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Promoting A New Synthesis Of Faith And Reason

Editorial: SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

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Dr William Newton examines The Transgender Moment and the Catholic vision

Paul VI's prayer before the Blessed Sacrament

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Issue: Volume 54 Number 1 January & February 2019

Price: £4:50

faith.org.uk

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Editor: Joanna Bogle, editorfaithuk@gmail.com

Editorial Board: Patrick Burke, Hugh MacKenzie, Andrew Nash, Luiz Ruscillo, Andrea Fraile, Tim Finigan, Christina Read

Book Reviews Editor: Andrew Nash

Subscriptions & Enquiries: Sister Andrea Fraile, 104 Albert Road, Glasgow G42 8DR or subscribe on-line at www.faith.org.uk, faithsubscriptions@gmail.com



Speaking the truth in love

The topic of sexual abuse has dominated Catholic discussions over the past months and weeks.

There are many aspects to this sordid subject. One thing has remained obvious, just as it has been obvious for the past few decades : we need clear moral teaching and leadership. The Church does not have to struggle to discover what is right and what is wrong when it comes to sexual ethics. She has a clear and profound doctrine on the nature and purpose of human sexuality.

an apparent reluctance to enunciate the teaching

Moral guidance

But if there is promotion of the idea that there is no objective morality, that there is no such thing as mortal sin, that salvation is guaranteed regardless of any need for contrition and amendment of life, then it becomes easy to give into temptation, to slip into sin, and even to justify a double life in which, for example, an active homosexual lifestyle is lived alongside priesthood.

Without clear moral guidance it is tempting for weak, confused and disorientated souls to be trapped into a belief that the Church's teaching is "outdated" or impossible to live.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is clear:

2360 Sexuality is ordered to the conjugal love of man and woman. In marriage the physical intimacy of the spouses becomes a sign and pledge of spiritual communion. Marriage bonds between baptized persons are sanctified by the sacrament.

the training and formation of priests

2361 "Sexuality, by means of which man and woman give themselves to one another through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, is not something simply biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such. It is realized in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and woman commit themselves totally to one another until death."

The *Catechism* lists the sins against chastity, and in listing rape among these, emphasises that there is a particular gravity where the rape of children has occurred by those entrusted to their care.

Over recent decades there has been an apparent reluctance to enunciate the teaching clearly on the part of those in positions of authority in the Church. Too many bishops have been shy of stating clearly the fullness of the Church's message. There has been ambiguity in material provided for Catholic schools, and in speakers at some Catholic events.

Homosexuality

On homosexuality the *Catechism* has this to say:

2357 Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience

an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.

2358 The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.

2359 Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection.

Pope Francis

Pope Francis has recently noted the importance of this with respect to the training and formation of priests: "We have to urge homosexual priests, *an invitation to life and to joy* and men and women religious to live celibacy with integrity, and above all, that they be impeccably responsible, trying to never scandalize either their communities or the faithful holy people of God by living a double life. It's better for them to leave the ministry or the consecrated life rather than to live a double life."

We must teach that the Church's sexual and moral teaching is an invitation to life and to joy. We should teach it whole heartedly - and we must insist that those, like Fr. James Martin, who clearly do not believe in the teaching of the Church, must make up their minds and choose.

Unity

We need doctrinal and moral unity in the Church and a challenge from the highest authority that priests and people, whatever their temptations and sins, must accept the teaching of the Church and at least try to live up to it or have the decency to leave. *The Church has clear and profound doctrine*

It is time for truth and courage. It is time to speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15).



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From the Aims and Ideals of Faith Movement:

Faith Movement offers a new synthesis of faith and reason, explaining the Catholic faith in the evolutionary perspective of modern science.

Reflecting on the unity of the cosmos, we can show the transcendent existence of God and the essential distinction between matter and spirit. We offer a vision of God as the true Environment of men in whom "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28) and of his unfolding purpose in the relationship of word and grace through the prophets which is brought to its true head in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Lord of Creation, centre of history and fulfilment of our humanity.

Our redemption through the death and resurrection of the Lord, following the tragedy of original sin, is also thereby seen in its crucial and central focus. Our life in his Holy Spirit through the church and the sacraments and the necessity of an infallible magisterium likewise flow naturally from this presentation of Christ and his work through the ages.

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

Reunion Revisited

Mark Vickers examines the ecumenical efforts of the 1930s



Lonely but prophetic voices always existed seeking the unity of Christians in these islands, including the nineteenth-century converts, Fr. Ignatius Spencer and Ambrose Phillipps de Lisle. Impetus was given to the movement by the nineteenth-century Oxford Movement, as the Church of England returned to patristic and Catholic sources to promote spiritual and moral renewal. The call for Reunion was taken up by the 1920 Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops. Their *Appeal* made passing reference to the Catholic Church, but confident that they would receive no response. Anglicanism preferred rather to focus on practical cooperation with the Protestant Free Churches at home and vague overtures of sympathy towards the Orthodox and Lutherans overseas.



Lambeth Conference 1920

Anglican assumptions that they could safely ignore the Catholic Church in ecumenical matters reckoned without two factors. The first was Francis, Cardinal Bourne, Archbishop of Westminster, unfairly portrayed as hostile to the Malines Conversations held in Belgium in the 1920s. What Bourne did object to was Belgian and French Catholics claiming they had a better understanding of Anglicanism than English Catholics, and the suggestion that a different, less demanding form of Catholicism was taught on the Continent than here in Britain. While realistic about the prospect of immediate results, Bourne was in no way opposed to dialogue between Catholics and Anglicans. He gave the Malines Conversations his initial blessing, offered to send English Catholic delegates to

Belgium and subsequently met the Archbishop of Canterbury with a view to commencing conversations in this country. It was Lambeth that declined to take up the offer.

Anglo-Papalists

Then, there existed within the Church of England a curious group unknown to most Catholics: the Anglo-Papalists. The 1896 Papal bull, *Curae Apostolicae*, categorically denied the validity of Anglican Orders and seemed to rule out conclusively any possibility of rapprochement between the two Communion. An Anglican clergyman from the Cotswolds, Spencer Jones, who deserves to be far better known, developed an imaginative, if controversial, response. He recognised that the Catholic Church cannot change her doctrine, whereas change is characteristic of the Church of England; therefore, it is for Anglicanism to change and accept papal claims. In his writings and in the Church Unity Octave, which he co-founded, Jones argued that, historically, this Papalist stance actually represented the true nature of Anglicanism, rather than the Protestantism forced upon it by the civil power at the Reformation. Prayer and education were needed to convince his fellow Anglicans.

They limited themselves to the vaguest expressions of sympathy

Believing, as they claimed, in all defined doctrine of the Catholic Church, many Catholics naturally asked why these Anglo-Papalists remained in the Church of England. They gave two reasons. They worked for 'Corporate Reunion.' Individual conversions, they argued, would only delay the ultimate return of the Anglican Communion to the Catholic Church, leaving Anglicanism in the hands of Protestants and Modernists. Then they felt unable to become Catholics if that involved the denial of their priestly orders, of which they were passionately convinced.

These Anglo-Papalists shared with Bourne a similar understanding of the basis for ecumenical progress. Both understood the different senses in which the term 'Reunion' was being used. For Anglo-Papalists, as well as for Catholics, it meant 'true dogmatic agreement upon defined truth,' rather than 'mere friendly relations and cooperation.'¹ A much stronger appreciation of this distinction needs to be recovered today. Ecumenical contact might start gradually with friendly contact, but, unless we are clear and honest about the ultimate objective, then we ought not to be surprised if little progress is made. The Papalists were scathing of the encroachments of Modernism in the Church of England and increasingly critical of an Anglo-Catholicism which, they felt, yearned more for Establishment endorsement rather than concerning itself with the propagation of the truth. Catholicism, the Papalists argued, meant more than 'a revival of ceremonies and costume.'²

The Lambeth Conference and contraception

Attempts at dialogue in England had been mooted in the late 1920s. What finally brought Cardinal Bourne and the Anglo-Papalists together were the resolutions of the

¹ Rev. W. R. Corbould in Rev. H. J. Fynes-Clinton & W. R. Corbould, *What are We to Say?* (London: Council for Promoting Catholic Unity, 1932)

² Rev. H. K. Pierce to Rev. S. Harris, S. J. Jones & A. Acheson, 21 March 1932

1930 Lambeth Conference. The Papalists were horrified by the limited recognition and possibility of intercommunion offered by the Church of England to Protestants who made no claim to apostolic succession. The presence of Orthodox delegates at the Conference did not help. The Papalists suspected a conspiracy to create a 'non-papal' Catholicism, which for them was unthinkable.

But the Anglo-Papalists reserved their greatest fury for the sanction granted to the use of artificial contraception. (In this respect, Fr Holloway wrote, 'The Church of England in particular might be called the very barometer of moral pressure against the harsh perfections of Christ on the weakness of human nature.'³) For Anglo-Papalists and many others at the time, this was 'the Moral Heresy' – 'Lambeth had blessed mortal sin.'⁴ We marked the fiftieth anniversary of *Humane Vitae* last year: it is worth recalling that there are those beyond her visible confines who look to the Catholic Church to defend the natural law and Christian tradition. The Anglo-Papalists were delighted by Pius XI's encyclical, *Casti Connubii*, in which he censured the Anglican Bishops for departing 'from the uninterrupted Christian tradition' in the erroneous belief they could 'declare another doctrine.'⁵

*Prayer and education
were needed to
convince his fellow
Anglicans*

The London Conversations of 1931

It is against this backdrop that highly-confidential London Conversations commenced in January 1931 at the Thackeray Hotel opposite the British Museum. Initially, they were chaired by Sir James Marchant, an English Presbyterian who worked in the world of publishing and presided over various quasi-governmental bodies. His presence was later dispensed with as both sides suspected him – with justification – of being less than straight forward and advancing his own personal agenda.

It was not for lack of effort on Marchant's part that authorised, senior Anglican representation was lacking. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York were in an invidious position. In the light of their own *Appeal* for Christian unity, they could not be seen to reject outright these efforts towards mutual understanding and reunion with Rome. Yet, for them, this represented the wrong kind of ecumenism. They limited themselves, therefore, to the vaguest expressions of sympathy. So, the Anglican conversationalists were drawn from the highly-unrepresentative Papalist grouping: Spencer Jones, the highly irascible author Dr Scott, and four other parish clergy.

By contrast, Cardinal Bourne was fully appraised and supportive of the conversations.

The Catholic delegation was impressive: the Jesuit, Archbishop Alban Goodier; Cuthbert Butler, former Abbot of Downside and a considerable scholar; Bede Jarrett, Provincial of the Dominicans; and another Jesuit, Martin D'Arcy, intellectually brilliant and a renowned convert-hunter. British Catholics have no reason to be apologetic about their commitment to the search for unity in the early twentieth century.

Discussion

To the surprise of the Catholics, doctrine did not feature large in the initial Conversations. Assuming that they were already united in belief, the Papalists produced four historical monographs for the consideration of their Catholic friends. These papers sought to validate the Papalist claim to be the true voice of the Church of England and to demonstrate that it was possible to be out of communion with Rome, while being neither in heresy nor schism. Archbishop Goodier, who led the Catholic team, recognised immediately: 'The question is not one of history; it is dogmatic.'⁶



St Magnus the Martyr, London Bridge

Goodier was not a speculative theologian. Lacking the vocabulary of 'degrees of communion' provided by the Second Vatican Council, he struggled to define the relationship to the Catholic Church of these exotic Papalists. There was a great deal of ultimately unhelpful discussion as to the possibility of schism *within* the Church as opposed to schism *from* the Church. Frustrated by what he felt was mere semantics, Goodier was inclined to call a halt to the Conversations. Butler and the others urged perseverance. It was possible that, in God's Providence, the Papalists 'are doing a Catholicising work that we can't do; they are in fact touching wide and ever wider circles that none others reach, or can reach.'⁷

Patrimony

Matters progressed at the meeting in June 1931 when attention turned to practicalities. What were the Papalists seeking from Rome? In 2009 Pope Benedict XVI was praised for his creativity in establishing Personal Ordinariates to allow Anglicans to move into full communion with the Catholic Church in a corporate manner, retaining elements of their Anglican patrimony. In fact, such proposals had been considered three generations earlier. Rome was eminently practical. Did the numbers justify such concessions? The Papalists claimed the support of 400 Anglican clergy. But what was it they wanted?

The Anglican conversationalists accepted that some concessions might only be of temporary duration. Drawing upon the Malines Conversations, they requested the following:

³ Fr. Edward Holloway, *Catholicism: A New Synthesis* (Wickford: Keyway Publications, 1969), p. 434

⁴ Pierce to Confraternity of Unity Council, 17 February 1933

⁵ Pope Pius XI, *Casti Connubii* (1930), n.56

⁶ Archbishop Alban Goodier to Sir James Marchant, 15 March 1931

⁷ Abbot Cuthbert Butler to Goodier, 6 March 1931

- That the Archbishop of Canterbury should be created 'Patriarch of such Anglican churches throughout the world as should desire to enter into the union;'
- That Anglicans being reconciled should be governed by their own canon law – with the possibility of appeals to the Holy See;
- The right to appoint their own bishops;
- The Holy See should authorise use of 'an English rite' for the liturgy – the Book of Common Prayer revised to ensure its full conformity with Catholic doctrine;
- The use for the moment at least of the King James Version of the Bible;
- The Pope to 'regularise the orders of the Archbishop of Canterbury,' who, in turn, would regularise the orders of all other clergy;
- Married clergy who were reconciled should be permitted to continue to function – but those ordained in the future would embrace celibacy; and
- The option of Communion under both kinds.⁸

Pope Benedict XVI

It is instructive to compare the concessions granted subsequently by Pope Benedict. The final point had already become the norm in the Latin Church. Under the 2009 Apostolic Constitution, *Anglicanorum Coetibus*, groups of Anglicans entering full communion were granted their own ordinaries and constitution, provision for married clergy and their own liturgy embodying 'Anglican patrimony.'

These requests were not dismissed out of hand in the 1930s. Far from it. Cardinal Bourne asked for the preparation of a background statement for the benefit of the Vatican, and he himself presented the Papalists' memorandum to Pope Pius XI at an audience on 9 December 1931. We know that the Pope received the memorandum sympathetically. The fact that there was no further action in Rome was at least in part because then (and again three years later), the Vatican, with good reason, doubted that sufficient numbers of Anglican clergy would respond even if such concessions were granted.

It was not the end of the road for these English Conversations. Having ditched Sir James Marchant as their chairman, the Anglicans and Catholics continued to meet through 1932 at the Rectory of St. Mary's, Chelsea, the residence of Archbishop Goodier.

Mutual understanding

Cardinal Bourne gave permission for a conference at St. Ermin's Hotel in Westminster on 25 October 1932 at which both Catholics and Anglicans would present papers with a view to building mutual understanding and contact between the two Communion. Informed of the proposal, the Archbishop of Canterbury simply noted the fact that it was occurring. The conference, intended as the first of a series, was attended by 120 clergy – and its occurrence and the content remained confidential!

The subject of the conference was 'The Ideal of the Church.' Archbishop Goodier led for the Catholics, and spoke at length. He was much more comfortable handling doctrine than history. At last, he seemed able to articulate his understanding of the distinction between the Anglo-Papalists and Roman Catholics. Affirming their shared belief in the divinity of Christ, he maintained that there was a 'fundamental difference of outlook.' Even when Anglicans accepted Catholic doctrine, including the claims of papal jurisdiction and infallibility, this was for them 'a matter of personal judgment, and personal interpretation.' Whereas, for Catholics, authority always took precedence, and was only subsequently confirmed by personal judgment. Goodier held that the fundamental distinction was between 'belief in the Christian religion' and belief in 'the Christian Church.'

The Archbishop was able to point to the unchanging doctrine of the Catholic Church. She speaks as Jesus spoke, because He bids her; as the apostles spoke, because she is one with them. She commands as they commanded, and can do no otherwise.' Having been so critical themselves of the recent sanctioning of artificial contraception by the Lambeth Conference, the Papalists would have been forcefully struck by Goodier's next point: 'the faith or morals of one generation cannot contradict the faith or morals of another ... the Church that teaches morals which have never been the morals of the Church of Jesus Christ, declares herself formally heretical.'⁹

Home truths

The paper delighted his fellow Catholics. Bede Jarrett wrote: 'Here is controversy *in excelsis*. Archbishop Goodier is in the tradition of St. Francis de Sales.'¹⁰ But Anglicans too appreciated his honesty and clarity. One acknowledged 'that home truths were spoken, but in a charitable manner; that they were needed to be stated; and that the result was on the whole good.'¹¹ There is something here to be learnt in ecumenical dialogue today. The cause of unity is not advanced by obfuscation.

Contrary to expectations, there were no further conferences. Why not? Death and illness intervened. Catholic patronage and participation of the Conversations had been crucial. But within a few short months Cardinal Bourne, Butler and Jarrett had either died or were incapacitated. Tellingly, it was during Bourne's brief return to health and active ministry in 1933, that the prospect of further conversations was raised. It is also difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Anglicans' bluff had been called. Hearing of the avowed intentions of

⁹ Goodier, 'The Ideal of the Church,' *Blackfriars*, 14/155 (February 1933), pp. 90-100

¹⁰ Fr. Bede Jarrett, Editorial, *Blackfriars*, 14/155 (February 1933), p.85

¹¹ Pierce to Rev. D. Rea, 12 January 1933

the Papalists, the Pope declared that he was 'ready to do anything' to help their journey into full communion. A few Anglicans recognised a moment of unique opportunity, and pleaded with other members of the group to take 'the Next Step.' It was with infinite sadness that it dawned upon them that that was to be no Next Step. 'No one will admit there is any definite point in the Anglican Communion's disintegration beyond which we can't be associated with it.'¹² A handful of brave souls were reconciled to the Church, but what had promised to be a significant movement in the English ecclesiastical landscape never materialised.



The Faith Movement is concerned with reconciling the claims of faith and science, but it must never neglect the lessons to be learnt from history. After all, we proclaim 'the primacy of Jesus Christ overall creation, *throughout history*.' Pope Benedict demonstrated his capacity to learn from history in his creation of the Ordinariate structures: both the limitations sometimes of formal ecumenical dialogue, and the requirement for creativity in response to the needs of individuals and groups. And we Catholics we have no cause for complacency. We too need to learn continually anew how destructive can be the inroads of Modernism from which these anguished Anglo-Papalists suffered in the 1930s.

Pope Benedict demonstrated his capacity to learn from history

We state in our Origins and Purpose: 'Faith is ecumenical in spirit.'¹³ Let an understanding of history inform that statement and make it an increasing reality.

Fr. Mark Vickers is a parish priest in West London. His book Reunion Revisited: 1930s Ecumenism Exposed (2017) is published by Gracewing.

¹² Pierce to Jones, 15 December 1932

¹³ 'Origins and Purpose of the Faith Movement' at www.faith.org.uk/about

The Transgender Moment and the Catholic Vision of the Human Person



William Newton looks at a topical issue

Very likely there have been "transgender persons" around since antiquity but these individuals have always been more or less in the back-ground of social consciousness and there was never before an accompanying theory or movement. Clearly that has changed.

The Church has a developed teaching on the human person and human sexuality but there is little, as yet, on transgender issues. In *Amoris Laetitia* Pope Francis has this to say:

Yet another challenge is posed by the various forms of an ideology of gender that "denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family. This ideology leads to educational programmes and legislative enactments that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female. Consequently, human identity becomes the choice of the individual, one which can also change over time. It is a source of concern that some ideologies of this sort, which seek to respond to what are at times understandable aspirations, manage to assert themselves as absolute and unquestionable, even dictating how children should be raised. It needs to be emphasized that "biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated..."

the Church is duty bound to speak the truth

It is one thing to be understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life, and another to accept ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality. Let us not fall into the sin of trying to replace the Creator. We are creatures, and not omnipotent. Creation is prior to us and must be received as a gift. At the same time, we are called to protect our humanity, and this means, in the first place, accepting it and respecting it as it was created.¹

Key points-

- Francis makes a distinction between transgender persons and transgenderism. He says, "It is one thing to be understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life, and another to accept ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality." To be clear, a transgender person is an individual who identifies with a sex that is different from his or her biological sex. Transgenderism is a system of thought (i.e. a philosophy) that seeks to justify this experience as being in conformity with reality and, therefore, normal.

Let us not fall into the sin of trying to replace the Creator

¹ *Amoris Laetitia* (§56).

- He denies one of the key principles of transgenderism, namely a radical divorce between sex and gender. He says, “biological sex and the socio- role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated.”
- He points out one of the negative implications of following through on this theory. He says that it will lead to “a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family.”
- He hints at an underlying basis of transgenderism, namely a kind of creaturely rebellion against the Creator. He reminds us that, “we are creatures, and not omnipotent. Creation is prior to us and must be received as a gift.”

Divorcing sex from gender

As Francis suggests, a prominent feature of transgenderism is to drive a wedge between the notions of sex and gender. It is on account of this that an individual maybe said to be male according to his biological sex but female as to gender identity.

Until recently, the words “sex” and “gender” were synonyms.² Both words pointed to the categorization of human beings as male or female on the basis of their specific contribution to generation. At a bodily level (chromosomes, endocrine constitution, internal and external organs) the female is organized so as to generate within herself, while a male is organized to generate in another (i.e. in the female).

In more recent years, the meaning of the word gender has become less directly tied to the notion of generation; and, herein, lies a problem. Being unmoored in this way, it has floated off in various directions, making it hard to pin down. For some, it has moved close to the notions of masculinity and femininity which describe characteristics that are (sometimes more and sometimes less) associated with biological males and females respectively, such as psychological propensities (e.g. agreeableness or assertiveness) and dress codes. So we might speak of male attitudes and women’s clothing.

Even more radically uncoupling sex from gender, others claim that gender is non-binary. A person’s gender can exist anywhere along a spectrum between male to female, in either a fixed or fluid manner. Or, going further and breaking out of the limitations of this spectrum, genders other than male and female are recognized. Finally, a person’s gender is understood to be unique and is whatever the individual says it is.³ However, once totally set adrift from sex in this latter way, the word more or less loses any meaning.

Truth

The question presents itself: what is true and what is not true in these ideas about gender?

It is true that there are characteristics which allow us to distinguish male from female that are less directly tied to human generation than is biological-sex. Hence, we do need a vocabulary that can express this fact. Whether we ought to co-opt the word “gender,” rather than “secondary sex characteristics,” is another question. It is also true that one person can manifest these secondary characteristics more than another: there is a spectrum of sorts here. After all, some women are experienced as more feminine than others and some men more masculine; some girls are “tom-boys,” and so on.

What is not true is that *all* these secondary characteristics (elements that are not

directly related to human generation) are merely imposed by society. It is important to note that the two examples given above – psychological propensity and dress-codes – rest on very different foundations. Psychological propensities such as “assertiveness” or “agreeableness” flow from biological sex much more immediately than do social conventions like dress-codes. Some, not seeing (or accepting) this distinction, erroneously claim that gender is *wholly* a social convention. Rather, it seems closer to the truth to say that some phenomena associated with gender are socially constructed (e.g. wearing dresses), but many are rooted in sex distinction itself (e.g. levels of agreeableness). Much of what is meant by gender is *an effect* of sex. Sex is primary; gender is derivative.

Using the words “Man” and “Woman”

The words “man” and “woman” or “male” and “female” are used most strictly in relation to sex. Sex, rather than gender, is the base line because when an attitude or form of behaviour is called “feminine,” it is done so because it predominates in those who are female *as to sex*.

Accordingly, if “woman” or “man” is used to describe the identity of an individual other than on the basis of sex, then these words are being used analogously or even metaphorically. For example, if a biological man is called a woman because he manifests attitudes or inclinations associated with a biological woman, then the word “woman” is being used metaphorically; just as a human being might be called “a lion” because he or she was brave or ferocious. It’s not strictly speaking wrong to use the word “woman” in this way but one would need to be aware that it is being used metaphorically; something that is not commonly appreciated and so something that leads to confusion.

Why make an issue out of all of this?

The quality of the collaboration of men and women in society (and particularly in child-rearing) is the touchstone of civilization. But for men and women to do this well, they need to know themselves as men and as women and how they *complement* each other. There are several elements of transgenderism which – if they become mainstream – will make it harder for boys to grow into men and girls into women with that clear sexual identity that founds complementarity. These include the following features: relativizing the importance of sex as a component of personal identity; teaching that being a man or woman is a choice; teaching that being a man or woman is a fluid reality. Furthermore, while gender identity may well be distinct from sexual orientation, transgenderism necessarily denies the normative character of heterosexual attraction on account of each of the phenomena just enumerated.⁴ It is for these reasons that Pope Francis concludes that this theory is effectively “eliminating the anthropological basis of the family.”

Secondly, God has chosen the relationship of man and woman as his special love-language. It is the way he has chosen to reveal himself and his love to mankind (cf. Song of Songs). If this language is garbled, then this revelation is attenuated and his plan frustrated.

Third, the Church is not just concerned with mankind as a whole but with *individual* men and women. From the perspective of sound anthropology, a person who is a biological-male but considers himself to be more a woman than a man, does not see reality as it is.⁵

² The word “gender” is related to the word “generate,” whereas the word “sex” comes from “secare” (to cut); in the sense that the human race is cut into two on the basis of the particular contribution to generation.

³ Gender Spectrum, “Understanding Gender” (<https://www.genderspectrum.org/quick-links/understanding-gender/>).

⁴ Pontifical Council for the Family, Family, Marriage and “De Facto” Unions (2000), §8.

⁵ Benedict XVI, Address to the Roman Curia, December 21, 2012

They have Gender Identity Disorder (GID).⁶ Let's be clear: persons with this disorder are not being dishonest or delinquent. They really do identify with the sex that is different from their biological sex. Yet, while one must sympathize with this situation, it is not something that warrants being encouraged, any more than one would encourage and confirm a girl with anorexia in her inadequate self-perception.

Alone on the hill?

The reasons above seek to explain why the Church is 'prepared to die on the hill' in defence of the truth about sex and gender. Is she alone on that peak, exposed as it is to the harsh winds of modernity?

She is not.

Jordan Peterson, for example, questions the radical uncoupling of gender from sex. From a purely scientific perspective, he argues that gender is inextricably bound to sex.⁷ After all, there is a well verified statistically significant difference between men and women (across all cultures) when the so called "big five" personality traits are considered.⁸ This difference increases dramatically when other personality traits (e.g. vigilance or abstractness) are placed to the forefront.⁹ Responding to the objection that these traits are culturally conditioned, Peterson points to the so called "Scandinavian Paradox," namely that in egalitarian Nordic cultures, the trait difference between men and women is larger not smaller.¹⁰

*Creation is prior to us
and must be received
as a gift*

Ryan Anderson, of *The Heritage Foundation*, points to various seeming inconsistencies in transgenderism which do not require a Catholic world view to appreciate.¹¹ These include:

- (1) If sex and gender are so distinct and the body is (at the end of the day) not what determines whether one is a man or woman, why would there be an impetus to medically transition, i.e. to undergo sex reassignment surgery (SRS)?
- (2) If femininity is not rooted in the body but is a choice, a feeling, or a psychological affinity, why do many men who medically transition desire bodies that are stereotypically female?
- (3) If gender identity is a personal choice – or even fluid (and so malleable) – why does the transgender movement tend to oppose therapies that would realign a person's gender identity with his/her biological sex?¹²
- (4) If a person's gender is not objectively determined by the person's biology but rests more upon a person's *subjective* judgement, why are others compelled to accept this subjective determination?

⁶ In recent years some organizations (such as the American Psychological Association) have moved from speaking of "disorder" to "dysphoria." The term "dysphoria" removes from the equation any sense of being in discord with reality. It implies only a sense of unease. For an explanation of this (seemingly political) move, see: Adrian Traloe, "Letter to Catholic Medical Quarterly" Nov 2017

⁷ "Jordan Peterson: Differences between men and women" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSXEHsYf8uQ>).

⁸ Yanna J. Weisberg et al, "Gender Differences in Personality across the Ten Aspects of the Big Five" (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3149680>).

⁹ Dario Maestripieri, "Gender Differences in Personality Are Larger than Previously Thought" (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/games-primates-play/201201/gender-differences-in-personality-are-larger-previously-thought>).

¹⁰ See "Hjernevask," (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVaTc15pIVs>).

¹¹ Ryan Anderson, *When Harry Became Sally* (New York: Encounter Books, 2018), 45ff.

¹² WPATH Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender Nonconforming People, 16 (<https://www.wpath.org/publications/soc>).

Even individuals who have actively supported SRS have cautioned a greater circumspection than is currently practiced. Dr Kenneth Zucker was for many years the head of the world renowned Gender Identity Clinic in Toronto, Canada. He helped numerous adults to medically transition. However, when he opposed SRS for minors, he was ousted.¹³ His objection to chemical and surgical intervention comes in light of the fact that between 80-88% of all children who are suffering from GID eventually identify with their biological sex; when they are given appropriate support and not 'locked in' by hormone blockers or hormone replacement therapy.¹⁴

Evidence

Finally, there is cogent evidence in favour of the position that what we are dealing with here is a true psychological disorder. The correlation of GID with other psychological and medical problems is alarming. For example, those with GID are nineteen times more likely to attempt suicide during their life than those without it,¹⁵ seven times more likely to be depressed,¹⁶ three times more likely to practice substance abuse,¹⁷ and forty-nine times more likely to be HIV positive than their peers.¹⁸

There can be little doubt that some of the poor mental health indicators are the result of the stress that is part of discrimination, exclusion, or fear of rejection; but the outcomes are too extreme to account for them solely in this way, especially when we compare transgender persons to other persecuted minorities.¹⁹ That this is not a matter merely of social exclusion is perhaps also indicated by the fact that these poor health indicators are the same in so called 'progressive' countries where transgender persons are more socially accepted.²⁰

*the touchstone of
civilisation*

Notably, suicide rates are little affected by medical transitioning.²¹ It was the insignificant contribution of SRS to mental health that led Dr Paul McHugh to shut down the Gender Identity Clinic at Johns Hopkins in the 1970s. He concluded that "the hope that they [transgender persons] would emerge now from their emotional difficulties to flourish psychologically had not been fulfilled."²²

Opposing Transgenderism

The resistance of the Church to transgenderism is not first of all medical but anthropological. In short, the Church's vision of the human person and that which (consciously or not) undergirds transgenderism are irreconcilable.

¹³ Jesse Singal, "How the Fight Over Transgender Kids Got a Leading Sex Researcher Fired," *The Cut* 7 February 2016

¹⁴ Thomas D. Steensma et al, "Factors Associated With Desistence and Persistence of Childhood Gender Dysphoria: A Quantitative Follow-Up Study," *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* 52.6 (June 2013): 582-590; Cohen-Kettenis P et al "Intersex And Genderidentity Disorders. The Treatment of Adolescent Transsexuals: Changing Insights," *The Journal of Sexual Medicine* 5 (2008): 1892-1897. Jesse Singal, "What's Missing From the Conversation About Transgender Kids," *The Cut*, 25 July 2016.

¹⁵ Anne P. Hass et al, "Suicide Attempts Among Transgender and Gender Non-conforming Adults: Findings of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey" *Williams Institute* January 2014.

¹⁶ Stephanie L Budge, "Anxiety and Depression in Transgender Individuals: The Roles of Transition Status, Loss, Social Support, and Coping," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 81.3 (February 2013).

¹⁷ American Addiction Centers, "Transgender and Addiction,"

¹⁸ World Health Organization, "AIDS/HIV: Transgender People"

¹⁹ Erin C. Wilson et al, "The impact of discrimination on the mental health of trans-female youth and the protective effect of parental support" *AIDS Behaviour* 20.10 (2016 Oct): 2203-2211.

²⁰ Cf. Anderson, *When Harry Became Sally*, 94.

²¹ Rikke Kildevæld Simonsen et al, "Long-Term Follow-Up of Individuals Undergoing Sex-Reassignment Surgery: Somatic Morbidity and Cause of Death," *Journal of Sexual Medicine* 4.1 (March 2016): 60-68.

²² Paul R. McHugh, "Surgical Sex: Why We Stopped Doing Sex Change Operations," *First Things*. Nov 2004

The problem we encounter in transgenderism is not so much the denial of the immaterial soul but the denial of a *profound unity* between the body and the person: it is a matter of an exaggerated dualism.²³ To put this another way: transgenderism does not accord sufficient personal significance to the body. Hence, the male or female character of the body is not seen as a core identity of the individual. In a given instance, the body maybe male, but this does not determine the identity of the person in a fundamental way, perhaps at all.

This stands in sharp contrast to that sound anthropology (accepted by the Church) in which the body and soul are seen as so intimately connected that they form a single reality – a single substance.²⁴ In this approach, the body as much as the soul defines the individual human person; so much so that a statement like “I have the wrong body” would be tantamount to saying, “I have the wrong I.”²⁵

In short, Freaky Friday may be fun, but it is a poor anthropology. It posits the notion that the personhood of an individual is so distinct from her body that mother and daughter could swap bodies for the weekend, like two people might swap cars. The same body-person estrangement lies near the heart of transgenderism. In this sense, it takes its place beside other modern errors in the area of human sexuality such as pornography and hook-up culture.

Pornography separates the body from the person so that someone might gain gratification by focusing on the individual's body without the ‘inconvenience’ of having to consider that this individual is a human person. Hook-up culture implies that two people can have a very intimate bodily exchange without effecting a personal connection. In this same vein, transgenderism exaggerates the distinction between the body and the person. It denies, ignores, or profoundly down-plays the fact that the body (with its distinctive sex) is an intrinsic and inalienable element of a human person and, thereby, determinative of his or her identity.²⁶

Person

There is something unfortunate about the phrase “transgender person.” The word “transgender” tends to capture the limelight to the detriment of “person.” We are human persons and this is the foundation of our identity and dignity rather than whether we are transgender, cisgender, a-gender, or even male or female. To that extent transgenderism makes a mountain out of a mole hill. But, once the mountain is made, the Church is duty bound to speak the truth. To the extent that transgender theory diminishes the importance of the body and the significance of sex in personal identity, there is a falsehood in play. To the degree that it sows confusion and undermines marriage and the family, there is a social fallout that cannot be ignored. A transgender person is as much in the image of God as anyone else, let that be proclaimed, but this does not make transgenderism a sound philosophy.

Dr William Newton is Professor of Theology at Franciscan University, Steubenville, USA

²³ The Church understands the human being to be a composite of a body and of an immaterial soul. Interestingly, there is less need to make a defence of the immateriality of the soul in the face of transgenderism than with out-and-out materialists since transgenderism operates on the basis that the body is other than the person which implies that the human person is not purely a material entity.

²⁴ Council of Vienne, Decree §1 (Denz. 900).

²⁵ John Paul II, Letter to Families §19.

²⁶ This ‘down-playing’ of the significance of the body is aggravated in SRS because in these medical interventions violence is done to healthy organs in a healthy body.

PRAYER BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God,
You are the one who reveals the invisible God,
The first-born of all creatures
The foundation of all things;
You are the Master of humanity,
You are the Redeemer,
You were born, you died, and have risen for us;
You are the centre of history and of the world;
You are the one who knows us and loves us;
You are the companion and friend of our life;
You are the man of sorrow and of hope;
You are he who must come
And who one day will be our judge
And, we hope, you will be our delight
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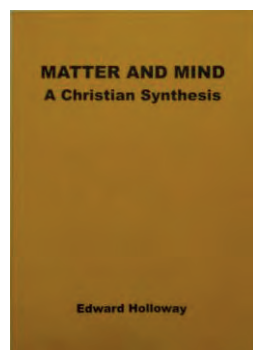


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Interview

A new saint from Krakow

Joanna Bogle meets the biographer of
Blessed Hanna Chrzanowska



Malgorzata Brykczynska – Gosia to her friends – is a woman with a mission. Born in Britain of Polish parents, she is a former nursing tutor at London's Great Ormond Street hospital, has also taught philosophy in the USA, and is the author of several books. And her current mission is to make known the story of remarkable new Polish "Blessed", a wartime heroine and close collaborator of St John Paul II.

The story of Hanna Chrzanowska is important not only in its own right, but because of the light it sheds on St John Paul's remarkable leadership of the Church in Krakow in the difficult days under Communism, and the message that this has for our own day.

*Nurses and their teachers
were forced to attend
lectures in socialism*

"People gathered around John Paul – there was a unity unimaginable today, people working together on all sorts of projects, things that needed doing" Gosia reflects. "They supported each other spiritually. It wasn't that these people carried their religion on their sleeve – in fact, there was a strong sense of privacy, very necessary under Communism. But there was this deep understanding and sense of common purpose.

"I have a particular interest in the story of Hanna: my great-aunt knew her – they were much the same age and went to the same nursing school, so there was a bond. But above all, Hanna's story is an inspiration for people today and that's why it is worth telling."

Nursing

Hanna Chrzanowska was beatified on April 28th, 2018, at the shrine of Divine Mercy just outside Krakow. Her story begins in 1902 when she was born in Warsaw. The family was old-school landed gentry: patriotic, well educated, orientated towards a sense of service to the community. They moved to Krakow in 1912 when her father was appointed a professor at the Jagiellonian University. On the outbreak of World War I Hanna became a teenage first aid volunteer. She had always wanted to become a nurse, and after the war ended, in the newly independent Poland, she was able to join Poland's first-ever school of nursing, founded by the American Red Cross in Warsaw.

*People gathered around
John Paul*

A successful student, Hanna was then chosen to go to Paris as part of a pioneering group studying community nursing, and on her return, to help start new nursing school in Krakow.

Taking her faith seriously

"She later wrote that it was during her time in Paris that she began to take her faith seriously, to have a real relationship with Christ " Gosia notes. "And when she returned to Poland it was as a deeply committed Catholic who saw everything in that light. Her personal relationship with Christ was bound up with her nursing vocation."

In the inter-war years, the nursing school at Krakow flourished, as did a professional publication for nurses, which Hanna edited through the 1930s. With the outbreak of war in 1939, everything changed. Under German occupation all universities and colleges of advanced education were closed. Hanna's professor father was arrested along with other staff at the Jagiellonian University and he died in Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

The sick and elderly were increasingly bereft of care



Gosia, 2nd left, at a lecture tour in the USA

Children

Living with friends – the family home had been part of the university and was now banned to them – Hanna, worked with a committee established by the Poles to help people made homeless by the war, and cared for children separated from their families and for orphans. The Jewish children were in particular danger – it required tact and secrecy to find them safe homes.

In a book published to mark Hanna's beatification, Gosia explained "The children she was protecting did not know who had placed them with their new families or in safe

orphanages. Neither did the institutions and families ask probing questions". If Hanna's involvement with saving the children had been discovered, she would have been executed, along with her workforce.

Christmas banned

After the war, Poland was effectively under a new occupation as Communism was imposed with the backing of the USSR's Red Army. Even nurses and their teachers were forced to attend lectures in socialism and new structures were imposed which made home nursing – which had been Hanna's speciality – difficult. The sick and elderly were increasingly bereft of care. Meanwhile in the hospital where Hanna was based, it was announced that there could be no Christmas celebration for the nurses as it was a religious feast: against regulations, back in the nurses' accommodation, Hanna organised a Christmas supper, decorating the tables and organising the singing of traditional carols.

In the 1960s, seeing the needs of the housebound and elderly, Hanna went to the Bishop – Karol Wojtyla – and it was with his support and encouragement that she began what was to be her major achievement – the creation of a network of volunteers who visited people in their homes to give companionship and nursing care.

Housebound and handicapped

"My great-aunt, at the suggestion of the Bishop – later St John Paul – contacted Hanna and got involved" Gosia notes "My cousin, her daughter, had a telephone – that was rare in Poland at that time – so they were able to do a lot of the organising for the retreats and get-togethers that Hanna arranged for lonely and housebound people. There was the difficulty of getting transport – they needed cars with four doors, so as to be able to get handicapped people in and out. Under Communism, everything was difficult and complicated – but they had these get-together days for people who would otherwise be marooned at home, seeing no one."

She would have been executed, along with her workforce

Gosia's great aunt, Alexandra Dambaska, was herself something of a heroine, and is honoured by the Jewish authorities as Righteous Among the Gentiles for her rescue work with children in the war years.

Gosia likes to quote Hanna Chrzanowska's words to nurses "What dignity belongs to our profession! Christ in us serves Christ in the other person". In today's Europe, where the inherent dignity and value of every person is challenged by a culture which accepts abortion and euthanasia, the beatification of this remarkable nurse sends an inspiring message.

Gosia Brykczynska's book on Blessed Hanna, COLOURS OF FIRE, is available from Amazon

Joanna Bogle is Editor of FAITH magazine

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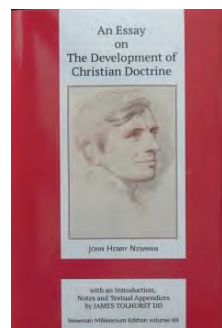
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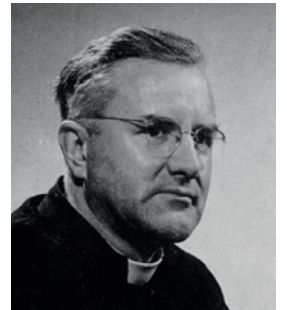
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Holloway on...

The Covenant of Christian Marriage: Part I

EDWARD HOLLOWAY



We have all at one time or another seen those TV programmes featuring Sixth Formers in which boys and girls, and significantly enough more militantly the girls, will state with obvious honesty that they don't intend to marry till death do us part, although if the love does go on lasting so much the better. Similarly they will say that they just don't see how you can live with anybody for ever and ever without getting frantically bored. The child from a broken home sees it otherwise, and the teenager from a broken home as well, unless of course by now they are set upon sexual experience rather than marriage, and can afford to talk glibly about 'knocking it off if it does not work out' etc.

marriage must be a permanent state of commital and love

As with everything in the Christian life, it is a case of 'Without Me you can do nothing, but with God all things are possible'. We can see why marriage must be a permanent state of commital and love. Among the baptised it is a direct sharing in the love by which God creates for time and eternity, and the consent to share this work with Christ is made at the altar. It is in fact the matrimonial consent, and that consent is not ratum, i.e. ratified with finality, until it is also *consummatum*, until the office which is inherent in their love, through their souls, and their bodies which are ordered to each other for this office, is effected through sexual union after the sacrament. From that time their bodies and their souls minister to Christ and with Him in a creative love, a love to which as members of His Body by Baptism, they are accepted of their own free will in a mutual work.

An office delegated from Christ

This work as we have suggested must be an office in the Church, a vocation in Christ, and a ministry in the Church. Once their bodies and souls have been so given to Christ and accepted there is no going back. Christ's love does not change, and they have ratified and consummated an office delegated from Him, sharing in His own work of creation. The love which binds Christ to the Church is indissoluble, and the love which shares in that love of His must also be indissoluble. It springs from the relationship established in

Baptism, which incorporates us into Christ as members of His Body, sharing His life and His work, according to our grace, gift, and offices. The love of Christian marriage shares in all things in this love of Christ, and in couples who live their lives together as one great prayer of union, supplication, contrition, and joy in Christ, that love will mellow and ripen down the years. Of course it cannot last for ever unless it is spiritual, and in the grace of Christ. If it is so, then it will take up all things of body and of soul into that relationship with Christ, and it will not only last, it will increase, and increase towards sanctity.

The priest's chastity and married couples' fidelity

The same argument is true of the priest and of the continuance of his sense of joy in his vocation. It can only increase if a man loves God humbly in joy and in sorrow, in sin and in virtue. If a man loses his faith and becomes even subconsciously a Rationalist, then he will be the most wretched of all creatures. Of course he will wither. The vow of priestly chastity sharpens the dilemma not only because it denies a man a secure all too human love, and with it sexual companionship, whereas given the possibility of marriage a man can 'drop back' into a comfortable state of being professionally holy, and drift along unnoticed among the tide of mankind. The priest who takes a vow of chastity for the Kingdom of God's sake, is exposed much more nakedly to emptiness and frustration, for of its nature this state of perfection in living does not have surpassing joy and satisfaction except it be lived in God as He divinely is.

This then is Christian love, and so we should teach it

Eucharist

But also in marriage: there is no guarantee of a lasting love and a love faithful and forgiving in pain, human faults, and human dereliction unless men and women be joined to Christ in a living prayer. If the Eucharist has a special relevance to the grace of marriage and its state, it must also have a relevance to the passion and cross of its betrayals and dereliction. Here too, the Christian spouse is called to come through the Cross to the Resurrection, to come through the Cross to a new challenge and a further vocation, not to deny the bond. Christ did not deny the bond but was faithful unto death, even to the death of the Cross. This also can be preached, but we have no time to develop the theme in this article.

Forming the mind and heart of children

When a young couple come to the foot of the altar there can come to the mind of a priest the words said to him long ago by the bishop, in the former service for the ordination of Sub-deacons: 'Dearly beloved son, again and yet again I do adjure you, consider how great

a burden of responsibility you take upon yourself this day'. Because before him he sees fifty years of life ahead, and all the drama and achievement, and all the sorrow and pain of human life, from springtime to the grave. He sees the hot and bothered years of young married life, and the forming of the mind and heart of children, through the atmosphere of their parents' personality in the love of God.

In the next age of marriage, he sees the young teenager, brimful of life, jealous of independence, responsive alike to high ideals and fierce squalls of temptation. He sees and senses too his own role here, his ability perhaps to hold and help better than 'Mum' and 'Dad', his ability to give reasons as well as love, and a vision of the Faith which builds on the world of science, and school, and human culture. He is given these kids by these parents to build on that rock of solid Christian faithfulness in loving, on that rock which is an office in the Church, made for his own office, fulfilled in his own love.

He reminds them in his sermon that their greatest achievement will be the nurturing of children like themselves, their greatest reward will be that which their own parents have here and now, when they stand in the benches behind their own children at their weddings, children who will thank God above all other things for the gift of a good and truly Christian, mother and father. They will know then that all achievement is in persons only, not in houses, lawns, and investments; only in the love that is undying, the gift of the mind and heart of those who love. The only reward of life is that men and women think they have reason to love you, that through all your faults, the seed of God's image lives in you, and you are, God help you, lovable, worthy to be loved. Life has no other reward, you take nothing else beyond the grave.

Parents and their adult children

He may tell them that even in the years when they can but pray and agonize, like himself, for their children, they will still hold them as the best and most valued of counsellors, if they know how to love without possessiveness, and to grow up with their children, treating them with a natural respect, with the recognition of their new adulthood, as they grow in the teens. He will tell them too, that the love which knows not divorce knows no end to its vocation down the years of life. Faithful to each other, forgiving in love, reverential of each other in body and in soul, they will know how to teach their children, as young wives or husbands, the laws of Christian goodness, prudence, tolerance, and chastity in holy wedlock. They will not be rich when they die, for their hands, even in middle-age, will be going again and again deep in their pockets for money, mortgages, and many a help.

love which knows not divorce knows no end to its vocation down the years of life

Summer into Autumn

As their summer lengthens into autumn, they will still be teaching both children and grandchildren the ways of God, for those ways shine in their faces and their works. They will learn to value the unity of their children's marriage more than their personal love of son or daughter. They will not take sides in quarrels, they will not divide, they will learn to mind their own business. They will not line up behind their offspring in family rows like football supporters behind their own team. This selfish misdemeanour of in-laws has been the beginning of many a divorce.

The better part

Even in old age he will tell them that their work continues, their vocation undimmed. They will still be wanted by children's children as babysitters and sitters. Even so, when frail and more than a little tired, and wracked with rheumatic pain, they will be forming the minds of children's children in their first prayers, and in the simple love of God. They will rejoice with Jesus that when others are out in the company of the wise, brilliant, socially delightful etc., that to them is given the better part, to stay in the company of the Master, and to reveal Him to the little ones. And in that sunset of life they will know the further reward of hearing in the voices of their children, in those simple words 'Mum' and 'Dad' overtones of reverence and of a love spiritual which echoes the reverence in the title of 'Father' given to a priest. For this is the reward of faithful love, a love which shared with Christ all the burden of creation, from conception to salvation, from the cradle to the grave. This then is Christian love, and so we should teach it, and allow ourselves to feel a little bit 'commosso' whenever a good couple hold hands before us at the foot of the altar. Because all the drama of life is here, for better or for worse, and at the end there will be true of them a variant reading from the book of Wisdom:

'Like the sunrise over the mountains of the Lord so is the majesty of a good wife in a well ordered home: Like the golden glow of the sanctuary lamp before the altar of God, so is the beauty of the face in a ripe old age.' (Sirach. 26:16-17).

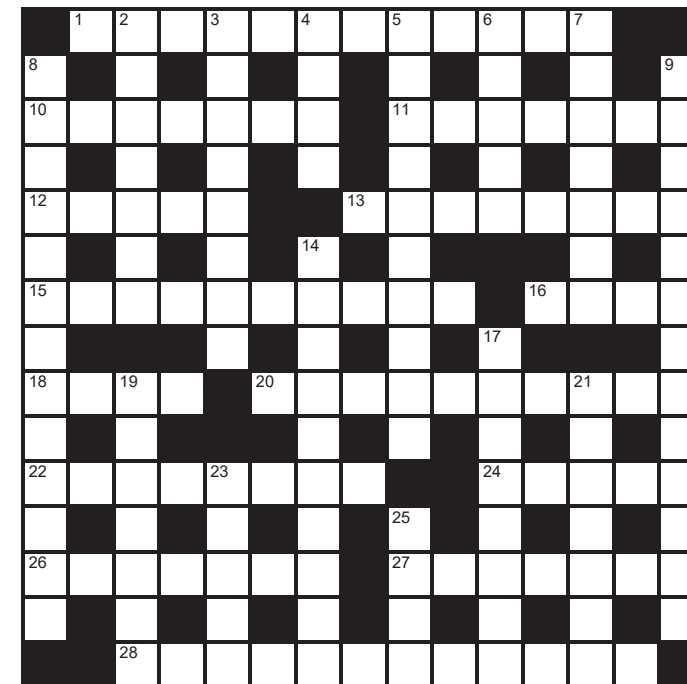
For as the burdens and the duties last till death do us part, so also the glories and the beauty shine from time into eternity.

This is the second half of the Editorial for the September/October 1979 issue of FAITH.

the Christian spouse is called to come through the Cross to the Resurrection

the love that is undying, the gift of the mind and heart of those who love

CROSSWORD 15 by Aurora Borealis



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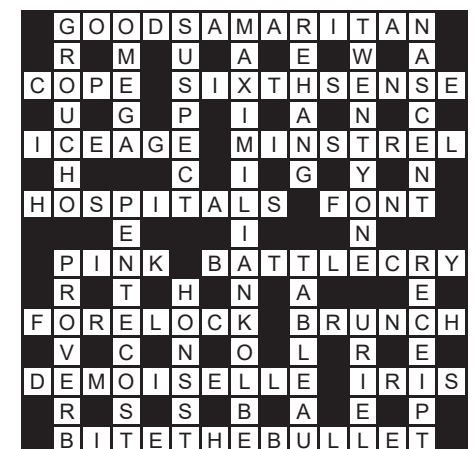
1. This kind of person knows all about water sources (4-8)
10. Reprimand for making plaits to go on top of head (7)
11. Get off this and you must be mad (7)
12. Chatty Roland shows us part of Austria (5)
13. **Devotional item based on monastic garment (8)**
15. **The partition between chancel and nave in a mediaeval church (4,6)**
16. Take away sticky stuff from detective and you'll end up with this (4)
18. Plant part of eye (4)
20. Take a Delhi bun, slice it up with last of nuts, and get some cheese (6,4)
22. **First century rabbi mentioned in Acts 5 (8)**
24. Start of over-prepared chapter is too likely to have this in the footnotes (2,3)
26. Knocking back sailor at a launch of tugboat (3-1-3)
27. Sounds like a bee and two eyes are stirred into silt - capital! (7)
28. About a metre beyond northern land, discover a place with lots of bluebottles (8,4)

Down

2. O, grab me the wrong way and it will create a blockage (7)
3. Muddled self heads south after meadow is bare (8)
4. Go on, party! This will never get off the ground (4)
5. **The process of teaching the faith (10)**
6. Time with backward poor? Company! (5)

7. **Woman who caused Samson's downfall (7)**

8. Goat toys with dropper (13)
9. The icy cold heart of Derry yields a kind of power (13)
14. Alternatively, note the last word - thank you - left something beautiful (10)
17. **Branch of philosophy which attempts to explain the problem of evil (8)**
19. Fashionable friends found in institution (7)
21. More daring will lose head, but be more fortunate (7)
23. Well-lit house has a kind of print (5)
25. Amaze eccentrics travelling south to north (4)



Crossword 13 solutions above. The winner of Faith Crossword 12 was Mr. D. Banister

An erudite and attractive appeal to humanists

The Great Mystery: Science, God and the Human Quest for Meaning, by Alister McGrath, Hodder & Stoughton, 256pp, hardback £20.00, paperback £10.99.

reviewed by *Conor McDonough O.P.*



There can hardly be a more prolific theological writer in the English-speaking world than Alister McGrath. Since 1985 he has been publishing serious books and articles in an impressive range of fields and registers: theology and sciences, apologetics, historical theology, biography, and popular spirituality.

His latest book, *The Great Mystery: Science, God and the Human Quest for Meaning*, combines many of these interests. It aims to be popular, in the sense that it seeks to articulate and respond to the universal human search for meaning (p.5-6), but it is also erudite, since it seeks to bring the insights of 'science' and 'religion' to bear on the search for meaning, each bringing its own particular perspective(s). Science seeks to unveil a hidden order in the world (p.8), but limits itself to what is physical. In so doing it 'fills in part of the "big picture" of reality – but only part' (p.10). Religion also responds to the order of the world (p.10), but in a way that goes beyond the merely physical. According to McGrath, anthropology recognises that this move to the religious is 'both natural and human' (p.11), and psychology supports the idea that a 'big picture' search for meaning and value is essential to our well-being (p.9).

A richer vision of reality

We might respond that these anthropological and psychological observations do little to bolster truth-claims and that they seem rather weak foundations for an argument, but it is clear that McGrath is not mainly interested in mounting an argument in this book. Rather, he aims to 'weave a richer vision of reality' (p.13) than that proposed by the secular mainstream:

That's our agenda in this book. It is steeped in the rich traditions of enquiry and reflection we find in both the natural sciences and Christian theology, while encouraging expansion of this vision of reality through every appropriate means. It aims to open up some of the deepest and most pressing issues about human identity, welcoming scientific insights on the one hand, while aiming to develop a 'big picture' of human nature which transcends the limits of the natural sciences on the other (p.14).

It is clear, then, that this book is intended more to seduce than to convince, and to appeal not only to believers, but to anyone

interested in what it means to be human.

Expanding our perspective

The following two chapters seek to deconstruct a popular reductive model of human nature, and to propose a variety of other models. A multiplicity of perspectives, drawing on science, philosophy, literature, and theology, is always preferable, according to McGrath, to a 'one-liner' summary of humanity, such as the idea that we are 'only metabolic machines', or just bundles of neurons, or merely carriers of genes (p.21-2). But instead of addressing these reductive approaches by marshalling a series of arguments, McGrath seeks simply to paint a more comprehensive, more satisfying picture:

The best way of challenging these inadequate and partial approaches is not to get lost in their fine detail, but to set out a richer and deeper vision of human nature which includes what is good about them. Human beings are complex systems; our whole transcends our individual parts (p.25).

McGrath himself offers no definition of humanity, or human nature, but simply aims to expand our perspective on humanity in the various directions suggested by a variety of thinkers.

The Balcony and The Road

When he then turns to the question of 'the meaning of life', McGrath introduces a metaphor which will guide the rest of his musings. Borrowing from John Alexander Mackay, he speaks of two ways of seeing a 'big picture'. One he names 'The Balcony', the other 'The Road'. The Balcony is a

metaphor for 'the perfect spectator, for whom life and the universe are permanent objects of study and contemplation' (p.51). This is a useful perspective, but it fails 'to recognise the awkward but critically important point that observers are actually part of the reality that is being observed, and are affected by the world around them' (p.52). The Road, on the other hand, involves 'a first-hand experience of reality':

Those who are travelling on the Road are participants, not distant and detached observers. If they observe, it is in their capacity of those who are travelling alongside and amid those whom they observe (p.52).

Given the inescapable fact that we are always already woven into the fabric of the world we are observing, McGrath sets aside any attempt at ultimate objectivity. Better to think and feel and experience as widely as possible: and this is precisely the reason McGrath values literature in the search for creaturely wisdom. If the search for meaning is comparable to a road, then the best we can hope for, it seems at this stage, is interesting and wise fellow-travellers.

The best of narratives

We might naturally ask whether McGrath is drifting into a bland humanism here. Does he rule out the possibility of a divine 'irruption', of a blinding revelation which relativises and judges all our attempts at wisdom? It must frankly be admitted that, at this stage, the possibility of such a revelation seems remote. Rather, Christianity is presented gently as the best of narratives, 'the fulfilment of all myths

– the ‘true myth’ towards which all other myths merely point’ (p.69). This would not fully satisfy many Christian theologians, but McGrath’s aim here is perhaps evangelical rather than systematic.

Chastening rationality

The following chapters treat various themes which aim to reframe standard objections to the idea that there is any meaning to life beyond the physical and factual. He proceeds not only by argument, but also by ‘chastening human rationality’ (p.196). Chapter 6, for example, asks whether meaning is discovered or invented, and introduces the question of God’s existence. Rather than present arguments for the objective existence of God, McGrath responds by interweaving objective and subjective approaches, including an element of personal testimony. McGrath’s very manner of proceeding here is itself testimony to the fact that religious belief can be thoughtful, aware of alternatives, and open to revision.

The myth of progress

The final section, ‘Wondering About Our Future’, is significantly meatier than what went before. The first chapter of the section deals with the question of sin, making cautious parallels between the Christian account of human sinfulness and the Darwinian struggle for life. McGrath goes on, in the following chapter, to examine the idea of ‘humanism’, or, rather, ‘humanisms’, showing, with his usual historical sophistication, that this is by no means a univocal term, nor is it a phenomenon which automatically

excludes religion. Again, drawing on history, McGrath takes on, in Chapter 12, ‘The Myth of Progress’, a resilient myth often associated with the rejection of religion. Once again, though, McGrath refuses to enter apologetic mode, and concludes the chapter with an accessible meditation on ‘The Hope of Immortality’.

Humility, reality and generosity

The book concludes by proposing three values that have emerged in the work: ‘Humility: Reality is a lot bigger than we are [...]. Generosity: We will have to learn to live with unresolved questions [...]. Wonder: A willingness to expand our vision’ (p.196-8):

Our place is on the Road, not on the Balcony – not a settled habitation of detached privilege, but a process of journeying in hope through an opaque and puzzling world (p.199).

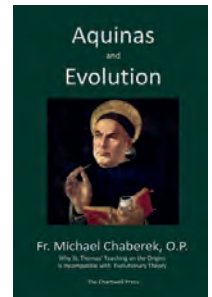
McGrath’s aim is worthy, his prose is attractive, and his erudition is impressive. But at the end of this meditation, I am left wondering whether he has underestimated the strangeness of the Gospel, the surprise of the Christian mystery, and the radical discontinuities that ought to mark the Christian life. Whether this is so or not can be put to one side, however. I am not the intended reader of this book, and those ‘humanists’ who expect to find only strangeness and objectionable truth-claims in Christian faith may well find a great deal to interest them in McGrath’s latest work.

Conor McDonough OP teaches dogmatic theology at the Dominican House of Studies, Dublin.

Can Thomism cope with Evolution?

Aquinas and Evolution - Why St. Thomas’ Teaching on the Origins Is Incompatible With Evolutionary Theory by Michael Chaberek, OP, The Chartwell Press, 272 pp, £14.00

reviewed by Mark Higgins



The contemporary scene of Catholic apologetics, at least in terms of the apologetics that deals with theological and philosophical questions, is largely underpinned by the works of St. Thomas Aquinas. This reflects the gradual re-ascendency of the Angelic Doctor in seminaries and universities which has occurred over the last twenty years, spearheaded by a new wave of orthodox Dominican scholars and a genuine thirst for theological clarity and certainty by a new generation of seminarians. Fr. Michael Chaberek, the author of this volume, can undoubtedly be included within this category of new Thomists, that is, with a rather significant caveat related to the theory of evolution.

Isolationists and compatibilists

As Fr. Chaberek identifies within this present work, generally speaking, the new breed of Thomists has taken one of two approaches to Darwinism, they have either entirely bracketed off any discussion of the theory of evolution, as a kind of academic inquiry separate and isolated from their disciplines of philosophy and theology (isolationists), or otherwise, they have gone to lengths to assure the reader that St. Thomas, whilst unaware of evolution, offers philosophical principles highly compatible with this scientific theory

(compatibilists). Our Polish Dominican author argues, on the contrary, that the philosophical and theological teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas do touch the areas of human origins, and that secondly, the claims of Darwinism have metaphysical implications, Darwinism cannot simply sit on top of Thomism, not at least with a Thomism intent on being entirely faithful to its foundational metaphysics.

Scholastic method

As a true son of the scholastic method, our author follows a classical methodology: he begins by defining the key terms; secondly, he outlines the arguments of his compatibilists and isolationist interlocutors (18 discreet arguments, well referenced and explained); thirdly, he offers a ‘*sed contra*’; and fourthly, a ‘*corpus*’ (a general outline of his position), before finally responding to the eighteen arguments already outlined. The book does not however conclude on this note and contains two further, albeit shorter sections, the first a response to the popular characterisation of Augustine as a proto-evolutionist, and the second, a defence of Intelligent Design approaches from a Thomistic standpoint. These additional sections of the book don’t carry the same sense of purpose or pace as the first, but are nonetheless thought-provoking, more so

the chapter on Augustine which elucidates his rather complicated understanding of creation succinctly and clearly.

The Gap theory

Fr. Chaberek has certainly researched his subject thoroughly, and the reader is left deeply impressed at the responses that he offers to his interlocutors and their proposals, always utilising the *ipsissima verba* of St. Thomas. Uncomfortable as the conclusion may seem, the book ultimately presents a very well argued case towards the metaphysical incompatibility of the Aristotelian-Thomistic synthesis and evolutionary theory. Interestingly, Chaberek cannot simply be accused (or even dismissed) as simply being a Young Earth Creationist intent on appropriating the saintly Dominican to the cause of Answers in Genesis. Chaberek always sides with Aquinas, and since Aquinas has no metaphysical attachment to a young earth and a universe 6,000 years old, neither does Chaberek (p.217). Chaberek's conclusions are always from the standpoint of, fundamentally, being unflinchingly committed to Aquinas' *sana philosophia*. For example, we read that only God can initiate a species, that for Aquinas this is a divine act, directly caused and not something attributable to secondary causes, and so on St. Thomas' terms we must conclude that any species with a given matter-form cannot gradually, through environmental influences and natural selection, lead to a distinct new species - such is beyond the framework of Angelic Doctor and his understanding of change (p.56). The Polish Dominican therefore seems to approximate St. Thomas towards a position akin to the 'Gap Theory' in which Almighty God periodically creates each individual species, sequentially, through history, and *ex nihilo* (p.220), a position which, scientifically, to put it as charitably as possible, would be considered a non-mainstream, minority position.

Rejecting evolution

Given the theological crisis that followed the Second Vatican Council and the lack of clarity experienced by three generations of seminarians in formation, it is understandable that many would seek refuge in the clear, solid and coherent argumentation of St. Thomas. What Fr. Chaberek has shown is that a Neo-Orthodoxy pinned strictly to Aquinas cannot then claim to be compatible with a modern scientific world-view. For whilst St. Thomas can tolerate and even embrace a universe 6 billion years old, he cannot, within his Aristotelian, static, understanding of matter/form and substance/accident accept also the continuous emergence and evolution of different species as a result of natural, secondary causes. For Fr. Chaberek, his findings are clearly a summons to reject the science of evolution.

A revised metaphysics

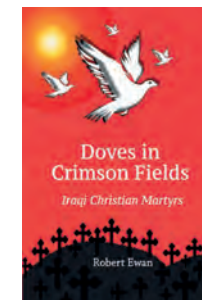
But, of course, this need not be the case, and he too at least shows an awareness of the possibility that perhaps it is the philosophy of St. Thomas that may require a revision (p.236). Fr. Chaberek unfortunately offers very little consideration to the alternative pathway; he cannot see how anything other than the 'classical metaphysics' of St. Thomas could ever act as an underpinning for the unchanging truths of the faith (p.240-45). In one sense then, this book is very much calling for a revised metaphysics along the lines of that conceived by Fr. Holloway, or at the very least it is alerting that there is most definitely a need for a revised metaphysics if orthodox Catholics are to coherently accept the science of evolution alongside the theological truths of the faith.

Fr. Mark Higgins is a Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Southwark.

Iraqi Christian Martyrs

Doves in Crimson Fields by Robert Ewan, Gracewing, xiii + 213pp, £11.99

reviewed by Paul Marsden



Pope Benedict XVI wrote that, even in our times, 'the Church does not lack martyrs' (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 85). In many places things have got worse since then, and in *Doves in Crimson Fields* Robert Ewan gives us a detailed account of Christian martyrdom in Iraq from the very earliest times to the present. Crucially, he stresses the importance of past martyrs in contemporary spirituality.

Robert Ewan is a freelance writer who was born in Baghdad (where he lived until 1977) and who writes extensively about Iraq, especially in the Catholic press. He also edits *Mesopotamia*, a publication of the Chaldean mission in the UK. The Foreword is written by John Pontifex of Aid to the Church in Need (UK), who writes that 'this book acts as a tribute to the timeless virtues of faith, hope and charity that are so firmly imprinted on the history of Iraq but which run the risk of being stamped out by forces that have contorted faith into a mantra of hatred, violence and hyper-extremism'. In the author's own Introduction, he links the early Christian martyrs in Iraq with Jesus' own Sacrifice and His prediction of what would be the price His followers would pay.

From prosperity to persecution

How exactly Christianity became established in Mesopotamia in apostolic

times is not known with certainty, but the fact is it did. We know that people from Mesopotamia were present in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 5-9) and it seems likely that they took the new faith home with them. Before giving an account of individual cases of martyrdom, Ewan gives a detailed account of the history of Christianity in Iraq with its truly bewildering changes of fortunes for the Faithful. The position in the first five centuries was constantly changing, between toleration (and even prosperity) to savage persecution (including probably the worst persecution in Christian history under the Persians beginning around 315 AD). These ups and downs continued through the various Caliphates and the Moguls up to the Ottomans and the disaster of the First World War genocide. The massacre of August 1918 involved several thousand Christian martyrs amid a bloodthirsty brutality which we have sadly seen again in our own day. Saddest of all is the account of the last fifteen years with its catalogue of brutal persecution, displacement and emigration. With the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, many Iraqis considered their Christian neighbours as collaborators of the invaders and acted accordingly. Before 2003 Christians in Iraq were estimated at almost one million; now barely 200,000 remain.

Link with the past

The main part of the book consists of accounts of specific cases of persecution from Iraqi history and is illustrated with no less than 33 cases of either individual or group martyrdom. A useful list of Sources and References is found at the end of the book. A large number of these martyrs figure importantly in the spiritual lives of contemporary Iraqi Christians and, in many cases, the account of the life and death of these martyrs concludes with mention of the date on which the Church celebrates their Feast today. This link with the past is powerful, as we ourselves in the Latin Church experience when we hear the lists of martyrs in the Roman Canon.

An ancient church

Before he begins his account of the individual cases of martyrdom, Ewan has a chapter on the importance of the Church in Koukhi. It would be interesting to know how many of us have even heard of the place, now an unappreciated and inaccessible archaeological site. But it was the first church built in Iraq, constructed during the second half of the first century and became the seat of the Patriarchy of the Church of the East, which it remained until the tenth century, when it moved to Baghdad (which had, by that time, become perhaps the biggest city in the world.) Throughout the book, Ewan never lets us forget how ancient the Church in Iraq is.

Cruelty and barbarity

Ewan is very good at setting the historical contexts for the individual cases of martyrdom. Unforgettable is the life and death of Patriarch Shamoun VIII Yohanna Sulaqa, who, in the sixteenth century, travelled to Rome to negotiate Uniate status for the Chaldean Church and was

promptly killed by the opposing faction on his return. (Apparently the Holy See picked up his travel expenses). But it is the most recent episodes that are the most chilling. The most recent one described, carnage of almost unbelievable cruelty and barbarity, was the massacre in October 2010 of Sayidat al-Najat church. Events are described with courtroom precision, including the detailed accounts of eye-witnesses. But much persecution is simply unrecorded: the greatest loss of life was probably during the 9-month siege of Mosul (which had been home to Christians for 1,800 years), when Islamic State killed any civilians who tried to escape.

Return

But numbers are low today, not just because of killings, but also displacement and emigration. It is true that some are demoralised, but there are grounds for hope. In northern Iraq 120,000 people fled for their lives when militants invaded the Nineveh Plains and the city of Mosul. Now, with the help of overseas aid, nearly 3,250 homes have been repaired and more than 8,000 families have resettled back. Speaking in Westminster Cathedral at this year's Easter Vigil, Cardinal Vincent Nichols said that the return of the Christian communities to the plains of Nineveh was a sign of Easter hope. They need the support of the whole Church in both prayer and aid.

For those with a particular interest in this area, a very useful recent addition is *The Church in Iraq* by Cardinal Fernando Filoni, currently Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples and himself a former Apostolic Nuncio to Iraq.

Paul Marsden works to help the persecuted Church worldwide and is a Trustee of Aid to the Church in Need (UK).

'Where does all the beauty come from?'

The Radiance of Her Face: A Triptych In Honor of Mary Immaculate, by Dom Xavier Perrin. Foreword by Dom Benedict Hardy OSB. Second Spring. 93pp.

reviewed by Sr Mary Thomas Brown



In C.S. Lewis's *Perelandra*, when the protagonist Ransom at last sees the unfallen King, he is astonished by the resemblance to Christ which is seen in his face – and yet Ransom observes that, mysteriously, this most perfect of created images could never be mistaken for its Original and thus become an object of idolatry. I suppose it is unlikely that, during his life on earth, Lewis would gladly have picked up a book about the Immaculate Conception. As so often, however, his instinct was Catholic despite itself. The eyes not of imagination, but of Catholic faith, contemplate the mystery of an unbroken reflection of God in the utterly real person of Mary Immaculate, whose beauty fascinates Abbot Xavier Perrin.

In the interests of transparency, it should be noted that the author, the translator, and the author of the Foreword are all well known to the present reviewer. I hope that what follows will more than suffice to show that there are reasons well beyond cronyism to recommend this book.

Through the eyes of the angel Gabriel

The Radiance of Her Face is a translation of *Regards sur l'Immaculée* (Éditions du Carmel, 2006) incorporating two new chapters. In keeping with the original title, the book's thought is indeed largely structured around a series of 'looks' upon the Immaculate Virgin. The first chapter is the 'Triptych in Honour of Mary Immaculate' of the book's subtitle. We look through the eyes of the Angel Gabriel at the one who is full of grace, and Pope Pius IX as he proclaims the dogma of

the Immaculate Conception. To see the triptych's central panel, our gaze is aligned with that of God the Father Himself, in His predestinating of Mary to her unique role.

Chapter Two is about St Anne, 'The Mother of Mary Immaculate' – much-loved patroness of Abbot Xavier's native Brittany – beginning with a helpful look at the so-called 'Protoevangelium of James' (on p.27, the phrase 'than in the West' should be read immediately after the word 'East'). Anne looks at Mary and Mary looks at Anne: 'The ancient, graced world, represented by Anne, greets in Mary the new world of pure grace', while both await the Christ (p.37).

The totality of Mary's belonging to God

The third chapter is 'The Mercy Stairway'. We climb from Mary Magdalen 'the Sinner' via Thérèse of Lisieux 'the Innocent One', to Mary Immaculate, and thus see the mounting wonders of God's mercy in restoring the sinner, preserving innocence or – 'the masterpiece of prevenient mercy' – creating the total freedom from sin which is the Immaculate Conception.

Next 'The Mirror and the Flaming Torch' help us to open our lives to Mary's influence. The 'Mirror' is St Bernadette Soubirous. Despite receiving Our Lady's self-identification as 'the Immaculate Conception', Bernadette's response did not involve the articulation of this mystery – she even found the phrase hard to remember – but rather the self-effacing reflection of Mary's way of life: humility, obedience, faith in suffering, mercy, hiddenness. 'Bernadette, mirror

of Mary Immaculate, seems to tell us that Mary herself is a mirror, the perfectly pure mirror of the glory of the Word Incarnate' (p.65). St Maximilian Kolbe, by contrast, is a 'Flaming Torch', eager to spread the message, in the strongest terms, of Mary's unique participation in the life of God and thus her unique role in bringing the world back to God. Some of St Maximilian's formulations concerning Mary's special relationship with the Holy Spirit may be rather surprising – they certainly required hard thought from this reviewer, though I do not think they are incomprehensible. But no reader is especially obliged to make St Maximilian's theology his own. The point to take is that Bernadette and Fr Kolbe coincide in pointing us to the totality and radicality of Mary's belonging to God, and the 'radical dispossession and entire gift of self' to which the Christian faithful are called in order to enter into this.

Intercession and conversation

Chapter Five is on Mary's role as intercessor, in the form of a meditation on Cana and its significant connection to Calvary. 'Mary's privilege as the Immaculate One establishes her in utter dependence on the redeeming sacrifice of the Son on the Cross and on the mercy of the Father... She prays for us in the simplest way: she presents us and all our needs through Jesus to the light of God's mercy' (pp.76-7). And in Chapter Six we move from contemplation to conversation, in the *cor ad cor loquitur* of the Immaculate Heart and the Sacred Heart. The book concludes with a brief meditation on the Preface for the Mass of 8th December, uniting our gaze to the Church's and drawing us to praise of the Thrice-Holy God who has worked all these wonders.

The one who has received the most

This is a slim volume, and highly readable, but as Fr Benedict says, it is worth reading slowly and then re-reading as we participate in Abbot Xavier's own 'contemplative gaze'. It contains profound theology, conveyed with Abbot Xavier's happy knack of arranging his thought and expression in eloquent structures (witness the chapter headings above). We see the Immaculate One as the fitting mother for God's Son, of course, but the main emphasis is the Immaculate One's special

role as mother in the economy of salvation, God's plan of merciful love. Mercy is a theme dear to Abbot Xavier's heart (this book's French publication predates Pope Francis's pontificate). Mary's privilege is the outstanding work of divine mercy; it is not merely a negative reality (being without sin) but the positive reality of a share in God's life – deification – to a degree unique among created persons, embracing Mary's whole being and history, constituting her identity. Precisely as the one who has received the most, she is the most humble, the most aware of her total dependence; precisely as the one who has received the most, she is ready and able to give all at the service of God's other, sinful children – us.

A mission at the service of life

Mercy and humility are two constantly recurring words in these meditation. It is specifically as woman and mother that Mary reflects God's mercy. In commenting on Genesis 3:15, Abbot Xavier shows as Mary as 'the Woman *par excellence* ... Mary surpasses Eve as the perfect type of 'feminine humanity' (pp.20-21). The Immaculate Conception is exactly what makes Mary the new Eve: 'Standing beside the Son of God made flesh, [who is] foreign to sin by nature, God has always seen and foreseen Mary, the all-pure one, foreign to sin by grace' (p.21). Motherhood, whether bodily or spiritual, is described here as 'a mission at the service of life' (p.35), a vocation proper to women. We may link this with the later comment that the 'one work of God' is to give life: 'The whole drama of the world is one divine gift of life' (p.78). How could this wholly graced woman who is 'first in the order of mercy' not then have 'a universal motherhood in the Spirit according to the order of the Father's merciful grace' (pp.55-6)?


Meditating with Abbot Xavier on the Virgin's radiance widens our receptivity to the divine light. Psyche, of C.S. Lewis's *Till We Have Faces*, famously asks, 'Where does all the beauty come from?' There is no better pointer to the answer than His Immaculate Mother.

Sr Mary Thomas Brown OSB is a nun of St Cecilia's Abbey, Ryde.

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