

faith

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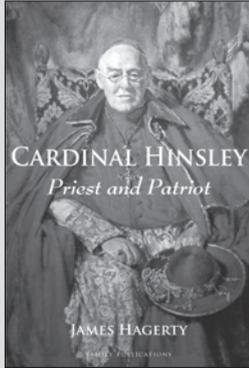


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Editor Hugh MacKenzie, St. Mary Magdalen's, Clergy House, Peter Avenue, Willesden Green, London NW10 2DD, Tel 020 8451 6720, editor@faith.org.uk

Editorial Board David Barrett, Timothy Finigan, Andrea Fraile, Roger Nesbitt, Christina Read, Dominic Rolls, Luiz Ruscillo, Mark Vickers.

Book Reviews William Massie, 187 Pickering Road, Hull, HU4 6TD, reviews@faith.org.uk

Advertising Manager Scott Deeley, St Paul's, 16 Birdston Rd, Milton of Campsie, Stirlingshire G66 8BU, advertising@faith.org.uk

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Towards Realigning Thomism

Editorial

“Where there is no vision the people perish” Proverbs 29:18

Some time between 1945 and 1946 a youthful Edward Holloway wrote

“If we may use a very vulgar analogy, justified only by its exactness, we consider the mating of Aristotelianism and the Christian tradition of St. Augustine, as the union of horse and ass –the offspring is a static compromise, without power of generation, without élan vital, but not without sometimes the obstinacy which characterises the castrated offspring of those two useful animals.”
Perspectives in Philosophy (PiP), Vol. 1, p. 28.

One can detect behind these words a certain bombast and desire to be provocative. Furthermore one might respond that Holloway in his seminary years had only been exposed to a manualist presentation of Thomism. However the three volumes of his *Perspectives in Philosophy* (see advert on inside front cover) are littered with quotations from St. Thomas, and even the most cursory reading of them provides ample evidence of Holloway’s profound engagement with, and his respect for St. Thomas’ thought. In later years, when he returned to critique his youthful writings, he concluded, “The philosophy I was taught [i.e. the Thomism of the Gregorian University before and during the Second World War] seemed to me not so much decadent as quite irrelevant. It had reached a terminus. It had rendered great service, but now it needed redevelopment and realignment.” (PiP Vol. 1, p.9) No amount of ingenious accommodation can disguise the fact that Holloway was fully aware that his philosophical thought at points diverged significantly from the Thomistic tradition.

Hand in hand with his explicit refusal fully to embrace the old Thomistic synthesis, Holloway professed an unwavering loyalty to the Church’s Magisterium, and to key theological principles of the Tradition.

Although in recent years John Paul II stressed, “the Church has no philosophy of her own nor does she canonise any one particular philosophy in preference to others” (*Fides et Ratio* n.49) nonetheless the Magisterium has undeniably accorded a privileged place to Thomas’ philosophy. In *Aeterni Patris* (1879), the founding charter of the modern Thomist movement, Leo XIII wrote

“We exhort you brethren, in all earnestness to restore the golden wisdom of St. Thomas, and to spread it far and wide for the defence and beauty of the Catholic faith, for the good of society, and for the advantage of all the sciences.”
(*Aeterni Patris*, n.31)

Pius XII lavished equal praise on St. Thomas:

“the method of Aquinas is singularly pre-eminent both of teaching students and for bringing truth to light; his doctrine is in harmony with Divine Revelation, and is most effective both for safe guarding the foundation of the faith and for reaping, safely and usefully, the fruits of sound progress.” (*Humani Generis* n.31)

It might then be argued that actually Holloway’s developments upon Thomistic philosophy and theology, along with those of most prominent post-Vatican II Catholic theologians, have stretched loyalty to a Magisterium which holds up St. Thomas’ philosophy as the paradigm of Christian philosophy. Do not the Church and right reason demand that we just return to and polish up the old synthesis?

A Third Way?

With a very different mindset, as R.R. Reno points out, the thinkers of the influential schools of Transcendental Thomism and the Nouvelle Theologie have swept away the old synthesis without replacing it with a viable new one: “the collapse of neo-scholasticism has not led to the new and fuller vision sought by [these thinkers]. It has created a vacuum filled with simple-minded shibboleths.” (‘Theology after the Revolution’, *First Things*, May 2007)

For decades seminarians have been intellectually formed by lecturers who completely disagree among themselves about whether existentialism, or Karl Rahner’s synthesis, or some other recent theoretical framework, is the way forward. No longer can a new priest be expected to have a deep synthetic knowledge of his faith. Leo XIII and Pius X had ensured that synthetic formation continued despite increasing pressure from Enlightenment thought. But this only worked until the mid-twentieth century.

Facing up to this problem, Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI, as well as other prominent thinkers, have been fostering the search for a third way between the old Thomism and the new dominant theology. The latter they argue is, in some important respects, the fruit of a damaging revolution; by contrast renewal must come from the careful realignment of the truths of the Catholic faith, in the light of new knowledge.

We want to suggest that the basic parameters of Holloway’s thought are in harmony with what both the Church and right reason demand. Given the collapse of conservative neo-scholasticism and the failure to bear fruit of modern syntheses, it is our view that Holloway’s ‘Unity-Law’ thought should be given a hearing. We think it might inspire a new and needed coherence.

St. Thomas’s Thought Lends itself to Development.

It is well known that St. Thomas, towards the end of his life and having had some sort of mystical experience, described the *Summa* by comparison as “so much straw” after which he stopped working on it. Obviously this anecdote shows that although he possessed a theological mind of the highest order St. Thomas possessed in equal measure intellectual humility. But it also means that, whatever his motives, he left the *Summa unfinished*. An unfinished work, by definition,

“Given the collapse of conservative neo-scholasticism and the failure to bear fruit of modern syntheseses [...]”

is not the final word: it is therefore in its material reality open to subsequent development.

Moreover the whole methodology of the Summa is one of question and answer. It is not formulated as a perfected system whose definitive conclusions have now been reached; rather it documents an enquiry that has reached a certain point. Because it is composed of questions and response, it is always open to further questions and further responses. As MacIntyre notes “Aquinas summarises the outcome of that enquiry so far, advances it one stage further, *and leaves the way open for the proponents of yet further considerations to continue beyond that point.*” (our italics – *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, Indiana 1990. p. 74.) The methodology of the Summa is of its very nature open-ended.

The Summa is a work of genius that synthesises the theological debates of the first twelve centuries of the Church’s history. As such, after St. Thomas, it is impossible to philosophise or theologise within the Christian Tradition without due deference to this inescapable monument of Tradition. However the Christian who approaches the Summa as if it were the final word in theology, or as if it contained the answer to every conceivable question, violates its material reality –it is an unfinished work– and its intrinsically open-ended methodology. Unfortunately after Vatican II to speak of being faithful to the “spirit” of a project has all too often become a euphemism for radical infidelity. However it is possible, given the insights of modern science, that by slavishly binding oneself to the letter of St. Thomas’s thought –who did after all live in the thirteenth century– one might run the risk of betraying the spirit of openness to, and confidence in, the truth which inspired him.

“Thomism” – An Ambiguous Term

The belief that Thomism is a single monolithic philosophical system is as widespread as it is mistaken. In the mid-nineteenth century, a variety of cultural and intellectual currents threatened the integrity of the Church’s teaching. In response the Church’s most brilliant minds, Jesuits like Kleutgen and Liberatore, called for a return to a unified approach to philosophy and theology, the precedent and model for which they saw in medieval Scholasticism. In 1879 in his encyclical letter *Aeterni Patris* (AP), Leo XIII endorsed this project: he maintained that the Scholastics had diligently collected and “stored in one place, for the use and convenience of posterity” (AP, n.14) the whole heritage of Christian antiquity, and that foremost among the Scholastics was St. Thomas. However, he also called for a rigorous study of the sources of Thomism: “be ye watchful that the doctrine of Thomas be drawn from his own fountains, or at least from those rivulets which, derived from the very fount, have thus far flowed, according to the established agreement of learned men, pure and clear.” (AP, n.31) As scholars deepened their research into its sources, it became increasingly evident that Scholasticism did not constitute a single metaphysical system: for example

the thought of St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure differ appreciably on important issues.

Furthermore even within the narrower confines of the Thomistic tradition differences emerged. The baroque Scholastics like Cajetan and Suarez, because they were philosophers and not historians, had approached St. Thomas’ thought in an a-historical fashion and so had adopted positions under the guise of Thomism that were at variance with St. Thomas’ own. Kleutgen and Liberatore, brilliant though they were, read St. Thomas as a response to problems formulated in the nineteenth century and so emphasised and interpreted certain aspects of his thought in a way that was not wholly in agreement with St. Thomas.

Russell Hittinger has brought out further complexities of Thomistic developments in the wake of *Aeterni Patris*: “Thomists developed rather freewheeling accounts of the political, economic, legal and social order [... putting] Thomism in an offensive mode as far as social doctrine went [... whereas] in matters related to sacred doctrine [philosophical] Thomism would be put into a defensive role” such that scholasticism could not be publicly challenged within the Church. It was feared that “even slight changes in philosophy entail new estimations of the doctrine.” (*Two Thomisms, Two Modernities’*, *First Things*, June 2008)

Thomism thus had a *developmental* style in response to modern social theory, which developments supported and built upon *Rerum Novarum* (1891). It had another less flexible posture when engaging with modern philosophy, a posture fostered by *Aeterni Patris* and later Pius X’s firm rejection of modernism.¹

Pope Benedict XV somewhat relaxed Pius X’s restrictions upon debate, and argued, in 1914, that in order to foster unity amongst Catholics

“matters in which without harm to faith or discipline -in the absence of any authoritative intervention of the Apostolic See- there is room for divergent opinions, it is clearly the right of everyone to express and defend his own opinion.”

In the years after this relaxation eminent philosophers such as Maritain and Gilson gallantly took on the task of synthesis in the increasingly complex Thomistic field. In the event they developed irreconcilably different interpretations of St. Thomas’ epistemology and its implications. Simultaneously Maréchal was developing his own unique approach to Thomist epistemology. As Gerard McCool observes concerning philosophical thought:

“Thus in the period between the wars three irreducibly distinct Thomisms emerged: the traditional Thomism of Maritain, the historical Thomism of Gilson, and the transcendental Thomism of Maréchal.” (*Nineteenth Century Scholasticism*, Fordham, 1999, p. 257.)

John Paul II called for and exemplified a renewed “bold” approach to developing and synthesising the Thomistic

response to post-Enlightenment thought and culture. In *Fides et Ratio* he tells us that “the Church has been justified in consistently proposing Saint Thomas as a master of thought and a model of the right way to do theology.” (n.43). He goes on to note the post-Enlightenment fragmentation of the Catholic synthesis: “what for Patristic and Medieval thought was in both theory and practice a profound unity [...] was destroyed by systems which espoused the cause of rational knowledge sundered from faith.” (n.45) He concludes that:

“it is necessary not to abandon the passion for ultimate truth, [...] or the audacity to forge new paths in the search. It is faith which stirs reason [...] willingly to run risks so that it may attain whatever is beautiful, good and true.” (n.56)

Benedict XVI has been a great example of this willingness in his cordial and challenging dialogue with philosophers of an Enlightenment or Islamic disposition. He has spoken helpfully about developing the philosophy of science and applying a hermeneutic of continuity to modern liturgy and to modern scriptural exegesis (see Fr Holden’s article in this issue). During his last summer holiday he responded to a priest’s question by stating: “Faith must constantly confront the challenges of the mindset of this age, so that it may not seem a sort of irrational mythology.”

***Aeterni Patris’* Guide to Development**

So Thomism does not denote a univocal reality and St. Thomas’ method of philosophising is open-ended. Leo XIII helpfully envisaged the need to adapt St. Thomas’ thought in the light of new knowledge about our world: “if there be anything that ill agrees with the discoveries of a later age, or, in a word, is improbable in whatever way – it does not enter our mind to propose that for imitation to our age.” (AP, n.31) Furthermore, Pope Leo understood that what we moderns call science – sophisticated knowledge of the natural world – has an impact on philosophy. In point of fact, he noted that this symbiotic relationship between science and philosophy was proper to the Scholastic method:

“They [the Scholastics] well understood that nothing was of greater use to the philosopher than diligently to search into the mysteries of nature and to be earnest and constant in the study of physical things. And this they confirmed by their own example; for St. Thomas, Blessed Albertus Magnus, and other leaders of the Scholastics were never so wholly rapt in the study of philosophy as not to give large attention to the knowledge of natural things”. (AP, n.30)

Finally it should also be noted that Pius XII, as quoted, lavished praise on “the *method* of Aquinas” which one can legitimately distinguish from the content of Aquinas’ thought, and argued that it was “most effective ... for safeguarding the foundation of the faith”. Thus the Magisterium’s position, because in Thomism it is necessarily faced with a complex reality, is altogether more nuanced than might initially be apparent.

What then does *Aeterni Patris* have to say to the Catholic thinker of 2008 regarding the relationship of Scholastic philosophy to the faith? As noted above Leo XIII called for a renewed study of Scholasticism at a particular point in history and with reference to particular threats to the integrity of the Church’s teachings: St. Thomas’ thought was singled out as the adequate response to these threats. Consequently a proper grasp of those aspects of St. Thomas’ thought that were being proposed for imitation, can only be reached by understanding the problems to which the Church was responding at that time.

Threats to the Integrity of the Faith

In the late nineteenth century the faith of the Church was assailed by intellectual threats from within and without. As Leo XIII put it

“a fruitful cause of the evils which now afflict us, as well as those which threaten us, lies in this: that false conclusions concerning divine and human things, which originated in the schools of philosophy, have now crept into all the orders of the State, and have been accepted by the common consent of the masses.” (AP, n.2)

The Enlightenment gave birth to a variety of philosophies which, based on exaggerated claims for the role of human reason, rejected the positive historical nature of Christian revelation. Either Christianity was to be rejected outright or its moral and intellectual claims were seen as the fruit of pure reason alone.

Within the Church seminary formation had for a variety reasons suffered from extreme eclecticism. Moreover there were schools of theology many of which had developed in response to the pressures of the Enlightenment but adherence to which seemed to endanger the integrity of the faith. Those of a somewhat reactionary bent posited a primitive divine revelation, denied human reason’s ability to reach certainty in moral and religious matters. Above all reason was believed to be unable to establish the existence of God. Various other theological approaches, which had to a greater or lesser extent accepted Kant’s philosophical premises, attempted to reconcile the positive historical claims of Christian revelation with the necessary and apodictic certainty required of knowledge within the Kantian system. In doing so they tended to posit some sort of intuition of God’s nature -which in Catholic theology is a work of grace- as the foundation for certainty in our knowledge of every day reality and so blurred the distinction between nature and grace.

Leo XIII advocated the revival of Thomism in the first place because Thomas’ thought provides a way of articulating faithfully the content of the Catholic faith, but also because, contrary to Enlightenment rationalism, it maintains the importance of divine revelation within human history, and avoids exaggerating human reason’s capacity to know the divine without the help of grace. Against eclecticism it presented a unified vision of the Catholic faith; against

“Holloway’s intention was to be faithful to the vision of Catholic philosophy set out in *Aeterni Patris*.”

perennial fideistic tendencies it maintains unaided reason’s capacity to know moral truths and establish the existence of God; finally Thomism does not blur the distinction between grace and nature.

These are key features of traditional catholic thought and foundations for its true development. The great virtue of neo-scholasticism has been its attempt to be faithful to these. We have often argued in this space that Transcendental Thomism does not maintain them. R. R. Reno, in his above mentioned piece, has powerfully argued that the anti-scholastic Nouvelle Theologie school, including Balthasar, have not been respectful enough of such foundations, even at times undermining them.

Reno also flags up “the equal and opposite blindness of the leading figures of early twentieth neo-scholasticism, who also neglected the full range of theological work and at times used their power within the Church to prohibit and suppress the proper exploratory mode of theology”.

Holloway and Thomas

Edward Holloway, regarded by ecclesiastical authorities as too ‘progressive’ before the Council and too ‘conservative’ since, was trying to offer a hermeneutic of continuity, faithful to the integral Catholic faith, as well as responding to the needs of a new intellectual culture.

Given that St. Thomas’ theological project is both materially and intentionally open ended, and given that the Magisterium recognises that philosophy must take adequate account of the advances of modern science, if one could demonstrate that the perspective proposed by Holloway and now by *Faith* movement and magazine fulfilled all of the criteria mentioned above – i.e. it is a unified vision of the Catholic faith that gives due place to the role of human reason without blurring the distinction between nature and grace and one that presents our revealed faith uncompromisingly and in its entirety – one could justifiably claim that the *Faith* vision is totally coherent with, if not the total *content* of St. Thomas’ theology, then most certainly the aims and intentions set out in *Aeterni Patris*.

It is well beyond the scope of this editorial to demonstrate all of these claims, though previous editorials, and many other publications available on our website, have gone further in presenting and exploring the ideas we have received. The remainder of this editorial highlights a series of issues fundamental to Holloway’s thought that demonstrate his intention to be faithful to the vision of Catholic philosophy set out in *Aeterni Patris*.

The vision we present aims to show the coherence and unity of the Catholic faith. Holloway’s epistemological realism takes seriously the possibilities of human knowing while avoiding the pitfalls of those schools of thought that accept Kant’s first premises. Finally, though he differs in his description of the relationship between grace and nature as presented in manualistic Thomism – though there are strong parallels between

his thought and that of St. Thomas himself on this matter – he does maintain a distinction between grace and nature.

The Unity of the *Faith* Vision

The *Faith* vision argues that the Incarnation of the second person of the Blessed Trinity, far from being primarily a response to human sin, is in fact from the very beginning the meaning and purpose of the Universe. The relationship between this Revelation and human reason is discussed below, but there is clearly a place for Divine revelation within this vision.

This perspective on the Incarnation means that creation is for the sake of Jesus Christ. The Church is a seamless development upon the Incarnation, and the locus where Jesus continues to be present in His wisdom and humanity, especially through her teaching authority and above all in and through the Blessed Sacrament. Moreover in the Incarnation God most fully enters into a personal relationship with mankind, which relationship is our eternal destiny under his gracious plan. The Incarnation is the hermeneutical key through which the whole of creation, not least the human flesh and the whole of matter-energy, is to be understood. Every branch of theology from protology through anthropology to eschatology derives its intelligibility from the Incarnation.

Thus Holloway’s vision does not just coherently unify theology. If material creation is for the sake of Jesus Christ, then in the end the laws of science – physics, chemistry and biology – find their ultimate intelligibility in Jesus Christ. The *Faith* vision which proposes Jesus Christ as the “master key to meaning of the universe” amply fulfils *Aeterni Patris*’ requirement that philosophy “bind together as it were in one body the many and various parts of the heavenly doctrines ... in complete union.” (n.6)

Holloway’s Epistemological Realism

It is beyond the scope of this article to analyse Holloway’s epistemology in detail. Suffice to point out that it is fundamentally realist in intent. Holloway is at pains to stress that we know not an abstraction of reality but we know reality itself. Consequently his epistemology avoids the pitfalls of nineteenth century Traditionalism which, carried to its logical conclusion, by undermining the possibility of any rational discourse about reality – and God as its ultimate cause – leads either to radical scepticism or fideism. By contrast Holloway asserts: “I perceive in my mind that I know only the determinate, the real, the singular.” (PiP, I, p.22) Moreover because the individual known is part of and in relation to a unified cosmos, the dangers of nominalism are obviated.

In Holloway’s epistemology the human mind attains to the real. Man does not require some sort of intuition of God to found his knowledge of reality. The following quotation from his writings shows that he rejected this latter form of epistemology that had resurfaced in the twentieth century under the guise of Transcendental Thomism, because he was

Towards Realigning Thomism

continued

acutely aware that this path led at least to a blurring of the distinction between nature and grace if not to pantheism:

“What we must not do [...] is to relate God as ‘ground of being’ to the very inner substance and core of the soul as in some way ... a part or aspect of the creature’s being.” (PiP, I, p.63)

Nature and Grace

Although Holloway was aware that an authentic Catholic understanding of the relationship between grace and nature distinguished between them, he realigned this distinction in a novel way.

The problem he saw was that although positing a natural end for man outside of God guaranteed the gratuity of God’s gift to man of a supernatural end, it also reduced the relationship between nature and supernature to the level of accidental (in the philosophical sense) or incidental (in more commonplace parlance). Holloway argued that the final end of any spiritual being can only be in relationship with God. Whilst such an end in the natural order may well be intelligible, a knowing and loving as it were “at God”, in the actual, historical dispensation, our spiritual and human end has been revealed as being “sharing the divine nature”. As explained in our May and September editorials having such an end does involve a more dynamic concept of human nature than the scholastics had. It does not entail that the distinction of grace and nature be blurred because “such an end can never be proportionate to any created nature, nor within its natural powers to attain.” (PiP, I, p.79) Creation and the human creature has no right to, or claim in justice on, the supernatural end that God chooses to bestow on it. The gratuity of grace is maintained because “this intrinsic transcendental urge of the soul by which it seeks from nature but beyond nature to the Source of its nature, is in the order of Divine *Charity*.” (my italics, PiP, Vol. II, p.63)

Conclusion

The Church in the developed West is in crisis. The crucial intellectual dimensions of this crisis are increasingly recognised. Those who advocate a return to Thomism as the solution must answer the question: why did everything collapse so completely and so quickly in the 1960s? The response that this came about through a widespread and collective act of infidelity to the truths of the Catholic faith only shifts the question. Why, if the Thomistic theology prevalent at the time was adequate did so many turn their back on it?

The purpose of this article has not been to argue that Holloway’s vision is flawless. Doubtless there are difficulties in his thought to be wrangled with. Nor does this article intend to dismiss St. Thomas’ thought: its study is still of immense profit and of Catholic duty. Our more limited intention has been to argue that at least in intent Holloway is faithful to the project set out by Leo XIII in *Aeterni Patris* and as such the *Faith* vision merits further attention. To dismiss Holloway’s ideas, based not on an assessment of their merits, but rather simply because they are in places

at variance with those of St. Thomas Aquinas is not a mark of Catholic orthodoxy – it is a mark of misplaced intransigence.

Holloway was trying to foster a realignment of Thomistic insights in the light of modern knowledge of matter. This is a Thomistic-like thing to do. Something similar was proposed recently by Pope Benedict – and John Paul before him. On 31st October last the Pope spoke these words to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences:

“Thomas Aquinas taught that the notion of creation must transcend the horizontal origin of the unfolding of events, which is history, and consequently all our purely naturalistic ways of thinking and speaking about the evolution of the world. [...] I recall] the words addressed to you by my predecessor Pope John Paul II in November 2003: ‘scientific truth, which is itself a participation in divine Truth, can help philosophy and theology to understand ever more fully the human person and God’s Revelation about man, a Revelation that is completed and perfected in Jesus Christ. For this important mutual enrichment in the search for the truth and the benefit of mankind, I am, with the whole Church, profoundly grateful”

Note

¹For a specific discussion of the anti-Suarez “24” metaphysical “theses” affirmed by the Sacred Congregation for Studies in 1914 as “not in the category of opinions to be debated one way or another” in Church universities, published just before Pius X’s death, see the introduction to *Denzinger*, and *The Hermeneutic of Continuity* blog for August 2007. It is also worth noting that as head of the CDF in 1990 Cardinal Ratzinger saw the description of the lowest authoritative level of the magisterium found in *The Ecclesial Role of the Theologian* (e.g. n.24: “It often only becomes possible with the passage of time to distinguish between what is necessary and what is contingent.”) as “probably” applying to “the pontifical statements of the last century regarding freedom of religion and the anti-Modernists decisions of the beginning of this century.”

Catholicism a New Synthesis

by Edward Holloway

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The Challenge of Modern Science to Thomistic Ontology *by Lydia Jaeger*

Dr. Lydia Jaeger suggests that a latent Greek-inspired dualism prevents Thomas Aquinas' hylomorphism from cohering with modern insights into the mathematical intelligibility of the phenomenon of change. She is Director of Studies at the Institut Biblique de Nogent-sur-Marne on the outskirts of Paris, a College for Christian leaders in the Evangelical tradition. This is a developed extract of a paper given at the joint conference of the American Scientific Affiliation and Christians in Science, in Edinburgh, on 3rd August 2007.

1. The Greek Concept of Matter and Creation Ex Nihilo

It has become customary to consider that modern science was born in a revolution: science, as it has been practised since the seventeenth century, is not the continuous development and enhancement of ancient and medieval science, but operates within a significantly different conceptual framework and methodology. A wide variety of changes occurred during the so-called scientific revolution. This paper concentrates on the concept of matter and the implications its mutation (or perhaps one might even say, abandonment) has had on scientific methodology. The chosen focus does not, of course, imply the idea that the change in the concept of matter was the most important, let alone the only factor in the scientific revolution. It is nevertheless interesting to single out this particular concept, in order to grasp one significant aspect of the revolutionary development which led to modern science.

The Ionian physicists first employed the concept of matter in the 6th century B.C., in order to explain physical changes by invoking one or more kinds of universal underlying "stuff". The concept was then used by Plato, Aristotle and subsequent philosophers in a variety of contexts, with at times rather contrasting meanings. Ernan McMullin lists eight different roles matter played in ancient Greek philosophy: the "substratum of change", the "principle of individuation and multiplicity", space as a receptacle for form, "the locus of potentiality", "the source of defect", the contrasting principle "over against life, mind and Divinity", "a factor in explanation" (the so called material cause) and "the ultimate subject of predication".¹ A thorough examination of the development of the concept of matter would need to take into account these differing meanings and distinguish between varying uses of the concept depending on historical period and individual authors.² In order to keep the length of this article inside reasonable limits, it is necessary to focus our attention on particular salient aspects of the change that occurred. I will therefore mainly concentrate on the (predominantly Platonic) understanding of matter as the source of defect and examine how it relates to the notion of creation *ex nihilo* and to the modern scientific paradigm.

When the Church fathers came into contact with Greek philosophy, they could not assimilate the Greek concept of matter without significant change. The doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* led them to confess God as the Creator

and Sustainer of everything, including matter. Thus matter came under the direct responsibility and reign of the omnipotent, benevolent and wise Creator God. Therefore it could no longer be seen as the source of defect (or even less of evil, as the Gnostics thought). Nor could it be eternal, as Aristotle had thought that unformed matter, as the substratum underlying all change, was itself without any change. In particular, Christian theologians could not represent the creation of the world as the work of a demiurge impressing form on pre-existing matter. Instead, the theologians of the ancient Church had to affirm their belief in the creation of matter also. Augustine wrestles with exactly this question, when commenting in his Confessions the opening verses of the Bible: "Before thou shapedst and diversifiedst this unshapen matter [*informem materiam*], there was nothing, neither colour, nor figure, nor body, nor spirit."³ But according to Greek thought, formed matter was preceded by unformed matter: "And yet was there not altogether an absolute nothing; for there was a certain unshapedness, without any form in it."⁴ But in order to be faithful to the conviction that the origin of *all* reality lies in God, Augustine considers that matter itself is created and finds biblical support for this doctrine in the second verse of the first chapter of Genesis: he interprets the *tohu-bohu* (Gen. 1:2) as referring to "the unshapedness of the first matter [*informitatem materiae*] which thou createdst without form (of which thou wert to make this goodly world)".⁵ In particular, our understanding of creation should not be based on the analogy with a human craftsman in as much as he always works with what already exists. On the contrary, all things come from God: "'Tis thou that madest the artificer his body, thou gavest a soul to direct his limbs; thou madest the stuff [*materiam*] of which he makes anything; thou madest that apprehension whereby he may take his art."⁶ God himself does not depend on any pre-existent thing in his work of creation: "Nor didst thou hold anything in thy hand whereof to make this heaven and earth: for how couldst thou come by that which thyself hadst not made, to make anything? For what hath any being, but only because thou art?"⁷

2. The Creation of Matter and the Possibility of Empirical Science

Postulating the creation of matter leads to a very different perspective on the contingency of our world, compared to the conception of a world formed by a demiurge. In the

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continued

Judaeo-Christian view, contingency is not the result of an imperfect formation process, but stems from the free will of the omnipotent Creator. The work of a demiurge is only contingent insofar as he does not succeed in implementing the *telos* that he had in mind. Therefore, if there is any deviation from the rational essence of things, it results from imperfection; it is caused by the limitations of the demiurge. As he works with pre-existing matter, he is not omnipotent, but has to face its resistance. Thus the world produced by the demiurge can in no way be the subject of empirical science. In as far as the work of the demiurge is successful, it is completely transparent to contemplation for the essence of things allows for an exhaustive rational understanding, as they arise from a (finite) intelligence which has informed matter. As a result, no experiments are necessary to understand nature. In as far as the work of the demiurge is imperfect, it does not allow science – either empirical, or rational – because the deviation from the original *telos* follows no rules, but arises from a principle of irrationality.⁸

Creation as a voluntary act of the omnipotent Intelligence can, on the other hand, be used to undergird the empirical method which governs the new scientific approach, from the 17th century onwards. The notion of creation combines rational work with free act, in such a way that contingency is no longer the result of imperfection, but expresses the freedom of the almighty Creator:

The changed value of the notion of contingency consists of the fact that the contingent no longer has its basis in the indeterminacy of matter, but in the freedom of the divine will, as the creative foundation of the world and all its parts.⁹

Thus, creationism believes that the contingent – as contingent – is understandable, which helps to explain the empirical approach of modern science. On the one hand, reality is accessible to scientific description, since it has its origin in God, who is both almighty and rational. On the other hand, rational conjecture is not enough to grasp the natural order, since it is the result of a free act, and is therefore not necessary: scientists must, through their experiments, learn which laws God has established in the created world.

3. Science and History

Not only does the changed perspective that the notion of creation brings to contingency encourage the empirical approach, but the world with its real historical development becomes the subject of scientific enquiry. For the coming into being of the material world is not explained by the meeting of form and matter (where only the former is subject to rational laws), but has its foundation in the historic action of the Creator, who is supremely rational. It is very instructive to compare this view to that demonstrated in Plato's *Timaeus*, a particularly good

example of how Greek philosophy struggled to incorporate history. The “likely account”¹⁰ which the *Timaeus* provides about the origin of the world affirms from the outset the opposition between rationality and history:

What is that which is Existent always and has no Becoming? And what is that which is Becoming always and never is Existent? Now the one of these is apprehensible by thought with the aid of reasoning, since it is ever uniformly existent; whereas the other is an object of opinion with the aid of unreasoning sensation, since it becomes and perishes and is never really existent.¹¹

For Plato, that which is perceptible and changing is not the subject of knowledge. Since the intellect can only grasp that which is eternal, our world and its historic coming into being escapes reason. But the idea of creation implies a significantly different perspective on history, as the natural order is by its very essence historical, that is, the result of a temporal action, which nevertheless is not capricious, but the orderly work of the God of all wisdom. Therefore, reason is able to explore change; historical evolution is not opposed to rational inquiry.¹²

“The latent dualism of Thomas Aquinas’ scheme has noteworthy repercussions on his understanding of the scientific method.”

The rationality of becoming, in the light of creation, takes on particular significance from the moment the natural sciences decisively opened up to the historical dimension. This happened most spectacularly in biology in the 19th and in cosmology in the 20th century. Although it might be difficult to prove historically that the idea of creation played a positive role in this change of the scientific outlook, it is still noteworthy that on the conceptual level, there is no contradiction between creation and a more historical approach in natural sciences. Quite to the contrary, viewing the world as created implies that the natural order is subject to change in history. Thus the dichotomy between the “hard” sciences and history breaks down, and it is to be expected that the exact sciences incorporate a historical dimension. Although a number of Christians rejected Darwin’s theory of evolution, it should not be inferred from that that the idea of creation implies fixity. Not only have other Christians, among the most conservative, accepted the new biological paradigm without any problem,¹³ but it is even likely that the idea of contingency of the natural order that creation implies eased the acceptance of an evolving cosmos in astronomy. Recall that Georges Lemaître, who first introduced the Big Bang idea in 1927, was a Catholic priest, whereas Einstein’s spinosism was probably a factor in his initial reluctance to the idea of cosmic evolution.¹⁴ Whatever attitudes that Christians have adopted faced with the historicising turning point of the natural sciences in the

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19th and 20th centuries, there is no reason, in the perspective of creation, to represent scientific and historical descriptions as being in opposition. On the contrary, since natural laws are not eternal, the natural sciences cannot but be open to history.

4. Exact Science in a Material World

The statement that creation is *ex nihilo* rules out any trace of polytheism: no independent principle or being can remain, since God is the Creator of all facets of reality. As such he has perfect mastery over the world; nothing can escape his control. If matter also is created, it is included under the wise governance of the Creator and thus cannot constitute an irrational principle. While for the Greeks (and in particular Plato), matter was only understandable inasmuch as it was “in-formed”, matter created by an orderly and wise God does not in principle pose any obstacle to rational understanding. The new philosophy of nature which took shape in the 17th century was based on the conviction that the perceptible, the material, in itself, is the subject of rational knowledge. On this point it is perfectly in agreement with the idea of creation: since all that exists is the work of an infinitely wise God, nothing is fundamentally irrational and unintelligible. In such a vision, “reality is substantial nourishment for the intellect. Nothing is inert, insignificant, alien or unable to be assimilated. No ‘matter’ in the sense of ‘stuff resistant to the intellect’, utter waste for the mind.”¹⁵

In fact, at the birth of modern science, the debate over the status of matter was present. Galileo plays out several times, in his imaginary dialogues, the disagreement on the supposed imperfection of the material world. In the *Dialogue on the Great World Systems*, Salviati, advocate for Galileo, insists that mathematical description applies to material objects themselves. He thereby opposes the views of Simplicio, according to whom “it is the imperfection of matter that makes the matters taken in concrete to disagree with those taken in abstract.”¹⁶ To the contrary, says Salviati, “what happens in the concrete does in like manner hold true in the abstract”, so that mathematical calculations apply perfectly to our material world.” If a round object touches a plane surface at more than one point, this is not because it is material, but because it is not truly a sphere.¹⁷ In the *Discourses concerning Two New Sciences*, the learned Italian loosens the traditional link between the material realisation of forms and the approximation inherent in any scientific description of the world: the approximation is an integral part of the *theoretical* models used in science, independently of the material nature of the objects being studied. Thus, the description of free-fall ignores the fact that the earth’s gravitational field lines are not exactly parallel to each other due to the round shape of the earth.¹⁸

At first sight, the difference might seem trivial: in explaining why a round object touches a plane surface at more than one point, one side maintains that the material object is an

imperfect realisation of an ideal sphere, the other that it is not an exact sphere. But in fact, the two perspectives are profoundly divergent. This becomes clear in the different ways they treat the deviation from the spherical form: for Simplicio, the material imperfection is the end of all possible explanation. Salviati, however, immediately seeks an exact mathematical description of how the object deviates from the ideal form. If it is not exactly a sphere, it is exactly something else! From whence comes the revolutionary assertion that the book of *nature* is written in mathematical characters:

The book of philosophy [...] stands perpetually open before our eyes, though since it is written in characters different from those of our alphabet it cannot be read by everyone; and the characters of such a book are triangles, squares, circles, spheres, cones, pyramids, and other mathematical figures, *most apt* for such a reading.¹⁹

Refusing to link material realisation and imperfection led to an original attitude to experimental data: the conviction that nature allows an exact mathematical description generated an expectation of finding a more comprehensive and universal order than that which appears at first Platonic-inspired glance. To use Kantian terms, trust in the mathematical structure of the world acted as a regulative principle for Galileo: it made him carefully monitor the setting-up of his experiments, in his quest to draw out the natural order which can evade the inattentive and unsophisticated eye of the ordinary observer.

5. St. Thomas Aquinas’ Synthesis

While creation *ex nihilo* would in the end call into question the Greek antithesis of matter and form, it is undeniable that Christian theology was slow to exploit the revolutionary leverage which this central doctrine contained. In order to illustrate this point, it is very instructive to study the ideas of Thomas Aquinas, who tried to synthesise the Aristotelian and Christian perspectives. In its contact with the Arab world, the West had rediscovered the works of Aristotle, such that at the start of the 13th century, young intellectuals leant on a certain reading of the Stagirite to critique traditional thinking, which up to that point was heavily dominated by Platonism. Thomas therefore strove to present Christian doctrine in a rational way, profiting from the conceptual tools that Aristotelian philosophy had made available. His *Summa contra Gentiles* targets precisely Muslim commentators of Aristotle, and the questioning of Christian theology that their reading might produce.

In line with ecclesiastical tradition, Thomas asserted that the world in its entirety owes its being to God, for “everything besides Himself is from Him.”²⁰ He must therefore distance himself from the Stagirite, to reject the eternity of matter and assert creation *ex nihilo*: “God brought things into being out of no pre-existent thing as matter.”²¹ At the same time,

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continued

he appropriates the dualism between form and matter, which underlies Aristotelian philosophy. But to stay faithful to received doctrine, he cannot identify God with any of these two structural principles. On one hand, he asserts that “God is not matter” which follows from creation *ex nihilo*; for “God created all things not out His own substance, but out of nothing.”²² Thus there cannot be continuity between matter constitutive of the created world and divine essence. On the other hand, he rejects “the error of some who have asserted that God is nothing else than the formal being of everything.”²³

Aquinas “does not draw all the conclusions offered by the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, [...] which make it possible to reach a modern scientific understanding of law.”

A shift occurs, however, when Thomas follows Aristotle in his definition of the divine as that which “is wholly actual, and nowise potential”²⁴ and when he identifies matter with passive potentiality: “For matter, such as it is, is in potentiality.”²⁵ Thus matter threatens to become a principle alien to God. Their mutual relationship is that of “opposite differences [...]: the one being pure act and the other pure potentiality, they have nothing in common.”²⁶ The creation of matter therefore poses a problem, for how could God create that which is opposed to him? Thomas shows his awareness of the difficulty when he treats, in *Summa theologica*, the objection which follows from it: “Action and passion are opposite members of a division. But as the first active principle is God, so the first passive principle is matter. Therefore God and primary matter are two principles divided against each other, neither of which is from the other.”²⁷

Greek philosophy had resolved the problem by positing the eternity of matter – an outcome which Thomas cannot take on board without breaking with received doctrine. He must assert the creation of matter, even if this makes little sense in the conceptual framework which he inherits from the Stagirite.²⁸ Thomas therefore seeks to evade the objection by assuming that potentiality derives from actuality: “Passion is an effect of action. Hence it is reasonable that the first passive principle should be the effect of the first active principle, since every imperfect thing is caused by one perfect. For the first principle must be most perfect, as Aristotle says.”²⁹ But does it make sense, in Thomas’s system, to postulate that a cause has an effect which is fundamentally dissimilar, even opposed, to it? Hence it seems difficult to accept that pure action should give rise to passion, the perfect to the imperfect: the relationship between God and matter remains enigmatic, as long as one adopts such antithetical concepts in order to express the difference between the Creator and the creature. Thomas’ answer to the objection counts for little more than a principled petition; it does hardly anything else but repeat

the conviction that matter comes from God, without really shedding any light on the relationship between these two opposites. We move no doubt towards a solution when Thomas states that matter is not created as such, but always attached to a form.³⁰ But even this assertion doesn’t succeed in providing a satisfactory answer to the objection. It is true from a Christian standpoint that “it is necessary that even what is potential in it [every creature] should be created”;³¹ but how could pure action confer existence on that which is opposed to it, in its very essence?

In asserting that God alone is pure action, Thomas seeks to express a fundamental conviction in the idea of creation: it is impossible to include, in the same category of being, the Creator and his creatures. On this note, it is significant that the term *analogia entis* is not used by Thomas: divine transcendence does not allow any general concept of being into which can be subsumed God and the world.³² But his thinking is still tied to the antithesis of matter and form, of potentiality and act. There is therefore the risk of understanding the being of created things as dependent on two heterogeneous principles: pure act and matter, where the latter constitutes a principle opposed to God. To assimilate it with potentiality, and therefore non-being, doesn’t avoid conferring it with its own metaphysical status, which threatens the monotheistic character of Thomas’ proposition.

The latent dualism of Thomas Aquinas’ scheme has noteworthy repercussions on his understanding of the scientific method. Without attempting to cover the entirety of his ideas on the subject, let us observe two implications which are directly related to his treatment of matter. Firstly, we find in his ideas the Greek belief that matter in itself is not intelligible:

Forms are not actually intelligible except according as they are separated from matter and from its conditions; nor are they made actually intelligible except by the power of a substance understanding them, according as they are received into, and are affected by, that substance.

Whence it is necessary that there be in any intelligent substance a complete freedom from matter, such that the substance does not have matter as a part of, such too that the substance is not a form impressed on matter, as is the case with material forms.³³

He rejects in particular the idea that “it is only corporeal matter that impedes intelligibility, and not any matter whatsoever.”³⁴ Matter in its very essence, evades reasoning.

Secondly, he accords to matter the role of resisting form. Movement always requires a small amount of time, owing to “a defect of the matter, that is not suitably disposed from the beginning for the reception of the form.”³⁵ Similarly, matter gives the explanation for the failures that an agent endures in his attempts to act:

“To assimilate [matter] with potentiality [...] threatens the monotheistic character of Thomas’ proposition.”

Those things which are referable to matter as their first cause, are beside the intention of the agent; for instance monsters and other mischances [peccata] of nature. But the form results from the intention of the agent. This is proved thus. The agent produces its like according to its form, and if sometimes this fails, it is from chance on account of a defect in the matter.³⁶

6. Conclusion

To accord to matter the power to oppose the ordaining power of the Creator is foreign to biblical monotheism. Creation *ex nihilo* goes hand in hand with God’s perfect mastery of all elements of reality. Here Thomas pays the price for the synthesis he tries to work with Aristotelian

philosophy. He does not draw all the conclusions offered by the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, which he nevertheless affirms. But taking fully into account the implications of this doctrine is a key element in elaborating the idea of the universality of the reign of the laws of nature which makes it possible to reach a modern scientific understanding of law. As John Milton states it:

The barrier which must inevitably prevent any systematic attempt to think of natural phenomena as governed by [universal] laws is the absence of a belief in creation *ex nihilo*. If the world does not owe its whole existence to God, then no divine law can provide the *fundamental* explication of the nature of things.³⁷

Notes

- ¹Ernan MCMULLIN, “Introduction: the concept of matter in transition”, in *The concept of matter in modern philosophy*, ed. E. MCMULLIN, Notre Dame (IN), Univ. of N.D. Press, 1978, p. 5-12.
- ²See for example Ernan MCMULLIN (ed.), *The concept of matter in Greek and medieval philosophy*, Notre Dame (IN), Univ. of N.D. Press, 1965, and *The concept of matter in modern philosophy*, 1978.
- ³*St. Augustine’s Confessions* XII-3, «The Loeb Classical Library», transl. William WATTS, 1631, Cambridge (MA), Harvard Univ. Press, 1946, vol. I, p. 293.
- ⁴*Ibid.*
- ⁵*Ibid.* XII-4, p. 293. For the controversial exegesis of this verse, cf. Victor P. HAMILTON, *The book of Genesis: chapters 1-17*, New International Commentary of the Old Testament, Grand Rapids (MI), Eerdmans, 1990, p. 108-117.
- ⁶*St. Augustine’s Confessions* XI-5, p. 219.
- ⁷*Ibid.* p. 220.
- ⁸Michael FOSTER, “Christian theology and modern science of nature (II)”, *Mind* XLV, 1936, p. 4-7. Foster quotes two passages from the writings of Francis Bacon, which show how the idea of an all-powerful God allowed a transition from a concept of imperfectly realised forms, to one of forms which are open to scientific description and effectively given in nature (*ibid.* p. 7, n. 1).
- ⁹Wolfhart PANNENBERG, “Die Kontingenz der geschöpflichen Wirklichkeit”, *Theologische Literaturzeitung* CXIX, 1994, p. 1052. This different perspective on contingency constitutes, for Pannenberg, one of the major contributions that Christian theology has made to the philosophy of science; e.g. “The doctrine of creation and modern science”, 1989, *Toward a theology of nature: essays on science and faith*, ed. Ted PETERS, Louisville (KY), Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993, p. 36f, and “Contingency and natural law”, 1970, *ibid.* p. 115f. For the role that contingency plays in the created order in Newtonian empiricism, cf. L. JAEGER, “The idea of law in science and religion”, *Science and Christian Belief* XX, 2008, p. 133-146.
- ¹⁰PLATO, *Timaeus* 29d, *Plato in twelve volumes*, «The Loeb Classical Library», vol. IX, trad. R.B. BURY, Cambridge (MA), Harvard Univ. Press, 1929, p. 53.
- ¹¹*Ibid.* 27d-28a, p. 49; cf. *ibid.* 51d-52a, p. 121f.
- ¹²W. PANNENBERG, “Theological questions to scientists”, *Toward a theology of nature*, p. 21, and “Contingency and natural law”, 1970, *ibid.* p. 78, 90; Ted PETERS, “Cosmos as creation”, in *Cosmos as creation: theology and science in consonance*, ed. T. PETERS, Nashville (TN), Abingdon Press, 1989, p. 101.
- ¹³As for ex. Benjamin B. WARFIELD (1851-1921), dogmatician at Princeton Theological Seminary, known for his defence of biblical inerrancy (*Evolution, science, and Scripture: selected writings*, ed. M.A. NOLL, D.N. LIVINGSTONE, Grand Rapids (MI), Baker, 2000, *passim*). Cf. David N. LIVINGSTONE, *Darwin’s forgotten defenders: the encounter between Evangelical theology and evolutionary thought*, 1987, *passim*, and «Situating Evangelical responses to evolution», in *Evangelicals and science in historical perspective*, ed. D.N. LIVINGSTONE, D.G. HART, M.A. NOLL, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1999, p. 193-219.
- ¹⁴Many 19th-century philosophers advocated an eternal universe, conceived of as an infinite series of cycles (Stanley L. JAKI, *Science and creation: from eternal cycles to an oscillating universe*, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1974, p. 309 s, 311 3, 319-322, names, in particular, Schelling, Engels and Nietzsche). Jaki believed that many scientists’ resistance to general relativity’s finite universe was due to the attractiveness of the Greek idea of an eternal universe (*ibid.* ch. 14).
- ¹⁵Claude TRESMONTANT, *Études de métaphysique biblique*, Paris, Gabalda, 1955, p. 220 (translated by Jonathan Vaughan).
- ¹⁶*Dialogue on the Great World Systems*, 1632, Second Day, transl. T. SALUSBURY, 1661, rev. G. DE SANTILLANA, Chicago (IL), Univ. of Chicago Press, 1953, p. 220 (Le opere di Galileo Galilei, 1968, vol. VII, p. 332). For the imperfect realisation of mathematical forms in material objects, cf. also PLATO, *Timaeus* 50b, 53b, 56c, p. 117, 127, 137.
- ¹⁷*Dialogue on the Great World Systems*, Second Day, p. 222 (Opere, vol. VII, p. 333). Ernan McMullin pointed out to me that Galileo was not entirely consistent on this issue. At one point he wrote that “conclusions demonstrated in the abstract are altered in the concrete”, but that demonstration in the abstract ought to be sufficient for the purposes of science (*Two New Sciences*, 1638, Fourth Day, transl. S. DRAKE, Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1974, p. 223 (Opere, vol. VIII, p. 274). Cf. E. MCMULLIN “The conception of science in Galileo’s work”, in *New perspectives on Galileo*, R.E. BUTTS, J.C. PITT, Dordrecht/Boston, Reidel, 1978, p. 209-258.
- ¹⁸*Two New Sciences*, 1638, Fourth Day, p. 223f (Opere, vol. VIII, p. 274 s).
- ¹⁹GALILEO, Letter to Fortunio Liceti, January 1641, in Stillmann DRAKE, *Galileo at work: his scientific biography*, Chicago (IL), Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978, p. 412 (italics mine).
- ²⁰*The Summa contra Gentiles*, 1259-1265, II, XV, transl. by the English Dominican Fathers, London, Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1923, vol. 2, p. 18.
- ²¹*Ibid.* II, XVI, p. 21; cf. II, XIX, p. 29.
- ²²*Ibid.* I, XVII, transl. by the English Dominican Fathers, 1924, vol. 1, p. 38.
- ²³*Ibid.* I, XXVI, p. 62.
- ²⁴*Ibid.* I, XVI, p. 37.
- ²⁵*Ibid.* I, XVII, p. 38.
- ²⁶*Ibid.* I, XVII, p. 39.
- ²⁷*Summa theologica* Ia, 1267/68 (?), q. 44, art. 2, obj. 2, transl. by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Notre Dame (IN), Christian Classics, 1981, p. 230.
- ²⁸Cf. Herman DOOYEWEERD, *A new critique of theoretical thought*, vol. I, Phillipsburg (NJ), Presbyterian & Reformed, 1953, p. 180, 182.
- ²⁹*Summa theologica* Ia, q. 44, art. 2, rep. 2, p. 230.
- ³⁰*Ibid.* rep. 3, p. 230.
- ³¹*Ibid.*
- ³²*Summa contra Gentiles*, I, XXXIV, p. 79.
- ³³*On Being and Essence*, IV, 1, 1254/55, in Joseph BOBIK, *Aquinas on Being and essence: a translation and interpretation*, Notre Dame (IN), Univ. of N.D. Press, 1965, § 68f, p. 135f.
- ³⁴*Ibid.* IV, 2; BOBIK, § 70, p. 136. Cf. *Summa theologica* Ia, q. 12, art. 4, p. 52; et *ibid.* q. 14, art. 1, p. 72.
- ³⁵*Summa contra Gentiles* II, XIX, p. 29; cf. II, XXV, p. 44: “Potentiality of being is in those things only which have matter subject to contrariety.”
- ³⁶*Ibid.* II, XI, p. 88 s.
- ³⁷“The origin and development of the concept of the ‘laws of nature’”, *Archives européennes de sociologie* XXII, 1981, p. 187.

Aquinas and Explaining the Real Presence Today

by Stephen Boyle

Fr Boyle, Parish Priest of New Addington, Surrey, brings out aspects of St Thomas Aquinas' metaphysical explanation of Transubstantiation which need development in the light on modern scriptural scholarship and scientific knowledge.

"It is not bread or wine, it is Jesus". Such is the clear teaching of Sr. Joan O'Donoghue, the chief catechist in this writer's parish, to children preparing for their First Holy Communion. It is something which needs to be repeated not just in First Communion preparation but also from the pulpit. However, this is undermined by real confusion concerning the metaphysical implications of the doctrine of the real presence. To support a coherent approach in sermons and catechesis, it is important for this to be resolved.

A few years back Cardinal Avery Dulles convincingly praised Aquinas' middle way between a "too carnal [...] naïve realism" and an approach that is too "mystical" or "figurative". Counselling against "inquir[ing] too curiously" he concludes: "It is better simply to accept the words of Christ, of Scripture, of the tradition and of the Church's magisterium which tell us what we need to know: Christ is really but invisibly present in this sacrament."¹

But it is not clear, this writer would suggest, that the adjective 'invisible' is consistent with such faithfulness to Christ's teaching. We do indeed need to avoid that "naïve realism" which claims *per impossibile* that the Sacred Host acts and reacts in the way Jesus' body did when walking in Palestine, that they both have exactly the same set of physical (that 'material' realm which is the object of sensation) properties in the same regard. But to avoid this we should not and do not need, we suggest in this piece, to deny in any way Christ's actual physical identity to the intrinsic bread-like properties of the Blessed Sacrament, as prominent scholasticism seems to do. We will argue that we do actually see Jesus upon the altar, but not that He physically winces in pain at the fraction.

Our key will be to remember that the vocation of the physical flesh of Christ differs in at least one important respect from the physical flesh of us human creatures – His flesh is our nourishment for eternal life, our Bread of Life – a vocation and a Body which encompasses the physicality of his pre-crucifixion life, as well as of his glorified Body.

Below we hope to indicate the teaching of the Church on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and, in the light of this, to show the need for a development in the way we have traditionally explained 'Transubstantiation'. Briefly we will suggest that Edward Holloway offers a way forward.

Clear Teaching of Jesus on the Real Presence

"Unless you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man you will not have life in you" (Jn 6:53). We believe in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist because Jesus has said it and his word is Truth, and the Catholic Church, the body of Christ, faithfully transmits this truth to us. But what is the manner of this presence?

We first of all turn to the words of Jesus, "He who eats my flesh" (Jn 6:56). John invokes the Incarnation by using the

Greek word *Sarx* for flesh. It is the same Greek word used at the beginning of the Gospel, "the Word became flesh and lived among us" (Jn 1:14). The most straightforward way to interpret this, and the one which, we would affirm, has been the preference of the magisterium, is to assert an identity between the earthly presence of Christ 2,000 years ago and the Eucharist in their whole respective existential realities.

In the Ignatius Catholic Study Bible series the commentary on John's Gospel has an exegesis of John 6:54 which emphasises the dramatic nature of Jesus' words. Here it is in full:

"He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood..." John (6:54): Eats *Trogo* (Gk.) A verb meaning 'chew' or 'gnaw'. In John the verb is used four times in the second half of the Bread of Life discourse. (Jn 6:54, 56, 57, 58). This marks a noticeable shift in Jesus' teaching, which up until 6:54 made use of a more common verb for eating. The change in vocabulary marks a change of focus and emphasis, from the necessity of faith to the consumption of the Eucharist. The graphic and almost crude connotation of this verb thus adds greater force to the repetition of his words: he demands we express our faith by eating, in a real and physical way, His life-giving flesh in the sacrament."²

Jesus is to be real food. This real food is the Incarnate God, the Word made flesh.

The Teaching of Trent

The Incarnation, the Word made flesh, is to continue through space and time. The body of Christ is to be concretely, historically, physically, wholly present to men down the ages and across the globe.

The Council of Trent said that Christ is present in the sacrament, "truly, really and substantially". The word 'truly' was used to refute the assertion of the 11th century heretic Berengarius and some of his followers in the 16th century that the sacrament was a mere sign, pointing away from itself to a body that is absent, perhaps somewhere in the heavens. The affirmation that the presence is 'real', was to combat Zwingli, who believed that Christ was present in and through the faith of the participants, that this presence was not tied to the elements and depended completely upon the faith of the communicants. The Catholic teaching is that it is not faith that makes Jesus present, but the proper performance of the rite by a duly ordained minister.

The Council said that presence is 'substantial' to refute Luther, who believed that Christ's body and blood were present in the sacrament "in, with, and under" the elements of bread and wine, Consubstantiation. The key consideration for this article is the meaning of the belief that Jesus is present substantially in the Eucharist.

“it is not clear that the adjective ‘invisible’ is consistent with Christ’s teaching”

In the Council of Trent, the definition of transubstantiation was thus:

“By the consecration of the bread and wine a conversion takes place of the substance of bread (*totius substantiae panis*) into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His Blood”.³

The council did not make its doctrine dependent upon scholastic ontology. An article published in *L’Osservatore Romano* for the recent year of the Eucharist pointed out that the Council did not use the term ‘accidents’ – it preferred the term ‘species’. It used the word *substantia* “for two reasons: a) because it is present in the tradition of St. Ambrose and Faustus of Riez, passing through Councils such as the Fourth Lateran; b). because it was used well before the advent of hylomorphism in the scholastics.”⁴

The use of the word ‘species’ refers to the appearance of bread and wine in the Eucharist. While Trent says “the true body of our Lord and His true blood together with His soul and divinity exist under the species of bread and wine”, this in no way implied that Jesus was present “*in the bread and wine*”. The council emphasises the completeness of this change by affirming that Christ is present “whole and entire (*totus et integer Christus*)”⁵ under both species.

This implies the ‘concomitance’ of the whole Christ. The words of consecration said over the bread render present the whole substance of our Lord’s body. Yet because that body is the real body of Christ the substance of his body must imply and include all that is substantially one with Him. So for example in communion under one kind, the faithful receive the whole Christ, body, blood, soul and divinity.

Greco-Thomistic Explanation

We have seen the literalist character of the teaching of Christ, speaking to his followers, and of the teaching through the Church concerning transubstantiation.

Through the lens of the traditional substance-accident and form-matter distinctions some prominent Catholic philosophers depart somewhat, I would suggest, from such literalism. Here is a representative definition of the concept of ‘substance’, from a respected Catholic professor of philosophy:

“Substance [...] is not a sensible image, but a purely intelligible concept, a Transensible object. To try to use the senses in order to see the substance is like trying to smell with one’s ears or to measure the weight of an animal with an thermometer. The accidents are not the ‘envelope’ or the outer wrapping of the substance, but precisely what reveals the substance to our intelligence”.⁶

In his book, *God and the Atom*, Ronald Knox regretted such an emphasis: “Depending as we do on the senses for our information, we could never (we were told) come in contact with the substance itself in our daily experience.”⁷ As we’ve alluded to above, surely when I touch you I am touching your substance. When Jesus referred to us “chewing Me” the personal pronoun cannot refer to the existential accidents of bread, let alone exclusively so.

Fr. Holloway made the same point in suggesting, concerning the Thomism he was taught in the 1940’s, “When as a Thomist, I elevate the Host at the Consecration, do I see Christ? No, I do not. [...] We see only the physical accidents of bread, but we know that the reality which defines the totality is Christ. Nevertheless we do not see Christ”.⁸

The Summa

St. Thomas’ actual teaching in this area provided a magnificent defence of orthodox doctrine which has borne much fruit over the centuries. As rehearsed numerous times in these pages his metaphysics of matter has come under justifiable pressure from our modern understanding of matter-energy. This dynamic has had in recent times unfortunate repercussions for describing transubstantiation.

Jesus, for Thomas, is really present in the Eucharist, and is the perfective principle of all the sacraments. Not only that, he indicates that for Christ to be close to us it must be through the flesh. He states that the reality of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist

“belongs to Christ’s love, out of which for our salvation He assumed a true body of our nature. And because it is the special feature of friendship to live together with friends [...] He promises us His bodily presence as a reward [...] Yet meanwhile in our pilgrimage He does not deprive us of His bodily presence; but unites us with Himself in this sacrament through the truth of his body and blood.”⁹

Tensions in this vision begin to emerge, we would respectfully suggest, when we look closely at St. Thomas’ description of transubstantiation as involving no change in the material accidents of bread and wine, as opposed to the substance of the bread which is changed into the body and blood of Jesus. The former, material realm is the object of sensation, the latter of the intellect and of the act of faith. We seem, in this vision, physically to sense bread but understand and believe Christ to be present.

He clearly sees transubstantiation as a unique incidence of what scholastic philosophy termed substantial (or formal) change. The accidents in the real presence have a unique status:

“We must say that the accidents of the bread and the wine, which are perceived by the senses as remaining after consecration, do not have as their subject the substance of the bread and the wine, since, as has been said, that does not continue to exist. [...] It is also obvious that such accidents cannot have as their subject the substance of the body and the blood of Christ [...] So we are left with the conclusion that the accidents in this sacrament do remain without a subject. And this is indeed possible by divine power. [...]

“In anything else, accidents do not have existence. The substance is that which exists, and the accidents inhere in the substance. *In this case*, after the consecration accidents which remain have existence [...] and they have quantitative parts.”¹⁰

Aquinas and Explaining the Real Presence Today

continued

The accidents exist in a miraculous way without a substantial form, through the power of God. The qualities of porousness, brittleness, and density all remain in the sacramental 'species', the Sacred Host as it interacts.

This is explained in this way: "the dimensive quantity of the bread remains after the consecration, while only the substance of the bread passes away. [...] The dimensive quantity of the bread and wine retains its proper nature, but it miraculously receives the power and property of substance"¹¹

"When Jesus referred to us 'chewing Me' the personal pronoun cannot refer to the existential accidents of bread, let alone exclusively so."

This non-present substance to which the accidents have miraculous reference seems to be bread not that of Our Lord. When Thomas considers whether the species can nourish he comes to the conclusion that it is the species of bread, and not the body of Christ that can satisfy hunger and inebriate.¹² For Thomas, of course the substantial Body of Christ is present, and its accidents by concomitance but these are not the accidents we sensitively encounter:

"The soul is the form of the body giving it the whole order of perfect being, i.e. [...] being, corporeal being, and animated being, and so on. Therefore the form of the bread is changed into the form of Christ's body, according as the latter gives corporeal being, but not according as it bestows animated being".¹³

"It is evident to sense that all the accidents of the bread and wine remain after the consecration. And this is reasonably done by Divine providence. First of all, because it is not customary, but horrible, for men to eat human flesh, and to drink blood."¹⁴

There is an important truth here concerning what might be termed the lower-level properties of the Blessed Sacrament, our Bread of Life. But in terms of the actual subject of these properties and of the existential identity of what today we can call the matter-energy, it seems that, in Thomas' vision Jesus' identity is not "bestowed" upon it. It thus becomes very difficult to affirm that we "chew" upon Jesus, or upon his animated *sarx*. The life that is present is spiritual and not in any sense organic.

"Sight, touch, and taste in thee are each deceived." This is one of the lines of St. Thomas' famous hymn to the Eucharist. It would seem however that for St. Thomas the "species" is more than just the appearance of bread and wine. We see, touch, and taste the existential accidents of bread. At the level of sensation we do not encounter Christ. The real presence can be better explained, as St Thomas himself does, as a spiritual, non-visible presence, by the power of the Spirit.

Contemporary Presentations

This is the position succinctly summarised by Cardinal Dulles in the quotation at the beginning of this piece. Raniero Cantalamessa, recent preacher to the Papal Household, also took such a view, in his 2005 Good Friday homily at St. Peter's, Rome:

"Theology in our day has recovered a more balanced vision of the identity between the historical body of Christ and his Eucharistic body. It places an emphasis on the sacramental character of Christ's presence in the sacrament of the altar which, however real and substantial, is not material."¹⁵

St Thomas indicates a theological reason why he cannot accept the possibility of Christ's body and blood receiving qualities of bread and wine. Christ's body is now glorious and immune from suffering and change: "There is no matter underlying the sacramental species except the matter of the body of Christ and it is outside the world of change." As we will allude to below this somewhat begs the question: the actual matter of Christ's sacramental body, as the Bread of Life for us today, *is* in the world of change.

Fr Cantalamessa sees the modern temptation to a 'consubstantial' view of the real presence:

"If one considers substance as commonly used today, it becomes difficult to accept that bread which eaten in quantity satiates, and wine, which drunk in quantity inebriates, do not have substance of their own...it is currently said that such bread is 'substantial!'"¹⁶

Thomas' vision tries to answer such a dilemma. But in the light of our modern understanding of the intimate relationship between a physical thing's relational properties and what it is, his approach does not provide the answer. In this context it is more than miraculous but positively unintelligible to separate the substance (of the Eucharist) from its existential material properties. Paradoxically to state that the accidents have (miraculously) the status and power of the substance of bread might lead an assiduous modern Catholic to a consubstantial view of the Eucharist. It suggests that the nature which confers identity to the matter-energy of the Eucharist is not that of Jesus but of bread. The inner reality is Jesus, but what we see, touch, and feel is bread. Such a view would lose the realism of Jesus' words and of Catholic tradition. It also misses out on properly developing Christ's application to himself of the title Bread of Life.

Cantalamessa is not wedded to the Thomistic view. He points to the use of the word 'Sarx' by the evangelist John, to indicate his belief, contrary to "Scholastic theology", that just as in the Incarnation we do not speak of Jesus becoming flesh but becoming man, so in the Eucharist we have Jesus' soul as well as his body by the power of the sacrament, and not just by 'natural concomitance'.¹⁷ While using Johannine theology so potently here, it would be this writer's opinion that Cantalamessa needs to follow this all the way and say that Jesus is truly bodily present not only substantially but also in his accidents, or better 'appearances', and thus in a material way, by the power of the sacrament.

“We seem, in the scholastic vision, physically to sense bread but to understand and believe Christ to be present.”

With the view that transubstantiation is a one-off special case of there being formal change without material change after the consecration, it would also seem difficult to see the Eucharist as a true extension of his Incarnation. In the Incarnation we have Jesus: body, blood, soul and divinity. How we can truly speak of the real ‘body’ of Christ in this ‘Eucharistic’ presence is hard to tell if it is only a spiritual presence.

And how can a union with God through the Eucharist be seen as a fully human union, when there is no real material union with the body of Christ? With such a view it would seem that the fact that we are matter-energy is not fundamental to the meaning of the Eucharist. The Eucharist surely has a fundamental place in the plan of God for man. If accidental matter, in its own fundamental, existential reality, is just a sign but not the reality of Christ, then one can question the real meaning of the matter of man in his fulfillment. Are we just fallen angels, with the real nature and vocation of Man applying only to his spiritual soul?

Overview of Holloway’s Approach

There is a need for a development in the teaching of Eucharistic doctrine. As has been discussed in these pages before, in the Greco-scholastic definition of substance there is a lack of the sense of the essential place of matter-energy relationships. Fr Holloway attempts to provide this and so offers a development in the explanation of the doctrine of transubstantiation. This vision manages to avoid naïve realism as well as, doing justice to the realistic understanding of the Eucharist given to us in the scriptures and the magisterium.

As Aquinas brought out, for our union with God to be fully human, we must receive his body to eat, and his blood to drink. It is the vocation of the flesh of Jesus to be food for our souls. He really is the Bread of Life for human beings on earth. The matter-energy of the Eucharist truly becomes one in existential identity with Christ’s incarnate body.

Holloway’s seminal development in this area is in Chapter 19 of his book *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*. There is no space to develop that here, fortunately for this writer. We would refer to our September 2006 editorial for aspects of the realignment we offer of scholastic hylomorphism (see faith.org.uk).

Suffice to say here that for Holloway the identity of any physical entity is intimately linked to its environmental relationships, and what it does for and receives from that environment. This is all controlled and directed by the Mind of God. When the Divine Mind uttered “Let there be light” He created and organised matter-energy relationships. When He says “This is My Body” He develops upon this in a completely harmonious manner

The Holy Eucharist as our food of life does something radically greater and different than what bread does. It feeds and ‘environs’ our whole personalities in a manner that works for us, in a very human, very physical manner, in a manner of which the mother giving of her body to her baby in the form of milk is an analogy. This Gift is to be one with the very nature of the flesh of Christ from the Annunciation up to its glorified fulfillment in heaven. For the Word was made flesh that we might be ‘enviored’ by God and divinised. His body’s low

level properties appear like bread, our basic foodstuff, which is how they should appear in order, under the wondrous plan of God, to be what they *actually* are, the properties of Christ the Bread of Life, as He intimately, sacramentally, ministers across the ages.¹⁸

As Holloway says:

“When...Christ says ‘This is Me’ then the matter concerned is conjoined to the organic unity of the body of Christ, vivified by the same human soul, in the unity of the Person of God the Son. It is now Him, and we mean no qualification whatever of that literalness.”¹⁹

Fr. Holloway summarises what we have tried to outline thus:

“It is fair to ask – did the Apostles around the table of the Last Supper, when they heard the Master say, ‘this is my Body’, and ‘this is the chalice of my Blood’ think that what they saw were the accidents of bread and wine, held by miraculous power in metaphysical real existence, and upheld by the underlying substance of the Body and Blood of the Lord? Did they not think rather that in all simplicity, they saw what the Master named and promised – Himself, in all that they saw and touched and took? This is not a capricious point, for the development of the notion of a doctrine of Faith should not belie the first simple apprehension of its generalised meaning before development of the content of the doctrine. We are called to look back at the Last Supper, and acknowledge the true faith of the apostles, and thus keep our understanding of the Eucharist in relation to it.”²⁰

Notes

¹ *Christ’s Presence in the Eucharist*, Spring McGinley Lecture, Forham University, March 2005, p.46- published by adoremus.org

² The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, The Gospel of John, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2001. P.31.

³ Council of Trent, Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist, 4. DS 1642.

⁴ Jose A. Sayes, The Eucharist in the Council of Trent, L’Osservatore Romano, 23rd February 2005, p.5.

⁵ Council of Trent, Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist, 3, DS 1641.

⁶ Joseph M. de Torre, Christian Philosophy, 1981, Vera-Reyes, Inc(Philippines) p.86.

⁷ Ronald Knox, God and the Atom, Sheed and Ward, USA, 1945, p.35/6.

⁸ Edward Holloway, Perspectives in Philosophy, Faith Keyway Trust, Vol 1, 48.

⁹ St Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, III, 77, 1.

¹⁰ STh III, 77, 1.

¹¹ STh III, 76,4.

¹² S Th III, q.77, art 6.

¹³ S Th III q.75 art 6. Reply to Objection 2. Also see “From bread and wine to flesh and blood”, by Roy Abraham Varghese. Homiletic & Pastoral Review, Feb 2007.

¹⁴ STh III, 75, 5.

¹⁵ L’Osservatore Romano, 6th April, 2005. p. 2.

¹⁶ Raniero Cantalamessa, “This is My Body”, Pauline Books & Media, MA, U.S.A., 2005, p.58.

¹⁷ Ibid: p. 59.

¹⁸ Somewhat more speculatively one might add to this vision the fact that its physical properties also include the symbolic and ecclesial context in which the bread becomes the Body of Christ – which elevations, associated words and rites are imposed upon the matter-energy species by Christ in the Church, with Whom it is now in organic unity. Bread has not had the words of Christ “This is my Body”, uttered by Christ over it through His minister in whose hands the Sacred Host is held. Even its physical relationships are then changed by being in and under an ecclesial intentionality and within a Tradition that goes back to the Word made flesh in Palestine.

¹⁹ Edward Holloway, Catholicism: A New Synthesis, Faith Keyway 1976, 331.

²⁰ Ibid, 342.

Beyond Historical-Criticism – Pope Benedict XVI and the Reform of Biblical Exegesis *by Marcus Holden*

Fr Holden, assistant priest in St Augustine's, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, and co-author of the popular *Evangelium* catechetical resource brings out the traditional context in which Pope Benedict is trying to place modern scriptural exegesis, and the great enriching for all this could involve.

The Historical-Critical method of biblical exegesis has dominated scripture study for more than a hundred years. Despite the uneasiness of many theologians, and especially the faithful, about the way this method has been conducted, few have dared to challenge its presuppositions, implications and exclusivity. One figure who has consistently called for a re-evaluation, purification and augmentation of the prevalent method of biblical exegesis is Joseph Ratzinger. Now as Pope Benedict XVI his contribution in this crucial area of theology will be all the more influential.

In his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, Joseph Ratzinger calls us to move beyond mere historical-criticism to a more profoundly theological reading of Scripture.¹ He acknowledges that a truly historical approach is necessary, but while it only deals with the isolated past as past it “does not exhaust the interpretive task for someone who sees the biblical writings as a single corpus of Holy Scripture inspired by God”.² In expressing this point Ratzinger subtly shifts the debate away from an assessment of what the historical-critical method has achieved or not to a new openness for something which goes much further than historical-criticism itself.

Critical historical exegesis during the past hundred years has undoubtedly aided unprecedented advancements in our biblical knowledge: in the better understanding of literary genres, source history and textual composition; in etymology and archaeology; in the penetration of ancient languages and cultural settings. Nevertheless, at no other time has there been such a crisis in relating our faith to the findings of modern research. This problem is felt most acutely in relation to the person of Jesus Christ himself. Many scholars have separated the ‘Jesus of history’ from the ‘Christ of faith’ and in doing so have severed theology and doctrine from reason and reality. The potential fall-out from this trend is worrying: “Intimate friendship with Jesus, on which everything depends, is in danger of clutching at thin air”.³

Against the background of scepticism it is not surprising that the perennial Christian method of discovering theological truth and spiritual meaning in the Scriptures was virtually eclipsed in the second half of the 20th century. Ratzinger comments that the great synthesis found in the traditional Christian interpretation, “would become problematic when historical consciousness developed rules of interpretation that made Patristic exegesis appear non-historical and so objectively indefensible”.⁴

Reflecting upon this peculiar impasse, Joseph Ratzinger has noted that the crisis in biblical understanding feeds off and fuels a broader predicament in theological hermeneutics. Almost twenty years ago Joseph Ratzinger observed:

Modern exegesis, as we have seen, completely relegated God to the incomprehensible, the otherworldly, and the inexpressible in order to be able to treat the biblical text itself as an entirely worldly reality according to natural-scientific methods.⁵

The secularisation of exegesis stems from a more general anti-supernatural rationalism that has been present and growing since the “Enlightenment”. If one denies the reality of God and his active guidance of creation, then it follows that one will deny the concept of an inspired Scripture that gives us objective divine revelation and the key to understanding history. A theological and supernatural view of exegesis is then automatically dismissed, thought unworthy of serious scholarship, or easily reduced to a footnote in the history of ideas.

The issue at stake, which Ratzinger has picked up on, is not one of defending or attacking biblical historicity but rather a more fundamental one. What the rationalist, with his particular philosophy, could not accept was the claim inherent in traditional Christian exegesis that there is a privileged knowledge about the meaning of history that comes from the transcendent God himself. The properly theological and revelatory sense of Scripture, which was always an essential part of traditional exegesis, could never be considered as “religion within the confines of pure reason” and was therefore unacceptable.

When historical criticism, whose “specific object is the human word as human”,⁶ is used by a rationalist scholar as the exclusive approach to Scripture, then faith is necessarily banished out of exegesis. Furthermore, when dogmatic belief in a unified corpus of Scripture is excluded any connection between the Old and New Testaments is rendered utterly tenuous. As Ratzinger has noted:

The triumph of historical-critical exegesis seemed to sound the death knell for the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament initiated by the New Testament itself. It is not a question here of historical details, as we have seen, it is the very foundations of Christianity that are being questioned.⁷

Even the greatest aids in discovering the surface meaning of an isolated text of Scripture are of little use if the meaning and implications of that literal passage can be neither contextualised within the whole biblical corpus nor allowed to be mined for revealed theological truth. Historical-criticism always deals with Scripture as a series of fragmented works from different periods and by definition remains at the basic level of human hypothesis. If this becomes the exclusive endeavour of the biblical scholar then theology has been excluded categorically and has been replaced by an essentially secular philosophy and world view.

“Many scholars have separated the ‘Jesus of history’ from the ‘Christ of faith’ and in doing so have severed theology and doctrine from reason and reality.”

The Ratzinger Solution

Joseph Ratzinger has indicated two clear ways by which we can help foster a solution to the exegetical crisis.

1. Refocusing Through Faith and Reason

The first is to purify the historical-critical method itself. The purification of the historical-critical method can take place by off-loading the philosophical baggage that has weighed it down in suspicion of faith. There is no reason why we cannot conduct perfectly rigorous and impartial historical research on the history of ancient peoples and texts while believing at the same time in God, providence and divine inspiration. In *Jesus of Nazareth*, Ratzinger cuts through so much of the paper thin scepticism of the critics both with cogent arguments and above all with that devastatingly simple alternative open to every enquirer, “I trust the gospels”.⁸ By this masterful stroke the philosophically loaded hermeneutic of suspicion is replaced by a hermeneutic of faith.

Joseph Ratzinger has often called theologians and exegetes to be wary of implicit philosophical presuppositions that carry an innate bias against faith and the supernatural dimension of revelation. He has stated very clearly that, “at its core, the debate about modern exegesis is not a dispute among historians: it is rather a philosophical debate”.⁹ In practice he calls us to reverse the hermeneutic of suspicion from Holy Scripture back upon the exegetes themselves. In his work *Behold the Pierced One* he states the thesis:

“The historical-critical method and other modern scientific methods are important for an understanding of Holy Scripture and Tradition. Their value, however, depends on the hermeneutical (philosophical) context in which they are applied.”

Reservations regarding minimalist pre-suppositions need not be seen as an attack on the historical-critical method itself. What is being called for here is that the critics practice a little more self-criticism and self-limitation with a greater hermeneutical honesty and philosophical awareness.¹⁰

A purified historical critical method can, according to Ratzinger, be open to and work with a truly theological understanding of Scripture. This openness is akin to the receptivity of reason before faith. From the merely human standpoint, “the individual writings (*Schrifte*) of the Bible point somehow to the living process that shapes the one Scripture (*Schrift*)”.¹¹ We begin to see, even without theological faith, the marvellous inter-connectedness of these documents and the events described therein.¹² When faith begins to see that inter-connectedness as coming from Christ and as supernaturally founded then we enter into the realm of theology proper. “But this act of faith is based upon reason – historical reason – and so makes it possible to see the internal unity of Scripture”.¹³

Throughout the work, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict gives us a practical exegetical example of a purified historical approach to Scripture. He reads the sacred text with faith and reverence, with a motive of seeking the true “face of Christ”,

in the context of the Church’s divinely guaranteed doctrine, while at the same time employing to the full modern historical tools for understanding the original context, languages and construction of the biblical text. Just as the scribe of the Kingdom, as put before us by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, Ratzinger brings out of his treasures, “things both new and old” (Mt 13:52). In a recent audience Pope Benedict said:

“We must never forget that the Word of God transcends time. Human opinions come and go. What is very modern today will be very antiquated tomorrow. On the other hand, the Word of God is the Word of eternal life, it bears within it eternity and is valid for ever. By carrying the Word of God within us, we therefore carry within us eternity, eternal life”.¹⁴

2. A Return to the Spiritual Sense of Scripture

Against a background of new theological openness Joseph Ratzinger offers a second way towards solving our exegetical crisis, namely, to revive a truly theological exegesis as exhibited by the Fathers of the Church. In his important preface to the Pontifical Biblical Commission’s 1993 document *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, he praises “new attempts to recover patristic exegesis and to include renewed forms of a spiritual interpretation of Scripture”.¹⁵ One need only survey his many theological writings to see just how steeped he is in Patristic theology. He himself has described very explicitly his love of the Fathers of the Church and the theological influence they have had upon him. For a renewal of exegesis he speaks of the need “to introduce into the discussion the great proposals of patristic and medieval thought”.¹⁶ In his work *Jesus of Nazareth* and in his unprecedented audience addresses on the Fathers of the Church he has been putting this ideal into practice.

Almost all the Fathers of the Church, to a greater or lesser extent, employed in their writings a particular method of scriptural exegesis which they believed to have been established by the Lord Jesus himself and passed down through the Apostles.¹⁷ This method uncovers a “mystical meaning” of the Scriptures founded on God’s perfect plan for the history and salvation of the world. This “mystical meaning” came to be called the *spiritual sense of Scripture*. It was practiced in homilies, commentaries, theological tomes and in the teaching of catechumens. This exegetical method was bequeathed to later centuries as the common inheritance of East and West and was at the heart of theology throughout the medieval period.

The spiritual sense pertains to the Christological significance of the persons, objects, events, images and symbols referred to by the human authors of the bible. These significations are not extrinsically or retrospectively applied but rather God himself has established them in his far reaching providence. Words signify things, but when God inspires, the things signified by the words, also signify other important eternal and invisible things. St. Thomas Aquinas writes, “In the other

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continued

sciences handed down by men, in which only words can be employed to signify, the words alone signify. But it is peculiar to Scripture that words and the very things signified by them signify something".¹⁸ The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which was compiled under Ratzinger's supervision, states, "Thanks to the unity of God's plan, not only the text of Scripture, but also the realities and events about which it speaks can be signs".¹⁹ This depth of meaning manifests the uniqueness of the Bible, no other book could have this kind of second order signification.

During a general audience in April 2007, Pope Benedict, when speaking of the theological contribution of the third century writer Origen, once again emphasised that while the literal sense is indispensable it opens itself to something more. He wrote:

"The purification of the historical-critical method can take place by off-loading its philosophical baggage."

"But this sense transcends us, moving us towards God in the light of the Holy Spirit, and shows us the way, shows us how to live. Mention of it is found, for example, in the ninth Homily on Numbers, where Origen likens Scripture to [fresh] walnuts: "The doctrine of the Law and the Prophets at the school of Christ is like this", the homilist says; "the letter is bitter, like the [green-covered] skin; secondly, you will come to the shell, which is the moral doctrine; thirdly, you will discover the meaning of the mysteries, with which the souls of the saints are nourished in the present life and the future" (Hom. Num. 9, 7)".²⁰

In inspiring the letter of Scripture, God was also revealing in types and figures the full meaning of history and salvation in Jesus Christ. The signifying things that God has chosen are attuned to reinforce truths and refute falsehoods.²¹ Furthermore, they are objects for contemplation by which God elucidates the many facets of the mysteries of faith. The significations of the spiritual sense regard matters pertaining to revealed faith, morality and glorification (and therefore fall into three distinct categories: allegory; tropology; anagogy).²²

When the literal sense is put alongside the three spiritual senses we speak of the *Quadriga*. Perhaps the best-known summary of this comes from Augustine of Hippo as quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "The Letter speaks of deeds; Allegory to faith; The Moral how to act; Anagogy our destiny".²³ A good and classic example of the different senses relating to the scriptural reference "Jerusalem" in Psalm 137 is taken from St. John Cassian:

These four previously mentioned figures coalesce, if we desire, in one subject, so that the one and the same Jerusalem can be taken in four senses: historically as the city of the Jews; allegorically as the Church of Christ; anagogically as the heavenly city of God, which is the mother of us all; tropologically, as the soul of man, which is frequently subject to praise or blame from the Lord under this title.²⁴

God himself, the Lord of history, can alone guarantee this unique form of signification. Through his special providence and inspiration God ensures that the two great Testaments have a particular relationship to Christ's coming and saving action. In fact, God has ensured that the Scriptures are radically focused as one on Christ. In *Jesus of Nazareth* we read that "all the currents of Scripture come together in him, that he is the focal point in terms of which the overall coherence of Scripture comes to light – everything is waiting for him, everything is moving towards him".²⁵ If these foundational principles are rejected *a priori*, as has happened in post-Enlightenment exegesis, then clearly the spiritual understanding remains closed.

Discovery of the spiritual sense of Scripture is theological exegesis *par excellence*. It opens up to us vast tomes of neglected Patristic and Medieval writings and gives a new appreciation of why we possess such a lavish gift as an inspired Scripture. The method comes from the New Testament itself and is not an invention of later theology. Ratzinger writes, "The Fathers of the Church created nothing new when they gave a Christological interpretation to the Old Testament; they only systematised what they themselves had already discovered in the New Testament".²⁶ While the New Testament itself, particularly through St. Paul, gave the formal unity and common foundation of the spiritual sense, it is to the great elaborators and practitioners of the method to which a biblical theologian must turn for more specific guidance. Origen, St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great, St. Bede, amongst many others, must therefore play the primary roles in any investigation but always viewed within the context of the entire Catholic theological Tradition.²⁷ This return to the sources is an integral part of Joseph Ratzinger's vision of a wide-ranging hermeneutic of continuity.

Conclusion

If Pope Benedict XVI is right then the way forward for modern exegesis is in upholding history and authentic historical investigation while at the same time perceiving the theological import of that same history revealed through the providence of God. In other words, Catholic exegetes and theologians need to pursue both the precise literal sense of Scripture as well as the three spiritual senses. The Holy Father made this point very explicitly in his discourse to the Swiss Bishops in 2006:

"I would very much like to see theologians learn to interpret and love Scripture as the Council desired, in accordance with *Dei Verbum*: may they experience the inner unity of Scripture – something that today is helped by 'canonical exegesis' (still to be found, of course, in its timid first stages) – and then make a spiritual interpretation of it that is not externally edifying but rather an inner immersion into the presence of the Word. It seems to me a very important task to do something in this regard, to contribute to providing an introduction to living Scripture as an up-to-date Word of God, beside, with and in historical-critical exegesis".²⁸

“Intimate friendship with Jesus, on which everything depends, is in danger of clutching at thin air.”

At the recent XII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome the themes of good exegetical practice so close to the Holy Father’s heart were enunciated. In the preface to the preparatory document *Instrumentum Laboris* we hear an explicit call for a “dual, complementary approach to the Word of God”²⁹ which includes both critical engagement with the text and a truly Christological exegesis. The task for the biblical theologian therefore is to move “from the letter to the spirit and from the words to the Word of God”.

It appears that the hard work and profound insights of the theologian Joseph Ratzinger are becoming, through the providence of God, the platform for the reform and renewal

of the Church’s whole theological mission beyond the era of hermeneutical scepticism.³⁰

“The reflection process was guided by the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, the Universal Pastor of the Church, who has often made reference to the topic of the synod in his discourses. In doing so, he, together with others, has voiced his desire that by rediscovering the Word of God, which is always timely and never out-of-date, the Church might rejuvenate herself and experience a new springtime. She will then be able to undertake with renewed vigour her mission of evangelisation and human promotion in today’s world, which thirsts for God and his words of faith, hope and charity.”³¹

Notes

¹Ratzinger, J. *Jesus of Nazareth*, xxiii, ‘I have merely tried to go beyond purely historical-critical exegesis so as to apply new methodological insights that allow us to offer a properly theological interpretation of the Bible’. Doubleday 2007.

²Ratzinger, J. *Jesus of Nazareth*, xvi. Doubleday 2007.

³Ratzinger, J. *Jesus of Nazareth*, xii. Doubleday 2007.

⁴Ratzinger, Car. J. Ratzinger, Card. J. Preface of 2002 Pontifical Biblical Commission Document *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

⁵Ratzinger, J. On the Question of the Foundations and Approaches of Exegesis Today, in *Biblical Interpretation in Crisis: The Ratzinger Conference on the Bible and the Church*, ed. Neuhaus, R, J. Eerdmans 1989. p17. He calls the historical method to a humble self-limitation, by which it can mark out its own proper space.

⁶Ratzinger, J. *Jesus of Nazareth*, xvii, Doubleday 2007.

⁷Ratzinger, J. Preface of 2002 Pontifical Biblical Commission Document *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, p9-10.

⁸Ratzinger, J. *Jesus of Nazareth*, xxi, Doubleday 2007.

⁹Ratzinger, J. *On the Question of the Foundations and Approaches of Exegesis Today, in Biblical Interpretation in Crisis: The Ratzinger Conference on the Bible and the Church*, ed. Neuhaus, R, J. Eerdmans 1989. p16.

¹⁰Cardinal Henri de Lubac a great colleague and ally of Joseph Ratzinger in the turbulent period after the Second Vatican Council, made a very similar comment about modern biblical critics: “they are primarily specialists, and their function has become very necessary and very important during the last few centuries. They must realise (and this realisation is something they have occasionally lacked) that their very specialisation imposes limitations on them; that their ‘science’ thus cannot be the whole of scriptural science; but they are not required, in their role as scientific exegetes, to give us the whole of scriptural science; and they should not even aspire to do so” (*Scripture in the Tradition*, Herder & Herder, ed 2000 (French edition 1967), p58 footnote 9).

¹¹Ratzinger, J. *Jesus of Nazareth*, xviii, Doubleday 2007.

¹²Ratzinger sees that ‘Canonical exegesis’, developed amongst other by the protestant scholar Brevard Childs, which reads ‘the individual texts of the Bible in the context of the whole’ (*Jesus of Nazareth* xix) as a step towards a truly theological approach.

¹³Ratzinger, J. *Jesus of Nazareth*, xix, Doubleday 2007.

¹⁴Pope Benedict XVI, Papal Audience on St Jerome, 7th November 2007.

¹⁵Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, IIIb, 2.

¹⁶*Biblical Interpretation in Crisis: The Ratzinger Conference on the Bible and the Church*, ed. Neuhaus, R, J. Eerdmans 1989, 1-23.

¹⁷According to Origen, the fact that the spiritual meaning of Scripture goes beyond the obvious (literal) meaning is a unanimous part of the Apostolic Rule of faith, *de Principiis*, I, 8. And St Augustine says, “This form of understanding that comes to us from the Apostles”, *City of God*, XV, c. 2 (commenting on Gal 4:24).

¹⁸St Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Galatians*, lecture 7. From the *Summa Theologiae* we read “The author of Sacred Scripture is God, in whose power it is to signify his meaning, not by words only (as man also can do), but also by things in themselves” I, 1, 10. He also writes in the same place, quoting from St. Gregory the Great, that Sacred Scripture “by the manner of its speech transcends every science, because in one and the same sentence, while it describes a fact, it reveals a mystery.

¹⁹*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 117.

²⁰Pope Benedict XVI, Papal Audience on Origen, 25th April 2007.

²¹As John Henry Newman famously wrote: “It may be almost laid down as an historical fact that the mystical interpretation and orthodoxy will stand or fall together” (John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, ch 7, section 4, no5).

²²*The Catechism of the Catholic Church* provides a magisterial endorsement for this call: “According to an ancient tradition, one can distinguish between two senses of Scripture: the literal and the spiritual, the latter being subdivided into the allegorical, moral, and anagogical senses. The profound concordance of the four senses guarantees all its richness to the living reading of Scripture in the Church” (par. 115). The Catechism also states that it is the task of exegetes to work according to these rules (par.119).

²³*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 118.

²⁴St. John Cassian, *Spiritual Conferences*, 14, VIII.

²⁵Ratzinger, J. *Jesus of Nazareth*, p246, Doubleday 2007.

²⁶Joseph Ratzinger in his preface to the 2002 Pontifical Biblical Commission Document *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*.

²⁷St Thomas as the common doctor of the whole Church is implied here. The importance of Thomas’ clear and careful balance of the literal and the spiritual senses is as important as ever given the two dangerous tendencies that dominate the field, namely faithless criticism and spiritual fancy. His great achievement, contrary to the tendencies of his time, in marrying knowledge through faith with knowledge gained by reason, is mirrored in his understanding of Scripture’s letter and spirit. His balance on this matter of an integral exegesis is so important while we are faced with both a rationalism and a post-modern spiritualism which both denude the true meaning of Scripture.

²⁸Benedict XVI, *Discourse to the Bishops of Switzerland* (7 November 2006), in L’Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English, 22 November 2006, pp. 5, 10.

²⁹*Instrumentum Laboris*, Preface, XII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, October 2008.

³⁰*Instrumentum Laboris*, Preface, XII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, October 2008.

³¹*Instrumentum Laboris*, Preface, XII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, October 2008.



The Truth Will Set You Free

Fr David Barrett, doctoral student at the
Gregorian University, Rome

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF A NEW CATECHESIS

I first came across the *Faith* movement through some fellow students when I was studying for the priesthood at the English College in Rome. I had entered the seminary in 1986 at the age of 18. Whilst I remain convinced that I was responding to God's call I think I was fairly naïve. I was aware of a crisis of teaching in the Church which seemed to me was sapping the spiritual lives of the people in the pews. My first year, however, was marked by my own lack of spiritual commitment and I found many distractions from following Christ. Then in the beginning of my second year I experienced something that changed me. It happened oddly one morning when I was waking from a dream-filled sleep. God in his goodness, intervened in my life to change my heart, make me aware of what I had done wrong in my life and let me see that I needed to turn to Him through a real spiritual life. This moment was a turning point and made me look at life more spiritually. It made me more aware of the kind of people who might help me come closer to God. It reduced the strength of suspicions and difficulties I had concerning the approach of friends who had been deeply influenced by the *Faith* Movement. I think that true doctrine, when it is married to a genuine search for holiness, can often be a threat to us.

Central to the *Faith* Movement is the perception that the modern scientific world view has deeply affected our culture. Any new evangelisation needs to take account of this. Rejection of scientific discoveries is seen as inadequate. Modern technology is evidence of the fruitfulness and truth of the basic discoveries and theories of modern science. Moreover the Church has always believed in the power of reason to reach the truth. There is this need to show, for example, how evolution is not contrary to revelation but in fact part of God's supreme wisdom and plan for the universe, culminating in the coming of Jesus Christ. As St Paul says, "All things were created through and for Him... and in Him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:16,17). God had set forth in Christ a plan to recapitulate all things in Christ, a plan for the fullness of time (cf. Ephesians 1:9-10).

More and more scientists, in fact, have found that the discoveries concerning the origins of the universe and of life point us more conclusively towards the existence of a Creator. The cosmos is an ordered whole across time and space. This can be accurately expressed by a mathematical equation and equations are not random but the consequence of mind.

Furthermore if Christ is the culmination, the crowning point of God's plan for the universe, it means that the universe is incomplete without Him. This means that no branch of knowledge and no person can be complete without Jesus. Jesus is the master key that unlocks the meaning of the universe and of every human person's life. God made man

is essential to man. After all St Paul taught, "in Him (God) we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17.28). The Church and the Sacraments are also indispensable for human beings. As the new Catechism says "Creation was made for the Church" (para. 760). Holiness thus becomes the fruit of living united to God and we can only do this through Christ in his Church.

Such a vision as it becomes clear is thrilling. It fits in so deeply with the Faith of the Church, takes in the beautiful teaching of the Fathers from early Christianity, and also tries to make sense of modern science, in much the same way as St Thomas Aquinas attempted to do in the thirteenth century. Initially, however I found this quite difficult to accept, as I had been steeped in an approach to philosophy and theology that admitted only the supremacy of the mind of St Thomas Aquinas. The *Faith* Movement's approach seemed to diverge from this in some ways. It incorporated a more relational view of nature and of knowing.

In the end, after many arguments and discussions, I eventually met the founder of the *Faith* movement, Fr Edward Holloway. I found him an unsettling man. Holy people often are. He could be brutally honest in a sweet and loving way. He had an encyclopaedic mind but also an awareness that only God possesses the fullness of wisdom and we are the servants of that wisdom. We are not masters of the Word but its ministers. All we need to do is open our hearts and minds to see how He has revealed Himself through His masterpiece of creation and most of all through the Incarnation of His Son. All would reveal the beauty and deep joy of His plan.

Fr Holloway often said that he found the whole faith vision "deeply thrilling". You could see it in his eyes and face. He taught that the presence of God could be a lived experience and often when you looked at him it seemed to be the case. It was extraordinary to see such a great and fine mind in such calm and simple communion with God.

It was Fr Holloway who convinced me, not just by his words but by his personal witness. He showed me that such a vision is not just a matter of ideas but it affects everything, including one's prayer. Good doctrine is meant to join us more fully to God. Through it I believe that God has led me a long way though I know this is only a part of my journey.

After having become involved in the movement I discovered that the insights at the heart of the vision were written down by Fr Holloway's mother, Agnes, in the 1930's. This was following what she claimed to have been some private revelations. She died in 1991 and Fr Holloway himself in 1997. But their teaching and insights continue to be spread. *Faith* conferences then became a singular source of encouragement to me as I went through seminary and as I have lived my priesthood in parishes. Many vocations have emerged from this work, not just to the priesthood and the religious life, but also to the married state and the single life. To see it all bear fruit in the minds, hearts and lives of our people in our parishes is truly "thrilling". Perhaps that was the work for which God had been preparing me all along.



The Road From Regensburg

Papal Encouraged Dialogue Beyond Catholicism in Search of a Modern Apologetic

God and Man: Muslims' Priorities Bear Fruit

The Catholic-Muslim Forum, which grew out of the 138 Muslim scholars' open letter, *A Common Word*, issued on the first anniversary of the Regensburg lecture, had its initial meeting in early November in Rome. The two main agenda items were love of God, the theme desired by the 2007 *Common Word* initiative, and the dignity and rights of the human person, the theme preferred by Cardinal Tauran and prominent Catholic commentators.

The Forum's final communiqué contains an Islamic reflection on God's love for us, which interestingly is backed up by a Hadith saying of the Prophet, rather than the Koran itself. It is strikingly close to the Christian emphasis upon the overflowing love of God: "So immense is this love and compassion that God has intervened to guide and save humanity in a perfect way many times and in many places, by sending prophets and scriptures."

Pope Benedict's speech at the end of the meeting brings out how Christianity suggests a more perfect ultimate fulfilment of such divine generosity: "The Christian tradition proclaims that God is Love (cf. *1 Jn* 4:16). It was out of love that he created the whole universe, and by his love he becomes present in human history. The love of God became visible, manifested fully and definitively in Jesus Christ."

The Pope goes on to enlarge upon this "foundational" truth: "This infinite and eternal love enables us to respond by giving all our love in return: love for God and love for neighbour. This truth, which we consider foundational, was what I wished to emphasise in my first Encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*."

It is in this context that he mentions the second half of the Forum's agenda: "Only by starting with the recognition of the centrality of the person and the dignity of each human being [...] can we find a common ground for building a more fraternal world, a world in which [...] the devastating power of ideologies is neutralised."

Significantly the Forum's communiqué affirms: "the right of individuals and communities to practice their religion in private and public."

On his website Sandro Magister (www.chiesa) expresses regret that (even) more progress was not made, specifically concerning emphasising the right to convert. Such disappointment has, it seems, led to the proposed foundation of an alternative inter-faith forum set up by the retired archbishop of Algiers Henri Teissier and the prominent Algerian Islamic professor Mustafa Cheriq.

Christian View of Man and Saving Europe

A letter of Pope Benedict to the atheistic, Popperian philosopher and *Forza Italia* Senator Marcello Pena, has been published as the preface to the latter's new book *Why we must call ourselves Christians*. The two co-authored the 2005 book *Without Roots, Europe, Relativism, Christianity, Islam*.

The Pope's letter commended Pena's new book for its "brilliant" and "cogent" explanation of how "the essence of liberalism flows from its roots in the Christian image of God [...] of which Man is an image and from which we have received the gift of freedom." Pope Benedict said this is of "fundamental importance" in enabling Europe to "find its identity" and acknowledge its "Christian-liberal foundation."

In this context he praised Pena's emphasis upon dialogue between those of different religions which necessarily "places one's own faith in parenthesis" and discusses the "cultural consequences of foundational religious decisions."

In September 2007 Pena enlarged on these themes at the International Economic Forum in Poland. He pointed out that the secularist "*recognition* of human rights" is self-consciously founded upon a "belief in" human dignity (cf. UN Declaration of Human Rights sixty years ago). This, he said, is in fact a quasi-religious belief system which comes from Judaeo-Christianity. Dominant European secularism is in denial on this point. It calls its belief system humanism. It permits personal religious expression but contradictorily and dogmatically forbids religious "influence" in the public and political square. The drive for social and economic unity Europe has thus failed because while it "fills the human wallet it fails to fill the human spirit".

Last March Pena opened a Rome conference on freedom and Europe with the words: "Europe wants to avoid a war of civilisations and of religions. Its actions are having the opposite effect because [...] its lack of identity [and relativism] transforms Europe into terrain for conquest [...] by a] terrorism and fundamentalism [which] attack the core values of our civilisation." This, he suggests, is dangerously similar to modern democracies' 1938 appeasement of Hitler.

Man's Religious Nature and Forming Civil Society

Thomas Farr, a Georgetown Professor of Religion and International Affairs, in an adaptation of and an article in *Foreign Affairs*, has argued in *First Things* that the fostering of democratic societies in Islamic lands must be linked with encouraging Islamic communities themselves to understand the value of religious freedom.

He says "The *absence* of religious liberty can yield democracy-killing religious conflict, religious persecution, and religious extremism. The *presence* of religious freedom is highly correlated with political, social and economic good."

A foreign policy which takes this into account must involve, he argues, "adopting an overarching principle: religion is normative, not epiphenomenal, in human affairs. [...] something that drives the behaviour of people and governments in important ways. [...] Ordered liberty demands realism about human nature."

This was at the heart of the founding principles of the USA, he argues. But it is sadly absent in modern US attempts to foster democracy in Islamic States, which look more like secular wishful thinking and risk reaping more of the whirlwind of 9/11.

Acknowledging Regensburg

In a *Guardian* article on November 3rd the prominent Islamic scholar Tariq Ramadan wrote concerning the "debate between faith and reason, and over the virtues of rationalism": "The Pope's remarks at Regensburg have opened up new areas of inquiry that must be explored and exploited in a positive way, with a view to building bridges and, working hand in hand, to seeking a common response to the social, cultural and economic challenges of our day."



Letters to the Editor

The Editor, St. Mary Magdalen's Clergy House, Peter Avenue,
Willesden Green, London NW10 2DD editor@faith.org.uk

EVANGELISING SCIENTIFIC CULTURE

Dear Father Editor

Professor Laurenzi argues persuasively that the US education system ensures that, as a rule, the scientifically trained are not formed for faith and that the religiously literate are not strong on science. (Letters, November 08). It seems we are in for the long-haul as regards re-evangelising a technological culture. In the meantime let us pray for the conversion of scientists to faith, but especially of articulate Christians who “miss the import of science” (article, July '08) to getting it.

Yours faithfully
Andrew Levander
Hinton Rd
Littledown
Bournemouth

EDITORIAL COMMENT: See a papal contribution on page 32 of this issue.

MAGISTERIUM AND SCIENCE: WHICH COMES FIRST?

Dear Father Editor

I would like to draw your attention to an article in *L'Osservatore Romano* for 24th September.

The article is called: ‘Scientism’ and the search for life’s origin and purpose.’ It includes this passage: ‘The possibility that the Creator also makes use of the instrument of evolution is one that the Catholic faith can countenance.’

I wanted to bring this article to your attention, because (as I am sure you realise) for some of your readers mention of ‘evolution’ is like a red rag to a bull. Indeed, if I remember rightly, I have crossed swords myself in your Letters column, with someone who thought of evolution as heresy!

Anyhow, I cannot end without saying how valuable *Faith* is.

Yours faithfully
Fr. Aldhelm Cameron-Brown OSB
Prinknash Abbey
Gloucestershire

Dear Father Editor

If a man challenges another man’s belief that the Universe was made four billion years ago by providing evidence of a young Universe, the second man is not going to rebut that view by merely uttering the truism that science and religion are not incompatible.

Yet this is the method that tends to be adopted when attempting to answer similar objections from some of your correspondents (November '08). Neither does a proposition become true merely by re-asserting it. That form of circular reasoning is known as “begging the question”.

None of your correspondents has claimed that faith and science (or reason) are incompatible. That is common ground and not under challenge.

What *is* under challenge is the view of *some* people as to what constitutes real Faith and real science – a rather different thing. Circular re-assertion of an unchallenged view means either failing to understand the objection made or else arrogating to oneself an inability to err, both of which positions are untenable.

Neither does one improve the argument by setting up and knocking down straw men as a substitute for answering the real question. An example is pointing to the more obvious errors of those who think that Evolutionism allows us to exchange Catholic belief in God for a pantheist “World-Soul”. This is a view so obviously contrary to Catholic doctrine as to be no more than a convenient distraction from the main issue.

So what is the main issue? It is this. You write, in response to various correspondents, as follows: “What we advocate in this magazine does not alter or accommodate the faith to

scientific theory, but if anything the very opposite”. This is a vital and timely objective and no good Catholic can gainsay it. However, merely asserting it does not equate to achieving it.

To teach, as some writers have, that we *must* accept the “insight” of modern Evolutionists, as true beyond reasonable doubt, that humans came into existence in various places at differing times (so-called “Polyphyletism”) is to compromise the Church’s infallible teaching that there was one first man (Adam) and one first woman (Eve) from whom we all descend. This infallible teaching is sometimes called Monogenism and is not an optional extra for any Catholic but a dogmatic truth that *must* be accepted. It is expressly taught in *Humani Generis* of Pius XII and by *Arcanum* of Pope Leo XIII, as well as by the Ordinary Infallible Magisterium since the Church began.

If this clashes with the views of some scientists then we must remind ourselves that the transitory theories of science cannot be placed on a par with the consistent, infallible and dogmatic teachings of the faith unless we wish, thereby, to deny the faith. You are quite right to teach and believe that the author and creator of the scientific Universe is the very same divine author of faith.

You rightly conclude that it is a false conclusion, then, to argue that this same faith must be made to accommodate recent scientific theories. But how else are we to characterise the view that says that the infallible teaching on Monogenism is to be departed from in order to accommodate what is no more than a recent scientific theory that there were many original men and women and not just one pair?

The only logical view – whether for a Catholic or indeed for anyone – is to admit what is patently clear, in any case, that a mere scientific theory is simply not conclusive of a purely metaphysical issue and there is simply no compulsion upon us to accept it.

“If metaphysics is incapable of reference back to the physical world, it becomes philosophical Idealism.”

Such a denial or dismissal of this particular theory or “insight” is by no means to “undermine the credibility of the Church and the message she preaches” and to suggest as much is to substitute physical scientific “insight” for dogmatic truth.

Even for those who are not theists at all, it is plainly clear that one is by no means obliged to jettison a metaphysical belief for a purely physical theory or “insight”. Now, if that is so for atheists and unbelievers then why should the same clear logical conclusion be denied to Catholics simply because they are believers?

Yet this is what we are in danger of doing if we allow the physical to overrule the metaphysical. It is even more untenable a position when the physical consists in no more than a currently fashionable theory among some Evolutionists. We should take care, then, not to fall into the very trap we are warned against, namely seeking to alter or accommodate the faith to mere scientific theory.

Yours faithfully
James Bogle
Kings Bench Walk
Temple
London
EC4Y 7EB

EDITORIAL COMMENT: Mr Bogle’s letter does raise a number of related and important issues, which, however, need to be carefully distinguished from each other.

First let us say that one of the distinctive and abiding characteristics of *Faith* Movement, clearly stated in our aims and ideals from the very beginning, is the intention to uphold and positively defend the defined teachings of the Church. The *Nihil Obstat* and *Imprimatur* have never been refused to any of our catechetical publications. This does not mean, of course, that all Catholics will be in agreement with theological opinions expressed therein. But we are confident and assiduous that we do not promote anything contrary to *de Fide* doctrine.

With regard to the specific issue of human origins, Mr Bogle rightly defines

polyphyletism as the opinion that human beings descended from various ancestors that were constituted as human “at different times and in different places”. This opinion is indeed incompatible both with the theological unity of humanity as a single family under God who all inherit the consequences of a fall from grace at the dawn of human history, and with the genetic unity of the human race which makes us a universally interfertile species. No *Faith* publication has ever advocated polyphyletism.

However, the issue of polyphyletism is not the same as the debate over poly- or monogenism.

Polygenism refers to humanity beginning with a group of genetically related individuals in one place at the same time. Monogenism is the corresponding thought that humanity takes its origins from a single primordial pair. We make no case for polygenism as such, but if there is scientific evidence to support it, we must ask whether polygenism is compatible with defined doctrine, or are Catholics bound to hold monogenism as an infallibly defined dogma?

In *Humane Generis* Pius XII did indeed speak very strongly in favour of monogenism, saying “it is in no way evident” how any other view could be reconciled with defined teaching about Original Sin. The phrase “it is in no way evident” does not amount to infallible definition. Legitimate debate about the issue has in fact been conducted and permitted in the official organs of the Church’s Magisterium over the last forty years.

For example, a 1969 edition of *L’Osservatore Romano* published an article by Roberto Masi which said:

“Revelation and Dogma say nothing directly concerning Monogenism or Polygenism, neither in favour nor against them. Besides, these scientific hypotheses are per se outside the field of Revelation. Within this context, different combinations of the scientific theory of evolution are therefore hypothetically possible or compatible with the doctrine of original sin.”

After considering various possibilities for reconciling polygenism and Original Sin, the author concluded:

“These hypotheses are only suppositions which many think are not contrary to Revelation and the bible. Even if we accept as valid the scientific theory of evolution and polygenism, it can still be in accordance with the dogma of original sin in the various manners indicated.”

This article was later been republished on the EWTN web site. More recently, several proceedings of the International Theological Commission, all endorsed by Cardinal Ratzinger have addressed the question. A document on evolution and creation from 2004 states:

“While the story of human origins is complex and subject to revision, physical anthropology and molecular biology combine to make a convincing case for the origin of the human species in Africa about 150,000 years ago in a humanoid population of common genetic lineage. However it is to be explained, the decisive factor in human origins was a continually increasing brain size, culminating in that of homo sapiens.”

This passage admits of both monogenetic and polygenetic interpretations, since it is unclear whether the “humanoid population” is to be regarded as the first humans, or the immediate ancestors of the first humans. And further:

“Catholic theology affirms that the emergence of the first members of the human species (whether as individuals or in populations) represents an event that is not susceptible of a purely natural explanation and which can appropriately be attributed to divine intervention.”

Lastly, the document mentions Adam:

“Every individual human being as well as the whole human community are created in the image of God. In its original unity – of which Adam is the symbol – the human race is made in the image of the divine Trinity.”

In a January 16, 2006 article in L'Osservatore Romano, Fiorenzo Facchini states: "The spark of intelligence was lighted in one or more hominids when, where and in the ways God willed it."

None of these opinions has attracted censure. Yet we are rightly reminded to be cautious in this area. There is so much that we do not know. If we entertain the possibility that the first true humans were a group, it would have to be small group in a closely integrated locale, otherwise it would indeed not be apparent how the Fall could be a single historical event. What Pius XII was ring-fencing in *Humanae Generis* was the Tridentine definition of Original Sin being passed on by generation not by imitation, not the existence of an individual named Adam as such. The name is symbolic in any event. And the scriptural account speaks of the disaster of sin being passed, in the first instance, among the small group that is Adam and Eve. The first act of sin was not committed by Adam but by Eve who infected him through temptation and willing complicity. The fact and effects of fallen human nature were then passed to subsequent generations by natural propagation.

We can only talk cautiously of possibilities here, on condition that they can be actually reconciled with orthodox doctrine. Mr Bogle is right to point out that assent to defined doctrine comes before all else. Where we and others of greater authority than ourselves in the Church, differ from his view lies in the assessment of exactly what is defined and what is not.

It is also true that we must be equally cautious about too rashly accommodating the latest scientific datum to specific scriptural events or doctrines. For example, it seems that there have been a series of "bottleneck events" in the history of the human genome, which could explain the close genetic solidarity among all living human beings. Such bottlenecks are created by environmental pressure and may well be the driving force for

adaptation and speciation at crucial points in our evolutionary past. One such genetic bottleneck has recently been identified which would have reduced the ancestors of humanity to a few tens of thousands.

"We can only talk cautiously of possibilities here, on condition that they can be actually reconciled with orthodox doctrine."

This is very interesting, but we cannot safely conclude that this is the event that triggered the mutation for the increased brain capacity occasioning the creation of the soul, and that therefore the first human community consisted of many thousands. That would indeed be hard to reconcile with the doctrine of Original Sin. There might have to have been a number of such mutational/environmental shifts on the path to true humanity. Which event was the decisive one that brought about true Man would be very difficult to determine. Despite the enormous and impressive progress being made in genetics, it would be as well for scientists, even Catholic scientists of orthodox intention, that we are barely out of the primary school in our understanding of human nature its origins. We may yet discover that all species actually begin with a single mating pair. Humility is a scientific as well as a theological virtue.

Finally, while we agree wholeheartedly that Revelation takes precedence over human reasoning, we cannot agree with the assertion that metaphysics can never be modified in the light of advances in physics. Metaphysics is a human science that ultimately derives from empirical experience. For Aristotle it was a second level of reflection upon the structure of reality which followed directly on from his physics. If metaphysics is incapable of reference back to the physical world, it becomes philosophical Idealism, entailing a complete separation of matter and meaning, phenomenon and noumenon, which we find alien to our Catholic vision of creation.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Dear Father Editor

It was most encouraging to see the review of Aidan Nichols's book: "The Realm: An Unfashionable Essay on the Conversion of England." (July issue). Having read the book, may I share one small success story which illustrates his theory of 'integral evangelisation'? i.e. the method of the 'intellectual, mystical and institutional'.

My department has been facilitating a new marriage preparation course on the innovative "Engage" programme from the Pastoral Matrimonial Renewal Centre, Australia. The six sessions draw upon insights from John Paul II's theology of the body. The material is brought to life by mentor couples guiding the engaged couples.

The feedback from the couples has been extremely positive and correlates with Fr. Aidan's theory on 'integral evangelisation'. His work is to be commended and not just as theory but as a refreshing basis for what can be done. For more information on "Engage" and to receive a promotional DVD contact my Department or go to www.engage.com.au

Yours faithfully

Edmund Adamus

Director, Department for Pastoral Affairs

Diocese of Westminster

Vaughan House

Francis Street

SW1P 1QN

Notes From Across the Atlantic

by Fr Richard John Neuhaus



PRESIDENT OBAMA

It has been a deep embarrassment to watch some Catholics brutally twist their minds and consciences into the service of defending their claim that faithful and staunchly anti-abortion Catholics should support a radically pro-abortion presidential candidate who says his first act in office will be to sign the Freedom of Choice Act, which would, by federal mandate, eliminate even the most minimal legal discouragements of the killing of unborn babies. Douglas Kmiec, professor of law at Pepperdine University, is the most conspicuous of such Catholics. Once we get beyond those troublesome questions about the culture of life versus the culture of death, he says, we will be able to focus on “the balance of Catholic social teaching”, which addresses questions such as poverty and world peace, all of which will presumably be secured by President Obama. “Relations between Benedict XVI and the Holy See under an Obama administration would be very, very positive,” says Kmiec. (I assume he means relations *with* the pope and the Holy See.) Asked if he might be Obama’s pick for ambassador to the Vatican, he says he would “never rule anything out”. Then there is Nicholas Cafardi, professor of law at Duquesne University. He says, “While I have never swayed in my conviction that abortion is an unspeakable evil, I believe that we have lost the abortion battle – permanently.” The time has come to resign ourselves to the fact that the unspeakable evil has

triumphed. There is no point in protesting it, never mind giving such protest political effect. It is now the permanent reality in this country that some who are unquestionably human beings may legally be killed at will. Not just some but millions. This line of reasoning astonishes. On what other great question of human rights, in this case the most fundamental right, which is the right to be protected from willful killing, does Cafardi say “the battle is over – permanently”? To what other “unspeakable evil” does he suggest we should resign ourselves? Of course he’s right that abortion, euthanasia and the destruction of embryos are not the only “intrinsic evils”. But his hope that Sen. Obama will dramatically reduce poverty and secure world peace is a prudential judgement. It may or may not be true. By way of dramatic contrast, it is beyond dispute that an abortion kills an innocent human being at an early stage of her development, and it is beyond dispute that Sen. Obama favours an unlimited license to perpetrate such killings.

If Cafardi’s is a counsel of despair and surrender in the face of unspeakable evil, Douglas Kmiec finally came around to adopting the pro-choice position while continuing to call himself pro-life. Following the McCain-Obama debate in which abortion was addressed, Kmiec wrote in the *Los Angeles Times*: “Sometimes the law must simply leave space for the exercise of individual judgement, because our religious or scientific differences of opinion are for the

moment too profound to be bridged collectively. When these differences are great and persistent, as they unfortunately have been on abortion, the common political ideal may consist only of that space. This does not, of course, leave the right to life undecided or unprotected.” It is totally baffling, however, how the right to life is to be protected if the abortion license imposed by *Roe* and *Doe* is to be kept in place, which is what Kmiec clearly seems to favour, calling abortion a “sensitive moral decision” that “depend[s] on religious freedom and the voice of God as articulated in each individual’s voluntary embrace of one of many faiths”. In short, Kmiec is the “personally opposed but . . .” position given currency by Mario Cuomo many years ago. The great debate is not over sentiment but justice, not over personal preference but public policy. Every thoughtful person has understood that the pro-life position – explicitly and consistently articulated by the Catholic Church at every level of teaching authority – is that justice requires that every unborn child be cared for and protected in law. And it has been understood that the pro-choice position is that the life or death of the unborn child is a private matter to be decided at the sole discretion of the mother – for any reason and at any point of the child’s life up through the moment of being born. It is a bizarre attempted obfuscation for Kmiec and others, at this late date, to claim that their personal disapproval of abortion makes them pro-life in their support of the pro-choice position.



Comment on the Comments

by William Oddie

Forgetfulness of Virtue

The Vatican, as Anna Arco reported in *The Catholic Herald* in November

“has approved the psychological screening of seminarians in the wake of damaging clerical abuse scandals. In a long-awaited document the Congregation for Catholic Education said seminary candidates should undergo psychological evaluations whenever there is a suspicion of personality disturbances or serious doubts about their ability to live a celibate life. The document, entitled *Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood*, also controversially endorsed tests to root out men with ‘deep-seated homosexual tendencies’ from seminaries.” [My emphasis]

But why “controversially”? Of course it sounds controversial if you first say it is then use an expression like “root out” to imply some kind of witchhunt. But what was announced seems pretty mild to me: for a start, the psychological investigation has to be with the consent of the individual investigated. According to the CNS, the document simply says that “the use of psychological consultation and testing was appropriate in ‘exceptional cases that present particular difficulties’ in seminary admission and formation”; it also makes clear that “psychological evaluation could never be imposed on seminarians or seminary candidates. But it emphasised that church authorities have the right to turn away candidates if they are not convinced of their suitability.”

The Herald’s leader on the document was uncharacteristically flaky, criticising Cardinal Grocholewski (who launched the document) for implying at the press conference that

“‘strong heterosexual tendencies’ were less of a barrier to priesthood than equivalent homosexual tendencies, because the latter opened up a special type of ‘wound in the exercise of priesthood in forming relations with others’.”

“What”, the Herald asked, “is the source

of this theory? It sounds as if Cardinal Grocholewski was improvising – and in so doing reawakening ideas against gay men based on antiquated prejudice.” But the Cardinal was doing nothing of the sort. What on earth is going on here? “Antiquated prejudice” forsooth! The Cardinal’s response was based on Catholic teaching – which according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (para 2357) is that

“homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered [so, therefore are homosexual inclinations]. They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved”

– and on the Vatican’s 2005 instruction that the Church cannot ordain men who are active homosexuals or who have “deep-seated” homosexual tendencies. For the *Herald* to talk about “equivalent homosexual tendencies” is in any Catholic context a simple contradiction in terms: whilst heterosexual tendencies can certainly also be wounded homosexuality, as “proceed[ing] from affective” and “intrinsic” wounds, cannot be in any sense an “equivalent” to heterosexuality.

In passing, it is probably germane to ask what that expression “deep-seated” is intended to convey. Damian Thompson, in his Telegraph blog probably had it about right. His

“first reaction [was] that this is not a simple witchhunt against gays, but that the main point of the document is to identify potential clerical sex abusers (most of whom have in the past been gay men). The vagueness of the term “deep-seated” allows seminary rectors room for manoeuvre. I think it’s shorthand for “too risky to ordain””.

He suggests an interesting and disturbing unintended possible consequence of the document’s encouragement to use psychological screening: it is unclear, he says “whether the document will make

it more or less easy for liberal seminaries to screen out conservative seminarians, a widespread practice in Europe and America.” Indeed it is, and this is something that ought to have been anticipated: “psychological examination” can be used (and has been used) to sniff out “unhealthy” and “immature” tendencies towards undue obedience to magisterial authority, lack of proper inclination towards irreverence and so on.

Thompson’s speculation that the main point of the document is the identification of clerical sex abusers is, of course, precisely correct. So is his suggestion that most of these abusers are gay men. This has been in the past, unfortunately, seen as a politically incorrect diagnosis: and because of this, the Church has been laid open to a degree of obloquy it should never have allowed itself to endure. It is one thing to accept that there has been too much clerical sex abuse. The fact is, however that “paedophilia”, the abuse of pre-pubescent children, is infinitely more terrible than the abuse of adolescent males, possibly as old as 17 or 18 (and therefore much more able to defend themselves), bad as that is. We should never have accepted that the real problem was too many “paedophile” priests: in fact the proportion of genuinely paedophile clergy is minuscule. But the number of homosexual clergy with “deep-seated” tendencies is not. Even here, however, the problem, though still serious, has shown signs of improvement over recent decades.

According to a survey entitled *The Nature and Scope of the Problem of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States* carried out in 2004 for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, which carried out a survey of 90% of the priests and deacons reported to have had allegations of child sexual abuse, from the seventies to the nineties, “if the yearly ordination totals for diocesan priests accused are compared to the

“The John Jay report has revealed clearly that the crisis in the Church is not one of pedophilia, but of homosexuality.”

overall number of diocesan priests ordained in that year, the percentages of accused priests range from a maximum of almost 10% in 1970, decreasing to 8% in 1980 and to fewer than 4% in 1990.” 4%, however, is still a lot of priests, far too many. The John Jay report’s most important finding, however had to do not with the number but with the nature of the sexual abuses alleged: The report states that 80% to 90% of priests who sexually abused children over the past 52 years had been involved with adolescent boys – ephebophilia – not prepubescent children – paedophilia.

In the wake of the John Jay report, the Catholic Medical Association in America issued a document entitled *Homosexuality and Hope*. One of the contributors to the document, Dr Rick Fitzgibbon, gave an interview to the Zenit Catholic News Agency, containing a good deal of commonsense. He confirmed that “The John Jay report has revealed clearly that the crisis in the Church is not one of paedophilia, but of homosexuality,” and that “the primary victims have not been children, but adolescent males.” He went on to identify much of this clerical homosexual abusive behaviour as

“being due to identifiable personality defects and disorders (which by themselves one would have thought, should exclude a man from the priesthood)... The loneliness and lack of male confidence from the adolescent stage of life that lead to same-sex attractions to teen-age males can be resolved with no further homosexual acting-out behaviours in highly motivated persons.”

As for the problem for the Church, says Dr Fitzgibbon,

“Prior to the release of the John Jay report the basic root cause of the problem had not been clearly identified. We can be thankful that this misunderstanding has been corrected. Hopefully, this clarification in regard to homosexuality as the basic problem that caused the crisis will result in a number of new steps being taken to protect the Church, the priesthood and teenagers and children.”

The trouble is that “this misunderstanding” has *not* been corrected in the minds not only of most contributors to the secular media but even of many within the Church, including Catholic journalists. This has several consequences. Firstly, it means that we still seriously overestimate the problem of paedophilia: things are not as bad as we think. Secondly, it means that we vastly *underestimate* the problem of clerical homosexuality: this makes us vulnerable to politically correct rubbish about “homophobia”, and encourages a desire to be thought enlightened about the problems of “gay men”. Of course it is the case that there are many priests, whose orientation is homosexual rather than heterosexual, who live chaste and holy lives. Of course *The Catholic Herald* is right to say that “The purity of a priest’s celibacy is not determined by the nature of the urges he is restraining in obedience to Christ’s teaching”. Of course that is true: kindly do not teach your grandmother to suck eggs. But it is not the point. The point is that it looks as though around four percent of clergy cannot be trusted around good-looking teenage boys. And *if* “psychological screening” can prevent their ordination in the future, the Church would be mad not to use it.

Whether it can, however, if it can only be used with the agreement of the prospective or actual seminarian may be doubted. More to the point, if he does agree, *how reliable* is such screening? It isn’t, of course, just risky sexual proclivities that need to be identified, as the Congregation for Catholic Education’s document makes clear. “In reviewing candidates for admission to seminaries”, the CNS reported it as saying, “psychological experts should be called upon “whenever there is a suspicion that psychic disturbances may be present”. Such problems may include “excessive affective dependency,” disproportionate aggression, incapacity to be faithful to obligations, incapacity for openness and trust, inability to cooperate with authority and confused sexual identity....”

Of course all that is true; but wouldn’t half an hour with a candidate over a pint tell most of us whether there is something about him that’s a bit

peculiar? How are these things to be evaluated scientifically rather than by simple common sense? And by going along with the claims of the secular psychological industry, are we not missing the point, our unique Catholic point, which is that we have something to offer that modern psychology cannot begin to evaluate, let alone to replace?

As Fr Finigan puts it in his blog *The Hermeneutic of Continuity*,

“I would agree that some sort of psychological evaluation of candidates is a fairly obvious necessity but I’m nervous about the use of psychometric testing. Many years ago, I actually did a degree in psychology (joint with philosophy) at Oxford. From that time, I picked up a scepticism about the validity and methodology of psychometric testing. The book *After Asceticism* which I reviewed in the Jan-Feb 2008 *Faith Magazine*, criticised the use of a secular “therapeutic mentality” and referred favourably to the work of the Catholic psychologist, Dom Thomas Verner Moore in the first half of the 20th century. It seems to me that the “therapeutic mentality” still influences some of the use of psychology in the Church...”

In case you do not have your Jan-Feb 2008 issue of this magazine handy, Fr Finigan outlined *After Asceticism’s* rejection of “the primacy of place that is given to the therapeutic mentality *because it fails to appreciate the role that religious devotion and faith play in the moral life of the priest*, and has no proper understanding of human nature, original sin and free will.” [My emphasis]

Taking its foundation instead from

“the classical psychology of virtue, shame in doing what is wrong and a delight in doing what is right, it insists that hope is at the centre of the arduous task of chastity – and that chaste celibacy is a singular manifestation of hope for others.”

Well, quite. But how strange it is that after two Millennia we should need to rediscover such things as if nobody had ever said them before. What curious creatures we humans are.



Book Reviews

Ecumenism Today: the Universal Church in the 21st century

edited by Francesca Aran Murphy and Christopher Asprey, Ashgate, 238pp, £50

Ecumenism Today is a classic product of a movement firmly rooted in the twentieth century. The contemporary Ecumenical Movement is generally traced back to the World Missionary Conference of 1910, as Christopher Asprey remarks in his introduction. In classic style the book collects together more than a dozen discussions by authors, varying in their ecclesial loyalty devoted to particular aspects of inter-denominational theological conflict (although one contributor from an Eastern Orthodox perspective – David Bentley Hart – allows himself to get in some powerful blows against some of his peers in his own camp). Several of the writers make particular reference to John Paul II's *Ut unum sint* – notably the Anglican John Webster and Susan Frank Parsons. It is clear that the question of a possible acquiescence to the primacy of Peter in some modified form is engaging the minds of many non-Catholic theologians with a new urgency at the start of the new millennium as they contemplate the Roman question. The chapter by the Armenian Vigen Guroian is particularly intriguing in this regard. Anyone who has followed the internal strife in the Anglican Communion in recent times must be aware that the absence of a primacy within that Communion seems to have allowed latent divisions to become even more insuperable. It is well to remember however that Protestant respect for the papacy cannot by any means be taken for granted – witness the statement of

Philip Jensen, Anglican Dean of Sydney, as reported in the *Tablet* (26 July 2008), that the Pope's claim to be the Vicar of Christ is "an appalling blasphemy".

The editors have performed their task well, and the fifteenth-century Russian painting depicting the Council of Nicaea on the cover looks most attractive. There are some intriguing discussions of lesser-known ecumenical byways such as Nicholas Thompson's treatment of the *Worms Book* drafted by the Protestant Martin Bucer and the Catholic Johannes Gropper in 1540. The most substantial contribution comes from Francesca Aran Murphy – 'De Lubac, Ratzinger, and von Balthasar: a communal adventure in ecclesiology'. As translator of *The Spirit of Celibacy* by Johann Adam Möhler, I was delighted to note the attention Murphy pays to his thinking. At the end an epilogue, with contributions by John Pontifex and Robin Gibbons, offers timely reflections on how external threats tend to unite us – ecumenism powered by the spirit of the Blitz.

But there are elephants in the room. I began by saying that the book is a classic product of a twentieth-century movement; but towards the end of that century there was a tectonic shift in Protestant mentalities which has already begun to complicate ecumenical relations between Protestants and both their Catholic and Orthodox interlocutors. I have in mind two features of the recent history of the Protestant denominations (and I include the Anglican Communion here). First, the quickening trend towards the abandonment of historical Christian moral positions in matters of sexual morality. This means that the most important divergences between Catholic and Orthodox on the one side and Protestant on the other are now in the field of morality, an area passed over in silence in *Ecumenism Today*. Second, the rapid development of ever more Christian communities and groupings entirely outside the mainstream denominations. These movements – house churches, charismatic fellowships, 'non-denominational' Christian communities and the like involve millions of the most enthusiastic

and committed Protestant believers – and they are left out of the loop in books like the present one. But the plain fact is that the growth in Protestantism since World War II has been mainly among these myriad evangelical movements, while the so-called 'mainline' denominations are in free fall. A large part of the problem here, as I pointed out in a recent CTS booklet entitled *Protestantism from a Catholic Perspective*, is that those members of the intelligentsia who dominate in the media despise the evangelical movements. A classic example of this contempt could be found in *The Independent* of 16 July 2008, where a Catholic commentator, Paul Vallely, referred patronisingly to 'theologically primitive and doctrinally ideological evangelicals'. Hang on a minute, Mr Vallely, were those fishermen called by Jesus perhaps not 'theologically primitive' too? Such observers overlook St Paul's coruscating talk about the foolishness of human wisdom. It is the evangelicals who drive the most popular and productive 'new movements' in Protestantism like the Alpha Course and New Wine. It is the evangelicals who power massive communities like Willow Creek in Chicago and the Vineyard Fellowships with all their huge appeal to the young, as well as what is claimed to be the largest single congregation not just in London but even in Europe – Kingsway International Christian Church. The absence of all of this dimension from books like *Ecumenism Today* says a great deal about ecumenism today.

Cyprian Blamires

Market Harborough
Northants

“the most important divergences between Catholic and Orthodox on the one hand and Protestant on the other are now in the field of morality.”

The Wisdom of Nazareth. Stories of Catholic Family Life

*selected & edited by Sr Crucis Beards
FMDM & Anna Schafer, Foreword
by Lord Alton, Introduction by
Michael O'Brien, Family Publications
& Maryvale Institute, 205pp, £8.95*

This is the first book to be published by the *Centre for Marriage and Family* of the Maryvale Institute. It draws together thirty one articles from the *Nazareth Journal*, a magazine produced by a Catholic family apostolate that worked in the 1980s and '90s in Canada. In his introduction, Michael O'Brien, former editor of the *Nazareth Journal*, rightly points out the growing amount of theology on the “domestic Church” in recent years, and writes that these stories, “from the front lines” (13) of Catholic life, demonstrate such theology in action.

Several of the articles fulfil this aim in a particularly impressive and moving way: the parents who adopt three children with disabilities despite already having four children of their own; how a child's grief at his parents' quarrelling brings them back to the Church at Christmas; the “quiet desperation” (64) felt by a man who is the only bread-winner for his large family; a married couple who have been using contraception for twenty five years gradually coming to a full appreciation of, and adherence to, *Humanae Vitae*. This last is a rare instance of explicit theological reflection in the book, which tends as a whole towards the emotional rather than the intellectual. This is fair enough – it is meant after all to be a collection of personal testimonies – but the downside is that articles can become bogged down in domestic detail: in one entitled “A Day in a Catholic Marriage”, the author goes through her day minute by minute, detailing exactly what she cooked for her family and what she put in the freezer for later. Some stories descend into sentimentality, a notable example being a mother who decides not to pursue a Master of Arts degree because she already has the double title of MAMA bestowed on her by her heavenly Master.

Perhaps responding cynically to this kind of writing simply shows the cultural differences between English and American Catholicism. In his foreword, David Alton maintains that despite coming to us from “across the water”, the stories “have a perennial value and speak beautifully of so many family situations.” (10) His need to state this may be indicative of the cultural barrier which British readers face on encountering these stories. One instance of this North American flavour is an account of a Catholic family of twelve building their own house on a farmstead, encouraging each other with the words: “This is America! People can do anything they set their minds to, God willing!” (132) The energy bursting from this story is admirable, but this is a long way from the problems of an average Catholic family in Britain, who are more likely to be worrying about what the local primary school is teaching their children, rather than the best way to shoot a rat.

This is the chief problem of the book: the stories are being published in a context for which they were not written. The authors are mostly drawn from one particular community, writing stories aimed in tone and substance at that community. There is considerable repetition – six of the articles are written by the same author on more or less the same theme. The book as a whole focuses mainly on the relationship between parents and children within a large Catholic family in a suburban setting, often home-schooling, with a non-working mother. There is nothing wrong with this, but it is not the only possible model of Catholic family life, which is of necessity more diverse, and it would be interesting to explore some different relationships, those between siblings, for example, or the role of aunts, uncles, cousins and god-parents. A brief reflection on how a father relates to his sons and daughters-in-law is one of the more interesting articles, and points towards what this kind of book could do, hinting at the wideness of the family circle, and showing how all family roles, however apparently obscure, can be drawn into the life-giving work of Christ and His Church.

It seems almost churlish to criticise a book in which there is so much good will and genuine devotion to God and His teachings. The problems with the book are not with the individual parts, many of which point towards (in the words of Pope Benedict XVI) “the beauty of human love, of marriage and of the family” (11), but with the rather uncertain whole that the parts construct. It is difficult to imagine who the target audience is for this book and how it will be read, if not in the fashion of a monthly journal. However, the reader who overcomes all the barriers that this book presents may find themselves unexpectedly touched and moved by the humility, love and moments of grace that the stories record.

Lucy Nash
Durham

The Faithful Departed – The Collapse of Boston's Catholic Culture

*by Philip F. Lawler, Encounter Books
272 pp, £12.95*

This book has this commendation on the dust cover: “If St John Chrysostom is correct when he says that the road to hell is paved with the skulls of bishops, it would be a mistake for any bishop or priest to miss this book.” It is made an even more striking recommendation by the fact that it is made by a Bishop, the Most Rev Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Nebraska.

With clear evidence Philip Lawler explains how one of the most thriving Catholic dioceses in the world collapsed into one with a drastic shortage of priests, closing parishes, and a complete lack of political influence.

Of course, the sex abuse in the diocese is given full treatment. But this is what Lawler says:

“The thesis of this book is that the sex-abuse scandal in American Catholicism was not only aggravated but actually caused by the willingness of Church leaders to sacrifice the essential for the inessential: to build up the human institution even to



the detriment of the divine mandate. I argue that in Boston, Catholic culture lost first its integrity and then its power because Church leaders made the same fatal mistake, offering their first fealty to the church that is “it” rather than the Church that is ‘she.’”

He details how the Second Vatican Council was used to propagate ideas which were exactly the opposite of what it said. This led to an ‘anything-goes’ mentality that allowed child sex abuse to flourish and led timid bishops not wanting to appear to be “homophobes” by opposing it.

One could weep when one considers what the Boston diocese was like. Cardinal Cushing in the 1950s had a target to ordain 100 priests a year; he did not obtain it but over 80 priests a year were ordained. In 2006 it was five. Mass attendance used to be 80%. More than 60 parishes have been closed since 2002.

“The whole thrust was on public relations.”

When the sex abuse scandal broke, Lawler explains how the bishops prevaricated and eventually brought out rules that left priests open to action for a single accusation while they, the bishops, escaped all blame. The whole thrust was on public relations and spin, not on protecting children and certainly not on putting right what was and is wrong in the Church.

Has this any relevance to what has happened in the UK? I can imagine a reader saying, “Of course, the child abuse numbers were not as bad over here.” My reply to that is, “How do we know?” Where are the figures in the Nolan Report? The Nolan Committee was given and produced no figures of abuse and did not even say that there had been abuse. Nolan was simply asked to report on Child Protection; there was no mention of any crisis, nor does the Report say that anything has ever gone wrong. In America, society is much more open. There, meetings of the Bishops’ Conference are open to the public and are even televised,

and bishops cheerfully are interviewed by lay journalists. So in America there was a National Review Board which reported on the crisis, which Nolan was not asked to do. That Review Board reported that 81% of the cases involved male-to-male contacts. Of these victims, 90% were adolescents. From the statistics, and after analysis from the American Linacre Centre, Lawler reports that: “Faced with that statistic, some analysts began to say that what had been seen as a crisis of paedophilia was really a matter of ephebophilia”, a term meaning the sexual attraction of men towards adolescent boys. And what do the statistics show in England? No one knows because the statistics are, incredibly, kept secret. COPCA, the Catholic Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults, and the responsible archbishop, have steadfastly refused to give any breakdown of the annual figures that might enable an analysis to see whether it is men or women committing acts of abuse and whether on boys or girls. What is there to hide? Such lack of clarity might well be contributing to priests being inappropriately suspected and encouraging, for instance, that stalwart ladies have to have criminal checks to do the flowers with their own grandchildren. In any situation, risk assessments are necessary. Without the facts, proper risk assessments are impossible.

So though Lawler is critical about America, things are much worse here. Incredibly, the Catholic Education Service, is backing the government’s plans for sex education for five-year old infants. Gerald Warner rightly says about this on his Telegraph blog “The most widespread child abuse in Britain is perpetrated by the Government.” True and the Catholic Education Service supports the government.

The book finishes with a section on Restoration. The key here is for the Church to admit that things have gone wrong:

“Reform cannot begin until the corruption is acknowledged. And since the American hierarchy apparently

cannot or will not recognise the corruption with itself, other Catholics must call the bishops to account and demand the sort of responsible pastoral leadership that the American Church has not seen for years. Under these circumstances, lay Catholics who criticise their bishops are not showing their disrespect for the bishop’s office. Quite the contrary. Those who revere the authority of a Catholic bishop should protect that authority – if necessary, even from the man who occupies that office.”

Americans can have hope that, although the majority of bishops still refuse to admit the problems, at least everything is in the open and an increasing number of bishops are facing up to the facts. The situation in England may or may not be better than that in America but what Damian Thompson calls “the culture of secrecy and evasion” in England means that we simply do not know.

Eric Hester
Bolton

The Gift of Confession

by Michael de Stoop, Foreword by Cardinal Pell, Gracewing, 153 pp, £7.99

In recent decades there has been a serious decline in people going to Confession. Many priests and religious go seldom. Not a few laity report that confessors have discouraged frequent confession. Parish timetables often only indicate half an hour of confessions on Saturdays. “You don’t know what you’ve been missing” could be the summary of this book; “and I’m going to tell you”.

Fr de Stoop, from Sydney, tells us why it is good to go to Confession. The sacrament of Reconciliation doesn’t just take our sins away. It also brings many benefits. He lists twenty-five, each receiving a chapter in this highly readable book.

The benefits are: God’s mercy is communicated in a tangible way; Reconciliation with God; Personal encounter with Christ; Divine life is restored in our soul; Grace is given;

Confession reminds us of the price of sin; The profits of penance; Remission of eternal punishment; Temporal punishment can be diminished; Merit and virtue restored; Makes our prayers and works more efficacious; We benefit from the priest's prayers and penance; More fruitful participation in other sacraments; Sacrament of healing; Strengthens our faith; Cultivates hope; Increases charity; Fosters growth in humility and in self-knowledge; Helps to form our conscience; Brings psychological benefits; Prevents us from falling into more serious sins; Improves our prayer life; Source of spiritual direction; Helps us become saints.

The book covers all aspects of the sacrament. Its theology is sound and is backed up by numerous quotes, from Scripture first of all; then from the Magisterium (especially John Paul II and Trent), the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the Church Fathers (Cyprian, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Augustine), Doctors (Aquinas, Alphonsus), Mystics (St John of the Cross, St Teresa, St Faustina, Julian of Norwich) and others such as the Curé d'Arns, Archbishop Fulton Sheen and Scott Hahn. In the next edition, at Ch. Twenty-Three (110), on the love of God leading to love of neighbour, a quote might be added from Benedict XVI's *Spe Salvi*. There are many illustrations, simple in style but effective.

Many good points are made: how much God wants the return of the sinner (7); the link between the loss of the sense of sin and the decline in confession (15); mortal sin and the shortcomings of the fundamental option theory (16-21, 130-32); Sunday Mass (35); the social aspects of the sacrament (35, 37, 44-47); mortification (38); hell exists (41-42); confession of venial sins, purgatory and indulgences (43-47); confession can lessen the incidence of divorce (67); sin leads to blindness (75-77); intellectual difficulties are often due to immoral behaviour (75-78); good confessors should be sought (79, 127-28); frequent confession (83-84; 97-99); “In the single act of confession you will exercise more virtues than in

any other act whatsoever” (St Francis de Sales, 89); conscience and guilt (93-99); people need confession, if they don't go to the sacrament they'll do so in “reality” shows (101); confession can prevent depression (104); it develops our freedom (107, 119); aridity and perseverance in prayer (110-11); helps discern our vocation (114); assiduous recourse to it leads to holiness (117); grave and serious sin (129).

At the end of each chapter there are questions for personal reflection or group discussion. Terminology is explained (e.g. contrition, absolution, supernatural, grace, sanctify, merit). There are six Appendices including one on the conditions for plenary indulgences; and a guide for a good Confession. It might be worthwhile including here the full formula of absolution (145).

The book is ‘straight down the line’. It has a very encouraging tone and shows real understanding for those wishing to be reconciled. The reader is left in no doubt as to the goodness of Confession: “of all the ways that can please God, nothing exceeds going to Confession” the author writes, relating it to the story of the return of the prodigal (8).

It is suggested that priests could use this book to prepare homilies on the Sacrament (2). It will also be beneficial to teachers and parents and students, and anyone who wants a clear and attractive treatment of this subject. Its approach is sensitive and workmanlike and has a useful index.

Fr Andrew Byrne

Westpark Study Centre
London

A Daughter's Love

by John Guy, Harper Collins, 400pp, £25

The Lion's Court

*by Derek Wilson, Hutchinson/
St Martin's Press, 580pp, \$35*

The late Paul Schofield has left us with the most compelling portrait of Sir Thomas More. In *A Man For All*

Seasons the Chancellor is shown at home with his family and in conflict with his King.

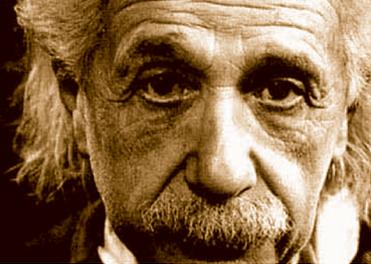
John Guy considers More from the angle of his relationship with his favourite daughter, Margaret (or Meg) Roper, drawing on neglected or undiscovered documents. The general outline of More's life is well known but Guy makes More that much more human. He shows that the Chancellor considered that he was destined for the most barbaric form of execution (which was only changed at the last moment.) He needed the comfort of his daughter, since his wife stayed away, “he was too gregarious, too emotionally dependent on his family to face Henry's terrible wrath alone.”

Margaret Roper's husband William took the oath but later wrote a famous *Life* of his father-in-law which sanitises his own position. Guy shows that More's own brilliance was wonderfully reflected in his daughter who corrected Erasmus and published her own works but died aged 39 only eight years after her father. Through her ingenuity in smuggling correspondence in and out of the Tower we have the final picture of More, the King's good servant but God's first.

Derek Wilson places the Chancellor in the company of five other Thomases: Wolsey, Cromwell, Howard, Wriothesley and Cranmer. He is clearly not sympathetic to More whom he classifies as authoritarian “in his bulldozing way”. He homes in on More's attitude to heresy, which from a modern stance seems the height of intolerance. Wilson tends to consider everything from a purely historical point of view which provides some very fascinating details. The characters do not however come to life in the same way as they do in John Guy's approach.

Fr James Tolhurst

Chislehurst,
Kent



Cutting Edge Science and Religion News

POPE ANSWERS HAWKING (AND ANTONY FLEW)

The front cover of one of the Catholic papers at the start of November had a most striking image, that of the meeting of two of the most famous men in the world: the Pope, Benedict XVI, and Professor Stephen Hawking, the theoretical physicist from Cambridge. Their meeting took place in the context of the plenary session of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, of which Prof. Hawking is a member. The Pope went and greeted Stephen Hawking personally, prior to addressing the assembly on the 31st October in the Clementine Hall of the Vatican. His address initiated the Academy's session on 'Scientific Insight into the Evolution of the Universe and of Life.'

Over the years Hawking himself has offered a particular spin upon what the late Pope, John Paul II, had said in his hearing. In 1981, before the same Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Pope John Paul II had touched on the question of the universe's origin. In his *A Brief History of Time*, Hawking gave his version of what the Pope had said:

"the participants were granted an audience with the Pope. He told us that it was all right to study the evolution of the universe after the big bang, but we should not inquire into the big bang itself because that was the moment of Creation and therefore the work of God. I was glad then that he did not know the subject of the talk I had just given at the conference – the possibility that space-time was finite but had no boundary, which means that it had no beginning, no moment of Creation." (p. 116 in the 1988 edition).

Much more recently Hawking has reiterated this version of events, when in June 2006 he gave a lecture in Hong Kong which gained wide publicity. The late Pope had decreed no such ban, but had in fact said: "Any scientific hypothesis on the origin of the world,

such as the hypothesis of a primitive atom from which derived the whole of the physical universe, leaves open the problem concerning the universe's beginning. Science cannot of itself solve this question ..." (3rd October 1981).

In his address, the Pope made the following observations:

"To state that the foundation of the cosmos and its developments is the provident wisdom of the Creator is not to say that creation has only to do with the beginning of the history of the world and of life. It implies, rather, that the Creator founds these developments and supports them, underpins them and sustains them continuously. Thomas Aquinas taught that the notion of creation must transcend the horizontal origin of the unfolding of events, which is history, and consequently all our purely naturalistic ways of thinking and speaking about the evolution of the world. Thomas observed that creation is neither a movement nor a mutation. It is instead the foundational and continuing relationship that links the creature to the Creator, for he is the cause of every being and all becoming (cf. *Summa Theologiae*, I, q.45, a. 3).

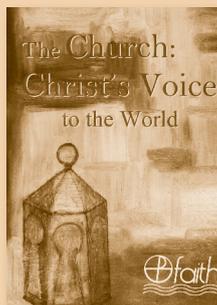
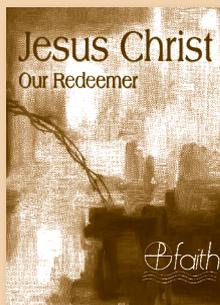
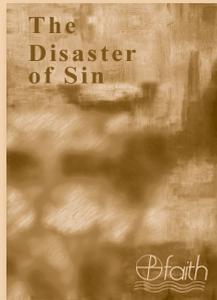
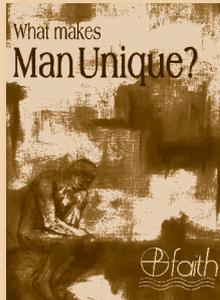
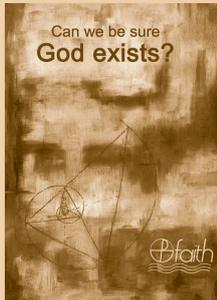
"To 'evolve' literally means 'to unroll a scroll,' that is, to read a book. The imagery of nature as a book has its roots in Christianity and has been held dear by many scientists. Galileo saw nature as a book whose author is God in the same way that Scripture has God as its author. It is a book whose history, whose evolution, whose 'writing' and meaning, we 'read' according to the different approaches of the sciences, while all the time presupposing the foundational presence of the author who has wished to reveal himself therein. This image also helps us to understand that the world, far from originating out of chaos, resembles an ordered book; it is a cosmos."

The Pope went on to articulate something in harmony with the 'Unity Law' idea promoted by *Faith* movement

"Notwithstanding elements of the irrational, chaotic and the destructive in the long processes of change in the cosmos, matter as such is 'legible.' It has an inbuilt 'mathematics.' The human mind therefore can engage not only in a 'cosmography' studying measurable phenomena but also in a 'cosmology' discerning the visible inner logic of the cosmos. We may not at first be able to see the harmony both of the whole and of the relations of the individual parts, or their relationship to the whole. Yet, there always remains a broad range of intelligible events, and the process is rational in that it reveals an order of evident correspondences and undeniable finalities: in the inorganic world, between microstructure and macrostructure; in the organic and animal world, between structure and function; and in the spiritual world, between knowledge of the truth and the aspiration to freedom. Experimental and philosophical inquiry gradually discovers these orders; it perceives them working to maintain themselves in being, defending themselves against imbalances, and overcoming obstacles. And thanks to the natural sciences we have greatly increased our understanding of the uniqueness of humanity's place in the cosmos."

Among other advantages, this line concerning God as the mind immediately sustaining and organising each and every aspect of cosmic matter is also important for challenging the Deism of the prominent ex-agnostic Professor Antony Flew.

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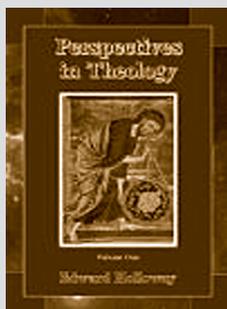
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From the Aims and Ideals of Faith Movement

Faith Movement offers a perspective upon the unity of the cosmos by which we can show clearly the transcendent existence of God and the essential distinction between matter and spirit. We offer a vision of God as the true Environment of men in whom “we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28), and of his unfolding purpose in the relationship of word and grace through the prophets which is brought to its true head in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Son of Man, Lord of Creation, centre of history and fulfilment of our humanity. Our redemption through the death and resurrection of the Lord, following the tragedy of original sin, is also thereby seen in its crucial and central focus. Our life in his Holy Spirit through the Church and the Sacraments and the necessity of an infallible Magisterium likewise flow naturally from this presentation of Christ and his work through the ages.

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

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