

faith

May • June 2007 Volume 39, Number 3

**The Sacrifice of the Mass and
Spiritual Formation Today**
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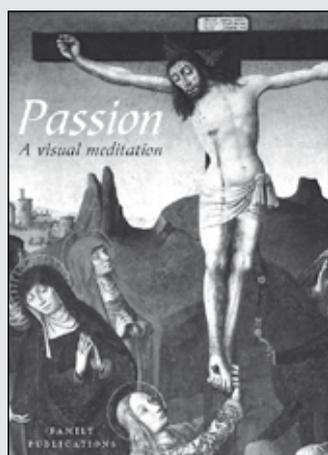
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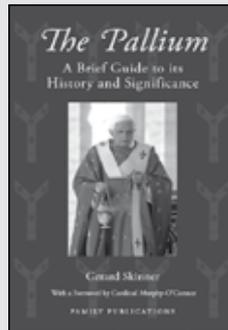


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The Sacrifice of the Mass and Spiritual Formation Today

*“Father, the hour has come, glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee, since thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him.”
(John 17:2)*

Sin made the spiritual creature break away from God...

“Christ’s humanity is the measure and the medicine for ours. Only He can bridge the gap and love with a total love that cleanses and heals, a love that He has communicated physically and with the shedding of His blood. Real contact with Him then, in body and soul, is essential.”

Lent is approaching its conclusion as this editorial is being written. One present-day fad that is frequently heard, both from clergy and from laity, is the suggestion that it would be better not to fast or give anything up for Lent. Instead, we should do something positive. The implication of this is that fasting and self-denial are negative things and are to be viewed in a less favourable light to doing positive things such as praying more or giving to charity. This view is shallow.

At the heart of true fasting is an active and dynamic love of God. We can all too easily be over-dependent on material things. None of them are bad in themselves but they can become too much the focus of our desires. Fasting is a way of making manifest a preference for loving God. It confirms that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. It is a way of relating to God that shows that we depend on Him above all and love Him above all things and are willing to give more of ourselves in love, rather than just fulfil our own needs and desires. True fasting thus flows into prayer and charity. It is something positive.

A similar fad appears when thinking about the notion of sacrifice. It too is seen as a more negative concept. For many it means depriving yourself of something; for some it evokes the ritual slaying of some animal or even of a human being. It appears to be a primitive notion. Furthermore, there is a kind of embarrassment in talking about sacrifice in catechesis, not only because it is seen as something negative in itself but also because it can conjure up what is often seen as the Protestant view of the angry God who seeks blood to be appeased and is only fully appeased when Jesus dies on the cross, shedding His blood in our stead. The cross as sacrifice is thus often glossed over in teaching in reaction to this image of God; and so it finds little place in basic teaching about the Eucharist.

The Sacrifice of Christ

The notion of sacrifice is one of the essential keys to Christian doctrine and to Christian living. If it is merely seen as primitive or negative, if it is neglected in catechesis, then the effects are incalculable. Just as the belittling of fasting has contributed to a distorted and flabby spirituality, so also the neglect of sacrifice produces a much emasculated Christianity. We can see this in those celebrations of the Eucharist where the emphasis ends up being too much on what we the people do rather than on what Christ is doing for us. The Eucharist is seen as our meal, that time when we can show that we are God’s family through our sharing. There is no primacy of grace in such a view. There is little room for Christ except as a kind of memory or as someone spiritually close. The life of faith becomes Pelagian since it depends on our activity rather than being something that essentially depends on and springs from what Christ has done for us.

The New Testament is replete with explanations and references to what Christ has done for us. In the midst of the jealous rivalry of the apostles, He reveals to them that He has come “not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). John the Baptist, in a clear reference to the Passover sacrifice, points to Christ as “the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). (Later in this issue Peter Burrows helpfully brings out how it is only the Eucharistic Sacrifice which fulfils this scriptural emphasis.)

John the Divine will go on to write that Jesus is “the sacrifice to expiate our sins, and not only ours, but also those of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). Peter echoes the same doctrine when he says in his first letter, “You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Peter 1:18-19). The whole of the letter to the Hebrews is a meditation on Christ’s sacrificial Priesthood – “He entered once for all into the Sanctuary, taking not the blood of goats and calves but His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption” (Hebrews 9:12). Finally, Paul’s corpus too is replete with references to Christ’s sacrificial mission: salvation is obtained through Christ “who died for us so that whether we wake or sleep we might live with Him” (1 Thessalonians 5:10). “Christ loved the Church and sacrificed Himself for her to make her holy” (Ephesians 5:25-26).

Developing our Understanding of Christ’s Sacrifice

All of this highlights the poverty of those programmes of catechesis which neglect the sacrifice of Christ. On the other hand, at first sight, the quotations may serve to strengthen that view of sacrifice as an appeasement by blood. This understanding seems to be the primary focus of the talk ‘Why did Jesus die?’ within the international Evangelical *Alpha* course. Such a view is a disservice since a deeper reading brings out something more wonderful.

When St Paul, in the passage quoted above from his letter to the Ephesians, talks about Christ’s sacrifice, it is to describe the Lord’s marriage relationship with the Church. He then encourages husbands and wives to imitate this love between Christ and the Church since it is the original mystery of which all other marriages are a participation. The full meaning of this sacrifice or giving up of Himself totally is that Christ “nourishes and cherishes” the Church, having purified her “in cleansing water with a form of words” (cf. Ephesians 5:21-33). Here then the sacrifice of Christ is more than just an appeasement – it is an act of love that makes the Church holy, that purifies and nourishes and cherishes.

The sacrifice is more than just an act of blood: it is a total giving of Himself, from the heart outwards, which will in a sinful world, involve a giving unto death.

Elsewhere St Paul reveals this more complete understanding of sacrifice when he writes, “I appeal to you therefore, my brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1). Pope Benedict XVI, in the recently published *Sacramentum Caritatis*, comments that this passage reveals how the Eucharist makes our whole life an act of spiritual worship to God. Having quoted St Augustine he adds:

“In these words the new worship appears as a total self-offering made in communion with the whole Church. The Apostle’s insistence on the offering of our bodies emphasizes the concrete human reality of a worship which is anything but disincarnate. The Bishop of Hippo goes on to say that ‘this is the sacrifice of Christians: that we, though many, are one body in Christ. The Church celebrates this mystery in the sacrament of the altar, as the faithful know, and there she shows them clearly that in what is offered, she herself is offered.’ Catholic doctrine, in fact, affirms that the Eucharist, as the sacrifice of Christ, is also the sacrifice of the Church, and thus of all the faithful. This insistence on sacrifice – a ‘making sacred’ – expresses all the existential depth implied in the transformation of our human reality as taken up by Christ (cf. Phil 3:12).” (para. 70)

Here then sacrifice refers to more than just a shedding of blood. In its fullest meaning it involves a full hearted offering of the self. Furthermore, the action of sacrifice has an intention, a goal. Its purpose is to make sacred – something indicated by the very word itself. This purpose is summed up by St Augustine in his *Civitate Dei* when he goes to the heart of the meaning of the idea of sacrifice. He says that it is every work which is ordered to our communion with God (10, 5, 6). This is why the offering of Melchisedek was seen as a true sacrifice, even though no animal was killed. Such sacrifices brought those who offered them or who were present into a relationship of grace and love with God.

The Passion: Restoration of Control and Direction

Christ’s own sacrifice at His Passion reveals this meaning as well. It is the wholehearted giving of Himself, a living prayer, by which He loves us to the end, making apology for the family of Man which so hardheartedly rejects Him: “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). His loving forgiveness is more than just an attitude of the heart. Like the word of God it accomplishes what it

intends to do. It overcomes the division between us and God created by sin, by every sin, and it begins the work of healing the damage of sin – a damage that extends through every sinful human life and that even affects the creation around us. Sin seeks to disrupt true communion with God and the communion of humanity. The offering of Christ in perfect love in the midst of the rejection of God bridges and heals that gap: His perfect love more than makes up for our lack of love. He then becomes in the fullness of His Person, in His Divinity and His humanity, our point of contact with God. The only way back to God is through Christ. Communion with Christ is a basic need of Man.

This communion is more than just something spiritual. It is true that sin arises from the spirit, from the heart, but it is expressed physically as well. The doctrine of Original Sin is a recognition that the damage wreaked upon human nature which we all inherit involves a weakening and wounding of our whole nature, body and soul. That first sin produced a previously unknown result in living matter, indeed in all matter. For this was the first time matter was wrenched from that properly ordered relationship with God which characterized the universe in its fundamental control and direction. No longer was there to be an overall relating to the Mind or *Logos* through which all things were made. Sin made the spiritual creature break away from communion with God and urge its whole self, body and soul, into a pattern of rebellion against the great Law by which all things are meant to be ordered and directed to their end.

Thus, though this breach in the overall communion of the cosmos finds its source in the will of man, it is realized spiritually *and* physically. For this reason the healing of the damage must involve the body as well as the soul. In His whole life, death and resurrection Christ reveals that He alone can do this work. Only His humanity is the measure and the medicine of ours. Only He can bridge the gap and love with a total love that cleanses and heals, a love that He has communicated physically and with the shedding of His blood. Real contact with Him then, in body and soul, is essential if this work of Christ is to reach into our inner depths and free us from the bonds and disease of sin. In our bodies and souls we cannot do the work ourselves – we are caught up in the situation of sin and so our actions are flawed with the basic pride and selfishness that sin spawns. This existential situation handicaps us from the beginning. What was originally intended was that through Christ (Cf. Ephesians 1, 4) our souls and bodies would form a unity of communion with God: they would each be a kind of means by which communion with God would be effected and lived out. Given the disaster of sin a new means is needed, a new relationship which will heal and restore and help us

grow into that communion with God the more we diminish in our attachment to sin and overcome its effects. That new means and relationship is Jesus Himself, the *Logos* who ‘dwelt among’ sinful men. He brings it about through the total offering of Himself, to the Father, body, soul and divinity – His sacrifice.

Our Sanctification

Communion with the Christ of sacrifice is the means by which we can begin to participate in the great work of redemption and transformation of our nature. It is an on-going work since each human being needs to be brought into on-going contact with Christ. Christ’s sacrifice is not just something in the past. This offering of Himself finds its culmination in the great drama of Easter but it is something that remains forever as part of Him. This is shown by the presence of His wounds in His risen body. There is no action of Christ that did not involve His whole self. His Passion is more than just a physical act left behind in the recesses of history. As an offering of love, it involved all that He is, His whole Person. It is more than just something He did – it is part and parcel of who He is. It is this offering of Himself in perfect love that He carries with Him into the Sanctuary of the Father’s presence for all eternity. The author of the letter to the Hebrews reveals the eternal nature of this one sacrifice of Christ – a work begun in time and carried as integral to the identity of the Incarnate Word forever: “Jesus is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” (Heb 7:25).

Through such a vision the full meaning and majesty of the Eucharist can be gradually revealed to us.

The Mass is the consecrated time when Christ comes to us, in all His physical reality, so that we can, both in body and soul, enter into the dynamism of His offering. Here we can offer our lives, our intentions, our whole humanity so that the work of reconstructing full communion with God can begin and can move forward – always aware that this is a work that will only be fully accomplished when God is all in all at the end. The Mass puts us into life-giving contact with Christ and so with His work of sacrifice – a sacrifice consummated in time and carried forward into eternity, the great work by which we experience redemption in the here and now. Any reduction of the Eucharist to merely a shared meal robs us of the full contact with the redemption that we need to be in any way fully alive. It is true that baptism accomplishes the beginning of our redemption. But its sacramental power is rooted in the sacrifice of Christ and so in the Eucharist. Furthermore, the Eucharist is what

completes the process of full Christian initiation into the Church and is the power house that continues the work of salvation for the rest of our lives.

In this space twenty years ago Fr Holloway wrote concerning a paper given by the then Cardinal Ratzinger on "The Ecclesiology of Vatican II":

"One notices with interest that Ratzinger, quoting De Lubac, is now urging the concept of the Church as *Sacrament of Christ* working in the world, as an antidote to the errors foisted upon the otherwise lovely, and true image of the Church as "People of God"... this concept of the Church as *The Sacrament of Christ*, living and working in the world ... can only be urged and valued however because the Altar of the Eucharist, the central focus of the Church's Liturgy is also the Body and Blood of her doctrine. The Eucharist is Christ in Person, living and working, God and Man. The meaning of the Incarnation of God will become even more deeply understood as part of the development of doctrine from now on, and into the next century." (March/April, 1986)

Pope Benedict has offered some developments in understanding the full nature of Christ's sacrifice. We have used some insights from Holloway to enhance this. Later in this issue Père Jobert makes his own interesting attempt and Christopher Zealley retrieves some crucial Thomistic insights. Without a retrieval and a renewal of the Catholic understanding of sacrifice we cannot hope, in the modern world, to foster our people's spiritual life in an integral manner.

True Participation and False Adaptations

This understanding of the Mass highlights therefore that it is an action of Christ above all – indeed, it is His work *par excellence*. Too many abuses in the Liturgy appear to put an emphasis on the Eucharist as fundamentally a work of the community, of those actually gathered at a particular celebration. Many examples can be given. In numerous Youth Masses the fashion has developed for the altar to be bare from the beginning until the presentation of gifts. At this point it is dressed with altar cloths, candles and flowers. Quite apart from misunderstanding the role of the altar and implying that it only begins to be used in the second half of the Mass, this practice reinforces the idea that the Mass is the result of our activity – that there is nothing given prior to what we do. It is imagined that doing such actions make us more involved than we otherwise would have been. It appears more Pelagian than Christian. For the Christian, Christ has the primacy in all things. The fuller understanding of the Eucharist as Christ's own sacrifice shows us that our

own involvement must be from the heart outwards. It is Christ who draws us through Himself to the Father. What truly involves us is not dressing altars up or dancing or any other ministry. It is the offering of ourselves, of our lives, of our bodies and our souls, "as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Romans 12:1). In doing this the Church makes Christ's sacrifice for her sacrifice for Him, a participation in the original marital 'mystery' of Ephesians 5 referred to above.

The many abuses in the celebration of the Eucharist diminish the revelation of its true meaning. The priest and also those who help prepare the Liturgy should have a sacrificial attitude towards the Mass. This means that, first of all, we must let the Mass speak for itself, allow it to be celebrated as the Church intends – in this sense allow it to be given completely and in no way distorted or reduced so that this giving is incomplete. The abuses of the Liturgy are by their very nature counter-sacrificial. Christopher Zealley brings out the crucial importance of liturgical symbolism for enacting the one sacrifice of Christ in his article in this issue.

Secondly, we need to be humble before the Liturgy. Among clergy there is a variety of opinions about the present Rite of the Mass, about how it should be celebrated, about what is possible, about its advantages and its shortcomings. However, to start changing things according to our own opinions, no matter how apparently justified, is to set up our will and our mind against that of the Church. It is to offend the nature of the Liturgy as the action that effects and reveals the Communion of the Church. To impose our own tastes simply masks the Liturgy. The priest and the organizers of the Liturgy have to be self-sacrificial: they need to allow the Church's Liturgy (not "my" Liturgy, or "our" Liturgy, or the "Liturgy" of a single group) to speak for itself. This means putting aside our tastes and opinions and giving ourselves generously to celebrating the Mass (indeed all the sacraments, especially Confession, the subject of widespread abuses in our own countries) as given to us by the universal Church.

Marriage and Celibacy

This deeper understanding of sacrifice has further ramifications in other areas of our lives. For instance it is the only way to help couples live out their vocation to marriage. At the heart of their relationship there should be a generous giving of themselves to each other, fully and without reservation, in body and soul. Through this they can share in the mutual sacrificial love of Christ and the Church. At a practical level it is only by giving generously and also, because of sin, denying ourselves that any relationship

can flourish. It is selfishness that brings great strain to many marriages. Overcoming this is not easy. Only a self-sacrificial view of life can help – where we put the other person first. If this is done mutually then the marriage can flourish. Sacrifice then is a positive thing within marriage as well. Indeed, if all that has been said so far is taken into account, then at its heart marriage can be understood most completely as sacrifice: the giving of oneself completely to another, holding nothing back. From this perspective it can be seen how artificial contraception wounds the true meaning of marriage. Not only does it seek to frustrate the true meaning of the marital act as orientated towards procreation; it involves withholding fertility deliberately and so not giving oneself completely. It strikes at the heart of marriage and at the very notion of sacrifice. No wonder Pope Paul VI's predictions of marital breakdown and societal problems arising from contraception have sadly been fulfilled.

For priests the beautiful Catholic vision of sacrifice will provide positive reasons for living celibacy fruitfully. Celibacy, like sacrifice, is more than just a denial of self. We can go further and say that in its deepest sense celibacy is not a denial of the self but its fulfillment in love. The celibacy of the priesthood is about a particular form of loving. The priest is asked to love the Church, to care for the people to whom he is sent, with the same love of the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep (cf. John 10:11). He is called to incarnate in his life the total giving of self that Christ makes for the Church. Christ makes the Church His bride – for this reason He did not marry since not only was He to give Himself to and for all rather than to one other single person, but also because this relationship would be the Exemplar of all marriages – the original “form” of marriage. The priest is called to be Christ the Shepherd to

his people. It is through this Headship that Christ becomes the Bridegroom of the Church as Paul indicates in the Ephesians 5 passage. If the priest is to be shepherd he must also be bridegroom as well, living this sacrifice in his life. It means not marrying a single person but marrying the whole Church, giving himself completely to and for all rather than giving his whole heart to a wife. It is this insight that has helped the Church to see that celibacy is much more in keeping with the heart of priesthood.

The *Movement for Married Clergy* believes that advocates for clerical celibacy base their views on notions of cultic purity and an idea that the love of God is more readily accessible in the celibate life. But our view is completely different and is rooted in this more comprehensive and dynamic concept of Christ's own sacrifice. It maintains the essential goodness of the marital life and of sexual loving within that context and at the same time reveals why celibacy for the priesthood is more in keeping with the essential identity of the priest as one who shares in the Priesthood of Christ, a Priesthood of Sacrifice, expressed also in the titles of Shepherd and Bridegroom.

Conclusion

The Church's doctrine of sacrifice in its fullest sense is neglected in our preaching and catechesis at our peril. It is foundational for the Church. It can be understood and therefore taught only if appreciated in all its positive beauty as more than just a ritual or some form of self denial. Only this fuller vision can do justice to the ramifications of the reality of sacrifice in the Christian life. Christ's sacrifice is the Revelation of the complete love of God; it is the Exemplar for daily Christian living no matter what vocation we may have; it is the instrument through which our lives are healed and restored to God; it is the *modus operandi* for life in the Church – for the life of the Church.

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Ceremony and Sacrifice in St Thomas Aquinas

Christopher Zealley

Christopher Zealley argues that St Thomas, with some magisterial support, makes the symbolism of Eucharistic liturgy a crucial dimension of the Eucharistic sacrifice. He brings out the relevance of this point to the modern liturgical debate. He takes issue with Mgr James T. O'Connor's *The Hidden Manna: A Theology of the Eucharist* (2005) a highly regarded book from Ignatius Press.

Mr Zealley is a father of five and proprietor of St Philip's Books, Oxford (www.stphilipsbooks.co.uk)

"... the divine wisdom has devised a way in which our Redeemer's sacrifice is marvellously shown forth by external signs symbolic of death." Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, 1947

E*ccllesia de Eucharistia* (2003) shows that Pope John Paul II sought to restore a due attention to Mass as the renewal of Calvary: 'At times one encounters an extremely reductive understanding of the Eucharistic mystery. Stripped of its sacrificial meaning, it is celebrated as if it were simply a fraternal banquet'.¹ Surely he was right to be concerned. Many Catholics do indeed seem scarcely aware that the Mass is, in the words of the encyclical, a sacramental perpetuation and "'commemorative representation" (*memorialis demonstratio*)' of the sacrifice of the Cross.² For most, probably, the Mass is transparently a communal celebration of faith, culminating in a sacred meal, but few would say, if asked, that it puts them in mind of Calvary.³

Why this lack of awareness? Many factors may be involved, both catechetical and liturgical. For instance the widespread practice of the priest facing the people across the altar may have created an over-emphasis on the link between the Mass and the Last Supper. This new practice matches more closely a common image of the Cenacle meal as depicted in influential works of art.⁴ But the purpose of this essay is to argue for the influence of a more long term contributory cause: neglect of the full Eucharistic doctrine of St Thomas Aquinas.

At one level this might seem strange, since St Thomas's Eucharistic teaching has long enjoyed a high standing in the Church, and has clearly influenced magisterial teaching, for instance at the Council of Trent.⁵ In the modern period St Thomas's thought in general was recommended to theologians by the encyclicals *Aeterni Patris* (1879) and *Studiorum Ducem* (1923), and the influence of his thought is apparent in *Mediator Dei* (1947) and *Mysterium Fidei* (1965). The very phrase with which Pope Benedict begins his recent apostolic exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, is taken from St Thomas's *Summa Theologica* (III, q.83, a.3).

Nevertheless general surveys suggest that after Trent theologians began to lose interest in that part of St Thomas' doctrine which concerned the sacrifice of the Mass, partly because it was thought to offer little help against Protestant controversialists.⁶ In particular from the later nineteenth century (if not earlier) his teaching on sacramental signification commonly became a source of embarrassment or a subject for ridicule.⁷ *Mediator Dei* attempted to reverse this trend, but its teaching was eclipsed by the Second Vatican Council's *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, which, remarkably, contains not a single reference to Pius XII's encyclical of just 16 years before.

Though in recent years there has been a revival of theological interest in St Thomas,⁸ a certain coyness often remains when contemporary writers discuss his doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass. My aim is to offer a critique of one such treatment, and to suggest that a recovery of St Thomas' teaching on ceremonial symbolism, recommended implicitly in *Mediator Dei* and *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, might serve to increase awareness of the sacrificial dimension of the Mass.

Sacrifice in the Summa

Mgr James T. O'Connor's *The Hidden Manna: A Theology of the Eucharist*, is a highly regarded survey of Catholic teaching on the Eucharist first published by Ignatius Press in 1988 and reissued with minor revisions in 2005. In this book the author 'presents and comments on substantial excerpts from the major sources of the Church's Tradition extending all the way back to apostolic times'. He does not intend to be original or controversial, and his views presumably exemplify much mainstream thinking in the Church. My contention is that O'Connor fails to provide a balanced and accurate exposition by sidelining St Thomas' dependence on sacramental signification. In its place he emphasizes a teaching relating the sacrifice of the Mass to the Real Presence which he claims to have found in the *Summa Theologica*, but which is not really there.

Before turning to O'Connor's book we need to note that for St Thomas the term sacrifice in relation to the Mass has a narrower focus than is usual today. St Thomas distinguished between oblation and sacrifice, and used the former as the more general term, as we see in II:II, q.85 a.3 ad.3: 'A sacrifice, properly speaking, requires that something be done to the thing which is offered to God...The very word signifies this, since sacrifice is so called because a man does something sacred (*facit sacrum*). On the other hand an oblation is properly the offering of something to God even if nothing be done thereto... Hence every sacrifice is an oblation, but not conversely'.⁹ Thus St Thomas could say that the Mass is the same oblation as Calvary because the priest and victim are the same; but this truth did not establish that they were the same sacrifice. What makes Christ's action on Calvary a sacrifice for St Thomas are the things done to him: the cruel abuse of his body leading to his death on the cross.¹⁰ So the Mass must somehow involve these things if we are to assert its identity with the sacrifice of Calvary.

This narrowing of the issue is apparent in St Thomas's only direct treatment of the subject in the Summa: Part III, question 83, article 1. Here he asks 'Whether Christ is sacrificed in this sacrament [the Eucharist]?' but then fails to call on patristic teaching that the priest and victim are the same to provide even a part of the answer. Rather, in his *responsio*, St Thomas states that 'the celebration of this sacrament is called a sacrifice for two reasons'. Firstly, because it constitutes an image representing Christ's Passion, and secondly, because it applies the redemptive fruit of Christ's suffering, death and resurrection. Shortly afterwards St Thomas cites St Ambrose's assertion (in his commentary on Hebrews) that because of the Real Presence the same victim is offered at Mass as on Calvary, but this patristic teaching is not one of his 'two reasons'

for thinking the Eucharist is a sacrifice. In other words, the presence of the same victim is not at the heart of the question of the identity of the sacrifice.

In attempting to summarize St Thomas's teaching O'Connor cannot avoid taking the *responsio* to question 83 as his starting point, and so he admits that St Thomas taught that the Eucharist is Christ's sacrifice 'because the once-and-for-all sacrifice is symbolically represented'.¹¹ But he appears uncomfortable with this teaching, probably because he wishes to distance St Thomas from the Protestant view of the Eucharist as just a memorial, a symbolic means of calling Calvary to mind. With the apparent aim of ensuring that St Thomas is seen to offer something 'deeper' or more distinctively Catholic, he downplays the importance of signification and suggests instead that: 'For St Thomas the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist... largely depends upon the [Real] Presence'.¹² This suggestion is fundamental to O'Connor's interpretation of St Thomas on the sacrifice of the Mass, and yet is the element of his exposition which seems to me mistaken. My aim will be to show that, on the contrary, according to the Summa, the specifically sacrificial aspect depends on the ritual actions, *the things done*, and not on the Real Presence, *the thing offered*.

O'Connor's case

O'Connor's argument, that the sacrifice depends upon the Presence, may be set out as follows:

1. The consecrated species contain the Real Presence of Christ;
2. This Real Presence is the presence of Christ's glorified body;
3. Christ's glorified body bears the scars of his Passion, and so may be described as the presence of the victim of Calvary;
4. In having the presence of Jesus as victim of Calvary, we have the presence of the sacrifice of Calvary;
5. Therefore the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary is renewed at Mass by the priest's confecting the Real Presence.

In other words, if, after the consecration, we could see beneath the veil of the appearances of bread and wine, we would see Christ bearing the marks of his passion and death, as St Thomas the Apostle saw him after the Resurrection. We cannot see Christ in this fashion, but we know by faith he is so present, and thus we need nothing more to understand that the Eucharist has a sacrificial dimension, indeed is the same sacrifice as Calvary made present here and now.¹³ In O'Connor's words:

'By emphasizing that the Sacrament contains the "Christ *who has suffered*" (and not simply the Christ now glorified in heaven), Thomas highlights an important truth. Suffering changes a person. The risen Christ, truly glorified, is nonetheless always the Victim, the One who has gone through and endured and been permanently marked by his Passion. It is as such that he is present to us in the Eucharist... The sacrificial state of Christ perdures even in his glorification' (pp.200-01).

To maintain this view O'Connor sets aside q.83 and offers two other texts from the Summa: IIIa, q.73, a.4, ad 3 and IIIa, q. 75, a.1. As we shall see, on casual acquaintance both these passages might appear to serve O'Connor's purpose, since they certainly characterize the Real Presence as the presence of Jesus who was sacrificed on Calvary. That neither provides sufficient support for his argument emerges when the contexts are more closely examined.

As translated in *The Hidden Manna* the first of these passages reads:

'This Sacrament is said to be a sacrifice inasmuch as it represents the very Passion of Christ. Moreover it is a Victim inasmuch as it contains Christ himself who is, as Ephesians 5:2 tells us, a "fragrant sacrifice" (S.Th., IIIa, q.73, a.4, ad 3).'

The Latin original runs:

'Ad tertium dicendum quod hoc sacramentum dicitur 'sacrificium', inquantum repraesentat ipsam passionem Christi. Dicitur autem 'hostia', inquantum continet ipsum Christum, qui est *hostia suavitatis*, ut dicitur Ephes.'

In O'Connor's translation the two sentences comprising the passage are made to appear connected, because *autem* is rendered as 'moreover', and *hostia* in the citation from Ephesians as 'sacrifice'. By these means O'Connor leaves the impression that Thomas is saying that the sacrament is a sacrifice firstly by representation, but more importantly because it contains Christ in the condition of a victim. But the context makes clear that this impression is misleading.

Question 73 a.4 begins with the question 'Whether this sacrament [the Eucharist] is suitably called by various names?' Following his usual method St Thomas suggests three grounds for answering no: (1) the sacrament is a unity, and so should not be given many names; (2) the terms used of the Eucharist do not distinguish it because they also apply to the other sacraments, for instance the term 'sacrifice'; (3) *hostia* ('host' or 'victim') is not an appropriate option because it means the same as sacrifice. Then in

the *responsio* St Thomas shows that different names used of the sacrament apply fittingly to its different aspects. Accordingly, in the answer to the third objection, from which O'Connor's quotation is taken, he states that sacrifice and victim are both appropriately used of the Eucharist because they refer to different aspects of the sacrament, 'sacrifice' to the representation of Calvary, and 'victim' (or 'host') to the sacrament as containing Christ. So we can see that it is not his intention here to establish a connection between the two terms; rather the opposite, he is telling us that they express two concepts that can be distinguished.

Thus the context makes clear that the purpose of the word '*autem*' is to set apart the two words and their meanings; and this purpose is usually heeded by translators. For instance, in the early twentieth-century Blackfriars translation it is translated 'but'. O'Connor's rendering *autem* as 'moreover' actually frustrates St Thomas's purpose, which is to emphasize that the terms 'sacrifice' and 'victim' express distinct ideas. Similarly fidelity to St Thomas's purpose necessitates translating 'hostia' as 'host' or 'victim' on both the occasions it is used in the second sentence, whereas to translate the second use as 'sacrifice' confuses the issue and helps create an artificial link with the first sentence. Here is the more literal Blackfriars translation of the whole passage:

'This sacrament is called a *Sacrifice* inasmuch as it represents the Passion of Christ; but it is termed a Host inasmuch as it contains Christ, Who is a *host*... of *sweetness* (Eph. v. 2).'

So all we learn from this passage regarding the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist is what the first sentence, taken alone, says: that the sacrament is called a sacrifice because it represents the Passion, in other words, just what St Thomas expounds in III, q.83.

That Christ contained in the sacrament can be referred to as a host or victim, as stated in the second (Latin) sentence, doesn't necessarily tell us, even implicitly, that the sacrifice depends upon the Real Presence. St Thomas isn't necessarily saying that the sacrament contains Christ in a wounded or victimised state; he could simply be saying that it contains Christ, who was (in Palestine in the first century) a victim for our salvation. Of course the language is very striking – St Thomas clearly holds that it is appropriate to describe the Real Presence as a victim when discussing the Eucharist. But this could be read as a side-effect of St Thomas's vigorous Eucharistic realism rather than an attempt to attribute woundedness to the Real Presence. Because the Eucharist is the whole Christ, it is feasible and suitable to apply to it language used of Jesus in the Bible.

O'Connor's second passage is as follows:

'[It is appropriate that the Body and Blood of Christ be truly present in this Sacrament] because of the perfection of the New Covenant. The sacrifices of the Old Covenant contained the true sacrifice of Christ's Passion only in symbol... Therefore it was necessary that the sacrifice of the New Covenant, instituted by Christ, have something more, namely, that it contain Christ himself who has suffered and contain him not only in symbol but in reality (S.Th., IIIa, q. 75, a.1).'

In the original:

'Hoc autem conveniens est, primo quidem, perfectioni Novae Legis. Sacrificia enim Veteris Legis illud verum sacrificium passionis Christi continebant solum in figura: secundum illud *Heb. X, Umbram habens lex futurorum bonorum, non ipsam rerum imaginem*. Et ideo oportuit ut aliquid plus haberet sacrificium novae legis a Christo institutum; ut scilicet contineret ipsum passum, non solum in significatione vel figura, sed etiam in rei veritate.'

This second passage helps O'Connor's case only if we assume the point at issue, that when St Thomas says the Eucharist contains Christ who has suffered, he means the Real Presence contains Jesus in a wounded condition. This would be one way to establish St Thomas's contrast, between the Old Testament sacrifices on the one side, inadequate because merely symbolic, and the Mass on the other, which is a sacrifice containing Christ the victim in reality. But once again this seems a less compelling interpretation when the context is taken into account.

Thus we need to note that this passage is part of the *responsio* to the question 'Whether the body of Christ be in this sacrament in very truth, or merely as in a figure or sign?' (q.75, a.1) The subject matter is the sacrament's status as Real Presence and not its status as sacrifice. The question asks whether Christ is really present, or whether he is present as a sign or figure, as he was (in St Thomas' view) in the Old Testament sacrifices. It is not asking whether the *sacrifice* of the Mass is present as a sign or figure on the one hand, or in some 'more real' way on the other. The question actually asked receives a sufficient answer simply by bringing forward the doctrine of the Real Presence. The superiority of the Mass over the Old Testament sacrifices is fully established by the Real Presence of Jesus under the sacramental species (in contrast to his Old Testament presence merely as a sign) even without the supposition that the Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament has, in whatever sense, a quality of woundedness. In short this passage,

like the first, does not oblige us to suppose that St Thomas believed the Passion and Death of Christ to be made present in any other way than as a sign, or ritual image.

What O'Connor hopes to find in both the passages from the *Summa* is the use of language which can be taken to imply that the Real Presence has the status, or inner nature, of a wounded victim. But we have seen that the passages fully serve their purpose in the argumentation of the *Summa* without this implication having to be drawn. Because Christ died on Calvary, the Real Presence is certainly the presence of a person who was historically a victim, *ipsum passum*, 'the one who suffered'. So using victim language of the Real Presence needn't necessarily imply the possession of a hidden quality of woundedness.

To clarify the matter further it is worth considering other passages in the *Summa* which are not mentioned by O'Connor, but which bear on O'Connor's theory. One apparently favouring him is as follows:

'The Eucharist is the perfect sacrament of Our Lord's Passion, as containing Christ himself who endured it (S.Th., IIIa, q.73, a.5, ad.2).'

'Eucharistia est sacramentum perfectum Dominicae passionis, tanquam continens ipsum Christum passum.'

However the same hermeneutic applies. St Thomas is asserting that the Eucharist contains the Christ who suffered at Calvary, without necessarily asserting the woundedness of Christ's Real Presence. It is the *perfect* sacrament of the Passion because it is accompanied by the Real Presence of the Christ who died on Calvary, not because the Real Presence lends extra victimhood to the victimhood signified by the ceremonial of the Mass.

On the other side there are certainly many passages which run counter to O'Connor's theory in that they take for granted the centrality of signification for St Thomas's view of the Mass as the representation of Calvary, as anyone reading the *Summa* on the Eucharist will quickly discover.

It is worth focussing on one passage because it runs so clearly counter to O'Connor's view, and so strikingly manifests St Thomas's thinking on the way in which the liturgy, rather than the consecrated elements, makes the Passion present at Mass. In the second article of question 83 he considers the question 'Whether the time for celebrating this mystery [the Eucharist] has been properly determined?' The second reason advanced for a negative answer is that 'since this sacrament is commemorative of Our Lord's Passion, it seems unsuitable... to be entirely omitted on Good Friday'. St Thomas replies that the

objection fails because 'The figure ceases on the advent of the reality'. On Good Friday, he says, 'Our Lord's Passion is recalled as it was really accomplished', presumably referring wholly or mainly to the reading from St John's gospel which was part of the liturgy for that day. By contrast the Eucharist only provided 'a figure and a representation' of the Passion, and so could not compete.

If O'Connor's theory were correct, the Good Friday liturgy could hardly provide a closer approach to the Passion than the Real Presence of Jesus himself at any Mass. So St Thomas's succinct phrase – 'the figure ceases on the advent of the reality' – shows that he did not think in O'Connor's terms at all. For him the 'reality' is the detailed representation of the Passion and Death delivered to the imagination by the Good Friday liturgy, and the 'figure' the distilled representation of Calvary found in the ceremonial symbols of Mass. In short, in dealing with the specific question of the identity of the Mass with Calvary St Thomas thought primarily in terms of what the liturgy, and not the Real Presence, achieved.

Senses of Victimhood

O'Connor's texts from the *Summa*, then, need not imply that St Thomas thought that the Real Presence possesses the condition of a wounded victim. However, it remains possible that St Thomas could have put a double connotation on the term victim – implying *not only* that the Real Presence is the presence of Jesus who suffered and died in Palestine, *but also* that this Presence is invisibly wounded. So we need to look more closely at St Thomas's theology to be sure that the Real Presence does not, in his view, have the sort of quality of woundedness that O'Connor depends upon. In fact two lines of argument found in St Thomas's writings appear to rule out the notion that the Real Presence could have victim status in this strong sense of the term.

(1) It seems that St Thomas's doctrine of 'natural concomitance' precludes the notion. It is clear from III, q.78 a.3, ad.1 that St Thomas believed that the liturgical representation of the death of Jesus depends upon 'the blood being consecrated apart from the body; because it was by the Passion that the blood was separated from the body'. But according to his doctrine of concomitance each species once consecrated contains the whole Christ: body, blood, soul and divinity (III, q.76 a.1). So the Real Presence cannot itself have victim status in the strong sense, because body and blood are together and not separated in each species of the consecrated sacrament. Thus the doctrine of concomitance necessitates the ritual image, otherwise Calvary is not made present.

(2) Of course it is true that for St Thomas the body of Jesus made present under each species at the consecration is the glorified heavenly body of Jesus, and that this heavenly body bears the scars of the Passion. But these wounds cannot straightforwardly be identified with the wounds which caused Jesus's death on the cross. The cavities in the hands, feet and side might look and feel like wounds (St Thomas the Apostle recognized them as the outcome of Calvary), but they are not wounds as we know them. Though they do not heal, they do not cause suffering and death, unlike the wounds of the Passion. Rather, the glorified wounds function as trophies – reminders of Christ's victory over sin and death – and not as reminders of the traumas of the Passion; they are reasons for joy, and not for sorrow. In heaven the spectacle of Our Lord's wounds cannot possibly be a cause of grief for the blessed, and so his Real Presence in the Mass cannot have the kind of victimised condition which might somehow move members of the Church militant to recall Jesus' suffering and death.¹⁴ In short, to use Valkenburg's term, the Resurrection brought about a mutation in Our Lord's body, and thereby deprived it of victim status in the strong sense of the term.¹⁵ For St Thomas, the external ritual, especially the twofold consecration, is the most important means by which Christians are provoked by attendance at Mass to remember Christ's Passion. The liturgy *as seen* is what (in principle) stirs up in us that sorrow for sin and love for Jesus which fits us for a worthy communion.¹⁶

For St Thomas, then, in the *Summa*, the Mass is a *sacrifice* identical with Calvary primarily because the Passion and Death of Christ are symbolised by the ritual action, especially the dual consecration. In his book O'Connor asserts that we can find in the *Summa* a further and more important basis of identity in the idea that the Real Presence is characterized by a hidden woundedness. This theory is based primarily on texts in which St Thomas uses the term 'victim' or 'the one who suffered' for the Real Presence. But we have seen that this usage is not enough to prove O'Connor's point. Two arguments have also been sketched to suggest that St Thomas's theology of the Real Presence precludes in principle the attribution of victim status in the *strong sense* to the Blessed Sacrament. These findings are not really surprising. *Prima facie* it would seem an artificial and implausible exercise to build from materials in the *Summa* an argument which St Thomas did not advance himself, though occasion called for it.¹⁷ Even more fundamentally, of course, we noted at the outset that the presence of a victim was not enough for St Thomas to establish the existence of a sacrifice, but only an oblation. O'Connor tries to smuggle a victim-definition of sacrifice back into St Thomas, neglecting the saint's requirement that for a sacrifice to happen, something must be *done*, and not merely something *offered*. For St Thomas the nature of the Real Presence (as Christ's glorified not his traumatised body) means that the

only way in which Christ as victim is present in the strong sense is through the symbolism generated by the liturgical action.

It is true that St Thomas's answer to III, q.83, a.1 has two parts, and I have focused only on the first, in which he asserts that 'the celebration of this sacrament is an image representing Christ's Passion'. He goes on to state that the sacrifice of Calvary is also identical with the sacrifice of the Mass because 'by this sacrament we are made partakers of the fruit of Our Lord's Passion' through actual or spiritual communion. But it has to be noted that identity through representation is the first argument offered, and the redemptive benefits the second. This is probably not a list in arbitrary order. St Thomas had to regard the ceremonial identity as the chief source of identity, because, as David Berger shows, he believed that 'the sanctification of man is directed ultimately to the service of the rite', and not the reverse.

'Just as the entire life and passion of Christ was directed primarily and comprehensively to the glorification of God, and as even the salvation of man is subordinated to this goal, likewise in the liturgy the soteriological purpose of the rite (*santificatio hominis*) is totally subordinated to its latreutical purpose (*cultus divinus*)... The two inseparable objectives of the liturgy, sanctification and homage, do not simply run side by side, but have an ordered relationship to one another; the act of grace is subordinate to the rite (David Berger, *Thomas Aquinas and the Liturgy*, 2004, pp.73-4, 87).'

Incarnational Religion

In the *Summa* St Thomas asserts that the Eucharist was instituted to leave man 'a memorial of our Lord's Passion as accomplished' (IIIa, q.73, a.5, ad.3). We only properly appreciate his Eucharistic theology if we recognize that for him the *substantial* Real Presence in itself provides no such way of remembering, because our senses cannot take us beyond the appearances of bread and wine. A reminder has to be something which is manifest and external, but the Real Presence (in its substance) is secret and interior – the 'Hidden Manna' of O'Connor's title. Consequently, another means of bringing the presence of Calvary to mind is needed, one accessible to the senses. And so what Jesus left, and the Church through the Holy Spirit developed, was the combination of words and ritual which constitute the Mass.

That Jesus himself intended the ritual as well as the words of the dual consecration to be significant seems to be magisterial teaching. The Fathers of Trent inform us that Christ instituted the Mass 'that he might leave to his beloved spouse the Church a *visible* sacrifice, such as the

nature of man requires'.¹⁸ This text means just what it says, as Michael McGuckian has recently emphasized: 'A correct interpretation of the doctrine of the Council of Trent... must maintain that the sacrificial character of the Mass is to be sought on the plane of the visible liturgical action'.¹⁹ One major theologian who has given due weight to Christ's intention regarding the ritual as well as the verbal dimension of the consecrations is Matthias Scheeben (1835-88). According to the digest of his theology edited by Wilhelm and Scannell, he taught as follows: 'Considering the glorified state of the victim on the one hand, and on the other the manner in which the human memory is awakened by sense perceptions, it seems impossible to devise a better commemoration of the death on the Cross. The distinctness and expressiveness of the words of institution, "This is My blood which is shed; My body which is given (= sacrificed)," leave no doubt that *in the mind of Christ* the very essence of the commemorative sacrifice lies in the separate presence of body and blood on the altar.'²⁰

This point presumably helps to explain why, from later patristic times to the introduction of a wholly vernacular liturgy in 1970, the Church's hierarchy judged the ceremonies of Mass to be pastorally more helpful than the words. For 1500 years generation after generation of Popes, Bishops, saints and spiritual writers saw no urgent case for introducing the vernacular. They seem to have assumed that the overwhelming majority of the laity, with no knowledge of Latin, and unable even to hear most of the words used at Mass (including the consecration formulae), could find in the ceremonial alone a sufficient help to identifying the Mass with Jesus' Passion and Death.

Hence, for instance, we can see that the medieval innovation of elevating the sacred species represented a huge step forward for lay participation in the liturgy, because the new practice (accompanied by bells) ensured that the most of the congregation knew when the twofold consecration took place. Of course the ceremonial could only function as a means of recalling Calvary if those attending Mass could understand its symbolic meaning; but from the early medieval period to the mid-twentieth century, a voluminous spiritual literature existed to bring this about.²¹ Great numbers of saints, theologians and writers of popular catechetics contributed to a specific genre of 'the spiritual exegesis of the liturgy', and it is plausible to suppose that until relatively recently some familiarity with this genre or its content was very widespread.²²

Given that liturgical reformers after Vatican II emphasized intellectual participation much more than visual, it is worth noting that the more traditional approach had been at the forefront of magisterial attention only shortly before. The twentieth-century liturgical movement had included a revival of interest in the symbolic value of the Mass ceremonial

and this found striking endorsement, specifically in relation to the consecration ritual, in Pius XII's 1947 encyclical *Mediator Dei*:

'... the divine wisdom has devised a way in which our Redeemer's sacrifice is marvellously shown forth by external signs symbolic of death. By the "transubstantiation" of bread into the body of Christ and of wine into His blood both His body and blood are rendered really present; but the eucharistic species under which He is present symbolize the violent separation of His body and blood, and so a commemorative showing forth of the death which took place in reality on Calvary is repeated in each Mass, because by distinct representations Christ Jesus is signified and shown forth in the state of victim.²³

It must be significant that John Paul II draws on this passage of *Mediator Dei* in the very encyclical in which he laments the loss of awareness of the sacrificial dimension of Mass. He even borrows (with acknowledgment) Pius XII's phrase '*memorialis demonstratio*' for his reiteration of the traditional teaching on the basis of the identity of the Mass with the sacrifice of the Cross. Since the teaching of Pius XII on sacramental signification clearly derives from St Thomas (S.T. III, q.76, a2, ad 1, q.78 a.3, ad.1), recalling Catholics to *Mediator Dei* is once again to underline the Church's debt to St Thomas for her understanding of the issue.²⁴ It would be interesting to know whether Pope John Paul II himself had III, q.83 of the *Summa* in mind.

Thus it is possible to contend that one effect of the type of misinterpretation of St Thomas exemplified by O'Connor's book is to obscure the showing forth of Calvary by diverting attention away from the external ritual of Mass, especially the dual consecration, as a means of imaging Christ's sacrifice. How many children currently have the simple and straightforward significance of this ritual explained to them when being prepared for First Communion or Confirmation? If the sacrifice is fittingly seen chiefly as an aspect of the Real Presence, as Mgr O'Connor and others maintain, then the tradition upholding the symbolic meaning of the liturgy might safely be downplayed. But if they are wrong, then the moment may have arrived, taking a hint from the late Holy Father, to pay it renewed attention.

A Final Word: Ancient Ceremonial Revisited

Given that the rite of dual consecration has such importance for St Thomas, perhaps we should also pay him serious attention when he explains the symbolism of other parts of the Mass ceremonial. (In doing this he was typical of the ceremonial exegetes.) Fandal points out that St Thomas uses same verb 'to represent' both when making the general point about the Mass imaging Christ's

sacrifice (in the *responsio* of q.83, a.1), and when explaining how the signs of cross made by the priest during the canon call to mind particular aspects of the Passion, Death and Resurrection (q.83, a.5).²⁵ As these signings were dropped from the reformed version of the Roman rite in 1967, they are now unfamiliar territory to many Catholics, and their significance for previous generations largely forgotten. So it may be of value to finish with another quotation from the *Summa* (IIIa, q.83, a.5, ad.3):

'The priest, in celebrating the mass, makes use of the sign of cross to signify Christ's Passion which was ended upon the cross. Now, Christ's Passion was accomplished in certain stages.

First of all there was Christ's betrayal, which was the work of God, of Judas, and of the Jews; and this is signified by the triple sign of the cross at the words, *These gifts, these presents, these holy unspotted sacrifices*.

Secondly, there was the selling of Christ. Now he was sold to the Priests, to the Scribes, and to the Pharisees: and to signify this the threefold sign of the cross is repeated, at the words, *blessed, enrolled, ratified*. Or again, to signify the price for which he was sold, viz., thirty pence. And a double cross is added at the words – *that it may become to us the Body and the Blood*, etc., to signify the person of Judas the seller, and of Christ Who was sold.

Thirdly, there was the foreshadowing of the Passion at the last supper. To denote this, in the third place, two crosses are made, one in consecrating the body, the other in consecrating the blood; each time while saying, *He blessed*.

Fourthly, there was Christ's Passion itself. And so in order to represent His five wounds, in the fourth place, there is a fivefold signing of the cross at the words, *a pure Victim, a holy Victim, a spotless Victim, the holy bread of eternal life, and the cup of everlasting salvation*.

Fifthly, the outstretching of Christ's body, and shedding of the blood, and the fruits of the Passion, are signified by the triple signing of the cross at the words, *as many as shall receive the body and blood, may be filled with every blessing*, etc.

Sixthly, Christ's threefold prayer upon the cross is represented; one for His persecutors when He said, *Father, forgive them*; the second for deliverance from death, when He cried, *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* the third referring to His

entrance into glory, when He said, *Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit*; and in order to denote these there is a triple signing with the cross made at the words, *Thou dost sanctify, quicken, bless*.

Seventhly, the three hours during which He hung upon the cross, that is, from the sixth to the ninth hour, are represented; in signification of which we make once more a triple sign of the cross at the words, *Through Him, and with Him, and in Him*.

Eighthly, the separation of His soul from the body is signified by the two subsequent crosses made over the chalice.

Ninthly, the resurrection on the third day is represented by the three crosses made at the words – *May the peace of the Lord be ever with you.*'

- 1 *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, CTS translation, 2003, p.9.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p.11
- 3 As customary, 'Calvary' will be taken as shorthand for Jesus's Passion and Death.
- 4 K.Gamber, *The Modern Rite: Collected Essays on the Reform of the Liturgy*, 2002, pp.25-6. Gamber states that this practice was pioneered by Martin Luther, who took the idea from artists' inaccurate representations of the Last Supper. See J.Hasting, *Last Supper*, Phaidon, 2000, for examples of such artworks.
- 5 E.g. J.L.Farthing, *Thomas Aquinas and Gabriel Biel*, 1988, D.Bagchi, *Luther's Earliest Opponents*, 1991, P.J.Fitzpatrick, *In Breaking of Bread: The Eucharist and Ritual*, Cambridge, 1993.
- 6 E.g. B.Byron, *A Theology of Eucharistic Sacrifice*, Hales Corners, 1974, p.55. Following the Fathers, St Thomas reckoned the representative nature of the Eucharist to be the prime source of its identity with Calvary, but Protestants believed the Eucharist could not be one with Calvary because only representative; see D.C.Fandal, OP, *The Essence of the Eucharistic Sacrifice*, River Forest, 1960, p.5. This striking reversal of view seems to have affected Catholic sacramental theology almost as radically as it did Protestant.
- 7 Eg.Paul McPartlan, *Sacrament of Salvation*, 1995, p.102; A.Fortescue, *The Wisdom of Adrian Fortescue*, ed. M.Davies, Fort Collins, 1999, pp.367-9. J.A.Jungman was apparently so incensed by St Thomas' teaching on sacramental signification in relation to the sacrifice that he denied his authorship of the relevant section of the *Summa* (III, q.83): *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, New York, 1951, vol.i, p.114, n.61.
- 8 A plethora of introductory studies have appeared in English in the last few years, e.g. by Aidan Nichols, Brian Davies, Nicholas Healy, Ralph McInerny, Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering.
- 9 For a fuller discussion of St Thomas on sacrifice see Fandal, op.cit. Quotations from the *Summa* are from the early 20th century Blackfriars translation published by Burns Oates & Washbourne, unless otherwise stated.
- 10 S.T. III, q.48 a.4
- 11 O'Connor, *The Hidden Manna*, 2nd edition, 2005, p.200.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p.198, my italics.
- 13 *Ibid.*, pp.199-200. The same view appears in older authorities, e.g. W.Farrell & M.J.Healy, *My Way of Life* (1952), p.541: '... this sacrament contains Christ Himself *and the Passion of Christ*' (my italics).
- 14 III, q.54 a.4: '... He kept his scars not from inability to heal them but *to wear them as an everlasting trophy of His victory*'. And see q, 54 a 4 ad 2: 'Although those openings of the wounds break the continuity of the tissue, still the greater beauty of glory compensates for all this, so that the body is not less entire, but more perfected' and ad 1: 'a special comeliness will appear in the places scarred by the wounds'.
- 15 W.Valkenburg, *Words of the Living God: Place and Function of Holy Scripture in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Leuven, 2000, p.69. This mutation accounts for the absence in Catholic iconography of portrayals of the monstrosity on the cross, or in the crib. The cross and the crib are signs of Christ's humiliation in becoming man, and so an inappropriate context for his glorified, post-Resurrection body. The idea of a significant change is commonplace in the tradition. See, for example, Charles de Condren (1588-1641): 'the body of Jesus Christ... at the resurrection... entered into a more perfect state, higher, holier, more absolutely consecrated to God' (*The Priesthood and Sacrifice of Jesus Christ*, 1899, p.81).
- 16 See III, q.46, a.3, responsio: St Thomas argues that Christ had to endure his Passion because, in the first place, 'man knows thereby how much God loves him, and is thereby stirred to love him in return.'
- 17 Cf.David N.Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradition*, 1992, p.227.
- 18 *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*. Transl. H.J.Schroeder, OP. (1950), p.144, my italics. C.f. M.Levering, *Sacrifice and Community: Jewish Offering and Christian Eucharist* (2005), p.90: 'In teaching human beings about eternal realities in accord with the manner of human knowing through sensible things, God works through the visible sign to make present the invisible reality'.
- 19 M.McGuckian, SJ, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass: A Search for an Acceptable Notion of Sacrifice*. (2005), p.6.
- 20 J.Wilhelm & T.B.Scannell, *A Manual of Catholic Theology based on Scheeben's "Dogmatik"*. 2nd edn (1901), ii,456, my italics. I haven't checked this against Scheeben's original.
- 21 E.g. O.B.Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages*, Baltimore, 1965; G.Macy, *Treasures from the Storeroom: Medieval Religion and the Eucharist*, Collegeville, 1999. Hardison notes that popular devotional manuals contained allegorical interpretations of ceremonial right up to the mid 1950s (p.39).
- 22 J.Saward, 'The Cosmic Liturgy and the Way of the Lamb: Retrieving the Tradition of Spiritual Exegesis of the Mass' *Antiphon* Vol.7, No.1, 2002, pp.18-28.
- 23 Para.74 (C.T.S paragraph numbering and translation by G.D.Smith, 1967 printing). It is this teaching of St Thomas Aquinas and Pope Pius XII which Paul McPartlan dismisses as 'pious nonsense': see note 7 above. R.Moloney comments thus on its origins: 'While it is disputed to what extent this notion is scriptural, it is certainly patristic teaching, for instance Gregory of Nazianzen, Letter 171 (PG 37, 280).' R.Moloney, SJ, *The Eucharist*, 1995, p.148, n.10. For another patristic source see Hardison, p.36, n.5.
- 24 See also Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei* (1965), para.27: 'by means of the eucharistic mystery, the sacrifice of the cross, achieved once on Calvary, is marvellously symbolised, continually recalled to the memory, and its saving virtue is applied to the remission of sins...' (translated by Byron, op.cit., p.70).
- 25 D.C.Fandal, pp.34-5, notes 56 & 65.

From Pope Benedict's recent APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION
SACRAMENTUM CARITATIS

11..... The remembrance of his perfect gift consists not in the mere repetition of the Last Supper, but in the Eucharist itself, that is, in the radical newness of Christian worship. In this way, Jesus left us the task of entering into his "hour." "The Eucharist draws us into Jesus' act of self-oblation. More than just statically receiving the incarnate Logos, we enter into the very dynamic of his self-giving." (21) Jesus "draws us into himself." (22) The substantial conversion of

bread and wine into his body and blood introduces within creation the principle of a radical change, a sort of "nuclear fission," to use an image familiar to us today, which penetrates to the heart of all being, a change meant to set off a process which transforms reality, a process leading ultimately to the transfiguration of the entire world, to the point where God will be all in all (cf. 1 Cor 15:28).

The Relationship Between the Passover and the Mass: Catholic and Protestant Understandings

D. Peter Burrows

Fr Peter Burrows explores the unique fulfilment of the Jewish Passover by the Sacrifice of the Mass as understood in the Catholic tradition. He is a priest of Plymouth Diocese now lecturing in Human Development at Allen Hall Seminary, London. He gives retreats and lectures in Sacred Scripture throughout the UK.

“Sacrifice and priesthood, together with all their accoutrements belong at the heart of Christianity from the beginning and pertain directly to Holy Week and the Mass.”

In recent times there has been a tendency in the Catholic Church towards a misunderstanding of the relationship between the Mass and the Jewish Feast of Passover. It is a tendency suggestive of a Protestant mind-set. I speak here of a *misunderstanding* of the relationship rather than the actual relationship of the two; unquestionably the Christian and the Jewish liturgies are related.

The Gospels and the testimonies of St. Paul, together with the ancient liturgical and theological recollections of the Church make it unmistakable that the events of Holy Week culminating in Easter happened at the Feast of the Passover with its attendant feasts of Unleavened Bread and the Pentecost coupled by the counting of the omer. This is not an historical accident, but a matter of divine plan. Yet we must ask just what about the Passover makes it the particular Jewish (or Judean) feast that offers the appropriate grounding for all that we Catholics understand about Jesus and the Sacrifice of the Mass.

No Sacrifice in Reformed Passover

This writer and family have had the great joy of celebrating the Passover some five or six times.¹ These were times of great mystery and profound joy. We “belonged” at those times to some life that transcended our ordinary and relatively short individual mundane life-experiences, as did everyone gathered at table,

The Passover table was always set with the usual and often only commemorative items: a dry lamb’s shank, a boiled egg, parsley and salt water. There were also some comestibles: unleavened bread (stacked on a silver platter in abundance and covered with a beautiful cloth), sweet red wine (including a cup at the empty chair for Elijah the prophet), moror (very hot horseradish) and charoses (chopped fruits and nuts mixed with wine). These were ceremonial and taken before the normal meal, which was usually a brisket of beef and all manner of Jewish goodies, always mother’s specialties and the family’s favourites. The elder of the gathering, usually abba (papa) reclined in his large and comfortable chair and directed the events of the evening, events which included prayers, readings, funny and serious songs, a question and answer session, counting the plagues on the Egyptians, and children’s games with prizes. The youngest got to ask the special question: “Why is this night different from all others?”

This table was laid according to Jewish and family traditions that date from some time after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE (or AD, if you’re so minded). What is important for us Christians is that more than likely Jesus would not have recognised much about this modern table. The Passover table as a feature of the celebration arose many years after Jesus’ Ascension and is a product of the later

¹ This was with my beloved teacher, the noted Jewish liturgist and scholar Rabbi Jakob J. Petuchowski of sacred memory, and his family, and with my precious friends Miki and Sam November, peace upon them. They were associated with the US rabbinical seminary (HUC-JIR) where I did my doctoral studies.

Rabbis' attempt to continue Jewish worship and life after the destruction of the Temple. Clearly, the table is in no way an altar, the meal in no way sacramental and the leader in no way a priest (unless his surname is Cohen or Levy).²

Development Further Away From Original Meaning

It was this very lack of sacrament, priest and altar that appealed to the founders of the Reformation and its scholarship, especially its biblical scholarship. They were bound to be rid of priests and their altars and sacraments – and most of all, the whole notion of sacrifice, all of which they found so repugnant in the Roman Catholic Church. Thus the Passover associations of Holy Week and Easter were to them clear evidence that the Catholic Church had perverted the true intention of Scripture (for them, the sole authority).

The sacrificial cults of the Temple with its priests and festivals, also to be found in abundance in Scripture, were naturally a difficulty for these reformers. But not to be frustrated with these facts of Scripture, Reformation scholarship, especially 19th century German scholarship, began a new study of the Old Testament, especially the five books of Moses. It claimed that these scriptures were not a single narrative but a patchwork of literatures from various sources put in the mouths of Moses and the prophets. They called it the Documentary Hypothesis of higher (literary) criticism.³

Their next step was to lump all of those sources mentioning sacrifice, priests, altars, and liturgies together into a single strand which they called the Priestly document, or "P". Then they discerned that the Priestly document was written during Israel's Exile in Babylon and represented the pale and empty shell of Israel's religion, a humanly-devised religion with no divine authority or substance. This "bankrupt" religion, these scholars showed, was a kind of religious wasteland through which God prepared for an entirely new religion, discontinuous with Israel's former religious glories, rejective of the Jews and their covenants and something

entirely different – Christianity.⁴ But the Catholic Church (and this was the actual empty cult which the Protestant reformers wished to attack) was then judged to have kept the old and useless ways of priests, altars, sacrifice and the entire old and meaningless Temple cult – after all, had God not brought about the destruction of the Temple and all its works? Had not the priests crucified Jesus? St. Paul, the un-priestly Rabbi suited them perfectly. Of course, John's Gospel and the Epistles of St. James and to the Hebrews were somewhat suspect, but New Testament scholarship could (and did) handle the discrepancies.

Passover without Sacrifice: the Protestant Solution

Passover triumphed as the reformer's "Feast of choice", even though Israel had only celebrated the Passover once in Egypt, once just before the beginning of the 40 years in the wilderness⁵, once at Gilgal after they had crossed the Jordan into the promised land at the end of the 40 years⁶, and probably again only during the great reformation of King Josiah in Jerusalem hundreds of years later⁷. Assuredly, we have little idea how it was celebrated or kept in Jesus' day at all. But for the reformers, the Passover table-feast was a God-send.

Consider the advantages for Protestant liturgy and worship. No more priests, no more talk of sacrifice, no more altars, only plain and unadorned crosses, no vestments or strange rites and languages, no order, pure democracy, political correctness and every man doing what is right in his own eyes. One might argue that the "make-it-up-as-you-go" and entertainment factors have become the order of the day. The altar has become a table, with candlesticks (or not, as you wish – but they are like the candles on the banquet table at any rate) with (or without) a nice tablecloth. Without sacraments it is possible to use anything for the meal, grape juice is the favourite of abstemious folk. A Methodist minister friend once used Ritz crackers and orange juice for a eucharist. Since there are no priests any more (even though you might want to call someone a "priest") for sacrifice, anyone who is head of family can preside at the Christian Passover table – even mother, *has v'shalom!* And certainly there is no suggestion of sacrifice and of giving something up.

2 The great Anglican liturgist, Dom Gregory Dix in his *The Shape of the Liturgy* (Dacre Press of A. & C. Black, Ltd.: London, 1945), proposes that Jesus celebrated a "Fellowship Meal" rather than a Passover meal with his disciples, but he knows this chaburah meal from the writings of the rabbis some 125 years after the destruction of the Temple. And in effect Dix cuts off the Passover meal from the Eucharist in order to accommodate John's Gospel's lack of a Passover meal.

3 A brief but fulsome and readable summary of the Documentary Hypothesis may be found online in an article "Did Moses Write the Pentateuch" by Don Closson of the Probe Ministries of Richardson, Texas – <http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/moses.html>. Closson lists a few of the many criticisms of this hypothesis over the years, though this approach to biblical scholarship continues to be normative teaching in protestant seminaries and sadly, in many Catholic seminaries as well. Many respected Jewish biblical scholars for over a century have called it the "higher anti-Semitism"!

4 Thus giving rise to Jewish identification of this scholarship as anti-Semitic.

5 Numbers 9 – and then, some kept it on the wrong month.

6 Joshua 10:5ff

7 "No such Passover had been kept either when the judges were ruling Israel or during the times of the kings of Israel and Judah", II Kings 23:21f

Problems with this Interpretation of Passover

One boulder could not be pulled out of this new-ploughed field, however. And it is a boulder put there by St. Paul himself. In I Corinthians 5:7 he declares: “As Christians you are unleavened Passover bread; for indeed our Passover has begun; *the sacrifice is offered* – Christ himself,” or “Christ our Passover is *sacrificed* for us, therefore let us keep the feast.”

The usual Protestant solution to this problem is put this way: “This leads Paul to speak of Christ as the lamb sacrificed at Passover.”⁸ Alas, this will not do!” The lambs slaughtered at the first Passover were *not* sacrifices. Their blood was smeared on the doorposts to keep the angel of death out of Hebrew houses⁹ and their roasted flesh was to be eaten and the leftovers to be burnt. Nowhere is it suggested that these lambs were sacrifices, much less offerings for sin. Nor does the smearing of blood on the lintels seem to ever extend as a feature of the keeping of Passover in the future.¹⁰ Furthermore, the “lamb” could be a goat or, later, a calf. There is no avoiding the fact that the Passover table celebration, from the very beginning, has nothing in its celebration to suggest, even remotely, the forgiveness of sin. Nor do any of the commandments of how Passover is to be kept ever imply that by doing them sin is affected. In fact, originally there was not even a table, as the meat was to be roasted and eaten standing and dressed for immediate travel.

Another stumbling block in the field for those of the Protestant persuasion is the Epistle to the Hebrews which insists on talking about priests and the high priest as a central feature of Christianity, whether it be according to the traditions of Aaron, of the wilderness, or of Melchizedek in the Solomonic Temple.

Sacrifice and priesthood, together with all their accoutrements belong at the heart of Christianity from the beginning and pertain directly to Holy Week and the Mass.

The Mass

How does the Passover, in its traditional meaning, fit in with the Mass? The relationship between the Mass as sacrifice and Holy Week with Passover requires first a proper understanding of what Passover is all about. It is not

8 Explanatory note on verse 7 by John C. Hurd, Trinity College, Toronto in *The New English Bible; Oxford Study Edition*, Samuel Sandmel, gen. ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 1976.
 9 An apotropaic and prophylactic use of the life blood of the animal to ward off the angel of death from Hebrew homes as it passed through Egypt taking their first-born just as Pharaoh had taken the lives of the first-born of Israel earlier.
 10 Exodus 12:21-25 might be interpreted as a ritual requirement that future celebrations of Passover might also include some re-iteration of the sprinkling of blood on the lintel, but this is very uncertain.

about the table and the meal; these are only the framework upon which is hung the real purpose of keeping Passover. The Hebrew name for the liturgy of Passover is Haggadah, the Story or the Recollection – Catholic liturgy calls it the *anamnesis*. The real purpose of the Passover is to re-iterate the entire story of everything from Israel’s first Passover in Egypt¹¹ all the way to the entry into the Promised Land, and the hope for the future expressed in the acclamation “Next year in Jerusalem”. The story is found in Exodus through the first chapters of the Book of Joshua. And it is why Israel did not keep the Passover in the time of Judges and Kings – they were making a new Story of the Promised Land and their life in it. Yet when that story began to pale in the latter days of the kingdom with constant threats of invasion and destruction, King Josiah ordained that they go back to the old Story of the wilderness and search for maps of renewal and restoration of the purity of the wilderness. Josiah was clearly seeking a “back to basics” retrospective, and Jesus, confronted by the same threats of Israel’s destruction by the Romans, is equally retrospective concerning the events of the Wilderness Story.

Following Josiah’s reformation we hear nothing of Passover until the exiles returned from Babylon, almost 100 years after Josiah’s reign. When the new Temple was finished, a great Passover celebration was held in the time of Ezra the Scribe with the eating of the Passover lambs. Then they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. Beyond this occasion, Scripture is silent.

From the beginning Israel is required by God to re-tell the Story regularly (in earlier times it was less frequently – perhaps every seven years) as though the story were a current event, so that every generation of children might become a part of the event.¹² Therefore, we must ask, “What happens in the Story that is significant for our everyday lives and how does this relate to Jesus the Christ and the Mass?” It is helpful I suggest to consider that Jesus revealed his Father’s understanding of the wilderness narrative in the Lord’s Prayer.

The Lord’s Prayer: Summary of the Wilderness Experience Narrative

Everything in the wilderness revolves around the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle. On the top of the Ark was the Mercy Seat, the very throne of God, with the

11 This first Passover is described in Exodus 12. It speaks of the angel of death “passing over” the homes of the Israelites as well as the hasty meal of roast meat, unleavened bread and bitter herbs eaten just before Moses leads the people out of Egypt through the Red Sea. Great stress is later placed on ridding every household of all leaven and fermentation before the feast.
 12 A primitive Passover narrative is to be found in Deuteronomy 26:1-11.

cherubim as armrests. Thus the Ark is the very presence of God on earth, the holy place and residence of His Name. It is God's throne, for He is the King of all the earth.

*Our Father Who art (really) in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name.
Thy kingdom come...*

The presence of God on earth and His concern for Israel are truly the first and primary issue of the wilderness tradition. These are not a motley of nomadic folk but a nation with their God as King, the Holy One of Israel. And He is approachable at His Seat of Mercy on the Ark, for He is also Israel's Father and adopted them in the wilderness.

Thy will be done, on earth as in heaven.

In the wilderness, unencumbered by the details of urban or farming life, Israel is able to receive God's Law, His will, on Mt. Sinai and through the explication of His servant Moses. "We will hearken to it and do it!" In the Ark were kept the tablets of the Law, the written testimony of the will of God and the agreement to keep it.

Give us this day our daily bread ...

In the Ark was kept some of the manna which sustained Israel for one day at a time and taught them faith in God. Don't worry about tomorrow's bread; as God gave it to you today, trust Him that He will provide again tomorrow.

And forgive us our sins as we forgive each other when they offend us.

In the Ark was also kept the almond staff of Aaron, the anointed High Priest (the Messiah) whose task it was to bring the forgiveness of sin through the sacrifice of the atonement lamb. Israel cannot live without regular reconciliation with God.

Lead us not into ways of temptation and deliver us from the hands of the evil inclination.

The movement of the Ark was the indication of God's leadership and invitation to follow Him. Because of the sin of the golden calf, God at first refused to go with His people; He offered, rather, to send an angel, "for I fear that I will annihilate you on the way, for you are a stubborn people." Moses intervened: "Indeed, if thou dost not go in person, do not send us up from here!" God relented: "All right, I will go with you in person and show you the way." God promises to be "Emmanu-el". Thus we read in Psalm 132: "Arise, O Lord, and come to thy resting place, thou and the

Ark of thy power (presence)." "The priests (Levites) carrying the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord stood firm on the dry bed in the middle of the Jordan; and all Israel passed over on dry ground until the whole nation had crossed over." (Joshua 3:17) It was at this place in the Jordan that Jesus was baptised by John.

Passover and the Sacrifice for Sin

What of sin and sacrifice? "Forgive us our sins" is a part of the Passover narrative indeed. The great and fundamental (original) Sin of the wilderness story occurs at the very moment that Moses is receiving the law but before he gives it to the people (and therefore has *nothing to do with law-breaking!*) It is SIN, not sins. Moses has led the people to the foot of Sinai and commands them to wait while he goes up the mountain to consult God. However, the people become afraid, (Jesus says more often "Do not be afraid" than even "Love one another" in the New Testament). Their fear leads them to make a calf of gold and to worship it as God, led by Moses' brother Aaron. The fundamental and original Sin of Israel (and indeed humankind generally), then, is clearly idolatry and replacing God with the God of Self and the fabrications of self. It is addressed by the First Great Commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart..."

God hears their liturgy of the calf and is furious, offering to wipe the people out and make a new people arise from Moses. Moses stands before God's wrath and pleads for time so that he can fix things, suggesting to God that wiping out a people whom He had just taken so much trouble in saving from Egypt would be very bad public relations in Egypt. God is temporarily assuaged. Moses rushes down the mountain, calls his brother Levites to himself, and begins to clean up the chaos of the idolatry in the camp. The Levites are at this point made the guardians of the Law and the order of God's people – they become the priests (sacrifice was not a major function of the levitical priests at the beginning).

Knowing that God is only on hold, Moses rushes back up the mountain and confronts God's anger again. He says: "This people have committed a great sin, making a god of gold." Now God already knows this, but the beginning of reconciliation is always confession of the actual sin and sorrow for it. Then Moses says: "If You will forgive them, please forgive (for they were afraid and didn't know what they were doing). But if You will not, if there is still an outstanding debt, *take my life in the stead of theirs.*" God replies that He likes the formula, one life for the many, but it will be the one who led the people who will make this sacrifice, namely Moses' brother Aaron. This is the

atonement sacrifice that restores the relationship with God, Aaron's life for the people's. Aaron becomes the High Priest of Israel at this point, whose major function is the offering of his life for the ransom of the people. Moses anoints him and pours the oil on his head so that it runs down his beard. Aaron is the Anointed One, the Messiah who suffers (allows) his life to be given annually for the people¹³ – the Suffering Servant.

The King Messiah of the House of David is a much later, non-wilderness institution which after Solomon applied only to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and while God made an everlasting covenant with David's house, the kings were, for the most part, more trouble than they were worth in Israel's tradition, and certainly only secondary.

What of the lamb? The liturgy of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement in the wilderness Passover narrative is that spelled out in Genesis 22 and the sacrifice of Isaac. God calls upon Abraham to return his son Isaac by sacrificing him, a clear invitation to Abraham to offer God his life in the future – “give me your son, your only son, the one who will be you in the next generation (whom you love).” As they travel to the mountain of sacrifice, Isaac says to his father: “Papa, I see the fire and the knife – and I'm carrying the wood of the sacrifice on my back (as Jesus later carried the cross) – but where is the young lamb for the sacrifice, Papa?” And Abraham replies, “God provides for Himself the young lamb for the sacrifice – my son.” Isaac is the God-provided lamb, the Lamb of God! Because he is born when Abraham was 100 and the barren Sarah 90, he is truly the God-provided son also. And when, after Abraham proves to God his fidelity concerning his future and Isaac suffers his life to be offered, God provides a substitute for the life of Isaac, a lamb caught by its horns in the thicket (which assures that it is unblemished). Abraham lays his hands on it and declares that the life of the lamb is in fact the extension of the life of Isaac – who is himself the extension of Abraham's life in the next generation. It is called “substitution” – “in the stead of” and is accomplished through the laying on of hands. We would call it ordination.

Later in Israel's tradition, the High Priest uses the casting of lots to choose the lamb of (for) God upon which he will lay his hands to make the lamb's life an extension of his own and, in the breaking of its body and the shedding of its blood be able to lay down his life in sacrifice for the atonement of the people's sin annually. All of this is a part of the Passover narrative and belongs to the tradition.

13 See below for the extension of Aaron's life to the sacrificial lamb through the laying on of hands.

Jesus the High Priest

Jesus does fulfil the promise of God to David regarding the throne, but this through his adoptive father Joseph. Yet kings, even in Israel, do not suffer their lives to be sacrificed, and of Jesus' kingly Messiahship it says in John's Gospel, “Jesus, aware that they meant to come and seize him to proclaim him king, withdrew again to the hills by himself.” (John 6:15). If I am a king, says he, “my kingdom is certainly not of this world.” There is no “messianic secret” here¹⁴ – he simply rejects this kingly messianic formulation.

Jewish males are always defined by their mother's pedigree anyway. In Luke's Gospel is the solution to the mystery. Mary, it says, is the cousin of Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist. Elizabeth (and thus Mary) is identified as a *daughter of Aaron* (and thus of the Tribe of Levi also). To Aaron's grandson Phineas, God made the following promise: “He (Phineas) and his descendants after him shall enjoy the (high) priesthood under a covenant *for all time – I grant him my security of tenure.*” (Numbers 25:11-13). On his mother's side, Jesus is truly the ancient Messiah of the House of Aaron, truly the great High Priest. And in the breaking of his body and the shedding of his blood he deals with sin, not just for Israel alone any longer, but for the whole world!

Jesus laid his hands on Peter, Peter upon his descendants; the Pope extends himself to his Bishops and they to their priests. The Sacrifice of the Mass is truly a part of Passover and is first worked, not at the table of the Last Supper, but on the altar of the cross on Good Friday. In John's Gospel Jesus' discourse at the Last Supper is called “the High Priestly prayer”. At table Jesus in effect said,¹⁵ “This, my body, will be broken (in sacrifice) tomorrow on the cross; this, my blood (life) will be poured out (my willing sacrifice which I suffer or permit or offer) for *the forgiveness of sin*, tomorrow on the cross.” The Catholic Sacrifice of the Mass is the work of Jesus the messianic High Priest on the cross at Passover, and, by extension/ordination the work of the priest at an altar, re-iterating that Sacrifice for the whole world at every time and place.

It is not a table and presidential thing; these are not enough.

14 The idea that Jesus kept his messiahship a secret from everyone until the Resurrection in Mark's Gospel was first proposed by William Wrede in 1901. In fact, Jesus denies rather than keeps secret any attempt to attribute to him a political messiahship and role simply because he is the High Priestly Messiah of the House of Aaron, not a king but a self-sacrifice for sin.

15 In Galilean Aramaic (as in Hebrew) which was probably the language of the Lord, there is no present tense of the verb “to be”. Thus, “This is my body/cup of my blood” is unlikely.

The *Novus Ordo*: A Timely Emphasis Upon Mercy

Dom Philippe Jobert OSB

Fr Jobert, Professor of Theology at the Abbey of Solesmes, argues that some traditionalists may have missed the need for a developed theology of the Mass which Vatican II highlighted and which was the proper context of the liturgical renewal.

Translated from the original French by Martin Blake.

“The priest acting in persona Christi, simultaneously offers the sacrifice to God as an act of justice, and for the people as a mercy, uniting them in Christ’s death and resurrection.”

Blessed John XXIII, realising that a gulf was widening between the static Church and the rapidly developing world, decided to call the Second Vatican Council in order to give the Church the means of reaching out to the world, to communicate salvation to it. He prophesied a new Pentecost. Indeed a new pouring out of the Holy Spirit in the Church was necessary in order to reach those who had no knowledge of salvation, and also those who, knowing about it, had rejected it. For the evolution of the world was tending in the direction of secularisation, that is to say separation from God. Mankind was living and acting more and more as if it was independent of God, as if God did not exist.

Now, just like the material world, men are created by God from nothing, and depend entirely on him for their being, their lives and activities. The Church’s mission is to remind them of this dependence. Being sinners they need to be saved from eternal death. The Church has to go to meet them, to announce to them and propose the way to salvation that Our Lord Jesus Christ has realised for them, by taking away their sins, and by communicating to them his eternal life.

Vatican II had no other purpose but to proclaim this proposition of salvation. For this reason it promulgated documents conveying the unchangeable message of Christ so that the men of today might understand it. Amongst these were the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, the decrees on ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue, and the declaration on religious liberty. I would suggest that the common denominator of all these documents is the theme of mercy.

Mercy and Sacrifice

At Pentecost the Holy Spirit spread the love of God in the Church (Rom 5,5). This means that God, who is love (1Jn 4,8), loves all men as himself, and wishes to give himself to them as the object of their knowledge and love. Being infinite, Divine Charity cannot increase, nor give more than itself. Yet it may surpass itself in its effects, by becoming Mercy. Etymologically mercy means that one is unhappy on account of someone else’s unhappiness. That is affective mercy. Going even further in doing good the merciful person can relieve still more the wretchedness of someone else. Wretchedness consists in being deprived of what one ought to have. It is relieved by effective mercy, which gives to the unhappy person the necessary good that he lacks. Perfect mercy consists in taking on oneself the wretchedness of another, to deliver him from it. Such is the Divine Mercy of the Son of God, who becomes a man, assuming the wretchedness of sinful humanity, sin excepted, in order to deliver it from death and eternal damnation.

This is the Mercy of Christ that John XXIII invited the Church to propagate in our time by means of the Vatican Council¹. A fresh effusion of the Holy Spirit was necessary in the Church so that her love might be extended in mercy towards modern men, following

¹ See for example his opening speech, 11th October 1962 where he emphasized the need “to use the medicine of mercy rather than the weapons of severity.”

the example of Christ who came to save the poor sinners that we are. This mercy has, however, been misunderstood by many members of the Church.

Equation of Mercy and Secularization

Some saw in it a solely humanitarian intention to struggle against the many wretched features of our contemporary societies, by exclusively social means, and by coming down to the level of the most deprived. Anxious only for social progress, they called themselves 'progressives', and left on one side the proper mission of the Church which is to transform people into children of God. Seduced by the ideologies of democracy, Marxism, etc., they were assimilated into those whom they should have been evangelising. In a word, they became secular.

Others committed the same mistake, but their reaction was entirely opposite: not only did they refuse to follow the general flow towards secularisation – in which they were right – but they rejected the Mercy of the Church, which they confused with an abandonment of its divine mission. For them the ecumenical dialogue is a heresy assimilating the Catholic faith to the errors condemned by previous councils. Inter-religious dialogue would appear in their eyes to be getting close to treating all religions as equivalent. Religious freedom, that resides in the natural faculty to be freely engaged in the quest for man's destiny, anterior to any question of religious truth, and independent of any exterior constraint, was confused by them with the liberalism condemned by 19th Century popes. Subjective freedom, which is what religious freedom is, the freedom of the person to reckon about his final destiny, has nothing to do with liberalism, where the object of freedom would be adherence to Christian truth. These people called themselves 'traditionalists'.

These divergent Christians, progressives and traditionalists, who similarly confuse Mercy with secularisation, indifferentism or liberalism, have not understood that Mercy implies love of persons, whilst *not* sharing their false ideas. Christ died on the Cross to save all men : not just Catholics, but Orthodox, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Atheists, Marxists, and so on. He loves them all, and in consequence by following him, the Church has to love them all too. This love includes respect for their religious freedom, but does not imply any adherence to the object of their erroneous convictions. On the contrary, because this love comes from God, the truth of this love tends to lead them to recognise the truth of God, which can save them through Jesus Christ in the Catholic Church. This love is Mercy, precisely because it tends to deliver from the wretchedness of their error those who are its victims.

On one occasion a 'traditionalist' magazine entitled its first page with the headline "Let Us Forget *Gaudium et Spes*." They had quite misunderstood it. For them this Pastoral Constitution was the expression of a starry-eyed humanism, a product of optimism following the horrors of the world war. This was to forget that Vatican II coincided with the period of the extension of communism throughout the world and the confrontation of international blocks in the 'cold war'. Above all it was a complete misunderstanding of the Divine Mercy which inspired the Council. To an unhappy humanity, for whom profound changes were obscuring the landmarks of the natural law, the Church was extending a helping hand. The Church was attempting anew to show modern Man the personal, family and social values which follow from his being in the image of God, and his divine vocation which is revealed and restored by Christ's dying and rising for all mankind.

This mystery of Mercy, which is the key to the interpretation of the Council, found its ultimate expression in the liturgical reform and the promulgation of a renewed rite of the Roman Mass by Paul VI in 1969. We must not be surprised at this, since the Mass is the synthesis of the whole Christian mystery.

Comparing Old and New Rites

There are few material modifications that distinguish the new rite from the old. To illustrate this let me quote the case of a journalist and his wife who were bitterly opposed to the liturgical reform, which he attacked weekly in a periodical now defunct. They came to Solesmes and having attended our Mass, solemnly celebrated in Latin in the new rite, the lady said to the monk: Father, what a pleasure it is for us to have been present at a good Mass!" In the French traditionalist jargon of the time 'a good Mass' signified the rite of St Pius V. The difference in the two rites is not to be found in such or such a detail of the celebration, but in their general orientation.

The old Roman Rite, which emerged from a long tradition, was understood as the sacramental offering by the priest, acting in the Person of Christ, which He offered on the Cross to his Father in expiation for the sins of the world. This was through his Divine and human love of Justice before his Father. God is offended by mankind's disobedience in preferring created things. Jesus obeyed his Father by sacrificing his life at the time of his Passion. This justified Mankind in the sight of God. The Council of Trent teaches that Our Lord Jesus Christ "By his most Holy Passion on the wood of the Cross has merited for us justification, and has made satisfaction for us to God the Father." (Dz 1528) Merit and satisfaction are the works of justice. One can say that the old rite is celebrated in the context, primarily, of Justice. Did not Jesus himself say to John the Baptist at his baptism in the Jordan river, symbol of his Passion: "It is fitting for us

to fulfil all righteousness.” (Mt. 3.15) This emphasis of being under Divine Justice is liturgically expressed in the priest facing East, that is towards God, and in the use of a sacred language, Latin, to address Him.

In the renewed Roman rite, the priest faces the people and the liturgy uses language that they understand. The altar is situated between the priest and the people. The congregation are more obviously in contact with the sacrifice. The priest acting *in persona Christi*, simultaneously offers the sacrifice to God as an act of justice, and for the people as a mercy, uniting them in Christ’s death and resurrection. The unity of the “to God” and the “for many” of this sacred mystery is more clearly expressed. The priest acts in the Person of Christ in so far as He exercises His Mercy towards men by offering Himself to the Father in sacrifice for the expiation for their sins.

A Developed Understanding of Mercy

The conception of the new rite is therefore to be seen in the context of our modern need for mercy. Indeed the whole mystery of Christ and his mission of salvation might be summed up under the theme of ‘Mercy’. He once said: “I have compassion on the crowd.” (Mt. 15.32) And again: “I desire mercy not sacrifice. For I came not to call the righteous but sinners.” (Mt.9.13.,Hos.6.6) Must there be a contradiction between mercy and sacrifice? No, because in quoting Hosea 6.6 Jesus shows that he prefers mercy to sacrifice, and mercy to justice. In the same way James writes: “Mercy triumphs over Judgment,” (Ja. 2.13) God is both infinite Justice and infinite Mercy, but in their effects mercy wins over justice. According to our human way of conceiving divine mysteries, it is Divine Mercy that moved Christ to accomplish a just satisfaction for the sins of mankind. The Council of Trent teaches (Dz. 1529) that the efficient cause of the justification of sinners is Divine Mercy.

From these comparisons we may see the new rite as an inspired development upon the former one. It expresses a progress in the understanding of the mystery of the Mass, since it makes explicit the inclusion of sacrificial Justice in the mystery of Mercy, that was implicit in the old rite. Unfortunately this mystery of Mercy has been inadequately explained to the faithful, and a number of them have interpreted the renewed rite erroneously.

Some have neglected the sacrificial aspect to emphasise a human conviviality surrounding the Eucharist, a kind of self-celebration of the liturgical assembly. They have made the celebration banal, losing the sense of the sacred and have reduced its quality in an almost profane way, instead of adoring the Divine Mercy offered for them and to them.

Others have rejected the renewed rite because they were attached to former habits, and imagined that the old rite answered their desire for justice towards God. This was particularly true of France where Jansenism originated, which emphasised the connection of justice with God; and it was the Jansenist mentality that underlay traditionalism, blinding it to the mystery of Mercy manifested by the renewed rite.

A Merciful Instinct

Millions of the faithful throughout the world have spontaneously adhered to the liturgical reform, because they recognise, as poor sinners, their need for the Infinite Mercy of Jesus’s Heart which comes to meet them in the renewed rite. Just a few tens of thousands of Christians have formally separated themselves from the Church in order to remain attached to the old rite. This smacks of a lack of awareness of their need of Divine Mercy. They may have failed to see the mystery of Mercy as a crucial interpretive key of the Second Vatican Council. They have missed the emphasis upon this sacramental mystery within the new

JANSENISM, JUSTICE AND MERCY

John Paul II on St Thérèse of Lisieux, from his Apostolic Letter proclaiming her as a Doctor of the Church, 19th October 1997.

She has made the Gospel shine appealingly in our time; she had the mission of making the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, known and loved; she helped to heal souls of the rigours and fears of Jansenism, which tended to stress God’s justice rather than his divine mercy. In God’s mercy she contemplated and adored all the divine perfections, because “even his justice (and perhaps even more so than the other perfections) seems to me clothed in love” (*Story of a Soul*, Ms A, 83). Thus she became a living icon of that God who, according to the Church’s prayer, “shows his almighty power in his mercy and forgiveness” (cf. Roman Missal, Opening prayer, 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time).

rite. If this understanding is correct a deeper humility arising from a deeper awareness of the misery of sin might bring traditionalists back to the liturgical unity of the Church.

It is not only on the Friday following the feast of Corpus Christi, as in the old rite, but in every celebration of the Mass in the renewed rite that we should celebrate the Sacred Heart. Just as in the 19th Century devotion to the Sacred Heart triumphed over the Jansenism of the two previous centuries, partly due to Dom Gueranger who led the dioceses of France to the unity of the Roman Liturgy, so, one believes, the Heart of Jesus will reunite all Catholics in the unity of the renewed rite.

The consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart at the dawn of the 20th Century by Leo XIII found its fulfilment in the intervention of Blessed John XXIII, whose forecast of a New Pentecost (of Love) made Vatican II the Council of Divine Mercy for the world separated from the Church. The liturgical cult of the Sacred Heart, inaugurated by St Jean Eudes, had received a decisive impulse from the revelations of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to St Margaret-Mary. It finds its further development in the renewed rite of the Roman Mass. From now on the liturgical reign of the Sacred Heart is universal, thanks to the reform willed by Vatican II.

At the end of his pontificate, John Paul II focussed his teaching on Divine Mercy. The encyclical letter *Dives in Misericordia*, the canonisation of St Faustina, the institution of the feast of Divine Mercy on the second Sunday of Easter, the consecration of the basilica of Divine Mercy in Krakow during his last visit to Poland are all signs of the times for the Church of the 21st Century. It must be the Church of Divine Mercy, truly present in the renewed rite of the Eucharist.

Conclusion

The present crisis is not only a superficial quarrel between the partisans of solemnity and those preferring conviviality, nor yet an episode in the controversy between tradition and progress, which is always with us. It is a deep division between two mentalities that reflect those of the characters in the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15.11). On one hand is the immense crowd of sinners, the prodigal sons, whom the Father of Mercy goes out to meet, and who offers them the feast of Lamb in the new rite. On the other hand there are the small traditionalist groups who, like the elder son, refuse to take part in the same feast, and want to celebrate with their friends. When the traditionalists, who believe in the Gospel, can loyally recognise themselves in the elder son of the parable, they will humbly rejoin the prodigals in sharing the Sacrifice of Mercy in the renewed Roman Rite. Then there will be no more liturgical crisis.

Cardinal Schönborn on ‘ad orientem’ & ‘versus populum’ last February

It is not decisive in which direction the celebrant faces, but rather what happens on the altar. We are called to focus on the “mystery of faith”, on Christ who is in our midst, whose dedication to the Father, for us and for all people we celebrate in the Eucharist. We proclaim His death and His resurrection because they become present among us. That is the centre and the source and the highpoint of the Christian life, as the Council stated several times. So this question arises on occasion of this “altar controversy” - are we sufficiently aware of this?

Second: Both directions of celebration are justified and neither should be suspected or “ideologized”. Mass isn’t celebrated “to the people” or “to the wall”, but to God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. The celebration turned “to the people” has the meaning that we all, priests and laypeople, gather around Christ who symbolizes the altar and whose Body and Blood become present on the altar. The celebration “with the back to the people” is not a turning away from the faithful but facing in the same direction in prayer, expressive of the path we walk towards God as pilgrims, His wandering people.

Third: Vatican II did not say anything about the direction of the celebrant. It wasn’t until 1969 that the GIRM said

(N 262): “The main altar should be built separated from the wall, so that it can be walked around easily to make the celebration *versus populum* (towards the people)” In the 2002 edition the following is added: “This should be the case wherever it is possible”. The Roman Congregation has declared this as a recommendation, not a requirement.

Fourth: The oldest direction for prayer is towards the East. The Jews prayed towards Jerusalem, the Muslims towards Mecca, the Christians towards the rising sun which symbolizes the Risen Christ. Thus the respective orientation of the synagogues, mosques and churches. The orientation, ie the “Eastwardness” of churches is one of the “original laws” of church architecture. St. Peter’s in Rome faces westward for practical reasons. therefore the Pope celebrates facing the doors, which are in the East, and because of that towards the people. It is good to remind oneself what “orientation” means.

Lastly, a personal comment: I love both directions of celebrating Mass. Both are full of meaning for me. Both help me to encounter Christ - and that is, after all, the purpose of the liturgy.

As translated by the Blog, The Cafeteria is Closed

A DISCOVERY OF CHRIST'S SELF-GIFT

by Neville McDonald

Due to family tragedies, I was put in an orphanage at an early age and experienced every kind of abuse. I did not know when another meal of dry bread would appear. We children would run to a window at four o'clock each morning to see if the bread wagon was coming – no wagon, no meal. At sixteen, I ran away and turned to drugs, alcohol and gang life. The Calcutta police knew me by name, and I was put through more than a dozen rehabilitation programs – with no success.

One night when I was 21, four other gang members and I were confronted by a rival gang. All four of my buddies were killed. I was badly wounded and had to spend half a year in hospital. At this time, a pastor friend told me, 'Enough is enough; rehab centres are doing you no good. I will get you a job as a driver with a group headed by someone called Mother Teresa.' So I went to the Home for Destitute and Dying and sat on a bench to wait. While I was waiting, a sister asked me to give her a hand. 'Please cut the toenails of this man lying on the floor'.

I started but was so disgusted by the state of this man's feet, that I could not do it. 'I have to get out of here fast!' I thought. Just then the sister said, 'Mother is here.' A tiny woman appeared, grasped my hands and said the Lord's Prayer. I had never experienced anything like it. She then hustled me off to her ramshackle ambulance with three sisters, insisting I drive them into the streets of Calcutta to look for dying people.

We came to a 35-year-old man, emaciated and filthy, weighing only fifty or sixty pounds, dying on the sidewalk in rags. Mother Teresa was all business. I waited while the sisters dashed off, returning with kettles of steaming water, which they proceeded to pour on the pavement round the man to melt the ice that froze him to the ground. I was then asked to lift the man into the vehicle, leaving a white patch of maggots where the man had lain.

I was extremely upset and couldn't sleep that night, feeling I could not stand such a life; but after deep thought and praying for the first time in earnest, I realised I had to go back.

At four o'clock next morning I returned to the centre and was warmly welcomed by Mother Teresa, who had sat with the dying man all night. She was stroking his head, and the man's eyes were open. 'Have you ever seen Jesus?' she asked. 'Who me? Never!' I replied. 'Then look deeply into this man's eyes,' she said. The man could not speak, and it was very quiet. 'Come closer and

look.' When I did, I looked for a long time and was deeply moved. The man lived only a few more hours but had a radiant face at the end, dying in peace and dignity. This experience changed my life forever. That was when I met Jesus. I have never looked back

For the next twenty years, I spent every moment of my spare time helping Mother Teresa, driving the streets to pick up dying people. I also went to leprosy centres to help patients there. I worked for Assemblies of God part-time for about ten years, during which time I married Glenda, also an orphan. I later worked about nine years for the Mennonite Central Committee.

At one point when I was without real work, our three-month-old daughter became deathly ill with tuberculosis. We were badly off and went to Mother Teresa for aid. She told me to care for other children around us. 'What are you saying?' I replied, 'I cannot even care for my own family – I have enough problems of my own!' But I thought about what she had said and soon asked our neighbours if I could walk their blind son to school every day. Later Glenda and I took in an orphan boy who worked at a local teashop, and eventually we took other orphans into our home. We have never seriously lacked for anything since then, and our baby recovered. Once we rescued two little girls from a brothel. There was a lot of trouble and the girls were terrified they'd have to return, but we managed to keep them. One of these girls is now a teacher in northern India. We have had up to eleven orphans (mostly girls) in our family at any one time, many of whom are now grown and serving others. We are the only Christian family in the neighbourhood, but the local people respect our work, bringing food or helping in other ways. We have a three-storey house, and we hope to invite volunteers to serve in various ministries in Calcutta. We also hope to establish another orphanage in the north of India soon.

I used to get angry in my youth when anyone spoke of God: 'How can people tell you "God is good," when you've had a terrible life?' But through my conversion and faith, I have been able to totally forgive and be forgiven. Forgiveness is the only way in life.

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DEVOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LITURGICAL DEVELOPMENT

by James Tolhurst

An article in the new Harper/Collins Encyclopaedia of Catholicism caught my eye because in it Fr Regis Duffy OFM (A Professor at St Bonaventure's University in Olean NY) says that "*private devotions flourish when the Church's liturgical life is poorly understood or when it does not satisfy the spiritual needs of ordinary people.*"

In saying this Fr Duffy is making two assumptions, firstly that liturgical life is better understood nowadays than it was before the Council and secondly that liturgy is now satisfactorily filling the spiritual needs of the people in the pews. Fr Duffy supports the first point by saying that "*when liturgical prayer and ritual are less accessible to people's understanding and participation, there is usually an increase in devotions*". In his syndicated article, Fr Richard McBrien (Professor of Theology at Notre Dame) makes a similar point: "*The lessening of interest in private devotions is more likely a sign that the Church is spiritually healthier now because its spiritual life is, as the Council hoped it would be, rooted more directly in the liturgy itself and especially in the Eucharist*" (The Tidings, Los Angeles 28 March 2003).

A Matter of Health

Many theologians in fact rather look forward to the withering of private devotions, as a vindication that maturity has arrived. Fr McBrien is particularly scathing about the rosary which he explains was the popular equivalent of the 150 psalms recited by the clergy "*The laity can pray and read each of the psalms on their own, without any need to substitute Our Fathers or Hail Mary's in repetitive fashion*". Many of us heard similar sentiments in the 1960's when we were urged to renounce the past with its works and pomps and stride out towards the new horizon. It was accompanied by the same aspersions on the misguided and rather juvenile practices of Catholics who were not able to see the new dawn. It is not realised that nearly one thousand million Moslems are entirely wedded to the idea of repetition in the Salah, when turning to Mecca five times a day; or the Tibetan lama when he says his prayers, and all the followers of Eastern meditation. Repetition is designed to create a resonance in the body and soul and it is insulting to see it disparaged on the grounds that is immature and unhealthy. At the same time it indicates a rather large chasm between those who talk in terms of a literate laity and the reality of the Catholic recipient of their ministrations. It is as if the average Catholic was expected to be as literate and to be literate in the same way as the theologian concerned. The scene of the man born blind comes to mind, when he challenges his judges and is rewarded with the stinging rebuke: "*You were born totally in sin, and you trying to teach us?*" (John 9:34).

Popular devotions have always had a place in the Catholic pantheon. They can and often do get out of hand – superstition is the price that religion pays to be vital and popular, as Newman puts it. An earlier contributor to the New Catholic Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Religion (Corpus Christi Publications, Washington 1978) was Fr P K Meagher. He writes; "*Popular devotions covers a wide variety of optional prayers and practices, often peripheral to the central themes of Christian worship that people find helpful as means of arousing devotion in the primary meaning of the term e.g. the rosary, the way of the cross, such special services as novenas and tridums and the invocation of special saints.*" Notice that he focuses in on their helpfulness in arousing devotion.

Popular devotions are not seen as an embarrassment but quite the contrary. Robert Broderick in the Catholic Encyclopaedia (Nelson Nashville 1975) says that they "*have promoted the spiritual lives of those who partake of them and have fulfilled in a singular manner the personal ministry of private and public devotion of the body of Christians who make up the Mystical Body of Christ*". Of course we are not diminishing the importance of the liturgy itself or playing it down. Vatican II says very clearly that it is far superior to them, but in the same paragraph it adds that they "*are in some way derived from it, and lead people to it*" (Constitution on the Liturgy n. 13). This is enshrined in Canon Law which makes the local bishop the moderator of "*pious and sacred exercises*" so that they are "*fully in harmony with the laws of the Church*" (Canon 839 #2).

Evaluating not Dismissing

It is precisely because they do in fact lead people to the liturgy rather than fade away as the liturgy shines ever brighter that we need to evaluate them instead of rubbishing them. Fr McBrien says ominously that his column is "*not intended as a debunking exercise*". In the order of "seniority" we have four private devotions which, because they have been given plenary indulgence status, are valued especially by the Church. The first is the rosary, the second is the way of the cross, the third is the visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and the fourth is meditative reading of the Scriptures. In the second order of merit we can signal those which are sacramental, those connected with the praise of God and those which are broadly penitential:

Sacramental	Praise	Penitential
Holy Water/ Asperges	Candles	Ashes
Benediction	Incense	Striking breast
Sign of the Cross	Litanies/Tridums	Pilgrimages
Blessings	Palms	First Fridays/ Saturdays
Visits to Churches	Medals	
	Grace at meals	
	Prayers to Saints	Fasting

Fr McBrien urges that we do not resuscitate (his word) pre-conciliar devotions. But the Church like the scribe in the Gospel is always taking new things and old out of her fund of devotional expertise. Such private devotions with the exception of First Fridays and Saturdays have the sanction of years of use and have become well-worn and a part of Catholic spiritual “furniture”. On one occasion when I was going into Church to collect something and dashing out again, I met an eight-year old who told me very seriously when he saw that I did not take Holy Water “*Why didn’t you bless yourself, we all do that*”. I was properly chastened. In fact we all should have some private devotions and should question seriously if they are lacking, because they provide that helpful link not only with the liturgy but also with the traditions of those who have gone before us in the practice of faith.

Updating Devotions

But Fr McBrien goes on to say that he hopes for the development of new devotions “*that grow organically out of the Church’s liturgical life*”. The inference is that private devotions which have endeared themselves to millions are *not* truly organic (the rosary for instance, is merely a repetitive device which can be dispensed with now that people can read the psalter themselves). Fr McBrien does not give specific examples of devotions because he presumably feels either that we should grow out of them or that they should sprout from the liturgy. But it is interesting that the post-conciliar liturgy has not produced of itself any new devotions, and one suspects that it was not supposed to.

Instead the Servant of God Pope John Paul attempted to update certain devotions. He promoted the Mysteries of Light for the rosary (on Thursdays) with decades meditating on the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, the marriage feast at Cana, the proclamation of the kingdom of God, the Transfiguration and the institution of the Eucharist. It was a courageous step to take, knowing how people regard their rosary and it seems to be catching on. He also suggested alternative stations of the Cross, to include the agony in the Garden, the betrayal of Judas, the denial of Peter and the comforting of the good thief. The addition of a fifteenth

station to commemorate the Resurrection which pre-dates his pontificate, has won wide acceptance. Pope John Paul believed in renewal rather than replacement. He has followed this policy with regard to the Catechism, the Code of Canon Law and devotions. Finally, he canonised countless saints in the belief that all parts of the Church and all walks of society need examples that they can admire and imitate in the twenty-first century with its new set of challenges.

Devotion and Liturgy

The fear among theologians is that there maybe some wholesale assault planned on the liturgy itself which has so far resisted criticism by raising the spectre of Tridentinism. It would seem to be time to question the seeming contradiction between liturgy and private devotion. It is exists – even in some people’s minds – should we not be looking at the liturgy as much as at devotions? Can the post-conciliar liturgy be made more devotional?

I think there must be an affirmative answer to the last question. Many opportunities were missed. Archbishop Bugnini revealed in his memoirs, that he had a master-plan which positively ruled out certain avenues of thought, and seemed proud of the fact. But the final result did leave something to be desired. This is not to yearn for any Tridentine liturgy. If one is totally honest, the Tridentine liturgy as practised by the ordinary clergy in a daily “low” Mass was by and large a hurried and not very reverential exercise. The High Mass was another thing, but we must remember that people could not go to Communion at that Mass because of the fasting regulations, and it was the only Mass to have a homily and last a good hour and a half. But the liturgy which we now have does seem to show signs of un-devotionality. This can be seen in the lack of any real entrance rite, the plainness of the offering of the gifts, the over-long absolution prayer for absolution, and the virtual elimination of kneeling in some countries and of genuflection in others. It is indicated by the tremendous chatter which greets anyone who enters a Church when Mass is due to begin. The emphasis is very much on social interaction, but at the expense of any quiet reflection. It is no wonder that the practice of visiting Churches has declined because they have become identified in many children’s minds with “gathering space”.

It is possible that the post-conciliar liturgy, rather than private devotions, needs to become more organic. There should be no contradiction between the two but instead a mutual interaction. The liturgy ought not to be considered so off-limits when private devotions are thought to be fair game. If we are not getting that devotional value out of parts of the liturgy then we should consider making adaptations. Instead of some blue-print handed down from a theological throne, we ought to grow the liturgy from the practice of the pastor in his parish who sees what actually works and knows a bit about the devotional antennae of his people. Only good can come of such endeavour and certainly renewed devotion.



letters to 
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**STRADDLING THE DIVIDE OVER
INTELLIGENT DESIGN**

Dear Father Editor,

I agree with you that "the totality of interacting things", as Father Stanley Jaki likes to call the universe, (along with your Editorial comment, March/April 2007) is the first and best reason for believing in the existence of a Creator. It is a reason closely linked, surely, to the argument from contingent to necessary being, which has always seemed to me just a grander way of saying "things can't make themselves".

As for the *Intelligent Design* people, I don't see why their suggestion that some things manifest the Creator's intelligence or ingenuity more than others is so apparently popular. But in so far as it goes, the idea seems to me true. It is the same with human artefacts. To make a sofa requires a lesser degree of intelligence or inventiveness than to make a mincing machine or a mincing machine than a car. But it would not be impossible for one man to have invented all three. As for the Creator, if he likes to make things simple and complex in that unpopular thing an hierarchical order, how does this diminish the evidence for his existence?

In our household we have a Fido who makes nonsense of all forms of atheism not just by the complexity of her body but by her beauty and loveableness.

The inability to give a satisfactory reason for the existence of beauty,

goodness and love seems to me the weakest point of all forms of atheism. As for the social consequences, they fill me with dread.

Yours Faithfully

Philip Trower,
Stanstead Bury,
Ware,
Herts

EDITORIAL COMMENT: We thank Mr Trower for this helpful contribution to this important debate. We would accept the traditional insight into degrees of being. Whether a stone or an electron being attracted to a proton is intrinsically less wonderful than the eye or the bacterial flagellum is less clear. The basic and wonderful pattern of their interacting being, immediately under the Mind of God, is the same. Differences of degree alone are not easily consistent with the ID argument, which posits a difference in kind between stones and flagella, analogous indeed (in their argumentation) to the difference between naturally produced things and artificially produced things.

**RESPONDING TO THE
SORS THREAT TO CATHOLIC
EDUCATION**

Dear Father Editor,

As one who has been a subscriber to *Faith* since the early days of the 1970s, I must congratulate you on keeping up the very high standard. The January/February edition contained a number of deep and weighty articles worthy of study.

However, the smaller sections are good, too, and it is about one of these that I wish to make a point. No one could disagree with the arguments of Fr James Tolhurst who demonstrates "that Catholic education is not divisive." However, the situation that Catholic education is facing in England is even worse

than Fr Tolhurst outlines. He says, "As Catholics we contribute to the cost of school building and maintenance and in return we have a majority on the governing body of the school. This guarantees the Catholic ethos of the school and its majority Catholic membership." I am afraid that this is not longer true.

As well as the direct attacks on our schools by this government that Fr Tolhurst mentions, there has also been undermining of the powers of school governors. Catholic governors no longer control the curriculum in maintained schools; we have a national curriculum. They no longer control their own admissions and, for instance, are forced to take in non-Catholics to satisfy a number imposed by the government. Soon some Catholic schools may literally have to hold a lottery to allocate places, as is already happening in the state sector. The right to appoint teachers has been under threat for some time, since the government, under the guise of "Diversity and Equality" in practice forbids any real attempt to appoint teachers who pay even lip service to Catholic morality.

The "Sexual Orientations Regulations" currently being pushed through parliament could mean that teaching that homosexual practises are " a sin crying out to heaven", rather than a human right, becomes a criminal offence. To my mind, this is even worse than Catholic adoption agencies losing government money by not giving innocent children into the hands of homosexuals.

We need strong action. What I suggest is this: if these regulations are approved – and it looks as if they will be since the government has the necessary control – then the Catholic bishops should act. On one particular day, every Catholic bishop in England and Wales (and Scotland for that matter) should go into a secondary school in his diocese and teach a group of senior pupils the Church's

clear teaching about homosexual acts. This would challenge the government to arrest them all or to accept that Catholic schools were not going to be forced to teach that which is evil. It might be uncomfortable to be in prison, but not so uncomfortable as being at the bottom of the sea with a millstone round one's neck.

Yours Faithfully,

*Eric Hester
Somerdale Avenue,
Bolton*

A RALLYING CALL

Dear Father Editor,

From the government of the day downwards the Church in England is treated with contempt, whilst an omniscient media finds her clergy paedophiles or a laughing stock. Meanwhile an increasingly elderly laity finds refuge in the parish church and the company of their ilk. This is no way to keep the Faith.

No one is too old to stand up and be counted. The running though has to be made by the younger generation, few may they happen to be in numbers.

May they receive the grace to hold their heads high and focus upon the only intelligible goal in the circumstances: the conversion of England. More power to your movement's elbow.

Yours Faithfully,

*Gwilym Bowen,
Monkswood Avenue,
Morecambe*

FALSE DISCONTINUITIES IN ISLAM AND PROTESTANTISM

Dear Father Editor,

Father Lynch's exploration of the points of contact between Protestantism and Islam and their common rejection of Catholicism (Jan/ Feb 07) is congruent with my own. The dynamic of Islam in collision with Christendom seems to be connected to the root cause of divisions among Christians themselves. A common theme which Protestantism shares with Islam, and with the medieval Christian anti-Semitism which Vatican II and Pope John Paul II discarded and condemned, is the belief in the divine repudiation of a faithless people.

The credibility of Islam depends on the cogency of the accusation that the Christians and the Jews have falsified their scriptures, so that those they have today are not as originally given. Similarly, the Protestant battle-cry was that Rome had falsified the faith and become thereby the seat of the Antichrist. The belief of Islam and of prominent versions of Christianity is that God has cast aside His once chosen, but now unfaithful, people and started anew with another, in radical discontinuity with the old.

Bat Ye'or writes that after the Muslims arrived in the Byzantine Empire they re-interpreted the anti-Jewish laws of the Empire within an Islamic conception and imposed them on both Jews and Christians. As they were prescribed in the Qur'an they became the infallible word of Allah, and no longer just that of St. Augustine or St. Ambrose, or St. John Chrysostom.

It seems that if we are to heal the divisions among Christians, we could well start by mending our relations with the Jews. The pronouncements of Pope John Paul II are very clear: the Jewish people have most certainly not been cast away by God, even in unbelief. He continues to keep faith

with them, for He is that kind of God. He is not a God of replacement.

Because He is that kind of God, we must be unshakeably confident that He will forever preserve the Jews as an identifiable people before Him, and will forever maintain the stability of the Throne of David as the locus in law of their national sovereignty. At that point the case for Islam or Protestantism begins to be starkly unconvincing.

As a post-script it is worth noting that the 'Islamification' of Byzantium involved a crucial and tragic support for the schism of 1054 between the Eastern and the Western Churches. The schism was virtually repaired on 8 June 1439 at the Council of Florence, with the support of 22 of the 23 Eastern Bishops present, and of Byzantine Emperor John VIII Palaeologos, whose father Pope Benedict famously quoted last year at Regensburg and whose brother and successor was to die as the Turks captured Constantinople in 1453.

The Imperial populace and civil authorities besides the Emperor rejected the Union of Florence, and the new Sultan duly obliged them by appointing as Ecumenical Patriarch Gennadios II, who was hostile to the Union and repudiated it. The legacy of protest is with us to this day.

Yours faithfully

*Michael Petek,
Balfour Road,
Brighton*

WOMAN BISHOPS AND CREEDAL BELIEF

Dear Father Editor,

There was recently a very extensive independent survey of the doctrinal and moral opinions of the Church of England's clergy. It found the women to be disbelievers or doubters by 26% "in God the Father Who created the

world"(!), by a whopping 67% "that Jesus Christ was born of a Virgin", by 35% "that Jesus Christ died to take away the sins of the world", by 47% "that Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead", by 61% "that Jesus Christ is the only way by which we can be saved", by 26% "that the Holy Spirit is a Person Who empowers Christians today", and by 30% "that God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are all equally God".

These shocking figures render utterly pointless any dialogue with the Church of England as such, though not with certain parts of it, nor with strongly Anglo-Catholic or Evangelical provinces of the Anglican Communion abroad. But they are only to be expected, since belief that a woman can indeed be 'in Persona Christi' necessitates a Christology falling short of Chalcedonian catholicity (that Jesus Christ is both fully human and fully divine), and thus a general departure from the teaching of the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople as expressed in the Creed. And belief that a woman can stand in the Apostolic Succession renders it impossible to retain the previously undisputed Apostolic Canon and its Apostolic kerygma.

Of course, not all Anglicans hold anything like our understanding of ordained ministry. We are well used to such Evangelicals, sharing with them

the doctrinal and moral essentials of classical Christianity, a commitment to the Augustinian patrimony of the West, recent remarkable joint statements on justification, and much common work for the sanctity of life, Biblical standards of sexual morality, social justice, environmental responsibility and world peace. Many (though not all) Evangelicals, Anglican and otherwise, have accepted women presbyters for reasons with which we do not agree, but which we can understand, and which do not purport to be the Catholic view on this matter. Often, it is just because the mighty priestesses lobby has successfully secured, over recent decades, the abolition of all previously existing patterns of women's ministry.

An Evangelical woman presbyter, since she does not have an 'Icon Christi' understanding of her ministry, is not compromised in her Chalcedonian, and thus also her Niceno-Constantinopolitan, orthodoxy. Nor does she see herself as standing in an Apostolic Succession ultimately inseparable from the Apostolic Canon and its Apostolic kerygma. However, it is most unlikely that many women, or even any woman, raised to the purple in the Church of England would be from its Evangelical wing.

There is growing pressure within the Church of England to create a situation in which the episcopal

"team" in each diocese always included both sexes, with women accounting for half of all bishops at any given time. In view of the above figures, and considering that the view of an Anglican bishop is always regarded by the BBC and others as the last word on any religious question, this is a matter of the utmost general concern, as well as a particular worry for parliamentarians, since the essentials of classical, historic, mainstream Christianity are in fact the constitutional basis of the British State (as well as the founding principles of all three political traditions), itself a Union of nations called into being by the Gospel, so that the baptismal covenant is the fundamental charter of each of them. A blocking amendment to this effect should be put down in both Houses whenever a Draft Bishops (Ordination of Women) Measure comes before Parliament, and should be supported by all Christian parliamentarians, whatever their views on the ordination of women per se. We must all lobby our MPs, and as many peers as possible, to that effect, starting immediately.

Yours faithfully,

*David Lindsay
Foxhills Crescent,
Lanchester,
County Durham.*

The Integration of new Movements into the life of the Church

Pope Benedict in a question and answer session with the Roman clergy, 23rd February 07

"Do not extinguish charisms (1Thess) ... If the Lord gives us new gifts we must give thanks.... And it is something beautiful that, without an initiative of the hierarchy ... new forms of life are born in the Church, as they were born in all the centuries."

"Movements have been born in all the centuries. They integrate in the life of the Church, though at times there is no lack of sufferings and difficulties."

"Thus, also in our century, the Lord, the Holy Spirit, has given us new initiatives with new aspects of Christian life: On being lived by human persons with their limitations, they also create difficulties ..."

"... If the movements are really gifts of the Holy Spirit, they integrate and serve the Church, and in the patient dialogue between pastors and movements a fruitful form is born, in which these elements become edifying elements for the Church of today and tomorrow."

THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

A pastoral approach to responding to the new Sexual Orientation Regulations

Fr Hugh MacKenzie

The confrontation between the Catholic Church and the Government over 'gay adoption' threatens to penalise the practice of the integral Catholic faith with legal sanction. Many ordinary parishioners are expressing shock at this state of affairs. Many of our people are tragically unaware of just how deep a divergence there is between fashionable sexual mores and the true principles of Christian love. Sadly, such ignorance is not uncommon given the gradual and subtly persuasive way in which secularism has been fostered in the UK over the last few decades. The situation has not been helped by the confusion and compromise which infects much of British Catholic thinking and teaching.

The implementation of the Sexual Orientation Regulations calls for clear catechesis in the parish, not in the spirit of political controversy, but out of pastoral compassion. It is an opportunity to address some of the false assumptions in the minds of many of our people and to bring out the profound harmony between Catholic truth and true human compassion, which is the purpose of this column. This is really an opportunity to take our people deeper into the life and work of the crucified Christ. What follows is one attempt to meet that challenge.

1. Introduction

A significant issue has been given great prominence in the Press. It has placed the Catholic Church in serious conflict with the Government and requires clarification. Before going into detail, it is worth remembering that we should expect such clashes. From Christ's crucifixion onwards, this has been the pattern of His Church's life. She has survived all such previous conflicts.

2. Outline of the problem:

The new Sexual Orientation Regulations will make it illegal to discriminate against someone on the grounds of their sexual orientation when offering "goods, facilities or services". This may sound well intentioned, but it actually carries some serious implications for the practice of the Catholic Faith. It calls for a concerted and considered response, comprising both prayer and political action.

3. Implications:

The most immediate, and currently the most prominent, implication will be the forcing of Catholic adoption agencies to cooperate with the institutionalization of gay partnerships forcing them to accept the possibility of placing children with such couples. But wider implications would also apply across many aspects of modern life, from NHS care to service in hotels and restaurants. A Christian operating a bed and breakfast will break the law if they refuse to allow a gay couple to share a bed in their house. If a church (or

mosque or synagogue) hires out its hall to other groups, it will not be lawful to refuse a gay activist group who wish to hire the hall. A Muslim printer or Christian web designer cannot refuse their services to a group promoting a homosexual lifestyle or sexual activity.

Government guidelines indicate that Catholic schools should remove anything that might be termed "bias" in favour of heterosexuality. They could fall foul of the law by teaching or even appearing to assume that marriage and heterosexual relationships are more normal than homosexual relationships (See box at end).

If the Government follows the recent recommendations of the Parliamentary Joint Committee of Human Rights, Catholic schools will not be allowed to teach Christian sexual morality as if it is true (see below). It is difficult to see how Catholic Schools could remain within the law without undermining their *raison d'être*.

4. Why this is wrong.

The Sexual Orientation Regulations will ensure that the "right" to a homosexual lifestyle trumps the right to a Christian lifestyle. It is inherent to Christianity to believe the opposite. They are in conflict. They cannot both truly be fundamental rights.

We should remember that for a long time now our culture has been profoundly influenced by the redefining of the meaning of sexual relations that is inherent in the acceptance of artificial contraception. If the sexual act is not intrinsically orientated to procreation within the loving commitment of marriage between man and wife, then there is no logical objection to homosexuality. The full consequences of this seismic shift in our view of sexuality may have taken a long time to dawn upon us, but the present outcome has been inevitable. The Catholic Church, as ever, has continued to witness to the perennial teaching from Christ in this as in other matters, against the tide of social fashion. This radical, anti-life, redefinition of sexual love has been a dangerous wrong turning. This is already evident in the hundreds of daily abortions and the general lowering of respect for the human person.

Forcing the Catholic Church and her agencies to act and to teach as if active homosexuality is not wrong is to compel us to go against the understanding of love and sexuality handed down to us from Christ through Christian tradition. We believe that all sexual activity outside marriage undermines growth in true self-less love in the image of Christ and so is morally wrong. And the same is true within marriage when artificially frustrating its orientation to new life. The Church cannot cooperate in any way with anything that undermines such love.

Of course we do not condemn everyone involved a relationship that involves immoral physical actions – be that fornication, adultery or homosexual activity – as utterly evil and incapable of loving actions at the same time. We can accept that goodness and immorality can be interwoven in complex ways in peoples’ lives. We do not deny that homosexual couples are capable of loving actions towards others, even children they may look after.

But the Church of Christ is convinced that sexual relationships outside marriage are not the authentic expression of loving and that such actions constitute an erosion of human goodness and a negation of human dignity. Where such relationships are made public and institutionalised with legal rights, the Church cannot recognize those rights, and should not be forced to recognise them against her conscience. Formally and publicly to cooperate with such an institution (as distinct from treating the individuals who happen to be involved in them with human respect and charity) must always be a destructive thing for the whole of society. This can be argued convincingly from reason (as attempted in the March/April 2006 edition of this column). We know also from our Christian faith that such policies are based on error and deeply distorted thinking. If Christian morality is not

the key to the fullness of life then it is of little value, and Christianity itself will, rightly, wither on the vine. This is, of course, what our opponents believe and hope will happen. History will prove them wrong, as so often before. It is their agenda that is leading us into cultural oblivion. We must pray for their conversion at the same time as resisting their disastrous policies.

For the Church of Christ formally to cooperate with this recently invented secular morality would spell the end of coherent morality itself.

5. Basic respect for those who experience homosexual inclinations

None of this takes away from the obvious duty not to judge anyone’s culpability when they do something wrong, nor to discriminate against someone because the particular temptations they happen to have include a sexual attraction to someone of the same sex. Like all of us, such people need support and friendship on their journey to wholeness and holiness.

As Andrea Williams of the Christian Lawyers’ fellowship commented “Whilst Christian groups have been clear from the outset that they would not wish in any way to deny the provision of basic goods and services to homosexuals, the Government have refused all calls that the Regulations should contain a simple clause that ‘no-one should be forced by this law to promote or actively condone any sexual practices which are contrary to their deeply held religious belief.’”

6. Action

Write to your M.P. and a Peer.

Be prepared to explain clearly the true purposes of marriage and sexuality (e.g. read March/April 06 version of this column). Priests, teachers and catechists must teach more on this, lest more of our families get sucked into the secular mindset and the culture of death.

Most importantly, attempt to respond more fully to Christ’s call to each of us to “Repent and Believe the Good News.” Renew our prayer, asking for the grace to act wisely, charitably and to resist the temptation to cooperate in thought or action with the undermining of authentic love.

It will not be without persecutions and sacrifices, but this is how we will rebuild Christian culture.

See letters, p28.

SOME DETAILS CONCERNING THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE REGULATIONS

With acknowledgements to Fr Tim Finigan’s blog.

(a) Current Government guidance *Stand up for us. Challenging Homophobia in Schools*, tells schools that as part of their action to prevent homophobia, they should avoid “heterosexism” a new word which the Department helpfully defines for us:

“HETEROSEXISM describes the presumption that everyone is heterosexual. It refers to a culture in which individuals, families and their lifestyles are categorised according to a heterosexual model. Examples include the assumption that a male pupil will have, or be looking for, a girlfriend; or that a female parent, when talking about her partner, is referring to a male. Such a culture can make LGB pupils and staff feel marginalised, and not valued or understood within the school community.”

(b) At the end of last February *The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights* published recommendations including the following:

Para 65. “We welcome the Government’s acceptance that the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation should apply to all schools in both the maintained and the independent sectors, without any

exemption for particular types of school such as faith schools. ”

Para 67. “Applying the Regulations to the curriculum would not prevent pupils from being taught as part of their religious education the fact that certain religions view homosexuality as sinful. In our view there is an important difference between this factual information being imparted in a descriptive way as part of a wide-ranging syllabus about different religions, and a curriculum which teaches a particular religion’s doctrinal beliefs as if they were objectively true. The latter is likely to lead to unjustifiable discrimination against homosexual pupils. We recommend that the Regulations for Great Britain make clear that the prohibition of discrimination applies to the curriculum ...”

(c) The Northern Ireland version of the Regulations make it illegal to harass someone on the basis of their sexual orientation. This is extremely concerning because the definition of harassment relies largely on the perception of the person who claims they were harassed: all they need do is allege that someone has ‘violated their dignity’ or that someone created a ‘hostile or insulting environment’ for them, and they can take legal action.

From the recent
POST-SYNODAL APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION
SACRAMENTUM CARITATIS
OF THE HOLY FATHER BENEDICT XVI

The institution of the Eucharist

10. This leads us to reflect on the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. It took place within a ritual meal commemorating the foundational event of the people of Israel: their deliverance from slavery in Egypt. This ritual meal, which called for the sacrifice of lambs (cf. Ex 12:1-28, 43-51), was a remembrance of the past, but at the same time a prophetic remembrance, the proclamation of a deliverance yet to come. The people had come to realize that their earlier liberation was not definitive, for their history continued to be marked by slavery and sin. The remembrance of their ancient liberation thus expanded to the invocation and expectation of a yet more profound, radical, universal and definitive salvation. This is the context in which Jesus introduces the newness of his gift. In the prayer of praise, the Berakah, he does not simply thank the Father for the great events of past history, but also for his own “exaltation.” In instituting the sacrament of the Eucharist, Jesus anticipates and makes present the sacrifice of the Cross and the victory of the resurrection. At the same time, he reveals that he himself is the true sacrificial lamb, destined in the Father’s plan from the foundation of the world, as we read in The First Letter of Peter (cf. 1:18-20). By placing his gift in this context, Jesus shows the salvific meaning of his death and resurrection, a mystery which renews history and the whole cosmos. The institution of the Eucharist demonstrates how Jesus’ death, for all its violence and absurdity, became in him a supreme act of love and mankind’s definitive deliverance from evil.

THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

comment

ON THE
c o m m e n t s



by William Oddie

Unpalatable truths?

What is the particular relevance of Pope Benedict XVI's first 'Apostolic exhortation', *Sacramentum Caritatis* – (issued on March 13 as the concluding act of the Synod of Bishops held in Rome in October of 2005) – to the political career of Ruth Kelly, since May 2006 Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government? I repeat, the *particular* relevance; for this wonderful document is directly and powerfully relevant to us all – though I am not holding my breath as I await in hope an enthusiastic response from the English and Welsh Bishops (of this genteel aspiration, more later).

The answer (as a contributor to Fr Timothy Finigan's indispensable blog, 'The Hermeneutic of Continuity' has pointed out) is to be found by bringing together para 83 of *Sacramentum Caritatis* and the statement by Ms. Kelly introducing the new Sexual Orientation Regulations, made in the House of Commons only the week before. To put it crudely, para 83 says unambiguously that a politician who professes the Catholic religion cannot just go to Mass and then behave as though it makes no difference to their political behaviour. It is important, says the document, to consider 'what the Synod described as eucharistic consistency, a quality which our lives are objectively called to embody. Worship pleasing to God can never be a purely private matter, without consequences for our relationships with others: it demands a public witness to our

faith.' The document specifies certain values on which decisions have to be made in the public sphere, including respect for human life, and for the family built on marriage between a man and a woman. 'These values', says *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 'are not negotiable. Consequently, Catholic politicians and legislators, conscious of their grave responsibility before society, must feel particularly bound, on the basis of a properly formed conscience, to introduce and support laws inspired by values grounded in human nature. There is an objective connection here with the Eucharist' (my italics).

Now consider the statement issued by Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor some hours before Ms. Kelly rose at the despatch box to introduce the Sexual Orientation Regulations in the Commons. It was not the first time he had made the Catholic position clear. 'Noting the fact that the Sexual Orientation Regulations are being voted on in the House of Commons today,' said the Cardinal, 'I again express our concern at their impact, not only on adoption services, but on cooperation between faith-based voluntary agencies and public authorities in public funded services.... Our society's understanding of the pattern of family life and of the role of conscience and religious belief in public life remains a very important part of the political agenda.' The English Church, then, of which Ms. Kelly is such a prominent member, had made it very clear that the SORs are a threat to 'the pattern of family life', to what *Sacramentum Caritatis* calls 'the family built upon marriage between a man and a woman'. The Catholic position had become so clear, indeed, that there had been calls from anti-Catholic quarters for Ms. Kelly to resign, on the basis of rumours that she had been trying to weaken or delay the regulations: as Toby Helm, the *Telegraph's* chief political correspondent had reported the previous October,

under the headline 'Kelly "must resign over delay to gay rights law"', 'A fierce Cabinet battle has broken out over gay rights after Ruth Kelly, the Communities Secretary, delayed plans that would penalise organisations – such as hotels – for denying their services to homosexuals. Ms. Kelly, a Roman Catholic and member of the Opus Dei sect, has clashed with Alan Johnson, her successor as Education Secretary, who is concerned that she is trying to water down the plans because of her religious beliefs.' Not only that: the Liberal Democrats, as Helm recorded, had 'called for Ms. Kelly... to resign on the grounds that her personal beliefs are incompatible with advancing gay rights.'

From their point of view, of course, those who were calling for Ruth Kelly's resignation on these grounds had a point – always assuming that she was indeed trying in some way to moderate or delay the legislation. But when it became clear that she had failed to do so, particularly over the question of her supposed efforts to negotiate an exemption for Catholic adoption agencies, it was not the Lib Dems but her fellow Catholics who were beginning to wonder how she managed to reconcile her 'personal beliefs' with her position as the Secretary of State whose job it was to steer the regulations through Parliament. But if Catholics were confused by her behaviour, she will have been reassured by the unequivocal support of the National Secular Society, who welcomed 'Ms Kelly's statement that there will be no scope for religious groups to discriminate if they are given welfare services to run.' She will also, no doubt have the support of Clifford Longley, who in *The Tablet* in January strongly attacked the Church's position on Civil partnerships and gay adoption. These are strange bedfellows, all the same, for a reputedly traditionalist Catholic.

The teaching of Benedict XVI on such matters is now clearer than it ever was. This column has several times commented on the extended honeymoon the present Holy Father has enjoyed in liberal circles; as Piers Paul Read commented in *The Spectator*, traditionalist Catholics had begun to be 'dismayed' at this: 'Had Pope Benedict forgotten what he had said in his address at the funeral of his predecessor... about the danger posed by moral relativism?... Was their Rottweiler now an old spaniel, happy to doze in front of the fire?'. Well, no. As Read goes on to point out, *Sacramentum Caritatis* clearly 'rejects most of the items on the liberals' wish-list. Conjugal acts must be open to the transmission of human life; marriage and the family must be defended 'from every possible misrepresentation of their true nature' (i.e. civil partnerships)...'. And so on. The document also calls for the Mass to be celebrated in Latin at all international celebrations, discourages banal ditties and recommends Gregorian chant. 'If, as expected,' comments Piers Read, 'Pope Benedict is to allow the saying of the Mass in the Tridentine rite, one can envisage a revival of a liturgy not seen since Vatican II'. Read goes on to comment that 'This revival of Latin and the return of the Tridentine rite, together with unambiguous restatement of traditional Catholic teaching on contentious issues, will no doubt dismay not just liberal Catholics but many of the Catholic bishops of England and Wales: certainly the muted response by the Bishops' Conference to *Sacramentum Caritatis* has caused indignation in some Catholic circles.'

This 'muted response', certainly, has not gone unnoticed; the week after the exhortation's publication, indeed, it inspired a leading article in *The Catholic Herald* under the headline 'A Bewildering Silence'. Imagine, the Herald suggested, 'that Benedict XVI

is a conductor and the Church an orchestra. Last Tuesday, the Pope took to the podium to lead us in a hymn of praise to the Eucharist through his Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*. When he raised the baton, the *Herald* began to play at full volume, devoting pages to the new document and hailing it as a masterpiece. But we were bewildered when we looked up and saw that great sections of the orchestra were sitting in silence. There has been a lot of speculation about why the bishops of England and Wales did not join their counterparts in Ireland and America in immediately welcoming the document. Some have suggested that it was to ensure that Benedict XVI's firm liturgical injunctions would never be implemented in this country.'

Well, who knows? But there certainly seems to be something impeding clear communications between the Holy Father and the man and woman in the English-speaking pew; could there be a conspiracy? I don't wish to seem paranoid, but there have also been suggestions that the English translation of *Sacramentum Caritatis* has considerably weakened the force of the text, so as to make it much easier to ignore. Father John Boyle, on his blog 'South Ashford Priest' (the sudden rise of these excellent clergy blogs seems to be a sign of the times), reports that he has discovered contrasting translations of *Sacramentum Caritatis*, which lead him to comment that he will 'have to re-read the apostolic exhortation in a completely different light... Where, in the English, the Pope might be saying "It would be awfully decent of you chaps to..." I shall have to interpret it as: "What I want/command from now on is that..."'. For instance:

RELEASED ENGLISH VERSION

62. Speaking more generally, I ask that future priests, *from* their time in the seminary, receive the

preparation needed to understand and to celebrate Mass in Latin, and also to use Latin texts and execute Gregorian chant; nor should we forget that *the faithful can be taught* to recite the more common prayers in Latin, and also to sing parts of the liturgy to Gregorian chant.

STRICT ENGLISH RENDERING

62. ... In general, *We require* that future priests, from the time of Seminary onward, be trained to understand and celebrate Holy Mass in Latin as well as to employ Latin texts and use Gregorian chant; nor should *great effort* be neglected in regard to the faithful themselves, so that they *learn thoroughly* the commonly known prayers in the Latin language and *in an equal degree* that they should learn the Gregorian chant of those parts of the liturgy which are sung.

What with the dual effects of weak translation and Episcopal obstruction, it will not be astonishing if the effects of *Sacramentum Caritatis* are neutered in this country, just as the effects of so much potentially inspiring papal leadership has been neutered over the last thirty years. Luke Coppen ends his *Catholic Herald* leader with a question: 'could all the parts of the Church – bishops, priests, the Catholic press, bloggers and committed lay people – find a new way to work together to ensure that the Pope's message is heard not only by all Catholics but also by those outside the Church who are anxious to receive it?'. The Bishops are busy men and may not have time for such matters. The Catholic Press is hardly unanimous on the desirability of getting the Pope's message heard. But bloggers and committed lay people may be another matter. Who knows? Perhaps the internet will get the message out where all else has failed.

A MOTHER'S DIARY

IORELLA NASH

Oh joy, Hugh has reached the bug-catching stage. In the past three months we have had conjunctivitis [really quite a messy experience], streaming colds [really, really messy experiences] and tummy bugs [don't even go there, I preferred the permanently running nose]. It is apparently very good for his little immune system and will save him spending time off school, having been exposed to all these infections in infancy. Whilst I am in optimistic mood, I suppose I should be grateful that he has not yet got the hang of spitting out the various lurid-coloured medicines I coax down his throat from time to time and that he is still labouring under the illusion that I am some minor deity with the power to make all things right.

"You can tell you're a first time mum," commented a mother-of-four at the parish mother and baby group, because I still jump out of my skin every time he so much as wobbles. I know he is unlikely to die if some other child accidentally treads on his fingers but I still half-imagine they will fall off. The fact is that when he is not nursing some rumbling condition, Hugh is having minor accidents as part of his education into the perils of the material world. For most inventive accident to date, it is a close contest between him managing to fall flat on his face with a rattle in his mouth and a near collision with the objects on top of my parents' coffee table.

In the first case he wailed with such Dantesque despair when I extracted the rattle from his mouth that I was convinced for a moment that he had knocked his teeth out. In the second, he shuffled towards an invitingly dangling tablecloth and gave it a hearty tug, pulling down a heavy glass vase and its contents. It missed his head by inches but I was so convinced it must have glanced off on the way down because of the noise he was making, that I took him to A + E to have a light shone in his eyes by a reassuring paramedic. "You're lucky he didn't actually bump his head or they would have called the social services," warned a doctor friend who spends a disproportionate amount of her time consoling panic-stricken mothers. "They usually call them automatically if heads are involved. It happens to lots of perfectly nice parents, so don't take it personally if they ever do."

Well of course I won't. Cross my heart and hope to die. Why on earth would I take it personally if a social worker started interrogating me on suspicion of being a child abuser?

I comforted myself that the health visitor would vouch for me if Hugh Ambrose proves to be one of these really unusual little boys who has the odd accident from time to time.

Funnily enough, health visitors were the aspect of the surveillance society that I was most dreading coming into contact with when my baby was born. I had heard so many horror stories about bossy, insensitive women in tweeds reducing young mums to tears over their choice of cot covers that I was half-expecting some female Darth Vader to turn up and tell me off for painting the nursery the wrong shade of blue [or indeed painting it blue at all – gender stereotyping, tut tut]. It had not helped matters that when I was in hospital recovering from the birth, every midwife who came on duty had a different dogmatic theory about baby care that they were just desperate to inflict on me. 'Feed him every three hours'; 'no, no, no, who on earth told you that? Feed him every four hours'; 'Take your clothes off and cuddle up with the baby, the skin-to-skin contact is so important'; 'What the hell are you doing? Who told you that new age rubbish?'; 'Keep trying to feed him all night if necessary'; 'no, no, no, you really have to get some rest or you'll crack up.' Actually I would not have done anything so unsporting as to crack up of my own accord when there was this regiment of experts around me so keen to help me to do so.

As it turns out, my health visitor is a cheerful, reassuring and unobtrusive presence in my life. She answers my every question, generally assumes when she gives me advice that I probably know what I am doing and she managed to ascertain with admirable sensitivity that I was not suffering from postnatal depression or being beaten by my husband. Best of all, when she bumped into a visiting priest in the hallway and walked past pictures of the Last Supper, Benedict XVI and an icon of the Holy Family, she was not terribly surprised when I declined her leaflet on contraception. It was fortunate she was so understanding as I had only been asked about five times in as many days what method of contraception I was going to use and had my answer all ready. Instead of saying, 'I practise Natural Family Planning' I was going to say, 'I'm on a one-woman mission from the Vatican to populate the country with Catholics'. Well, *someone's* got to do it.

sunday 
b y s u n d a y

by Fr Mike Dolman, Assistant Priest
 in Redditch parish in the Diocese of
 Birmingham

5th Sunday of Easter Year C

6 May, Jn 13:31-33a. 34-35

1. As Jesus celebrates the Last Supper with his disciples he gives them a New Commandment, "love one another, just as I have loved you". This is not an option for the disciple: Love can be demanded because it has first been given by Jesus through his incarnation, his teaching, his healing, his preaching and all other aspects of his public ministry. This complete self-giving love is fulfilled in his passion and death upon the cross. "Man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends".
2. Through his institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper, Jesus anticipates his death and resurrection by giving himself to his disciples under the form of bread and wine. "This is my body, given for you; this is my blood, poured out for you". Jesus continues to give himself to us his disciples when we gather to celebrate the Eucharist. His perfect love for us is made manifest body, blood, soul and divinity as real food that we may be able to love others "as (He) has loved" us.
3. In the parable of the Last Judgement Jesus identifies himself absolutely with those who are in need. "In so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me". Our lives will be judged according to how we have loved. This means our communion with Christ in the Eucharist, where we encounter the full

depth of his love, should lead to the practice of loving others and accepting their love for us. When this happens we are more readily able to recognise God's presence and love in our lives.

6th Sunday of Easter Year C

13 May, Jn 14:23-29

1. "If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make our home with him". For many people today, it seems that God is very distant. These words of Jesus speak of an intimacy with himself and the Father that will be made possible for the believer, once the Holy Spirit is sent. There is no longer to be separation between God and man but a deep personal communion. The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives allows us to know Jesus, to love him and to keep his word. Let us hope and pray to know this reality more deeply and so become more attentive to the closeness of God.
2. "The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you". There were so many things that Jesus said and did during his public life and ministry on earth, but so many more things that he was not able to speak of within the limits of that time and place. Jesus promises his disciples the gift of the advocate. It is through the Holy Spirit that this community of followers, the Church, gradually remembers all that Jesus did and said. It is through the Holy Spirit that the Church gradually understands these things in the light of Jesus' death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit animates the Church so that her Tradition is able to mature as she reflects upon the Gospel message. It means that the Church is able to speak with the confidence and authority of Christ as she encounters new situations that challenge humanity.

3. "My own peace I give you, a peace the world cannot give". We live in a world that strives for peace: peace in our world, peace in our communities, peace in our homes and peace in our hearts. Is it possible for us to have true peace when our hearts and minds remain closed to God? It is Jesus who is the Prince of Peace. During this Easter season we sing "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth": The message of the angels to the shepherds at Christ's birth reminds us that it is only in giving glory to God that humanity can come to know true peace on earth.

Ascension

20 May, Lk 24: 46-53

1. On this feast we celebrate the joyful return of Jesus to his Father in heaven. The Word that took flesh now returns, taking our humanity – victorious over death, gloriously Risen, making our way to heaven possible. Therefore his disappearing from our sight is not a source of sadness but of hope for us who seek to follow him. In baptism we have become a member of Christ's body, in faith each day we endeavour to live out the baptism we have received. Where he, the head has gone, we, the body, hope to follow.
2. In the post resurrection gospel narratives describing Jesus' appearance to his disciples we notice again and again that the accounts speak of him in terms of the solid bodily form of Jesus: He eats with them, invites Thomas to place his hand in his wounds, he breaks bread with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, he eats breakfast by the lakeside. For the Jewish people, in contrast to the Greek mindset, reality was to be identified with the material and the particular. Jesus, now raised from the dead, is not a phantom. His physical ascension into heaven underlines for us that it is the same Jesus of Nazareth, truly God and truly

man who now returns to his Father – and because of this each of us, body and soul, can follow.

3. After Jesus had been carried up to heaven the disciples worshipped him and on returning to Jerusalem they continued to praise God in the Temple. Their joy and praise echoes that surrounding the infancy narratives. They are to be witnesses to all that Jesus has accomplished; the salvation that was heralded by the angels has now been won for all nations.

Pentecost

27 May, Jn 20:19-23

1. “He breathed on them and said: ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’”. We are reminded of that first divine breath given at the creation of man out of the dust of the earth. That breath which infused man with a living soul now invests the disciples with the Spirit that makes them a New Creation. It is this life giving Spirit that will fill the hearts of the faithful and renew the face of the earth.

2. “As the Father sent me, so am I sending you”. Filled with the Holy Spirit the disciples are commissioned to go out into the world carrying the Word spoken by the Father: The Word who teaches truth, who forgives sins and heals, who loves perfectly and calls to unity. But these great men are such frail vessels, these eleven who have been entrusted with so much. Still fresh in our memories are the arguments about who is the greatest; the weakness of character exposed on that recent dreadful night and their slow wit in so many situations. Yet these are the men chosen by Jesus to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth. Jesus has chosen us too and he assures us that he will be with us his Church always, even though we muck up, even until the end of the world.

3. Through Jesus’ life, passion, death and resurrection he has won victory over sin and death opening up for us the promise of life eternal. In baptism we receive the same Holy Spirit that animated Jesus throughout his life and mission. It is the same Holy Spirit which Jesus breathed upon his disciples in the upper room and which enables Christ’s mission to continue through the life of the Church. The pattern of Christ’s living , suffering, dying and rising becomes the pattern for our lives, as we are members of his living body. “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me”. Our salvation is worked out through the details of our daily lives as the Holy Spirit dwelling within us allows us to die to our self-centredness and to live lives centred upon Christ.

The Holy Trinity Year C

3 June, Jn16: 12-15

1. When we think about God, we can sometimes speak of him generically as if there were no Trinity. In our prayer we may be careless, despite perhaps beginning with the Sign of the Cross. Today’s feast reminds us that God reveals himself as three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit and that in our life of faith we are called into relationship with the one God who is three persons. In our prayer, let us always be attentive to this remembering that we always live and love in the presence of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

2. “Everything the Father has is mine; that is why I said: All he tells you will be taken from what is mine”. The Holy Spirit is sent to lead the community of Christ’s followers, the Church. In the person of Jesus, God fully reveals himself to humanity. Jesus tells his disciples that the Holy Spirit is not coming to speak something new on his own. He proceeds from the Father and the Son. He comes to “glorify” Jesus by revealing to the Church all that the

Father has given to Jesus. There is a perfect knowledge and love expressed between the persons of the Trinity, a single mission that the Holy Spirit continues to unfold and communicate to the Church in every age.

3. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Our relationship with him is a fundamental aspect of our salvation and our hope of eternal life. Yet we can no longer see Jesus and the gospel accounts are written in a language that he never spoke. It is the Holy Spirit who guides us and makes Christ truly present to us through the life of the Church. In this way we enter into the mystery of the Holy Trinity through the ordinary events of our lives, led by the Spirit of truth into the fullness of truth.

Corpus Christi Year C

10 June, Lk 9: 11-17

1. We cannot fail to hear the Eucharistic overtones in the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, particularly as we hear it proclaimed on this feast day. We acknowledge the Eucharistic celebration as the source and the summit of our Catholic lives: Here we are nourished not with bread and fish but with Jesus Christ himself, veiled beneath the outward appearances of bread and wine. Not food for the health of the body but a remedy for the whole of our being. Words, gestures, signs and symbols: a ritual that draws us into the very life of God. Jesus Christ is the only one who is able to satisfy the deepest hungers of the human heart, to bring us life to the full, both here on earth and in the life to come and he has chosen to do this most profoundly through the celebration of the Mass.

2. “We have no more than five loaves and two fish”. When we gather to celebrate the Eucharist, to offer praise and thanksgiving to God Our Father, we too are aware of our inadequacy, of the imperfections and failings in our lives. Yet like the Twelve in today’s gospel,

we bring to Jesus all that we have; all that we are and place it in his hands. At the offertory of the Mass Jesus in the person of the priest receives this our offering, the bread and the wine. The humble offering of our lives is united to the one perfect offering of Jesus to his Father. In the Mass we offer the divine victim to God, and offer ourselves with him: "Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever. AMEN".

3. We see in Jesus' actions a concern and compassion for all of the people who sought him out. Putting his own needs and intentions to one side, he sets about addressing the needs of the crowd: spiritual and physical. He welcomes them, teaches them about the kingdom of God, cures those in need of healing and provides them with enough food to satisfy them. This remains Christ's mission through the Church in the world today: To provide for humanity all that we require to have life in its fullest sense. As his disciples we give ourselves in some small way to cooperate in his mission. "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord".

11th Sunday Year C

17 June, Lk 7: 36 – 8: 3

1. Jesus invites us to reflect upon the two ways in which he is greeted by Simon, the Pharisee and the woman who had a bad name in the town. As a Pharisee inviting Jesus to a meal, Simon would have observed all of the appropriate laws and customs so as not to cause offence to his guest but it is done more out of duty than with generosity and warmth. Simon poured no water over Jesus' feet; he did not greet him with a kiss or anoint his head with oil. In contrast, the woman with a bad name demonstrates deep devotion and affection for Jesus in her encounter with him: Washing his feet with her tears and drying them with

her hair; covering his feet with kisses and anointing them with ointment. We are called to imitate the example of this woman in the many different ways we meet with Jesus today: in our celebration of the sacraments, our love and care for those we live with, work with and meet each day, in the time we give to personal prayer – demonstrating her generosity and devotion, her deep love and confidence in him.

2. "They were unable to pay so he pardoned them both". None of us are able to pay or make up for the sin of our first parents, or the sins we ourselves have committed. In Jesus Christ we experience the depth of God's love for us and the fount of his unfathomable mercy. We rely completely upon God's forgiveness that is freely offered to each and every one of us in Jesus Christ. Recognising our sinfulness and the need we have for God's mercy and forgiveness is itself a gift of grace from God. The Holy Spirit reveals these areas of our life to us and fills us with confidence to approach Jesus.

3. "Your sins are forgiven". It was not the love that the woman lavished upon Jesus that was the ground for her receiving forgiveness. Jesus tells her that it is her faith that has saved her. This woman approaches Jesus with the confident faith and with the unshakeable hope of the Woman with the haemorrhage and of the Publican in the temple. It is because of this great faith in Jesus that her many sins are forgiven her.

The Birth of John the Baptist

24 June, Lk 1: 57-66. 80

1. In one sense the birth of every child is a miraculous event: a new and unique person brought into the world – man and woman participating in God's creative work. The birth of John the Baptist is truly miraculous: given

the great age of both Elizabeth and Zechariah and the fact that Elizabeth has been barren throughout her life. The joy that is shared by neighbours and relations has recognised the wonderful mercy that God has poured upon this elderly couple who had previously laboured under the divine stigma of an unfruitful marriage. Joy fills this moment as the promise handed on by previous generations draws so close to its fulfilment and the words of the angel Gabriel spoken to Zechariah are realised, "You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth".

2. "His name is John". According to the Jewish tradition, the child is circumcised on the eighth day and is named. The name carries significance for the bearer: what sort of person will he be? What is God calling him to be? What hopes do his parents have for him? To the surprise of everybody Elizabeth is adamant that he is to be called John, a name that means 'God's gracious gift' and is new as a name in the family. Zechariah is asked independently and gives the same name. There is amazement among all the people who have recognised God's hand at work. It is God himself who has given this name through the angel Gabriel, "Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John" and he is destined for a great mission.

3. "And he lived out in the wilderness". In the bible the desert is understood as a place associated with prophetic inspiration and preparation. It is the place where for forty years the people of Israel learned to trust in God, the place where Jesus prepared for his mission and it is the place where people will arrive in great numbers to respond to John's call to repentance and to prepare themselves for the coming of the Messiah.

book
r e v i e w s



CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY
TODAY

by Victor E Watton & Michael Elson,
Hodder Murray, 166pp, 1997, £11.99

Why does a person believe in God? There are many reasons available, St. Thomas Aquinas answers that there are five ways in which the existence of God can be proved. Writing over seven hundred years ago we might be tempted to think his ideas have been improved upon and are now outdated and redundant. We would be tempted to think wrong.

Catholic Christianity describes itself as "an invaluable resource for all Catholic Schools", produced by "experienced senior examiners, teachers and best selling authors". It is considered by many to be the best textbook available for teaching Religious Education in Catholic Schools. The authors Victor W Watton and Michael Elson begin the ever-important task of passing on the faith to our children with a chapter entitled "Believing in God". The reasons offered skip St. Thomas and two thousand years of Catholic tradition. The first reason they suggest that a person might believe in God is that if someone is brought up a Catholic then:

"to keep the promises they made at the baptism, the parents would probably teach them prayers ... they would say prayers to God thanking him for looking after them and so it would seem natural for them to believe in God ... at church, they would hear people talking about God and assume that God exists."

You may assume I am disappointed. If a science textbook began to explain the reasons scientists believe in the electron with a phrase like "at School, they would hear people talking about the electron and assume that it exists" we would describe that textbook as weak.

Why have they not mentioned Faraday or Ampere?, we might ask. Why do they not describe some experiments or show some mathematics? It is fair to say that some people believe in the electron because they have heard it mentioned on the TV, but this is not a fair explanation for belief in electrons. Real scientists have proper reasons for drawing conclusions, as do real theologians.

Catholic Christianity offers further explanation of belief in God. Miracles:

"for example, if a Catholic prays for her mother to be cured of cancer and she is, she will believe that her prayers have been answered and that God has caused a miracle to happen"

This is simply not true. If a Catholic prays for her mother to be cured of cancer and she is, she may choose to believe all kinds of things. She may believe that the doctor did a good job. She may believe that her mother somehow fought it off. She could draw the conclusion that it was not God that caused a miracle to happen but some other kind of mystical life force. The assertion that "she will" believe that God has caused a miracle is false. It is ludicrous to imply that all Catholics, after praying, will view all positive results as miracles.

Having described reasons for believing in God, *Catholic Christianity* moves on to possible objections. Catholic Christianity is excellent when it describes what CS Lewis calls "the problem of pain". A clear-cut bullet point list explains that a good God must want to eliminate suffering, if God is all-knowing He must have known what suffering would result from creating the world and if God is omnipotent He must be able to prevent or eliminate suffering. It is a pity then, that after such a clear explanation of the problem of suffering, we do not find an equally clear explanation of the Christian response. Once more, I am disappointed: *"the main response of Christians to suffering is a practical one – they help those who are suffering"*. This is true, but it does little to respond

to the conundrum presented: How could a benevolent God allow evil and suffering to exist? The students are left to work that one out on their own.

Although the book continues with a couple of responses, none are convincing. Perhaps it would have been over-optimistic to expect the authors to introduce our youngsters to the ideas of St. Augustine. He wrote: *"since God is the highest good, He would not allow any evil to exist in His works, unless His omnipotence and goodness were such as to bring good even out of evil"*. St. Thomas Aquinas also weighs in *"this is part of the infinite goodness of God, that He should allow evil to exist, and out of it produce good"*.

So now we come to the classic controversial issues: contraception, abortion, and euthanasia. Each "issue" is dealt with in three parts. What the issue is, What Catholics believe about it and What other Christians believe. In other words: A: The action in question is described in such a way as to make it sound lovely and fluffy. Secondly, B: We are informed that the Catholics forbid it. C: Then we hear that other Christians don't. Let's work through the ABCs of these classic controversies:

Contraception: A. *"The use of contraception in the West has led to a stabilising of the population ... However, in less developed countries, the population is rising by as much as 3% a year ... This is placing great pressures on food supplies, health services and education"*. B. *"The Catholic Church has always taught that using artificial methods of contraception is wrong ... Some Catholics, following their conscience, disagree with the Church's teaching and use contraception"*. C. *"The Methodist Church believes that responsible contraception is a welcome means towards fulfillment in marriage"*.

In order to have a concept of "disorder" we need to have a concept of "order" and since this book completely fails to explain the Catholic view of sexuality and vocation to family life, the ban on artificial contraception

can only be described as some kind of pointless arbitrary rule.

Abortion: A. "Until 1967, all abortions in Great Britain were illegal which lead to 'back street abortions'. These often resulted in injury to the mother and sometimes death." B. "The Catholic Church teaches that abortion is wrong and should never be allowed". C. "Jesus told Christians to love their neighbour as themselves, and abortion may be the most loving thing to do".

It's been fifty years since 1967 and apparently there is still no better argument in favour of abortion than: "we need to legalise things if people could get injured doing them illegally". A person could get injured robbing a bank, yet we would not dream of applying that logic here. There is no attempt to explain the Catholic belief in the dignity of the unborn child (who suffers injury and death both in the backstreet or in the hospital). The teachings of John Paul II about the culture of death don't get a look in. Perhaps they could fit them in by removing the sentence that reads "Catholics believe that abortion is wrong because:"...(drum roll)... "a foetus is a potential person". Potential person? I don't remember that page of the Catechism.

Euthanasia: A. "the situation where someone dying in pain asks a doctor to end his/her life painlessly" B. "The Catholic Church teaches that all forms of euthanasia are wrong." C. "if people are in so much pain that they do not know how to cope, God will not regard suicide as a sin".

The subtext which, it seems to me, will be picked up by teenagers is that avoiding pregnancy, having abortions and killing granny can all be positive things to do. The Catholic Church forbids them but then they forbid everything, and, hey, other Christians don't forbid them so don't worry yourself. Okay, so a book like this is here to educate according to a syllabus rather than convince, but the presentation of the Catholic view is positively unconvincing.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words and as such the choice of photos for the book is interesting. The photography seems feminist in sympathy; three photos of women priests seems a little more than is strictly required to illustrate the point that some denominations have women priests. There are only female first communion children, only a woman Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (falsely called Eucharistic Minister) and the only single parent shown is a woman.

Speaking of which, the choice of smiling people gives a clear message. These people are happy. Smiles sell anything from toothpaste to holidays. In Catholic Christianity they sell trouble. Ulrika Jonsson (whose name is misspelled in the book) smiles as a happy divorced single parent. Victoria and David Beckham smile as happy people who lived together before marriage. Elton John is a happy homosexual while Hayley from Coronation Street is a happy transsexual. Even the women priests are smiling. Dissent from the Church has never looked so much fun.

Biblical teachings on men and women are divided into "Teachings which show women as inferior to men" and "Teachings which show men and women as equal". As a man I find this highly sexist. Where is the section for teachings that show men as inferior such as when the first people to visit the tomb of Jesus are women and the men fail to believe them because they are sexist? It's enough to make me feel inferior! But seriously, it's surely giving into a caricature of Christianity to suggest that the author of Genesis 1-2 and St Paul taught that women are inferior to men and certainly far, far away from the Catholic interpretation of those texts.

How does it tackle the matter of the Celibacy of the Clergy?

"the first Christian Ministers were not required to be celibate ... Over the centuries the Church saw that there were advantages if those who were

leaders did not have the responsibilities of family life. Eventually the Church required all its bishops and priests to be celibate"

This seems uncomfortable close to: 'Sorry Father, but you can't have kids because we want our advantages'. It's funny how this has never happened anywhere else. Celibate politicians should have advantages, as should celibate managers of the England football team. What about celibate postmen? Without wives and families they could get up earlier and deliver more mail. So why are these people not celibate? Because they wouldn't stand for it? Maybe being a priest is significantly different from having some other job. Actually being a priest is not like a job at all.

Throughout Catholic Christianity there are columns of "Key Words" dedicated to helping the reader understand, well, the key words. Here are some of the worse ones:

"Moral Evil – actions done by humans which cause suffering"

It is a classic error of modern thinking simply to equate immorality with causing suffering. It is the kind of thinking that can lead to ideas like "what they don't know won't hurt them". Youngsters might be left thinking that actions carried out in private have no moral value good or bad. In fact nothing is neutral to God.

"Prayer – an attempt to communicate with God, usually through words"

This seems like a one way street, with the main effort on our side. God seems very far away and we attempt to reach him. The reality is very different; it is more often we who fail to hear him. He is always there, listening and ready to hear our prayers.

"Abortion – the removal of a foetus from the womb before it can survive"

Except in the case of late term abortions where many of the babies could survive if they were not killed. It is also interesting to note that the word 'foetus' is not considered a key word and is left (scandalously) undefined.

"Euthanasia – an easy and gentle death"

Etymology aside an easy and gentle death is when you die in the night while you dream of bunnies. Euthanasia, if it is easy and gentle (and it may not be) should properly be described as directly ending a life, that is: killing.

"Faith – our attitude in the presence of someone, or some event, whose goodness and greatness and wonder is greater than we can fully grasp, describe or explain"

Someone's attitude to such a "someone" or "event" could easily be something other than that which Catholicism terms faith. It could even be distrust or suspicion? When it comes to the presence of something I cannot fully "grasp, describe or explain" faith is one of numerous options. This leaves faith entirely undefined.

"Judgment – the act of judging people and their actions"

In my opinion this definition is the worst of them all. It tells the reader nothing. The fact that a definition such as this made it in to a school textbook defies belief.

I have some minor moans about errors, which just aren't quite forgivable in what is not a first edition of the book. The authors state that Mary was assumed into heaven "without dying". Pius XII left the question open. A priest anoints a sick person with the "oil of Chrism" (rather than the "oil of the Infirm"). Also, given that the Catholic Church teaches that Jesus Christ is the very centre of history, it is a little disheartening to come across consistent use of the abbreviations BCE and CE, for 'Before the Common Era' and 'the Common Era' rather than BC and AD.

When I look at Catholic Christianity I have feelings of dismay. It's a question of truth.

The writers of this book don't seem to believe in it (it's certainly not in the index which is a fairly big omission considering the index of the Catechism lists twenty-eight references). I'm not suggesting the authors are deceitful,

just that they have a different idea of what truth is. In other subjects, things have to be true. No science textbook could get away with speed equals distance multiplied by beans. No history textbook could say that the Romans landed on the moon, yet an RE textbook can write *"Followers of all religions have religious experiences which lead them to believe that God exists"*. All of them? Even those religions that don't actually believe in a God at all?

While writing this review I have ran it by a few people. Some priests, some teachers and some parents. The universal response has been: "Does it *really say that?*" I can only say yes. Yes it does. The fact that such a book is in the hands of our children is beyond belief. Let us please have an RE textbook that respects truth. I'm not asking for a one-sided advertisement for the Church that neglects to mention common objections to what the Church says. I simply ask for one that reports the facts about the Catholic faith and treats it more like a spiritual reality and less like a fairy story gone wrong. Let us please start to provide the children in our schools with the truth; the truth, that will set them free.

James Preece
Hull

TALKS ON THE SONG OF SONGS
by St Bernard of Clairvaux, Paraclete
Press, 154pp, \$14.95

PHILOKALIA: THE EASTERN
CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL TEXTS.
SELECTIONS ANNOTATED AND
EXPLAINED
Skylight Paths, 221pp, \$16.99

If you wanted to purchase the complete *Song of Songs* or the complete *Philokalia*, you would need to buy eight volumes (four of each). Obviously, you won't get all the nuances in these selections, but what a find they are.

St Bernard has received a bad press because he preached the Second Crusade. People seem to have forgotten that he founded sixty-eight monasteries during his lifetime

and that Dante chose him as his guide into Paradise: Mary's "faithful servant, Bernard." He is revealed in his commentary on the Song of Songs as touchingly humble: "Entire clusters of good works were spoiled by anger, torn away by bragging, and rotted by vanity! I ate too much; let my mind sit idle, had a timid faith, and let my emotions rule me." He was also full of affection and when Brother Gerard died said "You have my thanks, dear brother, for any good that may come from my own studies of divine subjects. If I have accomplished anything, the credit is yours. You made it possible... I was called abbot, and he did the work."

Bernard took eighteen years on his commentary on the Song of Songs – unfinished at his death. It abounds in the use of allegory. He would say that St Paul was "dark and beautiful" (Song of Songs 1:5) because "his letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive", and that "the conversion of the sinner sweetly perfumes the Church." The house is "filled with the fragrance of the perfume" (John 12:3). His use of scripture is incomparable and his range is breathtaking. He can say that the "Church is ordinary, yet extraordinary. It is both the "tents of Kedar" (Song 1:5) and God's sanctuary. It is a tented camp on earth and a heavenly palace... It is a target of criticism and the bride of Christ." He chides his monks, "I think there are the angels who listen as we pray. This is what bothers me when I see a few of us dozing during the night office. The angels must think you are dead!"

There is plenty of practical spiritual advice, as you would expect from talks given by an abbot. He says that "we who give in to temptation erect a series of walls around ourselves: lust, acquiescence, action, habit, disregard. Do your best to stop the chain at the very beginning." He is not blind to the power of heresy: "Being a heretic is not enough for them. They not only turn away from the Church, they leave it in ruins." Bernard Bangley who has

modernized the text (and abridged it) has his little colloquialisms but he has done a great service in making this work accessible.

It is interesting to compare St Bernard's talks to monks to a compendium of sayings largely from monks which is the *Philokalia*. The Faber edition (in four volumes) demands stamina. Here we are given seven chapters: repentance, the heart, prayer, the Jesus Prayer, the Passions, Stillness, and In the End: Theosis.

St Bernard comments on solitude: "Physical solitude is not required. It is a matter of the mind and spirit. This solitude is yours, if you decline to participate in gossip, hourly struggles, and disputes... if losses and injuries do not upset you." The *Philokalia* says "The desert is in fact superfluous, since we can enter the kingdom simply through repentance and the strict keeping of God's commandments." (Nicholas Stilthatos) Both put charity above personal devotion: "We in the Church must often suspend our personal devotional life in order to nourish the hungry souls of others" (St Bernard) and "When we receive visits from our brethren, we should not consider this an irksome interruption of our stillness, lest we cut ourselves off from the law of love" (St Theodorus). The role of humility is at the heart of both books, "Now he [= the Bridegroom] tells her twice she is beautiful. It is not only his love for her that makes her beautiful, but also her humility" (St Bernard) and "where humility is combined with the remembrance of God that is established through watchfulness and attention, and also with recurrent prayer inflexible in its resistance to the enemy, there is the place of God, the haven of the heart." (St Philotheos of Sinai)

Both books are available on *Amazon* in case you cannot locate them locally. St Bernard makes an important point for readers of *Faith*, "The beams (of the building – cf. Song 1:4) are the supporting structure of doctrine and regulations that prevent weakening of

the structure by individuals. The rafters are educated, dedicated clergy" – from one who knew.

*Fr James Tolhurst
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GOSPEL CHIVALRY: FRANCISCAN ROMANTICISM

*by Mark of Whitstable,
Gracewing, 192pp, £9.99*

The concept of a study of St Francis as the 'knight of Christ' is a highly attractive one, combining as it does two of the most loved (and problematic) images of the high Middle Ages – chivalric culture and the wandering friar of Assisi. Mark of Whitstable's book provides glimpses of what such a study might yield, but it is unfortunately only an introduction to that study and serves more to whet the appetite than to satisfy it.

The author's central claim is that a crucial impulse for St Francis' conversion, and the inspiration for his way of life, was a re-interpretation or inversion of the code of chivalry that was both a product and the regulating force of the feudal system within which he was born. It is obvious that Whitstable is convinced of this reading, and indeed some of his chapters contain fascinating and compelling interpretations of Francis' life and teaching in this light, but there is a lack of focus and rigour which leaves one with the impression that more could be said in far fewer pages with more convincing results. The thesis is at times illuminating both of St Francis and of his world; for example, the chapters on courtly love provide insights into Francis' relationship with Lady Poverty and the Blessed Mother, at the same time setting the secular cult of knightly trysts in a critical light, stripping away something of the 19th-century Romantic veneer from its surface. However, the author does not often enough distinguish between later reception of the period and contemporary readings – in one of these same chapters he propounds a wonderful exegesis of the Annunciation as representing Mary's chivalric courtesy but without making

it clear whether this is his own reading or one specific to the period he is studying. This exegesis follows on from a brief reference to Langland, but it is by no means clear that it proceeds from that source. It is then followed by a passing reference to Gawain but then a substantial quotation from Hilaire Belloc. The impression one receives is of a pot-pourri of contemporaneous and non-contemporaneous sources brought together to support or embellish the point being made, but without the historical filter necessary to distinguish between their various degrees of usefulness in understanding the period on its own terms. Similar uncritical (if interesting) use of later readings of the period include GK Chesterton and Francis Thompson.

Further, a fuzzy definition of Romanticism itself is employed throughout the book – in the very chapter with the subtitle, 'Franciscan Romanticism' (somewhat oddly slight and situated near the end of the book), a promising opening discussing the origins of medieval 'roman-tic' literature collapses into a watery (modern) use of the word relative to Francis' and Clare's "youthful mutual attraction [that] grew into a shared understanding of God's love for them"(p.151). In this case, as with much of the book, the author betrays a wish to leave no aspect of Francis' life untouched by his chivalric reading – even if this means 'shoe-horning' episodes into unsuitable or undeveloped concepts or vice versa.

Much of the book is frustrating because in service of this urge to comprehensiveness the author often passes from assertion to assertion without fully arguing a point, creating a sense of episodic arbitrariness rather than argument. *Gospel Chivalry* is less than convincing because it is difficult to know what kind of a book it is: is it a historical dissertation, an informed narrative, a meditation or a collection of short essays of various types? The notes, relatively extensive bibliography and the tone of the introduction lead

one to expect a work of scholarship, but this is belied by the lack of any rigorous interrogation of sources, too many unsupported claims and lack of any real sense of argument. The grouping of the chapters into four Parts seems to me to be entirely arbitrary, as I find no sense of progression (either narrative or argumentative) nor of thematic similarity within each Part, save that chapters on the beginning of Francis' life and ministry are towards the beginning and those on his death towards the end. To call the last chapter 'Denouement' is to imply a non-existent narrative. Another factor which both fragments the book and is frankly rather irritating is the almost verbatim repetition of passages from one chapter in others and the constant circling around a few central tropes without necessarily adding to their significance (or without having established them securely in the first place).

Gospel Chivalry does provide seeds for what would be no doubt very interesting scholarship indeed – the influence of the Knights Templar and the Hospitallers upon Francis is posited, for example. But it is then assumed without further investigation and passed over without any further enquiry and no provision of solid evidence to support the suggestion. It seems to me that this is a serious oversight because by overlooking the influences on or precursors to Francis' 'Gospel chivalry' the author misses a chance for further historical grounding that would take the edges off his rather idealised view of Francis as the original genius of the concept. The book could seriously benefit from this widened and tempered view.

In spite (or perhaps because) of this somewhat idealistic stance, however, Gospel Chivalry does inspire the reader anew with Franciscan zeal – despite its faults it is written with an enthusiasm

for both the period under discussion and the Franciscan vision. Anyone with an admiration for St Francis and a love of the legend of the chivalric Middle Ages should find here plenty of food for thought and fuel for those twin fires, though the book is at times a very frustrating read.

*Matthew Ward
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notes from across the

Atlantic

by Richard John Neuhaus

CALLING FOR CATHOLIC IDENTITY

It has been more than sixteen years since Pope John Paul II issued *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, underscoring that the Catholic university is born from “the heart of the Church” and should faithfully serve the Church’s faith and mission, meaning the faith and mission of those who are the Church. It is not true that nothing has changed in the two-hundred-plus colleges and universities in this country. Many institutions have engaged in an intensive self-examination seeking to strengthen their “Catholic identity”. For most schools, however, it seems that the drift into secular blandness continues, maintaining “Catholic identity” mainly for recruitment and fund-raising purposes. This is strikingly true of Jesuit universities that vaguely, and somewhat nostalgically, describe themselves as being “in the Jesuit tradition” but flee the scandal of particularity that is being Catholic. A man-bites-dog story that gained attention recently has to do with a lawsuit titled Saint Louis University v. The Masonic Temple Association. The Masons claimed SLU is a Catholic institution and SLU denied it. The dispute was over an \$8 million tax abatement, with the Masons contending that the state constitution forbids such aid to an institution controlled by a religious body. SLU argued that it is “independent of the Catholic Church”. As it happens, the court ruled on very narrow grounds of governance, noting that, while SLU “maintains a Jesuit heritage”, it is actually “controlled and operated by an independent, lay board of trustees”. (Of the 1,275 faculty and staff of SLU, fewer than 35 are Jesuits.) I expect one would with some difficulty try to explain to Ignatius Loyola how it came about all these years later that the Masons accused one of his universities

of being Catholic and the university prevailed in denying it.

ECONOMIC EUGENICS

The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) is a very establishmentarian pro-business organization, and it has recently issued a study celebrating the economic benefits of abortion on demand. “Taken together with earlier research results, the authors’ findings suggest that the improved living circumstances experienced by children born after the legalisation of abortion had a lasting impact on their lifelong prospects. Children who were ‘born unwanted’ prior to the legalisation of abortion not only grew up in more disadvantaged households, but also grew up to be more disadvantaged as adults.” The report adds, “This conclusion is in line with a broad literature documenting the intergenerational correlation in income and showing that adverse living circumstances as a child are associated with poor outcomes as an adult.” Thanks to the high-powered research of NBER, it now seems to be established that, in terms of economic outcomes, it is better to be born rich than to be born poor. Who would have thought it? A disproportionate number of the thirty-five million children killed by abortion since 1973 would have been born poor, and it is therefore a net economic gain that they were not born. Of abortion, the report says, “This phenomenon is referred to as ‘selection.’” To which one might add that the claim to know what those dead children might have done with their lives is referred to as soothsaying. And the argument implicitly advanced by NBER is referred to as eugenics. Thought Police on the Prowl

The title is unfortunate: “Expelling God from the University”. If by God we mean God, he cannot be expelled from any part of his creation. But the article, by David French of the Alliance Defense Fund, is a useful summary of curious things happening on campus. Appearing in that valuable journal, Academic Questions, published by the

National Association of Scholars, the article recounts case after case of students being punished or silenced for expressing religious views that violate academic orthodoxies; and of Christian campus groups, some of which have been around for decades, being put out of business. Not surprisingly, the most common instrument of repression is speech codes forbidding “homophobic discrimination”. Most of what French recounts is dreadfully familiar by now, but a new twist is the way in which state universities are in their official statements getting into the business of defining true (gay friendly) and false (gay critical) Christianity. So much for the separation of church and state when state institutions set themselves up as arbiters in theological and moral disputes. In multiple cases, courts have ruled that such discrimination against orthodox persons and organisations is illegal but, as French notes, that doesn’t stop the academic thought patrol from trying again and again.

WHEN THE ARGUMENT NEVER STARTS

“The argument is over”, announced former Vice President Al Gore. The subject was global warming. The television interviewer then asked, “You mean there is no argument about global warming?” Gore solemnly nodded and said again, very much like a judge pronouncing the final verdict, “The argument is over.” When and where, one might well ask, did the argument take place? Who was invited to take part in the argument? There are many very reputable scientists expressing skepticism or disbelief with respect to global warming. Never mind, they’re too late; the argument is over. As the presumed moderator of public discourse, Mr. Gore declares that the argument is over and that his side won. Writing in the *Boston Globe*, Ellen Goodman goes further, comparing global-warming skeptics with Holocaust deniers. They are not only ignorant, they are culpably ignorant. In fact, they are evil. One detects a growing pattern of refusing to engage in argument by

declaring that the argument is over. It is not only global warming. Raise a question about the adequacy of Darwinian theory, whether scientifically or philosophically, and be prepared to be informed that the argument is over. Offer the evidence that many who once coped with same-sex desires have turned out, not without difficulty, to be happily married to persons of the opposite sex and you will be told politely—or, more likely, impolitely—that the argument is over.

WOMEN OF COURAGE

In the October issue of *First Things*, I cited a powerful article by Elizabeth Schiltz on the pressures brought by the medical profession to have women abort less-than-perfect babies. It is included in a collection of essays entitled, *Defiant Birth: Women Who Resist Medical Eugenics*, edited by Melinda Tankard Reist. (Although published in Australia, the book is available on Amazon.) This invaluable book will be of very particular interest to mothers and fathers who are expecting. “Fewer and fewer pregnancies,” writes Reist, “are allowed to proceed without screening and related interventions. Rarely are women allowed to move through pregnancy without being subjected to some form of genetic surveillance. Some of the drive to ‘over-screen’ is driven by medical negligence claims; doctors, and no less insurers, push for routine screening as a means of ensuring that their risk of liability is minimized.” Reist writes: “*Defiant Birth* is a book about women who have resisted the present day practice of medical eugenics. It is about women who were told they should not have babies because of perceived disabilities – either in the child or themselves. They have confronted a society deeply fearful of disability and all its stigmas. Facing silent disapproval and even open hostility, they have had their babies anyway, believing their children are just as worthy to partake of life as are others. This is a book about women who have resisted the ideology of quality control

and the paradigm of perfection. They have dared to challenge the prevailing medical and social mindset. This book’s contributors have refused to take part in a system of ‘disability deselection’ which classifies certain people as ‘biologically incapacitated’. These women may be among the last who decide to have babies without the genetic stamp of approval. They are, in a sense, genetic outlaws.” The nineteen women who write about their defiance of what is aptly called medical eugenics are also heroines who gave life a chance and who write movingly of their joy in having resisted the “choice” that others tried to impose upon them and their children. *Defiant Birth*. Somebody you know should read this book.

BARAK OBAMA

I agree with those who complain that it is not fair to draw attention to the fact that Senator Barack Obama’s middle name is Hussein, but I cannot do so without drawing attention to it. Perhaps more pertinent to our politics is the name Barack (sometimes spelled Barak), which presumably refers to the warrior who served under the direction of a strong-willed woman executive named Deborah (see Judges 4). This has led practitioners of a peculiar style of biblical prognostication to conclude that the senator will accept the vice-presidential nomination on a ticket headed by a strong-willed woman of our time. I know nothing about that. But, free-associating as I sometimes do, this was brought to mind by a review of *The Judge in Democracy* by Aharon Barak, until recently head of the Supreme Court of Israel. The review, in *Azure* magazine, is by Judge Robert Bork, who is not taken with Barak’s distinction between “formal democracy” and “substantive democracy”. Formal democracy is the rule of the people through elected representatives, while substantive democracy, according to Barak, is the rule of “the enlightened members of society”, mainly through the judiciary. “The question is not what the judge

wants,” writes Barak, “but what society needs.” To which Bork responds: “It is incorrect to suppose that a society’s ‘needs’ is a fact that can be determined by an objective balancing of interests. In truth, the most important interests are likely to be conflicting value judgments. How, for instance, does a judge know whether a society ‘needs’ freedom of abortion, some degree of regulation or a prohibition of abortion altogether? How can a judge determine whether his or her society ‘needs’ a constitutional right to homosexual marriage? How does he decide ‘objectively’ whether religious education in state-supported schools should be required, made optional or prohibited? The answer, of course, is that the judge does not, and cannot, ‘know’ any of these things, though he may have strong feelings about them. Because the judge is, by definition, operating without guidance from positive law, it is almost certain that his personal opinions will turn out to be what society ‘needs’.” It seems that Barak believes the judicial authoritarianism is necessary because judges are intellectually and morally superior to other political actors. Bork writes: “As he explains, ‘a branch of government should not judge itself. It is therefore appropriate that the final decision about the legality of the activities of the legislative and executive branches should be taken by a mechanism external to those branches, that is, the judiciary’. Yet the judicial branch is properly subject to no such external mechanism, ‘because of their [the judges’] education, profession, and role,’ and because they are ‘trained and accustomed to dealing with conflicts of interest.’ Judges may be trusted, moreover, since they are ‘not fighting for their own power’. Surely anyone familiar with Barak’s record will see the irony in that statement.” By advancing and acting upon his understanding of the power of courts, says Bork, “Barak surely establishes a world record for judicial hubris.” Robert Bork is an acknowledged expert on the stiff competition for that accolade, not least by courts in this country.

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A special feature keeping us up to date with issues of science and religion

THE DAWKINS ANTITHESIS

The biologist Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion* (published September 2006) has generated much discussion, and not a little anger, for its prejudiced, unscientific attack on religion, and has caused many to suggest, 'There needs to be a book to answer all this.' Well, Dawkins's relentless diatribe of 374 pages has now received one just response, in a slim, volume of only 65 pages calmly written and closely argued by a fellow Oxford professor and former atheist, Alister McGrath, supported by Joanna Collicutt McGrath. They are, respectively, professor of historical theology at Oxford, and lecturer in psychology of religion at Heythrop. Both have science backgrounds, in molecular biophysics and clinical psychology respectively. The McGraths' book, entitled *The Dawkins Delusion?* (published February 2007 by SPCK), does not set out to answer each and every one of Dawkins's "aggregation of convenient factoids, suitably overstated to achieve maximum impact." They say:

"Every one of Dawkins' misrepresentations and overstatements can be challenged and corrected. Yet a book that merely offered such a litany of corrections would be catatonically boring. Assuming that Dawkins has equal confidence in all parts of his book, I shall simply challenge him at representative points, and let readers draw their own conclusions about the overall reliability of his evidence and judgement" (p. xii).

So, in four short chapters, they address the themes: 1. *Deluded about God?* 2. *Has science disproved God?* 3. *What are the origins of religion?* 4. *Is religion evil?* It is, in many regards, a good response to the Dawkins outpouring of vitriol, being a work temperate in tone

and neatly ordered – the very antithesis of Dawkins's book – and yet at times the authors are hard-pressed to contain their exasperation at the continual misrepresentations Dawkins offered his readers. More typical, however, of the new work, is the McGraths' sadness at the intellectually flimsy and scientifically bankrupt nature of Dawkins's arguments. They commend his early work, *The Selfish Gene*, at least for its "brilliant popularization of difficult scientific ideas," but here rue the abuse of his scientific credentials:

"It's hard not to believe that science – or rather, a highly contentious and unrepresentative account of science – is here being abused as a weapon to destroy religion. One of the melancholy aspects of *The God Delusion* is how its author appears to have made the transition from a scientist with a passionate concern for truth to a crude anti-religious propagandist who shows a disregard for evidence" (p. 27).

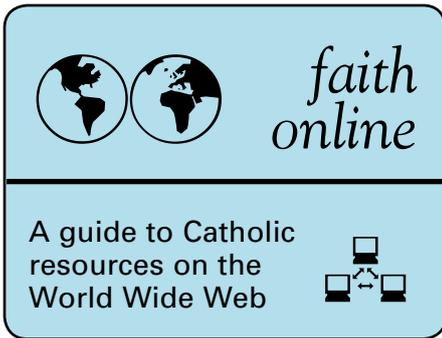
In the second chapter of their book, *Has science disproved God?*, the McGraths muster several arguments in opposition to Dawkins's claims, and particularly his core assumption that 'real scientists must be atheists.' First, that plenty of excellent scientists are not atheists, or at least do not dismiss out of hand the idea of a realm of reality beyond the material. Second, how a 'science explains everything' outlook is not an opinion that is rigorously tenable, given the transcendent questions for which man legitimately seeks answers. Third, that unlike Stephen Jay Gould's idea that science and religion are 'non-overlapping magisteria' or Dawkins's idea that science is the only magisterium, these authors defend "a realization that science and religion offer possibilities of cross-fertilization on account of the interpenetration of their subjects and methods" (p. 19). Fourth, that even in 2006 there were many significant books written on faith and science by eminent scientists, e.g. Francis Collins, Owen Gingerich, and Paul Davies, and that the percentage of believing American scientists has

not significantly changed between a survey in 1916 and a survey in 1997, i.e. 40%.

The McGraths conclude, "Dawkins is forced to contend with the highly awkward fact that his view that the natural sciences are an intellectual superhighway to atheism is rejected by most scientists, irrespective of their religious views" (p. 21). Whereas most scientists seem happy to adopt a view that "one can be 'real' scientist without being committed to any specific religious, spiritual or anti-religious view of the world" (p. 23), Dawkins believes that science is at war with religion, and must vanquish it.

In this magazine we go a little further than the McGraths have in their book. If a 'real' physicist is to be a 'real' metaphysicist he should be open to discerning that the evidence of the natural and human world leads quite specifically towards an understanding of matter and spirit which is consonant with the revelation of God made in Israel and most fully in Jesus Christ.

The McGraths have kept clearly and calmly focussed upon the task of debunking what they term Dawkins' 'atheist fundamentalism.' They are extremely critical of this 'crusading vigour' of his: "One of the greatest disservices that Dawkins has done to the natural sciences is to portray them as relentlessly and inexorably atheistic. They are nothing of the sort ..." (p. 25). What a sad comment regarding the academic biologist whose very professorship is entitled 'of the public understanding of science.' The ire and the bigotry, not to mention the unscientific partiality in his evidence make some wonder if indeed Dawkins has 'shot himself in the foot' with this book. The McGraths ask: "Might *The God Delusion* actually backfire, and end up persuading people that atheism is just as intolerant, doctrinaire and disagreeable as the worst that religion can offer?" (p. 64). Dawkins will be hoping, but presumably not praying, that that doesn't happen.



The links to all the websites mentioned in Faith Online are included in the Faith Website at www.faith.org.uk

GUARD DUTY

This site revives the notion of Christendom, not as a particular territory, but as Christian Society engaged with the world. Themed news reports and essays explore the interface between the Church and her milieu. Taking inspiration from certain saints and historical battles, the site provides a thoughtful context to our present struggles.

<http://www.guardduty.wordpress.com>

CAMPION COLLEGE

“Welcome to the dawn of a new era in higher education in Australia” writes the President of Campion College in Sydney, Rev Dr John Fleming. Those who have been fortunate to hear this inspiring speaker in the U.K. will be in little doubt about the veracity of his claim. Australia’s first Catholic liberal Arts College is also commended by Cardinal Pell. Studies are followed in small, discussion-based classes integrating a broad array of subjects within the context of authentic Catholic teaching. A smart online presence with a promise of hope.

<http://www.campion.edu.au>

THE DIVINE MERCY

The Marian of the Immaculate Conception host this authoritative site for what is now, thanks to John Paul II, in the mainstream of parish life. Here there is a sober and reflective summary of the devotion, placed within the context of the Scriptures and the Church’s teaching. There is a life of St Faustina and details of some apostolates that have grown up from the practice of the devotion. This is a good site for priests.

<http://www.thedivinemercy.org/>

NEXTWAVE

Recognising the role of music, this online community for Catholic young adults features an impressive list of Christian alternatives to mainstream artists of all styles. Submit a prayer or subscribe to nextwavefaithful for live chats with other Catholics. As an enthusiastic American outreach, it may even have something for the more jaded British teenager!

<http://www.wavefactor.com>

ARCHBISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN

The first T.V. priest, whose Cause is apparently underway. You can listen to many of his talks from the audio library (although the sponsorship for the site is highly intrusive). Photos of his life certainly chart the rise of the media age.

<http://www.fultonsheen.com/>

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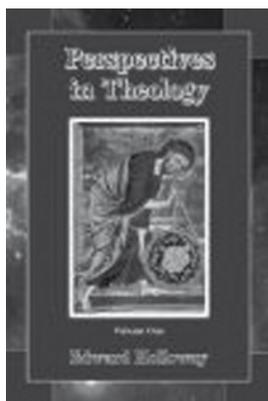
Since our previous review three years ago, two of the founding members have taken their first vows (in Westminster Cathedral) and the community has been entrusted with the running of Brentwood Diocesan House of prayer at Abbotswick. This updated site, with blog and photo album, provides more information on these dynamic young women as they seek to promote a culture of vocation.

<http://www.walsinghamcommunity.org/index.html>

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE HOLY CROSS

This parish site of the Sacred Heart, Eccleshall recounts the founding in 2004 of another new Community. Ordained, lay and professed religious live and pray in the same house. The vocation is to assist in parish catechesis and to provide retreats and renewal work.

<http://sacredheart-eccleshall.org.uk>



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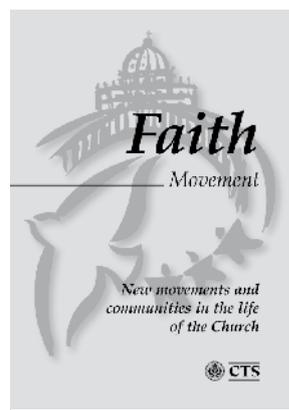
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