

faith

July and August 2014
Volume 46 Number 4
Price £4.50

PROMOTING A NEW SYNTHESIS
OF FAITH AND REASON

100 Days: The Papacy and the Family

Editorial

What I Want is Mercy, Not Sacrilege: The Dangers of “Routine Communions”

Fr Timothy Finigan

Marriage: A Divine Adventure – Building a family on the foundations of heritage, humanity and home

Msgr Cormac Burke

What has Ethiopia to Teach us?

Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali

What is Baptism?

Joanna Bogle

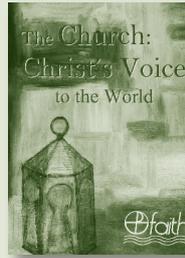
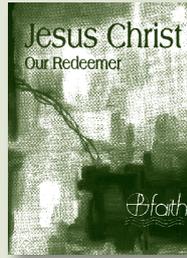
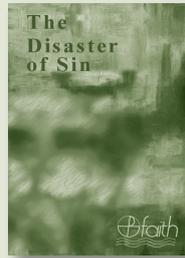
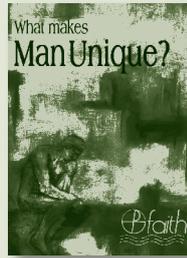
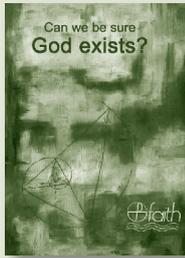
Gaining Ground: The Pro-Life Movement on Campus

Niall O Coinleáin

Gregory Farrelly on Alzheimer's research and nuclear fusion
Letters on Christ's risen body, marriage and nullity, Aquinas and Sartre
William Oddie on John Cornwell's attack on confession

Plus book reviews on evangelisation, the possibility of universal salvation,
the Church and the sexual revolution, and how to understand the Mass

A special series of pamphlets from *Faith Movement*



REASONS FOR BELIEVING

Straightforward, up to date and well argued pamphlets on basic issues of Catholic belief, this new series will build into a single, coherent apologetic vision of the Christian Mystery. They bring out the inner coherence of Christian doctrine and show how God's revelation makes sense of our own nature and of our world. Five excellent pamphlets in the series are now in print.

Can we be sure God exists?

What makes Man unique?

The Disaster of Sin

Jesus Christ Our Saviour

Jesus Christ Our Redeemer

The Church:

Christ's Voice to the World

To order please write to Sr Roseann Reddy, Faith-Keyway Trust Publications Office,
104 Albert Road, Glasgow G42 8DR or go to www.faith.org.uk



faith summer conference

Monday 4th August-Friday 8th August 2014

A five-day conference for young Catholics aged 16-35. The format of the five days provides an excellent balance of social, spiritual and catechetical activities.

Venue: **Woldingham School, Surrey**

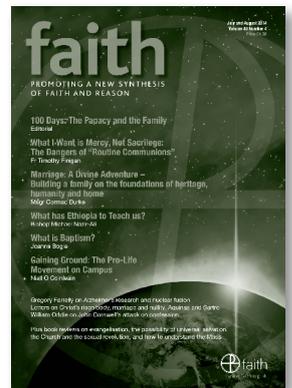
Full cost: **£165**

Concession cost: **£140**

Contact: **Ann McCallion Tel: 0141 945 0393 • Email: mccallionfaith@aol.com • Full details: www.faith.org.uk**

Contents

- 02 100 Days: The Papacy and the Family**
Editorial
- 04 What I Want is Mercy, Not Sacrilege: The Dangers of “Routine Communions”**
Fr Timothy Finigan
- 08 Marriage: A Divine Adventure –
Building a family on the foundations of heritage, humanity and home**
Msgr Cormac Burke
- 12 What has Ethiopia to Teach us?**
Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali
- 14 What is Baptism?**
Joanna Bogle
- 18 Gaining Ground: The Pro-Life Movement on Campus**
Niall O Coinleáin



Regular Columns

- 11 Cutting Edge**
Gregory Farrelly explains what recent research into areas as disparate as Alzheimer's disease and nuclear fusion can teach us about the “ecosystem” of nature and spirit
- 20 Book Reviews**
Philip Egan and Richard Whinder on two important contributions to the new evangelisation; Hayley Tomlinson on an inspiring collection of essays on women, sex and the Church; Ian Vane on a helpful study guide on the liturgical links between the Old Testament and the Mass
- 24 Letters**
Christ's physical presence, marriage annulment and the body-soul-spirit debate
- 26 Comment on the Comments**
William Oddie on the polemics of John Cornwell and why he's a favourite with the secular press

Executive Editor c/o 106 Dixon Avenue, Glasgow G42 8ER, editor@faith.org.uk

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

Book Reviews Andrew Nash, andrew.j.nash@gmail.com

Advertising Manager Scott Deeley, c/o Holy Cross, 11 Bangholm Loan, Edinburgh EH5 3AH, advertising@faith.org.uk

Subscriptions and Faith-Keyway Trust Publications Office Sr Roseann Reddy, 104 Albert Road, Glasgow G42 8DR, subscriptions@faith.org.uk

UK £25/year, Europe (inc Eire) £29/€37/year.

Surface Mail overseas £28/\$56/€36/year.

Air Mail overseas £33/\$66/€42/year.

Student rate £17/\$34/€22/year.

Single copies £5 inc. p&p. Bulk orders £3.50 plus p&p.

Published by the Faith-Keyway Trust, registered charity No. 278314.

Printed by Tudor Printing 01772 633098, ISSN 1356-126X.

faith

July and August 2014
Volume 46 Number 4

100 Days: The Papacy and the Family

Editorial

The Synod of Bishops on the Family begins at the Vatican in approximately 100 days. The prophetic voice of recent popes can provide those gathering in Rome with a consistent, clear and coherent vision of marriage and the family.

October 11th 1962. The solemn opening of the Second Vatican Council. His Holiness Pope John XXIII gives not one but two speeches. The first is a theologically dense but hugely important address to the Council Fathers. Today this speech is largely forgotten. The second comes later in the day, an informal talk from the window of the papal apartments looking out over the crowds gathered in St Peter's Square. This was Good Pope John's "moonlight address". In it he told his audience: "When you head home, find your children. Hug and kiss your children and tell them 'this is the hug and kiss of the Pope'." What is it about these words that so touched the hearts of the Catholic faithful and many others, then and now?

By invoking the parent-child relationship, there was an implicit appeal to the intrinsic goodness and attractiveness of the family. The world loved Good Pope John because he was saying: "I am with you in your families. I hug your children with you." He identified himself with the family and, from Heaven, the recently canonised Pope Saint John XXIII still does. No doubt he is even now interceding for parents and children all across the world.

This papal identification with, and concern for, the family did not end with Pope John XXIII. Quite the opposite. His immediate successor, Pope Paul VI, presided over the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, which gave to the Church many profound teachings on the importance of the family. The centrality of the family is underlined in many of the Council's documents, including *Lumen Gentium* and *Apostolicam Actuositatem*. Above all, though, Paul VI's concern and care for the family is expressed at length in the Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, which notes that "the well-being of the individual person and of human and Christian society is intimately linked with the healthy condition of that community produced by marriage and family". The document goes on to speak of "the excellence of this institution" and "its superlative value" (GS 47). Having recognised the value of marriage, in the subsequent paragraphs (48-52) it expands upon the Church's understanding of marriage:

The intimate partnership of married life and love has been established by the Creator and qualified by His laws, and is rooted in the conjugal covenant of irrevocable personal consent. Hence, by that human act whereby spouses mutually bestow and accept each other, a relationship arises which by divine will and in the eyes of society too is a lasting one. For the good of the spouses and their off-spring, as well as of society, the existence of the sacred bond no longer depends on human decisions alone. For God Himself is the author of matrimony, endowed as it is with various

benefits and purposes. All of these have a very decisive bearing on the continuation of the human race, on the personal development and eternal destiny of the individual members of a family, and on the dignity, stability, peace and prosperity of the family itself and of human society as a whole. By their very nature, the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children, and find in them their ultimate crown. Thus a man and a woman, who by their compact of conjugal love "are no longer two, but one flesh" (Matt 19:6), render mutual help and service to each other through an intimate union of their persons and of their actions. Through this union they experience the meaning of their oneness and attain to it with growing perfection day by day. As a mutual gift of two persons, this intimate union and the good of the children impose total fidelity on the spouses and argue for an unbreakable oneness between them. (GS 48)

Gaudium et Spes therefore stresses marriage not simply as a human convention. It has been "established by the creator" and is "qualified by His laws". In fact, "God Himself is the author of matrimony". This implies that we human beings do not have the ability or right to change or manipulate this immutable and eternal reality based upon our own desire, whims or peccadilloes. In the 11th century King Canute attempted to hold back the waves to demonstrate that even regal power could not trump the laws of nature. Any contemporary attempt to redefine the meaning of marriage – whether by socially liberal politicians or misguided clerics – strikes a similarly ridiculous and pathetic pose. The damage to the common good, however, is infinitely more alarming.

The God-given features of the institution of marriage are detailed in *Gaudium et Spes*. First, it is based on "irrevocable personal consent" and, once this consent is given, God ratifies the bond of marriage such that "the existence of the sacred bond no longer depends on human decisions alone". Hence there exists in the lifetime of a husband and wife "an unbreakable oneness between them". Second, this union between them "impose[s] total fidelity on the spouses". Third, "the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children, and find in them their ultimate crown". Finally, "through this union they [the spouses] experience the meaning of their oneness and attain to it with growing perfection day by day". In synthesis, the institution of marriage, while constituted by the "personal consent" of the spouses, is nonetheless more than a purely human convention. Matrimony is willed by God as a life-long, exclusive, faithful relationship between a man and a woman that, as a minimum requirement, is open to the possibility of the procreation of new lives. God wills that spouses find their fulfilment within this union.

“In his ‘Theology of the Body’ Pope John Paul II enters into a profound theological meditation on the meaning of what it is to be male and female”

Because marriage is a good willed by God, the council document also notes that “Christ the Lord abundantly blessed this many-faceted love” (GS 48). Further, what God has created and willed as good is caught up through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ into a new and higher reality. For baptised Christians, marriage becomes a sacrament by which God gives special helps to spouses to live out their married vocation:

Authentic married love is caught up into divine love and is governed and enriched by Christ’s redeeming power and the saving activity of the Church, so that this love may lead the spouses to God with powerful effect and may aid and strengthen them in their sublime office of being a father or a mother. For this reason Christian spouses have a special sacrament by which they are fortified and receive a kind of consecration in the duties and dignity of their state. (GS 48)

After John XIII and Paul VI, the cause of the family was adopted and embraced by Pope John Paul II. From 1978 onwards, he gave the Second Vatican Council’s vision of marriage an intellectually solid foundation that was continuous with the Church’s traditional teaching but that also integrated modern advances in the fields of anthropology, sociology and philosophy.

“It is surely providential that Pope Francis has chosen to focus on the family at this time in history”

Cardinal Carlo Caffarra, a close collaborator with Pope John Paul II, tells an anecdote that highlights the importance of the family to the recently canonised pontiff. Despite all his great scholarly works, and his political achievements in helping to bring about the fall of communism, John Paul II gave an instant response when once asked how he would like posterity to remember him: as the Pope of the family.

The family was, indeed, Pope John Paul II’s central preoccupation. From September 1979 he began to use his General Audience to catechise on the nature of human loving. These weekly sessions ran for another 133 weeks and now form the basis for what is known as the *Theology of the Body*. It is the exchange between Jesus and the religious authorities on marriage (Mt 19:3ff; Mk 10:2ff) that Pope John Paul II takes as his point of departure. When asked about the possibility of marriage Our Lord refuses to enter into the question at the level of legalistic prescriptions. Instead, he says: “Have you not read how in the *beginning* God created them male and female?”

Thus Pope John Paul takes up Christ’s approach of going back to the beginning, back to God’s original intention for humanity, created as male and female. In this way he enters into a profound theological meditation on the meaning of

what it is to be male and female. Within this context of the complementarity of the sexes he explores the meaning of the human body and human sexuality.

Against an aggressively secular world view that reduces human sexuality to the merely biological, or to no more than the acting out of purely subjective preferences, John Paul II reflects on human sexuality within the context of human loving and in the light of the Creator’s intention. From this reflection emerges an anthropology that is grounded in the dignity of the human person and which provides the philosophical foundations for the Church’s teaching on marriage and family life.

Similarly, Pope Francis too has chosen to make marriage and the family one of his chief concerns. There are contemporary challenges to be met. In our ephemeral and sexually permissive society there are many temptations that work against the ideal of the married family. Economic factors often create stress and put pressure on relationships. The demands of work may mean we have to live away from our loved ones or eat into the time we are able to spend with them.

Moreover, many outside the Church do not share our values. Many of these are in positions of influence in the media, higher education and government. From these cultural wellsprings stems open hostility to the values and way of life the Church proposes. This animus is not confined to those outside the Church. Many within also remain to be convinced of the Gospel of family life.

It is surely providential that Pope Francis has chosen to focus on the family at this time in history. It is surely providential that in the run-up to the Extraordinary Synod on the Family we have seen raised to the altars two great popes who both identified themselves with the family and courageously upheld the fullness of the Church’s teaching on the family. Indeed, it now seems that Pope Paul VI will be beatified in October.

Certainly there are challenges. We meet these challenges, though, intellectually well equipped thanks to the patrimony left to us by Popes John XXII, Paul VI and John Paul II. They have given us the teaching of Christ and his Church enshrined anew in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, with freshly laid philosophical and anthropological foundations.

While it is greatly to be desired that the Extraordinary Synod on the Family will provide us with new and creative ways to face up to the challenges of our time, we already know what Christ and his Church teaches. Moreover, in the anthropology of Saint John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body* we have a framework to describe the consonance between our human nature and God’s designs for us. The Church’s teaching on marriage is truly good news. It is the Gospel of family life. 

What I Want is Mercy, Not Sacrilege: The Dangers of “Routine Communion”

By Fr Timothy Finigan

For someone who believes in the grace of the sacrament, it is a great trial to be unable to receive Holy Communion. Unfortunately, receiving Holy Communion now seems to have become a prize to be fought over. The current discussion over the pastoral care of the divorced and remarried focuses on their being permitted to receive Holy Communion, as a means of recognising, tolerating or approving their state of life. In another example earlier this year, Bishop Philip Egan of Portsmouth quite properly explained that politicians who vote in favour of abortion or same-sex marriage, thus demonstrating a lack of communion with the Church, should not receive Holy Communion.

Conor Burns MP publicly described this as a lack of welcome, something hurtful to him. Bishop Egan was hung out to dry with indecent haste when Greg Pope, head of parliamentary relations for the Bishops’ Conference, wrote to MPs saying that there were no plans to deny Holy Communion to those who voted in favour of same-sex marriage. One is left wondering how long it will be before the European Court of Human Rights issues an edict safeguarding the right of pro-abortion MPs to march up to the altar rail, and whether Bishop Egan will be left alone *contra mundum* in opposing it.

Why Focus on Just One Group?

What seems to be forgotten is that there are actually many people whose state of life is such that they may not receive Holy Communion, not only the divorced and remarried. When parishioners come to arrange the baptism of their baby, a pastorally minded priest will enquire about the union of the parents. Many are cohabiting without being



Next month marks the centenary of the death of Pope Saint Pius X, the great papal promoter of frequent communion. While infinite graces have flowed from this pious practice, Tim Finigan now assesses the dangers that can arise when the Eucharist is viewed as a human prize rather than a divine privilege.

married, others were married civilly in a hotel or on a beach somewhere. I used to be sceptical about claims not to be aware of the Church’s law, but when the grandmothers began to protest that they did not know that Catholics were bound to celebrate their marriage in Church and that a merely civil marriage was invalid, I had to admit that our Catholic education and catechesis had indeed failed to that degree, and that the ignorance was genuine.

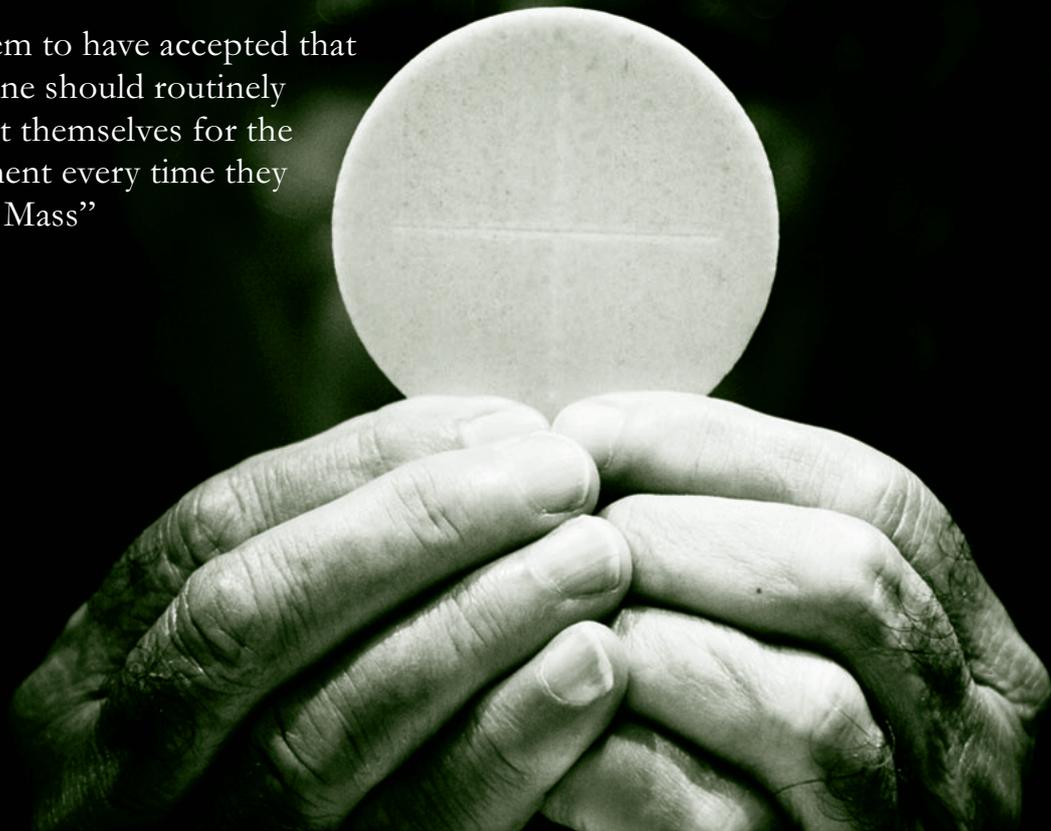
The priest can explain that a quiet wedding in the Church need not cost very much, or, in the case of invalid civil marriages, that a convalidation or *sanatio in radice* (a retrospective decree of validation from the bishop) can be easily arranged. In both cases, it needs to be pointed out tactfully that the Catholic partner should not receive Holy Communion until things have been put right.

Cases of cohabitation and of a merely civil marriage are far more common than cases of divorce and remarriage. There are very many couples in our parishes who have chosen, or drifted into, a state of life which is incompatible with receiving Holy Communion.

When applying to Catholic schools in England, parents are asked to fill in a supplementary form regarding their Catholicity. The form often asks: “Do you attend Mass: weekly, most weeks, occasionally, or never?” It would be more instructive to ask: “Do you neglect the grave obligation to attend Sunday Mass: never, sometimes, often, or always?” There are still some good Catholics who become scrupulous about having missed Mass when there was a reasonable excusing cause, such as illness, lengthy travel or the care of the sick, but far more common is the

“There are very many couples in our parishes who have chosen, or drifted into, a state of life incompatible with receiving Holy Communion”

“We seem to have accepted that everyone should routinely present themselves for the sacrament every time they attend Mass”



lack of any sense that there is a grave obligation to assist at Mass on days of precept and that it is a sin to miss Mass without a good reason. Once again, there is a large group of Catholics for whom it is necessary to explain that coming to Holy Communion requires living in accord with the Church’s teaching.

We also seem to have settled into the assumption that nobody ever commits a mortal sin and that St Paul was speaking in purely hypothetical terms when he warned against receiving Holy Communion unworthily (1 Cor 11:27). Addictive sins, particularly sexual sins, seem to have been given a free pass. It is assumed that full consent is lacking because of the force of habit, though perhaps the damage caused by internet pornography might give us occasion to rethink. Most men could see without too much persuasion that looking at pornography and masturbating are incompatible with receiving Holy Communion without first obtaining sacramental reconciliation with God and the Church.

By seeking the sacrament of penance before receiving Holy Communion again, such men could be helped in their firm purpose of amendment, and their struggle with a damaging compulsion, both by being reminded of the need for serious and sincere repentance, and by experiencing the joy of receiving the Lord with a heart that has been purified by the grace of God.

Routine Communions

Rather than take the difficult pastoral road of reminding people that there are circumstances in which some change needs to be made before receiving Holy Communion, we seem to have accepted that everyone should routinely present themselves for the sacrament every time they attend Mass. One of the insidiously damaging aspects of the present debate about the divorced and remarried is the failure to say anything about the proper dispositions required for a non-sacrilegious communion, and the general acquiescence in everyone coming up to receive the Eucharist regardless of their state of life, state of soul, or faith in the real presence.

There are some exceptions: the usual suspects from new movements, traditionalist groups and families who live the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* ask for confession, and abstain from Holy Communion if they have broken the Eucharistic fast or if they are aware of having committed a serious sin. They do not go around complaining about how hurt they are because of this, or how unwelcome they feel; and their spiritual life tends to be healthy.

At weddings, funerals, first Communions and Confirmations, many priests will try to give some guidance on who may present themselves for Holy Communion. A while back, I made a passing remark that I found to be surprisingly effective. After explaining that it is practising

What I Want is Mercy, Not Sacrilege: The Dangers of “Routine Communion” continued

Catholics, living in accord with the teaching of the Church and attending Sunday Mass every week who go to Communion, I added that there are always plenty of people who, for various reasons, cannot receive Communion and so there is no need to be embarrassed about remaining in the bench. My hunch was correct: at those public occasions, if you do not explain that there are required dispositions for Holy Communion, people will come up simply to be polite, in case it might be rude not to. Such is the result of our failing to educate the faithful on the proper dispositions for Holy Communion.

The Catechesis That is Needed

The impact of explaining to people, however diplomatically, that they should not receive Holy Communion until they have made certain changes in their life is aggravated by a failure of catechesis generally, and catechesis on Holy Communion in particular. Obviously the first and fundamental truth to emphasise is the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist in the fully Catholic sense, stressing that the Eucharist is not bread, blessed bread, or super-blessed bread but the body, blood, soul and divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

This truth is emphasised by the reverent use of external signs of devotion and particularly by the practice of kneeling to receive communion. We should also not shy away from giving gentle but persistent encouragement to receive Holy Communion on the tongue. Bishop Schneider’s celebrated short book *Dominus est: It is the Lord!* is most helpful in marshalling the historical and theological arguments in favour of these practices.

Priests who speak on these matters will probably be confronted by the protest “Are you saying that I am being irreverent by standing and receiving communion in the hand?” It is time that we stopped caving in to this childish passive aggression, in favour of helping the majority of ordinary faithful to benefit from external signs of reverence that they quickly recognise as helping reinforce belief in the real presence.

Catechesis on Holy Communion should not be limited to the real presence. We also need to speak of the grace given in Holy Communion and the awesome privilege of receiving our Blessed Lord. Holy Communion unites us with Christ more intimately than any other act, it separates us from venial sin and fortifies us to resist temptation. It strengthens us to carry out works of charity and to evangelise, and it is a pledge of future glory and a foretaste of the heavenly banquet.

Preparation and Thanksgiving

Routine communions are also associated with a lack of any preparation or thanksgiving. All Catholics, priest and bishops included, need to examine themselves before receiving Holy Communion and, if aware of unconfessed

grave sin, should refrain from receiving the sacrament before receiving sacramental absolution. In the case of priests or bishops who are committed to celebrating a publicly scheduled Mass, awareness of grave sin should be seen for the doom-laden prospect that it is, and the obligation of sacramental confession as soon as possible (Canon 916) must be regarded as a grave and urgent necessity.

In addition to this necessary basic examination, each communicant should make some devout preparation for Holy Communion, and ensure that some time is reserved for thanksgiving afterwards. The rush for the door at the end of Mass usually includes most of those who have minutes ago received Our Lord. Discussion over this usually descends to practical considerations, especially for priests who may be required to attend to people’s pastoral needs immediately after Mass, but is it not true that actually we have largely forgotten the need for preparation and thanksgiving for Holy Communion? Do we really see thanksgiving as something that might need to be deferred but not omitted? The priest’s leadership in this matter is highly effective.

At this point, I can almost hear the cry from some quarters of “Jansenism! Jansenism!” St Francis de Sales (one of the first to see the dangers of heresy at Port Royal) and other saintly spiritual writers who advocated frequent communion saw it as a practice requiring regular confession and serious preparation. The debate on who should and should not receive Holy Communion needs to be re-framed according to classical Catholic spiritual teaching. Nobody wants to see frequent Holy Communion disappear from the lives of Catholics, but it is equally necessary that Holy Communion should once again be understood as a sacrament to be received with due preparation, in a state of grace, and in a state of life that accords with the teaching of Christ and the Church.

Christ quoted the word spoken to Hosea desiring a real change of heart, and not an empty external ritual. We could reword His call without disrespect: “What I want is mercy, not sacrilege.” ☩

Fr Tim Finigan is the parish priest of Our Lady of the Rosary in Blackfen, Southwark Archdiocese, and a visiting tutor in sacramental theology at St John’s Seminary in Womersley. He is also a member of the Faith Editorial Board.

Faith and Politics: Speaking Truth Unto Power

Laura Seggie to Scottish Parliament, 13 May 2014

This May, a young Catholic woman addressed the Scottish Parliament. Laura Seggie, 19, from Coatbridge in Lanarkshire proposed to the politicians that the spirit of service at the heart of Christianity still has much to offer the common good.

Laura is a politics and history student at the University of Strathclyde and a regular attendee at Glasgow Faith Forum.



“Through my involvement at the chaplaincy and other youth groups, I have witnessed a great deal of young people embrace their faith despite social pressures”

“

Presiding Officer, Members of the Scottish Parliament, thank you for your kind invitation to address you today.

At this time of year, many of my fellow students face important exams determining their future. However, through my experiences at Strathclyde University’s Catholic Chaplaincy, I have found that not only do these young people rely on books and endless hours of studying in order to pass their exams, but increasingly they also look for spiritual support.

Through my involvement at the chaplaincy and other youth groups, I have witnessed a great deal of young people embrace their faith despite social pressures. This faith journey is one that does require a great deal of courage, since at times religious faith is portrayed as something negative. But it is a journey which brings so much joy and meaning to people’s lives.

A recent message from Pope Francis resonated with my experience. Using Twitter he said: “It is not easy to follow Jesus closely, because the path he chooses is the way of the cross.”

So often we find that in some way or another everyone has a cross to bear, be it poverty, loneliness or illness; and central to the Christian message is that we should have a willingness

to help people with their cross. For many of us we bear our cross for the sake of serving those around us, and being as Christ to them. So much of the work of political life is in fact taking the problems of others on your own shoulders.

That spirit of service for the common good is the heart of the Christian message. It means loving God and treating others as we would wish to be treated ourselves.

I am therefore convinced that Scotland still has much to benefit from the Christian faith. My hope for the future is that more people do find the courage to embrace and express their faith.

And I hope that you, as members of our Scottish Parliament, continue to show courage in the decisions that you make to legislate for the people of Scotland. Be assured that you are in the prayers of Christians nationwide.

Finally, I would like to end with the words of St John Paul II:

True holiness does not mean a flight from the world; rather, it lies in the effort to incarnate the Gospel in everyday life, in the family, at school and at work, and in social and political involvement.

”

Marriage: A Divine Adventure

Building a family on the foundations of heritage, humanity and home *By Cormac Burke*

With much debate surrounding the family dwelling upon issues such as divorce, remarriage and artificial contraception, Cormac Burke believes the main focus of discussion should be marriage itself, which he describes as a “conjoint family project” that is at the same time “a very attractive and divine mission”.

Our title puts together three concepts: heritage, humanity, home. A brief initial word on each.

Heritage

Heritage implies something that is handed down, that is worth not only having but also passing on to a further generation. So it implies something of value. By what standards can one distinguish what is of value?

Values may be spiritual or material, positive or negative, real or simply apparent. If the values we have are real (and the best of these are spiritual values, such as ideals of honesty or friendship) and we assimilate them, they help us grow in humanity. If they are only apparent (and this can happen especially with material values), their probable effect is to hinder or lessen our development as human beings.

Our first values are not invented by ourselves, but received or absorbed from others: usually, to begin with, from the home; but as time goes on also from the outside world, from our environment, from the prevailing culture.

Humanity

In the context of our title, humanity refers not to a particular human being or to a group of individuals, but to mankind as a whole, linked, despite passing differences, throughout the centuries (so we speak of “the history of humanity”). Today of course there is a widespread tendency to deny the very concept that we all share something in common, that all participate in the same human nature. Here we will do no more than note that tendency – which so threatens the foundations of any truly human society. Without presupposing a common human nature, the theme before us today would make no sense.

Home

The home is the focal point of our study. What do we mean by a home? Just a physical place, such as a boarding house? No. An old people’s “home”? No, such an institution may have a good atmosphere, but those who live there have little in common except the simple fact of old age. What we mean by a home is a *family* – composed of parents (husband and wife) and of children. Each home in this sense is something unique, a sacred place of special relationships marked by particular sharing and intimacy, and originating in marriage.

Sharing means “comm-union”, union that originates in love and is perpetuated in love. That is where marriage comes in. Marriage is not a more or less temporary alliance between a man and a woman who feel attracted to one another. It is a true and lifelong commitment of love that unites them – also

in the common purpose of incarnating their love in the permanence of a family. In the words of Benedict XVI, “the first form of communion between persons is that born of the love of a man and a woman who decide to enter a stable union in order to build together a new family” (Message for World Day of Peace, 2008).

A united home is the greatest human safeguard against loneliness – that malady of the Western world, that devastating impoverishment of personal life which the West keeps spreading everywhere. How many people today try to bury themselves in the present, afraid to look ahead, because they fear their future may offer no more than a panorama of growing loneliness!

What Values Predominate Today in the World?

Let us return now to values. Let us consider the values that constitute the inheritance the modern world has developed and is passing on. What values tend more and more to predominate in today’s “global village” world culture? It is no exaggeration to say that, rather than values, they are “anti-values”; concretely, the three spirits of a godless world listed in the Bible: the concupiscence of the eyes, the concupiscence of the flesh, and the pride of life (cf 1 Jn 2:16).

In more contemporary terms, we could list them this way:

1. *Consumerism*, an obsession with having material goods – having, having, having – which breeds disquiet of spirit, envy, jealousy, cheating, theft, violence...
2. A generalised yielding to *sensual appetite*, an obsessive concern for food and drink; and above all for sexual satisfaction – in any form it may take, where any idea or norm of restraint or respect is lost, where “everything goes” and nothing is sacred, where others are treated simply as *objects*, of interest insofar as they satisfy my vanity, my lust, my sense of power, my exploitative spirit...; the main propagator of this exploitation of persons being the media in all of its omnipresent forms.
3. *Pride*, in its ultimate expression: “I am who I am, and that’s it!”; “Only I can decide what is right or wrong, good or evil, for me.” In these matters, I will be who I am, “like God”. It is this prevalent relativism or subjectivism which isolates each one in the myth, in the cold and lonely freedom, of “the autonomous self”.

These anti-values characterise our global culture. They are forcing themselves into the lives and outlook of each person; and – this is our main point – into our homes.

“A united home is the greatest human safeguard against loneliness – that devastating malady of the West, which is spreading everywhere”

What Values Predominate Today in the Family?

Are couples who marry today, who want to form a real family and home, aware of the pervasive presence of these anti-values? Are they aware of how easily they can shape their own personal outlook and especially that of the home they are seeking to build? We are speaking of couples, of parents, who are good or want to be good. But even parents who want to be good and form a good family atmosphere, can be thoughtless. And thoughtless people are easy prey to manipulators or exploiters.

The attack on Christian living, as St John puts it, is three-pronged. Let us take a deeper look at just one of these major enemies: “covetousness of the eyes”, or the modern anti-value of *consumerism*. Few parents seem to be aware of how present it is in their own lives, and in that of their children; and how destructive are the effects of handing it down.

How many of us, how many parents, are not affected by the spirit of consumerism? “I must have this, we must buy that... Oh, if only we could have that wider flat-screen TV, that better car, that nicer house, like the one the So-and-Sos have... And you, our son or daughter still at school, you just must get those good marks to qualify for university and for a career where you make a lot of money. Otherwise you will lack self-esteem, you will feel inferior to those around you, a ‘failure’ in their sight...”

And then (their subconscious might add) you’ll spend your life like us, criticising and envying and hungering for still more of what cannot fill even the shrunken heart we are bequeathing to you...

Is this an exaggeration? I don’t know. But in practice these are the “values” which so many children absorb from their parents. With this as the inheritance handed down to them, are they in turn likely to pass on better “values”, true values, to the one or two children they may possibly have? Are they likely to have any other than a calculating approach to marriage itself, to the number of children they “can afford” to have?

Consider it; for that is the social future the West seems bent on building. The West, with all its concern about life in the 2030s or 2050s, about what will happen “unless we remedy global warming or atmospheric pollution...”, seems oblivious to the dehumanised, value-less and ever-more-lonely society which it has created for itself and will pass on to its posterity – if it really wants any posterity at all.

There is no real future for a society of self-absorbed individuals. Without any true and shared values held in common, there is less collective glue to hold it together. It ends in disintegration. Families who are rich economically can pass on a rich inheritance in cash or in land; sadly, what they leave behind is so often disputed among their children.

Rich families that are poor in love are not really rich. Poor families, richer in love, have a richer inheritance to pass on.

The Challenge of Rebuilding the Home

Is the panorama I have been depicting realistic? Perhaps, you may say, over-realistic and even excessively pessimistic. Well, let us return to a more optimistic view, a view of how things can change, in and through the family.

“Rich families that are poor in love are not really rich. Poor families, richer in love, have a richer inheritance to pass on”

The change has to begin among young people in their approach to marriage. The thrust of modern life is to put self first, and others second. Yet, the more you live for yourself, the more alone you will find yourself. It is not good for man or woman to be alone, or to seek company in shared selfishness. Man needs to build for others, for others whom he can love. He needs to build a home. The married couple who don’t come out of themselves and live both for each other and for their children, will sink back into themselves, back into their more and more separate selves; and the few children they may have will be even more self-centred, and even more alone. That is why few ambitions are more noble – for the present and the future – than that of creating authentic families, authentic homes, that can be the model and seed of a more generous and happier future.

The Basis for a Home that can Create and Transmit Positive Values

A true home can only be based on love. And love itself is true only if it has ideals and is generous. A young couple about to marry are truly in love if they share ideals: to make each other happy and to pass on their shared love to their children – the family that should be born of their generous love.

Husband and wife are the first who need to learn generous love: the love that refuses to dwell on the defects of the other, that learns rather to understand, to forgive, to ask forgiveness. That is the only way spousal love can last and grow. The spouses’ own learning experience will help them become good and patient teachers of the same love to their children.

The first need of very young children is to be given love gratuitously. If they are given that, later on they will begin to realise that this gratuitous love took an effort; and that they too need to make similar effort, to overcome their natural self-centredness, so as to *learn* to love their parents in return, and not only their parents, but also their siblings, each one of them in a special way.

Marriage and the family are a first natural school. And the first subject taught there is love. The parents have to learn it

Marriage: A Divine Adventure continued

first, and then be the main teachers of their children. Learning to love, to grow gradually in mutual understanding, to forgive and forget, to discover that one cannot always have one's own way.

If the home is a demanding school of love, the children will learn many other things too. An especially important point today is to learn the uses of freedom. Our age is one where few things are more highly prized than freedom; yet few people are taught the first truth about freedom: that it can be exercised well or badly, that it can grow or be lost, that one does not truly love freedom if one loves only one's own freedom and has no regard for the freedom of others.

“The real inheritance handed on by a good family is the memories it creates: memories of Mum's and Dad's goodness, of a place where one could take refuge”

Again, the family offers the first natural introduction to the mystery of sexuality. There brothers and sisters, in an atmosphere undisturbed by physical attraction, gradually begin to sense some of the deeper and truly human differences and complementarities between the sexes – and so to appreciate and respect the different way of being a man or a woman.

Still again, only in the family is it possible to learn that authority can come from love, and that obedience to authority can be an act of love.

The Treasure of Family Memories

Life is not just living in the present. It is working for the future – for a future that can last. One needs hope; and hope is buttressed by good memories from the past.

Dostoyevsky's famous novel *The Brothers Karamazov* closes with the remarks of one of the three brothers. He addresses them to a group of young friends, after the death of one of their companions: “There is nothing more powerful, nor more healthy nor more useful later on in life than some good memory, and particularly one that has been borne from childhood, from one's parents' home. Much is said to you about your education, but a beautiful, sacred memory like that, one preserved from childhood, is possibly the very best education of all. If he gather many such memories in his life, a man is saved for all of it. And even if only one good memory remains within our heart, then even it may serve some day for our salvation” (Epilogue).

“Once there was a way to get back home;” so goes a line from the Beatles' song “Golden Slumbers”. But today even if one knows the way, there is less and less urge to go back home, because it is not there: a place may be left but there never was a home. Few, if any, cherished memories remain

of one's childhood and upbringing; fewer supports for one's hope and salvation. The real inheritance handed on by a good family is the memories it creates: memories of Mum's and Dad's goodness, of a place where one could take refuge, where one felt understood and learnt to understand others, of quarreling with one's siblings and making up, of forgiving and being forgiven. That is a school for life.

Those already married, as well as those meaning to marry, could ask themselves no more important question than this: are our children – will our children be – really grateful for what they receive from us, their parents? Do I, do we, give them of our best? And the best is not comfort nor money nor job prospects, but love. Love in the constant little things that build true family life and, later on, make up the family memories that keep us going.

There is a large family that I have known for a long time. A family rich in children and very rich in love. A few years ago the mother died; all were present at the funeral. After her burial the father and children gathered at the family home, and reminisced together about the memories each one had of her. The father told me later that no stranger coming in could have imagined what a loss they had just suffered. On the contrary, the whole atmosphere was one of joy – though mixed with tears. Joy and tears of gratitude. That is richness; that is an inheritance!

The sorrow and the tears pass; the joy remains. And if, with the passage of the years, the memories still bring some tears, they will be tears of not-forgotten joy.

There lies the root and promise of happiness. Perhaps we still have to learn from one of Our Lord's most fundamental teachings: “It is happier to give than to receive.” Further, in giving, one receives: that is how true happiness begins here, and reaches its fullness afterwards. ☩

Fr Cormac Burke teaches at Strathmore University, Nairobi, Kenya. A renowned canon lawyer he is a recipient of the National Federation of Catholic Physicians of the United States Linacre Award for his writings in the field of marriage and sexual ethics.

Cutting Edge

Science and Religion News

By Dr Gregory Farrelly

Alzheimer's and Nuclear Fusion: New Solutions to Modern Problems

Alzheimer's Disease

As people live longer, thanks to better nutrition, healthcare and improved working conditions, an increasing number of elderly patients are being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, involving the long-term loss of memory. Now scientists at the Scripps Research Institute have discovered that a protein could help in the prevention or delay of this disease.¹

The protein transthyretin (TTR) is formed as a "tetramer", a four-unit structure. Old age can cause the tetramers to disintegrate into aggregates called amyloids, accumulating in various organs and causing diseases. In the mid-1990s, however, several laboratories indicated that TTR in the brain might actually protect against other amyloids such as amyloid beta, associated with Alzheimer's disease.

In transgenic "Alzheimer's mice", which overproduce amyloid beta, TTR overproduction was found to reduce the memory deficits of the mice. Further experiments showed that TTR tetramers bind to amyloid beta, inhibiting it from forming more harmful types of aggregate.

TTR is mainly produced in the liver and in those parts of the brain where cerebrospinal fluid is made, but it can also be produced at low levels in neurons. Experiments proved that Heat Shock Factor 1 (HSF1), a sort of protective switch against some types of cellular stress, could bind to the TTR gene's promoter (a segment of DNA near the TTR gene). Two stimulators of HSF1, heat and celastrol, boosted HSF1 binding and TTR production.

The researchers found that HSF1's boosting of TTR production occurred in neuronal-type cells, rather than in liver cells where most TTR is produced. In fact, in liver cells HSF1 caused a slight decrease in TTR production. Liver-cell

TTR, produced at up to 20 times the levels of neuronal TTR, is more likely to be hazardous than protective. In amyloid-beta-overproducing Alzheimer's mice, researchers found that the frequency of HSF1 binding to the TTR gene promoter was doubled in the Alzheimer's mice compared to ordinary mice.

The research team are now thinking about developing a small molecular compound, maybe delivered as a pill, to boost HSF1 activity and/or TTR production in neurons, so preventing or delaying Alzheimer's dementia.

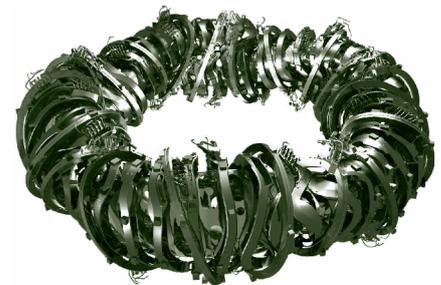
Nuclear Fusion

As the global population increases and ages, and the amount of energy used per person increases, the world is facing an energy crisis. A number of alternative energies exist: solar power, wind power, biomass fuels, etc. There has been a stagnation in the building of nuclear power stations in Europe as fears concerning safety have mounted, especially in the wake of the Chernobyl and Fukushima disasters, and the problem of the disposal and storage of radioactive waste materials has not been solved. Meanwhile, physicists have been working on developing fusion reactors. These seek to harness the energy released when light nuclei, usually deuterium and tritium, are fused.

The problems involved are immense. Huge densities and temperatures (millions of degrees, hotter even than the Sun's core) are required to overcome the electrostatic repulsion between the positively charged nuclei involved. The two leading techniques have been inertial confinement and magnetic confinement, involving huge magnetic fields to contain a plasma in a doughnut-shaped machine called a tokamak.

Essentially, these fusion reactors form energy just as stars do; we are, in that sense, building stars on earth. However, it is impossible to achieve steady-state output with these devices. Therefore, an older technology is being revamped at the Max Planck Institute of Plasma

Physics in Germany.² This relies on a device called a stellarator, which is smaller and cheaper (a mere €1bn!). It uses a complex arrangement of superconducting magnetic coils, as shown below.



The scientists involved hope to obtain magnetic confinement for 30 minutes (compared with up to 30 seconds for tokamaks) in the next few years, making it a relatively steady-state system.

What both these areas of research exemplify is something at the heart of the *Faith* movement's philosophical theology, namely the "ecosystem" of nature and spirit. Natural being is not random but relational, precisely because there is an intrinsic order of one thing to another in a hierarchy of being.

The Alzheimer's research demonstrates that a molecule acts differently in different contexts – it is adaptive. The stellarator research demonstrates the uniqueness of the human mind. Attempts at nuclear fusion are not part of some biological adaptive "survival of the fittest" process but show our transcendence of a merely material law of control and direction. The human mind is the master, rather than the servant, of material reality and this is precisely because we are spirit as well as body, the two natures united in each one of us as person. ☩

Notes

¹X Wang, F Cattaneo, L Ryno, J Hulleman, N Reixach, JN Buxbaum. The Systemic Amyloid Precursor Transthyretin (TTR) Behaves as a Neuronal Stress Protein Regulated by HSF1 in SH-SY5Y Human Neuroblastoma Cells and APP23 Alzheimer's Disease Model Mice. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 2014; 34 (21): 7253 DOI: 10.1523/JNEUROSCI.4936-13.2014.

²Edwin Cartledge, Rebirth of the Stellarator, *Physics World* Vol 27 No 5, May 2014.

What has Ethiopia to Teach us?

By Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali

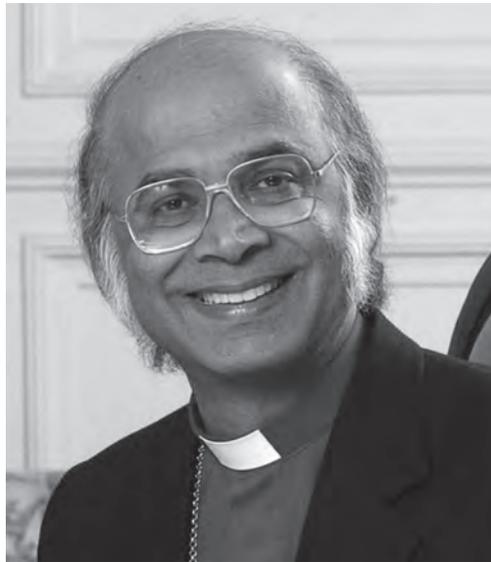
The St Frumentius Lectures in Addis Ababa are named after one of the two missionaries who re-evangelised the Empire of Abyssinia or Ethiopia in the fourth century. The other was Aedesius.

This year I was invited to deliver these ecumenical lectures on the theme of Christians in public life. Naturally, this brought me into contact not only with representatives of the churches but also with government ministers and officials. Like all other travellers to this remarkable country, I was fascinated by it. Here is an ancient civilisation which was once dominant across the Red Sea in South Arabia but also in Egypt. Although the arrival of Christianity systemised and propagated a written language, a literary tradition had existed before it, as had various forms of art.

Ethiopia is a prominent example, among others, of the early inculturation of the Gospel in contexts that were entirely non-Hellenistic. It may well be, as Pope Benedict claimed, that Christianity's encounter with Hellenism was providential, providing the Church with the linguistic and philosophical tools to engage with the Graeco-Roman world. There were other significant encounters, however. The Syrian, Coptic, Indian and Armenian come to mind. The Ethiopian is yet another.

In terms of what John Paul II has called the "continuing missionary mandate" of the Church, these examples are important today for the growing churches of Africa, Asia and Latin America as they learn how to engage the Gospel with the cultures in which they find themselves, so that the cultures themselves, as well as the churches, are transformed and renewed.

The Ethiopian Church is unique in its liturgy, canon law and customs and, at the same time, maintains important links to the Church in other parts of the world. On the one hand, it observes the Jewish Sabbath, as well as the Lord's Day, and retains a number of other Judaic practices, such as circumcision and the distinction between "clean" and "unclean" food. Many African features can also be observed



The introduction of Christianity to Ethiopia is charted in the Acts of the Apostles. The contemporary story of this ancient Christian church, though, has much to teach us, says Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali.

in, for instance, liturgical music and dance. On the other hand, many of the Church's feasts and fasts are recognisably those of wider Christianity. The psalms are widely used in worship and private devotion and the basic Eucharistic Prayer is none other than that of Hippolytus of Rome!

Along with Armenia, Ethiopia was one of the first nations to call itself Christian (Western Christendom came much later). This means that there has been a kind of "establishment" of the Church in Ethiopia for centuries, with clergy and monks involved in the affairs of the state. The overthrow of the last emperor, Haile Selassie, by a Marxist-inspired coup in 1974

introduced a period of being in the wilderness for the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which along with other churches experienced martyrdom and persecution.

The present regime claims to be secular, deriving its values from the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and "neutral" in respect of the different religions of Ethiopia. A number of questions arise regarding this attitude. Namely, from where have the values enshrined in the UN Declaration come? Do they derive from the Judaeo-Christian tradition and do they make sense only in the context of a biblical world view? Will they survive if they are permanently detached from the context which has given rise to them?

These are questions not just for Ethiopia but for all so-called "secular" societies which are content to live in the afterglow of Christian values, believing they will outlast the faith which produced them. Will they, or will we, be engulfed by a new Dark Age?

Another point made by the government is its adherence to Article 18 of the UN Declaration, which guarantees freedom of belief, freedom of conscience, the right to manifest our belief in public, etc. Will these freedoms be respected and will all religions in Ethiopia subscribe to this Article? It is noteworthy that equivalent Islamic declarations omit the safeguards of Article 18 altogether. Again, we can ask

“So-called ‘secular’ societies are content to live in the afterglow of Christian values, believing they will outlast the faith which produced them”

whether the spate of hate-speech and “equality” legislation in Britain and other European countries – not to mention the restrictions on public manifestations of faith, the right to which has been upheld again and again by both domestic and European courts – also falls foul of this Article.

“The overthrow of the last emperor, Haile Selassie, in 1974 led to a period of being in the wilderness for the Ethiopian Orthodox Church”

Since receiving the first refugees, sent by the Prophet of Islam himself, Ethiopia has had a special relationship with Islam and with Muslims. Will future relationships develop in the context of this tradition or in the direction of the conflict which has also been endemic between Ethiopia and neighbouring Muslim lands? At the moment, there is a precarious balance between Muslims and Christians, with

Muslims making up some 34 per cent of the population and Ethiopia being courted by some of the oil-rich Arab states. The Tablighi Jama’at and other Muslim missionary organisations are active and there is the possibility of conflict between them and ultra-Orthodox movements. At the same time, the Evangelical churches are growing rapidly. This could be an occasion for a new ecumenism or it could open another chapter of intra-Christian conflicts. Again, Ethiopia has a great deal to teach us, if only in reflecting some of our own problems back to us.

We cannot idealise the Church or the state there, but we can be thankful for the rich history of both – and for the many lessons they can teach us in the West and in the world of Islam. ☩

Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali is the Anglican Bishop-Emeritus of Rochester. He has both a Christian and a Muslim family background and is now President of the Oxford Centre for Training, Research, Advocacy and Dialogue.

ST PHILIP'S BOOKS

Rare and secondhand Catholic books bought and sold. Distributor for Newman's Letters and Diaries.

Proprietor: Christopher Zealley

82 St Aldgates, Oxford OX1 1RA

Tel: 01865 202 182 • Fax: 01865 202 184

Quarterly catalogues free on request

We travel to buy collections of Catholic books.

Shop in central Oxford, near Catholic Chaplaincy.
Over 9,000 books on view, new and secondhand.

Visitors welcome

Monday-Saturday 10am-5pm.

15 minutes walk from railway station or

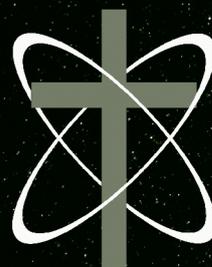
5 minutes from Westgate car park.

sales@stphilipsbooks.co.uk

www.stphilipsbooks.co.uk

“At a time when some scientists are reviving the old idea that science and faith are incompatible – and some Christians seem to be playing into their hands – this programme is a sign of hope and new possibilities. We need to bring these vital areas of life into a creative and constructive dialogue, and here we have resources to do just that. I commend this whole programme with enthusiasm.”

Bishop Tom Wright, DD, Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity, University of St Andrews



Scientists in Congregations Scotland

A programme of the John Templeton Foundation

Seeking to encourage conversation about faith and science within congregations across Scotland – conversation that will excite constructive engagement between the church and the scientific world.

Deadline for Proposals: April 18, 2014

For full information and application: www.sicscotland.org

Now accepting proposals for grant awards up to £10,000



What is Baptism?

By Joanna Bogle

For those involved in parish catechesis, a clear explanation of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation can be difficult to come by. In this essay, popular Catholic journalist Joanna Bogle explains the meaning of baptism.

Baptisms, like weddings and First Communions, are becoming grander and grander at the level of invitations, partying, guests invited, and general merrymaking. But they are also being sidelined, with an increasing notion, especially among the let's-be-fashionable middle classes, of announcing that "you can't impose religion on a child". So paganism is imposed instead, with a "naming ceremony" with poetry and the planting of a tree, and announcements about wishes and star signs.

What is baptism? The general mood in the Church has moved away (*Deo gratias!*) from the idea that baptism is essentially a welcome into "the community", and instead it is now more correctly understood as the essential start of a life's journey with God. A younger generation of priests, in this as in much else, is looking to the Church's authentic teaching rather than to ideas and slogans.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that baptism is "the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit" (CCC 1213). The word is linked to our word "bath" and refers to immersion, plunging into water. Baptism is the most important event in any Christian's life, a gift from God, a moment of great grace. It links back to Christ's own words in the Scriptures (Jn 3:5). *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* states:¹ "Christ announced the necessity of a spiritual regeneration 'of water and the spirit' in his conversation with Nicodemus, and it has been commonly held that he instituted the Sacrament either at an unspecified date before His passion or after his resurrection, when he gave the disciples the command to baptise in the Threefold Name."

St Josephine Bakhita, a former Sudanese slave who was rescued by an Italian family and taken to Italy, used to kiss the font where she was baptised, saying: "Here I became a daughter of God."² Blessed John Paul, on a visit home to Poland after becoming Pope, knelt and prayed by the font in the church at Wadowice, where he was baptised.

The water of baptism, used at the very beginning of our Christian lives, takes us back to the very beginning of all things, when, as the prayer at the Easter Vigil reminds us, "your spirit breathed on the waters, making them the wellspring of all holiness".³

The Church teaches that baptism is not an action by which we announce our commitment to Christ, but rather a sacrament in which he enfolds us in grace and binds us to



I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

him: it is essentially he, and not we, who acts in the sacrament.⁴ It is his gift to us, and our response to it must be one of love, of charity. Baptism is profoundly linked to the bond which God first established with his Chosen People in the Old Covenant. We see this in the Easter Vigil liturgy: "You freed the children of Abraham from the slavery of Pharaoh, bringing them dry-shod through the waters of the Red Sea, to be an image of the people set free in Baptism."⁵

Baptism is administered by pouring water over a person – or plunging him or her into water – saying at the same time: "I baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

Baptism binds together all Christians, and is something held in common even by those divided following the Great Schism or by the Reformation, with a range of very different views being held among the latter group. In recent years an understanding of the unity in baptism that is a reality between all Christians has been emphasised by the Church. Paul VI in his first sermon as Pope spoke to those "who without belonging to the Catholic Church are united to us by the powerful bond of faith and love of Jesus Christ and marked with the unique seal of baptism – one Lord, one faith, one baptism", seeking to "hasten the blessed day which will see, after so many centuries of deadly separation, the realisation of Christ's prayer on the eve of his death – *ut unum sint*, that they may be one..."⁶

The Christian Theological Tradition of Baptism

The Church's understanding that baptism was prefigured by the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:15-15:1) was emphasised by St Ambrose (*De Sacramentis* 14, 11) who noted that the Jewish people had sacraments. The Church

“At the moment of death, it is enough for the dying person to grasp the core of the Church’s teaching – the love of God” (Fr Léo Maasburg)

has always understood that the “form” of the sacrament was established by Christ when he was baptised in the Jordan, and that the Trinity was present at Christ’s baptism, because the Father spoke, the Son descended into the water, and Holy Spirit appeared (Mt 3:16-17).

The rite used by St Ambrose in Milan included the renunciation of Satan, an anointing, the profession of the Creed and the Trinity, triple immersion in water, and Holy Communion. To this day still, Satan is renounced, the Creed and the Trinity affirmed, and candidates anointed. In the West, admission to Communion comes later, at the age of reason, and is indicated by bringing the child to the altar for the Our Father.⁷ The triple immersion is replaced by a pouring of water, although baptism can still be done by immersion (and is, for example, at the church of St Charles Borromeo in Ogle Street, London).

The water used for baptism has been blessed beforehand. Baptism is linked to the death and resurrection of Christ. At the Easter Vigil, the priest blesses the water in the baptismal font, lowering the lighted Pascal candle into it three times while saying: “May the power of the Holy Spirit, O Lord we pray, come down through your Son into the fullness of this font...” He then holds the candle in the water while continuing “...so that all who have been buried with Christ by baptism and death may rise again to life with him.”

The Church has always taught the importance of water in the Old Covenant – at Creation, at the flood, at the crossing of the Red Sea – and has also always seen a symbolising of baptism in the water that poured from Christ’s side on Calvary: “O God whose son, baptised by John in the waters of the Jordan, was anointed with the Holy Spirit, and, as he hung upon the Cross, gave forth water from his side along with blood...”⁸

“It is essentially he, and not we, who acts in the sacrament. It is his gift to us, and our response must be one of love, of charity”

Baptism is recalled not only every Easter, when the faithful renew their baptismal promises, but also at a sung Mass with the Asperges, where the people are sprinkled with water, in a rite which replaces the usual penitential rite. The *Vide Aqua*, which is often sung during the Asperges – and is sung at the Easter Vigil – speaks of the vision of the Temple from which poured water: “I saw water flowing from the Temple, from its right hand side, and all to whom this water came were saved...”

Baptism has always been seen as central and necessary. Hence the tradition of “baptism of desire” for those who genuinely seek Christ and who for any reason die before being able to be baptised with water, and “baptism of blood” for

those who die witnessing to the faith.⁹ The Church does not set limits on God’s love and mercy: he will not inflict an eternity of loss and misery on those who, through no fault of their own, have not received the water of baptism. At Mass the Church places before God “all for whom we offer this sacrifice... those who take part in this offering, those gathered here before you, your entire people, and all who seek you with a sincere heart.”¹⁰

Baptism in the Life of the Church

Baptism has always also been an essential part of the Great Commission, given by Christ to his disciples: “Go forth, teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:20).

Baptism is the start of the Christian life, and its administration to new converts, and to children born into Christian families, is a central part of the life and mission of the Church.

It is not necessary that everyone who receives baptism understands the fullness of Christian teaching: it is simply the start of a bond with God, and is a gift from him. In the case of adult converts it of course usually involves instruction in the faith, but exhaustive examination of knowledge is not the essence of the sacrament. Fr Leo Maasburg, a close friend and spiritual adviser of Blessed Mother Teresa, recalls:

*In several cases I had to ask myself under what circumstances I could administer baptism to an unbaptised adult who was about to die. I remembered Mother Teresa explaining to me that... at the moment of death, it is enough for the dying person to grasp the core of the Church’s teaching, namely the love of God. One only needed to ask the dying person if he “would like to go to the God who sent the Sisters to him”. A wonderful question, to which probably no one privileged to experience God’s love through those loving hands could answer no.*¹¹

Christianity is an incarnational religion: *things* matter – water, oil, bread and wine. George Weigel comments in an essay on Evelyn Waugh’s book on St Helena, mother of the emperor Constantine, and her quest for the true Cross:

*Helena believed, and Waugh agreed, that without that lump of wood, without the historical reality it represented, Christianity was just another Mediterranean mystery religion, a variant on the Mithras cult or some gnostic confection... Helena’s search is not magical talisman: it is the unavoidable physical fact that demonstrates the reality of what Christians propose, and about which others must decide.*¹²

Baptism can be administered by anyone – it does not have to be done by a priest, and because it is so important it has often been administered by a lay person in an emergency¹³ – but in the ordinary way it is administered by a priest or deacon and includes not only the pouring of water and the words of baptism but also anointing with oil.

What is Baptism? continued

The oil for baptism is blessed by the bishop at the Chrism Mass in Holy Week, where all the clergy of a diocese gather together, and this re-emphasises the fact that each baptised Christian is in unity with the whole church. Baptism opens up the way of Christian life: it is completed by the sacrament of confirmation, and then throughout the Christian's life he can receive God's forgiveness through the sacrament of reconciliation, and be fed by the Eucharist: "Priests are stewards of the means of salvation, of the sacraments... not to dispense them according to their own will, but as humble servants for the good of the People of God" (Benedict XVI).¹⁴

This unity with the Church is all connected with our union with Christ. Our sins have been washed away in baptism, and we have in a mysterious sense shared in his death and hence in his resurrection. To be a sharer in this means also to be a sharer in the life of the Church. "The great candle lit from the Easter fire is kindled again at both baptisms and funerals. In the first case, this reminds us that baptism makes us part of Christ, members of his body the Church, and sharers in his death and resurrection. In the second, it shows that the earthly stage of the journey begun at baptism has been completed in company with the Lord who has gone before us through death."¹⁵

"The rekindling of the paschal candle reminds us that baptism makes us part of Christ, members of his body the Church, sharers in his death and resurrection"

The reality of the washing away of sins in baptism has been taught since the earliest days, but the teaching about forgiveness has developed: "The power of baptism to remit sins was so great that rigorists held that sins committed after baptism were possibly unforgiveable, and this motivated some people – Constantine but also future saints such as Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Ambrose, Augustine and Chrysostom – to delay receiving it."¹⁶

Baptism in the Christian Spiritual Tradition

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* emphasises that "for all the baptised, faith must grow after baptism".¹⁷ Faith is nourished by the sacraments, by living in the Church and in love and service of God and neighbour, and by prayer. The baptised have duties in the Church and also rights: "To receive the sacraments, to be nourished by the Word of God, and to be sustained by the other spiritual helps of the Church."¹⁸

Baptism is necessary before admission to Holy Communion. Baptism is the first of the sacraments of initiation, and is closely linked to confirmation. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* notes that "in the first centuries confirmation generally comprised one single celebration with baptism, forming with it a 'double sacrament' according to the expression of St Cyprian" (CCC 1290). This is echoed by non-Catholic writers: Massey H Shepherd in *A Handbook of Christian*

Theology comments: "It is now commonly admitted... that in the early Church no clear distinction was drawn between baptism and confirmation, since both rites were part of a single complex of initiatory ceremonies that included also the celebration of the Eucharist..."¹⁹

The *Catechism* teaches that "like Baptism, which it completes, confirmation is given only once, for it too imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual mark, the 'character' which is the sign that Jesus Christ has marked a Christian with the seal of his Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he may be his witness".²⁰ Baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist are seen as forming a unity (CCC 1306).

The Christian life begun at baptism involves a continuing encounter with Christ:

*The followers of Christ, called by God... have been made sons of God in the baptism of faith and partakers in the divine nature, and so are truly sanctified. They must therefore hold on to and perfect in their lives that sanctification which they have received from God... All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love.*²¹

Blessed John Paul wrote a poem, pondering the thoughts of the Samaritan woman at the well:

*From this depth – I came only to draw water
In a jug – so long ago, this brightness
Still clings to my eyes – the perception I found,
And so much empty space, my own,
Reflected in the well...*²²

The mercy and the love of Christ, given freely by him as he walked this earth, are still given freely, again and again, to people all over the world who encounter him.

Baptism involves being part of the community of faith: "The whole ecclesial community bears some responsibility for the development and safeguarding of the grace given at baptism."²³

The Protestant tradition sees baptism as something which follows a personal affirmation of faith, a ritual bathing conferring nothing of itself but showing that the person has made a decision for Christ and is renouncing sin. An extreme version of this produced the Anabaptists – literally meaning people who baptised again – who believed that infant baptism had no value whatever. The Catholic understanding is that the baptism itself confers grace. In recent decades much discussion has taken place about baptism between Christians of the various denominations. The Anglican position was made clearer by the work of the Tractarian movement in the 19th century, which emphasised a Catholic understanding of the sacrament as an actual washing away of sin, a regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit and an incorporation into the Church.

“The Tractarian movement in the 19th century emphasised a Catholic understanding of the sacrament as an actual washing away of sin”

Thus in 1829 John Henry Newman – still at that stage an Anglican – affirmed that Christians become entitled to the gift of the Holy Spirit “by belonging to the body of his Church; and we belong to his Church by being baptised into it”.²⁴ And more than a century later, Michael Ramsay, Archbishop of Canterbury in the 1960s – whose meeting with Paul VI in the 1960s was a central moment in the ecumenical movement of that era – took a generally Catholic approach to baptism, if expressed in a somewhat vague, “Anglican” way: “The life of a Christian is a continual response to the fact of his baptism; he continually learns that he has died and risen with Christ, and that his life is a part of the life of the one family.”²⁵

In the Tradition of Prayer

The three stages of the deeper spiritual life have traditionally been described as beginning with a stage of purging, and then continuing through a time of illumination, to a time of unity with God. These three stages cannot be separated: each merges into the next, and overlaps with it. We can perhaps see in the sacraments of Christian initiation something of this progression. The Christian journey begins at baptism with the cleansing of the soul from sin, and is then strengthened and illuminated by Confirmation – and then the Christian way continues, nourished by the Eucharist and by the mercy of God given through the sacrament of reconciliation, through to the final encounter in death, assisted by the anointing of the sick.

“Baptism seals every Christian into the life of prayer. St Catherine of Sienna taught her followers: ‘Build an inner cell in your soul and never leave it’”

Not everyone is a mystic, but all Christians are called to holiness. Basil Hume has written that the struggles of the Christian in prayer are a bit like that of a child trying to climb stairs, while his father waits at the top. The child can either give up the struggle and sulk at the bottom, or go off to another room, or keep trying – and the father will come down and carry him upwards. He goes on:

*I like the concept of man being in search of God. Slowly, we come to realise that it is only one way of speaking of our response to God’s search for us. That is where the initiative lies. God in search of man reveals himself in a way which the created universe cannot. It is a special kind of revelation. It reached its high point when the Son of God became man.*²⁶

Perhaps there is also a sense in which the Christian mystical tradition echoes the life of Christ himself. At the Transfiguration (Mk 9:2-8), Peter James and John – significantly after climbing up a mountain with Jesus – saw him shining with light. As Ramsay put it:

The voice saying ‘This is my son’ recalls the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, the note of time ‘after six days’ links the event

*with the recent prediction by Jesus of his suffering and death, the radiant light tells of the glory at the future coming of Jesus...*²⁷

Newman taught that to be a child of God in baptism means

*to become in a wonderful way, His members, the ... sacramental signs, of the One Invisible Ever-Present Son of God, mystically reiterating in each of us all the acts of his earthly life, His birth, consecration, fasting, temptation, conflicts, victories, sufferings, agony, passion, death, resurrection and ascension.*²⁸

Baptism seals every Christian into the life of prayer.

St Catherine of Sienna taught her followers: “Build an inner cell in your soul and never leave it.”²⁹ Prayer may not always be easy – some great saints have had a terrible sense of loneliness and even of the absence of God when they pray³⁰ – but the bond with God, established at baptism, cannot be effaced. ☩

Joanna Bogle is a journalist, broadcaster and writer based in London. She is currently filming a new series on feasts and seasons of the Church for EWTN, the global Catholic television network.

Notes

¹Cross, FL (ed) *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p126.

²website: <http://bakhitacatholic.info>

³*Roman Missal*, Easter Vigil, Blessing of Water.

⁴For a full analysis of the Protestant/Evangelical understanding of baptism, see Bridge, Donald and Phipers, David, *The Water that Divides* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977).

⁵*Roman Missal*, Easter Vigil, Blessing of Water.

⁶*Apostle for our Time: Pope Paul VI*, p168.

⁷CCC 1239-1245.

⁸*Roman Missal*, Easter Vigil, blessing of water.

⁹CCC 1257-1262.

¹⁰*Roman Missal*, Eucharistic Prayer IV.

¹¹Maasburg, Leo, *Mother Teresa of Calcutta: A Personal Portrait*, p135.

¹²Weigel, George, “St Evelyn Waugh” in *Practising Catholic*, pp135-136.

¹³Most obviously, for example, by a nurse or midwife to a frail baby who seems to be in danger of death.

¹⁴Benedict XVI Homily, 4 Nov 2011, the Altar of the Chair in the Vatican Basilica.

¹⁵Sister Ann Catherine Swailes OP, *Magnificat*, Holy Week 2013, p4.

¹⁶Hitchcock, James, *History of the Catholic Church*, p68.

¹⁷CCC 1254.

¹⁸CCC 1269.

¹⁹*A Handbook of Christian Theology*, p336.

²⁰CCC 1304, quoting the Council of Trent, and Luke 24:48-49.

²¹*Lumen Gentium*, (Vatican II) 40.

²²*The Place Within: Poetry of Pope John Paul II*, p37.

²³CCC 1255.

²⁴Quoted in “The Tractarian Liturgical Inheritance” in *Tradition Renewed: The Oxford Movement Conference Papers*, p117.

²⁵Michael Ramsey, quoted in *Michael Ramsey as Theologian*, p148.

²⁶*To be a Pilgrim*, p51.

²⁷Ramsay, Michael, *Be still and know*, p61.

²⁸*Parochial and Plain Sermons*, VI, p3. Quoted in *Tradition Renewed*.

²⁹*Catherine of Sienna*, p25.

³⁰As revealed, for example, by M Teresa in her letters. See *Mother Teresa of Calcutta*, pp188-189.

Gaining Ground: The Pro-Life Movement on Campus

By Niall O Coinleáin



Founded two years ago, the Alliance of Pro-Life Students is a youth-led organisation dedicated to equipping young people at university campuses nationwide to start and sustain pro-life societies. The group's incoming chairman, Niall O Coinleáin, told *Faith* magazine why he believes the pro-life cause on campus is gaining ground.

The pro-life voice is needed on our university and college campuses now more than ever before; the constant resubmission of assisted suicide bills to the Scottish Parliament and pressure for the same at Westminster is a clear sign of the potential for the UK to follow the same treacherous path as some of our European counterparts. Although introduced for seemingly compassionate reasons, the *right to die* has very quickly become a *duty to die* for the elderly and infirm. The increase in non-voluntary euthanasia and the introduction of child euthanasia in Belgium are clear signs of how easily these bills, with an initial narrow remit, are rapidly modified to become a death sentence for anyone of limited economic value or potential.

Current students represent a large proportion of the UK's future politicians, teachers and legislators. University is where many of these people will develop their standpoint on life issues such as euthanasia – a standpoint it becomes increasingly difficult to change as people progress through adulthood. Unfortunately, at this formative stage in their lives one viewpoint is pushed to the fore on campus, and that's the opinion that euthanasia, abortion, embryonic stem cell research and a host of other practices which strip humans of their most fundamental right are good things. It is therefore vital that pro-life groups in colleges and universities exist to counter this view with a life-affirming alternative.

Although it's been nearly 50 years since the 1967 Abortion Act was passed, it remains crucial that the pro-life message is voiced and heard on campus. Increasing efforts are being made to normalise abortion. Recent video campaigns such as "Women Have Abortions Every Day: It's Just One Choice", and one abortion facilitator filming her own abortion, are all part of a drive to further embed the practice into society, to make it seem like the only option worth considering when faced with a crisis or unplanned pregnancy.

In the UK, 197,569 abortions were carried out in 2012. That may be fewer than in the previous year, but it still equates to

more than 540 a day. The age group with the highest abortion rate is young women between 18 and 24, the age of most students. Kingston University Student Health Centre ran a survey in 2010 which indicated that, on average, a student was being referred for an abortion every day at the university. An abortion every day at just one university! This further illustrates how vital the student voice is to the pro-life cause.

Pregnant students are, for the most part, absent from our campuses. Last year *The Independent* carried an article entitled "I faked a student pregnancy and I was horrified by the reaction". The writer, Ellie House, used a fake pregnancy bump to see what kind of response she would get from fellow students. She describes what happened when she entered the student library: "As I returned some books, a gaggle of girls stared at me from their revision corner, nudging each other and pretending to study. Indeed it was girls who looked at my bump as if it might explode any minute, avoiding all contact with me. ... As a student, I had every right to be in the library, but my bump certainly did not."

The article quotes a real student parent, Esmee Thomas from Lancaster University, who describes her experience: "As my bump grew, I felt more and more out of place walking around campus. I even felt too self-conscious to go to clubs. I felt very lonely, not so much because I was pregnant but because there was no understanding. I didn't feel like I had a right to complain, when I was under so much stress. I didn't have a right to moan, because I had chosen to stay at university." Is the assumption that a student who becomes pregnant must want to have an abortion? If so, this assumption needs to be challenged.

This is why pro-life student societies are vital, to voice the pro-life message on campus but also to ensure that their university gives adequate support to students who are pregnant or already parents, offering a choice that is best for mother and baby, not just a single option. But pro-life societies face some serious obstacles. Student life is transient, debate on many ethical issues is being closed down and students have a negative image of the pro-life

“Is the assumption that a student who becomes pregnant must want to have an abortion? If so, this assumption needs to be challenged”

movement. The Alliance of Pro-Life Students (APS) was created in 2012 to help overcome these obstacles by building and supporting university pro-life communities united by a lasting and profound respect for human life from fertilisation to natural death.

It's been a busy first two years for APS, with launches in Edinburgh and London and several other events – including a party in parliament, where our student members had the opportunity to visit Westminster and meet pro-life MPs and Lords. Pro-choice motions designed to silence pro-life opinion on campus are on the increase, and Cardiff Students for Life have had to defeat two such attempts in the past month. APS is there to support students faced with policies that aim to take away their right to free speech.

“A survey at one university revealed that, on average, a student was being referred for an abortion every day”

In the coming year APS will be providing more leadership training for groups across the United Kingdom, and plenty of events are being organised by the existing groups. Our handbook on how to run a pro-life society will also be distributed to groups in the coming months. It may seem that pro-life students have an uphill battle, but the average student is open to the pro-life message. They simply haven't

heard it or engaged with the issues before. APS helps give students the skills to get the pro-life message to their peers, and lots of great events have been organised by existing groups.

These have included a debate entitled “Abortion: Right or Rights Violation?”, organised by Oxford Students for Life (a video of the debate, between Ann Furedi, head of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, and Sarah de Nordwall of Catholic Voices, is available at bit.ly/abortion_debate), and a talk and discussion on adoption hosted by Edinburgh University's Life Society.

In the coming years we aim to help more groups become established, and to give them the support and resources they need to tackle the challenges facing pro-life groups so that they can become more effective on campus.

In February, over the weekend of our first general meeting, we also trained a group of APS ambassadors who will spread across the UK and are ready to give talks about what APS can do. If you are pro-life and on campus, do get in touch. The future is bright. The future is pro-life. ☺

www.allianceofprolifestudents.org.uk
info@allianceofprolifestudents.org.uk

Niall O Coinleáin, 24, is a student of electrical and mechanical engineering at the University of Edinburgh.

faith

PROMOTING A NEW SYNTHESIS
OF FAITH AND REASON

 faith
www.faith.org.uk

Inviting Authors

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

- They should normally be 1,800 words, but can be longer if they are an extended essay.
- Articles may be of a speculative nature or of pastoral interest but they must be faithful to the Church's magisterium. Ideas for articles can be emailed to the editor, who is happy to discuss their suitability.

**Articles should be emailed to:
editor@faith.org.uk**



Book Reviews

Going “Intentional”

Forming Intentional Disciples: The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus. By Sherry A Weddell, Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 256pp, £10.50.

I am very happy to recommend this book to any Catholic, lay or ordained, interested in the new evangelisation.

In chapter one, Weddell lays out her stall: that the era of tribal Catholicism is now dead. Over 70 per cent of Catholics do not practise their faith, although these figures reflect the US and the situation is surely worse here in the UK. Older priests fondly believe that the young who leave the Church will one day return, yet surveys show they do not. More than half of the “lapsed” no longer identify themselves as Catholic and, interestingly, many ex-Catholics convert to other religions and to evangelicalism. They do so not because they reject Church teachings, nor because they are angry about the abuse crisis or a difficult marriage issue, but because, research shows, their spiritual needs are not met.

More worrying, Weddell argues, is that a staggering 40 per cent of *practising* Catholics do not have a personal relationship with God. Whereas evangelicals insist on a personal decision for Christ, many Catholics are sacramentalised but not evangelised. They do not believe in a personal God with whom they can have a life-changing relationship. They are not “intentional disciples”. In any parish, she says, the number of such disciples is often a mere 5 per cent, despite all the catechesis, preaching, sacraments

and Masses attended. This suggests a disconnection: that people can talk about the “Church”, or Church teachings, even the sacraments, but not about Jesus Christ, the Gospel, and what it means to be a disciple. For many, this is a “Don’t ask, don’t tell” area of their faith.

In the following chapters, Weddell explores the collaboration between clergy and laity in Christ’s three-fold mission of sanctifying, teaching and shepherding. She stresses the need for everyone to rediscover their sense of vocation, that Christ has called them personally to be His disciple, and that He has enriched them with charisms for the benefit of the Church and her mission. Catholics tend to sit back and let the sacraments do it all, yet the sacraments are not magic (chapter four). A person must be helped intentionally to desire the grace they offer.

Evangelisation should not begin with catechesis: there is a pre-evangelisation stage that leads to the proclamation of the *kerygma*, that is, the death and resurrection of Christ and what this means for us. Weddell identifies five thresholds of conversion leading to commitment. First, a sense of trust in the messenger must be aroused (chapter five), and then curiosity, itself comprising three stages (chapter six). This leads to openness, Weddell offering some useful strategies (chapter seven). By then, a person will actively be seeking faith (chapter eight) and will soon be ready to make an act of commitment to become a disciple of the Lord (chapter nine).

In the last chapters, Weddell turns her attention to the parish and how it might become an evangelistic community. The aim should be to “double in five [years]” the number of intentional disciples (chapter nine). People have to be helped to talk about what the love of God means for them, and Weddell proposes five levels of “threshold conversation” that can open

this up. She discusses the life of Christ and what the *kerygma* means (chapter 10) and how a thorough evaluation of the charisms God has given needs to be undertaken so that people can find their niche (chapter 11). Finally, the foundation is always prayer and we ought to expect conversions, particularly if we change priorities (chapter 12).

Sherry Weddell belongs to the Catherine of Siena Institute (www.siena.org) in Los Angeles. She has over 15 years of personal experience working with priests and people across the US. This summer she has been invited to the Diocese of Portsmouth to conduct the *Called & Gifted Programme*: one-to-one interviews to help people articulate their relationship with God and discover the gifts they have been given for the Church’s mission (more information on the institute’s website).

I can thoroughly recommend this book. It is one of the most important books of pastoral theology to be published these last years. Weddell offers numerous practical strategies and many new lines of thinking to help address the present crisis. Yes, it is American and the British reader will need to make the necessary transpositions. But its basic message and direction in my view are sound. It is a helpful contribution to that evangelisation, “new in its ardour, new in its methods and new in its expression”, that Pope John Paul II called for.

Bishop Philip Egan

Why We Must Evangelise

Will many be saved? What Vatican II Actually Teaches and its Implications for the New Evangelisation. By Ralph Martin, Wm B Eerdmans, 316pp, \$17.28, available via Amazon.

This book comes loaded with praise from a large number of prominent churchmen – among them Cardinals

“Many Catholics are sacramentalised but not evangelised. They do not believe in a personal God with whom they can have a life-changing relationship. They are not ‘intentional disciples’”

Timothy Dolan, Francis George, Donald Wuerl and Peter Turkson. It has also attracted considerable controversy, particularly in the United States. The topic it addresses is one of the most important facing the Church as she struggles to make a reality of the “New Evangelisation” now spoken of for several decades. It deserves to be read by every priest and theologically interested lay person.

The author divides his work into four sections. The first, which is fundamental to the rest, is a close study of chapter 16 of *Lumen Gentium*, the Second Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. Chapter 16 states, first, how those who have not yet come to explicit faith in Christ are related in various ways to the Catholic Church. It goes on to deal with the question of their possible salvation.

As is fairly well known, the text is clear about God’s universal salvific will and teaches that “those who, for no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ” and even those “who, without any fault of theirs, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God” nevertheless “may achieve eternal salvation”. However, Martin goes on to stress the importance of the concluding three sentences of *Lumen Gentium* 16 which, being fundamental to his argument, are worth quoting in full:

But very often, deceived by the Evil One, men have become vain in their reasonings, have exchanged the truth of God for a lie and served the world rather than the Creator (cf Rom 1:21, 25). Or else, living and dying in this world without God, they are exposed to ultimate despair. Hence to procure the glory of God and the salvation of all these, the Church, mindful of the Lord’s command to ‘preach the Gospel to every creature’ (Mk 16:16) takes zealous care to foster the missions.

These three sentences, argues Martin, qualify what has gone before by clearly

teaching (a) that the salvation of non-believers is far from certain and (b) that it is concern for their salvation which drives the missionary activity of the Church. But he believes that this teaching has been neglected, distorted or even contradicted by most of the preaching and catechesis which has taken place since Vatican II. Seeking reasons for this, he points the finger of blame at two theologians who, more than any others, have dominated Catholic theology in the post-conciliar period: Karl Rahner SJ and Hans Urs von Balthasar.

Martin begins with Rahner and in particular his doctrine of the “anonymous Christian” who, while with no explicit faith, “accepts himself completely” and finds salvation through that acceptance. This theory has, of course, already come in for some very severe criticism, not least from Balthasar (most fiercely in *The Moment of Christian Witness*). Interestingly, Martin actually defends Rahner against some aspects of Balthasar’s attack (a little too generously, to my mind), but this makes his own criticisms all the more telling.

He accepts that Rahner was well-motivated by pastoral concerns but ultimately condemns the theory of “anonymous Christianity”, and the extremely optimistic view of human nature on which it is founded, as fundamentally unscriptural. Martin himself devotes considerable space to a comprehensive exegesis of the texts cited by *Lumen Gentium* 16 – especially St Paul’s Epistle to the Romans – and demonstrates how, according to these texts, the situation of non-believers can only be considered as precarious.

But Rahner, as Martin points out, gave insufficient weight either to Scripture or to traditional Church teaching. Martin also asks some telling questions about Rahner’s remarkably optimistic vision of human nature – an optimism all the more astonishing since, as Martin notes, he spent

almost his entire priestly life (1932–84) first under Nazi rule and then, after the Second World War, with half of Germany under Soviet Communism. For a thinker so driven by the concerns of “modern man”, Rahner often appears to have been singularly blind to the true nature of modernity.

Lastly, in expounding the teaching of *Lumen Gentium* 16 Rahner systematically excluded any reference to the concluding three sentences, which speak of the work of the Evil One and the necessity of missionary activity. On the contrary, by portraying what he claimed to be the council’s “optimism concerning salvation...[as] one of the most noteworthy results of the Second Vatican council” and a clear break with the past, he provided a textbook example of the “hermeneutic of rupture” later to be condemned by Pope Benedict XVI.

Martin is more scathing about Balthasar. Indeed, the very title of Martin’s book is a sort of riposte to Balthasar’s *Dare we hope that all be saved?* Balthasar, of course, concluded that we could indeed hope that all human beings be saved – and indeed that it was our Christian duty to do so. It is against this position that Martin now takes up the cudgels.

Balthasar was far more concerned to base his theology upon Scripture and Tradition than was Rahner, and he was aware that the Gospels contain many passages where Our Lord himself implies not only that all may not necessarily be saved but that many won’t be. His response was to claim that these passages are not prophecies but rather warnings challenging us to amend our sinful ways.

Martin sees this as an untenable exegesis. Others would argue that Balthasar’s interpretation remains within the bounds of orthodoxy. But to the extent that he wanted this interpretation to be the only acceptable one, he certainly overstepped the mark.



Book Reviews continued

Martin also examines the different ways in which Balthasar used the word “hope”. When speaking of universal salvation sometimes he used it in quite a weak sense – much in the way an Englishman might hope for a fine day (without any firm conviction that it will come to pass). In this “weak” sense, Martin concedes, “there can be no objection to ‘hoping’ that all who have not already been condemned to hell, be saved. ... Indeed, we should all have this hope.” However, in other places Balthasar used “hope” in a very different, much stronger sense, akin to theological hope; in these instances the word was used to denote a supernatural reality which assures us that, even if human beings appear to reject God, he will nevertheless find a way to save them in the end (even in Hell).

Balthasar bases this conviction partly on his own interpretation of some of the more speculative writings of the Church Fathers, and crucially upon the revelations allegedly made to his friend Adrienne von Speyr. To this Martin responds that well-qualified authorities dispute Balthasar’s patristic interpretations, and that Speyr’s private revelations have never been given any authority by the Church (and indeed contradict the Church’s received understanding). He concludes that Balthasar, no less than Rahner, has been guilty of fostering a belief in the likelihood of universal salvation which has no basis in the official teaching of the Magisterium.

Martin concludes by examining the effect this “false optimism” has had upon the Church’s missionary activity and the New Evangelisation. Soberly reflecting on the collapse of the Catholic missions after Vatican II, and the failure of the New Evangelisation to recover the lost ground, he concludes that, while the faithful have often been reminded of the duty of evangelising, the motivation for so doing has remained obscure. Sloppy preaching and weak catechesis must of course take much of the blame for this, but even magisterial documents (in

Martin’s view) have been found wanting. Modern popes, notably Paul VI and John Paul II, have exhorted Catholics to evangelise, but have failed to give convincing reasons why this is necessary.

They have stressed obedience to the Lord’s command “Go, and teach all nations” but have been shy of stating the conviction of Scripture and Tradition, up to and including Vatican II, that unless they hear the Gospel and enter the Church, many will remain slaves of the devil, the flesh and the world, and may never attain the eternal life Christ won for them upon the Cross. Martin draws towards his conclusion with some stirring words:

What motivated the Apostles and the whole history of Christian missions was knowing from divine revelation that the human race is lost, eternally lost without Christ, and even though it is possible for people to be saved, under certain very stringent conditions, without explicit faith and baptism, very often this is not actually the case. Therefore it is urgent that the Gospel be preached.

Not everyone will agree with everything that is written in this book, but everyone concerned for the good of the Church ought to engage with its arguments, for they touch on something fundamental in the life of the Church and its mission to the world today.

Richard Whinder

Losers in the Sexual Revolution

Women, Sex and the Church, a case for Catholic Teaching. Edited by Erika Bachiochi, Pauline Books & Media, 251pp, £6.75.

The book comprises eight chapters, each by a different author, presenting a series of well-reasoned and documented discussions on the following themes: the difference and complementarity of the sexes,

abortion, premarital sex, marriage, contraception, infertility treatment, male priesthood and the tensions between family and work life. The authors draw on a variety of sources (Catholic and non-Catholic) to show why the Church is right to teach what she does, and what the consequences have been for society when these teachings have been ignored.

Cassandra Hough, in chapter three, demonstrates the physical and emotional pitfalls for women of premarital sex. Jennifer Roback Morse (chapter four) shows why the Church is right about marriage: sociological data confirms that married people are happier, healthier and better off financially; the “outcomes” for their children are also “far better”.

Angela Franks (chapter five) underlines the absurdity of contraception: “Contraception must be the only case in which a person takes a pill solely to thwart the natural purpose of a bodily system”; and her description of what a contracepting culture looks like – “more divorce, more unwed parenthood, more abuse, more abortion, less commitment, less trust, less love” – rings all too true. Franks points out that children are good for marriage; having children is what teaches us selflessness. She advocates use of natural family planning as a way of placing the couple “in a deliberate, and joint vocational discernment of God’s loving will”.

Elizabeth Schiltz (chapter eight) looks at the tensions between family and work, an increasingly difficult issue for many families today when, as Erika Bachiochi says, “the financial power of the two-income family has driven up the price of all life’s necessities”.

The book is expertly introduced and concluded by the editor, Bachiochi. She points out that the biggest losers in the sexual revolution have been poor women and children, and that

“Adhering to the teachings of the Church on matters of sexuality may not be easy, but it is undoubtedly what is best for ourselves, our families and society”

decoupling sex from procreation has resulted in a casualness to sex and a devaluing of motherhood that is bad for us all. Adhering to the teachings of the Church may not be easy, but it is undoubtedly what is best for ourselves, our families and society. This is not a light read but an extremely informative and inspiring one, which will leave you better equipped to counter the attitudes and arguments of secular culture.

Hayley Tomlinson

Understanding the Mass

The Eucharist – A Bible Study Guide for Catholics. By Fr Mitch Pacwa SJ, Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 112pp, £6.99.

The book is devised so that it can be used individually or by a small group, the latter being the more obvious intended use, thus affording an opportunity for both scriptural and liturgical catechesis. There are six chapters, or sessions, which would afford an effective part of a parish catechetical programme across the pastoral year.

Clear instructions are given throughout the book enabling the reader or participant to research and cross-reference relevant scriptural texts and to consider these in light of the teaching tradition of the Church. In this way the overall theme moves chapter by chapter from the liturgical actions of the Old Testament to the present day liturgical practice of the Church.

Where clarity of theological meaning is perhaps required, the author gives this in a highlighted boxed text and additionally provides a small amount of space for personal note making; each chapter closes with two or three questions to stimulate discussion and personal reflection.

In terms of a catechetical programme, there is perhaps too much material to be digested during the 45 minutes to

an hour that's usual in a pastoral setting. However, this should not discourage personal reading and the suggested research.

Initially, Fr Pacwa guides the readers or participants through the Temple liturgy and encourages them to use the Sacred Scriptures, looking up key texts associated with the theme of the particular chapter. He then connects the Old Testament liturgy to the liturgical action of the Mass to demonstrate that the Mass and its rubric are not “plucked out of the air” but rather are a part of the plan and provision through which God had prefigured the Holy Eucharist for us in the Old Testament.

For example, in the first chapter he talks of the Levitical High Priest performing the liturgy correctly and not being put to death for failing to do so. This is compared with paragraph 22:3 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (1963): “Not even the priest, may add, remove or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority.”

The detailed connections the author makes between the actions of Christ in Holy Week, leading up to his Last Supper, Passion and Resurrection, and the actions of the Levitical High Priest certainly leave the reader animated by the depth of the material, which on occasion requires a second reading.

As one moves into the second session the connection between the Old Testament language of sacrifice and the words of the institution narrative of the Last Supper are opened up to give greater clarity to the sacrificial action of the Mass.

The third session outlines the place of lambs as beast of sacrifice. It looks at the sacrifice of Abraham and the Passover in Egypt and shows how that Passover is perpetuated by Our Lord, who is identified by John the Baptist as “the Lamb of God”, and by St John the Evangelist as the

triumphant Lamb of the heavenly banquet in the Book of Revelation.

The fourth session looks at the profound significance of the words “Eat my Body, drink my Blood” and connects the multiplication of the loaves and fish and the “I am” sayings of Jesus with God's feeding of the Israelites at the time of the Exodus. It also highlights the similarity in the responses of the people, first towards God through Moses and then towards Jesus as described in the sixth chapter of St John's Gospel. In this session Fr Pacwa outlines the different kind of responses which an individual, both in the historical presence of our Lord and in the here and now of our lives, might make, provoking the reader to a greater generosity of mind and heart.

The fifth session demonstrates the clear connections between the Old Testament Passover meal, the Last Supper of Jesus and the celebration of the Mass.

The sixth and final session, which is entitled “Christ's Priesthood and the Eucharist”, examines the letter to the Hebrews, touches upon the destruction of the Second Temple in AD70 and explores the meaning of the New and Eternal Covenant, which is Christ Himself in the Holy Eucharist.

In conclusion, Fr Pacwa's book should provoke any priest to ponder what it is he is doing in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, and it should be a great help to the laity in understanding the abiding presence of Our Lord in the action of the Mass and in Eucharistic adoration.

Ian Vane



Letters to the Editor

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

CHRIST'S BODILY PRESENCE

Dear Editor,

As a scientist, always interested in the faith/reason dialogue, the term "spiritual body", as applied to the resurrected Christ, has always intrigued me. We are taught that God is pure spirit as three persons: Father; Son, or Word; and Holy Spirit. That the Word became flesh, so that Jesus has flesh, blood and a human soul, as well as divinity. That angels are also pure spirits, like the Word. Before Vatican II, we called the Holy Spirit the Holy Ghost.

The main problem with the term "spiritual body" becomes apparent in Luke 24. The resurrected Christ appeared to the apostles, who thought they were seeing a ghost (a pure spirit). Jesus invited them to touch him, saying: "A ghost has no flesh and bones, as you see I have." He then ate grilled fish in their presence. Thus he reassured them that his risen body, in space-time, was a material, physical body, just like ours. We could say he has a spiritual body in heaven, transcending space-time, but this spiritual body was present to the apostles as a finite living human body in space-time.

My conclusion is that the risen body of Jesus is a material body, which is simultaneously present in heaven and on earth in those appearances, but the material in heaven transcends space-time, and is not therefore evident to our senses, or to any scientific test, in contrast to the material of his body and ours on earth. That is why the heavenly body is called a "spiritual body".

However, his real presence in the Eucharist is not just a spiritual presence. Here I believe that his body has literally

the appearances (chemical and physical properties) of bread and wine. I agree with Fr Stephen Boyle (*Faith* magazine, May/June 2009) that aspects of St Thomas Aquinas's metaphysical explanation of transubstantiation need development in the light of modern scriptural scholarship and scientific knowledge.

St Thomas taught that Jesus is present as a spiritual body without accidents, under the appearances, or accidents, of bread and wine. It is as if the inner reality is Jesus, but what we see, touch and taste is bread and wine. As Fr Boyle says, this could lead an assiduous modern Catholic to a consubstantial view, which was Luther's belief.

The following is a simple, logical argument for my belief that the appearances of bread and wine are literally the appearances of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Original sin was, and is, a transcendental catastrophe, whereby every iota of matter-energy in the universe, divinely intended to be one, immortal, fully alive body, perfectly shared by all living forms, is fallen and blemished. Everything is blemished except the living flesh, blood and human souls of Jesus and Mary.

Baptism is an invisible change in the personal soul, from blemished to immaculate, but the matter-energy of the body, which is also universal, remains blemished. Ordinary bread is blemished by original sin. But in transubstantiation it becomes immaculate, and as such is the *living bread*, which is Jesus *down from heaven* (Jn 6:51). The transcendental material substance of his risen body has become simultaneously present as physical substance in space-time, in order that we can see, touch, taste and eat him. The only change in transubstantiation is also invisible, so the accidents of bread and wine remain, and so does Jesus, until these accidents are no longer evident.

John J Rooney
Emeritus Professor of Science,
Queen's University, Belfast

HOW VERY BRITISH

Dear Editor,

I see that all four attributed articles on the family in the May/June edition of *Faith* magazine are from America. Isn't this a bit of an imbalance in a British publication? Could you not have garnered home-grown articles on this important subject? For I'm sure that within these shores there are gifted Catholic writers on the family, both clerical and lay. Finally there's an irony: for generations the US has been the universal divorce and annulment capital and much of the rest of the world is catching up.

John O'Melia
Belper, Derbyshire

MARRIAGE AND NULLITY

Dear Editor,

The marriage articles in the May/June issue, as a prelude to the October synod in Rome on the family, were most apposite. The crucial scriptural reference to indissolubility is not in the references to adultery but in St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians (Eph 5:25, 32): "Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the Church... This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church."

The unbreakable union between Christ and the Church raises the union between a man and a woman in marriage to another mystical level. There can be no fracture between Christ and his Church and there can be no fracture of a properly constituted marriage. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1601–1666) is quite categorical about this question of indissolubility and the whole of the section on marriage should be made available to couples as they prepare to publicly make their vows to each other.

Not every marriage is properly constituted, however. As defender of the

bond for the Kent area of the Southwark Marriage Tribunal I am constantly made aware that preparation for marriage is minimal or even non-existent. This is an area that needs urgent attention (cf p64 of the May/June issue by the Archbishop of Denver) and will no doubt be addressed by the synod.

Most Catholics are unaware of the work of marriage tribunals. The underlying reason for them is to help when a marriage has broken down. They are part of the healing ministry of the Church and are gentle, non-confrontational and non-adversarial. Their non-judgemental approach mirrors the way Our Lord dealt with the woman taken in adultery and the woman at the well.

There are three main grounds on which nullity can be based and they are given in Canon 1095 of the Code of Canon Law, which states that the following are incapable of contracting marriage:

- (i) those who lack sufficient use of reason;
- (ii) those who suffer from a grave lack of discretion of judgement concerning the essential matrimonial rights and obligations to be mutually given and accepted;
- (iii) those who, because of causes of a psychological nature, are unable to assume the essential obligations of marriage.

Most nullities are given using ground (ii).

It should be noted that when embarking on a way of life – whether religious, single, celibate or married – the full implications of that choice are not evident. Only a life lived in close union with Our Lord will lead us to a full understanding of what that decision, perhaps made years earlier, means.

More should be done to publicise the work of marriage tribunals, and many more couples should come forward to apply for nullity when their marriages have broken down and they have obtained a civil divorce. Many so-called “lapsed” Catholics would love to return but are put off because of marital

breakdown. They want to receive Holy Communion but know that they cannot. Apply, and peace and deep happiness will result that are a joy to behold.

*Christopher Bull
Canterbury*

AQUINAS AND SARTRE

Dear Editor,

In his extended review of Stratford Caldecott's *The Radiance of Being* (May/June issue), Fr Hugh Mackenzie contrasts that book's espousal of “the ‘Renaissance-Platonic’ view of the human person as body-soul-spirit” with the *Faith* movement's prioritising of mind as the metaphysical first principle. This principle means that “being-known-by-mind is a relationship constitutive of and causative of a creaturely thing”. But is this position unique to the *Faith* movement?

Joseph Pieper in his *The Silence of St Thomas* compares the thought of St Thomas and Jean-Paul Sartre. He proposes that if they were both reduced to “syllogistic form, one would realise that both start with the same ‘major premise’, namely from this principle: things have an essential nature only in so far as they are fashioned by thought”. He then contrasts Sartre with

St Thomas. For Sartre, “because there exists no creative intelligence which could have designed man and all natural things... therefore there is no nature in things that are not manufactured and artificial”.

However, “St Thomas on the contrary declares: Because and in so far as God has creatively thought things, just so and to that extent have they a nature.” Perhaps herein lies the reason for the difficulty experienced today in defending and expounding the doctrine of the soul noted by Fr Mackenzie in his review. Modernity is Sartrean rather than Thomist. And this is a hostile environment for the doctrine of the soul because this doctrine teaches that man's nature is specific to him and so different from that of other animals in being spiritual as well as physical.

Take out creative intelligence (God) and we are left with an account of humanity in which man belongs only to biological nature – which means that, like all such beings, his identity is essentially unstable and mutable. That is the metaphysical first principle of atheist evolution, as well as Sartre's existentialism, but the result either way is the same: “the abolition of man” as CS Lewis warned.

*Fr Simon Heans
Our Lady of the Rosary, Blackfen*

Got a comment? Get in touch.

Comments should be kept to less than 250 words approximately and sent to:

editor@faith.org.uk



Comment on the Comments

By William Oddie

Who's Afraid of John Cornwell?

Why is John Cornwell such a source of recurrent irritation to so many Catholics (certainly among the ones I know)? Why don't we just ignore him? Some liberal writers are substantial enough to be impossible to ignore. It is historically not feasible, for instance, simply to discount Hans Küng, for all that his influence is now a largely spent force (as Benedict XVI's is not). In England, the late Peter Hebblethwaite was an enemy of Ratzingerian (ie mainstream) Catholicism intellectually formidable enough to make it, here at least, not possible entirely to disregard him. Without him, *The Tablet* is a shadow of its former self, its capacity for mischief vastly reduced.

But Cornwell? Cornwell is an enigma. He has (for reasons I find it difficult to fathom) the reputation of being an intellectual heavyweight: Catholic writers clearly opposed to him tend to feel obliged to make some such acknowledgement, perhaps in the interests of fairness. Christopher Howse, for instance, in his review of Cornwell's latest onslaught against the Catholic tradition, *The Dark Box: A Secret History of Confession*, observes that "Cornwell is a humane man with a sharp intellect".

But does someone with a sharp intellect really bandy about quite so many assertions for which he offers no evidence of any kind, as though they were so well known that proof is unnecessary? I have met him, and found him agreeable and surprisingly forgiving of the sharp things I had written about him in the past. Humane, certainly. But a writer "with a sharp intellect"? His thinking, it seems to me, is too ill-disciplined for that to be an appropriate description.

Take the attack, in his polemic against John Paul II, *The Pope in Winter*, on that pontiff's beatification of Pius IX. An early example of poor judgment and "the presumptuous influence of

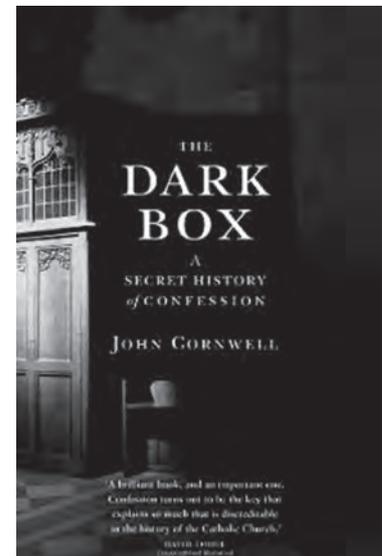
reactionary aides", he charges, "was the announcement made by the pope ... that Pius IX, Pio Nono, was to be beatified in the autumn of the jubilee year ... He was chiefly famous for calling the First Vatican Council, which declared the dogma of papal infallibility and papal primacy, although he was known for his infamous Syllabus of Errors which denounced democracy, pluralism, workers' unions and newspapers. A fine exemplar for the 21st century to be sure!"

Such writing (typical enough), as I wrote at the time, is so crass, and at so many levels, that it is difficult to know where to begin. We were told that Vatican I "declared the dogma of papal infallibility and papal primacy", as though they were the same thing. But papal primacy, from the earliest centuries, had been taken for granted: it was no purpose of the Council to "declare" it.

As for papal infallibility, that too was widely believed; Vatican I simply defined it formally. The controversy at the time was over whether its definition was "opportune" (Newman, for instance, never doubted that the doctrine was *true*). The implication that the reactionary Pio Nono somehow invented papal infallibility *ex nihilo* and then imposed it, and that this indictment, by extension, applies also to John Paul II, is simply laughable.

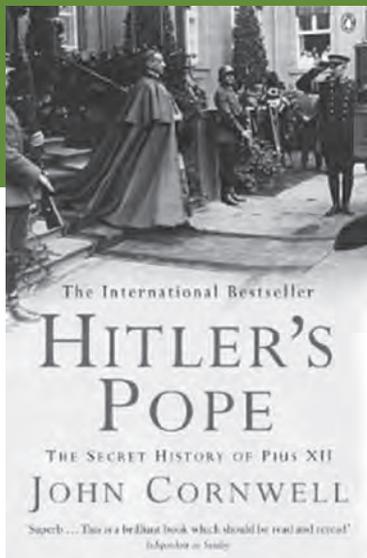
And as for the Syllabus of Errors, not one article of it mentions democracy, workers' unions or newspapers, and if it rejects "pluralism" (not a concept anyone at the time was familiar with) it is mostly in the sense that any religion which claims to be true, rather than a matter of opinion, rejects it. Pio Nono was certainly intolerant of other religions, but with few exceptions so, at the time, was nearly everyone else. The famous (for liberals the notorious) article 80 of the Syllabus – which condemns as an error the proposition

that "the Roman Pontiff may and ought to reconcile himself to, and to agree with, progress, liberalism and modern civilisation" – seems reasonable enough. As Saint John Paul often declared, Christians today are called on to be "signs of contradiction" (rather than signs of the kind of unvarying conformity with "progress, liberalism and modern civilisation" which you will find in the pages of *The Tablet* and of Cornwell's books).



This brings us back to my opening question: "Why don't we just ignore him"? Perhaps at the present time, it's because the present pontificate has excited (surely delusive) hopes that were dying out under Benedict XVI, of a liberal revival, of a new quickening of the "Spirit of Vatican II".

We are all a little on edge, perhaps. But Cornwell always did have the gift of being intensely irritating to many who love the Church, of mounting violent assaults, often at first effectively, against the most seemingly unassailable bulwarks of the Catholic tradition, in a way which has sometimes made him seem a real threat. And he has from time to time succeeded in being remarkably destructive – or, at least, in swinging in behind a process



“At times his book on confession reads like a Gothic novel of the more salacious kind”

of successful destruction already under way. Consider the extraordinary phenomenon of the devastation during the Sixties and Seventies of the reputation of one of the great popes of the last century, Pius XII, in which Cornwell’s book *Hitler’s Pope* played a prominent part.

As Rabbi David Dalin, for example, points out: “The technique for recent attacks on Pius XII is simple. It requires only that favourable evidence be read in the worst light and treated to the strictest test, while unfavourable evidence is read in the best light and treated to no test.

“So, for instance, when Cornwell sets out in *Hitler’s Pope* to prove Pius an anti-Semite (an accusation even the pontiff’s bitterest opponents have rarely levelled), he makes much of Pacelli’s reference in a 1917 letter to the ‘Jewish cult’ – as though for an Italian Catholic prelate born in 1876 the word ‘cult’ had the same resonances it has in English today, and as though Cornwell himself does not casually refer to the Catholic cult of the Assumption and the cult of the Virgin Mary.”

Cornwell’s book – the cover of which shows a German soldier standing to attention and an officer saluting as the then papal nuncio to Germany left that country’s foreign ministry (the outrageous implication being that here were Nazi stormtroopers saluting the Führer’s acknowledged ally, Pius XII) – was marketed by its publishers with the announcement that Pius XII was “the most dangerous churchman in modern history”, without whom “Hitler might never have ... been able to press

forward.” Did Cornwell ever repudiate that? I ask the question.

Back to his latest onslaught, *The Dark Box*. According to the publisher’s burb – presumably either approved or actually written by Cornwell – confession has “been a source of controversy and oppression, culminating ... with the scandal of clerical child abuse. ... Cornwell takes a hard look at the long evolution of confession.”

Christopher Howse, however, finds that he’s not centrally concerned with the confessional at all: “The real subject of the book is sex, and not the ordinary sex that Mum and Dad enjoyed, or even the romantic adultery of a Paolo and Francesca [da Rimini], but nasty furtive sex – of sex solicited by confessors, abuse of minors, girls or boys, of masturbation, guilt and shame.”

“Cornwell’s focus on the dark side”, Howse continues, “leads him into generalised accusations. ‘Criminality among confessors was widespread and entrenched by the 15th century.’ How widespread? As widespread as smoking today, or as widespread as heroin? In the 17th century, we are told, ‘alcoholism among mendicant confessors was common’. Or is that ‘not common’?”

“At times”, says Howse, “the book reads like a Gothic novel of the more salacious kind, with wooden dildoes and a Venetian confessor-seducer sitting ‘like a great Turk in his seraglio’. Cornwell mentions febrile 19th-century bestsellers like *The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk*. Yet in his own rambles around the seamier side of priestly conduct, he is happy to draw on a 19th-century work by HC Lea, the notorious anti-Catholic historian who loved nothing better than a tale of torture and the Inquisition.”

For Cornwell, it’s all grist to his mill. “His compilation of misery leaves a nasty taste,” Howse observes, before adding: “Who is it meant for? Readers who enjoy voyeuristic wallowing in

collected details of sexual crimes are unlikely to gain a realistic perspective.”

Professor Eamonn Duffy is more sympathetic, and even describes what Howse calls this “compilation of misery” as “a major [sic] contribution to the Catholic Church’s examination of conscience about the roots and circumstances of sexual abuse”. But he also insists that “the role of confession in moderating ... sins, cultivating civility and a sense of right and wrong, is also a necessary part of the story. ... For a rounded historical assessment of confession itself, we will need to look for a different kind of audit.”

The three books I have touched on share the same underlying subject and a common agenda, which Cornwell supports by the “evidence” he deploys.

The underlying agenda is Cornwell’s own fundamental criticism of the Catholic Church as it is and ever has been. *The Dark Box* describes what he thinks it is really like. As a young person he was, he tells us, himself propositioned by a priest, though that did not deter him from proceeding towards ordination, studying first at Oscott then at St Benet’s Hall.

As a postgraduate student he abandoned the Catholic religion and became an agnostic, though he returned to the Church 20 years later when he married a Catholic, who brought up their children as Catholics. But his return, it seems, was on his own terms, his abandonment of Catholicism only partly, perhaps, repudiated.

He is now, once more, in communion with the Holy See. But his condemnations of that See appear to be undiminished. That makes him just the sort of Catholic the secular press loves to quote, and the sort of Catholic writer whose “controversial” (ie annoying) books secular publishers love to bring out.

They only do it, of course, to annoy – because they know it teases. It also sells copies. 🍀

Catholicism: a New Synthesis

by Edward Holloway

Pope John Paul II gave the blueprint for catechetical renewal with the Catechism of the Catholic Church. *Catholicism: a New Synthesis* seeks to show why such teaching makes perfect sense in a world which has come of age in scientific understanding. It offers a way out of the current intellectual crisis, a way which is both modern and orthodox.

£14.00 503pp

Sr Roseann Reddy, Faith-Keyway Trust Publications Office,
104 Albert Road, Glasgow G42 8DR



J. Lewis Statues

Religious Art works: Created, Designed or Refurbished

Keeping our Churches Beautiful...

- Statue refurbishment
- New paintings, icons and triptychs
- Sculpture works
- Furniture refurbished
- Pedestals
- Custom-made linens and altar sets
- Design advice



Jeanette Lewis

4 Orchard Hey, Old Roan, Liverpool L30 8RY | Email: jlewisstatues@btinternet.com
Telephone: 0151 284 7024 | www.jlewisstatues.co.uk

PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

EDWARD HOLLOWAY

Volume 1:

A Critique of an Abstract Scholasticism
and Principles Towards Replacement

Volume 2:

Rethinking the Existential

Volume 3:

Noumenon and Phenomenon:
Rethinking the Greeks in the
Age of Science

Price per volume: **£5.00** +p&p

Available from:

Sr Roseann Reddy, Faith-Keyway Trust Publications Office, 104 Albert Road, Glasgow G42 8DR



PERSPECTIVES IN THEOLOGY

Vol. One

Christ the Sacrament of Creation
Edward Holloway

The first volume of collected writings by Fr Edward Holloway seeks to present his contributions to Faith magazine to a wider readership. A champion of Catholic orthodoxy, Fr Holloway sought to bring about a new reconciliation between science and religion. In this way he anticipated and also participated in Pope John Paul II's programme of intellectual renewal in the Church. In this volume you will find stimulating writing on the key themes of his synthetic perspective, including the existence of God; the development of Scripture; Christ as Son of Man; Mary Immaculate; the nature of the Church, and much more.

160 pages **£8.95**

ISBN 1-871217-50-4

Available from:

Sr Roseann Reddy, Faith-Keyway Trust Publications Office, 104 Albert Road, Glasgow G42 8DR

faith

From the Aims and Ideals of

Faith Movement

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

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

www.faith.org.uk

