



# faith

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**Schools and the Faith**

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**Christmas acrostic**

*A. M. Hill*

**The cosmic meaning of the Eucharist**

*Roger Nesbitt*

**The vocation of a Catholic teacher**

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# Schools and the Faith

The Church was running schools across Britain long before there was any State involvement. There were Catholic schools even in the years when the Church was cruelly persecuted in Britain. In more recent times, Catholics ran schools from the early 19th century onwards, with some public funding from the 1850s. Large numbers of children were educated in this way. The State only caught up in 1870, by which time the Church had long led the way and set the tone and standards.

Will our Catholic schools be allowed to continue in freedom? OFSTED, the frequently jargon-laden bit of officialdom which inspects schools and declares them to be of an appropriate standard, seems to be confused about what it is allowed to do. There are reports of OFSTED inspectors demanding that schools impose a weird agenda on children, teaching that it is possible for a boy to become a girl and vice versa, that sexual identity is not something specific, that all our knowledge of biology on this subject has been wrong.

It is difficult to recruit Catholic teachers: the collapse in Catholic practice over the past decades – noted repeatedly in FAITH magazine, where solutions to the problem are also always presented – means that the pool of available candidates is in any case small. Recruiting good head teachers is even harder – some local authorities have resorted to establishing networked schools with a head in charge of two or three at once.

And will the system of public funding for Christian schools – centred on the fact that such schools existed long before those established by any other authority in Britain – cease if the schools insist on retaining their Christian identity?

Avoiding these questions by smugly announcing that we don't need schools and that parents can teach their own children at home simply won't do. We cannot consign children to a bleak future dependent on the whims of Mum's latest boyfriend and occasional visits from a social worker committed to the sort of agenda described above. The Church has the right and duty to educate children, and has a special concern for the children of the poor – including the spiritually and culturally poor. For many, school will be the only place where they encounter God – who longs for them to be allowed to do so. Children who are privileged to have a faithfully married mother and father who are functionally literate and have a desire to instruct their offspring, and a commitment to the Church, are privileged indeed: for such children, home is already a place of education and spiritual nourishment. For the others – we must offer hope and practical assistance.

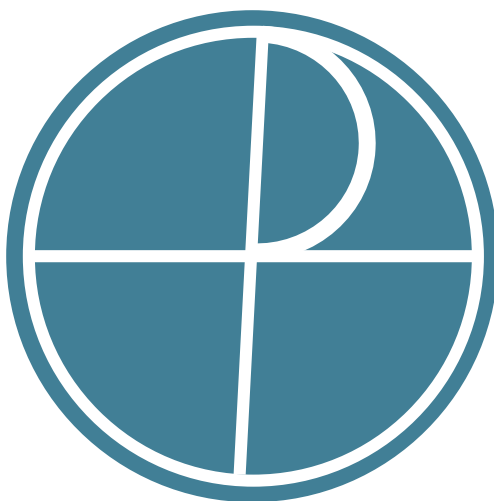
For decades, discussion about Catholic schools in Britain centred on demands for a fair share of the public funds available. Today this overlaps with debates about the actual content of religious education and about the freedom to offer children what the Church really teaches.

We need a robust approach: Church-based schools are popular, sometimes embarrassingly so. People lie and fib in order to get their children into our schools. “Yes, Father, we are regular Mass-goers”. “Er...we’ve only just moved into the parish”. “Well, this is sort of our real address – we sort of live with my nan...” We must defend our schools with confidence and the knowledge that we are offering something that large numbers of people want.

We must ensure that our Catholic schools teach Catholic doctrine, and uphold Catholic values – including the values that might clash with current trends in British society: marriage as the lifelong union of a man and a woman, the need for human life to be cherished from conception to natural death, the truth about our sexual identity as male or female.

We must insist that Religious Education in Catholic schools is centred on the fullness of the Catholic Faith as expressed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

As this first term of the School Year ends, our Catholic schools will be marking Advent and Christmas with carol services, Nativity plays, parties and celebrations. May they continue to be beacons of light in an often dark scene of moral and spiritual confusion in modern Britain.



# Christmas

Child of the Angel's call,  
Here at last, by oxen's stall,  
Rightly giving joy to all.  
It's our wish to join you there,  
Shepherds, kings, with them we share,  
Time eclipsed, we join their prayer.  
May each Christmas that we spend,  
Always find us as your friend;  
Seeking service without end.

*A. M. Hill*



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# The Cosmic Meaning of the Eucharist

ROGER NESBITT



*"The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us."  
(John 1:14)*

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**W**hat is the place of the Eucharist in the plan of God?

The Last Supper took place the night before Jesus died on the cross. It was His last message to His disciples and to us. Two questions should be asked – What is the importance of the Eucharist in the plan of Christ? A further question arises - is there a cosmic significance to the Eucharist?

The first question is fairly easy to answer: the Eucharist is the Lord's own final testament to the meaning of His whole life and work. *From the Catechism of the Catholic Church:*

"The Eucharist is the heart and the summit of the Church's life, for in it Christ associates his Church and all her members with his sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered once for all on the cross to his Father; by this sacrifice he pours out the graces of salvation on his Body which is the Church." (CCC 1407)

"By the consecration the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is brought about. Under the consecrated species of bread and wine Christ himself, living and glorious, is present in a true, real and substantial manner: his Body and his Blood, with his soul and his divinity." (CCC 1413)

## Christ and Creation

On the place of Christ in creation, Scripture gives us a clear answer – that the universe was only created for Him. This is sometimes called the Scotist view of Creation:

"In the beginning was the Word: and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him." (John 1:1)

"He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth: everything visible and everything invisible." (Col 1:15)

"In the last days he has spoken to us through his Son... through whom he made



everything that is." (Hebrews 1:1-2)

"He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him." (Eph 1:4)

## The Word made flesh

In his Encyclical Letter *Mysterium Fidei* Pope Paul VI, speaking of devotion to Jesus in the Eucharist outside Mass, says:

"It is not only while the sacrifice is being offered, the sacrament is constituted, that Christ is truly Emmanuel, 'God with us'. He is so after the offering of the sacrifice, the making of the sacrament, as long as the Eucharist is kept in churches and oratories. For day by day he is in our midst, he is dwelling among us full of grace and truth (cf. John 1:14)...." (para 67)

Pope Paul VI refers to John 1:14. I would like to suggest that this important text refers not only to the Incarnation of the Son of God in Bethlehem but also to the Holy Eucharist and that it is prophetic of the Church's development of doctrine, supporting that development, and putting it within a cosmic context.

## Why "tabernacled" among us?

It is not generally realised that the second part of St John's key statement on the Incarnation, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt (or lived) among us" should be translated literally as "*tabernacled* among us". This translation of *eskenosen* in Greek means that God "*pitched his tent*" among his People. This unique expression is used in the Old Testament of the "Tent of Meeting" or "Tabernacle" in the desert where Moses and Aaron went to speak with God, and which was considered the place where God lived, a constant presence among them and beside them.

## The Tabernacle became the Temple

When the Israelites entered the promised land the Tabernacle, or Tent of Meeting, eventually became the Temple of God in Jerusalem, the centre of Jewish worship and liturgy. There in the Holy of Holies, God dwelt in a special way among his People. The Temple was also the place of sacrifice, and in the Holy Place were located the Bread of the Presence, the Altar of Incense, and the seven branched candlestick which showed that in the Holy Place God was the Light and Life of his People. Most probably the Sanctuary Lamp in our Catholic churches derives from this Jewish custom.

## Jesus is presented as the New Temple

The words which follow in this passage, "we saw his glory" (Jn 1:14) are also related to the "*overshadowing*" of Mary by the Holy Spirit in the conception of Christ (Luke

1:35) and the glory of the Lord filling the “Tent of Meeting” (the Tabernacle) in the desert – “The cloud overshadowed the meeting tent and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle” (Exodus 40:34-35). So St John is describing the Incarnation as also the coming of Jesus the New Temple.<sup>2</sup>

This theme of Jesus as the New Temple, where God dwells among us, and also the Body which is sacrificed, is central to St John’s Gospel. Surely it is no coincidence that the cleansing of the Temple where Jesus says: “Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up”. (John 2:19) is put at the beginning of his Gospel. John says that Jesus was referring to his own Body. We will see later that this expression also has Eucharistic connotations since John uses the word “*soma*” in Greek, the same word used by Jesus at the Last Supper for His Eucharistic Body.

### The Eucharistic “flesh” of Jesus

Further confirmation of a Eucharistic significance of the Incarnation is also seen in John’s expression, “The Word was made flesh (*sarx* in Greek)”. Jesus uses the identical word recorded later in John’s Gospel for the Holy Eucharist: “The bread that I shall give is my flesh (*sarx*) for the life of the world.” (John 6:51), words in Greek very close to the words of consecration in the other Gospels.<sup>3</sup>

### The Incarnation and the Eucharist – essential parts of the same plan

In this perspective on this key text (John 1:14) we have a remarkable prophetic description not only of the Incarnation but also of the Holy Eucharist and of the Tabernacle, as part of the very plan of God in sending Christ into the world.

In every Catholic church throughout the world we can see a fulfilment and a continuation through time of the Incarnation. On the altar the “Word is made flesh” at every Mass, and behind the altar, Jesus Christ is “Tabernacled among us”. The Old Temple was only in Jerusalem. The New Temple, the Living Real Presence of Jesus is now in all our churches.

### Jesus in the Tabernacle at the heart of the church

Much more could be written about this beautiful theme, and of how St John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, develops it in his Gospel. Is there not here in this text, John 1:14, the nucleus of a scriptural and theological development of doctrine concerning the Reservation of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament? Does not the whole design of the Tabernacle in the form of a tent, and the use of the veil and the sanctuary lamp support this teaching? Must not a further consequence be that the Reservation of the “Word made Flesh”, the Lord of the cosmos and the Lord of history, can only be in the most prominent and central position in all our churches?



## The Eucharist on the “altar of the world”

Pope John Paul II refers to the cosmic dimension of the Eucharist in his Encyclical Letter *Eucharistia de Ecclesia* (2003) para 8: “When I think of the Eucharist, and look at my life as a priest, as a Bishop and as the Successor of Peter, I naturally recall the many times and places in which I was able to celebrate it. I have been able to celebrate Holy Mass in chapels built along mountain paths, on lakeshores and seacoasts; I have celebrated it on altars built in stadiums and in city squares... This varied scenario of celebrations of the Eucharist has given me a powerful experience of its universal and, so to speak, cosmic character. Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated *on the altar of the world*. It unites heaven and earth. It embraces and permeates all creation. The Son of God became man in order to restore all creation, in one supreme act of praise, to the One who made it from nothing. He, the Eternal High Priest who by the blood of his Cross entered the eternal sanctuary, thus gives back to the Creator and Father all creation redeemed. He does so through the priestly ministry of the Church, to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity. Truly this is the *mysterium fidei* which is accomplished in the Eucharist: the world which came forth from the hands of God the Creator now returns to him redeemed by Christ.”

## The cosmic significance of the Eucharist

The prologue of St John’s gospel already links the Incarnation to the Creation of the universe. The Bible begins with the words, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1) but St John says “In the beginning was the Word” (John 1:1). Everything was created through the Word (“*Logos*” in Greek meaning all the Intelligence and Wisdom of God) and created for the Word to be made flesh - in Bethlehem, on the Altar and in the Tabernacle. Therefore Jesus Christ is predestined from the beginning, and is part of the very plan of God in the poising of matter at the creation of the universe, *but so is the Holy Eucharist*.

Confirmation of this is given in the words of Jesus recorded in St John’s Gospel chapter six, when he gives the most profound meaning of the Holy Eucharist. Our Lord, the greatest of all teachers, expounds the meaning of the Mass and of Holy Communion in a series of seven key phrases of progressively deeper meaning. Jesus says that the Holy Eucharist is:

“The bread of God which has come down from heaven”; (John 6:33)

“I am the bread of life”; (6:35)

“I am the living bread which has come down from heaven”; (6:51)

“My flesh for the life of the world”; (6:51)

“My flesh is real food and my blood is real drink”; (6:55)

The final definition, which Our Lord gives us, is that the Eucharist is simply “Me”. This is completely reflected in the teaching of the Church that in the Eucharist the bread and wine are changed by transubstantiation into Jesus Himself in Person:

“As I who am sent by the living Father myself draw life from the Father so whoever eats *me* will draw life from me”. (6: 57)

## The whole plan of God from the beginning

In this key text Jesus links the whole plan of God from the beginning to the Holy Eucharist – “As I who am sent by the living Father ... so whoever eats *me* will draw life from me”. Jesus was sent into the world to be the Bread of Life for us. The Mass is part of the plan of God from the beginning of creation some fifteen billion years ago! The Holy Eucharist is therefore of universal and cosmic significance.

Pope John Paul II presented Jesus as “the Lord of the cosmos and Lord of history”. Therefore this profound and prophetic text can give us a vision of the plan of God – “The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us”. “Come let us adore him, Christ the Lord” – at Bethlehem, on the Altar and in the Tabernacle.

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*Father Roger Nesbitt, a founding member of the FAITH Movement, has served as a teacher and a parish priest in the diocese of Southwark.*

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# The vocation of a Catholic teacher

*Peter Stravinskias looks at the challenge of Catholic education today*



In Ezekiel 27, the prophet is confronted with a vision of a field of dry dead bones and commanded to prophesy over them, so as to bring them back to life. Isn't that the situation in which we find ourselves in the secularized West? Unfortunately, like the Chosen People of old, most of our contemporaries don't realize that they are dead and that the culture is moribund. It is our task to demonstrate to them just how lifeless the whole culture is.

Back in the 1960s, we were told that if we could shake off the shackles of religion and morality, we would experience true and complete happiness. Religion, we heard, was an albatross, an inhibition, an obstacle to human fulfilment. Well, the shackles were certainly removed, and the result has been a disaster. We must convince our students – being convinced first of all ourselves – of the truth put forth so powerfully by Pope Benedict XVI in his inaugural homily, which in turn harked back to the inaugural homily of Pope John Paul II in 1978.

His words on that occasion constantly echo in my ears: "Do not be afraid! Open wide the doors for Christ!" The Pope was addressing the mighty, the powerful of this world, who feared that Christ might take away something of their power if they were to let him in, if they were to allow the faith to be free. Yes, he would certainly have taken something away from them: the dominion of corruption, the manipulation of law and the freedom to do as they pleased. But he would not have taken away anything that pertains to human freedom or dignity, or to the building of a just society.

The Pope was also speaking to everyone, especially the young. "Are we not perhaps all afraid in some way? If we let Christ enter fully into our lives, if we open ourselves totally to him, are we not afraid that He might take something away from us? Are we not perhaps afraid to give up something significant, something unique, something that makes life so beautiful? Do we not then risk ending up diminished and deprived of our freedom? And once again the Pope said: No! If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation. And so, today, with great strength and great

conviction, on the basis of long personal experience of life, I say to you, dear young people: Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ – and you will find true life”.

## Effective

That is our noble calling – to teach those committed to our care that in following Christ and His Church, we lose nothing that is “free, beautiful and great” – and gain much more besides. Every Catholic educator must understand his or her calling and glory in it. Just what kind of understanding will enable you to be effective proclaimers of Gospel living and Catholic truth?

First of all, before becoming a teacher, one must be a student, a disciple. An old Latin adage instructs us: “*Nemo dat quod non habet*” (No one can give what he doesn’t have). One must enroll oneself in the School of Jesus and, having gone through a thorough education in the faith and a serious formation in virtuous living, only then will one be able to teach others. Here’s what the Congregation for Catholic Education said in 1977:

“By their witness and their behaviour teachers are of the first importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools. It is, therefore, indispensable to ensure their continuing formation through some form of suitable pastoral provision. This must aim to animate them as witnesses of Christ in the classroom and tackle the problems of their particular apostolate, especially regarding a Christian vision of the world and of education, problems also connected with the art of teaching in accordance with the principles of the Gospel”. (“The Catholic School,” n. 78)

## Credible Teachers

Only once we are evangelized can we become evangelists. Only once we become disciples can we be credible teachers. In this regard, it is worth recalling the insightful observation of Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, his 1975 apostolic exhortation: “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses” (n. 41). Or, as the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council before him put it in their Decree on Christian education, *Gravissimum Educationis*:

“... let teachers recognize that the Catholic school depends upon them almost entirely for the accomplishment of its goals and programs. They should therefore be very carefully prepared so that both in secular and religious knowledge they are equipped with suitable qualifications and also with a pedagogical skill that is in keeping with the findings of the contemporary world. Intimately linked in charity

to one another and to their students and endowed with an apostolic spirit, may teachers by their life as much as by their instruction bear witness to Christ, the unique Teacher. Let them work as partners with parents and together with them in every phase of education. . . . Let them do all they can to stimulate their students to act for themselves and even after graduation to continue to assist them with advice, friendship and by establishing special associations imbued with the true spirit of the Church. The work of these teachers, this sacred synod declares, is in the real sense of the word an apostolate most suited to and necessary for our times and at once a true service offered to society". (n. 8)

St. John Paul II, the great apostle of Catholic education – who often referred to Catholic schools as the very “heart of the Church” – in a 1996 discourse to the International Office of Catholic Education likewise addressed our topic in great detail:

### St John Paul

“It is of supreme importance that these educators, who have come of their own accord to offer their services in a Catholic institution or have been recruited by the administration of the school, have a precise vision of a Christian education based on the Gospel message. It is a sacred duty for

all to bear witness individually and, at the same time communally, to their faith. . . . Each one, in the discipline he teaches, will know how to find the opportune circumstance to have the youth discover that science and faith are two different yet complementary readings of the universe and of history. . . . Catholic education must be outstanding for the professional competence of its teachers, the witness of their strong faith and the atmosphere of respect, mutual assistance and Gospel joy which permeate the entire institution”.

*Catholic education must be outstanding for the professional competence of its teachers, the witness of their strong faith and the atmosphere of respect, mutual assistance and Gospel joy which permeate the entire institution*

### Personal commitment

Notice how the sainted Pope weaves together several threads: personal commitment to Christ, professional competence, permeation of the curriculum with religious and moral values (in other words, religion isn’t only taught in a half-hour religion class) – all leading to an atmosphere of genuine Christian life.

Pope Francis the Jesuit, himself a former high school teacher of Latin and chemistry, in a 2014 address to the Congregation of Catholic Education spoke at length about the importance of a proper preparation of “formators” in our Catholic schools. After

stating the obvious need for such teachers to be academically qualified, he also calls for them to be “coherent witnesses.” And how is that achieved? He tells us:

For this, an educator is himself in need of permanent formation. It is necessary to invest so that teachers and supervisors may maintain a high level of professionalism and also maintain their faith and the strength of their spiritual impetus. And in this permanent formation too I would suggest a need for retreats and spiritual exercises for educators. It is a beautiful thing to offer courses on the subject, but it is also necessary to offer spiritual exercises and retreats focused on prayer! For consistency requires effort but most of all it is a gift and a grace. We must ask for it!

Isn't that what we are doing today?

The Pope mentions prayer as an essential ingredient of the life of a Catholic educator.

In a conversation with students of Jesuit schools in June of 2013, Pope Francis zeroed in on the essential role of teachers, all the while encouraging them not to lose hope in the face of what Pope Benedict termed “an educational emergency,” that is, a worldwide pedagogical meltdown. Francis said:

“Do not be disheartened in the face of the difficulties that the educational challenge presents! Educating is not a profession but an attitude, a way of being; in order to educate it is necessary to step out of ourselves and be among young people, to accompany them in the stages of their growth and to set ourselves beside them.

Give them hope and optimism for their journey in the world. Teach them to see the beauty and goodness of creation and of man who always retains the Creator's hallmark. But above all with your life be witnesses of what you communicate. Educators . . . pass on knowledge and values with their words; but their words will have an incisive effect on children and young people if they are accompanied by their witness, their consistent way of life. Without consistency it is impossible to educate! . . .”

Thus collaboration in a spirit of unity and community among the various educators is essential and must be fostered and encouraged. School can and must be a catalyst, it must be a place of encounter and convergence of the entire educating community, with the sole objective of training and helping to develop mature people who are simple, competent and honest, who know how to love with fidelity, who can live life as a response to God's call, and their future profession as a service to society.

I trust you did not miss his emphasis yet again on the need for a consistent witness of life on the part of Catholic school teachers. But he also stresses that this is a communal enterprise; to his way of thinking (and the Church's), this involves parents as well and especially. And don't miss his emphasis on providing young people with a perspective of hopefulness – in a world so driven to hopelessness and despair.



## Not to give in to discouragement

You will recall that in one Pope Francis' talks, he urged teachers not to give in to discouragement. Permit me to piggy-back on that idea in three ways.

First, at times we hear people say that Johnny went to twelve years of Catholic school but hasn't darkened the door of a church since graduation. While this is surely regrettable, it is also evidence that what we do in our schools is catechesis and evangelisation, not brain-washing. If every Catholic school graduate emerged a devout, practising Catholic, we might have cause to wonder.

Not that we wouldn't want that to be the case – we do – but grace is offered and can be refused. As St. John Paul was fond of saying, the faith is proposed, not imposed.

Second, we have something to learn from the parable of the sower, wherein we hear of the various types of soil in which the seed of the Word of God is sown. While we teachers are used to assigning a grade of 65 or 70 as passing, what does Jesus say about a passing grade for a sower of the seed, that is, a Catholic educator? The Master Teacher says a teacher who succeeds 25% of the time is indeed a success. Why? Because, as St. Thomas Aquinas taught, "grace builds on nature." We can only do so much with what we are presented. Or, as Cardinal Dolan of New York puts in a one of his homey images, "You can only make gnocchi with the dough you're given." Which leads to my last point.

*We need to, can, and must catechise and evangelise two generations at once – and not infrequently three. That ought not to be viewed as a burden but as an exhilarating opportunity*

Children are coming to us today all too often from homes where the parents don't know how to parent because they were never properly parented. Therefore, teachers today – more than ever before – truly stand in loco parentis (in the place of parents). We need to, can, and must catechise and evangelise two generations at once – and not infrequently three. That ought not to be viewed as a burden but as an exhilarating opportunity.

St. Edith Stein was a consummate educator. The Carmelite martyr of Auschwitz maintained that it is the teacher's task to help students "develop their gifts and talents and find their own place in the community of the classroom where they can contribute to this community." She goes on: "Teachers who practice their vocation in the above manner pave the way for the recovery of family and nation."

But then, very realistically, she add "Should it be too late for that, then in any case, [the teacher] works for the Communion of Saints."

When all is said and done, that's what it's really all about – working for the Communion of Saints. That is, saving ourselves through our noble vocation as

teachers and helping to save as many of our students and their families as we can.

It is rare to see immediate results for our efforts. Sometimes the affirmation comes years later; sometimes, not at all.

Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman – pre-eminent promoter of Catholic education in 19th century England and an inspiration for our schools today, wrote:

God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments.

Therefore I will trust him. I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me. Still, He knows what He is about.

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*Fr Peter M. J. Stravinskias preached this homily for the Faculty Day of Prayer of St. Theresa School in Coral Gables, Florida, in August 2016.*



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# Fr Holloway and Professor Polanyi

*Simon Heans explores the work of Fr Edward Holloway and philosopher Michael Polanyi and discovers some interesting areas of convergence*



In one of the notes he wrote to the memoir prepared by his mother Agnes, Fr Holloway tells the story being stopped from doing a doctorate by his tutor at seminary. The latter informed Bishop Amigo that although his pupil's 'heart was entirely in the right place... he was not so sure of my head.' Holloway goes on to recount another experience of rejection following Vatican II 'for refusing to go along with the New Theology and publicly rebuking bishops for their rave reviews of Hans Kung and others' adding ruefully, 'I never did win'.

In this article, I want to look at some of the themes of Fr Holloway's writings in the light of the ideas of another original and controversial thinker who has often been dismissed as a maverick, the Hungarian scientist and philosopher Michael Polanyi (1891– 1976). Although his Jewish parents had him baptised as a Catholic in pre-war Budapest, he seems never to have practised the faith. However, as a philosopher of science his ideas bear a remarkable resemblance to those expounded by Fr Holloway. This is perhaps not so surprising since in his great work, *Personal Knowledge*, he tells us that 'we must now go back to St Augustine to restore the balance of our cognitive powers.'

## Locke

*Personal Knowledge* is subtitled *Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*. But what is the critical philosophy Polanyi wants us to go beyond? He answers by quoting John Locke:

How well-grounded and great soever the assurance of faith may be wherewith it is received; but faith is still not knowledge; persuasion and not certainty. This is the highest the nature of things will permit us to go in matters of revealed religion, which are therefore called matters of faith; a persuasion of our own minds, short of knowledge, is the result that determines us in such truths. (PK, 266)

The status of religious belief in the critical philosophy of which Locke was one of the first exponents is explained by Polanyi by analogy with the modern English constitution which Locke played an important role in shaping:

If divine revelation continues to be venerated, its functions – like those of the Kings and Lords of England are gradually reduced to that of being honoured on ceremonial occasions. All real power goes to the nominally Lower House of objectively demonstrable assertions. ... demonstrable assertions. (ibid,)

Although Polanyi is generous in his praise of ‘the critical movement in philosophy’ describing it as having ‘enriched us mentally and morally to an extent unrivalled

*Polanyi experienced at first hand the moral and political destruction unleashed by Scientific Positivism both as a refugee from Nazism and in his contacts with scientists in the Soviet Union during the Lysenko era*

by any period of similar duration’, he now wishes to call time on it and, somewhat paradoxically, awarding St Augustine the accolade of ‘inaugurating for the first time a post-critical philosophy.’

The Age of Augustine, roughly speaking the Middle Ages, was also a reference point for Fr Holloway in *Catholicism* - and for the same reason. Part One is entitled The Crumbling of the City of God, and the primary disintegrative force is science as presented by Locke and other more recent representatives of Polanyi’s critical philosophy movement. In the first draft of *Catholicism*, now published thanks to Fr Nesbitt as *Matter and Mind*, we find a fuller discussion than *Catholicism* offers of Fr Holloway’s view of this philosophical movement and its challenge to Christian belief. He calls it ‘the philosophy of Scientific Positivism’ (M & M) and says that it stands for ‘the government of life by the principles and factual findings of the human mind.’ Polanyi places this idea in historical context: ‘when the supernatural authority of laws, churches and sacred texts had waned or collapsed, man tried to avoid the emptiness of mere self-assertion by establishing over himself the authority of experience and reason.’

## Critical

Despite his encomium upon ‘the critical movement in philosophy’ already quoted, Polanyi clearly thinks it is now a monster. He tells us ‘that modern scientism... offers no scope for our most vital beliefs and it forces us to disguise them in farcically inadequate terms.’ Fr Holloway makes the same point: ‘Scientific Positivism has no criterion of intellectual and moral values, because these are not subject to experimental analysis and verification.’ Polanyi experienced at first hand the moral and political destruction unleashed by Scientific Positivism both as a refugee from Nazism and in his contacts with scientists in the Soviet Union during the Lysenko era. As he records, ‘Ideologies framed in these terms have enlisted man’s highest aspirations in the service of soul-destroying tyrannies.’ Fr Holloway of course also lived through the same period. He takes the same view of them as Polanyi: they are

rooted in Scientific Positivism: 'In either case we have a monistic philosophy which includes everything within an order of scientific empiricism.' (M & M 54) And the plant that grows from these roots is moral and political nihilism, Polanyi's 'emptiness of mere self-assertion'. Like Polanyi, Fr Holloway sees that 'the paradox of all these totalitarian philosophies is that they emanate from the minds of individuals, and their intrinsic certainty does not therefore transcend the individual and limited minds from which they proceed.' Their reality is 'empty self-assertion:

What a farce is all this unctuous adulation of Marx, or of Lenin... They are men like any other men, and they have not attained to their present position as apostles of the communist State by the sheer force of their mild, pacific, self-abnegating temperaments. (M & M, 55)

Fr Nesbitt tells us that he omitted some sections on Marxism from the published text of *Matter and Mind*. One can understand why since it no longer exerts the hold over minds which it once did. But if he and Polanyi are right about nihilism (Polanyi's 'empty self-assertion') being at the heart of the mentality of a culture dominated by Scientific Positivism then its occurrence is obviously not dependent on the specific form of the doctrine, be it Marxist, Fascist or whatever, in which it is expressed. In fact, the form closest to its spirit will not be doctrinal since any doctrine makes, at least in theory, a claim to general, perhaps even universal, applicability. No Marxist, for example, would be comfortable saying that his values are only an expression of his individual personality. To make this move is to go from Modernist discourses such as Marxism to Post-Modernism. But, as we have seen, this next step is the working out of the nihilistic and egotistical logic of scientism or 'critical philosophy'.

## Fr Holloway

In both *Matter and Mind* and *Catholicism*, Fr Holloway calls the phenomenon of Post-Modernism by a different name: Agnosticism. As he says, 'the essence of Agnosticism is that "you cannot prove it".' He goes on to give an example of Agnosticism in action citing 'an eminent critic and writer defending homosexual practices' in terms of a claim that there are "'many normalcies of love'". Of course, the debate has moved on from action (what homosexuals do) to being (what some suppose themselves to be) as Transgenderism has entered the public square. However, the philosophical substance of this rhetoric is the same as Homosexuality: Scientific Positivism. 'The only certitudes', Fr Holloway writes, 'are the empirical working of the mathematical sciences of matter.' Thus, as he puts it, 'There are no certainties of natural reason in the Agnostic culture, because every man is his own arbiter of what is "nature" and what is "reason" and death ends for all and for ever the tiresome debate.' (C, 13)

## The same aim

Fr Holloway and Professor Polanyi had the same aim. Their mission was to replace the false understanding of science represented by Locke and his allies. It has not yet been completed. Nearly fifty years ago Fr Holloway wrote that, 'The mentality of the priesthood, both Catholic and non-Catholic is formed in a tradition which is too exclusively that of the arts and classics.' But his solution is not 'more science and better science' as the Head of Physics at a school where I once taught averred during a staff meeting. No, his answer is 'more philosophy and better philosophy'. Fr Holloway writes: 'What they need is not an inventory of unrelated items of the physical sciences, but a philosophy of science which is also their philosophy of being'. (C, 31) In the space remaining to me, I want to suggest that, in their different ways, Fr Holloway and Professor Polanyi provide just such a philosophy.

## Idea

In the final section of Part One of Catholicism, Fr Holloway writes that Evolution is the 'The universal idea which is critical for Christian thinking today'. If the Age of Locke, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, gave us critical philosophy or Scientific Positivism, then the Age of Darwin, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, has given us Evolution. Both double as philosophies of science and being purporting to tell us what is true and real. We have seen that the first is problematic for Christian faith because it relegates faith to the realm of what, at best, *may* be true and real. Fr Holloway identifies a similar problem with Darwinism:

It was claimed that the mind which meditates the concept of evolution profoundly will find that nothing is left uncounted for... This can be done, the nervous system organised into the brain, the functions of the glands, the influence of the subconscious mind etc., all this and anything else one cares to add in qualification can take over the role of the so-called 'spiritual in the personality of man. If God cannot be directly disproved... He can be shown to be at least entirely redundant. (C, 36)

## Evolution

Despite this recognition that the philosophical presentation of Evolution has often been anti-Christian, as we know, Fr Holloway does not dispute the fact of it: 'In the matter of Evolution the factual proof came tumbling in from every science of matter as the years passed.' But before expressing this belief, Fr Holloway makes a general remark about the nature of scientific knowledge which may serve as an introduction to Polanyi's refutation of Scientific Positivism and his proposal that science is Personal Knowledge: 'It is most significant that here, as so very often in the



discoveries of science, it was not the inductive data which was the real beginning of the breakthrough in knowledge, but a deductive vision glimpsed through scanty data which thrilled and excited the mind... from then on the hunt is up for the clues and the final proof.' (ibid.,37)

In her excellent introduction to Polanyi's thought, *Michael Polanyi*, Drusilla Scott cites Polanyi's own story of how he got his PhD:

The Professor of Mathematical Physics, to whom the paper was assigned, had never heard of my subject matter. He studied my work for a bit and then asked me to explain a curious point; my result seemed correct but its derivation faulty. Admitting my mistake, I said that surely one first draws one's conclusions and then puts their derivation right. The professor just stared at me. (MP, 2)

## The Copernican revolution

Scott comments that 'later in life a number of philosophers may have shared the professor's emotions.'

Perhaps it was awareness of those feelings that persuaded Polanyi to begin *Personal Knowledge* with a discussion of the Copernican revolution. The Scientific Positivist account alleges that Copernicus was replacing a subjective view of the world in which man is at the centre with an objective one in which man is put in his place as just another and very recent arrival in the cosmos. Polanyi replies:

What is the true lesson of the Copernican revolution? Why did Copernicus exchange his actual terrestrial station for an imaginary solar standpoint? The only justification for this lay in the greater intellectual satisfaction he derived from the celestial panorama as seen from the sun instead of the earth. Copernicus gave preference to man's delight in abstract theory, at the price of rejecting the evidence of our senses, which presents us with the irrefutable fact of the sun, the moon and the stars rising daily in the east to travel across the sky towards their setting in the west. In a literal sense, therefore, the Copernican system was as anthropocentric as the Ptolemaic view, the difference being merely that it preferred to satisfy a different human affection. (PK, 3)

In Fr Holloway's words, the mind of Copernicus was 'thrilled and excited' by the 'deductive vision' offered by his heliocentric cosmology. If, Polanyi insists, Copernicus had followed the procedures of 'critical philosophy' and reasoned from his experience of the world, he would not have reached his conclusions about planetary motion.

Polanyi makes the same point about Einstein's discovery of relativity. He corrects an error which he says 'can be found in every text book of physics' (He is writing in 1958: I wonder if it still appears.) It is that Einstein put forward relativity in 1905

'in order to account for the negative result of the Mitchelson-Morley experiment, carried out in Cleveland eighteen years earlier, in 1887.' Not so, says Polanyi. He quotes Einstein's own autobiography to show that Einstein had already formulated the problem of relativity at the age of sixteen and solved it ten years later without reference to this experiment or any other. He goes on to tell us that, 'To make sure of this I addressed an enquiry to the late Professor Einstein, who confirmed the fact that "the Mitchelson-Morley experiment had a negligible effect on the discovery of relativity".' Thus Polanyi concludes that, 'When Einstein discovered rationality in nature, unaided by any observation that had not been available for at least fifty years before, our positivistic textbooks promptly covered up the scandal by an appropriately embellished account of his discovery.' (PK, 10. 11)

## Knowledge

At the beginning of this article, I quoted Polanyi's belief that it is necessary to return to St Augustine 'to restore the balance of our cognitive powers.' Augustine taught, Polanyi explains, 'that all knowledge was the gift of grace, for which we must strive under the guidance of antecedent belief: nisi crederitis, non intelligis.' As we have seen, Polanyi uses the term 'rationality in nature' as a synonym for Einstein's theory of relativity. Here the philosopher of science is translating the language of the scientist into the idiom of universality in which he deals. And this is exactly what Fr Holloway does also by coining the phrase familiar to readers of this magazine: The Unity-Law of Control and Direction. This 'rationality in nature' is an 'antecedent belief'. logically prior to the actual business of scientific investigation because, in Polanyi's words, it is 'a higher power that reveals to us knowledge lying beyond the range of observation and reason'. It is the premise from which all scientific research proceeds. And it is more than a premise. Polanyi clearly agrees with St Augustine that it is 'a gift of grace'. Polanyi's programme for rebalancing human thinking turns out to be theological as well as philosophical. He urges us to 'recognize belief once more as the source of all knowledge' and insists that scientific research is carried on only within 'a fiduciary framework'. (PK, 266)

## Dogma and practices

Parts One to Three of *Personal Knowledge* expounds the dogmas and practices of this world of scientific faith. In these pages, we find his philosophy of science as Personal Knowledge involving, *inter alia*, Articulation, Commitment, Conviviality, Tacit Assent and Intellectual Passions. Part Four (entitled Knowing and Being) moves from philosophy of science (what Man knows) to philosophy of being (what Man is). Here Polanyi, like Fr Holloway, outlines an evolutionary philosophy of human being. In the

final chapter of *Personal Knowledge, The Rise of Man*, Polanyi tells us that, 'We must face the fact that life has actually arisen from inanimate matter, and that human beings... have evolved from the parental zygote in which each of us had his individual origins.' However, despite this firm affirmation of the existence of evolution, Polanyi rejects the theory of Natural Selection. He argues that it 'necessarily overlooks the fact that the consecutive steps of a long evolutionary process – like the rise of human consciousness – cannot be determined merely by their adaptive advantage, since these advantages form part of such progress only in so far as they *prove adaptive in a peculiar way, namely along the lines of a continuous evolutionary achievement.*' (PK, 385 emphasis original) Fr Holloway makes the same point as follows: 'Environment may favour or may destroy the life mechanism... but an intrinsic modification of pattern-of-being from the invisible cell to the primates is something quite beyond that.' (M&M, 100) Polanyi adds that 'the ordering principle underlying such a persistent creative trend is necessarily overlooked or denied by the theory of natural selection'. And Polanyi has already explained this 'ordering principle' in terms which parallel Fr Holloway's Law of Control and Direction.

### Bringing it together

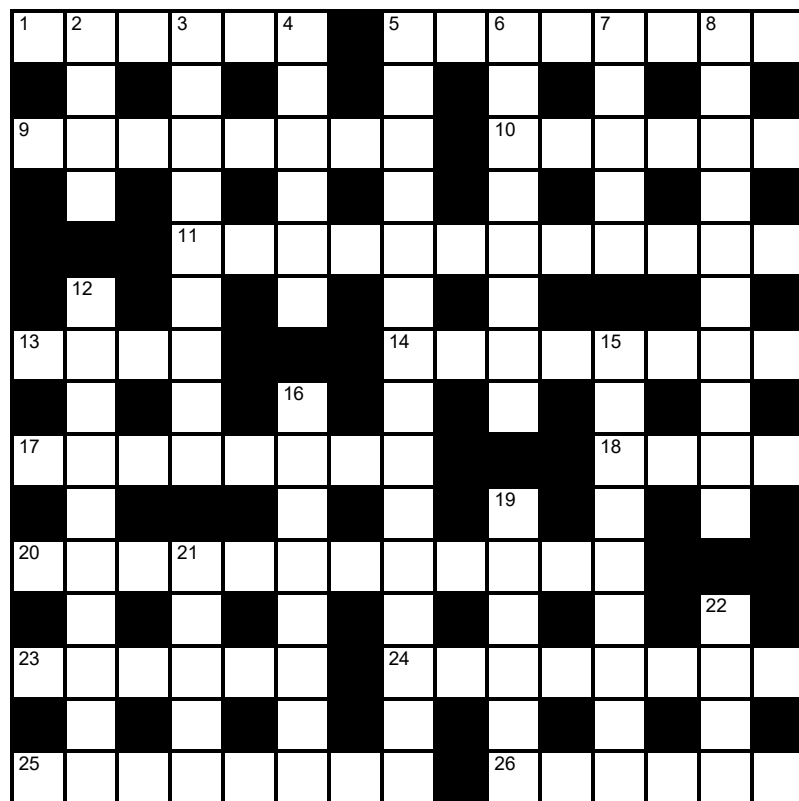
This article has sought to bring together the thought of Professor Polanyi and Fr Holloway to highlight the similarity of their concerns. However, I end by drawing attention to a difference between them. In the paragraph above Polanyi seems to regard human consciousness as simply the product of the evolutionary process whereas its *terminus ad quem* for Fr Holloway is the primates. Polanyi accounts for human consciousness in the manner of Teilhard de Chardin. 'Our race as a whole', he writes, achieved such personhood by creating its own *noosphere*'. As we know, Fr Holloway was a trenchant critic of Teilhard. *Pace* Professor Polanyi, human personhood for Fr Holloway is, in accordance with the Law of Control and Direction, the creation of God not humanity. Nevertheless, there is one further similarity which should be recorded. In the last paragraph of *Personal Knowledge*, Polanyi describes evolutionary history as 'the strivings of a myriad centres that have taken the risks of living and believing' all seeking to make 'some progress of their own towards an unthinkable consummation.' He ends his book with the comment, 'And that is also, I believe, how a Christian is placed when worshipping God'. And here is Fr Holloway, 'Our knowing is yearning towards more... the end of the search is actually for the Wisdom who is God.' (C, 105).

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*Fr Simon Heans is a priest of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham and a prison chaplain.*

# CROSSWORD by Aurora Borealis

We invite you to complete this crossword: the clues in bold involve general religious knowledge; the others are cryptic clues with secular answers.



A copy of Pope Emeritus Benedict's *Last Testament*, will go to the sender of the first correct solution opened from all those received by 31st December 2017. Entries may be this original page or a photocopy and should be sent to:  
FAITH CROSSWORD  
No.8, 45 East St Helen Street, Abingdon OXON OX14 5EE. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR FULL NAME AND POSTAL ADDRESS.

## Across

1. Completely fashionable dog from Oz (2,4)
5. Note: one's back to use keyboard and create part of cell (8)
9. **A declaration of unorthodoxy: ..... sit (8)**
10. Caution! You have no right to result in decline (6)
11. Not on the tape unofficially (3,3,6)
13. **The number of the horsemen of the Apocalypse (4)**
14. **Open corridor set round a quad in a monastery (8)**
17. At end of job, I tick over, being lazy (4,4)
18. **'Thou shalt not have strange ..... before me' (4)**
20. Little dogs pursue confused parish pedant (12)
23. **Papal representative (6)**
24. We French possess blue ground, rather vague (8)
25. **Jesus' cousin was one if these (8)**
26. **First disciple of St Benedict (2,4)**

## Down

2. Part of the Divine Office said at 3pm (4)
3. First of October, until the spring: send somewhere else (8)
4. Aristocrat loses head after solo fails to start: it won't happen again (3-3)
5. Layout expert changed 'Greed grips China' (7, 8)
6. Bridge players all reach part of building where headlines are made (8)
7. Brighton ice-cream gives a pick-me-up (5)
8. Regular writers enclose demons possessing first of righteous (3-7)
12. Traitor gets covered in paint – a virtuoso singer (10)
15. Sweet: fruit fairy (5,4)
16. Editors notice a quiet hill next to edge of scree (8)
19. Artist, plump, briefly on board ship (6)
21. Instruction to singer: this passage is to be declaimed, in short (5)
22. Mentor comes from ancient city inside what sounds like slime! (4)

The winners of the June/July competition were S. and L. W. of Dorchester.

# Catholic students: FOCUS, faith and friendship

*Joanna Bogle talks to Curtis Martin founder of FOCUS*



Students from across Britain joined a large group from across the USA at St Mary's University, Twickenham, this summer for *The Commission*, an event organised by FOCUS, the Fellowship of Catholic University Students.

"The aim is to accompany young people in their journey of faith – and for that, we need spirit-filled evangelists, who are really in love with God" Curtis Martin, founder of FOCUS, told FAITH magazine. The movement began in America and is now in its 20th year.

*"I discovered the early Church Fathers – and discovered that they were Catholic, that they taught the Catholic faith."*

He founded FOCUS after his own experience: brought up in a Catholic family, he lost his faith in his teenage years – and rediscovered it through Evangelical students at college, who helped him to encounter Christ in the Scriptures. "Then I discovered the early Church Fathers – and discovered that they were Catholic, that they taught the Catholic faith.

"But I found I was in a sort of vacuum – there were these Evangelical Christians with this joyful faith, but any Catholics I met seemed to be like people caught in a loveless marriage. They had a connection with Christ – they were in a covenant with Him through the Church – but it was loveless, the life wasn't there."

"FOCUS began as a response to that vacuum."

## Freindship

A core activity is Bible study groups which has an emphasis on friendship, prayer, and mutual support. "We take Christ as the model. He spent 30 years at home, in family life. And then when he started his public ministry it was with very few – just twelve – it all grew from there. Deep, personal accompaniment through life is central to his plan."

## Project

The week at St Mary's included Mass celebrated by Bishop John Wilson of Westminster,

who was joined by a number of priests including Fr Stephen Langridge from St Elizabeth's, Richmond – who has initiated FOCUS activities in Britain – and Father Peter Newby, chaplain at St Mary's. Each day saw a programme of talks, discussion groups, prayer, music, sport, social activities, and candlelit prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. In the USA, FOCUS is now active in over 60 universities.

*“Catholics have relied perhaps too much on the idea that Catholic students will go to the chaplaincy and establish contact there. But we cannot rely on that – we have to go out and seek one another”*

Francis Campbell, vice-chancellor of St Mary's greeted the conference as it began. Messages of support for the event came from a number of Bishops. The number of students was more than double that of the previous year, and the event looks set to grow.

Curtis sees friendship as the key. “You can't be a Catholic alone – we're not meant to see our faith as a lone activity, an individualistic thing. We are designed to be in a community – our faith is centred on the Trinity.”

“We encourage young Catholics to forge real friendships of trust and prayer. Communicating the Faith is something that involves trust and friendship. It involves recognising the model of family.”

## America

“In American universities, Evangelical Christian groups provide a real connection with Christ, and good friendship. This is how faith is nourished and communicated. Catholics have relied perhaps too much on the idea that Catholic students will go to the chaplaincy and establish contact there. But we cannot rely on that – we have to go out and seek one another, not wait for people to find us.”

“FOCUS has been an adventure in prayer and the adventure continues. This summer's gathering at St Mary's has been tremendous.”

The FOCUS project, especially in initiating Bible-study groups, is structured so that it grows organically: the idea is that groups “deepen” rather than “widen” so the emphasis is on communicating the faith and studying it rather than simply rallying people to attend events.

FOCUS now has 18,500 Bible Study participants across America, and is active in 125 universities there. The numbers at the Twickenham event showed that the enthusiasm is catching. More information at: [focus.org](http://focus.org)

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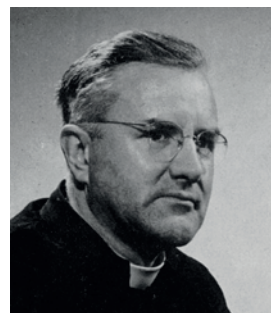
*Joanna Bogle is editor of FAITH magazine and is Visiting Research Fellow at St Mary's University, Twickenham.*



Holloway on:

# The Recognition of Jesus

EDWARD HOLLOWAY



Doctrine and personal appeal — sheer radiant power to attract men and women and to hold them in love — this was one thing and one force in Jesus Christ. The person we call *The Word* was made flesh and spoke an intelligible and humanly expressed word of truth and of way of life. We call it his 'doctrine'. There was no divide between some dry, harsh, abstract set of propositions imposed by an authority external to the personality of the Master Himself, and this wonderful, lovable, merciful Jesus. From this radiant personality there came out just this sort of teaching, both about Himself, doctrine of faith that is to say, and about the good life, the fulfilling life, doctrine of morals that is to say. The doctrine spilled out from the very mind and heart of Christ. It was Jesus Himself who said that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth spoke. The inner truth of the doctrine He saw and lived made Jesus the sort of person He was. The sort of person He was made Jesus brimful of the doctrine he taught. There is no way we can separate the two, no way at all.

## Reality

Men and women today we are told, especially the young, love and accept Jesus Christ, but they cannot stand that drab, authoritarian institution called the Church. When you peel the layers off their conscious mind and reach the subconscious, you will find most times that they mean they don't like the teaching this institution gives about poverty, prayer, attendance at the Eucharist, and their sexual life, whether in or out of marriage. Then, do they really know anything at all about Jesus?

## The Word Spoken and the Word Living

It is first of all a matter of knowing what the Jesus of history really said and taught. Are the gospels and the pastoral letters of Paul and the other apostles direct, hotly written, and clearly sincere expressions of a living master, or are they remote, carefully written up studies upon one who has long left the scene? The spontaneity, the sheer human verve and the naivety at times of the apostolic writings is there for

all to see. Jesus, lovable and magnetic and merciful as He was, managed to embroil himself in an awful lot of contradiction in His own day. The hard things in the doctrine of Jesus, including the hard things about marriage and sexual holiness, are already in the Gospels. They are present even more bluntly in the writings of St. Paul. They are found with the living evidence of history in the first documents and apologetics of the early Christian Church.

These realities of human nature and life both the inspiring and the difficult, are found again but polished and refined in presentation in the Fathers of the Church. Christian doctrine is a well worked out edifice of theology by the year 500 AD, a sophisticated but yet very unworldly synthesis of human and divine wisdom, presented by men who really and truly lived what they taught and who had experienced the fulfilment and the liberation of the doctrine they wrote about. There was, for instance, St. Augustine the Great. He presented to the Church of his day, after much dialogue and discussion, a doctrine of Original Sin which the Church recognised as true in all essentials to what she did in fact believe. The Church did not accept every philosophical speculation Augustine suggested, sometimes tentatively, to explain the 'how' of it. Likewise against the Manichees in the matter of the goodness of sexual desire and function, and against the Pelagians in the matter of its perfection and the need of inner grace to attain that perfection, Augustine gave again to the Church a synthesis of divine and human reasoning which the Church in his day, and for a thousand years and more afterwards, recognised as true in fact to the consequences of her doctrine.

## Knowing the Christ of History

It is no use saying that we cannot know the Christ of history. He lives in the Gospels in explicit speech. He lives in the Pastoral Letters of the Apostles in explicit speech. He lives in the witness of the primitive Church, the Fathers, and the teaching Church of Rome, and for that matter of Constantinople, down the ages. He lives alive and dynamic in the consecrated host, whenever it is lifted above the heads of the people at Mass. In the Eucharist we have Christ in Person, and because He is the Lord of history He is also the historic Christ. Through this centering of the Church in and through the

*In the Eucharist we have Christ in Person, and because He is the Lord of history He is also the historic Christ.*

Eucharist which is the Living Christ, He is also the Lord of the Magisterium, the true word of the Word Incarnate. First, in the solemn doctrine preached to the

people in the Liturgy of the Word; then through General Councils with the Pope, and finally through the solemn definition of Peter and his successors through the ages, above all when "Satan has obtained to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not . . ." (Luke. 22:32). We really do know the mind and heart of the

radiant Jesus because Jesus lives on, in His own physical reality, and in man's history.

## Christian Maturity

It is essential to 'know' Jesus. It is essential to fill out the vision of the Gospels, and the even more explicit vision of the Pauline Letters with the vision of the Lord of Creation, who in His very self and divine being fulfils as man that Unity-Law of control and direction to fulfilment within which the universe is framed. Yes, it is essential to proclaim the meaning of St. John and St. Paul through the Holy Spirit, against a larger canvas of truth, as modern knowledge has made it possible for us to do. Just as necessarily it is vital to possess Jesus in love, in a humble love and in an obedient love. Jesus was not made Incarnate to dazzle us, but to make us conformable to the divine being, the divine reality and holiness.

We seek then union and communion of love and life with Jesus, but we don't seek just the love of friendship or the love of admiration. We are not content with even the love of discipleship, unless that word is given its specifically Christian meaning. People can be disciples of a saintly man or woman, disciples of a 'guru'; our relationship to Christ transcends all that. Our love towards Christ is of the order of life and being, as a baby's is towards its mother. Baby loves and caresses mother, but also baby draws the milk of life from mother. Christian maturity of being is that sort of relationship to Christ, participation in the being of God, a maturity of spirit, of love and of emotion, a maturity of wisdom, love, and harmonious balance of every desire of spirit and of matter. The life of grace is the growing in beauty and real truth of being through this vital union and communion with Jesus Christ.

## Seeing Yourself Mirrored in Christ

So we come back again to the personality of Christ, to Jesus the lovable, the merciful, the totally wise. The same Jesus was intransigent, demanding. He really hurt that poor, rich, nice young man who had always been such a good boy! We come back to Jesus the real, the ultimate truth in doctrine and in fulfilment as a living experience of human joy. You take the package entire; Jesus cannot be parcelled out. *It is vitally important to get this relationship right in the matter of the personality of Jesus as it beckons to us, and in the doctrine that Jesus taught and still teaches, alive in the Church.* For Jesus is the mirror in which we see our own personality and find our own identity. The personality of Jesus is not merely a human personality; it is the radiation and the life-giving power of the Divine Person *in person*. This is the identity to the image and likeness of which we are made. Christ as Son of God and Son of Man *is the mirror image of man*: this is the Son of Man, and in His being as God and Man is your identity and my identity, the identity of male and female, without distinction.

The identity of our own personality, as we draw life and joy, likeness and conformity to God from Christ, is not a likeness of the mind alone, a likeness of vision and of truth. It is not a likeness of obedience alone, or of the pain of sacrifice. There is also the joy and the happiness of Christ, which is the radiation through His human psyche of the joy which defines the being of God in Itself. Unless our conformation to Christ, the Mirror of Man, is perfect, we are not going to experience within ourselves the perfect fulfilment and joy of our manhood or our womanhood. Like all spiritual creations, whether man or angel, our specific identity is not in ourselves or in the order of the created at all. It is in God, who is beyond our order of being and limitation but to whose image alone we are fashioned, and in whose order of joy alone we find our own bliss.

## The Son of Man – our identity and holiness

That is why all Humanism, with the capital letter, is a mistake. The fulfilment of Man is in God, and in God made Man we find the identity of ourselves. That is really the very meaning of that title, hardly found except towards the end of the period of Messianic prophecy, *Son of Man*, the title preferred above all others when Christ spoke of His mission to us and our relationship to Himself.

As the human nature of Christ is the perfect image, in the Son of Man, of our own identity and holiness, our wholeness in body and soul through God, so in the order of the spiritual soul, the Divine Being itself, as pure and perfect spirit, is the mirror image of our spiritual perfection, now and unto the beatific vision. It makes sense of the appalling proposition that through Christ we become ‘co-sharers of the Divine Nature’. It also means that Christ is the total manifestation as God and Man, in the unity of His one divine Person, of our human truth, our goodness, our wholeness and our beatitude. We mean, in heaven *and now upon earth*: it was Jesus who said “be you perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48.).

## Forming Christian Life

If teachers of status, whether priests or layfolk, do not accept themselves and do not teach to others the doctrine of life and human goodness that Jesus taught on earth and still teaches in His Church, they will not form within others the true identity of the real, the living Jesus. What you do not yourself believe, or what you yourself deny however regretfully and secretly, you cannot live in yourself as an experience of *life* and nobility of being. This principle is important in the home, the spiritual quality one means of parents who are the natural and in a sense the hierarchical teachers of their children; for marriage is to be looked upon as a ministry in the Church, and an office in Creation and in the Church. It is important in the schools and in the parishes:

we priests form men and women, and even more manifestly and often much more successfully we form children. It is important therefore in the university chaplaincies and most of all in the seminaries.

It is not only priests who talk about identity crisis. One has even found it in the Youth Club. This writer has been asked very earnestly by a teenager 'Do you know who you are . . . because I don't?' Knowing who you are is not a matter of being a priest, nor a matter of being married or being single. It is not a matter of vocation at all.

*Live with Jesus your friend and teacher, love Jesus your friend and teacher, be conformed to Him. He alone really knows what is good for you, joyful for you, fulfilment for you*

Knowing who you are is a matter of knowing Christ as He really is and of humbly loving Him and conforming your whole life to Him. Knowing who you are is a matter also of bearing anguish, and pain, and sacrifice, and the sneers and contempt of others, loneliness also, rather than betray the truth and goodness revealed in Christ. If you don't know who you are, if you have an 'identity crisis' it means either that you have never found Christ and are still looking for Him, or else that you don't love Him enough, or faithfully enough: you don't obey Him. 'Knowing who I am' is first of all to find Jesus Christ in His real self. That is to find doctrine of truth, love, and moral goodness and our relationship to others. It is to find God and one's neighbour in life, in love, and in prayer.

**"What will you have me to do?"**

When you have this degree of union with Jesus Christ, then from a full heart you will, especially in youth, say to the same Jesus "Lord, what will you have me to do?" That may well be the application of your identity to life and to vocation, whether in Religion or in marriage, or in the single state in the world. Nobody will find all his yearnings, loves, emotions and drives fulfilled in harmony and in truth except they be mirrored in that identity of truth which is the Person of Jesus.

*You have only one identity to achieve. It is Christ's identity living in you, radiant in you*

Live with Jesus your friend and teacher, love Jesus your friend and teacher, be conformed to Him. He alone really knows what is good for you, joyful for you, fulfilment for you. You were made by Him and through Him, He ought to know. Even as human, as *yourself* you were modelled upon Him; He was coming as 'the Son of Man'. Follow Him.

**You will find Jesus**

You have only one identity to achieve. It is Christ's identity living in you, radiant in you.

Do not try to divide in Jesus Christ His doctrine, which is to say His magisterium in the official, guaranteed Church, from His fulfilling and loving self. You can't separate a tree from its fruits, a man from his words; much less can you divide them in the Living God. Don't expect to find within yourself the power to live it, or the full will to live it. That is Humanism again, being me-centred and man-centred. You are made to be God-centred, and that by the Law of Nature as well as by the Law of Grace. "Without Me," said the Son of God and Man upon whom you are centred, "you can do nothing." Make your communion with Him, feed on Him in your heart, feed on Him in the Holy Eucharist.

Remember that in the 'last days' because affluence and power over nature has abounded, so will iniquity abound. It has been prophesied, many will fall away (Matt. 24: 11-12). How hard shall those who have riches, entire affluent nations of them, enter into the kingdom of God! You, however, man of God, daughter of God, strive to enter by the narrow way. Never be scared by any scandal no matter how grave within the Church. You will find Jesus easily enough if you look for Him; "he that comes to Me", said Our Lord "I will in no way cast out" (John. 6:37)..

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*Abridged from the Editorial in the November/December 1994 issue of Faith magazine.*

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# ETHICAL SEX

SEXUAL CHOICES AND THEIR NATURE AND MEANING

BY *Anthony McCarthy*

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Professor Alexander Pruss, Baylor University

*"This splendidly and engagingly written book deserves wide attention and careful reading. It defends in an intelligent way...a number of important and, I believe, very true theses about human sexuality and sexual ethics."*

Professor Josef Seifert

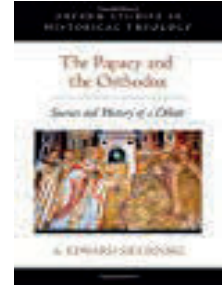
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# How can Orthodoxy be reassured about the Pope?



*The Papacy and the Orthodox. Sources and History of a Debate* by A. Edward Siecienski, Oxford University Press, xiv + 510 pp, £47.99.

*reviewed by Aidan Nichols*

The book under review is an immensely learned and scrupulously fair account of an historic debate. The Latin tradition claimed with increasing emphasis, not to say stridency, that, presiding over the pastoral and prophetic ministry of the Church's bishops, is an 'office of Peter' which is vested for all time in the bishops of Rome. The Greek tradition, or the Eastern tradition more widely, knew of a primacy of honour for the Roman pope, as the first among bishops, or, in later terminology, among patriarchs, but it refused to acknowledge in that figure anything remotely like the pretension to universal jurisdiction and infallibility in ex cathedra proclamation that were defined as de fide for Roman Catholics at the First Vatican Council (1869-1870). Professor Siecienski's book starts out from the confession, first made by Pope Paul VI, that the papacy, which, on the Catholic understanding, is intended to

unite the universal Church, is in fact the greatest obstacle to the overcoming of Christian divisions – especially with the Orthodox East.

### Peter in Scripture and the Fathers

After an Introduction where this theme is salient, the book unfolds in nine chapters. The first two, which show great sophistication in handling modern exegetical tools, concern the New Testament portrait of Peter – both the basic facts ('the Peter of history') and the theological presentation of those facts by the inspired writers. The overall conclusion is that Peter enjoyed a priority within the apostolic group but not a power over its members. The next three chapters concern the Fathers of the Church: Peter as understood in patristic exegesis (here an amazing quantity of literature is surveyed from primary sources); the local church of Rome in the early patristic period, and how the

papacy (the word had, however, not yet been invented) fared in the remaining centuries of the first millennium.

## No consensus

The overall conclusion here is that there was no consensus in the first thousand years of Christian history as to the extent of the pope's ministerial charge. Two chapters consider the papacy – through Greek eyes and its own – in the mediaeval and early Renaissance period when the Great Schism was confected (above all by the body-blow dealt to what remained of East-West harmony in the Crusades). A penultimate chapter takes the story up to Vatican One, and a final chapter to Vatican Two and the post-conciliar ecumenical dialogue between Catholics and Orthodox which continues, albeit with some dragging of feet from the Orthodox side, until the present day. The overall conclusion here is that, despite efforts at eirenicism (notably at the Council of Florence, 1438-1439) the increasing clarity with which the West affirmed the monarchical nature of Church authority and the East its synodical character created an impasse from which (attempts in modern ecclesiology to synthesise the two concepts notwithstanding) there is no obvious means of exit.

## A remote prospect

It is a tribute to the fastidiousness of Siecinski's scholarship and the integrity of his mind that no one without inside

knowledge of the man would be able to determine from this text whether he is himself a Catholic (as his Polish name might suggest) or an Orthodox. I understand that he is in fact a convert from Catholicism to Orthodoxy. But there is none of the proverbial zeal of the convert displayed here, only a sadness that, in the light of the massive divergence the sources indicate, recovery of unity between Catholics and Orthodox is a remote prospect indeed.

As a history of its subject this book is likely to be the principal reference-point for students for a very long time. What it does not attempt, however, is a theological resolution of the issues which have bedeviled Orthodox attitudes to the pope. How if at all could the primacy of jurisdiction and *ex cathedra* infallibility in teaching affirmed at Vatican One be rendered acceptable to the Orthodox Church?

## Alarming epithets

I take the issue of jurisdiction first. The at first sight alarming series of epithets which characterize papal jurisdiction in *Pastor aeternus* (where a jurisdiction 'supreme', 'full' and 'universal' is further described as 'immediate', 'ordinary', and 'truly episcopal') has been misunderstood by theologians and canonists insufficiently aware of the background of the language used. 'Immediate', 'ordinary' and 'truly episcopal' do not licence papal interventions here, there and everywhere. They simply affirm that

the universal jurisdiction in question belongs inherently to the office of the bishop who carries the primatial charge. Just how that charge is to be exercised is nowhere indicated in the text, and the possibility remains, therefore, that outside the Latin church the jurisdiction will be exercised via the patriarchs and ruling synods of the Oriental churches – normally, by way of reaction, namely, in the event of patriarchs or ruling synods calling on the pope for mediation in some dispute (‘appellate’ jurisdiction), and abnormally, in the pope taking some initiative to bring a matter to the attention of such patriarchs and synods. The key concept here is that the bishop of Rome, as the first in the ecclesiastical ‘taxis’, the order of the local churches and their pastors, has a responsibility for ensuring the harmonious functioning of that taxis as a whole.

## Ex cathedra

What of the infallibility in teaching? What has been called the ‘small print’ of *Pastor aeternus* (the preamble to the definitions) makes it plain that *ex cathedra* definitions of doctrine by the pope are intended for situations where the college of bishops is divided – where it finds itself in a condition of irresolvable internal doctrinal conflict. An episcopate

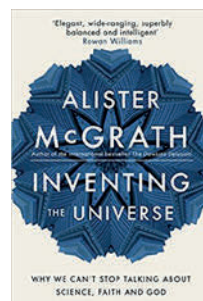
too divided to pronounce on a disputed question in doctrine will have in the person of the pope a teacher who, by his own exercise of the infallibility with which the whole Church is endowed, can enable the teachers (the bishops, witnessing to the faith of their churches) once again to teach with a single voice. If this is so, it is doubtful whether the *ex cathedra* function of the pope has ever yet been set to work. At any rate, the two Marian dogmas, of 1854 and 1950 were certainly not promulgated in this sort of crisis-situation.

Moreover, it was specifically affirmed on behalf of the drafters of *Pastor aeternus* that the phrases *ex cathedra* does not extend to any and every example of public teaching by the pope (this was to exclude St Robert Bellarmine’s exaggerated notion that the pope is always infallible except when speaking as a private doctor). What is needed, however, so as to reassure the Eastern Orthodox is some mechanism whereby a pope who departs from Tradition by teaching error, or what may be construed as error, can be inhibited by a form of ecclesiastical enquiry or trial – as is the case with any other bishop in the Church. The axiom ‘The first see can be judged by no one’ must not be abused to let a pope who is careless of doctrine get away with spiritual murder.

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# Reintegrating the human subject into objective metaphysics



*Inventing the Universe. Why we can't stop talking about science, faith and God*, by Alister McGrath, Hodder and Stoughton, 256pp, £20.00.

*reviewed by Hugh MacKenzie*

Alister McGrath has written a fascinating hymn to the transcendence of human knowing over empirical verification. He offers an attractive witness to his own Christian faith but argues that in the final analysis it is not experimentally or rationally “provable”. But nor is the dogmatic New Atheist rejection of them. There must be something that grounds rational “map making” of what we observe, experimentally or otherwise. In most of this book he finds this grounding in the religious choice for a meaningful and good life – but he admits that there are other coherent ways. This implies an anti-dogmatic pluralism that recognises the rational legitimacy of non-religious worldviews. But his final chapter seems to reopen the door to grounding rationally the human transcendence of objective matter.

## Cultural commentators

McGrath engagingly calls upon the purple prose of a wide range of great writers

to witness to this transcendence, deftly weaving together his autobiographical scientific-atheist-to-Christian story with a compelling narrative of the *constructive* relationship of science, religion, ethics and the poetic. He draws into his “mental map” a wide range of cultural commentators from G.K. Chesterton to Salman Rushdie. I will suggest below one omission: Newman’s 1870 *Grammar of Assent* which also well questions the rationalist foundations of inference – though going further than McGrath in affirming a specific grounding of it.

McGrath’s quotations include Richard Dawkins’ fellow evolutionary theorist D. S. Wilson’s put down of the *God Delusion* author as: “just another angry atheist trading on his reputation as an evolutionist and spokesperson for science to vent his personal opinions about religion.” (p.127). The New Atheists, especially the empiricists, are certainly left looking like the blind man who thought the elephant’s leg was all.



## The first-person perspective

Throughout McGrath refreshingly roots his reflection in his own experience, making appropriate nods to the Phenomenological, Pragmatist and even it seems Post-modern traditions. He acknowledges that ultimately no one can avoid the first-person perspective. This means that he can, notwithstanding his pluralist approach to philosophical paradigms, witness to the “richness” of his own, Christian, *Weltanschauung*.

Precisely because he sees the foundation of all experienced meaning as rooted in one’s own preferred angle, he constantly claims that visions of the world cannot be “proved”, and we must not be “dogmatic”. We should acknowledge that our own view may not be totally coherent, and that there are other fairly coherent ways of understanding the data gathered by human observation. This is like scientific “theories” which are usually “underdetermined” by available data. McGrath unfortunately does not define the concept “proof”, but for him it is closely linked to the modern scientific concept of empirical verification, and has little application to metaphysical visions.

## Having his cake and eating it?

Yet the book’s pluralism is constantly put in tension with the human desire for a “richness” of “meaningful” living. This concept cannot mean anything close to “unique coherence” which would undermine his pluralism, though he

occasionally sneaks in other adjectives like “simplicity”, “elegance”, and “most satisfying” (p. 79) as well as implying a uniqueness to the “meaningfulness” of Christian living (p.204). In the final analysis the richness concept is not clearly defined. Sometimes he presents this criterium as purely personal which other people, who also happen to look for richness, might perhaps find works for them. At other times, it does seem something more objective and intrinsic to human nature. This reader was tempted to ask, is he having his cake and eating it?

On page 151 McGrath captures this key contrast, “As I have made clear throughout this work I have found that the Christian faith offers a persuasive and deeply satisfying enrichment of a scientific engagement with reality ... [but] my position can be criticised on perfectly reasonable grounds.” Why, the reader might ask? Because the “evidential foundations” of this vision, as of all visions, are not provable, but are “enriching” assumptions.

It appears that McGrath has got too sucked into the Popperian insight that human understandings of the world are “theory laden” (p.61) – wherein human culture rather than human nature is made not just intrinsic to explanations of observations, but determinative. McGrath ends up decrying the very ability and “pretensions” (p.194) of credal religion to capture unchanging, objective truths. He fashionably complains of “arrogant religious and anti-religious

dogmatisms which seem to trade only in certainties" (p.49). Whilst I think going too far, McGrath is also emphasising the important call to careful mutual listening (p.183), to empirical openness to further discovery, and to value the personal angle.

### The coherence of reality

He gets closest to tying down the "richness" of vision to which he frequently appeals by using Lewis' famous epitaph: "I believe in Christianity as I believe the sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else" (p.65). He shows that this is similar to Chesterton's approach and W.V.O. Quine's argument that "the only valid test of a belief is whether it fits into a web of connected beliefs that accords with our experience of the whole" (p.63 - I would think that Newman's concept of the "Illative Sense" would dovetail with this.) This "test" of "validity" would seem to broaden the notion of "proof" beyond its restriction to syllogism and experimental verification. Yet such a network of beliefs grounded in experience is still seemingly regarded by McGrath as an individual Weltanschauung, "theory laden", something of an imposition upon underdetermined data.

Indeed reason, in the guise of the prominent and insightful philosopher of science Nancy Cartwright, allows that "we are imposing an order or rationality where there may be none ... inventing our own universe". (p. 192) It is only religion

which, for McGrath, "provides us with the reassurance of the [unity and] *coherence of reality*" (p.192, his emphasis). Religion postulates a "hidden web of meaning ... behind the ephemeral and incoherent world that we experience". It seems that for McGrath the only thing that saves Christianity from fideism is the richness of vision which theism offers.

And yet in amongst this he throws in a C.S. Lewis quote with a very different feel: "we are not reading rationality into an irrational universe, but responding to a rationality with which the universe has always been saturated."

### Holloway and Newman

Edward Holloway's *Perspectives in Philosophy*, Vol. II, Ch. 2, argues that all self-consciousness is imbued with the coherent unity of my experienced world. This intelligibility implies the ordered relationship of distinction between me and my world. Our "experience of the whole" is something objective and grounded. The present pattern of me experiencing myself in a bigger world is always a self-evident starting point for inference.

Newman's *Grammar of Assent* has shown that the necessarily non-logical foundations (II,VIII,i) of logical "proof" are not purely subjective (II,IX,i). For human experience is rooted in something self-evidently intelligible – the distinct, intelligible and moral, relationship between one's subjective self and one's objective environment.



## The fundamental, objective human need

When McGrath “brings the work to a close” he gets close to this, in tension with the pluralism he has advocated up to this point. Although he still attributes his insight here to the enriching “narrative of faith” (p.194), actually it is a philosophical reflection upon subjectivity in the present moment. He in fact invokes a range of philosophers from Augustine to Buber in affirming:

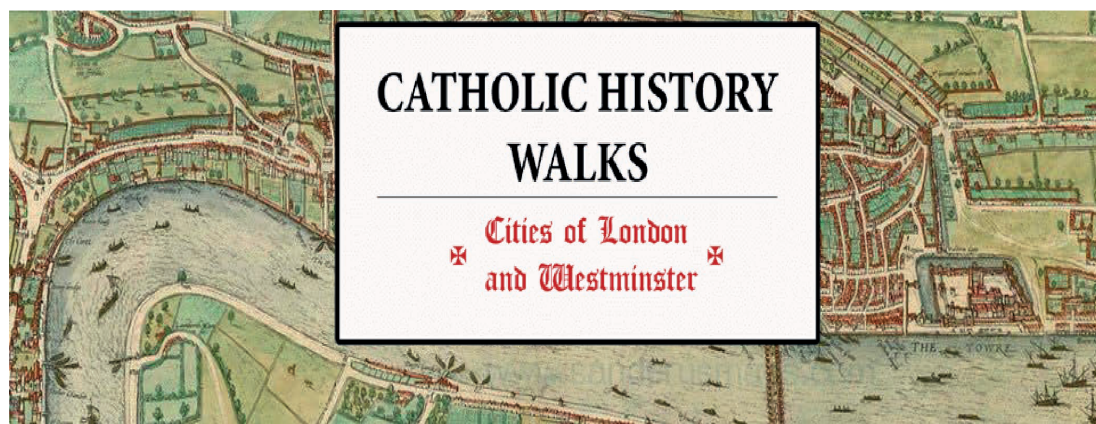
The ‘I’ perspective lies at the roots and heart of the human condition. It cannot be excluded from any existentially meaningful account of reality. It has to be brought back

in ... creating space for a religious or metaphysical enrichment of science. (p.197-8)

McGrath has brilliantly mapped the post-Kantian realignment of science and religion, and the unjustified, if understandable, fall-out for religion. For most of the book he seems to favour an anti-dogmatic pluralism over the admitted fundamental, objective human need for an ethical life. In the end he seems to swing things back to the latter foundationalism, by advocating an innovative reintegration of the human subject into an objective metaphysics. Newman and Holloway would be pleased.

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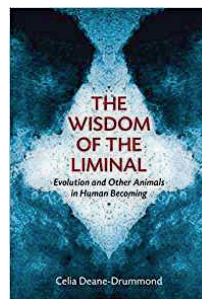
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# A marriage of biology and theology?

*The Wisdom of the Liminal: Evolution and Other Animals in Human Becoming*, by Celia Deane-Drummond, Eerdmans, 378pp, £20.39.



*reviewed by Conor McDonough*

Discussion of animals in a theological context, when it does arise, has tended to be limited to moral questions: Can we experiment on animals, and if so, for what purpose? Do we have a duty to make sure farmed animals are reared in comfort? Is recreational hunting to be condemned? Theological talk about animals typically drifts into the realm of dogmatic theology only in the question of the survival of animals after death.

Professor Celia Deane-Drummond's book, *The Wisdom of the Liminal: Evolution and Other Animals in Human Becoming*, is an ambitious attempt to counter this trend by bringing questions about animals – as evolved and evolving – into a sustained dialogue with theological anthropology, seeking thereby to reshape the theological vision of the human person. Deane-Drummond's aim is to lead her readers to consider the human being first and foremost as *linked* with other animals – ecologically and evolutionarily – rather than as separate from them. There are obvious parallels here with Alasdair MacIntyre's *Dependent Rational Animals*, but

Deane-Drummond's approach is rather more pugnacious: she wants to diminish the anthropological 'self-importance' she finds in much Christian theology (p. 52).

## Theology and research at the coalface

Deane-Drummond is particularly well qualified to facilitate a dialogue between theology and science: she has doctorates both in biology (plant physiology) and theology, and is currently Director of the Centre for Theology, Science and Human Flourishing at Notre Dame University. Given her dual expertise, she is particularly sensitive to the mutual ignorance that characterises contemporary theology and science. Against this background, she draws on a wide range of up-to-date research in the biological sciences, and while she aims to correct elements of the Catholic theological tradition, she is nevertheless keen to establish continuity with that tradition. She chooses Thomas Aquinas as a principal point of reference, principally because she sees Aristotelian

background as favouring a consideration of other creaturely kinds, but she pays particular attention also to Hans Urs von Balthasar. What is valuable in all this is that the author is neither a theologian with vague notions about science, nor a scientist with woolly ideas about the divine. Rather, she writes as a Christian – and Christocentric – theologian who is also comfortable at the coalface of research in the natural sciences.

### Biology and theology parallels

A typical chapter begins with detailed discussion of recent scholarship in evolutionary biology and ethnography, including debates within such scholarship, and proceeds to correlate these (disputed) findings with the writings of Thomas Aquinas and contemporary theologians. For example, in one of the better chapters, entitled 'Human Justice and Animal Fairness', the reader is introduced to Maasai systems of gift-giving, game theory as applied to chimpanzee behaviour, canine sensitivity to fairness, rules of play among wolves and rats, before a brief detour into Martha Nussbaum's development of Rawlsian justice theory leads us to an extended discussion of Aquinas' understanding of justice as a virtue, acquired and infused. Without taking a strong stand on the controversial question of whether inter-species relationships ought to be governed by justice – in other words, the question of whether we owe anything to

animals as such – the author establishes all sorts of interesting parallels between evolutionary biology and traditional theology in this area, as well as challenges from one to the other.

### Turgid sentences

This all sounds very promising, but the work suffers from three flaws. The first is the style of writing, which reproduces the turgid sentence structure that has come to characterise much academic writing. Consider the following example, which is by no means unrepresentative:

I interpret the idea of theo-drama as, in one sense, a theological commentary on Ingold's concept of life as movement, a human becoming through deliberate placing of the human person in the movement of the play as a way of bringing forth not simply that which is unique to human beings, but structuring human life as part of a wider bringing forth (p. 51).

Time and again when reading this book I found myself staring at such sentences, and strings of such sentences, and simply scratching my head. Neologisms abound, with intermittent helpfulness. It is possible that one needs simply to be attuned to this particular dialect, but it is certain that this book could have done with more rigorous editing.

### Misreading Aquinas

A second problem is Deane-Drummond's reading of Aquinas. As a Dominican I

rejoice to find a scientist-theologian attempting to take in the full breadth of Thomas' theology and taking it seriously on its own terms, but her interpretation of Aquinas is sometimes faulty. To take one example, the author suggests that we might legitimately interpret his teaching on infused grace in a bottom-up fashion, so that infused grace becomes 'the emergence of awareness of the ever-present presence of God' (p. 84). This conception of grace is utterly alien to Thomas. He certainly recognises the 'ever-present presence' of the Trinity in creation, but grace consists in a 'new mode' of this divine presence which has a real ontological effect in the recipient; it can in no way be reduced to a new mental perspective on the part of humans. Elsewhere the author makes a similar claim, eliding the distinction between providence and grace (p. 56). These are not the only such missteps, and I couldn't help feeling that Deane-Drummond would benefit from increased exposure to the living tradition of Thomist theology, a tradition which, it should be noted, is now taking especially seriously the challenge of evolution (see [thomisticevolution.org](http://thomisticevolution.org)).

### Comparing apples and oranges

Finally, there is the difficulty of sustaining a conversation between interlocutors who are speaking equivocally. Increasing academic specialisation combined with the disintegration of a philosophical background that would unite theology,

the humanities and the sciences makes Deane-Drummond's task near impossible. She compares research from biology, anthropology, sociology and theology on topics like 'reason', 'justice', and 'love', but the incommensurability of the underlying models employed by these disciplines, and even within these disciplines, means she is often comparing apples and oranges. There are important differences between the altruism observed by zoologists, and *caritas* as described by St Thomas (Chapter 8), and a biologist who ascribes the 'emotion of forgiveness' to hyenas is betraying a conceptual hinterland quite unlike that of the Thomist (Chapter 4). Deane-Drummond is not, of course, unaware of these problems, but she does not delay over them in her mission to establish points of contact between theology and science.

### A 'forced marriage'

For this reader at least, this book shows above all that there is great need of careful, clarifying philosophical work by theologians and scientists before any ambitious 'synthesis' is attempted. This work takes time, and in the contemporary university, where one must 'publish or perish', governed by the iron will of funding bodies, such work is not easily accomplished. Deane-Drummond mentions in a footnote a 'forced marriage' between a theologian and a mathematician who were required by the Templeton Foundation to

collaborate. My overall sense in reading this book was that, for all its ambition and breadth of vision, it too amounts to

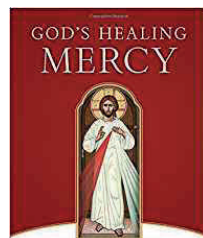
something of a 'forced marriage', or at least a premature one.

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*Conor McDonough OP is a recently-ordained priest of the Irish Province of Dominicans, currently engaged in further studies in theology at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.*

## From unforgiveness to forgiveness

*God's Healing Mercy. Finding Your Path to Forgiveness, Peace and Joy* by Kathleen Beckman, L.H.S. Sophia Institute Press, 186pp, £15.25.



*reviewed by Claire Waddelove*

"Sophia Institute is a non-profit institution that seeks to nurture the spiritual, moral, and cultural life of souls and to spread the Gospel of Christ in conformity with the authentic teachings of the Roman Catholic Church."

Kathleen Beckman's book certainly fulfils this aim. It is an ecclesial work, a wholly orthodox, clear, practical and readable exposition of many aspects of divine mercy. The importance of the sacraments is highlighted, particularly sacramental confession. Well documented, her sources include the Gospels, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, papal teachings and writings of the saints. Not surprisingly, St. Faustina's diary figures prominently, and several passages of *The Imitation of Christ* are

quoted. References are helpfully given as footnotes, including a number from the internet.

### A tool-box to be used

Each of the twelve chapters follows the same format. There is a particular focus: Rays of Mercy on ... 'You, The Family, The Universal Church, Marriage etc.; and the transformation needed: 'Healing from ... ' e.g. Unforgiveness to Forgiveness, followed by an opening quotation, usually from a papal document or address. A brief summary of the aims and content of the chapter is given, and a dozen or so pages are devoted to the theme, with several sub-headings. There follows a profile of an ecclesiastical figure who exemplifies the subject under discussion, and the chapter concludes

with a Personal or Group Spiritual Exercise. This consists of (a) a passage from the Gospel, (b) questions for reflection, e.g. "Think of a time when you had great difficulty in forgiving yourself or someone else. Can you identify the root cause of the unforgiveness?" (c) God's Letter to You – usually an extract from a piece of devotional writing, (d) a blank page for Your Letter to God. Some readers might jib at this, but it is only an invitation to compose a prayer, which many saints have done.

The style is simple and light; there is nothing heavy or turgid, nothing merely academic. The chapters are 'airy', with plenty of space. In several of them, effective use is made of bullet points, e.g. on pride, gleaned from St. Catherine of Siena's book *The Dialogue*. It is an easy book to read, and the biggest temptation might be to skim through it too quickly, which would not be profitable. It could be described as a tool-box to be used, or a map of a journey to be made. It requires engagement with heart and soul, and time to ponder, taking no more than one chapter at a time.

### No false notions

Written initially for the Holy Year of Mercy, the topics covered are for all times. The transformations – from fear to trust, from pride to humility, from no to yes, etc – form part of everyone's spiritual journey. For some readers, there will be information that is instructive; for the more seasoned,

the benefits will be largely in stirring the heart and strengthening the will. Of course, it will take more than the reading of one book to accomplish the desired effects - it is the work of a lifetime – but everything that helps us along the way is to be welcomed.

While the book is essentially positive and encouraging, it is all solid stuff. There is nothing wishy-washy, no compromise, no false notions of a forgiving God who doesn't care what we do. On the contrary, it calls us to conversion of life and purity of heart.

### Prayer is life

The author knows how to make an impact, often using short pithy sentences to good effect: "Peace of soul is the tranquility of order; an ordered heart, an ordered life according to God's precepts" (p.55). "No vocation is the fulfilment of all human desire. Only God fulfils." (p.89) "Mercy is self-emptying love." (p.74) "Saying no to God is never a good idea. The consequences are real and serious." (p.83) "The powerlessness of lethargy and discouragement is a temptation." (p.100) "Confession is the powerful step toward healing and deliverance and often takes care of a myriad of demonic ailments." (p.115) "Baptismal grace is dynamic, and we can draw from it throughout our life." (p.119) "The world is full of evil because of our free will." (p.160) "For Catholics, prayer is life." (p.162)

Beckman draws considerably on her



personal experience, with the result that there is, perhaps, too much use of the pronoun "I". There is a positive side to this, though, as it is clear that she knows what she is talking about. The most impressive example is her account of the murder of her father-in-law, and the long hours of prayer she spent before the Blessed Sacrament which brought her to forgiveness. She also cites other inspiring examples of people she has met: the joyful 80 year old priest in Trinidad who cares for seven parishes, and the home-schooling mother of eight children who rises early every morning in order to start her day with a holy hour.

### Peace in the heart

Male readers might find some pages too feminine, though most of the favourable reviews cited in the opening pages of the book were written by men. My only other criticism is of the language used.

It is modern American and can at times be jarring; "Mary's yes to the Trinity required a decision to surrender, self-empty, and sacrifice to birth Jesus, the Incarnate Word, into the world." (p.85)

This is not a literary masterpiece, then, but a sound, useful book. I don't think anyone could read it without gaining something from it. The passage which resonated most for me was the extract from the Vietnamese Cardinal (now Venerable) Van Thuan's testimony: his resolution after his arrest, "I will not spend time waiting – I will live the present moment and fill it with love." And, "When I began to discern between God and God's works, when I chose God and His will, and left everything else in His hands, and when I learned to love others, especially my enemies, as Jesus loved me, I felt great peace in my heart." (pp.76-77)

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*Sr. Claire Waddelove belongs to the Benedictine community at St. Cecilia's Abbey, Ryde, Isle of Wight.*

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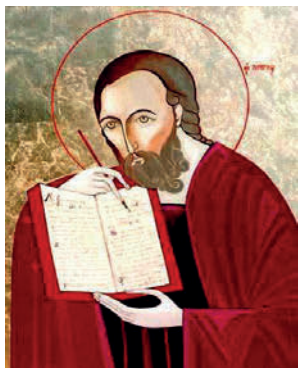
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