

John Paul II: A Response to *The Tablet*
Editorial

**The Evangelical Counsels in the Life of the
Diocesan Priest**
Dylan James

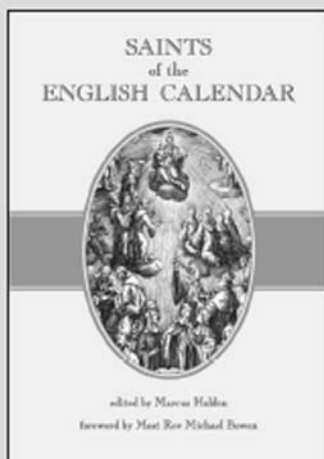
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Scott Deeley

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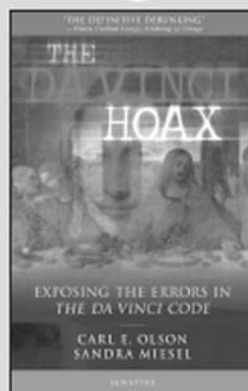
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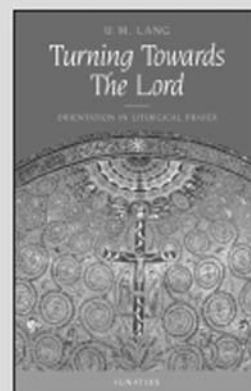
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John Paul II: A Response to <i>The Tablet</i>	2
<i>Editorial</i>	
The Evangelical Counsels in the Life of the Diocesan Priest	8
<i>Dylan James</i>	
John Paul II and the Theology of the Body	16
<i>Scott Deeley</i>	
Family Values Versus Safe Sex	24
<i>Alfonso Cardinal Lopez Trujillo</i>	
The Church and Homosexual Marriage	27
<i>Stratford Caldecott</i>	
Letters	31
<i>to the Editor</i>	
Sunday by Sunday	34
<i>Our regular guide to the Word of God in the Sunday Liturgy</i>	
Book Reviews	38
<i>Adrian Read enjoys some thought provoking speculation into the cosmic working of prayer and the Rosary in particular; Chris Massey recommends a Catholic teaching on marriage for the young.</i>	
Notes From Across The Atlantic	40
<i>A survey of religious and public life in America by Richard Neuhaus</i>	
Cutting Edge	43
<i>A special feature keeping us up to date with issues of science and religion</i>	
Faith Online	44
<i>A guide to Catholic resources on the World Wide web</i>	

Editor

Patrick Burke
Our Lady & St. Ninian's
52 Quakerfield, Bannockburn
STIRLING FK7 8HZ
01786 812249
fax 01786 489531
editor@faith.org.uk

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Ruscillo

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William Massie
St. Joseph's
187 Pickering Road,
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reviews@faith.org.uk

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JESUS CHRIST IS THE MASTER KEY TO THE MEANING OF THE UNIVERSE

John Paul II: A Response to *The Tablet*

"You are Peter and on this Rock I will build my Church." (Matthew 16,18).

"The Tablet's whole response to the pontificate of John Paul II has been one long reaction against him. Editorial after editorial has pursued a systematic dissent from his teaching, from the Church's teaching. It is the Tablet that has been reactionary. We need no lectures from an editor whose distaste for Pope John Paul was evidenced in an article in The Independent deploring the "spectacle" of the very public death of Pope John Paul. That in itself was a very telling reaction."

John Paul II, A Response to *The Tablet*

After the death of Pope John Paul II, the editor of *The Tablet*, Catherine Pepinster, decided that the Cardinal electors would benefit from heeding her incisive advice. Referring to John Paul, she declared, "The task of the conclave of cardinals will be to distinguish the man from the message."

Strangely enough, it is a sentiment with which Pope John Paul would have agreed. Writing in his spiritual testament, he seemed to be keenly aware of the lowliness of his own person: "Of everyone I ask forgiveness. I also ask for prayer, that the Mercy of God may appear greater than my weakness and unworthiness." He realised that he was a servant of the Word, a proclaimer of a Message which came not from him but from the Lord he served. He knew he was not worthy – which of us is? – but he prayed that he would be faithful, a fidelity that would even include his death: "Accepting that death, even now, I hope that Christ will give me the grace for the final passage, in other words my Easter. I also hope that He makes that death useful for this more important cause that I seek to serve: the salvation of men and women, the safeguarding of the human family and, in that, of all nations and all peoples." How his prayer was answered!

Unfortunately, the editor of *The Tablet* was not thinking along the same lines when she urged the Cardinals to bear in mind the difference of man and message. She urges the cardinals "not to let their immense admiration for the former, commit them uncritically to the latter." Strangely, but not unexpectedly, she inverts the distinction of man and message that the previous Pope made. The real problem with Pope John Paul, she thinks, was not his person but *his teaching*, the message he proclaimed. It was this that was wrong. "He wanted a Church of one mind, his mind," the editor declared. The message that John Paul taught was not the Truth of Christ but a set of what Pepinster calls "positions and policies".

A Political Perception of the Papacy

Her inversion and position betray the nature of the real theological rift in the Catholic Church. "He wanted a Church of one mind." The question is, "Whose mind?" The mind of *The Tablet*? If there was a Pope who heeded the stance of Pepinster and co. (the issue of *The Tablet* commemorating John Paul involved the participation of people like Michael Walsh, Clifford Longley, Richard A. McCormick and Charles Curran!), I am sure they would be the first to tell the rest of us to conform. There is a certain hypocrisy in this; they urge the need for a decentralized papacy, but they would want a papacy that would enforce the changes in Church teaching that they deem necessary. They reserve the right to dissent under a papacy that does not follow their approach (and, thankfully, which Papacy ever has?), but they would want to use the office of the same papacy to undermine the essential nature of that office. One almost has a sense that they interpret a papal election to be the same as a party political election: a new Pope will reverse and change the previous Pope's "policies" (i.e. teachings of the Church) in much the same way that a new Prime Minister does with his predecessor's policies. This is a Church reduced

from the magnificent vision of Vatican II, a vision so clearly espoused by Pope John Paul II, to one of a merely human institution, whose teachings are revisable, indeed capable of reversal, and whose mind is the result of a competing set of views and opinions.

Who Has "The Mind of the Church"?

Whose mind therefore? The truly Catholic answer is to point to the Mind of Christ. Indeed, the idea of there being one mind for the Church is not as repulsive as Catherine Pepinster implies. The Acts of the Apostles tell us that the believers "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." (2:42) "The company of those who believed were of one heart and soul." (4:32) The Apostles very early on resolve disputes for the believers and they do so because they claim that it is their office to do this. "It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us," they declare (Acts 15:28). The notion of the development of the Creed arises from the need to have one Mind in the Church. We see its roots in the Council of Jerusalem and in Paul's teaching in the first letter to the Corinthians that he delivered to the people the only Gospel he knew, the Gospel he himself received, "in which you stand, by which you are saved, if you hold it fast." (1Cor 15:1-2)

Unless there is one Mind in the Church, then we lose all point of contact with the historical Christ. He is the source of all that the Church is. If all teachings are revisable, if the Church has got it wrong, then how can we say anything that is guaranteed to be the truth concerning Christ? Everything would be up for grabs. Nothing would have the assurance of truth. The Church would be reduced to a political institution with no definitive assurance that the Lord is with us, merely the result of the ceaseless eddies and tumults of history, a history where there is no definitive fact, no final truth, but just the tide of relativism and the futility of life.

The Church's one Mind is based upon the assertion of a real historical event: Jesus Christ really and truly rose from the dead in his physical body and is now alive forever to intercede with us and to guide us in risen glory. He is the one Saviour of the world for all time. The whole claim of the Church flows from this fundamental fact. "As the Father sent me, so do I send you," said the Risen Lord to the apostles (Jn 20:21). He then told them, "I am with you always, yes, to the end of time." (Mt 28:20) "And they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it." (Mk 16:20)

If the Church has been fundamentally wrong, as *The Tablet* claims, in asserting certain teachings as being tied

to salvation, declaring that certain ways of behaving can separate us definitely from the Lord (for example, contraception, abortion, and divorce and re-marriage), then we can not pretend that the Lord is with the Church, that the Church has inherited the apostolic charism of truth, that the apostolic office of the college of bishops united to the Pope has had the guarantee and assurance of the Lord's own guiding presence. If that is so, then the claims of the Church are empty – and the witness to the Resurrection is forever vitiated. This is no exaggeration: at stake is the ability of the believer to maintain a credible faith in the witness and message of the Church.

A Reactionary Pope or A Faithful One?

In view of this, it becomes clear why the stance of *The Tablet* is so intellectually and spiritually impoverished. At the same time the greatness of John Paul II is revealed precisely in his *fidelity to the Mind of Christ*, to what we call the Magisterium or Teaching Office of the Church. He did not teach his own message. He handed on what he himself had received (cf. 1 Cor 15:3). This is essential to the Papal and Episcopal office. If Pepinster and co. had really read and digested the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, particularly *Lumen Gentium*, they would realise that Pope John Paul could have not have done otherwise than he did. The same held true for Pope John Paul I and also for Paul VI, who was vilified in life for his fidelity and only lionized after his death by those who continued to dissent and who were disappointed by the pontificate of John Paul II.

It is Pope John Paul's fidelity that really is at the heart of the calls for him to be known as "John Paul the Great". In her editorial the editor of *The Tablet* wrote, "Greatness in Popes is more usually associated with reform than with reaction and there was undoubtedly a reactionary side to his papacy." "Pot", "kettle" and "black" spring to mind. *The Tablet's* whole response to the pontificate of John Paul II has been one long reaction against him. Editorial after editorial has pursued a systematic dissent from his teaching, from the Church's teaching. It is *The Tablet* that has been reactionary. We need no lectures from an editor whose distaste for Pope John Paul was evidenced in an article in *The Independent* deploring the "spectacle" of the very public death of Pope John Paul. That in itself was a very telling reaction.

A Creative and Energizing Orthodoxy

Pope John Paul's fidelity however has been remarkably creative and energizing for the Church. There is no doubt that in 1978 he assumed the Petrine Office in a Church that was being paralyzed by dissent, division and a lack of a clear sense of what was to be believed and taught anymore. His first homily as Pope invited all

humanity to “open the doors to Christ,” and he set about helping the Church to rediscover once more the real, true face of Jesus, not the Jesus of the dissenters, but the Jesus known and loved and proclaimed by the Church through the ages, the Son of God and Son of Mary. In that homily he declared, “Today and in this place there needs to be again pronounced and heard the same words [of Peter]: ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.’” This was not a work of reaction. It was the work of renewal.

Over the following twenty-six years, Pope John Paul continued to proclaim Christ and to hand on faithfully but also refreshingly the living faith of the Church. Many have commented on the debt the Church owes to his impressive development of the Church’s social doctrine. However, there are many, many other areas where he showed how extraordinary his pontificate was.

His encouragement of a real dialogue between religion and science was marked by daring moves to rehabilitate Galileo and to take seriously the theory of evolution. His constant encouragement and involvement in the Pontifical Academy of Sciences has ensured the prestige of that body for believing and non-believing scientists alike. His great encyclical *Fides et Ratio* was a call for theologians, philosophers and scientists to engage in a work of synthesis, to show how ultimately all things “hold together” in Christ (cf. Col 1:17).

Developmental Teaching

He helped to develop the Church’s teaching on sexual ethics in the broader context of the nature and dignity of the human person, the theology of the human body and the need for relationships to be faithful to what it means to be a human person. In this he tried to show how positive the Church’s moral teaching really is and how it is the ultimate safeguard of what it means to be human. In doing this he re-vindicated the concept of the Natural Law and also helped to demonstrate that the most authentic arena for human perfection is in relationship to Christ. He remained faithful to the teaching of the Church concerning sex and he did this in continuity with John Paul I, Paul VI, John XXIII – and all the other successors of Peter. It was not his or anyone else’s “policy” to change.

He engaged in a thoroughgoing catechesis on the sacraments and developed key insights into the living presence of the Persons of the Trinity in their administration. He linked the sacramental life more securely to the sanctification of the world in the daily life of believers, teaching that the sacraments also involved a moral impetus to re-shape the world in every sphere. In

this way the tendency to distinguish secular and religious spheres was challenged. Furthermore, in this context, he re-affirmed the reality of grace and the efficacy of the sacraments. He showed how the life of baptism was an on-going source of life for the believer and that every Christian could tap into its power for the renewal of their daily lives. He taught beautifully that the sacrament of Confession was a real encounter with the mercy of God that every Christian needed from the depths of their being.

Devotion Underpinned By Doctrine

His evident love for the Mass was always moving. Yet he backed this up by a clear teaching concerning the true meaning of the Mass and a defence of the Real substantial Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. He re-explored the importance of the Sunday Eucharist and showed that the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays was not just based on some ecclesiastical precept but arose from the nature of belief itself, from the link between the death of Christ and His Resurrection on Easter Sunday, and the Sunday Mass as something that a true disciple of Christ knows that they need if they are to be faithful.

Furthermore his teaching concerning the beauty and indissolubility of marriage had its roots in the perpetual union of Christ and the Church: marriage was presented as an essential component of the life and work of the Church; the ethics of marriage flowed from the nature of love and the nature of what it means to be a person; but these in their turn were fulfilled and strengthened in a unique way by the grace of the sacrament of matrimony.

A Witness To Life and Truth

Pope John Paul engaged in a development of doctrine in so many areas – the nature of the Church, the relationship of the Church to other Christian communities and other religions, his re-vindication of the need for the Church to engage in evangelization, on the real need of the human race to receive salvation in Christ. His work in the defence of the dignity of every human life, from conception through to natural death, has been of particular importance.

Across the world it has encouraged movements for the defense and promotion of the value of human life and the impact of his remarkable teaching, crystallized and expounded in *Evangelium Vitae*, will show its fruitfulness for years to come. It was a teaching that had its critics – usually on the periphery of the Church. It is of note that *The Tablet*, in the editorial already quoted, refers in disapproving terms to the Pope’s intervention with the German Bishops’ Conference concerning the abortion

counseling services they promoted which were, at the very least, implicitly co-operating with referrals for abortions.

Much of this work was summed up in one of the most significant contributions to the life of the Church after Vatican II, namely *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. This beautiful compendium of faith was a major achievement of the pontificate of John Paul II. The editor of *The Tablet* lamentably fails even to mention it in her editorial. Yet the Catechism has become an international bestseller and was the fruit of a far-reaching consultation with the Bishops of the Church – giving the lie again to the notion that Pope John Paul was an autocratic leader who never listened to the voice of the wider Church. As a document it has been at the heart of the renewal of faith in many countries – renewal, note, not reaction – and, because of its richness and depth of reflection, it has been a source of inspiration to many of the new movements and communities that have flourished since 1978.

Much of this is because it gives a faithful and clear presentation of the life and faith of the Church. It is this clarity and depth that was at the heart of Pope John Paul's papacy – and at the heart of what the Church claims to be. Only if the Church has a real message, a real identity, rooted in the historical Risen Christ, can she say anything to our contemporaries concerning the reality of the love of God for all humanity and the need to change our world in justice, truth and peace. If everything is revisable, then none of this is possible, because no-one will be able to agree as to what real peace or justice or even truth really are. The Catechism is of profound importance therefore for the Church's dialogue with and evangelisation of the modern world because it shows why the Church believes and teaches what it does. It is not just a source of renewal for believers – it is an essential tool for reaching out to the world around us.

A Mighty Legacy Of Words

These are just some of the ways – how many more there are! – in which Pope John Paul II showed his greatness as Pope in terms of the handing on of the Faith. In the commemorative issue of *The Tablet* the late Richard McCormick SJ wrote that “the teaching of this truly remarkable man was more effective in his deeds than in his written words.” McCormick believed that the Pope's teaching was secondary to his symbolic actions. This fails to appreciate that John Paul's actions often arose from the Faith he articulated in his teachings. Indeed, behind McCormick's view was a certain disquiet with a number of teachings that he lists: “reproductive ethics (contraception, sterilisation, in vitro fertilisation)

mandatory priestly celibacy, pastoral treatment of homosexuals and of the divorced and remarried, and the ordination of women.” He did not like the “black-and-white way” that the Pope linked contraception, sterilization and reproductive technologies to the culture of death. Yet to many, Pope John Paul was a clear prophet in this regard, showing how the warnings of Paul VI in *Humanae Vitae* were being fulfilled in our time, but developing these insights in a clearly original way, contrasting the civilization of love and culture of life with the culture of death which has become more and more prevalent in western culture.

John Paul II - A Great Teacher Of Our Times

No. McCormick and Pepinster are wrong. One of the core elements of John Paul's greatness has been his teaching. It is this teaching, which was a faithful handing on of the Mind of Christ, which inspired him in so many of the dramatic and truly great gestures of his pontificate: the apologies for the failings of the children of the Church; his gatherings of leaders of world religions; his reaching out to Judaism, movingly and unexpectedly expressed in his action at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem where he quickly placed a prayer of apology for the persecutions of the Jewish nation; his gatherings of young people from across the world for World Youth Days.

There are, of course, many areas of concern for the Church today. The lapsation, particularly in the West, of many Catholics is a problem that has not been properly faced up to. It is disingenuous, however, to attribute this to the “policies” of John Paul II. After all, in many European countries there has been a significant failure to hand on the faith to our young people. It is the movements that are largely having most success with forming and renewing the faith of the youth – and this is because they do not dissent: they are faithful to the Mind of Christ in the Church.

Backlash From The Factions of Dissent

It is dissent and the lamentable failure of dioceses and schools (largely because of the policies set for them by Episcopal Conferences) that have failed to hold the hearts and minds of an entire generation. Dissent has nothing to offer. It has nothing in common with the act of faith. It is the fidelity of believers and the fidelity of movements that is having a fruitful effect in the life of the Church across Europe. It is this fidelity that Pope John Paul himself lived and which he encouraged in the Church of today.

Throughout the world the fruitfulness of this is seen in the increased numbers of vocations to the priesthood and the proliferation of new religious and consecrated

communities. The new movements are also a sign of this work of the Spirit. There is an increased attempt to engage in the work of evangelisation, again largely inspired by Pope John Paul II. The work of ecumenism is being approached far more realistically, and as a result far more positively, without a facile optimism that was in itself more destructive because the Church could not deliver what some had naively promised. Yes, there is more to be done and problems to be addressed. But what has the work of dissent achieved? Nothing except division, hardly a fruit of the Spirit. Dissent has not renewed the Church largely because it does not and cannot touch the heart.

John Paul "The Wise" As Well As "The Good"

The dissent displayed by journals like *The Tablet* reduces the Church to a merely political institution. Their critique is jaded and marked by that anger which

the withholding of the full act of faith always brings. The Pope saw the Church as the work of the Spirit, the Body of Christ, something alive with the mercy of the Father who wants all people to be saved. This is one of the many reasons why his pontificate will be more enduring and more renewing than anything offered by the dissenters.

For he was a Pope who kept faith with the Mind and Heart of Christ and he handed on the Faith in a truly remarkable way. He was a holy man who loved God and opened himself to all peoples. Through his adherence to the Faith, he helped to transform the world even politically and he has set the foundations for a profound renewal of the Church. He helped to reinvigorate the Church from a period of decline and confusion. Even in his dying he witnessed to the beauty and dignity of life and the redemptive holiness of suffering. He truly is John Paul the Great.

POPE JOHN PAUL II

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The Evangelical Counsels in the Life of the Diocesan Priest

Dylan James

Dylan James, a priest of the Diocese of Plymouth now studying at the Alphonsianum in Rome, eloquently presents some challenging ideas about living poverty, chastity and obedience as a diocesan priest.

Back To Basics

Contemporary priestly spirituality has tended to make little reference to the Evangelical Counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. As a consequence, many a diocesan priest has responded to a question about poverty with, “I’m not a religious, we didn’t take that vow”. However, as I shall attempt to indicate in this article, and as the Tradition and Magisterium of the Church insist, these counsels are a necessary part of the life of every diocesan priest.

Any talk of poverty so closely affects a priest’s lifestyle that it is likely to generate major controversy, and so I will attempt to indicate how what I am saying is based both in the Tradition and in recent Magisterial documents. It is only if we are clear about the principles that we can then face practical questions like: What type of car is compatible with living ‘simplicity of life’? What type of vacation? What frequency of vacation? What décor in the presbytery? What type of TV? And, most crucially: When my parishioners compare my lifestyle to theirs, do they see me living priestly poverty, living poverty in a way that the laity are not called to do? Or do they perceive the ‘secular’ diocesan priest to be a man not *in* the world and yet still *of* the world!

I intend to address this issue by returning to the basics. I want to start by considering the nature of the Evangelical Counsels themselves, and the fact that *all* Christians are called to live them. I then outline the way in which religious are *consecrated* in them by vows. And finally I will note the connection between the consecration of priesthood (that every diocesan priest has received) and the specifically priestly call to live the counsels.

The Evangelical Counsels

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, before it teaches about Religious Life, teaches that “Christ proposes the evangelical counsels, in their great variety, to every disciple” (CCC n.915). And it goes on to add that every Christian is called to the perfection of charity –which is the natural context to speak of the counsels since they are means to growth in charity.

St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that charity is the measure of Christian perfection, and he writes about the evangelical counsels when he considers those things that are contained within the New Law. In the *Summa Theologica* I-II q.108 a.4, he notes that “certain definite counsels” are contained in the New Law, and that as Christ is our wisest and best friend his counsels are to be considered “supremely useful and becoming”. The commandments are obligatory, of their very nature. The counsels, however, are not redundant because they “are about matters that render the gaining of this end [i.e. eternal bliss] more assured and expeditious”. Man is placed between the things of this world and the spiritual goods of eternal happiness, and the more man cleaves to one the more he must withdraw from the other. The commandments prevent us from cleaving to the things of this world as an end, as doing so would make us fall from spiritual goods. But renouncing the things of this world *entirely*

“Priesthood does not just change a person at some particular moments while he is exercising his mission, in the way that a 9-5 job might.”

leads to a more speedy attainment of man's end, and this is what the evangelical counsels propose to us.

Remedies For Inordinate Self Love

Earlier in the *Summa* (I-II q.77 a.5) Thomas describes the concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life as causes of sin, because inordinate self-love is the source of every sin (I-II q.77 a.4) and this includes the inordinate desire of good, because man desires good for the one he loves.

These three causes of sin relate to all the different ways that goods come into use in human life. But the evangelical counsels offer a remedy for each of these causes of sin: "[With respect to concupiscence of the eyes] riches are renounced by poverty; [With respect to concupiscence of the flesh] carnal pleasures by perpetual chastity; and the pride of life by the bondage of obedience" (I-II q.108 a.4).

For our purposes it is important to note that these counsels can be observed absolutely (as in the case of consecrated religious) or in a restricted sense (as in the case of some living the counsel of poverty in an act of giving money to the poor). Thus the call of Vatican II and the *Catechism* for all Christians to live the counsels reiterates the Tradition that we find in the likes of Thomas, that the "counsels, considered in themselves, are expedient to all" (I-II q.108 a.4 ad.1), though they are more fitting for some to follow in certain ways than for others.

In discussing the priesthood, the great Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange sums up the spirit of the evangelical counsels by saying that the spirit of the counsels is "the spirit of mortification".¹ In each of them we are practicing self-denial, and between the three we practise self-denial in all the various aspects of life.

Self-denial is an essential part of being a Christian, it was the call Christ addressed not to some of his disciples but to all of them, as it says in Mark 8:34: "If *anyone* would be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me." Hence, while particular forms of penance and self-denial vary for each vocation, *all* are called to die to self that we might live to Christ.

In order to better see what the counsels are about, and how they affect a man's life, I want to next examine the way that they are practised by religious, and in particular the link between consecration and the vows. Once I've outlined how they are practised by religious, I think it will be more evident why it is anomalous for a diocesan to practise celibacy but not practise poverty and obedience.

Religious Consecration

All Christians, lay, priests, religious, receive their primary consecration to God by their baptism, and they are thus called to holiness and perfection. However, with respect to the evangelical counsels a further distinction can be made. The consecrated life covers all those who undertake to live the evangelical counsels "in spirit and in fact"² whereas the laity live the counsels mainly in spirit. The consecrated life is thus referred to as 'total' consecration (to quote *Lumen Gentium* n.44, Canon 573.1 of the *Code of Canon Law*, and Thomas in the *Summa Theologica* II-II q.186 a.1), a consecration that can be made either by vows or by solemn promises.

A religious lives poverty 'in fact' because he owns nothing himself but lives in dependence on his order (however the rule of a particular order, congregation or secular institute expresses this). In contrast, a diocesan can live simplicity of life, but he does still own things, and thus is not living poverty 'in fact'. As I've already indicated, the three counsels cover all the different aspects of human life, and so in vowing these three the religious is living in 'totality'.

Having said the above, I want to return to what I said about the spirit of the counsels being a spirit of mortification –because the vows and counsels both affect how we relate to goods. It is important to note both that a vow is more than just a promise, and, also, that it is very different to the type of resolution that we make, for example, in a purpose of amendment in Confession (which rejects sin but does not choose a higher good over a lower good). In contrast, a vow is an act of the virtue of religion by which one chooses a higher good over a lower good, and in which "one gives what is vowed to the worship and service of God" (ST II-II q88 a5) (this being what defines the virtue of religion).

Different Means To The Same End

The vows, however, are not an end in themselves, they are a *means* to growth in charity, growth in the virtues. The direct object of the three vows of religion is negative in renunciation, whereas the direct object of the virtues is positive: a virtue is a habit inclining a human faculty towards its object in such a way that it fulfils that aspect of the person. The same goal of the virtuous life applies to all of us (union with God), but the means to this goal varies for each person's particular vocation. The laity pursue their vocation in the midst of the world using, in particular, the three goods of: marriage and family, possessions, and the power of human self-determination.³ Hence married laity share in the mystery of Christ's marriage to his Church by means of their love for their spouse, and this is a good. In the consecrated life *this*

good is set aside for a higher good (c.f. CIC 1191.1; CCC n.2102). Virginity is a more direct share in the mystery of Christ's marriage to his Church since, as John Paul II says, it is a *direct* cleaving to him, not through the intermediary of a spouse. Similarly with poverty and possessions, and obedience and self-determination. Because this means of pursuing the vocation is more direct, not through an intermediary, it is referred to as the *state of perfection*. This means that those in this state are in a state that uses more perfect means to holiness, it does not mean that they are necessarily perfect themselves.

Chastity

Having said this about the state of perfection and the vows, I want to describe how this relates to each of the vows in turn. The traditional Thomistic ordering of the vows puts poverty before chastity, as Basil Cole O.P. summarises it, "The classical theological order began with the least personal and proceeded *toward the essential centre* of personal consecration –from poverty to chastity to *obedience*- and this is still a meaningful approach" [my emphasis].⁴ However, Vatican II and John Paul II, consider chastity to be primary, as the motivation of the consecrated life, because it is through the vow of chastity that consecrated persons become spouses of God and thus renounce all worldly goods to live with him in poverty, and thus choose to obey him.

In chastity, the particular aspect of the person that is consecrated by this vow is his sexuality. I've noted that these vows are *means* to holiness, but not all means are equally efficacious. The Church teaches that cleaving to the Lord with an 'undivided heart' (I Cor 7:25-38) in vowed chastity is a more effective means than sacramental marriage for growth in charity. Pius XII in *Sacra Virginitas* n.32 summarised this as the teaching of Trent, and Vatican II in *Optatam totius* n.10 reiterates that virginity has a "surpassing excellence" when compared to the good of marriage.

John Paul II articulates the reason for this when he says that whereas marriage introduces the spouses into the mystery of Christ's union with his Church, celibacy enables a more *direct* share in the mystery of this marriage of Christ and his Church, because "virginal love goes directly to the person of Christ through an immediate union with him, without intermediaries: a truly complete and decisive spiritual espousal"⁵ (cf. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* n.16).

Thus marriage and virginity are not equal paths to holiness. It is important to note this if we are to see the value of virginity – otherwise we would be expecting a

virgin to renounce the good of marriage for something that was not a greater good. Little wonder that few understand celibacy today, and diocesan priests struggle to live it.

John Paul II notes that the properly ordered love involved in living virginity can be seen as a form of therapy for the disordered loves of our age (John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* n.87). Such 'therapy' links easily with the notion of virginity being a unique way of making present the future eschatological age where all such disordered love of goods will be remedied.

Poverty

As the *Code of Canon Law* says, the vow of poverty consists in the renunciation of possessing (CIC 600), a renunciation that freely returns to God the exercise of the instinct and the natural right to possess. The consecration of this aspect of the human person thus becomes a sacred means towards the possession of God and his Kingdom as the final fulfilment of all our needs.

While the Vatican II ordering of the vows clearly relates love and chastity, poverty is just as truly related to charity. John Paul II makes an interesting note about the relationship between poverty and contemplation –contemplation being itself ordered to growth in charity. All the evangelical counsels are a means to that perfection which is charity, and voluntary poverty is thus such a means. The possession of goods can lead a man away from charity, but voluntary poverty frees a man from thinking of worldly goods and so helps habituate and deepen the exercise that best increases charity: contemplation of Divine Truth. John Paul II thus says:

"From the Christian point of view, poverty has always been experienced as a state of life that makes it easier to follow Christ in contemplation, prayer and evangelization."⁶

And Thomas's teaching explains *why* this is the case:

"It is abundantly clear that the human heart is more intensely attracted to one object, in proportion as it is withdrawn from a multiplicity of desires. Therefore, the more a man is freed from solicitude concerning temporal matters, the more perfectly he will be empowered to love God." (Thomas Aquinas, *De Perf. Spirit. Vitae.*, ch. 6)

In the light of this focus on the desires of the heart, it seems obvious why Thomas would discuss poverty before chastity. Chastity is thus a very particular way of

living with an undivided heart, according to the way that poverty calls a consecrated person to do in a more general way.

Obedience

In both the Conciliar and the Thomistic framework, obedience ranks as the high point of the evangelical counsels: obedience, the counsel by which a person *surrenders himself* to God. Pope John Paul II references Thomas on this point as he says, “religious obedience [is] the most perfect form of imitating Christ... Obedience thus holds the chief place in the holocaust of religious profession (c.f. *ST* II-II, q.186, aa.5,7,8)”⁷

To repeat, each of the religious vows consecrates a different aspect of a man’s humanity to God. Poverty consecrates the instinct and right to possess temporal goods, while chastity consecrates a person’s sexuality. Obedience, however, does not consecrate an *aspect* of a person to God, but, by surrendering the will, obedience consecrates *a man’s very self* –thus it is the heart of a personal consecration to God. In obedience a man’s interior and exterior good, his spirit, body and possessions, all become, to quote Thomas, a “perfect holocaust” (*ST* II-II q186 a7) of sacrificial worship to God.

It is the possession of a free-will that makes man different from the animals (a consequence of his having an intellect), and it is through total obedience in faith that man returns to God what he essentially is: a free, intelligent person. The Scriptures reveal God as one who *calls* his people, and obedience, drawing its meaning from the Latin *oboedire* ‘to listen to’, is about listening to the call of God.

Such obedience is said to be lived ‘in fact’ by consecrated persons, and while the exact form of this varies hugely, every consecrated person resolves to obey according to the rules and constitutions of his order, congregation or institute. For those who take a vow (and not just a sacred promise), the *vow* makes a person’s obedience an act of religion, transforming the living of the *virtue* of obedience, so that “all obedient actions within this new scope of obligation are also acts of the virtue of religion”.⁸

Additionally we can think of obedience as a means to charity by thinking of the transforming union with God that is the goal of Christian life. To love someone is to will what they will, and the self-surrender of obedience causes the human and the Divine will to be consistently the same.

Thinking of the vows and promises and counsels, the diocesan priest might thus be pleased that if he is to take

only one counsel as a sacred promise, obedience seems to be the ‘best’ and most comprehensive one to take, and it is precisely this that we promise to the Bishop.

Priestly Consecration

But what then of the diocesan’s relationship to these vows and counsels? I’ve noted that each of the vows consecrates a different aspect of a person’s humanity to God, and that between them the whole person is consecrated to God. In what follows I will argue that there is an obligation on the diocesan that flows from his ordination. Holy Orders consecrates a whole person to God, and brings with it an obligation to live the counsels in a particularly priestly way. For the diocesan, it is not vows that oblige him to live the counsels but his priestly consecration, so that *for him they are not just expedient, they are morally necessary*.

In contrasting priestly consecration with the consecration of the vows, it is important to note that a priest’s consecration is a different type of consecration: it is not of an *aspect* of a person’s humanity, as an aid to his own salvation, nor as an aid to his own relating to God. The *Catechism*, in introducing the sacraments of Holy Orders and Matrimony, speaks of them as “Sacraments at the Service of the Church”. They are “directed towards the salvation of others; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to others that they do so. They confer a particular mission in the Church and serve to build up the people of God” (*CCC* 1534).

Priestly Life As Spousal Commitment

What then is the consecration of priesthood? It is a consecration “in Christ’s name ‘to feed the Church by the word and grace of God’ (Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium* n.11.2)” (*CCC* 1534). It continues the mission entrusted by Christ to the 12 Apostles (*CCC* 1536). It thus relates to a person’s *mission* rather than to a particular aspect of his humanity. But as an *ontological character* is conferred with the sacrament it changes the whole orientation of the person so consecrated – it does not just change a person at some particular moments while he is exercising his mission, in the way that a 9-5 job might.

Earlier, I noted that Vatican II and John Paul II altered the traditional ordering of the three vows by seeing spousal adherence to God as the basis of the consecrated life. John Paul II does something similar with his treatment of the *priest* as *spouse*, because the Pope relates the priest’s role as head and shepherd to his role as spouse.

Two pivotal texts of John Paul II’s *Pastores dabo vobis*⁹ are worth quoting:

"The priest, by virtue of the *consecration* which he receives in the Sacrament of Orders is sent forth by the Father through the mediatorship of Jesus Christ, to whom he is *configured* in a special way as *Head and Shepherd* of his people, in order to love and work by the power of the Holy Spirit in the service of the Church for the salvation of the world." [emphasis added](n. 12b)

Thus, the priest's consecration comes by his receiving holy orders, not by an additional vow or promise. His consecration is for his mission, for what he is sent forth to do. And this consecration configures him to Christ not in some general way, not just so that he acts *in persona Christi*, but in a special way: as Head and Shepherd, so the priest can act *in persona Christi Capitis* (CCC 1548).

Total Self Giving In The Likeness of Christ The Priest

It is pastoral *charity* that leads Christ to be Head and Shepherd of the Church, and the "essential content of this pastoral charity is *the gift of self*, the total gift of *self to the Church*" (PDV n.23b). Love as self-gift is a central and repeated theme of John Paul II, and this notion has its completion in *spousal* love, particularly the spousal love of Christ for the Church. The Church is the Body of which Christ is the Head. Just as Eve was taken from the body of Adam to become his Bride, so the Church is "the Bride who proceeds like a new Eve from the open side of the Redeemer on the Cross" (PDV n.22c). Thus *spousal love is the origin* behind Christ's relationship to the Church as Head, and of his pastoral concern for the Church as Shepherd.

Similarly, for the priest:

"The *priest* is called to be the living *image of Jesus Christ*, the *Spouse* of the Church... In virtue of his configuration to Christ, the Head and Shepherd, the priest stands in this spousal relationship with regard to the community. *Inasmuch as he represents Christ*, the Head, Shepherd and Spouse of the Church... *In his spiritual life*, therefore, he is called to live out Christ's *spousal love towards the Church, his Bride*." (PDV n. 22c)

But the motive for the priest's love is not primarily for the Church, it is primarily for Christ. Jesus commissioned Peter to care for the sheep in response to Peter's declaration that he loved Christ (PDV n.23e), a point important enough to be made three times. "Do you love me?... Feed my sheep" (Jn 21:17). It is the priest's bond with Christ that causes his bond to the Church, a bond

that is ontological and a bond of love. As configured to Christ, the priest is thus the icon of Christ, a living icon of Christ the Spouse (PDV 13).

What then can we say of the evangelical counsels? The priest is not consecrated in these, as such. However, the consecration he receives in his ordination imposes a *particular* obligation on him to live the counsels as *means* of acquiring the spousal charity that corresponds to the spousal priestly character he received in ordination. All Christians are obliged to live the evangelical counsels as means to increase their charity, but the priest receives this obligation in a priestly way: *to increase his spousal charity for the Church*:

"Jesus Christ... is both the model and source of the virtues of obedience, chastity and poverty which the priest is called to live out as an expression of his pastoral charity for his brothers and sisters." (PDV n.30g)

Poverty, Chastity and Obedience In A Pastoral Context

The diocesan priest is thus called to live the evangelical counsels in a way that is particularly priestly. So, his obedience is not the obedience of a religious, nor the obedience of a layperson. It is to be lived for a priestly *motive* and in a priestly *manner*, expressed, at a pastoral level, in his attitude of listening to the needs and demands of the people entrusted to him. Similarly with his chastity and poverty – he is called to live these because he is a priest, and so the way he does so should be priestly, rather than pretending to be a religious.

Priestly chastity connects very obviously with his spousal love for the Church:

"The Church, as the Spouse of Jesus Christ, wishes to be loved by the priest in the total and exclusive manner in which Jesus Christ her Head and Spouse loved her. Priestly celibacy, then, is the gift of self *in and with and to* his Church and expresses the priest's service to the Church in and with the Lord." (PDV 29d)

An Apostolic Spirituality

As with religious, the secular priest's celibacy enables him to cleave to the Lord with an undivided heart, as the Congregation for the Clergy notes in its *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests* (n.58). But the secular's motivation is different: it is primarily rooted in an apostolic spirituality rather than in a spirituality directed towards his own sanctification. Similarly, the diocesan priest is called to live *poverty*. Such poverty is part of loving the Lord with an undivided heart, a heart that is not

dissipated by a love of material goods, *such a heart will be able to love the Church* with the “self-detachment” (PDV n.22d) that the priestly spousal character demands.

This call to live poverty is not just found in *Pastores dabo vobis*. Canon Law states: “Clerics are to follow a simple way of life and avoid anything which smacks of worldliness” (CIC 282.1). The *Directory* n.67 has an even more explicit call to poverty. It first links poverty with pastoral care by saying that, “A priest could hardly be a true servant and minister of his brothers if he were excessively worried with his comfort and well-being”. It notes that the priest is called to follow Christ’s example, he who became poor for our sakes.

Celibacy Inadequate Without Poverty

Using an Old Testament image from the book of Numbers (18:20), it says that the priest’s “inheritance is the Lord”. It concludes by citing Canon Law and Vatican II’s *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, saying that the priest, “although not having assumed poverty as a public promise, must lead a simple life and avoid anything which could have an air of vanity (CIC 282.1), voluntarily embracing poverty to follow Christ more closely (PO n.17d). In all aspects (living quarters, means of transportation, vacations, etc.), the priest must eliminate any kind of affectation and luxury (PO n.17e).”

Many laymen might seriously question whether they see this reflected in their diocesan clergy. Gisbert Greshake, in *The Meaning of Christian Priesthood*,¹⁰ comments on this in speaking of the need for the various counsels to be lived as a unity. Most Catholic clergy are quite happy to accept celibacy. But having renounced the great good of marriage, this good all too easily gets replaced by an attachment to many worldly goods and possessions. As I cited Garrigou-Lagrange as saying, the three counsels fit together because they are all part of a spirit of mortification. Celibacy without this spirit of self-denial is rightly observed to be an anomaly.

The Promise of Obedience

In the above I have indicated how the consecration of priesthood obliges the diocesan to live the counsels, an obligation that, in a certain sense, comes from *outside* of him in that it flows out of the priestly character imprinted by God on his soul. However, there is an additional obligation to live the counsels that flows out of an act of the ordinand himself: his promise of obedience, because this promise implies many things, including a promise to live the counsels.

I noted earlier that obedience has an integrating role in the life of a religious, because by this vow of obedience

all his acts become part of his obedience: by offering his will in obedience he offers his very self to God. Dominicans and Benedictines take only one vow, that of obedience, with poverty and chastity being included in the rule that they are agreeing to be obedient to. Similarly, the diocesan’s promise of obedience implies obedience to a whole way of life. All his future acts, and in particular, all the acts of self-denial involved in a priest’s living of the counsels, have this obedience to his spouse the Church (for Christ’s sake) as their unifying feature.

The *Directory* notes that obedience is a particularly *priestly* characteristic: The priestly sacrifice of Christ on the Cross was primarily the sacrifice of his obedience, offering his will to the Father, so “that obedience to the Father is the very heart of the Priesthood of Christ” (*Directory* n.61) and is thus the very heart of our own priesthood. More specifically, my promise of obedience to my ordinary includes obedience to the Church’s teachings, laws and liturgical rubrics (*Directory* nn.61-6). Such obedience thus includes living the counsels *in the fashion indicated by the teaching of the Church*. Thus, while not covered by the same conditions and graces that accompany the *vowed* living of the counsels, a diocesan would seem to have some type of *related* graces to help him live the counsels (not to mention the fact that he has the grace of state), because his promise of obedience seems to *approach* a consecration of his very self to this way of life, a way of life that includes poverty, chastity and obedience. His promise of obedience consecrates his will to the Church’s service in the same ceremony in which the sacramental ordination will consecrate the ordinand’s very nature to priestly service.¹¹

Charism

I want to return to the question of a priest’s *motive* for living the counsels, with the notion that they are lived *for others* not for the purpose of his own sanctity, and I want to make this point by referring to charisms (the priesthood being a charism).

Charisms are given to an individual, not for his own sake, but for the sake of the Church (CCC nn. 799; 2003). A man may be sanctified while using his charism, but not in a direct sense, only in a secondary way. Similarly, the gift of priesthood to a man is not directly for his own sanctification. As with every Christian, his particular vocation is his means to sanctity, and so living his priesthood is his means to sanctity. But whereas the vow of a religious is ordered towards his own sanctification by consecrating each aspect of his humanity to God, the consecration of the priest is not ordered to his own sanctification but to the “service of the Church and for

the salvation of the world" (*PDV* n.12b). This consecration configures him in a unique relationship to Christ and thus to Christ's Spouse the Church, and this in turn places a unique obligation on him to live out the spousal character he has had imprinted on his soul. His 'character', as a quality of his personality, has to match the sacramental spousal character imprinted on him by ordination.

This means that he has a particularly *priestly* obligation to live out the evangelical counsels, while not vowed in living them. He lacks the specific graces that come from *vowing* the evangelical counsels and so he does not have this help in living them out.

But, with the graces of state (c.f. *CCC* n.2004) that come from ordination, he has other graces that assist him in his priestly obligation to live the evangelical counsels, for the sake of Christ's Spouse, the Church. Thus the notion of 'charism' helps to differentiate the differing *motivation* that the diocesan and the religious have in living out the counsels.

Contemplation ...

In what might seem to be in contrast with the motivation for celibacy that I have outlined, Paul VI taught that the primary motive for celibacy is contemplation, that priestly celibacy helps achieve a balance between the active and contemplative aspects of our vocation (*Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* n.70). However, while John Paul II and the priestly *Directory* do not quote this rationale of Paul VI, the two motivations of contemplation and spousal love are nonetheless intimately related.

With respect to contemplation and action, Thomas teaches that contemplation is more excellent than activity. Among the reasons he gives for this is that contemplation involves what is best in man, namely his intellect (*ST* II-II q.182 a.1 c), and because contemplation, ultimately in the beatific vision, is the whole goal of the Christian life (*ST* II-II q.180 a.4).

...The Wellspring of Action

However, while contemplation is more excellent than action, the two are mutually ordered to each other: we perform those actions proper to us as a result of contemplating the truth, but we become better able to contemplate by means of performing good acts, because good acts form the moral virtues that better dispose us to contemplate, calming the vehemence of the passions that can oppose our contemplation (*ST* II-II 180 a.2). Contemplation relates to charity in that it is the greatest means available to man to grow in charity because it is in contemplation that the intellect ponders the God that the

will is then better able to love. *Priestly* celibacy can be related to contemplation because it is by means of contemplation that the priest grows in charity and is thus better able to live his spousal charity for the Church. As I quoted earlier with respect to poverty, John Paul II says:

"From the Christian point of view, *poverty* has always been experienced as a state of life that makes it easier to follow Christ in *contemplation*, prayer and evangelization."

If celibacy is a form of poverty, then a priest's celibacy makes him better able to contemplate, and his spousal love for the Church follows. It might be said that celibacy, even for the diocesan, should have cleaving to the Lord with an undivided heart as its primary motive, enabling him to love by enabling him to contemplate. But in the context of the priest's priestly consecration, his celibate love for the Lord leads him to love Christ's Church with a spousal and pastoral love -a love that he is only free to give because he is celibate. Thus contemplation and apostolic spousal love can be seen as harmonious reasons calling for the diocesan priest to be celibate.

Conclusion

As I have indicated, all Christians are called to live the evangelical counsels in spirit, regardless of their particular vocation, and this spirit can be summed up as a spirit of mortification, regulating our use of created goods.

Consecrated persons are consecrated by the vows or promises that they make, with each vow consecrating a different aspect of the person's humanity to God, so that the three together consecrate the whole person to God in such a way that he becomes 'totally' dedicated to the Lord, living the counsels 'in fact' and not just in spirit.

Diocesan priests are consecrated to God by their ordination. This consecration is of the nature of a charism, in that it is ordered towards the sanctification and salvation of others, not directly to the sanctification of the priest himself.

This consecration brings with it a particular obligation to live the evangelical counsels, in order that he might grow in his spousal love for Christ's Church. This is not an obligation to live the counsels 'in fact' in the way that religious do. However, it is an obligation that implies a living of them that is in addition to what is generally required of the laity. Chastity must be lived by diocesans in the same manner as religious live it.

Obedience must be lived in a manner similar to religious: religious obey according to the rule of their order, seculars

obey according to the law of the Church. Poverty for seculars is not presently specified in an exact *form* by the law of the Church, but it does not seem to me that it would be impossible for the law of the Church to be altered, at least in some respect, in this way. Regardless, the spirit of these three counsels, the spirit of mortification, must be lived by every priest, so that the priest who offers sacrifice at the altar is also offering the sacrifice of his own life.

1. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange O.P., *Priesthood and Perfection*, trans. E. Hayden (Westminster, Md: Newman Press, 1955), 49.
2. Basil Cole OP & Paul Conner O.P., *Christian Totality: Theology of the Consecrated Life* (New York, Alba House, 1997), 27. My understanding of both St. Thomas and of Religious Life is heavily indebted to the teaching I have received from Fr. Cole.
3. *Ibid.*, 36; 54.
4. *Ibid.*, 75.
5. John Paul II, *L'Osservatore Romano English edition* Nov 30, 1994, 19, n.4.
6. John Paul II, *L'Osservatore Romano* December 7, 1994, 11, n.1.
7. John Paul II, *L'Osservatore Romano* December 14, 1994, 11, n.3.
8. Cole, 216.
9. c.f. Congregation for the Clergy, *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests* (London, CTS, 1994), nn.57-60.
10. Gisbert Greshake, *The Meaning of Christian Priesthood*, trans. Peadar MacSeumais S.J. (Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, 1989) p.131ff

11. On a more speculative note, it might be said that the diocesan could gain additional graces by vowing his counsels. The Church teaches that God gives 'sufficient' grace to everyone for his state of life, but this does not mean that there are not other graces possible, such as those that come with a vow. Gustave Thils, *The Diocesan Priest. The Nature and Spirituality of the Diocesan Clergy* Trans Albert La Mothe (Notre Dame, Indiana: Fides Publishers, 1964) p.319ff) notes the distinction between apostolic vows and vows of religion. Apostolic vows have the same matter (e.g. poverty, chastity, obedience) as vows of religious, but not the same end, object and limits. Thus the vow of poverty that a religious takes has the worship of God as its end, and the sanctification of the religious for the glory of God as its object, and has limits prescribed by the particular way of life of a specific religious order. A vow of poverty taken by a diocesan would be rooted in his priestly charism not in a religious charism. I would thus suggest that it would have the salvation of souls as its end, his own sanctification for the sake of the people he is to serve as its object, and limits prescribed by a diocesan way of life.

We already oblige diocesans to do something like this with respect to celibacy, so that in their declaration of freedom before ordination they say of celibacy, "This I promise; this I vow; this I swear". Similarly for poverty, even without this being the standard practise of the Church, individuals or societies of clergy are still able to take such a vow or promise. Such a vow would need to bear in mind that (as with a religious vocation) to live a vowed life one has to be responding to a call from God. A diocesan would need to be certain that his taking of a vow of poverty was a call from God, not just a good idea he'd come up with himself.

THE QUESTION OF SUFFERING

In order to perceive the true answer to the "why" of suffering, we must look to the revelation of divine love, the ultimate source of the meaning of everything that exists. Love is also the richest source of the meaning of suffering, which always remains a mystery: We are conscious of the insufficiency and inadequacy of our explanations. Christ causes us to enter into the mystery and to discover the "why" of suffering, as far as we are capable of grasping the sublimity of divine love.

In order to discover the profound meaning of suffering, following the revealed word of God, we must open ourselves wide to the human subject in his manifold potentiality. We must above all accept the light of revelation not only insofar as it expresses the transcendent order of justice, but also insofar as it illuminates this order with love, as the definitive source of everything that exists. Love is also the fullest source of the answer to the question of the meaning of suffering. This answer has been given by God to man in the cross of Jesus Christ.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" [27]. These words, spoken by Christ in his conversation with Nicodemus, introduce us into the very heart of God's salvific work. They also express the very essence of Christian soteriology, that is, of the theology of salvation. Salvation means liberation from evil, and for this reason it is closely bound up with the problem of suffering. According to the words spoken to Nicodemus, God gives his Son to "the world" to free man from evil, which bears within itself the definitive and absolute perspective on suffering. At the same time, the very word "gives" ("gave") indicates that this liberation must be achieved by the only-begotten Son through his own suffering. And in this, love is manifested, the infinite love both of that only-begotten Son and of the Father who for this reason "gives" his son. This is the love for man, love for the "world": It is salvific love.

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John Paul II and the Theology of the Body

Scott Deeley

In this timely paper, originally given at the Faith Theological Symposium in Ampleforth in February, Scott Deeley, a newly ordained priest of the Archdiocese of Edinburgh and St Andrews in Scotland, reflects on our late Holy Father's theology of the body.

In the Theology of the Body, our being embodied as male and female "in the beginning" is a window into the nature and purposes of the Creator God... Virtually every thesis in theology - God, Christ, the Trinity, grace, the Church, the sacraments - could be seen in a new light...¹

According to John Paul, the human body has a language that proclaims the mystery of God and it is in this sense that he speaks of the body as a theology. Because of sin we find it hard to read this theology. John Paul's theology of the body is like an epiphany which helps us to read the theological language of the body. In our fallen world the naked body is a symbol of licentiousness and indignity. Guided by Christ's words, John Paul challenges us to realise that "from the beginning it was not so."²

John Paul aims to sketch a biblical anthropology which has, as its key, nakedness without shame. In the beginning the naked body witnessed to love, to purity and to the sheer goodness of creation and God's plan for humanity so the appearance of the fig leaf marks a great disaster. However, the Good News of the Gospel is that "Jesus came to restore creation to the purity of its origins."³ And so with the help of John Paul's epiphany "even now [purity of heart] enables us to see according to God; it lets us perceive the human body – ours and our neighbour's – as a temple of the Holy Spirit, a manifestation of divine beauty."⁴

Defining the Theology of the Body

The inspiration for the Theology of the Body came in the work that John Paul did as a young priest and then as a bishop in Krakow. It was then that he accompanied many young and engaged couples who were trying to live faithfully to the Church's teaching on marriage and sexuality in communist Poland. The fruit of much of this work can be read in his book *Love and Responsibility*, which is a philosophical work on human sexuality, written when he was a bishop. Just as he was elected Pope, John Paul seems to have been working on a further book to continue the themes which he explored in the first. The content of this book, it is said, was basically to make up what we now call the Theology of the Body.

Theology of the Body is the working title that John Paul gives to the first major catechetical project of his pontificate. It consists of 129 texts from general audiences beginning on 5 September 1979. It is, in essence, a biblical reflection on the meaning and experience of human embodiment and erotic desire.

In Christian catechesis, people are used to an emphasis on the spiritual realm. However, many people are unfamiliar, and even uncomfortable, with a marked emphasis on the body. For John Paul this is a false dichotomy. There is, without doubt, an ontological priority to the spirit. Yet, "at once body and spirit, man expresses and perceives spiritual realities through signs and symbols... [he] needs

"The Pope's Theology of the Body presents the body, the married couple and the conjugal act as having particular significance and context in reference to Christ and the Church, the nature of salvation and the life of God Himself in which we are to participate."

signs and symbols to communicate with others ...The same holds true for God.”⁵ It is through our bodily senses and the “stuff” of the physical world that we encounter God.

Moreover, the human body in itself is in some sense sacramental and it is from this perspective that John Paul wants to study the human body as a theology, as a sign of the spiritual and divine mystery. The Pope tells us that it is “the body, in fact... [that] is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and divine. It was created to transfer into the visible reality of the world, the mystery hidden since time immemorial in God, and thus to be a sign of it.”⁶ The human body, male and female, has the mystery of salvation written into it.

The Importance of the Spousal Analogy

The divine mystery which the body symbolises is the mystery of Trinitarian Life and Love. The mystery of the Trinity is understood as the beauty and mystery of sexual difference and the call to fruitful communion. In male and female union we also see something of God’s plan for humanity; the scriptures employ many images to describe God’s relationship with man, but the nuptial image is the one which is used most often.

This “spousal theology” looks to the nuptial bookends of Genesis and Revelation as a key for interpreting what lies between. “The Church cannot therefore be understood as the mystical body of Christ, as the sign of man’s covenant with God in Christ, or as the universal sacrament of salvation unless we keep in mind the ‘great mystery’ involved in the creation of man as male and female and the vocation to conjugal love, to fatherhood and to motherhood.”⁷

But if it is through the body “and it alone” that the divine mystery is made visible to us then this is where the enemies of the divine plan will begin their offensive. And so the battle for man’s soul is a battle which is always fought over the primordial truth of his body, causing estrangement of body and spirit. Accordingly, a fallen world is then a world of estrangement; estranged spouses; estrangement between divinity and humanity; between heaven and earth; soul and body; spirituality and sexuality; sacredness and sensuality; masculinity and femininity.

It is the dualistic tendency inherent in these separations that leaves man swinging between angelism and animalism, prudery and permissivism, rigorism and indecency, repression and indulgence. When the wartime quarry worker ponders the great acts of barbarity that he has witnessed and when he looks for the answer to the

evil of this century and for the whole of human history, he believes that humanity’s greatest crimes are, at base, a rejection of God’s revelation of the love that He has inscribed on our bodies. The body is “the fundamental element of human existence,”⁸ and as such is “the deepest substratum of human ethics and culture.”⁹ The world finds itself in a profound crisis of ethics and culture and John Paul believes the deep answer to it is in the Theology of the Body. And so this is where his catechetical journey must start.

Structure of the Catechesis

The Theology of the Body is inspired by the call for a “total vision of man” in the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. In seeking to bring about this total vision, John Paul in the first part of the catechetical programme wants to establish an “adequate anthropology” which considers original man, historical man and eschatological man. In the second part of the catechesis the Pope considers the application of his adequate anthropology and deals firstly with celibacy for the kingdom, the sacramentality of marriage and thirdly love and fruitfulness (a reflection on *Humanae Vitae*).

In trying to promote his vision of the body and what it means to be a human being, John Paul adopts a phenomenological approach. It is from this point of departure that he seeks to show that the Church’s vision of man is not foisted on him from the outside but rather corresponds to his self-experience as a person on the inside. The Pope does not force assent to his proposals through rigorous, logical argumentation. Rather, he asks us to reflect honestly on our own self-experience to see if his proposals are confirmed there. John Paul seeks a subjective resonance for objective norms.

ESTABLISHING AN ADEQUATE ANTHROPOLOGY (PART I)

(a) Original Man

This is the first part of the triptych of the proposed Adequate Anthropology and it is where the Pope begins the whole series of general audiences which make up the Theology of the Body in September 1979. Here he reflects upon the body, sexuality, and marriage as man and woman experienced them “in the beginning”. It is to this that which we must return if we are to understand who God wants us to be.

The Pope begins his great catechetical project with Matthew’s Gospel, “For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but in the beginning it was not so.” Here John Paul is making a specific anthropological statement: Christ fully reveals man to

himself. Christ helps the historical man to view the beginning (original man) as his true fullness. In Jesus Christ we have the hope of returning to the beginning at the end (eschatological man).

Original Blessings

In his phenomenological approach, the Pope wishes to reconstruct man's original experience so as to understand better who we are now. He approaches this through the symbolism of biblical language and focuses on three original human experiences: original solitude, original unity and original nakedness.

(i) Original Solitude

"Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'"10 Man is aware of himself as the only creature who "names" and "tills", he is aware that he is alone. The body expresses man's difference from the animals, his subjectivity, and his call to communion with God and with an "other" like himself.

(ii) Original Unity

"Therefore a man leaves his father and mother..."11 The original unity overcomes the solitude and the Pope defines it as *communio personarum*. About this unity he says that, "[m]an becomes the image of God not so much in the moment of solitude as in the moment of communion."12 This is to say that man images God through the communion personarum which man and woman form from the beginning and this "constitutes the deepest theological aspect of all that can be said about man."13

(iii) Original Nakedness

"And the man and his wife were both naked and they were not ashamed."14 *Communio personarum* is what helps us to understand original nakedness which is the Pope's key to biblical anthropology.15 Original nakedness shows full awareness of the original meaning of the body as the revelation of the person; original nakedness shows a total trust and absence of barriers before the others; it shows the total unity between the physical and the spiritual.

This nakedness, "this seeing each other is not just a participation in [an] 'exterior' perception of the world, but has also an interior dimension of participation in the vision of the creator Himself... Nakedness signifies the original good of God's vision through which the 'pure' value of humanity as male and female, the 'pure' value of

the body and of sex, is manifested."16 In God's declaration of the goodness of creation we recognise that His motive is love. God initiates His own self-gift by creating us in His own image and likeness and for our own sake. Man and woman recapitulate the gift of God in creation by becoming a gift to each other, sexual desire was not experienced as a compulsive urge, but as the desire to make a sincere gift of self – to love as God loves. Furthermore, "in the primordial awareness of the nuptial meaning of the body ... there is constituted a primordial sacrament understood as a sign that transmits effectively in the visible world the invisible mystery."

Man will never avoid this indispensable 'theme of his own existence... In fact, in the whole perspective of his own 'history,' man will not fail to confer a nuptial meaning on his own body. Even if this meaning undergoes and will undergo many distortions, it will always remain, at the deepest level ... as a sign of the image of God.' The way that goes from the mystery of creation to the Redemption of the body also passes here."17 In short, the conjugal act is an icon of the Trinity.

(b) Historical Man

This is the second cycle of lectures beginning in May 1980. Here the Pope reflects on the body, sexuality and marriage as man experiences them in history as influenced by sin in the context of his being redeemed by Jesus Christ. It is in this cycle that the Pope considers the effects of the fall and redemption as an efficacious reality.

The entrance of shame marks the frontier between original man and historical man. Nakedness once revealed man's participation in grace and holiness but now it reveals their loss. The shame of nakedness shows that man loses the freedom of the "gift" and purity of heart and so it is hard to see the body as the revelation of the person and of the divine gift. The Pope says that with the entrance of shame, it is as if man "felt that he had just stopped ... being above the world of living things or 'animalia.' It is as if he felt the break of the personal integrity of his own body, particularly in what determines its sexuality."18

The historical man finds it difficult to be aware of the conjugal act as a *communio personarum*. Lust, which "passes on the ruins of the matrimonial significance of the body ... to satisfy only the sexual need of the body,"19 shatters the original experiences of original solitude, original unity and original nakedness.

As we seek to reconstitute the way in which we see the human body and the conjugal act we must be conscious

that the Redemption is not just an eschatological reality, but an historical one as well. From the Redemption man is not asked to return to his state of original innocence but is asked in its light and power to rediscover "the living forms of the new man."²⁰ Historical man "should find again the dignity and holiness of the conjugal union 'in the body' on the basis of the mystery of redemption."²¹

(c) Eschatological Man

The total vision of man inspired by *Humanae Vitae* must also look towards man's ultimate destiny. It is in this light that our origin and our history take on their meaning. It is here in the third part of the triptych that the Pope weds his Carmelite spirituality to his phenomenological insights to produce his vision for the eschaton never before articulated. It is here that he reflects on the body and sexuality as we shall experience them in the resurrection.

The Pope reaffirms the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body as the definitive accomplishment of the redemption of the body and then considers Christ's words, "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage."²² He tells us that "marriage and procreation in themselves did not determine definitively the original and fundamental meaning of being a body, or of being, as a body, male and female."²³ In the eschaton, the body as the primordial sacrament, will give way to the divine prototype; the union of the sexes is not man's end all and be all, it is only an icon of the end all and be all. The sexual difference and our longing for union reveal that we are created for eternal communion with the Eternal Communion: Father Son and Holy Spirit.

APPLYING AN ADEQUATE ANTHROPOLOGY (PART II)

This cycle, beginning in March 1982, marks a shift in the development of the "adequate anthropology" to its application. John Paul applies his "total vision of man" to the vocation of celibacy for the kingdom which he treats before the sacramentality of marriage moving lastly to a reflection on *Humanae Vitae*.

(a) Celibacy for the Kingdom

The Pope tells us that earthly continence for the kingdom "is a sign that the body, whose end is not the grave, is directed to glorification. Already continence 'for the kingdom of heaven' is a witness among men that anticipates the future resurrection."²⁴ The celibate person chooses to remain in the "ache" of solitude to emphasize that man's ultimate destiny is to be a partner of the Absolute. The difference between matrimony and celibacy is not to be understood in terms of a legitimate

outlet for concupiscence on one had and the repression of it on the other. "At the basis of the Christ's call to continence there is ... the consciousness of the freedom of the gift, which is organically connected with the profound and mature knowledge of the nuptial meaning of the body."²⁵

Marriage and celibacy do not "divide the human (and Christian) community into two camps [as if there were] those who are 'perfect' because of continence and those who are imperfect or 'less perfect because of the reality of married life."²⁶ The Pope confronts the notion of marriage as the *remedium concupiscentiae*²⁷ saying that it must be understood in the integral sense of the scriptures which also teach of the Redemption of the Body and point to the sacrament of matrimony as a way of realizing that Redemption.²⁸ Celibacy is far from a rejection of the deep meaning of sexuality, but a living of human sexuality which is even fuller, more profound and complementary to the extent that it explains the married vocation.

Man and woman "become gifts to one another through their masculinity and femininity, also through their physical union. Continence means a conscious and voluntary renouncement of that union and all that is connected to it"²⁹ and at the same time points to that of which matrimony is the icon: God Himself and the eternal physical and spiritual communion for which were made. The fullness of both states of life is seen in the lives of Mary and Joseph who, although in a matrimonial union, were continent for the sake of the kingdom.³⁰

(b) The Sacramentality of Marriage

This part of the catechesis is made up of twenty-two general audiences delivered in 1983. Here John Paul seeks to apply his "total vision of man" to deepening our understanding of the sacrament of marriage. His reflections, centred on the text of Ephesians 5:21-33, seek to uncover the divine dimensions of the covenant of grace and the human dimension of the sacramental sign:

"Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives be subject to you husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its saviour. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives be subject in everything to their husbands.

"Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

"Even so husbands should love wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the church; however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband " (Eph 5:21-33).

The Pope says that the passage contains a great mystery which is to be understood "as God's salvific plan in regard to humanity, it contains the "central theme of the whole of revelation, its central reality. It is that God, as creator and Father, wishes above all to transmit to mankind His word."³¹

(i) The Head/Body analogy in Ephesians 5

The Pope is keen to show that the Head/Body analogy presents the spouses as one organic unity, showing the depth of their union, whilst recalling that Christ says that any proper "headship" among His followers must not be modelled after the gentiles who "lord it over" their subjects and make their authority felt.³² Conjugal love is so unifying that the spouses are mutually penetrated spiritually."³³ "The analogy does not blur the individuality of the subjects."³⁴ "Christ is a subject different from the Church; however in virtue of a particular relationship, He is united to her as an organic union of head and body."³⁵ Therefore, the spouses' "uni-subjectivity is based on a bi-subjectivity and has not a real character but only intentional."³⁶

(ii) The Spousal analogy in Ephesians 5

In the passage from Ephesians we see that the analogy of body head becomes the analogy of groom-bride. Accordingly the wife is the icon of the Church and the husband is the icon of Christ. The spousal analogy "operates in two directions." It "helps us better to understand the relationship of Christ and His Church [and], at the same time, it helps us to see more deeply into the essence of marriage." In fact, at the basis of an understanding of marriage in its very essence is the relationship of Christ to the Church."

In turn, marriage "becomes a visible sign of the divine eternal mystery as an image of the Church united with Christ. In this way the letter to the Ephesians leads us to the very foundations of the sacramentality of marriage."³⁷ "[T]he letter to the Ephesians examines the sacramental

reality, proclaiming its grand analogy: both the union of Christ with the Church, and the conjugal union of man and woman in marriage are in this way illuminated by a particular supernatural light."³⁸

The good news of the Gospel is that that which was hidden in God from eternity has been revealed – first through the sign of man and woman's original unity and definitively through the sign of the union of Christ and the Church; "if in the most general way, the body enters the definition of a sacrament, being 'a visible sign of the invisible reality,' in this sign – and through this sign - God gives Himself to man in His transcendent truth and His love."³⁹

The conjugal union of man and woman then can rightly be called a primordial sacrament. In this light it is hard to see that the Incarnation could be considered as an afterthought since the relationship of man and woman was in the plan of God "in the beginning" as a symbol of what we shall be, a symbol that finds its full meaning in Christ's relationship with the Church. In this way the language of the body can be understood as prophetic.

(c) Love and Fruitfulness

This section of the catechesis is the sixth and final cycle of 21 addresses delivered in 1984. The Pope, with fresh insight into the scriptures, together with reflections on the Song of Songs and the book of Tobit and some new themes from Ephesians 5, applies his "adequate anthropology" to the teaching of *Humanae Vitae*. Here John Paul speaks of how the language of the body relates to contraception.

The Pope centres his reflection on *Humanae Vitae* n.12 which speaks of the "inseparable connection, established by God, which man, on his own initiative, may not break, between the unitive significance and the procreative significance which are both inherent to the marriage act." If we consider the sacramental character of the body and the conjugal act as an icon of the Trinity, a life giving communion of persons, then the introduction of contraception makes it a counter sign of the "great mystery", it becomes an anti-sacrament, no longer a symbolic Word but a diabolic anti-Word.

This is not a condemnation of contraception from philosophy and natural law but is, in fact, theological: it is a falsification of the sacramental sign of married love, "one can speak of the moral good or evil" in the sexual relationship "according to whether ... or not it has the character of the truthful sign."⁴⁰ The Holy Spirit is Lord and Giver of Life, contraception marks a specific closing off to Him in the conjugal union.

The Pope is of course clear that the unitive and procreative aspects of the conjugal act may not be separated. He reiterates also the concern that even natural methods may be sinful because of their immediate motivations. It seems that there is no explicit moral distinction between sex for the procreation of children and sex with the use of the infertile period with the correct intentionality. However, it would seem that the distinction is in fact implicit in the Pope's thought if the conjugal act is to be considered as iconic of the Trinity.

COMPARISON WITH THE THOUGHT OF EDWARD HOLLOWAY

(a) Original Man

Both John Paul and Holloway, when considering the true perspective of human relationships which are so damaged go to Matthew's Gospel, "but from the beginning it was not so..." Like John Paul, Holloway considers original man in order to discover who the historical man is, "it is not possible to judge rightly of the place and meaning of sex in human life without recourse to the original state of man's nature."⁴¹ The soul, as the new principle in the original man, is "the principle of knowing, of recognising relations, perspectives, and the balance of proportion"⁴² and it is in historical man that these principles are warped in relation to his own body, the body of his neighbour and sex. Holloway comments, in agreement with the Pope, that principal among the phenomena distorted by sin is man's sexual faculty.

According to Holloway, "in the beginning" our freedom from the disordered desire of the physical passions was derived partly from the body itself because "the flesh had always through the ages of development looked for and responded to its natural law."⁴³ The balance and proportion which human nature would have exhibited in such matters was only partially due to the soul. The flesh assented with the spirit; it was not just that the spirit had a better hold over the flesh before the fall. Holloway's perspective could be useful in realising the final exorcism of the Manichean heresy, which is certainly one of the Pope's goals with the Theology of the Body.

(b) The Centrality of the Incarnation

In the Theology of the Body, the first Adam and Eve were an icon of Christ and the Church who were the prototypes. Humanity, split in sex between male and female would be constantly pointing to the Christ who was to come and wed the Church which, presumably, would have consisted of the whole human race. We might say here that the Pope is talking in terms of a symbolic necessity (e.g. a constant reminder, a making

present of the salvation to come) for the splitting of the sexes, while Holloway speaks in the more concrete terms of a "functional necessity."⁴⁴

The Pope speaks of the "great mystery" of man as male and female, as if hinting to the unplumbed depths of its meaning. Holloway recognises the idea that there is no good reason for the biologically costly process of splitting sexes and of sexual reproduction, still a problem in modern biology. If the whole of material creation finds its consummation in man and man's proper end is his adoption as a son of God in the person of Jesus Christ, then the "incarnation should be fundamental to the developmental plan of the universe."⁴⁵ In the splitting of the sexes Jesus Christ can come to earth as true God and true man.

Few theologians have taken our embodiment as male and female as seriously as the Pope, but Holloway is certainly close. There is also an obvious Scotist thread which runs through the Theology of the Body and through Holloway's writings. Perhaps it is from here that there could even be brought about a synthesis of the two.

(c) *In Remedium Concupiscentiae*

In the twenty-second chapter of *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, Holloway states clearly that the second end of the sexual act (unitive) is defined through the first (the procreative), something which does not seem to be mentioned specifically in the Theology of the Body. In agreement with Orthodox Judaism he writes that sex "exercised in its most perfect use"⁴⁶ is for children: "[t]he best and most holy way of birth control is then to order one's use of sexual intercourse to the original and aboriginal mind of God. That alone is the perfection of holiness and pure love in human personality and family life."⁴⁷

Admitting of some qualitative differences between artificial contraception and natural methods he contests that even when the natural methods are used with correct intention, it is a "less perfect" conjugal act than that which is had to bring about children. The natural methods are used in *remedium concupiscentiae*, 'for the tempering of disordered natural desire'. "This after all, is an extrinsic principle in theology in the sense that its admittance is a concession to the stresses brought into human nature by original sin and its effects."⁴⁸

According to Holloway, historical man is subject to involuntary sexual urges because of the Fall. In original man sex was only for children. Holloway says that we may not speak in terms of an evolution of the meaning of sex "since the soul is distinct in order from matter."⁴⁹

"The nature of man, and the physical meaning of relationships of body and soul in terms of function and fulfilment were the same in the first man on earth as they will be in the last one."⁵⁰

The Pope does not explicitly say that sex only for children is the most perfect way. However, if according to the Pope the conjugal union is supposed to be an icon of the life of the Trinity, a fruitful communion of persons, then such a view would seem to be implied in the Theology of the Body.

(d) A New Synthesis of Science and the Theology of the Body?

There is much talk about the regulation of sexual activity, particularly among the young. As ever, the discussion may only boil down to the mechanics of how to avoid conception and venereal diseases. What is so frustrating about this discussion is that sex can never be spoken about as having meaning or even having its own proper context. The Pope's *Theology of the Body* presents the body, the married couple and the conjugal act as having particular significance and context in reference to Christ and the Church, the nature of salvation and the life of God Himself in which we are to participate. But will the Theology of the Body be convincing enough outside the Church to inspire modern men?

Holloway tells us that "the philosopher and the theologian must go back continually and anew to nature, to discover more fully the nature of being and its organic relationships."⁵¹

It is from the considerations, then, of science that we might be able to achieve a more complete synthesis of knowledge which can penetrate more fully the interrelationships of creation, both spiritual and material. If this were possible it might give some grounding to the Theology of the Body. The problem, according to Holloway, is that today "the Church cannot formulate an intellectualism which embodies the proven fundamentals of modern scientific knowledge within orthodox theological speculation" as happened in the Middle Ages.⁵²

The scholars of the Theology of the Body would be the first to recognize the density of each of the Wednesday catechesis, of how they have not yet been fully understood and of how they are quite 'unpacked'. Perhaps one avenue to grow or even confirm the ideas is to look for how they might ring true according to what is observed in nature for, as Holloway tells us, "the energies of knowledge are the factors which must be synthesised

anew in a new unity of knowledge both human and divine, if any possible meaning, dignity or final goal is to be affirmed of man's person."⁵³ The Theology of the Body is charged with man's meaning, dignity and final goal.

If Holloway is right then the Theology of the Body, if it aims to turn around the behaviour of modern men, which must be one of its goals, is not enough. There must in fact be a new synthesis of science and religion before the Theology of the Body can go anywhere. In the modern world, outside the Church, the Theology of the Body, on its own, is like a powerful missile with no launch pad.

Conclusion

There will be no renewal of the Church and the world without a renewal of the family, and there will be no renewal of the family if we do not return to the proper meanings of our bodies and sex. John Paul's catechesis takes the human body and sexuality out of the vacuum in which they exist in the modern world and gives them proper meaning and context. Because of the Theology of the Body, the body, marriage and the conjugal act can now coherently point beyond themselves to salvation and to the life of God.

George Weigel comments that the catechetical addresses are a "theological time bomb" which is set to go off with dramatic consequences some time in the third millennium of the Church. [And] [w]hen that happens, perhaps in the twenty-first century, the Theology of the Body, may well be seen, not only as a critical moment in Catholic theology, but in the history of modern thought."⁵⁴ If men like Scola, West and Weigel are right, the Theology of the Body is to have massive implications for every area of theology. But if it is to realise this massive predicted potential it is not enough for scholars of the Theology of the Body simply to rehash quotations from the Wednesday catechesis and then to stand back saying how wonderful it is.

In his phenomenological approach, the Pope hopes that the Theology of the Body will be accepted through the honest reflection of men and women who will find something inside them which resonates with his words. Is this enough in the post-Christian West? Perhaps in order to engage the world with this question, the Theology of the Body must be able in some way to go to the world, even to point to other disciplines to shore up the things that it says. It needs to be part of a synthesis.

1. G. Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, (New York: Cliff Street Books, 1999) 343.
2. Mt 19:8.
3. CCC, n.2236.
4. CCC, n.2519.
5. CCC, n.1146.

6. John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Boston: 1997) 76. This book contains all 129 texts from the general audiences which make up the Theology of the Body.
7. John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, 1994, n.19.
8. *Theology of the Body*, 16.
9. *Theology of the Body* 163.
10. Gen 2:18
11. Gen 2:24.
12. *Theology of the Body*, 46.
13. *Theology of the Body*, 46.
14. Gen 2:25.
15. *Theology of the Body*, 52.
16. *Theology of the Body*, 57.
17. *Theology of the Body*, 65-66.
18. *Theology of the Body*, 116.
19. *Theology of the Body*, 149.
20. *Theology of the Body*, 175.
21. *Theology of the Body*, 176.
22. Mt 22:30.
23. *Theology of the Body*, 247.
24. *Theology of the Body*, 267.
25. *Theology of the Body*, 283.
26. *Theology of the Body*, 276.
27. I Cor 7:9.
28. Rom 8:23.
29. *Theology of the Body*, 274.
30. *Theology of the Body*, 268.
31. *Theology of the Body*, 322.
32. *Theology of the Body*, 315.
33. *Theology of the Body*, 320.
34. *Theology of the Body*, 316.
35. *Theology of the Body*, 315.
36. *Theology of the Body*, 319.
37. *Theology of the Body*, 313.
38. *Theology of the Body*, 318.
40. *Theology of the Body*, 305-306.
41. *Theology of the Body*, 141-142.
42. Edward Holloway, *Catholicism: A New Synthesis* (London: Faith Keyway, 1976) 420-421.
43. *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, 398.
44. *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, 398.
45. *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, 149.
46. *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, 149.
47. *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, 421.
48. *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, 437.
49. *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, 437.
50. *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, 425.
51. *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, 425.
52. *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, 32.
54. *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, 32.
55. Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 343.

CHRISTIAN ECONOMICS

The Church acknowledges the legitimate role of profit as an indication that a business is functioning well. When a firm makes a profit, this means that productive factors have been properly employed and corresponding human needs have been duly satisfied. But profitability is not the only indicator of a firm's condition. It is possible for the financial accounts to be in order, and yet for the people--who make up the firm's most valuable asset--to be humiliated and their dignity offended. Besides being morally inadmissible, this will eventually have negative repercussions on the firm's economic efficiency. In fact, the purpose of a business firm is not simply to make a profit, but is to be found in its very existence as a community of persons who in various ways are endeavoring to satisfy their basic needs, and who form a particular group at the service of the whole of society. Profit is a regulator of the life of a business, but it is not the only one; other human and moral factors must also be considered which, in the long term, are at least equally important for the life of a business.

We have seen that it is unacceptable to say that the defeat of so-called "Real Socialism" leaves capitalism as the only model of economic organization. It is necessary to break down the barriers and monopolies which leave so many countries on the margins of development, and to provide all individuals and nations with the basic conditions which will enable them to share in development. This goal calls for programmed and responsible efforts on the part of the entire international community. Stronger nations must offer weaker ones opportunities for taking their place in international life, and the latter must learn how to use these opportunities by making the necessary efforts and sacrifices and by ensuring political and economic stability, the certainty of better prospects for the future, the improvement of workers' skills, and the training of competent business leaders who are conscious of their responsibilities.

At present, the positive efforts which have been made along these lines are being affected by the still largely unsolved problem of the foreign debt of the poorer countries. The principle that debts must be paid is certainly just. However, it is not right to demand or expect payment when the effect would be the imposition of political choices leading to hunger and despair for entire peoples. It cannot be expected that the debts which have been contracted should be paid at the price of unbearable sacrifices. In such cases it is necessary to find--as in fact is partly happening--ways to lighten, defer or even cancel the debt, compatible with the fundamental right of peoples to subsistence and progress.

from Centesimus Annus
John Paul II
1 May 1991

Family Values Versus Safe Sex

Alfonso Cardinal Lopez Trujillo

Cardinal Trujillo, President of the Pontifical Council for the Family, responds to the charge that the Church by her teaching on contraception has in some way contributed to the spread of AIDS.

"Those promoting the condom without properly informing the public of its failure rates (both in its perfect use and in its typical use, and the cumulative risks), have led to, lead to, and will continue to lead to the death of many."

Challenging False Advertising

In an interview some time ago with the BBC's Panorama Programme I warned about "safe sex", stating that one cannot truly speak of objective and total protection by using the condom as a prophylactic, when it comes to the transmission not only of HIV/AIDS (Human Immunodeficiency Virus, which causes the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome AIDS) but also of many other STD's (Sexually Transmitted Diseases). One has to keep in mind above all the integral good of the person, in line with the proper moral orientation, which will be necessary to provide total protection against the spread of the pandemic. With or without the threat of HIV/AIDS and STD's, the Church has always called for education in chastity, premarital abstinence and marital fidelity, which are authentic expressions of human sexuality.¹

Many Bishops' Conferences all over the world, individual bishops and theologians have since long ago presented these points. A well-known and authoritative moralist, Dionigi Tettamanzi, now the Cardinal of Milan, calls for an accurate critical analysis of the *real efficacy* of the condom: "There is a great risk involved: to 'deceive' persons by propagating 'safe sex because one is protected', while in fact it is not safe, or is not safe in the way it might be thought to be".² Another Italian moralist, Elio Sgreccia, currently a bishop and Vice-President of the Pontifical Academy for Life, wrote that campaigns based only on the free distribution of condoms, "can become not only fallacious, but counterproductive and encourage... the abuse of sexuality; at any rate, they are devoid of truly human content and do not contribute to holistically responsible behaviour."³ Many other moralists and experts have tackled these questions, including Lino Ciccone and Jacques Suaudeau.

Failure Rates of Condom Use

Indeed, the discussion on condom failure is not at all new, or limited to Church circles. In 1987, the Los Angeles Times published an article entitled, Condom Industry Seeking Limits on U.S. Study [on condom effectiveness], and another in 1989, 4 Popular Condoms Leak AIDS Virus in Clinical Tests.⁴ A British newspaper reported that "the [World Health Organisation] says 'consistent and correct' condom use reduces the risk of HIV infection by 90%. There may be breakage or slippage of condoms...".⁵ The International Planned Parenthood Federation even gave a lower effectiveness rate, stating that "use of condoms reduces by approximately 70% the total risk between unprotected sex and complete sexual abstinence. This estimate is consistent with findings from most epidemiological studies".⁶

In 2000, the US National Institutes of Health and other federal agencies held a *Workshop* to study peer-reviewed journal publications on condom effectiveness. The *Workshop Summary* explains that *available scientific evidence indicated that the condom reduces the risk of AIDS/HIV by 85%,⁷ and that "[t]here was no evidence that condom use reduced the risk of HPV infection...".⁸ HPV or Human papillomavirus is an STD associated with cervical cancer, which in the US kills many more women than the HIV. As for other genital infections, there is either *no or some**

protection through condom use, or there is *insufficient data to confirm* risk reduction.

Ineffective Contraception

As a related matter, pregnancy in spite of condom use is well documented, with the Pearl index placed at around 15 failures per 100 women years within the first year of use. Based on this data, would it not be only logical to conclude that the condom also allows transmission of HIV and STD's, given that the disease-causing organisms may be present with the sperm cells, in the seminal fluid, and even elsewhere, such as on skin surfaces not covered by the condom? Moreover, one must consider that a woman can become pregnant only during her fertile days (approximately 5-8 days in a cycle, taking into account the sperm's lifespan inside her body), while the HIV and STD's may be transmitted on any day.

The remaining 10-30% from these figures, which represent the condom's failure range, is relatively high when one deals with a potentially mortal disease such as AIDS, especially if there is an alternative that provides absolute protection against the sexual transmission of the same: namely, abstinence before marriage, and fidelity to one's spouse.

The Myth of Safe Sex

In an article subsequent to the Workshop Summary, Fitch et al emphasize that the cumulative risk factor is very significant – that is, the risk (transmission of infection in spite of condom use) greatly increases the more the action (condom use) is repeated.⁹ Likewise, based on an International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) article, "the risk of contracting AIDS during so-called 'protected sex' approaches 100 percent as the number of episodes of sexual intercourse increases".¹⁰ This means that the safe sex Russian Roulette becomes even more serious with repeated condom use.

Permeability and electric tests indicate that latex may allow passage of particles bigger than the HIV.¹¹ Likewise, holes and weak spots in condoms may be detected by tests, as can be seen in a 1998 article on the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) website.¹² The FDA allows four leaking condoms in every batch of 1,000: hence, there could be hundreds of thousands or even millions of leaking condoms circulating all over the world, either sold or distributed for free, and most probably contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS and STD's.

In fact, Cardinal Eugenio De Araujo Sales, former Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, recently stated in a newspaper article that several lots of condoms (some from leading brands) were recalled from the market in

Brazil in 1999, 2000 and 2003, due to failure in different tests and the discovery of counterfeit products.¹³

In addition to having possible manufacturing defects, condoms could undergo deterioration during shipping, handling and storage, and even further degradation after purchase and during actual use. Furthermore, the typical, real-life use of condoms is far from perfect; it is rather normally used inconsistently and incorrectly.

That condoms do not provide total protection against the transmission of HIV and STD's is compounded by the fact that the "safe sex" campaigns have led not to an increase in prudence, but to an increase in sexual promiscuity and condom use.¹⁴

On the other hand, where abstinence before marriage and fidelity to one's spouse have been successfully promoted, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has been significantly controlled better: take the case of Uganda¹⁵ and the Philippines (presently with 1,935 cases, compared with Thailand's 750,000 cases, in spite of Thailand's smaller population).¹⁶

False Information About Condoms

Condom users should be guaranteed their ethical and juridical rights to be correctly and completely informed of the risks involved in the sexual transmission of this disease, and of the true ineffectiveness of the so-called prophylactic. The false security generated by the "safe sex" campaigns are hindrances to this right to correct, complete information. The public has to be informed of the risks they expose themselves to, perhaps by requiring condoms to carry warning labels on their packaging and on the shelves and apparatus where they are displayed, stating that they do not guarantee total protection against HIV/AIDS and STD's, and that they are not safe.

For those who have already exposed themselves to the risks outlined above, a responsible mode of action would be to undergo tests to determine whether or not one might have already been infected, considering that a real danger exists. Each person has the obligation to take care of his or her health and that of others, and to do so, each person has the right to be aided by society as far as possible.

The statements reflecting the hard fact of condom failure by no less than international and national agencies, along with the scientific studies and real-life experiences, go totally against the accusations made against the Church: namely, that the Church contributes to the death of millions by not promoting or allowing the use of condoms

in the fight against the AIDS pandemic. Indeed, shouldn't it be the opposite: that those promoting the condom without properly informing the public of its failure rates (both in its *perfect* use and in its *typical* use, and the *cumulative risks*), have led to, lead to, and will continue to lead to the death of many? The Catholic Church can surely claim expertise in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, providing ²⁵ percent of all the care worldwide.

Finally, one must remember that in several places there is an emergence of youth movements whose members publicly promise to maintain a responsible attitude towards sex, and to remain chaste, abstaining before marriage, and to be faithful to their spouses. For what reason then should this model based on family values not be promoted?

1. See Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (Mar 25, 1995), and *Familiaris Consortio* (Nov 22, 1981), among others. See also Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality. Guidelines for Education within the Family*, Vatican City, Dec 8, 1995. See also J. Suaudeau, *Stopping the Spread of HIV/AIDS. Prophylactics or Family Values?*, in *L'Osservatore Romano Weekly Edition in English*, (Apr 19, 2000): 9-10, and further clarification in *L'Osservatore Romano Weekly Edition in English*, (Sep 27, 2000): 2.
2. *Nuova bioetica cristiana*, 2000.
3. Elio Sgreccia, *Manuale di Bioetica*, Vol 2: Aspetti medico-sociali, Vita e Pensiero, Milan 1991, p. 266.
4. Both articles were written by Allan Parachini. See *Los Angeles Times* (LT), Aug 28, 1987, in <http://www.aegis.com/news/lt/1987/LT870807.html>, and Sep 12, 1989 in <http://www.aegis.com/news/lt/1989/LT890904.html>.
5. *The Guardian*, Special Report 13 Oct 2003.
6. Willard Cates, *How Much Do Condoms Protect Against Sexually Transmitted Diseases?*, in IPPF Medical Bulletin, 31 (Feb 1997) 1: 2-3. Quoted by SEICUS, *Condoms Are Effective in Preventing HIV/STD Transmission*, in SHOP Talk (School Health Opportunities and Progress) Bulletin, Apr 25, 1997 Vol. 2, Issue 2.
7. *Workshop Summary: Scientific Evidence on Condom Effectiveness for Sexually Transmitted Disease Prevention*, 20 July 2001, p.14. The Workshop Summary is available from the internet: <http://www.niaid.nih.gov/dmid/stds/condomreport.pdf>.
8. Workshop Summary: pp. 23-26.
9. J. Thomas Fitch, MD, Curtis Sine, MD, W. David Hager, MD, Joshua Mann, MD, MPH, Mary B. Adam, MD, and Joe McIlhaney, MD, *Condom Effectiveness. Factors that Influence Risk Reduction*, in *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* 29 (Dec 2002) 12: 811-817.
10. *Human Life International, Fact Sheet on Condom Failure*, <http://www.hli.org/Fact%20Sheet%20on%20Condom%20Failure.html>, referring to as source Willard Cates, *How Much Do Condoms Protect Against Sexually Transmitted Diseases?*, in IPPF Medical Bulletin, 31 (Feb 1997) 1: 2-3. See also Human Life International's other fact sheets on condoms, in <http://www.hli.org/bbc.html>.
11. See, for example, the numerous studies cited by J. Suaudeau, *Sesso sicuro*, in *Lexicon*, pp. 795-817, and J. P. M. Lelkens, *AIDS: il preservativo non preserva. Documentazione di una truffa*, in *Studi Cattolici*, Milano (1994) 405: 718-723. A number of studies hypothesize that among other factors, the process of vulcanization could contribute to the irregularity of the latex surface and the presence of microscopic pores.
12. Mike Kubic, *New Ways to Prevent and Treat AIDS*, in FDA Consumer, Jan-Feb 1997 (revised May 1997 and Jan 1998; available at http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1997/197_aids.html).
13. *O Globo*, Nov. 15, 2003.
14. Hearst, N. and Hulley, S.B., *Preventing the Heterosexual Spread of AIDS. Are We Giving Our Patients the Best Advice?*, in *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 259 (1998), 16, pp. 2428-2432. See especially p. 2431.
15. See *Condom Lobby Drives AIDS Debate Besides Abstinence Success in Africa*, in Catholic Family & Human Rights Institute, Friday Fax Vol. 5 (Dec 13, 2002) No. 51.
16. See *Telling the Truth: AIDS Rates for Thailand and the Philippines*, by Rene Josef Bullecer, in <http://www.hli.org/thailand%20and%20philippines%20aids%20rate.html>.

WOMEN OF THE FUTURE

And what shall we say of the obstacles which in so many parts of the world still keep women from being fully integrated into social, political and economic life? We need only think of how the gift of motherhood is often penalized rather than rewarded, even though humanity owes its very survival to this gift. Certainly, much remains to be done to prevent discrimination against those who have chosen to be wives and mothers. As far as personal rights are concerned, there is an urgent need to achieve real equality in every area: equal pay for equal work, protection for working mothers, fairness in career advancements, equality of spouses with regard to family rights and the recognition of everything that is part of the rights and duties of citizens in a democratic state.

This is a matter of justice but also of necessity. Women will increasingly play a part in the solution of the serious problems of the future: leisure time, the quality of life, migration, social services, euthanasia, drugs, health care, the ecology, etc. In all these areas a greater presence of women in society will prove most valuable, for it will help to manifest the contradictions present when society is organized solely according to the criteria of efficiency and productivity, and it will force systems to be redesigned in a way which favors the processes of humanization which mark the "civilization of love".

*from Letter to Women
Pope John Paul II
29 June 1995*

The Church and Homosexual Marriage

Stratford Caldecott

As the debate about homosexuality continues to rage in the Anglican Communion, Stratford Caldecott explains why the Church teaches that "same-sex marriage" is impossible.

"Our social fabric is a delicate ecological system, where any structural changes of the sort being discussed will inevitably have immeasurable and irreversible effects on every level from the personal and psychological, to the economic and political."

Pressure For Change

Many Christians, just like the rest of the population, experience homosexual attraction, and a good number have come to define themselves as "gay", even if only by inclination. In both England and the United States matters of sexual preference and expression are regarded increasingly as on a par with any other "right to choose". The social and political pressure to abolish the distinct privileges of the traditional married couple, or to extend them to same-sex couples, has become intense.

In the summer of 2003, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith headed by Cardinal Ratzinger issued a document entitled "Considerations regarding proposals to give legal recognition to unions between homosexual persons". Intended to give direction on the matter to Catholic politicians, it was worded so strongly that some accused it of having been *intended* to give offence, although it is more likely to have been motivated by frustration at the way earlier official statements on this subject have been consistently ignored or downplayed in parts of the Church. The most notorious sentence was this (the emphasis is mine): "There are *absolutely* no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be *in any way similar or even remotely analogous* to God's plan for marriage and family. Marriage is holy, while homosexual acts go against the natural moral law. Homosexual acts 'close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.'"

While it is true that active homosexuals are often extremely promiscuous, many do form long-lasting, even lifelong unions characterized by tender affection and self-giving love. Not all such unions exclude sexual contact outside the union, but some do. Is it really possible to reconcile this fact with the Congregation's flat denial of any analogy or similarity between homosexual unions (at least of this sort) and marriage?

What Catholics Understand by "Marriage"

Before trying to answer this question, I want to set aside another set of issues that I do not intend to cover in detail. It seems clear enough that many people cannot help being attracted by or falling in love with someone of the same sex. Why is this? Did God intend to make them that way? In that case, some would say, it hardly seems fair of him to demand that they renounce their feelings or refuse to act upon them. Or have they been "damaged" by genetic inheritance or upbringing, so that their "normal" feelings are diverted into other channels? I am not qualified to enter into the arguments about the physical or psychological causes of homosexuality. What I am concerned about is the Christian response to it. And it is important to remember that love and friendship are at the very heart of Christianity. What is at issue is not the feelings *per se*, but the genital expression of those feelings, and whether Christianity can make a consistent and convincing case against one whole category of such expression.

It is, after all, the case that the Church restricts genital expression of sexual feelings in the case of heterosexuals too, and not only to those of who are in the single state.

A married man or woman may fall uncontrollably in love with someone outside the marriage, and the Church regards adultery as a sin. The same strictures – and the same tolerance of human weakness in those who fall, with the continually-extended offer of reconciliation – should be applied to all types of sexual experience. The difficult thing for homosexuals to understand is not the claim that sexual activity may be sinful under certain circumstances, but that, according to the mainstream interpretation of the Christian tradition, there is *no* legitimate form of homosexual union, equivalent to marriage, within which sexual expression is permitted.

Marriage Not Based on Subjective Feelings

To make sense of this we must first distinguish the subjective order of feelings from the objective order of actions and structures. At the level of feelings there may indeed be a deep bond between two people of the same sex – particular friendships may even outlast earthly life. But a friendship, however deep and intense, and even if it possesses an erotic quality or dimension, is not the same as a marriage. Feelings obviously have a place in marriage, but as an institution and as a sacrament it does not depend upon them. The Vatican document says that marriage is a particular kind of bond between persons that is only possible on the basis of biological gender.

So what kind of a structure is “marriage”? According to the document, it “exists solely between a man and a woman, who by mutual personal gift, proper and exclusive to themselves, tend toward the communion of their persons. In this way, they mutually perfect each other, in order to cooperate with God in the procreation and upbringing of new human lives.” Marriage is therefore a communion between a man and a woman which exists for the sake of procreation. It is then “elevated by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament”, becoming “an efficacious sign” of the covenant between Christ and the Church (*Eph* 5:32).

The Objective Structure of Matrimony

This way of describing marriage is highly technical. It presupposes a long history of theological discussion, and the broader context of Catholic teaching. The phrase “efficacious sign”, for example, refers to the nature of the sacraments as symbolic and ritual enactments that by divine grace “effect” or bring about what they signify. What it boils down to is that the vow of marriage, once consummated, brings into existence a new reality: a unity composed of two people – a whole greater than the sum

of its parts. This “ontological” union, once freely entered upon in full consciousness by two baptized Christians (who by virtue of their baptism are each members of Christ’s “mystical” body), is so strong that the Catholic tradition regards it as indissoluble except by physical death.¹

The Three Elements of Marriage

Let us look more closely, then, at the nature of this “ontological” union of a couple in marriage. There seem to be three essential conditions to bring it about. The first is the intention of the couple to create just such a union, which they express in the words of the marriage vow. The second is the fact that each member of the couple is a baptized Christian (not necessarily a Catholic). The third is consummation of the marriage through sexual intercourse.

The “giving of the word” in a marriage vow, which is in essence the conscious *giving of the self*, each to each, is the decisive intentional act that establishes the basis for a marriage. It is this intention that seals the analogy between the human and the divine. In God, too, the Word is given. Marriage is an image both of the Trinity as a communion of equal persons, and of the Church as a union between God and man. This resemblance or analogy that exists between marriage, the hypostatic union in Christ, and the divine Trinity in heaven, “connects” the married couple with God in a particular way, making them a living icon of the Trinity.

However, the image is only complete if the couple is already baptized. Baptism means that Christ actually dwells within a person, through the Holy Spirit. This is a more intense form of presence than that of the universal presence of the Creator within the creature. Before being baptized, God is within me, and I may pray to him there; but after baptism I am also within God. Baptism initiates me (even before I fully realize it) into the mystery of the Incarnation, into the “within” of God, so that the life of God as man is being lived through me; my life is that of the Son. The within of God is the Trinity.

Thus for the married couple who are baptized, marital union becomes part of this living out of the Incarnation, and specifically the union of Christ with his Church (the extension of the Incarnation into communion with others). There may even be an implication that the Church recognizes that without being joined to Christ by baptism, a human being is probably incapable of true self-gift – or, at least, that it should not be expected of him.

Consummation also plays a vital role in sealing the marriage covenant. It completes the act of self-gift which

is begun in the words of the marriage vow. The reason for this is that the human person includes a body. The Church rejects the Cartesian anthropology that would make the body a merely extraneous machine-like instrument of the mind, in favour of a view that regards the material world as fundamentally good and the human being as inclusive of both matter and spirit. Thus a union of persons includes a union of bodies.

In sexual intercourse the couple forms a biological unit. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts: literally so in the case of a union that results in the conception of new life. The biological incompleteness of each sex on its own, such that it can only fulfil this aspect of its nature by merging with the other, is another essential basis for the supernatural partnership of marriage, and it is this which specifically excludes marriage between two persons of the same sex ("homogamy").

In the act of procreation, and in no other act, two individuals function as a single principle, because it takes both of them to give rise to a new human life. Their union is more than a felt or imagined union of two consciousnesses, or the apparent merging of two sets of feelings into one shared ecstasy; it is an objective union of two embodied persons in a unity that transcends the couple.

To put this another way, the sacramental union is founded on a *potential* union, or predisposition to union, that is inscribed in our very biology. Christ appeals to this (archetypal) union of male and female "in the beginning" when he re-institutes indissoluble marriage as a sacrament in Matthew 19:4-9. Of course, an individual man or woman is a person and, as such, a true unity created by God in his image. On this is founded the dignity and immortal destiny of each human being. But there is another kind of whole that can only be constituted by a man and woman together. That union, the particular *raison d'être* of marriage, is not possible for a same-sex couple, however loving and faithful they may be, simply because it is based on those human differences which derive specifically from procreation.

Objections

Catholic marriage forms a coherent package, but arguments alone will not convince everyone to buy the package. The question remains: is this merely an ideal, and what is more an ideal that suits some people not others? Furthermore, could a society that no longer recognizes Christianity (let alone Catholicism) as its spiritual foundation not institute a more inclusive form of legal union that would capture many of the traditional elements of Christian marriage without prejudice to

Catholics who wish to "marry" in their own, more specialized, sense of the word?

The Uniqueness of Marriage

It is, of course, true that many of the conventional or legal elements that have become associated with Christian, sacramental marriage might be detached from this context and applied to other intimate (and not necessarily sexual) relationships. Why cannot close friends live together, or bequeath property to one another, donate pension benefits to each other, and so forth? The limits to this largely depend on whether we regard sacramental marriage as needing or deserving special legal privileges and advantages.

Why might it? Well, for one thing, the sharing of property and the merging of assets makes most sense between people who are undertaking a union that is intended to be permanent. In a society where marriages often end after a few years, and perhaps acrimoniously, the disentangling of what had been legally merged together becomes a major industry in its own right. The presence of children complicates things further, legally and even more importantly, psychologically.

If it is true, as many have argued, that the mental and spiritual health of a child is best secured within a conventional two-sex relationship, where the child lives within an ambience created by a maternal and a paternal figure cooperating together, this creates another set of reasons against the encouragement (through legal institution) of same-sex "marriages" – namely, the well-being of the children who might be adopted by the couple, whether out of genuine love or merely as a lifestyle accessory.

Increasingly, if same-sex unions are recognized as legitimate forms of marriage suitable for bringing up children, the pressure will be even greater on scientists to develop technologically-assisted forms of reproduction that would enable such couples to have children of their own, should they desire them. It would be argued that to have a child is the "right" of any couple, and that science ought to make this possible. Children are increasingly regarded – as we have seen in recent years – as commodities to be manufactured on demand. The social and psychological consequences of such developments are uncharted, but hardly unpredictable.

Conclusions

Our social fabric is a delicate ecological system, where any structural changes of the sort being discussed will inevitably have immeasurable and irreversible effects on every level from the personal and psychological to the

economic and political. For this reason alone, quite apart from any Christian considerations (and I have not even mentioned the guidance of Scripture, which Christians regard as an authoritative guide to the principles that should govern social life), it would seem wisest for politicians not to give in to the pressure on behalf of same-sex unions, but to find other ways to protect the interests of citizens, whether homosexual or not, and the common good of society.

As for Christians themselves, whatever the arguments against the equal legal recognition of same-sex unions, with or without the option of divorce, it is important to remember two facts. The first is that there is a strong and determined lobby intent on pushing legislation as far and as fast as possible. The second is that homosexuals are human beings like everyone else, and as deserving of respect and love as the rest of us. The attempt to block the political movement towards sexual liberation of gays should never be linked to the kind of un-Christian attitudes that homosexuals rightly regard as hypocritical.

This is linked to a third fact that has been reiterated in Church teaching, but is not always taken as seriously as it might be. It is not essential to human health to indulge one's sexual preferences or desires, whatever Freud might say. A healthy continence is no contradiction in terms. Even within marriage it is essential to attain a level of self-control and purity that makes long periods of abstinence possible. In this respect, Christians have to reject one of the dominant assumptions of our culture. But the virtue of chastity, and the discipline of continence, should be demanded of heterosexuals just as much as it is of homosexuals.

The best response to the rise of a sexually active (and activist) homosexual subculture is the development of a culture of life where personal chastity and purity are universally encouraged and supported, where the dignity of the single person is fully acknowledged, and where chaste same-sex friendships are recognized and valued as a gift of God.

FURTHER READING

David Morrison, *Beyond Gay* (Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1999)

David Morrison, *Homosexuality - Christ Above All: The Church's Teaching on Same-Sex Attraction* (CTS "Explanations", 2004)

Livio Melina, "Homosexual Inclination", *Communio* Spring 1998 (also available in the Archive section of the Second Spring web-site at www.secondspring.co.uk).

On the whole question of chastity, see

www.godspy.com/life/Purity-The-Way-of-the-Celibate.cfm.

For further information and help:

<http://couragerc.net> and www.truefreedomtrust.co.uk

NOTE

- 1 It can, of course, be annulled; but this merely constitutes recognition by the Church that the marriage never really existed, owing to the incomplete intention of one or other partner or the failure to consummate. It is worth noting that such an indissoluble union could not conceivably be brought about simply by an agreement between two consenting adults; that is, by legal contract alone. A mere contract, as distinct from the stronger form of personal union sometimes signified by the word "covenant", can always be dissolved. In fact it is highly unlikely that most of those currently campaigning for same-sex "marriage" want such unions to be indissoluble in that sense. Almost certainly they would permit divorce by mutual agreement, or even unilateral divorce in the case of cruelty or betrayal by one of the partners. But without indissolubility at least in principle, there is no "marriage" in the full sense understood by Catholics. The Orthodox tradition also regards marriage as indissoluble in principle, and divorce as a sin, though it allows more scope for the recognition of failure in marriage and the possibility of remarriage in some cases.



letters to the editor

The Editor, Our Lady & St. Ninian's
52 Quakerfield, Bannockburn
STIRLING FK7 8HZ

editor@faith.org.uk

MARY AND THE CONVERT

Dear Fr Editor,

David Paul Deavel is to be highly commended, as a convert, for producing such a magnificent defence of the role of Our Lady in your last edition against all-comers, including Calvin and the other Protestant reformers.

The biblical evidence for Marian devotion is, of course, powerful but perhaps Mr Deavel could help other potential converts by pointing in a practical way to the miraculous fruits, signs wonders and healings associated with the reported apparitions of Our Lady, especially those of the 19th/20th centuries. Lourdes, Fatima and Medjugorje spring to mind, having produced large numbers of converts to the Catholic faith, including leading Protestants especially in the USA. The number and variety of miraculous cures in these places, especially Lourdes, provides very impressive scientific evidence for those who seek to discover Our Lady's powers of intercession.

Another good example of this can be found in the secret prophecies (recently revealed) of the 1917 Fatima apparitions predicting the outbreak of the Second World War, the fall of communism in Russia and the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II, who himself attributes his escape to the intercession of Our Blessed Mother.

If someone has had half his stomach removed by operation and, after visiting Lourdes finds it totally

restored, the onus is on the doubters to provide some plausible explanation. The same can be said about the many malignant tumours which have disappeared without treatment after visiting Lourdes (e.g. the 1976 cure of Delizia Cerolli).

If no scientific or natural reason can be found for these inexplicable cures and events, then surely Divine intervention as a result of the intercession of Our Lady is the only answer.

Yours faithfully,

*Hugh Lynch
Burnhead Road
Larbert, Stirlingshire*

Dear Fr Editor,

With regard to the article Mary and the Convert (Faith Jan/Feb 2005) I would like to add some additional insights.

As a Sola Scriptura Protestant in the late 1950's I adopted, half consciously, the general working principle that the truth of a doctrine was directly proportionate to the amount of space allotted to it in the Scriptures. Then it gradually dawned on me that the greatest doctrine of all, the Holy Trinity, was by no means self-evident in the Bible: Mary actually gets more space in the New Testament than God the Father. So much for proportional representation!

And yet most Protestants accept the Trinity - that is to say, they accept that the doctrine can be drawn out and developed by the Church even if not explicitly formulated in the scriptures. Why cannot the same process be applied to the Mother of God?

If Mary had written a Gospel or an Epistle herself surely she would have diminished in stature. She is the very channel of life and inspiration that enabled the (male) apostles to do all the talking! It would have been very unfitting that she should descend

from her divine motherhood to be a 'mere' writer or preacher. After Pentecost she lived quietly in the home built for her by St John in Ephesus. I think that the silence of Mary is much more powerful and eloquent than any words or actions of hers would have been.

As for the title 'Co-Redemptrix' - I think that this will always present a problem for non-Catholic Christians, there is simply no getting away from it. To the uninstructed, 'Co-Redemptrix' plainly implies equality with her Son - and first impressions are very important. A title that requires an explanatory footnote is not a good one. Apart from inventing a ponderous new compound phrase, I see no way out of this difficulty except perhaps by defining Mary by one of her titles in the Litany of Loreto (remember that?) How about "Mother of Divine Grace"? This differentiates her from her Son while preserving in a very attractive way her power, dignity and uniqueness.

Yours faithfully,

*Jim Allen
Seymour Drive
Torquay*

THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

Dear Fr Editor,

I read the recent editorial, "Tragedy and Suffering: What can we say?" with some interest. But what I have to say is that I found some of its claims disturbing. We read that "to be an atheist who is outraged or incensed by human misery is incoherent." I set aside the question of the truth or otherwise of this claim; what concerns me is the misleading non-sequitur: "If the cosmos is just a vast accident of random, pointless events, then why grieve at death or disaster?" Why should not an atheist grieve? There is surely no logical connection between

the two ideas. An atheist, while he may accept the fact of human misery, that it's "just how it is", is a human being with the usual emotions, and quite entitled to grieve at the suffering of others. I see no conflict of interest here.

In the case of the discussion about original sin, I was more puzzled than disturbed. "[W]e say that sin made its entrance at the outset of the history of humanity, with our first parents. That first sin fundamentally wounded our human nature ..." Does the writer believe that Adam and Eve, our "first parents", were historical persons; or is he speaking here in a metaphorical or mythological vein? If the former, I find this hard to reconcile with "the promotion of a new synthesis of faith and reason".

It would take much more time and space than is possible in a short letter to discuss the question of causality and freedom. But the writer's argument comes close to that sort of Deism that sees God as Creator, but who takes no further interest in His world and leaves it to its own devices. There is admittedly a let-out in the phrase "God does not constantly intervene ..." Then under what circumstances does He intervene?

Finally, a remark about Professor Dawkins and the selfish gene. I do not think it correct to say that he "argues that all life, even at the genetic level, is fundamentally selfish." Dawkins' argument is that life is fundamentally selfish, specifically at the genetic level. He does not in any way deny the possibility of human generosity and altruism.

Yours faithfully,

John Boutland (via email)

Dear Father Editor,

Thank you for your thoughtful contribution on God and suffering.

Great opportunities were lost during the recent disasters to spell out realities especially, as you say, in the light of the unique saving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. No wonder the unbeliever was scoffing. We finite ones with such limited understanding and poor judgement of God's mysterious ways, need more and more to bow down before and acknowledge Infinity. The more we do so, the more we grow in God's outstanding love and peace to help us endure, go forward and at times, start all over again when everything has been lost. What opportunities for grace there are in these situations, to go and drink from God's infinite well of love. In that, we find all that we have lost and much more besides. We begin to see more and more the profound limitations of doubting and keeping on about design or no design while failing to grasp the vital centrality of the Third Way. Hence, with the Angelic Doctor, we demand appropriate and concentrated scientific inquiry into adequate and ultimate explanation for contingent existence. The money and marvellous help being given are very little compared with the new strength, vision, peace, joy and love that come from our God who embraces so wonderfully all our sufferings and wants so much to translate them into a constant, never ending, mysterious rising again.

Yours faithfully,

*Father Bryan Storey
Tintagel Catholic Church
Cornwall*

THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION

Dear Fr. Editor,

It seems that we are in the season of 'Parliamentary Election Fever'. The political parties are exchanging insults and making wild promises as

usual in the hope of receiving the support of the voters. But it occurs to me that many of the problems a British government has to deal with, in 2005, have been self-induced by past governments which in Christian terms avoided the 'narrow way' and took the 'broad and easy way'. It has been said by anthropologists that Moses' Ten Commandments were the obvious basis for an ordered society and were commonly found in the diverse societies of the world. During the last fifty years nine of these Commandments were discarded in British Law, which might therefore seem to have been a recipe for social disorder:

- God and Belief is mocked in public;
- Respect for Sunday has gone;
- Marriage and the Family has been replaced legally by temporary relationships;
- Killing the unborn is legal; (killing the aged and 'useless' is proposed)
- Stealing is common: speak to any hotel owner, welfare cheating, business fraud etc;
- Adultery and fornication is 'encouraged';
- False witness and dishonesty is praised as expedient and as 'strong leadership';
- Envy and covetousness are promoted as necessary to the economy.

The nine Beatitudes have suffered a similar fate:

- Humility is despised (I suppose it always was);
- Meekness is mocked;
- There is less Christian comfort for those who mourn;
- Standing up for what is 'right in God's sight' is a career risk;
- Mercy has been discarded in favour of the philosophy of "the end justifies the means";
- Purity is unfashionable;
- Peace: (As George Orwell prophesied in his novel "1984" the slogan of Big

Brother has arrived -"war is peace";)
-Hopefully not many in Britain are
persecuted in the cause of right;
-Christians are certainly an object of
calumny.

This leaves me with the thoughts:
Have our governments passed laws
which will lead to an increasingly
disordered society? Is that why there
are now millions of CCTV cameras in
public places and plans for new laws
which are like those we used to
criticise in 'totalitarian' societies?
(Laws which our Christian Ancestors
cancelled 800 years ago) Did we

sow the wind...and will we soon be
reaping the whirlwind? Was it a
mistake to give the people all the
freedoms they desired? Is it (and was
it) better to LEAD 'the people' away
from those behaviours in which 'the
bosses' always indulged because
they were "above the law"? I would
like to suggest that this coming
election is a challenge to Catholics,
but not because we might worry
about for whom to vote. I think this
election should challenge Catholics
to think deeply about European
society and what are our

responsibilities in a society in which
God is mocked and Christian values
derided? Do we Catholics still
believe that souls may be lost? Do we
care if souls are lost? Should we
remaining Christians think ourselves
in any way responsible if souls are
lost? Do we sincerely believe that it is
a great blessing to be a Catholic?

Yours faithfully,

*Philip Audley-Charles
135 York Way
London N7 9LG*

EUCCHARISTIC DEVOTION IN THE SPIRIT OF VATICAN II

This worship, given therefore to the Trinity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, above all accompanies and permeates the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy. But it must fill our churches also outside the timetable of Masses. Indeed, since the Eucharistic Mystery was instituted out of love, and makes Christ sacramentally present, it is worthy of thanksgiving and worship. And this worship must be prominent in all our encounters with the Blessed Sacrament, both when we visit our churches and when the sacred species are taken to the sick and administered to them.

Adoration of Christ in this sacrament of love must also find expression in various forms of eucharistic devotion: personal prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, Hours of Adoration, periods of exposition--short, prolonged and annual (Forty Hours)--eucharistic benediction, eucharistic processions, eucharistic congresses. A particular mention should be made at this point of the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ as an act of public worship rendered to Christ present in the Eucharist, a feast instituted by my predecessor Urban IV in memory of the institution of this great Mystery. All this therefore corresponds to the general principles and particular norms already long in existence but newly formulated during or after the Second Vatican Council.

The encouragement and the deepening of eucharistic worship are proofs of that authentic renewal which the Council set itself as an aim and of which they are the central point. And this, venerable and dear brothers, deserves separate reflection. The Church and the world have a great need of eucharistic worship. Jesus waits for us in this sacrament of love. Let us be generous with our time in going to meet Him in adoration and in contemplation that is full of faith and ready to make reparation for the great faults and crimes of the world. May our adoration never cease.

Thanks to the Council we have realized with renewed force the following truth: Just as the Church "makes the Eucharist" so "the Eucharist builds up" the Church; and this truth is closely bound up with the mystery of Holy Thursday. The Church was founded, as the new community of the People of God, in the apostolic community of those Twelve who, at the Last Supper, became partakers of the body and blood of the Lord under the species of bread and wine. Christ had said to them: "Take and eat.... Take and drink." And carrying out this command of His, they entered for the first time into sacramental communion with the Son of God, a communion that is a pledge of eternal life. From that moment until the end of time, the Church is being built up through that same communion with the Son of God, a communion which is a pledge of the eternal Passover.

*from Dominicae Cenae
John Paul II
24 February 1980*

sunday

b y s u n d a y

6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER: A 01.05.05, Jn 14, 15-21

1. Jesus' words about his own leaving them create a growing sense of sadness in the Apostles, who have come to depend on their Master during three years of toil and travel. Struggling with such feelings must have exhausted them so that they were quite unable to pray with Jesus later on that evening in Gethsemane (cf. Jn 18, 1; Lk 22, 45-46) The Master has so much to tell them with so little time left. A constant sinister undercurrent during these discourses is the impending betrayal of Judas who has slipped out into the night with words of truth ringing in his ears but a darker purpose in his heart (cf. Jn 13, 27-30).

2. The one who loves Jesus is the one who keeps his commandments (Jn 14, 15.21). Not by words or good intentions, easy promises or empty resolutions do we prove our love for the Lord. Only when we are living the sort of life that Jesus led in obedience to the Father under the guidance of the Spirit can we be sure that we truly have love within us. Again, the subtext of betrayal gives a deeply poignant edge to this teaching. Position and eminence close to the heart of the Church offer no guarantee whatever. Even Judas was one of the twelve.

3. "...he is with you, he is in you" (Jn 14, 17). The Advocate whom the Father will send on the Apostles at the request of the Son continues the work that Jesus has started. He is "another" Advocate (Jn 14, 16) implying that the work he does is the same as that of the Son. He is also a counsellor, protector, comforter and helper - all of which can be understood from the Greek

'parakletos'. Our Lord promises that this Spirit of Truth will be with us in the sense of being at our house ("apud" in Latin), not merely in the sense of being in our company.

FEAST OF THE ASCENSION: A 05.05.05, Mt 28, 16-20

1. The divinity of Jesus is never in doubt in Matthew. The title 'Lord' is used many times (Mt 8, 25; 14, 28.30) and there is an emphasis on authority throughout the gospel (Mt 28, 18; 7, 28-29; 9, 8). Yet we learn here that even at the end some of the apostles hesitated to believe in him. What more could Jesus have done for them that he did not do? There are echoes here of the ingratitude of Good Friday in the strange, almost irrational reluctance of those closest to Jesus to recognize him and believe the evidence of their eyes. At least the apostles do fall down before their Lord. Eventually.

2. Jesus' love reaches out to us in his infinite patience. Though he had previously criticized his apostles for their doubt (Mt 8, 26; 14, 31), here he makes allowances and encourages the eleven in their newly-dawning Easter faith by his physical appearance and inspiring words. Our Lord's victory is quiet as silence but all-pervasive. Like the light of the sun which spreads to every corner of the globe, the joy of Easter glory suffuses through every generation until the end of time. Even when we hesitate, the patience of Jesus waits with unbounded love for our reluctant knees to bend before him and acknowledge the Lord.

3. Is Jesus with us or not? At the Ascension he is taken into heaven in his physical body, passing from our sight. We can be tempted to flounder. Like doubting Thomas, we can ask, " Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (Jn 14, 5). Jesus' real presence has passed into the

sacraments of the Church, physically so in the Holy Eucharist. He has kept his word, remaining an abiding presence for us in the tabernacles of our churches. The Ascension is the power behind Jesus' injunction to Thomas, "Doubt no longer, but believe" (Jn 20, 27)

7TH SUNDAY OF EASTER: A 08.05.05, Jn 17, 1-11

1. "Father, the hour has come.." (Jn 17, 1). John's gospel is split into two sections, with Jesus' public life and miracles forming the first twelve chapters, and the last few days of his earthly life and subsequent resurrection forming the last nine. These last chapters are subtitled, 'the book of glory' because they outline the coming of the hour of Jesus when he died on the cross as the innocent lamb sacrificed for us. Many times Jesus is preserved from harm because his 'hour' had not come. With Judas gone and Calvary beckoning, Our Lord announces that his time has now come.

2. It is upon the cross that the Christ is king and fount of God's glory for fallen man. This was the same glory that the Son had with the Father before time began (Jn 1, 1). Sin as a power to enthrall men is quite overthrown in its very attempt to bring down the glory of God through the ignominious death of the cross. John shows that the cross becomes the throne of God's glory where the universal kingship of Christ restores all men to health and allows them to know for sure that same glory of God.

3. Jesus knows that his disciples love him, that they accept his teaching. In acknowledging this, he prays especially for them so that they might be made strong enough for the work he has to give them in bringing the love of God into a hostile world. They are to be the foundation stones of the Church, the vehicles of abiding truth and the swords of the Spirit. In

their priesthood, they are conformed to the Master, whose single sacrifice they must perpetuate and imitate, even to the shedding of their own blood. They need this prayer.

FEAST OF PENTECOST: A

15.05.05, Jn 20, 19-23

1. The risen body of Jesus is truly physical and yet transformed. John is at great pains to emphasize both continuity and discontinuity between the risen Christ and the Christ executed upon the cross. There is something different about Jesus after the resurrection, yet he is unmistakably the same physical and spiritual reality as before death. When the evangelist remarks that "the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews" (Jn 20, 19) he suggests that the terrified followers of Jesus had barricaded themselves in. Yet the same Jesus and no ghost comes and stands among them.

2. Jesus bestows peace upon his disciples. He says it twice: once to establish his credentials as a flesh and blood human being, and once as the grounds for the gifts and mission he wishes to confer on the disciples. The Hebrew sense of this word is multi-faceted and rich. Our Lord is not talking about the modern notion of an absence of war, but a deeper and more positive blessing. He brings soundness, welfare, security, prosperity, tranquillity, contentment and friendship. In the primary sense of the word 'shalom', Jesus brings completeness. This completeness is gifted us through the Holy Spirit.

3. 'Shalom' or completeness is the fruit of a perfect fidelity to the Covenant made by God with Israel. The blessings God promised Abraham if his descendants were faithful to the promises made them has now been won in fullness for the Church by Jesus, who establishes the new Covenant in his own blood. Peace in the Hebrew sense can only

come through perfect response to God's holy Covenant and conformity to the Law. No man ever achieved this except Jesus. He was the perfect Jew in response to the election and mission given him by his Father.

FEAST OF THE HOLY TRINITY: A

22.05.05, Jn 3, 16-18

1. A few years ago now, during the 1986 World Cup played in Mexico, advertising boards appeared around the grounds which departed from the usual marketing hype. Instead of the latest beer, bank or razor blades football fans were challenged by a single biblical reference: 'John 3: 16'. The temptation to look it up proved too much even for some of the hardest hearts. Secretly, many old bibles were dusted down to reveal a reference to the gospel in just one verse. Jesus came into the world to reveal the Father's love, who is the Holy Spirit made known through Jesus.

2. Belief in John's gospel is the key notion. Do we believe what Jesus says? Do we believe that he came from the Father, whom he reveals to us. That certainty of faith that comes to us once we have encountered the living Lord is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus reveals to us that God's love for us is not something static or remote, but a share in the creative dynamism of Father, Son and Holy Spirit through an utterly unmerited and free act of giving. The Father wishes us to have life and have it to the full.

3. Nicodemus often gets a bad press as the disciple who only half-loved Jesus by night. But there is sufficient evidence of the courage of this man both before and after the death of Jesus (Jn 7, 50f; 19, 39). He is a slow and deliberate man, but there is evidence that he got there in the end. Jesus gently mocks his ultra caution (Jn 3, 10) but respects his need to understand before committing himself. Indeed, he draws out of

Jesus some of the most profound and succinct summaries of the gospel. Not exclusive and condemnatory like the Pharisees, Jesus has come into the world to save all.

FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI: A

26.05.05, Jn 6, 51-58

1. If Jesus had wanted to give us his physical flesh to eat and his physical blood to drink, could he have put it more plainly? The reaction of his audience to this shocking teaching gives a clear indication that they understood his words and intention to be wholly literal. Neither did Jesus attempt to allay their horror at his words or to act as a sop to their deep sense of scandal. The crowd turn against him (not for the last time) and walk away. These were not people who had been previously hostile to the Master. All this changed.

2. The Church insists on the use of the term 'transubstantiation' to describe the change that comes about in the elements at Mass. She insists that the whole substance of bread becomes the whole substance of the body of Christ, and that the whole substance of the wine becomes the whole substance of the blood of Christ. The elements retain the appearance of bread and wine, but what they are in themselves has changed into the physical body and blood of the Saviour by means of the words of consecration pronounced by a validly ordained Catholic priest.

3. Why should this be so? The answer is to feed us and sustain us in our Christian life. Jesus said that he would not leave us as orphans (Jn 14, 18), and he kept his promise in the most marvellous way through the Eucharist. We need to be fed by him as a child needs to be sustained by its mother's milk. There is no cannibalism, because we are not eating dead flesh, but rather the living flesh of the Word who dwells among us. This feast is about the

physical presence of God among us, drawing us to a deeper life in him.

9TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY

TIME: A

29.05.05, Mt 7, 21-27

1. Because faith is seen as something essentially irrational in our modern secular age, a massive gap has been allowed to develop between what a man believes and how he acts. Faith is insubstantial and lacking in mental grip or relevance, whereas how one acts must be dictated by real considerations such as economics, scientific advancement and government intervention. Jesus' words cut across such easy-sounding, self-serving cant as he insists on the essential connection between listening to the truth he speaks and acting on it. It is this that separates the sensible man from the stupid, not political correctness.

2. Jesus assures us that if we do not act on his commandments, we are heading for a mighty crash. Grand external appearances, much success and popular acclaim can hide shallow roots. In such circumstances the bigger we are, the harder we fall. Jesus' words give life. They have to be the rocky foundation that sustains our being, upon which we build up the sure house of a sound character and mature personality. Between the house built on sand and the house built on rock there is no fence to sit on. We choose one or the other.

3. It is easy to fool oneself, and Our Lord assures us that many will do just that. His words are shocking, but they are nothing compared to the fright many will receive on Judgment Day who hear them with complacency and enthusiastic lip-service. We can take from God gifts of prophecy, power over unclean spirits and even the ability to work miracles and attribute it all to our essential worthiness and sheer ability. We are not judged on how we sculpt our speeches and witticisms, but on the charity we show to the

poor and neglected, the marginalized and uncool.

10TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY

TIME: A

05.06.05, Mt 9, 9-13

1. One of the reasons Jesus transferred his Gallilean ministry from Nazareth, his home town, to Capernaum was that the latter was a busy frontier town. Nazareth was an inland backwater, but Capernaum boasted a garrison to keep order and a customs house to regulate trade. The synagogue in the town was a magnificent structure beyond the norm for the area. It had been built by the Roman centurion whose faith had astounded Jesus and whose words are recalled at Mass: "Lord, I am not worthy..." (Lk 7, 1-10). Taxes in Capernaum were extorted beyond the going rate by collectors more hated than the Romans themselves.

2. Caravaggio's painting of the Calling of Matthew conveys all the drama of this extraordinary event. Jesus and Matthew are worlds apart and occupy separate sides of the canvas, with Matthew in the gloomy shadows and the beckoning Jesus in the natural light of the doorway. Matthew is not even looking at Jesus, so absorbed is he in counting money. If Jesus had had an image consultant or spin doctor, they would have left his company immediately. No cause could survive the trauma of being associated with a tax collector, but Jesus knows what he is about and stares straight at the unsuspecting Matthew.

3. Not spin doctor, but sin doctor. Jesus no more approves of what Matthew does than anyone else. In calling the tax collector to follow him, he is drawing him to a new way of life: "It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick" (Mt 9, 12). Jesus sits at table with sinners. In doing this he exposes the spiritual pride of the religious elite, not in any overtly humiliating way but in the form of an invitation to abandon the

isolation of the higher moral ground for a better way: "What I want is mercy, not sacrifice" (Ho 6, 6 quoted in Mt 9, 13).

11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY

TIME: A

12.06.05, Mt 9, 36 - 10, 8

1. Like Moses, whose care of the people of Israel proved too great a task for him alone (Ex 17, 13-26), Jesus sees the enormity of the work that confronts him. But, whereas Moses was in danger of being crushed by his labours, Jesus' heart overflows with compassion for his flock. There is no sense of weakness on Jesus' part in Matthew's account of the commissioning of the apostles. Rather, it is a response of overwhelming love and zeal for the task in hand. Jesus' love for the dejected townsfolk who flock to him causes him to share his labours. Such sharing continues to this day.

2. Authority and power exude from Christ. A key concept in this gospel, there is none of the sense of isolation and abandonment in Matthew's treatment of Jesus that can be detected in Mark's corresponding account of Jesus' public ministry. Jesus is always in control in Matthew's writing, and his is very much the gospel of apostolic service. The work of the Church is paramount, and much of the central sections of the gospel are concerned with the instruction of the apostles for the work of mission (eg. Mt 10, 1-42). The Master instructs his pupils and empowers them for a work of service in the Church.

3. "You received without charge, give without charge" (Mt 10, 8). Any tax collector who can record such a saying has clearly undergone a profound conversion of heart. Literally translated this phrase could be rendered, "You received as a free gift, give as a free gift". The Lord demands nothing of us that he has not poured into us in the first place as the free expression of his

abundant and total love for us. He asks no more of us than that we do to others as has been done to us from the bounty of God's providential care.

12TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY
TIME: A
19.06.05, Mt 10, 26-33

1. The tone of confidence and authority that marks Jesus' activity throughout Matthew's gospel continues as he instructs his apostles for their work of bringing in the Kingdom of Heaven. "Do not be afraid.." (Mt 10, 26.28) is Jesus' constant refrain, which draws its power to encourage from the final, key phrase of the entire gospel: "Know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time " (Mt 28, 20). The Master is always in charge, and has won the victory for us. There is nothing to fear except fear itself, and Jesus disperses this like the sun that burns up the morning mist.

2. "...everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear " (Mt 10, 26). Jesus will guide the Church into the fullness of the truth. The implication in this exhortation is that the teaching authority of Christ will remain with the Church as he guides the barque of Peter through every change and development of doctrine. We can be reminded of Cardinal Newman's contention that the stronger an idea is, the greater will be its ability to adapt and develop. Paradoxically, the more unchanging a truth, the more susceptible it is to variation and adaptation to differing circumstances.

3. The struggle with the spiritual forces of darkness is at the centre of Jesus' mission and work of salvation. A modern temptation is to see Jesus' goodness in merely social or ethical terms. But the overthrow of the powers of hell is at the centre of all his ministry and passion. Only in Matthew is the extraordinary account of the earthquake after the death of

Jesus (Mt 27, 51-54), and in no other gospel are there so many examples of miracles of deliverance from possession and the influence of evil spirits (Mt 4, 24; 8, 28ff; 9, 32ff; 12, 22ff; 17, 14ff). Thus, Jesus warns us here against the destructive power of Satan.

FEAST OF SS PETER AND PAUL
29.06.05, Mt 16, 13-19

1. Two Palestinian towns bore the name of Caesar at the time of Jesus. Caesarea Maritima by the north Galilean coast was infinitely more temperate and hospitable than the dry and dusty territory of Caesarea Philippi in the northern Palestinian area governed by the Tetrarch Philip. Caesarea Philippi was also an extremely rocky terrain, where any journeying would be slow and uncomfortable. A place less given to the production of prophetic statements could hardly be imagined. Yet God's thinking is not man's thinking, and it is this place that heralds the founding of the Church upon the rock of Peter's faith.

2. Matthew's account of Peter's profession of faith differs not so much in content as in detail from Mark's presentation of the same event (Mk 8, 27-30). Mark's account

trails away from Peter as he begins to remonstrate with Jesus, who has just prophesied his Passion (Mk 8, 32b-33). It is the isolated and misunderstood Messiah that Mark wishes to emphasize. Matthew focuses on Peter and outlines the particular charism that Christ bestows on the Prince of the Apostles. Peter will be the rock that does not fail, the touchstone of judgment whereby the voice of Jesus can be heard and understood without fear of error.

3. These extraordinary blessings received by Peter embarrass many exegetes who use Mark's account to cut away the inconvenient bits of Matthew, dismissing them as early Church propaganda. This view accepts as gospel the assumption that Mark was written before Matthew. It also assumes that the accounts are essentially antagonistic to one another. In fact, they marvellously complement each other and clearly illustrate the oft repeated observation that the gospels are four portraits of the same person, not four photographs. The different styles and emphasis of the evangelists are as evident as the fact that they write about the same events.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

It is significant that in St. John's Gospel life refers to the divine light which Christ communicates to us. We are called to enter into eternal life, that is to say, into the eternity of divine beatitude.

To warn us against the serious temptations threatening us, our Lord quotes the great saying of Deuteronomy: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Dt 8:3; cf. Mt 4:4). Even more, "life" is one of the most beautiful titles which the Bible attributes to God. He is the living God.

Pope John Paul II
To the Pontifical Academy of Sciences
October 22, 1996

book r e v i e w s



THE ROSARY IN SPACE AND TIME

by Ruth Rees

Gracewing, 140pp, £7.99

An intriguing title, this. Specifically, the words space and time refer to the time and place in which Mary and Jesus lived. As a Jewish convert, Ruth Rees came to the Faith, and to the Rosary in particular, with a lot of unanswered questions relating to her cultural and religious heritage. For example, what would it have been like for the Holy Family living in Roman-occupied Judea in the first century AD? How would Mary have travelled to visit Elizabeth? What traditional Jewish mourning customs would have been observed after the death of Jesus? Her quest for a deeper understanding of the day-to-day lives of Jesus and his disciples led her to realise that "it is impossible to experience the profundity of the Rosary - and pray it well and lovingly - without a close attachment to its original source: the New Testament."

This book, or rather the second half of it, is a result of that quest. There's a chapter for each mystery, including the mysteries of light. But first comes an illuminating discussion on prayer in which she makes the striking observation that our petitions can encompass the past and future as well as the present. "For instance, we have it within our spiritual power to pray for those who were martyred for the Faith in past centuries, so that their pain may have been lessened at the hour of their greatest suffering." I'd be interested to know what other readers make of this.

The deeper significance of the title becomes clear when Rees explores the inter-connectedness of all creation. She does this, rather

unusually, by linking the transcendent power of prayer with the principles of chaos theory and sub-atomic physics. I wasn't altogether convinced.

For example, in quantum physics the act of observing a particle affects the result of the observation (as she points out), but I don't see the similarity between making such an observation and praying for a particular intention. When we pray for someone, we begin with the assumption that they exist. For many physicists, though, there's no such thing as objective reality at the quantum level: a particle can't be said to exist until it's measured.

She also uses the famous 'butterfly effect', in which the flapping of a butterfly's wings can trigger a series of reactions that produce a hurricane thousands of miles away, to illustrate the way in which our seemingly insignificant prayers can achieve great things if offered in love. I liked this analogy better, though we have to remember that the physical world (at the macro level at least) is still a deterministic system, however chaotic it appears to be, while the world of prayer most certainly isn't.

More interestingly, perhaps, for readers of FAITH, is her description of Christ as "our spiritual unified field". The quest for a unified field theory, which would unite the four fundamental forces of matter in a single set of equations, is the Holy Grail of modern physics. Christ, though, is not a distant goal that may never be achieved, but "the complete answer to the deepest longings of the human soul." In FAITH we would go one further and say that Christ is the source and summit of the whole of creation, the master key to the meaning of the universe.

Rees ends her 'cosmic' odyssey by pondering the remarkable similarity between Stephen Hawking's thesis in his book *The Universe in a Nutshell* and the revelations given in 1373 to the great English mystic Dame Julian

of Norwich. "He showed me a little thing, the size of a hazelnut," wrote Dame Julian. "I looked upon it with the eye of my understanding, and thought, What may this be? I was answered in a general way, thus: 'It is all that is made.'" It took some 700 years for scientists to reach the same understanding. The difference is that God made it clear to Dame Julian that creation is an act of love, not of necessity.

In her final chapter, Rees asks what it would mean, theologically, if intelligent life were to be found in other solar systems. We should be overjoyed, she says, at this proof of God's glory in the immensity of his creation. She leaves us with a rather inspiring piece of speculation: "It was from an obscure region of a relatively unimportant part of the Middle East that Our Lord sent his disciples to preach his Gospel throughout the world. Is it not possible that God may have chosen our insignificant little planet, located on the outer rim of a huge galaxy, to be the Galilee of the cosmos?"

Ruth Rees deserves credit for writing such a stimulating, thought-provoking book. Short and simply written, it's an ideal gift for anyone seeking to enter more deeply into the mysteries of the Rosary.

Adrian Read
Honor Oak Park
London

MARRIAGE & GIFT: A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

by Josephine Robinson

St Pauls, 208pp, £8.95

Modern society is often deemed to be obsessed with many things. Love, power, sex, and greed, are just some of the subjects that are constantly in the media. Far less so these days do we hear about things that once were the bedrock of everyday life, namely trust, respect, humility, and of course marriage. The writer of this book,

Josephine Robinson, has therefore decided to write a guidebook for modern marriage, from a Catholic perspective.

Marriage & Gift, takes the reader through the steps that lead up to that sacrament, and then follows on with advice about the many facets of marriage, from children, to potential marital problems. She quotes from the teachings of the Catholic Church, such as *Gaudium et Spes*, on a whole range of issues from the sacramental nature of marriage to the importance of being open to new life. Her primary intention is to give practical advice to those who are about to get married, newlyweds or those who simply wish to learn more about marriage. I am in the middle category, and so I read her book with considerable interest.

The author, mother of three children, was educated at Oxford and the Open University. She has worked as a volunteer for several charities, and is currently chairman of the Association of Catholic Women. The result of her varied background is that she has a wide range of sources upon which to call. She quotes, either from her own experience or that of her friends, a substantial amount of advice that she wishes to pass on. We learn, for example, of the importance of including grandmothers in the raising of children. "New mothers should not be afraid of asking their mother, or mother-in-law, to look after the baby if they live fairly near."

When the author refers to other commentators on specialist subjects, such as the raising of children, she is quite precise in how she mentions them, and also from where their observations, or research, have originated. Not only does Robinson quote from Jane Feinmann's *Baby Blues*, for example, but she also provides an endnote from which the book can be traced. When dealing with such writers, Robinson is concise, easy to follow, and provides a good source of further information.

However, the same cannot be said for the whole of the book. I found the opening chapter, which is concerned with preparation for marriage, to be rudimentary. Its style is different from that of some of the later chapters, and is largely anecdotal. At one point in this chapter, she mentions that a child is less likely to run away from home if he or she has two parents who are married to each other. Given the number of children who have done that, whilst having those parents appeal on television for them to come home, I feel that she has taken too much of a simplistic approach to some areas.

Although this book is always easy to read, it is worryingly generalistic. On page 87, she informs us that "one of the most noticeable of women's abilities is that of building bridges." Although I am aware that there are, perhaps, more peace-makers amongst women than men, I am also aware of plenty of men, who do seek to get on with their fellow human beings, and some women

who do not! The most interesting part of the book for me was the discussion on the different types of love, as based upon the Greek model. The author therefore describes all four different types, from eros, or sexual and physical love, to agape, or the love which involves complete self-giving. In this chapter the author thus sets the nature of love in context, and goes on to point out that a marriage must be able to embrace all four of the different types, in order to be able to last, and ultimately prosper.

This part of the book is very good and also the later sections on the difficulties that a marriage can face, and the reassurance that the examples of the married saints can offer. For the young and any who do not have a reasonable grasp of the faith this book could be beneficial.

Chris Massey
Kirkham
Preston

MOTHER OF EVANGELISATION

Mary is the model of that maternal love which should inspire all who co-operate in the Church's apostolic mission for the rebirth of humanity. Therefore, "strengthened by the presence of Christ, the Church journeys through time toward the consummation of the ages and goes to meet the Lord who comes. But on this journey ... she proceeds along the path already trodden by the Virgin Mary."

To "Mary's mediation, wholly oriented toward Christ and tending to the revelation of his salvific power," I entrust the Church and, in particular, those who commit themselves to carrying out the missionary mandate in today's world. As Christ sent forth his apostles in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, so too, renewing that same mandate, I extend to all of you my apostolic blessing, in the name of the same Most Holy Trinity. Amen.

from *Redemptoris Missio*
John Paul II
7 December 1990

notes from across the

Atlantic

by Richard John Neuhaus

MIRACLES AND MEDICINE

Medical doctors are, all in all, quite seriously religious. This is reflected in a nationwide survey of more than a thousand physicians by the Louis Finkelstein Institute for Religious and Social Studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary, directed by Alan Mittleman. Seventy-four percent of doctors believe that miracles have occurred in the past and seventy-three percent believe they can occur today. Fifty-five percent say they have seen healings in their patients that defy medical explanation and that they consider miraculous. Fifty-nine percent say they pray for their patients. The report says physicians tend to be more religious than other professionals "perhaps because of their frequent involvement with matters of life and death". That will often do it. Christian doctors are more open to miracles than Jewish doctors. It says here, "Such differences do not indicate that Christians are more religious than Jews. They do indicate that Christians tend to be religious in a more traditional way, while Jews are religious in a liberal way." I'm thinking about it.

UNLIKELY BUSH SUPPORTERS

Tyler Golson is an American in Damascus who teaches the children of the Syrian upper class. He is also a Democrat who supported John Kerry and was surprised to discover that his students were enthusiastically backing Bush. This despite the fact that the U.S. has placed sanctions on Syria and accused it of being part of the terror nexus. Bush is, the students said, a good man, a strong leader and, most important, "a good Christian".

Golson reflects: "And thus I came to realise something that the Democrats could never admit: that there exists a support base for both the Republicans' domestic and foreign agenda among the very people we thought most opposed current U.S. policy. The cultural background and value systems which inform many of these young Arabs' outlook on the world mean they will always favour men like Bush over men like Kerry. The tenets of faith, family and, yes, 'moral issues' determine the overall political leanings of a considerable number of the Middle East's future leaders, in rejection of Democratic stump issues like increased liberalism, internationalism and scientific progress. Though Democrats are often quick to criticize their opponents for seeing the issues in stark black and white, 'us and them' terms, perhaps they ought to step back from their own obsession with 'red' and 'blue' dichotomies and recognise this nuance of Middle Eastern reality. Having a truly even-handed and practical approach to peace in the Arab world means realising that not everyone, and certainly not all of the elites in Arab society, sympathise with the anti-American movements taking place within their own ranks, and that these heartland Arabs could prove a valuable ally in future U.S.-Arab relations."

'CARING' SIDE OF PRO-ABORTIONISTS

After the November election, I speculated that some pro-abortionists will start thinking about modifying their pitch, perhaps by coming out in support of some limits on partial birth abortion. They could then present themselves as "moderately pro-choice" or even, with some linguistic sleight of hand, "moderately pro-life". Among the first out of the gate is Frances Kissling, founder and head of Catholics for a Free Choice (CFC), an

organisation that has received millions of dollars from Ford, Rockefeller and other major foundations to counter the influence of the Catholic Church on the life questions. Kissling, who is sometimes referred to as Frances Quisling, has written a long article in *Conscience*, CFC's magazine, "Is There Life After Roe? How to Think about the Foetus", in which she warns pro-choicers that they are losing the battle because they come across as callous and unfeeling toward the fate of the baby who is killed. Pro-choicers should, she says, "present abortion as a complex issue that involves loss—and be saddened by that loss". Eleanor Smeal, former head of NOW, is not persuaded. "I don't hear her saying that there is joy sometimes. I think if an eleven-year-old is pregnant, it's a great relief for her to have an abortion." Not that Smeal is prepared to limit abortion to troubled eleven-year-olds or, for that matter, to limit it at all. Lynn Paltrow, director of National Advocates for Pregnant Women, a New York-based pro-abortion group, is somewhat more sympathetic to Kissling's argument. "We definitely need a paradigm shift in the reproductive rights movement," she says. "We've done a terrible job of articulating our beliefs in terms of values." By values Paltrow means "protecting women from the consequences of being forced to carry unwanted pregnancies." As best I can make it out, she's saying that they've done a terrible job of articulating their support for abortion in terms of their support for abortion. In her article, Kissling says that pro-abortionists should not, for instance, reflexively fight the Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act, which would require women to be told about the pain experienced by the child being aborted. Kissling says the bill is an opportunity "to show that people can support the right to abortion and care about the foetus at the same time."

They can “honour both law and morality [by] trying to change the legislation to say that foetal anaesthesia should be respectfully offered as an option”. That is the consistent pro-choice position, giving the mother the choice of anaesthetising the baby before having the baby killed. As it happens, the worry of pro-abortionists about the perception that they are callous toward nascent human life is nothing new. The standard pro-abortion text on this is the 1977 book by Magda Denes, *In Necessity and Sorrow*. That was nearly thirty years ago, and over the years the delusion that an unlimited license to commit an unspeakable evil can be disguised or excused by a display of moral handwringing has become ever less convincing to ever more Americans.

COMPARISON OF VALUES

The “moral values” factor in last November’s election will keep the analysts busy for a long time. Here is some trivia grist to add to the research mills. According to *Brandweek*, the advertising magazine, a survey of a thousand Americans reveals that 24% of Democratic voters but only 20% of Republicans admit to having stolen a towel from a hotel. But that difference may be within the margin of error, or maybe Republicans are not as honest in admitting their wrongdoing.

More interesting is the finding that 23% of Republicans speak to their parents several times a week, compared with 14% of Democrats. 4% of Democrats say they never speak to their parents, compared with only 1% of Republicans. 40% of Democrats say they are on “very unfriendly” terms with their ex-wives or husbands, while only 18% of Republicans are. Perhaps pertinent to the “pro-family” agenda, 9% of Republicans have no brothers or sisters, while 14% of Democrats are without siblings. These are things I thought you might want to know.

APOLOGIES FROM AMERICAN ANGLICANS

A recent report stated that the bishops of the Episcopal Church, meeting for two days in Salt Lake City (an unlikely religio-cultural juxtaposition), wrestled with the recent Windsor Report on conflicts in the Anglican communion but were not able to come to a resolution. The Windsor Report wanted the Americans to apologise for installing as bishop a man who had left his wife and children to live with his male lover, countenancing the blessing of same-sex unions, and related offences. The Utah meeting expressed “sincere regret for the pain, the hurt and the damage caused to our Anglican bonds by certain actions of our church”. They very notably did not apologize for the certain actions. Said the U.S. presiding bishop Frank Griswold, “We perhaps have not been the most sensitive partners in terms of taking with full seriousness the integrity of other provinces and their struggles.” Perhaps. As Griswold and other Episcopal leaders have suggested on many occasions, the main struggle of Anglicans in Africa and Asia is in growing up and following the example of their American betters in accepting the changed sexual mores of the modern world.

BEING OPEN TO ID

Once again on intelligent design (ID). Professor Terry Noel of California State University writes in the *Wall Street Journal*: “The reason most scientists reject ID is that it fails to add anything to our understanding. Placing any kind of ‘super-intelligence’ in our explanatory chain of the origins of life simply puts the final question off. If one proposes that some kind of intelligence is behind it all, then one must in all fairness inquire into the origins of that intelligence and so on, an infinite regression.” This is a bit of a puzzle. If one concludes that the evidence

suggests ID, then it certainly adds to one’s understanding if one previously thought the evidence did not suggest ID. It follows that one would then reject the rejection of ID. Inquiring into the origins and nature of that intelligence may take one into questions usually described as philosophical and theological rather than scientific. In that case, one either accepts a more humble notion of what can be known by scientific methodology or expands the definition of scientific methodology to encompass all considerations pertinent to the inquiry at hand. Both possibilities are repugnant to many scientists, who therefore reject ID. A livelier scientific curiosity, one is inclined to think, might lead not to infinite regress but to progress toward the infinite. But Prof. Noel may be right: most scientists have made up their minds and decline to think seriously about evidence and arguments suggesting that they may be wrong. That, too, may change, albeit very slowly.

WHAT ARE MUSEUMS FOR?

Identity politics, it seems, has now invaded the museum world. At the Smithsonian’s new National Museum of the American Indian, the general public is permitted to view only some of the material in the collection. Other artifacts can be seen only by people from a specific tribe. Marian Kaminitz, head of conservation, says that native peoples should be the curators, “because they know the material best, as it is the material of their culture. We respect their concerns and interpret the material through what they see as appropriate rather than as a dominating voice from outside the culture.” Indians may in some cases be the best authorities on Indian culture, although, as many scholars have pointed out, American Indian culture as currently admired is in large part the product of non-Indian mythmaking, not least of all by

Hollywood. The more important point is that the very idea of the modern museum is founded on a distinctly Western belief that knowledge is universal and a distinctly Western eagerness to learn from other cultures. The Smithsonian is in the odd position—although by no means alone in the odd position—of undermining its own rationale for being. Perhaps the magnificent collections of medieval art in our great museums should be entrusted to the exclusive care and interpretation of devout Christians, or maybe just devout Catholics. Extend the logic to Egyptian, Chinese and other collections. Or maybe all the stuff should be shipped back to their original owners, as the Greeks demand with respect to the Elgin marbles at the British Museum. Then the museums could all go out of business, leaving the future's understanding of the past in the hands of their ethnic-ideological custodians. Somebody at the Smithsonian needs to get a grip.

HOLLYWOOD POLITICS

The mind of Hollywood, if one may be permitted the expression, wants to be scrupulously fair and balanced. Much was made of the fact that, when it came to the Academy Awards, Hollywood eschewed giving serious consideration to "controversial" films of both the left and the right, meaning Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* and Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*. Mr. Moore's film, as he repeatedly and proudly declared, was an unabashed piece of partisan propaganda aimed at discrediting and defeating George W. Bush. As movie critic Michael Medved observes, it has the lasting artistic significance of a faded bumper sticker from a failed election campaign. *The Passion*, by way of contrast, is totally nonpolitical and will almost certainly be viewed as a classic, watched by appreciative audiences for many years into the future. Contrary to Hollywood bias, it

is neither conservative nor right-wing within the meaning of our current political polarisations, having earned \$370 million in domestic box office sales in 2004 by drawing huge crowds in states both red and blue. By rejecting both Moore and Gibson, the entertainment mandarins were

able to pose as centrists, and were thus free to heap awards on films sympathetically depicting "non-controversial" causes such as abortion (*Vera Drake*) and mercy killing (*Million Dollar Baby*, *The Sea Inside*).

CHRIST THE FULFILLMENT OF ALL RELIGION

Christianity has its starting point in the incarnation of the Word. Here it is not simply a case of man seeking God, but of God who comes in person to speak to man of himself and to show him the path by which he may be reached. This is what is proclaimed in the Prologue of John's Gospel: "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (1:18). The incarnate Word is thus the fulfillment of the yearning present in all the religions of mankind: This fulfillment is brought about by God himself and transcends all human expectations. It is the mystery of grace.

In Christ, religion is no longer a "blind search for God" (cf. Acts 17:27) but the response of faith to God who reveals himself. It is a response in which man speaks to God as his Creator and Father, a response made possible by that one man who is also the consubstantial Word in whom God speaks to each individual person and by whom each individual person is enabled to respond to God. What is more, in this man all creation responds to God. Jesus Christ is the new beginning of everything. In him all things come into their own; they are taken up and given back to the Creator from whom they first came. Christ is thus the fulfillment of the yearning of all the world's religions and, as such, he is their sole and definitive completion.

Just as God in Christ speaks to humanity of himself, so in Christ all humanity and the whole of creation speaks of itself to God—indeed, it gives itself to God. Everything thus returns to its origin. Jesus Christ is the recapitulation of everything (cf. Eph. 1:10) and at the same time the fulfillment of all things in God: a fulfillment which is the glory of God. The religion founded upon Jesus Christ is a religion of glory; it is a newness of life for the praise of the glory of God (cf. Eph. 1:12). All creation is in reality a manifestation of his glory. In particular, man (*vivens homo*) is the epiphany of God's glory, man who is called to live by the fullness of life in God.

from Tertio Millennio Adveniente
John Paul II
14 November 1994

cutting/edge

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

BOYLE LECTURE 2005

2004 saw the revival of the Boyle Lecture series, which originated in 1691 by a legacy from the celebrated scientist and Christian, Robert Boyle. The 2005 lecturer was Professor Simon Conway-Morris, professor of evolutionary palaeobiology at the University of Cambridge. He has already written on matters of faith in the debate surrounding the evolution of life on earth, especially in his latest book, *Life's Solution: Inevitable Humans in a Lonely Universe*. In his Boyle Lecture 2005, *Darwin's Compass: How Evolution Discovers the Song of Creation*, given the Anglican church of St Mary-le-Bow in the City of London, he again addresses the question of evolution pointing to the mind of the Creator. He argues against atheistic Darwinism from the facts of evolutionary convergence: "The central point is that, because organisms arrive repeatedly at the same biological solution... this provides not only a degree of predictability, but more intriguingly points to a deeper structure to life ..." His viewpoint is quite clear: "Metric-sized animals that are the end-result of many billions of years of prior stellar and biological evolution may be the only way to allow at least one species to begin its encounter with God. ... As has been made clear, the viewpoint within orthodox Darwinism is agreed and uncontroversial: humans are an accident of evolution because *everything* produced by evolution is strictly incidental to the process. Accordingly, humans are as fortuitous as a tapeworm, and by implication no more — or less — interesting. ... I would argue that the study of evolution itself already hints that to reduce all to the accidental and

incidental may turn out to be a serious misreading of the evidence." A link to the whole text of this fascinating lecture can be found at:

<http://www.stmarylebow.co.uk/news/boyle2005.htm>

'STOQ' PRESS

An exciting project which has come to fruition in Rome since the Jubilee Year's May 2000 conference entitled the 'Jubilee of Men and Women from the World of Learning' is the 'STOQ' initiative. The programme, 'Science, Theology & the Ontological Quest' was begun in 2003 as by three of the pontifical universities of Rome under the auspices of the Pontifical Council for Culture and sponsored by the John Templeton foundation. The present phase of STOQ is for three academic years, from 2003–2006, and is presently in its second year. Courses may be taken at any or all of the participating universities, the Gregorian, the Lateran and the Athanaeum 'Regina Apostolorum.' Recently three other universities have made links with the STOQ project, Santa Croce University, the 'Angelicum' University of St Thomas, and the Salesian University. Under the guidance of Cardinal Paul Poupard, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture, and a Programme Committee, along with directors of the project in each of the participating universities, the STOQ programme offers a very wide experience of interdisciplinary courses in science, philosophy and faith. Given that some two-thirds of the Church's bishops, a great proportion of the Roman Curia and many of the world's seminary professors have studied in the Roman Pontifical universities, the STOQ project is seen to be crucial as a way of educating the Church to understand better the contribution of the Church to science, the need for the Church's dialogue with the world of the scientist, and the insights the Church can gain from the findings of modern science. The organisers of

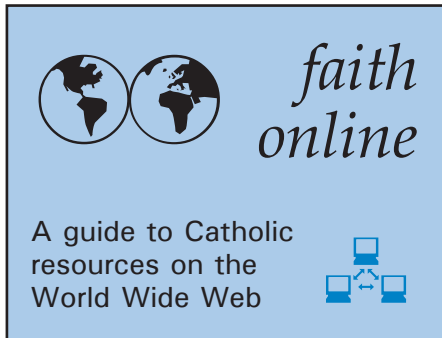
STOQ realise that only by re-educating the Catholic world to engage with modern science can progress be made. The aims of STOQ are:

1. The integration of scientific and human values: "The double goal of the STOQ Project is to contribute, through the academic activities (teaching and research) of its partners: (i) to the advancement of science, in order to stress its compatibility with the highest moral values, also in view of encouraging the new generations, particularly sensitive today to the humanistic implications of science, to embrace scientific study, research and work; (ii) to the reinforcement of the connections between science, philosophy and theology, in order to testify that the ultimate finality of science is humanity and its whole welfare, of which essential components are the intellectual, the ethical and the religious elevation of each human person."

2. Science–religion relationship: "All the Partners of STOQ share, within the common Christian faith, some basic ideas as to the role of science in its relationship with religion. The main shared convictions are: (i) that science should serve the cause of progress and of humanity, in the whole sense of these two terms; (ii) that the human destiny in the universe is the most important quest, and to clarify this point is the ultimate goal not only of religion, but also of science, in their unending search for truth. Humans are indeed a part of the universe, and the universe receives its sense by the presence of intelligent agents in it, such as humans are, by a precise willing of God the Creator."

The mission of the STOQ programme and the courses available within it can be seen at:

www.stoqnet.org



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

SPUC

The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children has a new, professionally redesigned web-site. It is a great improvement, with easily accessible resources, including a page about the U.K. General Election and relevant parliamentary documents. This refurbished online presence will surely assist many more to benefit from its vital experience and vision.

www.spuc.org.uk

NEW SAINTS OF THE EUCHARIST

BI Charles de Foucauld

Famous for his Eucharistic Adoration as a hermit in the Algerian desert, Charles was alone when he was murdered in 1916. However, there are now 19 different movements of fraternities inspired by him, in 80 countries: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies..." He is due to be beatified on May 15th.

http://www.charlesdefoucauld.org/en/biogra_en

BI Edward Poppe

This young Belgian priest poured out his life caring for the sick, but especially working with the young. He insisted that the latter should be challenged with the full gospel message of perfection, drawing their strength from love of the Eucharist. He died in 1924, aged 33, and was beatified in 1999. www.childrenofhope.org/poppe

St Katharine Drexel

Foundress of the Blessed Sacrament Sisters in 1891, she worked to improve the lives of native and Black Americans especially by opening and staffing schools and colleges for them. She died in 1955 and was canonised in the year 2000.

www.katharinedrexel.org/summary.html

WITNESS OF PRAYER

1500 young adults came together in London in January, praying in Westminster Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. The mission was the brainchild of a vibrant young monastic community called the Fraternity of Jesus, from Valledara in Italy.

www.jesusthefullnessoflife.org

SHRINES OF IRELAND

The pilgrim centre of Knock has a rather smart site, recounting the events of 21st August 1879. It provides a testimony of one of the witnesses, a virtual tour of the buildings and a pilgrim guide.

www.knock-shrine.ie

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