

faith

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Crossword

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Issue: Volume 54 Number 2 March and April 2019

Price: £4:50

faith.org.uk

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Marriage, the Church, and the need for courage

Marriage is the lifelong union of a man and a woman, establishing a new family. It is, by its very nature, designed for the procreation and raising of children. It is sacred, designed by God from the beginning and establishing in human form the sacred bond between Christ and his Bride the Church.

That is what we have a right and duty to teach in Catholic schools, youth groups and from the pulpit of every Catholic church. It is not an optional pious statement nor is it something that is subject to Government policy.

Identity Politics

We are all well aware of the now drearily established notion of "identity politics". Following the 1960s sexual revolution in the West, and the subsequent entrenchment into law of policies designed to remove legal protection for sexual integrity and the rights of unborn babies, a miserable mixture of tribal groupings has been created, vying for attention. We have the "gay rights" lobby vying with the "trans" lobby, and new and militant forms of "animal rights" to add to a mix already made confusing.

We have stopped smiling at wry references to the fact that, with the establishment of legal arrangements for same-sex "marriage," there is no reason why such arrangements should not extend to threesomes, or unions involving all sorts of sexual partners on various levels of semi-permanence. We know only too well that money taken from us in taxes pays for the distribution of contraceptive drugs and devices to children and forms of instruction that urge them to consider themselves sexually available from puberty onwards.

The Christian Way

What can we do as Catholics to ensure that the truth about marriage is taught and its meaning understood? How can we nurture and sustain Catholic marriages? Decades ago Father Edward Holloway noted that living the Christian way in modern British society was like trying to remain clean and healthy while living amid open sewers. Things are much messier today: the sewage has seeped into the land and infection is widespread...and the very pumps which ought to be controlling it and ensure health and wellbeing are being used to spread it systematically everywhere.

None of which allows us to assert smugly that it's all the fault of *other* people – including, of course, people in public office, people holding office in the Church, people with power in industry, but certainly not *us* - and that therefore we should find ourselves some Crusoe-

the truth about marriage

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style mental and emotional islands and cope with things from there. On the contrary. Christ calls us not to be afraid, and will ask us, at the end of our lives, for an account of how we lived and the measure by which we sought to help others especially the poor and miserable.

Effective

The FAITH Movement offers a powerful and effective way forward. For something approaching half a century, it has fostered the vocations of good numbers of young men to the priesthood. It has offered formation and spiritual nourishment to young people whose children and grandchildren now arrive with noisy enthusiasm at the FAITH Summer sessions. And constantly growing and evolving networks of friendship and contacts ensure that new groups form, whether formally as with meetings in London and Glasgow and elsewhere, or informally through social get-togethers. In this, it shares characteristics with other New Movements in the Church, a significant development first formally given recognition by Pope St John Paul and now a part of Catholic life worldwide that offers real hope for the Church of the 21st century.

Difficult

But it's going to be difficult to teach and even to live the truth of Christian marriage and family life in the immediate future. The emergence of "identity politics" has created powerful tribes, fuelled by the bitterness and confusion of their origins. This summer there will be marches through Britain's cities under the slogan of Pride. Our country's flag will be replaced, on Government offices in Whitehall, with the striped Pride flag announcing proud support for homosexual and lesbian activity. There will be pressure on churches to follow suit – and it is, alas, very likely that some Anglican churches or cathedrals will oblige. The police and the Armed Forces will, as last year, be formally involved, with posters announcing full support for Pride and with pressure on representatives of the Forces to take part in the marches. There will be formal statements of warm support from public officials at national and local level.

Pride is one of the seven deadly sins, and always brings misery and failure. Even without the link now established between this word and the homosexual lifestyle, there is something bleak and miserable about the idea of a nation celebrating Pride. As the saying goes, Pride comes before a fall.

Rescuing the wounded

The Church has recently been described as being like a field-hospital, ready to rescue the wounded. There are going to be many victims of Pride over the next years, and the answer to their wounds – and to the collective wound of the society attempting to celebrate Pride and falling so miserably as it does so – is Christian love. Not sentimentality, or bogus assertions of kindness that carry no meaning. Not affirmations that there are no wounds. Rather, that authentic Christian love that modern saints have been raised up to teach us: Maximillian Kolbe in Auschwitz, Mother Theresa in the slums of Calcutta, John Paul II in hospital forgiving the would-be assassin who had ripped his stomach apart.

*something bleak
and miserable about
the idea of a nation
celebrating Pride*

We will teach the truth about God, marriage, and family life, not with pride but with love – and love is actually stronger and more enduring than pride. And love and courage go together: Christ on the Cross, martyrs down the centuries.

Teaching the truth

And this teaching of the truth cannot be confined to private gatherings. Britain's Catholic schools are extremely popular and are often over-subscribed. Parents like the sense of community, the uniforms, the generally good academic results. Government policies have favoured Church schools over recent decades. But public funding, popularity, and official support bring the risk of an obligation to support the official line on, for example, same-sex marriage or "transgender" ideology. We cannot do that: Catholic schools must teach the truth about marriage, about the human person, about God's plan for the human race and his creation of us as male and female.

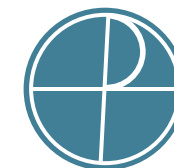
A bigger danger is from within: a lack of teachers who know, live and can teach the Catholic Faith, and a lack of parents willing to stand firm and back the school when the Faith is taught. Where campaigning parents announce that they want a school to be "supportive of gay and transgender pupils", or where teachers and governors sense that they may fail to be supported by Bishops when seeking to uphold the Church's teaching, trouble beckons.

Courage

The Church, in parishes, schools and Catholic groups and organisations, must teach the truth and the Bishops must take the lead in showing how that is to be done. We need to be reminded of the need for courage – and shown this by word and example. We need to speak up about the right and duty of the Church in a free society to uphold and teach the Christian Gospel in all its fullness. And we need to know that all of this is going to be difficult and challenging and that we need to encourage one another and our friends and allies in non-Catholic churches and of other faiths who share our concern for human dignity and for the truth of marriage and family life.

*the right and duty of
the Church in a free
society*

As a start, when the subject of marriage comes up in discussions with officialdom, Catholics could use the wording of the first paragraph of this Editorial, and explain that this is a non-negotiable central reality in Catholic teaching and that whatever the government of the United Kingdom states, we cannot and will not change this. We have been here before: we are the monarch's good servants, but God's first.



Keeping The Seal

Australia has been presented with plans to force priests to break the seal of confession. Fr John Michael McDermott SJ explains why the seal must never be broken.



Any Catholic reading the report of Australia's Royal Commission of Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse must be appalled by the multiple instances of abuse in ecclesial institutions perpetrated by priests, religious, and laity, women as well as men. That similar abuses occurred in other churches and religions in no way excuses the Catholic Church from culpability. The offence is especially grave for those pledged by vows to testify to Christ's transcendence of earthly fulfillment and to serve Him in the least of His brethren, for Catholics place a greater trust in them.

We easily understand the cry for justice on behalf of the victims, many of whom were entrusted to the Church's care precisely because their relations with their families were strained or non-existent. . The Royal Commission rightly insisted on institutional changes to prevent such abuse from continuing in the future. The Australian bishops accepted most of its recommendations. Other recommendations they referred to Rome. But on one point they unanimously refused to change the Church's practice: the seal of confession. To understand their adamant determination some reflections on the role of confession and its seal can be helpful. For abolishing the seal wouldacerbate rather than alleviate the problem.

The Reign of Sin

The secular mind has difficulty understanding the seal's purpose and necessity since it uncritically adopts an ideology in which religion is considered a private matter whose truth cannot be objectively ascertained. It relegates religion to the private concern of individuals who feel a need for consolations and support. Secularism rejects any notion of original sin, in which the transgression of original parents entails suffering and loss of salvation for their descendants. Yet post-modern culture's widespread sexual license with its consequent weakening of family structures should make people rethink the dismissal of original sin. Most of the abused children came from disrupted families. Predator-priests often groomed children who, lacking a caring father at home, were seeking a male paternal figure with whom they might identify.

If the destruction of basic relationships within a family render children vulnerable to exploitation by others, might not the sins of our primordial ancestors have disastrous repercussions through the ages? Plato certainly thought so (*Laws* 9:854b). Greek tragedy, e.g., the *Oresteia* and the Oedipus cycle, trace the calamitous consequences of original sins in a family's and a nation's history. No man is an island. Every human being receives from parents, family, and clan not only physical life but also a sense of dignity, worth, and moral responsibility. When we are loved, the world makes sense. When love is lacking, individuals struggle with feelings of isolation, rejection, and despair. G.K. Chesterton

once remarked that original sin is the sole doctrine for which the Catholic Church can offer empirical proof, a truth all the more obvious in our current society where all pay for the breakdown of the family.

The dogma of original sin is fundamental to Catholic truth since Jesus Christ, God's only Son, died in torment on a cross. He was condemned for calling men to convert to God's self-sacrificial love. Sinners dislike being confronted by their sins. Precisely because original sin penetrates so profoundly human society, we all try to justify ourselves. We build walls to lessen our vulnerability and protect ourselves against others. We accumulate property and power. This search to augment control over others and enjoy fleshly allurements, financial security, and political or social domination too often comes at the expense of others.

Jesus' Call to Conversion

In His day Jesus called His audience to radical conversion. If from eternity God saw that the cross was necessary for the human race's salvation, how great must have been the obstacle to love in human beings? The cross would be a most repulsive way of expressing love unless it were the only way of bringing people to love, to sharing in God's life. Christian love entails the self-emptying which Jesus manifested most clearly on the cross. The true lover must first sacrifice himself for his beloved in order to experience the joy which love's mutual response involves. "Unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and die, it remains alone; but if it dies it bears much fruit." (John 12:24).

Jesus died on the cross and rose to demonstrate what true love requires and to assure sinners that love is stronger than sin and death. He demands of His followers that they follow Him to the cross and give their lives for Him and their fellow men. Disciples' love is a responding love.

Concupiscence, disordered desire, influences each of us profoundly. We are internally pulled in diverse directions by our desires to be loved, to render ourselves invulnerable, to elevate ourselves, and to attain justice for ourselves and others, not to mention the power of carnal attractions over our lives. It is so easy to justify ourselves by reason. Life daily bears witness to that truth.

To prevent the reduction of love's requirements to one-sided juridical claims Jesus laid down His life for others. The norm of justice has been surpassed by self-emptying love, and Jesus issued moral judgments. He also left the interpretation and application of the moral law to His Church lest love be misinterpreted and believers disagree on the conduct expected from fellow Christians. Hence the Church is charged with remaining faithful to Jesus' ordinances and summoning all to conversion.

Sacrament

Because through weakness even well-intentioned believers fail in observing His commands of love, Jesus established a remedy for sins committed after baptism. Following His resurrection, He breathed upon His disciples, saying: "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven them; whose sins you retained, they are retained" (Jn. 20:22-23). Sin is not merely a rejection of God's will by an isolated individual. We live in relation to others since they are created for the freedom of love. That truth is

realized compellingly in the Body of Christ. Consequently, “If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together” (1 Cor. 11:26). Therefore reconciliation is mediated by the ecclesial community. We sin against the ecclesial Body of Christ as well as against God. Yet the priest in confession represents not the community alone. Since the sin is directed ultimately against God, he represents God in pronouncing the words of absolution. Which brings us to the seal of confession.

The Seal of Confession

The notion of “seal” is borrowed from the ancient practice of impressing a seal on a document to guarantee its authority and to preserve secrecy. Anyone wanting to learn its contents must break the seal and thus give himself away. The sacrament of penance places under an inviolable seal all information revealed in view of obtaining sacramental absolution. The seal is inviolable in all cases and the priest is bound most strictly in conscience both to reveal to no one the penitent’s sins and to refrain from any non-sacramental use of information harmful to the penitent. This obligation to secrecy allows no exception. Even if the confession is sacrilegious or interrupted, even if absolution is denied or deferred – the priest must ascertain the penitent’s sincere intention of repentance – the seal covers what the penitent confesses in view of absolution. **No circumstance, no matter what harm to an individual or the common good, justifies breaking the seal.** Any priest, who knowingly and willingly both indicates the penitent and reveals his sin(s) directly, not only commits a most grave sin but also incurs an automatic excommunication (*latae sententiae*) reserved to the Pope.

Prohibited

Under the seal fall every mortal sin, generic or specific, as well as specific venial sins committed by the penitent. The priest may not announce generically, “He committed mortal sins.” He may indicate that a penitent committed venial sins since every penitent entering the confessional is presupposed to seek forgiveness for some sin, but he may not mention individual venial sins. He should not even mention the counsel given or the penance imposed (except the minimal penance) if they are connected to the sin confessed and might manifest it. Included under the seal are necessary, useful, or superfluous bits of information expressed in declaring or explaining a sin.

A priest is also prohibited from violating the seal indirectly, eg when knowledge obtained only in the confessional is revealed unintentionally or with proximate danger of betraying the penitent, ie when a probable and prudent suspicion regarding the sin and the particular sinner might arise. A simple rule for resolving doubts is offered: a violation of the seal occurs “if a sin is reported with the danger of indicating a person, or when a person is designated with the danger of arousing suspicion of the sin.” For example, if a priest says that a particular person was not absolved, or praises another penitent above others, or declares a vice prevalent in a certain parish or institution, or reprimands a penitent’s sin in a loud voice audible outside the confessional, he subjects himself to ecclesial penalties: e.g., suspension from celebrating Mass and hearing confession (even perpetually), and, in serious matters, removal from the office of priesthood.

Knowledge

A priest is also prohibited from using confessional knowledge even when harm to himself may result. For example, someone confesses his participation in a plot, now regretted, to kill the priest on his way home in a certain spot; the priest may not avoid that spot unless he has other knowledge of the plot or if a plausible reason for avoiding it may be legitimately discovered. Otherwise he would be in danger of divulging the matter of the penitent’s confession: the plotters would plausibly connect his knowledge with his penitent. Similarly he may not reveal what he or a penitent said in confession, even if he is wrongly accused by the penitent – unless it can be proven that the alleged penitent intended a fraudulent confession or deliberate entrapment. While not bound by the seal, the penitent may be bound by a natural secret regarding the advice obtained in confession – some advice may apply only to him – but if he is troubled by the advice he may prudently consult others. If the confessor solicits him to do something improper, however, the penitent should inform the proper authorities.

Silence

In difficult cases exceeding the confessor’s knowledge he may, with the penitent’s free, explicit permission, consult another priest, eg an expert canonist, or theologian, provided that the penitent’s identity remains concealed. If the conditions are such that the penitent’s identity may be surmised, the expert too is gravely bound to silence by a natural secret. More seriously, if the confessor must appeal to a higher authority to obtain faculties for absolving a reserved sin, that authority is bound. Indeed, if through chance or design anyone overhears a confession, the natural obligation to secrecy gravely prohibits that person from revealing the matter to anyone. Disclosure of the confessional secret, besides being sinful, can issue in various ecclesial penalties, even excommunication. The same restriction applies to anyone acting as translator or interpreter for a confession. Similarly a priest may not mention a penitent’s sin outside confession unless the penitent initiates the conversation about it, thereby indicating implicitly his permission to discuss it. Yet outside the confessional a person cannot oblige a priest to silence by saying that he or she wishes to place a communication “under the seal.” At most, only a natural obligation to secrecy can be invoked. Inversely, if a child in confession spoke of being abused, the priest could advise the child to tell someone, even himself, outside confession in order that the proper authorities be summoned to provide proper support for the child and to prevent further crimes by the abuser.

Reasons

The reasons for the obligation are varied. On the level of natural morality, detraction -- a grievous sin -- involves unjustly injuring another’s good name by manifesting his true, but hidden, fault. Further, an implicit contract arises between the penitent and priest not to reveal what is confessed since it involves the penitent’s interior life before God. Finally, the seal’s deepest foundation derives from the sacrament’s institution by Christ for the forgiveness of sins. The priest represents Christ the judge since only God can forgive sins. What is revealed to God cannot be publicised by man. Were a priest allowed to reveal sacramental matter, the faithful would be deterred from frequenting the sacrament, thus frustrating Christ’s intention of providing absolution for post-baptismal sins. Even under



oath a priest cannot reveal transpired in the confessional; he possesses no *communicable* knowledge. In the life of the Church, many priests preferred death to breaking the seal: e.g., St. John Nepomucene, St. Mateo Corves, Andreas Faulhaber, Felipe Ciscar, Fernando Omedo, Petro Marieluz Garces.

The Impossible Demand

Some Australian states have codified a civil obligation to reveal instances of child abuse confessed under the seal of confession. This demands the morally impossible and imposes an unjust burden on priests. Their free exercise of religion, guaranteed by the Australian Constitution, prohibits priests from complying with the law. Such a law is unjustly imposed since obligations to God outweigh all human legislation. However pure the politicians' intentions the law's effect would be counterproductive.

If the seal does not bind the priest to silence, Catholics would be dissuaded from confessing their sins sacramentally. This would be deleterious on two levels. First, a repentant child-abuser would have no one to whom he or she might turn for advice and counsel, whereas a confessor could and should advise and warn a penitent to seek help lest he commit further wicked crimes against defenseless children.

Second, while civil laws seek to abolish the seal only with regard to the confessed abuse of children, people could conclude that, if one exception is made, others can and will follow. That would lead Catholics to shun confessing their sins, which would harm both individuals and society. Unacknowledged guilt festers in the sinner and warps his moral perceptions. Acts previously unmentionable become tolerated. It seems clear that society's moral level has declined in recent decades with the prevalence of addiction to drugs, alcohol, and pornography, with divorce, abortion, exploitation of the poor, etc. It is surely more than coincidence that the increase in child-molestation corresponded to the decline in use of the sacrament of penance in recent decades. Starting with John

Paul II and Benedict XVI, there has been a revival of the Church's traditional teaching and discipline. Regular confession is again being preached and lived. More than ever the sacrament should be encouraged.

Duty

If the Australian states impede the return to confession, inadvertently or not they contribute to society's loss of a sense of sin. The blessing mediated by sacramental confession consist in this: sinners can openly confront their sins, ask for absolution and assistance, and resolve not to sin again. By opening the confessional to sinners for counsel, sympathy, encouragement, and, most of all, forgiveness, priests perform an immense, though unrecognized, service to humanity. Only through God's word of absolution do sinners dare to hope that God's love is stronger than sin and that they can be changed for the better. Ecclesial authorities have the responsibility of reparation to those sexually exploited in Catholic institutions and of preventing, as much as possible, a recurrence. Their insistence on preserving intact confession's seal shows that they wish to fulfill their duty to Christ and their fellow men.

With thanks to the Homiletic and Pastoral Review.

¹ P. Palazzini, "Sigillum Sacramentale," *Dictionarium Morale et Canonicum*, ed. P. Palazzini, vol. 2 (Rome: Catholic Book Agency, 1968), 288.

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Father Bryan Storey RIP 1933-2018

Bryan Sidney Storey was born in London on 8th May 1933 and evacuated to the remote coastal village of Tintagel in north Cornwall with his brother and schoolmates in 1940. It was at the local Anglican Church that he discovered his belief in God before becoming a Catholic in 1948. Following various jobs in London accountancy firms and two years in the RAF, he trained for the priesthood at St Augustine's in Walworth, London and St John's in Womersley (1953- 1960). He was ordained 16th June, 1960 at St Anselm's Church, Tooting Bec and served eleven years as a curate in St Peter's, Hove.



Due to personal circumstances he moved back to Tintagel in 1971. It was meant to be a temporary move, but lasted over 47 years. Initially there was little to live on. He would cycle everywhere visiting parishioners and through the Legion of Mary searching out the lapsed. Eventually he was able to build a small presbytery *Chy an Pronter* in Cornish. He had a great love for the Blessed Sacrament and would spend hours kneeling in prayer in front of the tabernacle. He founded the International Crusade for Moral Reform and keenly promoted Eucharistic adoration. The confessional was also a very high priority. A humble and gentle priest, he led many into the Catholic Faith.

But perhaps he was best-known for his regular letters to the Press - often a lone voice defending the Church's moral teaching and particularly the value of purity.

In 2010 he celebrated his Golden Jubilee of the Priesthood at St Paul the Apostle Catholic Church in Tintagel, Cornwall. The last few years brought two types of cancer, Parkinson's Disease and finally a broken hip; he died due to complications caused by pneumonia on 26 July in Truro. His funeral mass was celebrated by three bishops on 9th August in his church of St Paul the Apostle.

Fr Bryan was always a friend of *Faith* – he was one of the magazine's longest-serving book reviewers – and would recount his time as a seminarian at St Augustine's under the tutelage of 'Slim' (Fr Edward Holloway). He deeply valued Fr Holloway's teaching and influence on his own faith: "You are up to learning these things, Bryan; believe me: I'm no ogre!"

May he rest in peace.

Fr Chris Findlay-Wilson

Interview

Sisters in blue, and with work to do

Joanna Bogle meets the Community of Our Lady of Walsingham



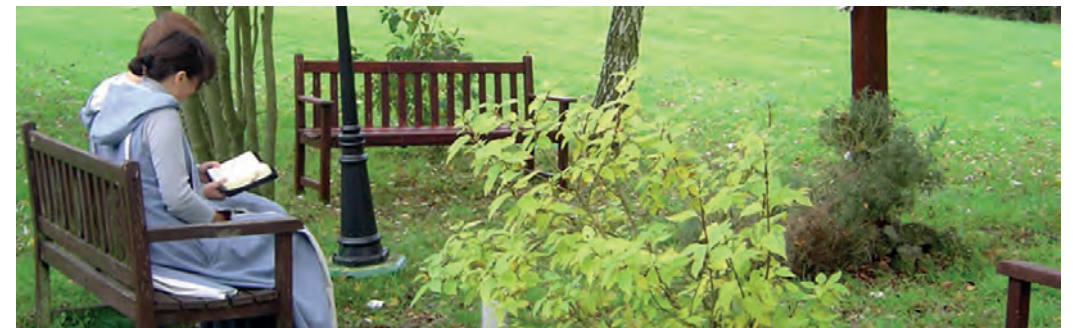
It sounded rather attractively medieval – a community of religious sisters spending an afternoon working on embroidery. But this was a definitely 21st-century scene. The young sisters at the Community of Our Lady of Walsingham belong to a generation that has not been brought up to do cross-stitch. They are more at home with computers and mobile phones than with making church kneelers. So they had invited an older lady to come and teach them the basics – and the result, it is planned, will be hand-stitched blue-and-white kneelers for their new chapel, set beneath the rafters of their new convent in a converted barn in Dereham, Norfolk.

The dream was always to go to Walsingham

The Community, as its name implies, is based at Walsingham – but for the first years following its foundation, it was centred in the diocese of Brentwood, running Abbotswick House of Prayer. The dream was always to go to Walsingham, and now they are there, running Dowry House, a retreat centre set in the heart of the village and very much part of the current surge of new activity at the Shrine.

Convent

But they also needed a separate convent of their own, with some outdoor space and community rooms for their catechetical work with families. The opportunity came to acquire a large building that they have now opened at Dereham. It began life as a barn but was later converted into a family home and then put up for sale. With an enormous and well-equipped kitchen, substantial sitting-room complete with open fireplace, and a number of small rooms leading off a cloistered grassy area centre on a pond, it now



houses the Community, and friends who come to stay.

"It even has this cloister – the spaces on the walls around the pond exactly matched the wall-spaces we needed for the beautiful blue-and-white Stations of the Cross that now hang there" says Sister Camilla, the leader and foundress of the community, bustling about in the blue and white habit which the sisters wear. She is leading me into the kitchen, and getting me a cup of tea. The guest rooms are extremely comfortable – mine has an ensuite bathroom and a glorious view.

The large field beyond the barn will be turned into gardens and an orchard

"When the barn was converted, the idea was that two families would share it – hence the huge kitchen which is a sort of double room. But in the end, the families decided to sell – and here we are."

Barn

In October 2018, the Community welcomed friends and pilgrims from Walsingham plus local clergy from churches of various denominations, to an Open Day with cream teas. The large field beyond the barn will be turned into prayer gardens with a couple of hermitages and an orchard. Meanwhile, youth work has already begun in another barn at the other end of the property. Mass has already been celebrated there and families arrive for talks and activities centred on the Faith. Once it is converted it will house a larger chapel, conference facilities and accommodation for the consecrated men.

In teaching children, the sisters use the Montessori-based *Good Shepherd* catechesis with its strong contemplative style. "It's the exact opposite of trying to be 'cool' – the children are prayerful, the place is holy ground" says Sister Johanna "We love doing this work. The parents are affected by the message and are very happy with this whole approach."

Dowry House

In Walsingham, the Community is busy at Dowry House, which stands in the main street of the village and is an ancient building with evidence of Medieval foundations. Guests enjoy the comfortable rooms, and also the sense of history. People come for retreats, or simply to have a quiet time to reflect, pray, and visit the shrine, reached by walking along the Holy Mile. The plan for the Community is that, over the years, more and more sisters will be trained in spiritual direction, and that Dowry House will be part of the revival of devotion to Our Lady at Walsingham that began at the end of the 19th century, and has recently seen something of a renewal.

we gather in the comfortable community room

The low ceilings in some parts of Dowry House present can sometimes be a challenge: "I'm probably going to get long-term concussion from the number of times I've bumped my head" grins tall Sister Theresa. But the quiet atmosphere and the sense of peace is very attractive, and the house has its own chapel across a courtyard. The sisters initially had their convent in some rooms above, but the space was too cramped and allowed for no expansion.

The blue and white habit is unusual: the sisters do not wear veils but have hoods, which they raise over their heads when they pray. "It's sort of like an enclosure, a way of gently shutting out the noise of the world to be with God – 'hidden with Christ in God' as St Paul says" explains Sister Gabi. The spirituality of the community is very much linked to that of Walsingham, centred on Mary's *Fiat* at the Annunciation. "To live in the Divine will – living in the joy that comes from accepting, fulfilling and surrendering to God's will – that's something for people in every walk of life" says Sister Camilla. This is why the community as an Ecclesial Family of Consecrated Life is open to men and women in all vocations. The sisters are currently writing their Book of Life which will begin to explain their spirituality. "It will also enable those in the other branches of the community to live the charism wherever they are".

a quietly joyful message

Busy

The sisters are busy at events at the Shrine including the large summer gatherings run by Youth 2000 and New Dawn, and are playing a major role in the pilgrim journey of the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham around England preparing for the consecration of the people of the country to Mary in 2020.

At Dereham, after a very good supper, we gather in the comfortable community room around the fire. Adjoining rooms include one for craft work – the embroidery and more – and there is a good library.



The day has a set pattern and begins with Adoration in the chapel high in the roof of the former barn, where the altar stands in front of full-length clear-glass window. Stained glass would be a pity here – the sense of being open to the sky and the fields is rather wonderful. The Great Silence, begun the night before, is maintained until after Morning Prayer. A typical day's work might include gardening – there is a lot to be done at Dereham as the whole project takes shape – but is more likely to involve travel to Walsingham and activities at Dowry House. Wednesdays are a rest-day, spent at Dereham. Each evening has a time of talk and recreation: Night Prayer in the chapel begins the silence, which in the Norfolk countryside is absolute – there was not even the faintest roar of traffic outside my window and few lights penetrated the darkness.

These are early days and it's a young community, but there seems to be a sense of hope and certainly a great sense of trusting in God's providence. In a worrying time for the Church – and for the future of Christianity in the West – there is a quietly joyful message here.

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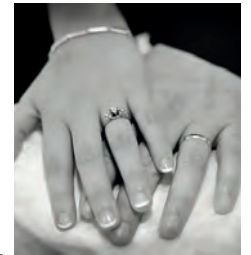
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The Catholic Church and Marriage



Cara Treacy

In the 2018 Catholic Young Writer Award, sponsored by the Catholic Union Charitable Trust, pupils at Catholic secondary schools in Britain were invited to write a letter to a friend who had asked about the Catholic Church's teaching on marriage, and what happens at a Catholic marriage ceremony. They were asked to make reference to the Scriptures and to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The winning entry, gaining the coveted Young Writer trophy and a selection of books, was Cara Treacy of Our Sacred Heart of Mary School, Upminster, Essex. We publish the main part of her essay here. We do not pretend that this essay offers profound theological insights, but it shows that a young Catholic can grasp the essentials of the Church's teaching in this area and write on the subject with enthusiasm.

Dear Katie,

It's lovely to hear from you again. I'm sure you will have a wonderful time at Alex's wedding, but it will surely help to have information on the sacrament before you attend.

Through reality television shows and celebrity influences, weddings have become distorted and even irrelevant to some. The significance of vows and eternal promises are often overcome by the autocratic decisions of venues, dresses and cakes.

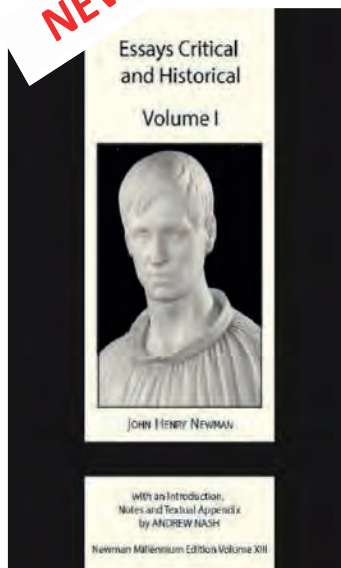
However, many will still argue of the paramount idealisms that lie in the sacrament of marriage. Christians and other faiths believe this argument as they feel marriage is a blessing from God and that it is a part of his plan for us to live together with those we love. Due to this common belief, Catholics feel it necessary to have the ceremony in a Church, which is God's house. We do this because we are then under the presence of God, meaning He will bless the couple and offer them His guidance and wisdom.

*the safety and
blessing of God in a
married family*

Wedding

The process of a wedding sacrament can vary in length, but a Catholic wedding will follow the same outline. Before the wedding day, both the bride and groom will have attended pre-wedding courses to better their understanding of the significance of marriage and make the ceremony more solemn. To start the sacrament, the priest outlines the purpose of marriage and reminds the couple that marriage is a sacrament that God will bless.

NEW



Essays Critical and Historical

Volume I

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

edited by Andrew Nash

Written by Newman as magazine articles during the Oxford Movement, these essays have never before been published in a critical edition. Topics include: the effect of Rationalism on revealed religion; the role of apostolic tradition; St. Ignatius of Antioch as a key witness to the Catholicism of the early Church; the radical social teaching of de La Mennais; the prospects of the Church of England; Anglicanism in America; a satirical account of an early Methodist sect; and Newman's views on poetry.

This edition provides a detailed Editor's Introduction providing the background and a critical analysis of each essay; footnotes to Newman's text explaining his many historical and patristic references which can be obscure to the modern reader; and a Textual Appendix which reveals for the first time how very substantially Newman revised the articles when he republished them as a Catholic in 1871. Volume II will follow during 2019.

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GRACEWING

He acts as the Church key official witness. Suitable readings are chosen from the Bible and the priest gives a homily pointing out the meaning and responsibilities of a Catholic marriage. The priest questions the couple individually. The purpose of the questions is to ensure that the couple understand the responsibility of marriage. The questions: 1. 'Have you come to give yourself to each other, freely, and without reservation?' 2. 'Will you love and honour each other for life?' 3. 'Will you accept children lovingly from God?'. The couple exchange vows. This is the actual moment of the sacrament. Each in turn says 'I (name) do take thee (name) to be my lawful wedded wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part'.

Acceptance and blessing

The priest represents the people of God, the Church, and accepts a mutual consent of the bride and groom. Then the exchange of rings will commence, the rings will symbolise their unending love. 'Take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit'. Marriage blessing where special prayers are said asking for God's blessings on the couple so that they will become good parents. Lastly there will be a signing of the marriage register, the civil legal requirement for a marriage. There may be a nuptial Mass...where the Eucharist is given as the first banquet for the couple.



The reasoning behind marriage comes from God's plan for humanity. A quote from the Bible that explains the concept of marriage: "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female' for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So, they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." (Mark 10: 6-9). In this quote, we can see that our benevolent God created marriage so that we can experience love – we received love from our parents and peers and we experience unconditional love from God, but we try to emulate the commitment God made to humanity by committing to our partners. This allows us to understand God's divinity in more depth, as we are capable understand how difficult it is to love someone eternally without temptations such as money, looks and fame influencing our choices.

*marriage is a blessing
from God*

The marriage

In the marriage sacrament, the couple will exchange vows...While some couples may see those words as a contract binding the two together, Christians will see this as a sacred covenant. In our vows, we can decipher, again, the image of unconditional love...We

commit to these vows in front of the wedding congregation and in front of God. All the witnesses... expect us to live up to the vows we promise to our partner. Jesus makes his love for us known in front of his disciples and witnesses also - "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another" (John 13:35).

God made us in the image of himself: "God created man in His own image, in the image of God. He created him; male and female He created them,"(Genesis). We know we are expected to love God as unconditionally and to 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' -Matthew 22:37. However it is hard to fully show this; God gave us the choice to reflect our love onto someone else, who was made in the image of himself – as we all are.

*God is a benevolent
Father figure to us*

Children

In marriage, one of the main connotations would be reproduction. God told humankind to fill the lands and to multiply. Once the sacrament of marriage has made the couple pure and whole, they would be able to create a Christian child in the likeness of themselves and God. God's plan was to fill the Earth with worshippers and Christians. Children are a blessing from God and while they present challenges to the couple, they also aid their growth both spiritually and emotionally as they can experience a true miracle of God's love as their child grows up in the safety and blessing of God in a married family. Sometimes, God 'closes the womb' of mothers to not allow them to give birth, this shows us God has control of our lives and love us so much he gives us guidance and has authority over our bodies. The Bible never demands married couples to have children, they are simply described as a blessing.



Sacrifices

Another reason for marriage is submission. Both partners in a couple make sacrifices to help the marriage and to submit to each other. ..We are learning attributes such as selflessness and trust in marriages and growing as Christians when placed in predicaments where temptation may take over.

Corinthians state that: "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." The final reason for marriage is one that is a gift from God. God presents us with difficulties in marriage, tests us, sometimes even separates couples however the core of marriage is love. The relationship between two individuals

who wish to take on should a solemn sacrament should be eternal and emulate the perpetual love that God bestows on us...

God

On the other hand, many will disagree with these arguments. Marriage, today, is a huge monetary industry and brings in billions of pounds in twisted ways. From the size of the ring on your finger to the ribbons that hang on the reception dinner chairs, marriage has become something that is deemed unimportant. Many choose not to be in the presence of God for their marriage....in the popular television show, *Don't Tell the Bride*, the idea of marriage is completely exploited for money and for comedic purposes, some Churches are devalued and treated as 'joke' venues to upset the brides before their real ceremony. These shows ridicule the true meaning of Christian matrimonial sacrament.

...I believe marriage is paramount for a Christian, while I do understand many may not opt to marry or to commit to one person, I do feel that God wishes us to experience a deep and faithful love to someone we choose. God is a benevolent Father figure to us, and if He wishes us to marry to fully empathise the importance of love, I believe we should trust our Father.

"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast"

The Catechism

The *Catechism* writes about marriage multiple times...: "The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament," - (CCC). We can see that... we have become obsessed with big, bold celebrity weddings and have forgotten the words we commit to for eternity when we step down the aisle, marriage – although for different reasons for many- is a way of truly connecting to God on another level and experiencing love towards another to emulate the love God give us on a daily basis.

I do hope you have a great time,

Send me lots of pictures!

Love from,

Cara x



CATHOLIC HISTORY WALKS: LONDON

March/April 2019

The City of London and its Wall

Friday 15th March, 2pm. London was originally just the City, the Sqaure Mile; today we discover the line of the ancient city wall and many fascinating stories along the way. Meet at St Etheldreda's, Ely Place, EC1N 6RY. Nearest Station: Farringdon.

Westminster and Parliament

Sunday 17th March, 3pm. We walk through the heart of political London, from Westminster Cathedral, a national focus for English Catholics, towards Parliament, hearing about Catholics & Politics, from St Thomas More to the Emancipation and beyond. Meet on the steps of Westminster Cathedral. Nearest Tube: Victoria.

Westminster and Parliament

Wednesday 20th March, 6.30pm. We walk through the heart of political London, from Westminster Cathedral, a national focus for English Catholics, towards Parliament, hearing about Catholics & Politics, from St Thomas More to the Emancipation and beyond. Meet on the steps of Westminster Cathedral. Nearest Tube: Victoria.

The King's Good Servant

Saturday 23rd March, 2.30pm. The story of heroic St Thomas More, who bravely stood up for the faith under Henry VIII, as we walk around his Chelsea Estate. Meet at the Church of Our Most Holy Redeemer and St Thomas Moore, Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, SW3 5HS. Nearest Tube: South Kensington.

A Royal Walk

Sunday 24th March, 3pm. A walk exploring the history of the Royal Family and Catholicism, through St James' Park and on to Buckingham Palace. Meet on the steps of Westminster Cathedral. Nearest Tube: Victoria.

Westminster and Parliament

Wednesday 3rd April, 6.30pm. We walk through the heart of political London, from Westminster Cathedral, a national focus for English Catholics, towards Parliament, hearing about Catholics & Politics, from St Thomas More to the Emancipation and beyond. Meet on the steps of Westminster Cathedral. Nearest Tube: Victoria.

In Newman's Footsteps

Monday 8th April, 7pm. We will walk along the river Thames from Richmond to Bl John Henry Newman's childhood country home at Ham. Meet at St Elizabeth's Church, The Vineyard, Richmond, TW10 6AQ. Nearest station, tube, and overground: Richmond.

Discovering Old Customs and Traditions

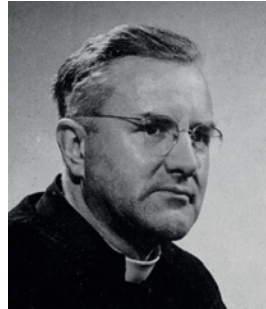
Saturday 13th April, 2pm. Meet at the Church of the Most Precious Blood, O'Meara Street, SE1 5TN. Nearest Tube: London Bridge or Borough.

catholichistorywalks.org

Holloway on...

Sacramentum Mundi: The Evidence for Jesus Part I

EDWARD HOLLOWAY



In this Editorial in FAITH of May/June 1985 Fr. Holloway reflected on a recent TV programme, "The Evidence for Jesus", which took a sceptical approach to the reliability of the New Testament.

The modern man or woman looks at the "Evidence for Jesus", especially the factual evidence of the Bible, Old Testament and New, and murmurs "It was all an awful long time ago.

*the power that
proclaims the evidence
for Jesus*

Nobody can be really sure what happened". Is it fair to say that 2,000 years of time and cultural upheaval, must dim the credibility of evidence that is so far back in time? It surely must — so vast a lapse of time lessens the credibility of faith based upon such an historical record. The modern mind says, the ordinary man in the club says, "People were simple in those days, they knew nothing about what we know of the world and the universe. They could not even tell the difference for sure between illness and being possessed by the Devil. Anything that happened which they could not understand, they thought had been done by God directly." In fact the evidence for Jesus has to be much more than that. It has to be faith from the evidence for the activity of God in human history.

Certainty

The subconscious presumption of the mandarins of the Media establishment is that of an ancient Protestantism which they have long since abandoned: that faith comes from hearing or reading the "word" and the word is the Bible, more particularly the New Testament. So they say, "Let us consider how reliable is this word." One must say that for the Non-Catholic Christian, faith must in any case become more agnostic with time, because in fact their belief is based only on the Bible, and any word written 2,000 years ago, and understood only as testimony is a dead word, and an uncertain word. We cannot ask it questions. The Non-Catholic Christian does not admit any power on earth that can, or that does preach, teach, and define with an objective certainty. That was made pathetically clear in the recent [1985] Synod of the Anglican

*the divine
manifestation of the
truth of the claims of
Jesus*

Church, in which the Archbishop of Canterbury rejected demands to define objective belief, against the doubts of the bishop of Durham and others. It was not he said "our way to tie things down in rigid formulae ... it is in any case impossible to attempt to define Mystery". Yet, those ancient creeds did attempt to define Mystery. They did not pretend to exhaust it, but they meant just what they said in such terms as "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one Being with the Father" and so forth...

God as "Living Context"

First, let it be clear that for the Catholic, the motives of credibility that buttress 'faith' are not the taking of the words of Holy Writ as an historic record simply. We should not even say that our faith stands on Scripture and Tradition, as if these were two distinct sources. We believe from Scripture with Apostolic Tradition. The written Scripture is part of the living tradition of the Apostles' preaching; it was conceived within that tradition prior to being written down. It was written as the teaching of that tradition, and it is interpreted only within that living tradition of solemn teaching. The 'Good News' spoken now is the 'Good News' spoken then. First comes proclamation with divine authority that is to say Magisterium, then the written word that embodies it. There is no need to require that every doctrine of the faith should be explicitly and clearly evolved within that primal Magisterium of the written word. It is however essential, both for the Old Testament and the New, that it should be written down, and by witnesses protected by God against error. Otherwise, in the Old Testament there could be no sure provable prophecy, in words and types, that could later point the credentials of the Christ. If the New Testament were not written, there could be no development of doctrine.

*the mind which is the
Living Word of God*

A divine teaching authority

The development of doctrine is also the vocation of the Holy Spirit within the Church, not the work of private opinion. There could be no clear vindication of the promise "but when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will teach you all things, and bring to your minds whatever I have said to you. I have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now ... but He will receive of Mine, and manifest them unto you" (John 16:12-15) In the evidences for Jesus, the claim to divine magisterium is essential because such is the only living vitality of Divinity upon earth. A divine teaching authority alone gives objective certainty, and objective certainty alone gives a certain moral law, and a certainty and an integrity in holiness to be lived.

Truth

There is for us no living communion of joy with an agnostic God. Therefore, when we speak to the young, or to the unevangelised adult, of apostolic tradition, of infallibility as a power constitutive of the Church, of the Magisterium of Christ, exercised by the college of the Bishops with the Pope etc; let us bear in mind that we are saying that this magisterium is not a final decision, like any other 'final' human decision, settled by king or majority vote. It is the Truth of the Living God, which encompasses the Church, because first it encompasses Man in human history. If the Church possesses the truth, it is because first the Truth which is the Living God, has encompassed and possessed the Church, and ever protects her, "And behold I am with you always, even to the end of the world". So for us, scripture with tradition means that the word of the Bible is not a dead word, a merely recorded word. It is a word that lives unto God, and is declared in its final meaning, and in its fuller, developmental meaning, through the Church. The evidence for Jesus lives in a context. It lives in an historic context. That historic context is the Being of God himself, creator, fulfiller, redeemer, and fulfilling love.

Creation as "Context" for Jesus

The living authority of God therefore, actively working in the Church, is the power that proclaims the evidence for Jesus. It is also the power which protects that proclamation from error, and preserves the beauty of its positive fullness. It is this action of God upon men which, since the Incarnation of God in Person (for so we claim Christ to be) is the meaning of the Church's claim to infallibility in the solemn definition of matter of faith and morals. It is this same action of God, through men appointed by God, namely the college of Bishops with Peter, that constitutes the divine Magisterium through which the Holy Spirit, as part of His own vocation in the Church, develops, clarifies, and protects the divine word revealed in Jesus Christ.

*the mind which is the
Living Word of God
conceives all things*

Living

If this is the context, not dead but living, within which the scriptures are contained and are an ever living word, how far back in time shall we go? Where shall we begin to show the context that is part of the evidence for Jesus? Will it be with the New Testament, at say from Pentecost day onwards? No: this is far too little. We have to put into the context of the divine manifestation of the truth of the claims of Jesus, that Old Testament which was in all its types, words, and liturgy prophetic of Jesus. Very well then; shall we agree to start

with Abraham, and the history of the line that leads to Christ? That will take us from 2,000 BC, a very respectable span of growing evidence. We know of many schemes and books that start from there. But, if we are going to be really coherent, and of help to men and women of this science soaked and sophisticated age, let us go back still further. Let us go back to the Book of Genesis, and beyond Genesis. For the book of Genesis portrays not only the creation of our world, but God as the living, purposeful context within which that world was framed. Genesis however does not deal very explicitly with creation itself, with the universe itself.

*the Truth of the
Living God*

The Big Bang

The Evidence for Jesus, we suggest goes back to the primal explosion of creative energy within which the universe, our world, and all it later contains was held and is held. Let us go back to zero-point, to what the popular media journalists call the 'Big Bang'. The scientists today are, especially the physicists, telling us with emphasis and awe, that this universe, at the zero-point of beginning, when its radiation energies were held in laws and relationships we cannot even conceive, was no random mass of radiant power. Within the first second of its explosion into those relationships we name space and time, there were formed the basic relationships of physics and the laws we already know. Moreover, the details of that universe, in terms of physics and chemistry, were already aligned to the possibility, the most unlikely possibility, of the emergence one day, within that universe, of the phenomenon of intelligent life, which is to say the Phenomenon of Man. They confess to us that this universe of ours is poised to that "unlikely" event, within unimaginably fine tolerances of organisation, in the first seconds of the creation.

this Word is Jesus

The "Unity-Law"

They speak already of a "Unity-Law" which spans all creation, and all its ages, and within which that primal explosion of ordered, creative energy was framed. Such an equation cannot be random: it must be centred in intelligent Personality, because its final end to be produced is contained, before it happens, within the original poising of matter-energy. The name of an intelligent Personality, that transcends the developing, evolving universe, is GOD. The modern scientist is beginning to give us an argument from mathematics and physics to the existence of God. Some of us would claim to have seen it a long time ago, in teenage in fact, and the manner of seeing it is explained in Catholicism: A New Synthesis, because this vision of creation sweeps much beyond physics, and beyond animal life, to Man himself. From Man himself it rises to God himself, and to Jesus Christ, as the Son of

*that living tradition of
solemn teaching*

Man. It is an enormous vision. It can be convincingly presented, and well defended. It is part of that context for Jesus within which His “Evidences” stand. That is where to begin.

A Unity-Law in Creation

The scientist has discovered a “Unity Law” because he knows that all the laws of matter and energy, including those we cannot at present fully reconcile, must have been contained within the primal poising of the Primal Explosion. From this intuition he hopes to deduce a unified theory of matter both as particle and wave. He hopes to explain the apparent contradictions between “classical” and “quantum” energies and forms. He hopes for a lot, although he hardly dares to hope to know the initial relationships of energy within which the universe was framed and poised at “zero point” in space and time. Such is the power of man’s intellect however, even when his senses are of little help, that he does aspire to hope to deduce a final answer even to this last query.

*the primal explosion of
creative energy*

Law

This sudden apprehension of a Unity-Law, and a Law of Unity, within which all things are framed, applies not only to the Primal Explosion of the universe in ordered energies; the order and the energy persists, in mutual interplay of galaxy upon galaxy, planet upon star, sun upon planet, environment upon life forms, and in the controlling interplay of one living form upon another, as predator and prey, and in many a wonderful and complex way at all times of the development of the universe, and in all changing aspects of its ordered, evolutionary ascent of being. The Unity-Law is always the same. The universe changes; new, and more complex forms of being appear and, in our planet at least, finally life itself. The harmonic interplay, the law of mutual control and direction unto self fulfilment and unto a stable natural order — that remains always. Yet, until we get to man, and come to the non-material energy, to the spiritual soul, free thinking and freely willing, all of this harmonic order, and life law found within diversity is contained within the poising of the initial equation of creation, by the laws of necessity, not of free-will. We say by the law of necessity; first the necessity of sheer mathematics and physics, and then by the necessity of determinism of being, even in the life forms, until we get to man, who is the unique one.

*the activity of God in
human history*

The Word made Flesh

Of course, it is all part of the “evidence for Jesus”. We cannot treat of it now in any detail. The serious reader might write to the “Faith” office for the book Catholicism earlier mentioned if he or she really wants to know. We can, however, indicate that the evidence was initialled by St. John, who must have got it from Jesus Christ himself. John writes: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God: the Same was in the beginning, with God: all things were made through Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made” (John 1:1-2). The term John uses is Logos, in the beginning as the Mind, Personal and self-conscious: God’s knowledge of Himself, the Mind that poises all things in their beginnings and in their final ends, altogether in one creative act. The “Word” who also says through St. John, “I am Alpha and I am Omega, I am the Beginning and I am the End” (Apoc. 22: 13). Since the mind which is the Living Word of God conceives all things, of course this law of harmony and ordered fulfilment is a perfect unity-law, from its inception until the last day’ and for eternity. But, you may say, how is this evidence for Jesus? Because this Word is Jesus, through Him all things are thrown across space and time in being, and in the end, we show the evidence for the coming of this Living Mind among human kind as God incarnate, the Word made Flesh.

The concluding part of this article will appear in our next issue.

SAVE THE DATE!

FAITH Movement Summer Session:
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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.

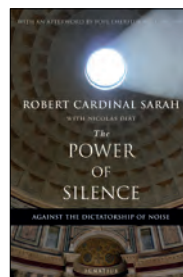
Our redemption through the death and resurrection of the Lord, following the tragedy of original sin, is also thereby seen in its crucial and central focus. Our life in his Holy Spirit through the church and the sacraments and the necessity of an infallible magisterium likewise flow naturally from this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

The Presence of the One who loves us eternally

The Power of Silence – Against the Dictatorship of Noise by Robert Cardinal Sarah with Nicolas Diat, Ignatius, 244pp, £16.50.

reviewed by Sr Claire Waddelove OSB



"Cardinal Sarah is a spiritual teacher, who speaks out of the depths of silence with the Lord, out of his interior union with him, and thus really has something to say to each one of us."

Afterword p.244, Benedict XVI Pope Emeritus

This beautiful book does indeed deserve to be read by everyone: by bishops, priests and religious, certainly, and those in formation, but also by lay Catholics and other Christians, who will find in it a means of deepening and strengthening their interior life, and by non-believers who may thus discover a path to God. Those, in particular, who have never known a world without the internet and mobile phones, will have a new vista opened to them: a contemplative approach to life, the silent love of the praying heart.

The author's message is unequivocal: "If man seeks God and wants to find him, if he desires a life of the most intimate union with him, silence is the most direct path and the surest means of obtaining it" (p219). And, "To refuse silence filled with confident fear and adoration, is to refuse God the freedom to take hold of us by his love and presence. Sacred silence allows man to place himself joyfully at God's disposal" (N° 230).

Accessible 'Thoughts'

Like their first book, *God or Nothing*, this one takes the form of a dialogue between Cardinal Sarah and Nicolas Diat. The latter's questions form a framework for what might be described as a prolonged mediation on the subject, which, until the final chapter, is broken down into numbered "Thoughts". These vary in length from a short paragraph to a page or more, and there are numerous thoughts in response to each question. The book is very accessible and although best read slowly all through, it can also be readily dipped into, as each Thought can stand alone. There are treasures on every page and many memorable texts, giving us a glimpse into the depths of the author's soul. Throughout the book, there are evocative quotations from the Scriptures and spiritual writers spanning the millennia. There is a bibliography of five pages listing the sources, but no precise references are given.

God is Silence

In "Silence Versus The World's Noise", the first and longest chapter, we read that God is silence, that he dwells in the human heart and it is there that he will bring about our inner transformation. We must prepare for activity by "an intense life of prayer, contemplation, seeking

and listening to God's will" (N° 14). In contrast, the world "no longer hears God because it is constantly speaking at a devastating speed and volume in order to say nothing.... In this hell of noise, man disintegrates and is lost" (N° 74). It is part of the devil's strategy, to keep man from facing himself and finding God. "Too few are willing to confront God in silence, by coming to be burned in that great face-to-face encounter" (N° 76).

Stern words of warning are addressed to priests: "Without the asceticism of silence, pastors become rather uninteresting men, prisoners of their boring, pathetic torrents of words. Without the life of the Holy Spirit and without silence, a priest's teaching is nothing but confused chatter devoid of substance" (N° 135).

The title of the second chapter, "God Does Not Speak, But His Voice Is Quite Clear", might give rise to disappointment. It begins promisingly with creation, which is "a silent word of God. The wordless beauty of nature displays before our eyes the manifold riches of a Father who is ceaselessly present among men" (N° 162). Prayer is indicated as being the best means of understanding God's silent speech, his presence and his love: and "God has his mysterious way of being close to us in our trials" (N° 171).

Redressing the balance

Yet the voice of God seems muffled rather than clear. Although references to the Sacred Scriptures as the very Word of God do appear elsewhere, much more might have been expected here. There is no direct reference to the voice of conscience, nor to the way God speaks to us through other people, through wise spiritual counsel, through the circumstances and events of our life. There are a few passing references to the fact that Our Lord spoke, "the voice of the Son is the voice of the Father" (N° 194), and an acknowledgement that he rarely asked his disciples to keep

silent, but in this chapter, too, the emphasis is overwhelmingly on silence: the silence of God, of Jesus, of the Holy Spirit, of Mary. Even the liturgy of heaven is silent. It might seem overdone. Presumably the Cardinal thought it necessary to redress the balance which is so heavily weighted the other way. We need to be silent in order to be able to hear God, to receive the Word.

The liturgy

In Chapter III, "Silence, The Mystery And The Sacred", the spotlight is on the liturgy, from which he would like banished all noise, worldliness, entertainment, superficiality, irreverence, profanity, and due place given to sacred silence. "Only silence leads man beyond words, to the mystery, to worship in spirit and in truth" (N° 243). Happily for those of us who have dedicated our lives to the praise of God in Gregorian chant, this receives approbation: "Gregorian chant is not contrary to silence. It has issued from it and leads to it. I would even say that it is as though woven of silence" (N° 247).

God works in silence

God's silence in the face of evil and suffering is the theme of Chapter IV. Evil is acknowledged as "an enigma that is impossible to resolve" (N° 272), but we can say that God does not will it. "Evil exists because his love is not accepted; his love is misunderstood, rejected, and resisted. ... The more monstrous the evil, the more evident it is that God, in us, is the first victim" (N° 276). We are invited to follow the example of Our Lady at the foot of the Cross: "She takes refuge in prayer, self-offering, and serene acceptance of God's mysterious will, in communion with her Son" (N° 282). "The time will come when evil will be destroyed by good ... evil never has the last word. In the darkest night, God works in silence" (N° 291). Silent prayer, patience, trust, self-surrender and filial piety give strength in the midst of trials.

Rebellion against God leads to sterile despair; suffering with faith and hope can lead one to spiritual heights.

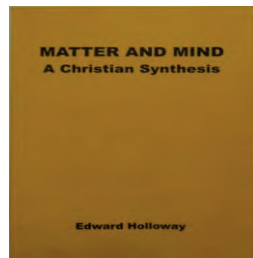
Insights into prayer

In the final chapter, Dom Dysmas de Lassus, Father-General of the Carthusian Order, joins in the conversation, in a rare interview. Drawing on a wealth of personal experience, he offers precious insights into prayer – distractions, coping with interior noise, making progress, continual prayer; and the spiritual life - the hardest combat being the battle with oneself, the immense journey that has to be travelled from total selfishness to sacrificial love, seeing trials

and suffering from the perspective of eternal life and the certainty of being loved by God.

In the Conclusion, Cardinal Sarah gives the last word to *Lectio Divina*, “a moment of silent listening, contemplation, and profound recollection in the light of the Spirit ... The Word read in silence accompanies us, enlightens us, and feeds us. ... It is the Presence of the One who loves us eternally” (pp 240-241).

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



MATTER AND MIND A Christian Synthesis by Edward Holloway

Edited and with an Introduction by Roger Nesbitt

427pp, £15.00

Fr Edward Holloway's masterpiece on science and religion, *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, has inspired priests, laity and religious since it was first published in 1969. Here now is his original version – never published before – of this profound vision. Written when he was a young priest in the late 1940s, it sets out with freshness and urgency his insight into how the Catholic faith can be presented in a synthesis with the new scientific knowledge of evolution. He addresses the fundamental issues about God, the evolution of the universe and the emergence of human life. The question of human nature – how much is matter and how much is mind? – is answered convincingly. And God's revelation to the world, climaxing in Jesus Christ, is presented in a striking perspective. With his grasp of evolutionary science – which research in the decades since has further confirmed – he argues the philosophical and theological basis which must underpin Christian thought in the modern age.

His friend and fellow founder of the Faith Movement, Fr Roger Nesbitt, has now edited this early text to bring Fr Holloway's thought to a new generation. As atheism grows in the secular West, this synthesis is more urgently needed than ever if the Church is to present the Faith in its fulness to the scientific age.

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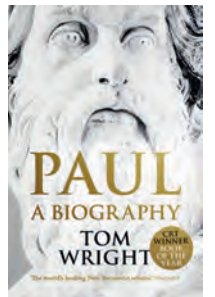
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Thanks to Paul, we have inherited the Church

Paul: A Biography by N. T. Wright, HarperOne, 464pp, UK £12.99 (paperback), US \$20.39 (hardback).

reviewed by Sister Mary Dominic Pitts



Imagine a book-length treatise on the life and writings of Paul the Apostle, derived from years of theological, sociological and historical research. Imagine this treatise delivered in the thoughts and speech and actions of Paul and his companions, all in lighthearted modern language. Imagine all of the foregoing and you have N.T. Wright's newest work, *Paul: A Biography*.

Contextualizing Saul's sudden appearance in Acts, the author gathers together Paul's self-reported biographical facts—his prized Roman citizenship (Acts 16:37 22:22-29), his study under the great Rabbi Gamaliel, his upbringing as a Pharisee anticipating Israel's glorious end times, and his deeply rooted desire to destroy the “followers of the Way”—and combines them in a portrait of the zealous young Jew who becomes one of the most remarkable men in Christian history. In a powerful narration of the conversion on the Damascus Road, Wright imaginatively transforms the blinding “light from the sky” (Acts 9:3) into the mystical chariot of the prophet Ezekiel. Our eyes travel upward with Paul's as he hopes to see “the [God] he has worshipped and served all his life”—and we, with Paul, come “face-to-face with Jesus of Nazareth” (p.53).

What Paul meant

Wright has a gift for debunking false modern ideas with historical evidence of what terms and concepts would have meant in the first century. Heaven consists not of “being rescued by Jesus from the world and taken to a distant heaven, but [of] *the coming together* of heaven and earth in a great act of cosmic renewal in which . . . Jesus will come *to transform the present world* and us with it” (p.8). The “conversion” on the Road to Damascus is in fact an expansion of the Jewish *telos*. Gentiles have to be convinced that the Jewish-sounding “covenant faithfulness” does not undermine the Roman Empire but brings about a shift of universal lordship from Caesar to Christ (p.106). “Miracles” worked through St. Paul on his journeys are not a divine “invasion” into nature but the “Creator himself at work in a fresh way” (p.122). Paul's speech at the Areopagus is not a confrontation with dilettante philosophers but Paul's desperate self-defence before the Athenian high court in the face of the danger of arrest and even execution (p.196).

The author has a particularly delightful gift for vivid metaphors to capture his points. For example, Paul is depicted as

walking a “tightrope over [a] volcano,” and continues, “If we can think of a world without music and then imagine it being invented . . . we may have a sense of the crazy magnitude of Paul’s vocation” (p.109). The abandonment of idols for the “living God” is like giving up gambling for regular church attendance.” Its impact is “to give up all our usual machines and conveniences: car, cell phone, cooking equipment, central heating, or air-conditioning. You would have to do everything differently” (pp.110-111). Luke’s omitting the outcome of “the collection” for Jerusalem is like “people watching all but the last ten minutes of a great sporting event . . . when a sudden power outage stops us from find out who won” (p.350).

The theology comes alive

For this reader, the book’s most powerful achievement is its fresh unfolding of the full realities of problems, persecution and misunderstanding that arise in Paul’s new Christian communities. In a series of outstanding chapters, the cause of the “daily pressure on me, my care for all the churches” is traced directly to enemies in Corinth and Ephesus (p.315). Wright attributes the two powerful Christocentric hymns—Philippians 2: 6-11 and Colossians 1:15-20—to Paul’s dark night during the two years of his imprisonment. The same prison ordeal is made to account for the descent into sadness in 2 Corinthians after the brisk advice in the first epistle. A chastened Paul emerges to urge quarrelling churches in Philippi and Colossae to imitate Jesus’ divine self-emptying and to worship Jesus as Lord of the universe. To unite the Jewish and Gentile house churches in Rome, Paul produces Romans, the great epistle of systematic Christology theology, with its theme that “God has shut up all people in disobedience, so that

he may have mercy upon all” (p.335). In Wright’s own translation of the Scriptures, the eloquent Greek of the epistles is transformed into equally eloquent modern English accessible to the reader. The theology comes alive.

Jesus has won the messianic victory

In the end, Wright powerfully sums up Paul’s realization that “Jesus is the image, the truly human one at the heart of the world-temple, the one who straddles heaven and earth, holding them together at last, the one whose shameful death has reconciled all things to the Creator” (p.291). From the Acts of the Apostles and Paul’s epistles, the author pieces together Paul’s interior and exterior lives, his maturing theology and his missionary journeys to spread the eschatological truth that Jesus is at once the fulfillment of Israel’s hopes and expectations and the unlooked-for salvation of the Gentiles. We follow Paul’s struggle with initial resistance and even, in his final hard-won victory, his anxiety that there must be “no barriers between Jewish Messiah people and non-Jewish Messiah people, [for] to erect such barriers would mean denying that Jesus had won the messianic victory” (p.79).

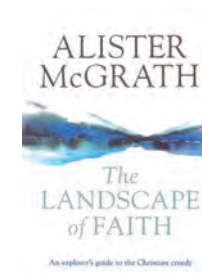
In *Paul: A Biography*, N.T. Wright portrays with brilliant simplicity the story of Paul’s role in about the Church as we know it today. The book follows the expansion of Christianity from the original Messiah-people into diverse communities of believers spanning the known world of the first century. We have inherited this Church, thanks to Paul.

Sister Mary Dominic Pitts, a Dominican sister of the Congregation of St. Cecilia, teaches at Aquinas College in Nashville, Tennessee.

A flawed apologetic

The Landscape of Faith : An Explorer’s Guide to the Christian Creeds by Alister McGrath, SPCK, 276pp, £9.94.

reviewed by Stephen Boyle



McGrath gives an apologetic organised around the Christian creeds, seeing them as maps of the landscape of faith. Using other images like the balcony over a road, or the road itself, he conjures up images that truly help put across in an accessible way aspects of the Christian faith.

The fallacy of atheism

He is at his best when he outlines the fallacy of atheism being based on reason: “There are no knock-down arguments that compel us either to believe in God or to believe that there is no God”. Using Bertrand Russell and Dawkins in particular as examples, McGrath sees atheism as not self-evidently true and leads to a belief in a world devoid of meaning. Turning to Christianity he came to a respect for its intellectual vigour and the assurance that there are answers to the ultimate meaning of life. It is in a transforming encounter with God that the world is seen in a deeper and profound way for what it really is.

While he does not directly mention Original Sin, in his chapter on suffering he has clear understanding of the coherence of this doctrine of the flaw in man and that it is the Christian message which gives meaning and hope. The commentary of the visit of W.H Aden to an American cinema in 1939 stays in the mind. This theme of the brokenness of man is coherently brought

home later in the book in reference to grace when positively referring to St. Augustine in the Pelagian controversy.

Flaws

There are many other nuggets of gold in the book. However, the flaws are difficult to overcome, and the following comment are not exhaustive.

I had to read McGrath’s statement that New Testament writers do not identify God with Jesus Christ a few times before really believing it was written. A Google search of “Is Jesus God in the Bible?” does the trick. He sees heaven as a restoration of the paradise of Eden. Creation is restored to what was intended. However, he quotes with approval C. S Lewis, that we are called to “come to share in the life of Christ ... (and) be sons of God”, surely not on offer to Adam and Eve.

Incongruous

In the preface he says: “I try to explore a basic consensual Christianity without engaging with contentious questions of denominational identity”. You would need to bracket Catholicism out of that equation. Positive comments about Luther and Calvin are fine but give a clue to what unravels later in the book. Using the quote

“once for all” from the Letter to Hebrews we are informed that there is “no longer any need for priests, sacrifices or temples in the Christian vision of life”. The sacraments are explained in a Protestant way, and when we read “Christians disagree about whether baptism causes forgiveness or is a public declaration that forgiveness has been received and accepted” he reveals his liberal position on this debate.

What is so incongruous about this is that in his acknowledgement the first four names are Anselm of Canterbury, Thomas Aquinas, Athanasius of Alexandria and Augustine of Hippo. He also quotes positively from St. Augustine, G.K. Chesterton and Joseph Ratzinger among others.

A cosy view of the Creed

One would have thought that, seeing as the creeds are formed at Church councils, the Church might have come up as a topic. This is so, late in the book. Instead near the beginning we have the following: “the creeds are primarily communal Christian confessions of faith”. Having just read Newman’s *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, I found this rather cosy view of the formation of the Nicene Creed, yes, laughable. While the Council decided against the Arians overwhelmingly (of the estimated 250–318 attendees, all but two agreed to sign the Creed), subsequently we find St. Athanasius exiled from the church five times by four Roman emperors, spending almost half of his 45 years as bishop of Alexandria in exile for his defence of the Creed; and in that period (359) we have the celebrated phrase of St. Jerome, that the whole world woke up one morning, lamenting and marvelling to find itself Arian. I really do suggest he read Newman’s *Arians*.

Newman and certainty

I also suggest that he read Newman’s *Grammar of Assent*. He quotes C. S Lewis thus: “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because through it I can see everything.” Such clarity with regard to holding the truths of the faith is not continued, however, by McGrath: “But we now know that no conviction that is worth holding can be proved, and we have become willing to grasp the nettle of living with uncertainty.” He compares the act of faith to a trapeze artist in mid-flight between two bars. This state could be conceived as the *Preambula Fidei*, the steps before faith, but it cannot be the confirmed faith of a Christian. The martyrs for both the Protestant and Catholic faith would not understand such a view, and indeed uncertainty in faith indicates a crisis in one’s faith. Jesus did not see uncertainty in a positive light: he said to Peter “Why did you doubt?” when Peter lost his nerve walking on the water. For Newman certainty or proof is not to be found by the logic of words but in a virtue which he calls the *Illative Sense*. He shows that far from being uncertain, one can prove Christianity divine to one’s own satisfaction and to others who start from the same principles.

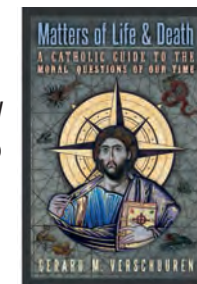
It is the lack of coherency that flaws this book. If it were to be a Protestant exposé of faith that would be fine, but the trying to be inclusive, and the lack of scholarship indicated, means that the good scholarship and the book’s many insights are clouded.

Fr. Stephen Boyle, MSc, STL, is the parish priest of St. Anselm’s, Dartford, in the Archdiocese of Southwark.

Life is always meaningful

Matters of Life and Death – A Catholic Guide to the Moral Questions of Our Time by Gerard M. Verschuuren, Angelico Press, 201pp, paperback £12.50.

reviewed by Lucy Courlet de Vregille



The debate surrounding abortion or euthanasia seems to have been somewhat shelved in recent years as the legal systems of more and more countries recognise it as morally acceptable or do not give much consideration to the role of morality in such matters at all anymore. The objective of *Matters of Life and Death* appears to be to defend the very existence of morality and its essential function in society, providing a ‘Catholic moral compass’ to navigate the moral terrain, and offering a crystal clear response to the various moral sore points of our time.

The standard relativist rhetoric of today’s society, which avoids telling anyone how they have a duty to live, ultimately accepts all forms of behaviour, condoning destructive life choices in the name of ‘acceptance’ and the right to ‘do or be what I like’. Conscious he is addressing a culture which is lost in its own idea of acceptance of everyone and everything, and which is visibly detrimental to the most vulnerable, Verschuuren wastes no words in laying down timeless truths, whose very purpose is to protect and to fulfil us. The author himself says, his subject matter is not original, as his work is to, “reacquaint the reader with the precepts the Church has long provided”.

Unassuming gentleness

This is not a spiritual guide to living out your own moral life; it is an informative work on what the correct moral choice is to make in a select number of specific and pertinent situations; including abortion, euthanasia and eugenics. As well as tackling other topics, which perhaps, by many, are not even seen as moral issues anymore; contraception, IVF, gender-change and homosexual behaviour. Verschuuren places them carefully and definitively back in their place alongside each other as morally grave matters, explaining why.

He takes an encouraging tone: an authoritative attitude, lightened by occasional humour. He uses a framework of beautiful sources, quoting saints, old and new, who, as always, offer clarity and motivation. Sources include; the philosophy of Aquinas, JPII’s *Theology of the Body*, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, G. K. Chesterton, Pope Francis. It must be hard to write a book on morality in today’s climate without being considered judgemental, dictatorial or somewhat lacking in compassion, but Verschuuren succeeds for the most part in engaging this tricky subject with unassuming gentleness;

"Let me invite you on a quest for what is right and what is wrong under the guidance of a Catholic compass." (pg. 1)

Scientific background

His simple and direct manner means the chapters remain concise, leaving room for further reading if you are looking for a more thorough debate, but which do keep the overall length of the book down. This makes for a short read and cleverly ensures that the dense subject matter does not become overwhelming for the more casual reader. With a background in genetic science, Verschuuren competently leans on scientific argument to justify the roots of many moral stances. Then, after transmitting a clear understanding of Church teaching on each subject, he passes on to the next. This interesting approach originates from his strength as a consultant on Faith and Reason.

In secular society 'rights' and 'freedom' have become words which are widely misused, wrongly invoked and almost entirely misunderstood. But this is the tip of the iceberg. Before he even begins, Verschuuren is obliged to create a level ground on which to have a clear discussion. The problem of language is something the author confronts confidently, defining his terms from the first chapter and deftly putting into place a vocabulary which has otherwise been largely re-appropriated or forgotten; a point which is interesting in itself.

Awakening the conscience

For questioning Catholics or Christians,

this book contains a good introduction to morality and clear answers on the burning topics of today. To read *Matters of Life and Death* is to be on a quest to understand more deeply the importance of recognising and defending one's rights and duties, to learn from where they originate, and ultimately what it means when we say 'the dignity of human life'.

"moral duties and rights go hand in hand... the duty to seek the truth matches the right to seek it; the duty to protect life goes with the right of life to protection [...] no one has the duty to marry, so no one has the right to be married; no one has the duty to have children, so no one has the right to have children..." (pg. 23)

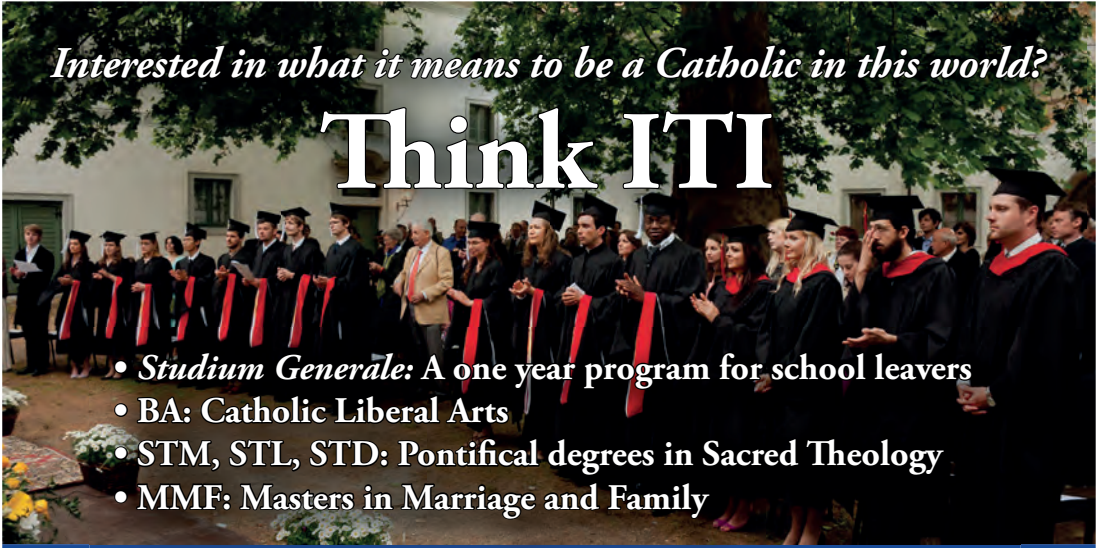
This book informs, it motivates and perhaps most importantly it awakens the conscience to see the will of God when faced with incredibly difficult situations and intense suffering. It insists on the necessity of making informed decisions, even if these be counter-cultural. The author highlights, by chapter, challenging situations which, originally sparking intense debate on a national and international level, have since become increasingly socially acceptable and even considered normal by younger generations. As explained simply in this book, they do in fact remain now and for always, morally wrong.

"Life is always meaningful, in good times and in bad times, in joy and in suffering." (pg. 150)


Lucy Courlet de Vregille is a member of the Emmanuel Community and a stay-at-home mother of three children under four.

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