

faith

Promoting A New Synthesis Of Faith And Reason

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Front cover pic: Celebration Mass at the Church of the Most Precious Blood, London Bridge, to mark the 10th anniversary of Anglicanorum Coetibus, establishing the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham

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Courage as we look ahead

It is not going to be easy being a Catholic bishop or priest in the Britain of the next few years. The combination of ignorance – most of the rising generation in Britain have very little first-hand knowledge or experience of the Christian faith – and of prejudice, in a social climate increasingly alert to the glee of denouncing anyone possibly guilty of having violated the rules of political correctness, make for a grim atmosphere.

Ignorance

The ignorance about the Church is massive. For large numbers of people, the only known facts about Catholic belief is that Catholics are against abortion and that the Church “hates gays”. There is very little general knowledge about the basic tenets of the Creed: God becoming man and living among us, dying and rising again and establishing for eternity the bond between humanity and God planned by God from “the beginning”.

All of that would be bad enough. But of course there is more. There is a general vague notion that “hundreds and hundreds” of Catholic priests have routinely subjected children to sexual abuse and that nothing has ever been done about it.

And in discussing the whole ghastly topic of sex abuse, the prospects of getting a fair hearing are not great. Nor should we complain about that: if the hearer assumes that we are going to defend evil behaviour, he is obviously not going to make much effort to listen to us. It is no use beginning the conversation by noting that the number of priests who have ever been involved in this evil is tiny – far smaller than in any other comparable profession. It just doesn’t matter. The retort will probably be something along the lines of “one is one too many” – a cliché which, like most clichés, is true. It is crucial to establish that this evil behaviour shames the Church and is a source of penitence for every Catholic, and to seize the opportunity to get to the heart of things and note that we rightly call priests to a far higher standard than any one else, and ask why. We can then start talking about what a priest is, and whether or not there is a God, and why and how we know about good and evil, right and wrong. We can note in passing the truth that the number of priests who have been involved in this evil is tiny: but simply re-stating that will not help to get people nearer to Christ.

*in defence of
Catholic teaching*

*the basic tenets of
the Creed*

Action

In this climate, it is tempting to retreat and leave all evangelisation to others. A lack of action can be comfortably filled by criticising bishops, denouncing any missionary efforts as a waste of time, or gleefully reporting the latest depressing Mass attendance figures.

What line does the Faith Movement take? We run regular and well-attended youth events which have grown in number and in size over the 40-plus years of the Movement's work, and we frequently and frankly discuss the Mass attendance figures and related statistics and invariably link this with specific and practical plans and actions for reversing the trend.

Above all, we show how the Faith can be presented in a scientific perspective with clarity, integrity and conviction.

Ideas

Within the Faith Movement, we have a range of ideas for that latter point. To take one example, the Editor takes issue with those who affirm that "all our Catholic schools are a waste of time – better to get rid of them". For many young people, baptised into the Catholic Church but rarely attending Mass, a school could be one place where some contact may be made with a Catholic Faith that is otherwise completely alien to them. The Editor is aware of initiatives in Catholic schools that have included Rosary Clubs, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament ("surprisingly popular" I was told "they seem to like the atmosphere"), talks on the plight of persecuted Christians, visits from religious sisters explaining their vocation and message, and meetings of "mini-vinnies" – the junior version of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Reactions of pupils to Religious Education can be unexpected. The Editor recalls "Have you come to talk about abortion?" as being the first question asked by VI formers on three separate occasions when arriving to speak. The well-intentioned arrangements for having regular speakers on that subject had produced the assumption that this was the only subject on which the Church had anything to say. (It is good to be able to report that pupils at these and other schools have responded well to talks on, among other subjects, saints John Paul II and John Henry Newman, the Church's calendar of feasts and seasons, ancient Marian shrines in England, and the story of how the Anglo-Saxons became Christian.)

The way ahead

The way ahead is evangelisation. We need prayerful Bishops who are courageous and give us clear leadership. We need good and holy priests. We need young men and women who are prepared to become RE teachers in Catholic schools. We need parish catechists

who are prepared to be properly trained (the Maryvale Institute offers excellent courses).

It seems likely that there will be attempts to introduce legislation stating that priests must reveal what they hear in confession if it relates to any form of sexual abuse. But no Catholic priest can ever reveal what he hears in confession: and there have been those who have refused to do so, and have died because of that refusal. The Church cannot and will not ever suggest that there could be any change in that. As one bishop has recently put it: "The history of the Catholic Church has a number of people who've been put to death in defense of the seal of confession, it might come to that". Courage will be needed in the years ahead. .

*firm words on
confession*

FAITH MOVEMENT SYMPOSIUM



for members and associates of the FAITH Movement
Ampleforth Abbey, Yorkshire



February 17th-20th 2020

Information from frds@knightrc.org



Newman's London

A pilgrim handbook

Joanna Bogle
Illustrated by Malgorzata Brykczynska

"This book guides us through Newman's London. It is intriguing to discover the places that he knew. The house where he was born, near his father's bank in the City, no longer stands but the Square Mile is still a teeming place of banking and business. The rural Ealing, where he arrived in a stagecoach for boarding-school, has vanished under suburban streets. The family's summer home to along by the Thames at Ham, however, still has an air of peaceful country living. For Londoners and visitors alike, discovering Newman's London can bring the story of this great man's life into focus. It is a wonderful way of exploring the message that he has for us today. I wish all pilgrim readers of this book every blessing and joy!"

✠ Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster

978 085244 941 7

140 pages

£7.99

GRACEWING

The canonisation of St John Henry Newman was the major event for the Church in Britain in 2019. To mark Newman's birthday (February 21st) FAITH magazine reprints here the feature by HRH the Prince of Wales in *L'Osservatore Romano* to mark the canonisation.



JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

By His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales

When Pope Francis canonises Cardinal John Henry Newman tomorrow, the first Briton to be declared a saint in over forty years, it will be a cause of celebration not merely in the United Kingdom, and not merely for Catholics, but for all who cherish the values by which he was inspired.

In the age when he lived, Newman stood for the life of the spirit against the forces that would debase human dignity and human destiny. In the age in which he attains sainthood, his example is needed more than ever - for the manner in which, at his best, he could advocate without accusation, could disagree without disrespect and, perhaps most of all, could see differences as places of encounter rather than exclusion.

At a time when faith was being questioned as never before, Newman, one of the greatest theologians of the nineteenth century, applied his intellect to one of the most pressing questions of our era: what should be the relationship of faith to a sceptical, secular age? His engagement first with Anglican theology, and then, after his conversion, Catholic theology, impressed even his opponents with its fearless honesty, its unsparing rigour and its originality of thought.

Whatever our own beliefs, and no matter what our own tradition may be, we can only be grateful to Newman for the gifts, rooted in his Catholic faith, which he shared with wider society: his intense and moving spiritual autobiography and his deeply-felt poetry in 'The Dream of Gerontius' which, set to music by Sir Edward Elgar - another Catholic of whom all Britons can be proud - gave the musical world one of its most enduring choral masterpieces.

At the climax of 'The Dream of Gerontius' the soul, approaching heaven, perceives something of the divine vision:

*a grand mysterious harmony:
It floods me, like the deep and solemn sound
Of many waters.*

Harmony requires difference. The concept rests at the very heart of Christian theology in the concept of the Trinity. In the same poem, Gerontius says:

*Firmly I believe and truly
God is three, and God is One;*

As such, difference is not to be feared. Newman not only proved this in his theology and illustrated it in his poetry, but he also demonstrated it in his life. Under his leadership, Catholics became fully part of the wider society, which itself thereby became all the richer as a community of communities.

Newman engaged not merely with the church, but with the world. While wholeheartedly committed to the Church to which he came through so many intellectual and spiritual trials, he nonetheless initiated open debate between Catholics and other Christians, paving the way for later ecumenical dialogues. On his elevation to the Cardinalate in 1879, he took as his motto *Cor ad cor loquitur* ('heart speaks to heart'), and his conversations across confessional, cultural, social and economic divides, were rooted in that intimate friendship with God.

His faith was truly catholic in that it embraced all aspects of life. It is in that same spirit that we, whether we are Catholics or not, can, in the tradition of the Christian Church throughout the ages, embrace the unique perspective, the particular wisdom and insight, brought to our

universal experience by this one individual soul. We can draw inspiration from his writings and his life even as we recognise that, like all human lives, it was inevitably flawed. Newman himself was aware of his failings, such as pride and defensiveness which fell short of his own ideals, but which, ultimately, left him only more grateful for the mercy of God.

His influence was immense. As a theologian, his work on the development of doctrine showed that our understanding of God can grow over time, and had a profound impact on later thinkers. Individual Christians have found their personal devotion challenged and strengthened by the importance he attached to the voice of conscience. Those of all traditions who seek to define and defend Christianity have found themselves grateful for the way he reconciled faith and reason. Those who seek the divine in what can seem like an increasingly hostile intellectual environment find in him a powerful ally who championed the individual conscience against an overwhelming relativism.

And perhaps most relevantly of all at this time, when we have witnessed too many grievous assaults by the forces of intolerance on communities and individuals, including many Catholics, because of their beliefs, he is a figure who stood for his convictions despite the disadvantages of belonging to a religion whose adherents were denied full participation in public life. Through the whole process of Catholic emancipation and the restoration of the Catholic Church hierarchy, he was the leader his people, his church and his times needed. His capacity for personal warmth and generous friendship is shown in his correspondence. There exist over 30 collected volumes of his letters, many of which, tellingly, are not addressed to the fellow intellectuals and prominent leaders but to family, friends and parishioners who sought out his wisdom.

His example has left a lasting legacy. As an educator, his work was profoundly influential in Oxford, Dublin and beyond, while his treatise, *The Idea of a University*, remains a defining text to this day. His often overlooked labours on behalf of children's education are testimony to his commitment to ensuring those of all backgrounds shared the opportunities learning can bring. As an Anglican, he guided that church back to its Catholic roots, and as a Catholic he was ready to learn from the Anglican tradition, such as in his promoting the role of the laity. He gave the Catholic Church renewed confidence as it re-established itself in a land in which it had once been uprooted. The Catholic community in Britain today owes an incalculable debt to his tireless work, even as British society has cause for gratitude to that community for its immeasurably valuable contribution to our country's life.

That confidence was expressed in his love of the English landscape and of his native country's culture, to which he made such a distinguished contribution. In the Oratory which he established in Birmingham, and which now houses a museum dedicated to his memory as well as an active worshipping community, we see the realisation in England of a vision he derived from Rome which he described as 'the most wonderful place on Earth'. In bringing the Oratorian Congregation from Italy to England, Newman sought to share its charism of education and service.

He loved Oxford, gracing it not only with passionate and erudite sermons, but also with the beautiful Anglican church at Littlemore, created after a formative visit to Rome where, seeking guidance on his future spiritual path and pondering his relationship with the Church of England and with Catholicism, he wrote his beloved hymn, 'Lead Kindly Light'. When he finally decided to leave the Church of England, his last sermon as he said farewell to Littlemore left the congregation in tears. It was entitled 'The Parting of Friends.'

As we mark the life of this great Briton, this great churchman and, as we can now say, this great saint, who bridges the divisions between traditions, it is surely right that we give thanks for the friendship which, despite the parting, has not merely endured, but has strengthened.

In the image of divine harmony which Newman expressed so eloquently, we can see how, ultimately, as we follow with sincerity and courage the different paths to which conscience calls us, all our divisions can lead to a greater understanding and all our ways can find a common home.

(Vatican News Service October 2019)

Relationships and Sex Education: an alternative view

Louise Kirk highlights important developments in education policy



There has been a lot of concern about the new Regulations for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) which come into force in September 2020. Judith Nemeth, Director of the Values Foundation for Faith and Families in Education (TVF)¹, has paid several visits to the Department for Education (DfE) and says that there is now a new team dealing with the subject “who are more friendly to the faith perspective” than the old one. Exactly what will be enforced by Ofsted we have yet to discover (the DfE’s Statutory Guidance on topics to be studied already goes further than the letter of the Law, which actually states that the education must have regard to the age and religious background of the pupils). What is clear is that we need schools, churches and parents who are prepared to stand up for the considerable rights left us within the law or we will be pushed over by the likes of Stonewall just for not daring.

A true Catholic approach

The task of creating a true Catholic RSE programme is massive. We aren’t just talking about getting the best out of new regulations. We are talking about reversing decades of damage in which Catholic schools have been led by the secular agenda instead of vice versa. Promotion of the LGBT agenda is one thing, but it is still small fry compared to the big problem, that of ordinary young people who should be setting up the married families of the future but who are failing to do so in large numbers. We are talking about the backbone of Britain becoming crumbly.

What both sexes lacked were the values and direction to take them to their goals

Right back in the 1980s Christine Vollmer, creator of the *Alive to the World* programme of which I am UK Co-ordinator, set up a prolife organisation among the poorest of the poor in the shanty towns of Caracas. She was puzzling over how one could prevent the lovely young girls from becoming teenage unmarried mothers. And then she noticed something. These girls had every bit as much desire for romance and marriage and family life as richer children, and the boys just as much yearning for heroism. What both sexes lacked were the values and direction to take them to their goals – their own families were chaotic, and the Christian moral framework had largely broken down round them. Interestingly, a

report by the Centre for Social Justice published last year showed similar findings in this country. Some 78% of 14-17 year-olds thought finding a lasting adult relationship not only important, but more important than a career. A similar number (8 out of 10) wanted to get married at some point. And yet a few years later, as Sir Paul Coleridge of the Marriage Foundation has pointed out, this desire for marriage has a way of dwindling.

Values and strength of character

Here surely is our overall goal for RSE: not just teaching children to abstain from sex for a time but giving them the values and strength of character to remain chaste in preparation for a lasting marriage. Eligible young men and women are ones who are generous and self-controlled in spirit, who work hard and make use of their talents, present themselves well and get on with others, and, in general, are givers to the community and fun to be around. You will notice that those most eligible to found future families are also desirable in the workplace and in any other vocation they may have: as a priest, or nun, or single person. They are the good citizens that any country should prize.

Reform

How do we achieve this education?

I would suggest by hijacking school sex education with a specific target in mind: destroying the hold of contraception. Most revolutions rest on ideas. The sexual revolution is unusual in that its ideology depends on a material instrument. Remove it, and all sorts of things start to fall back into place. Imagine a world without contraception. Girls would no longer agree to easy sex with boys, recovering their roles as the natural door-keepers of intimacy. Boys would be encouraged to ask their girlfriends to marry them, much earlier than at present. Both would recover their sense of modesty, and the natural interplay between boy and girl, man and woman, which is at the heart of romance and true love. When Sir Paul Coleridge gave the Lords & Commons Family & Child Protection Group a presentation on his ideas for marriage reform, he showed us that divorce and family breakdown followed on historically from introduction of the Pill. He also told us that, from the 1600s until the end of the 1970s, unmarried co-habitation never accounted for more than 5% of couples in any strata of society. Now 87% of higher earners (over £43,000) still marry but only 24% of low earners (under £16,000). Given the benefits of marriage, economically as well as against every other marker, this is widening inequalities in a disastrous way.

Natural Fertility

We are able to contemplate such action because of massive strides in understanding natural fertility. Fertility Awareness-Based Methods (FABM) of spacing births follow ecological trends and are now as effective as the Pill at avoiding pregnancy. What is more, teaching children to understand their own fertility promotes chastity and self-respect and prepares young people for fulfilling sexual lives in lasting marriages. Everybody likes to

learn about themselves, and the truths of the human body, the psyche, and the differences between men and women, are fascinating. They are also relevant to teenagers in the here and now. Opening these to young people makes sense of our Judaeo-Christian morality and of St John Paul's Theology of the Body.

Outreach

Science can thus be shown to support the Catholic Church's teaching on the inviolability of the sexual act, and it's not only Catholics who are saying this. If you go to a World Congress of Families you will find delegates from every faith, mostly Christian, coming in behind similar pastoral policies and thanking the Catholic Church for giving a lead. Modern methods of natural fertility management not only give couples a reliable tool to help them plan or avoid conception. They have also been found to heal and preserve happy marriages: the divorce rate is something like 5%. It's a glorious irony that NFP has done what the Pill was touted to do: promote fulfilling sexual lives.

The vehicle created by sex education gives us an outreach into every home in the land. Taking it over and replacing contraception with teaching natural fertility is of course fraught with difficulty. At the time of *Humanae Vitae* the controversy revolved around one form of family planning over another. Now we would be taking on the commercial interests bound up in the contraceptive industry, together with the ways of life to which it has given rise: the various LGBT varieties and also having women give priority to careers over having children. Earlier this year the New York Times carried a full-page ad in which 180 US companies claimed that access to abortion is necessary to keep their workforce functioning.

an outreach into every home in the land

Truth

So is such a scheme possible? Not only is it possible. Eventually it will happen regardless of what we do or don't do, because no society lives forever according to a lie. We can also believe with Cardinal Trujillo, the formidable President of the Pontifical Council for the Family in St John Paul's time, that learning the truth of our human sexual biology has its own resonance and ability to convert. If we allow ourselves to be God's instruments, he will lead the enterprise which will no doubt take decades to accomplish. There are already factors pointing in our favour. For a start, the Pill is fifty years old, its drawbacks are increasingly aired and its ethos is out of kilter with today's environmental sensibilities. What's more, despite the money thrown at new solutions, none have been found. The human body and psyche were not designed for contraception, and the search for "the perfect method" will only ever be filled with mirages. Contraception would still be taught, of course – it has to be – but truthful facts would reveal it as a blunt instrument past its sell-by date.

There are already factors pointing in our favour

Open children's eyes

Overturing the Sex Education Forum's goals would do more than this. Where present sex education is based around things to be avoided: premature pregnancies, STIs, sex abuse, lack of consent, which is a depressing way of teaching relying on fear for its motivation, fertility appreciation opens children's eyes to the wonder of their being, which in turn leads them to respect childbirth, themselves and other people.

a sure foundation for the rest of their lives

Present methods

Where present methods attempt to make boys out of girls, supposedly giving them the ability to "enjoy their sexuality" and prepare for a career without the encumbrance of motherhood, true sexuality prepares girls for both aspects of their personality: home-making and career. It also teaches boys their essential role as providers and protectors of their future families.

Where present methods treat all children as potentially promiscuous, true education balances the needs of innocent late-developers with those of the precocious and vulnerable, teaching both the virtue of purity, which can be described as being actively loving in every relationship, in the manner appropriate to that relationship.

Where present methods preach self-esteem and fulfilment as a goal, turning children in on themselves, true teaching shows that God gifts each person individually for a specific vocation which it is theirs to seek and pray for. It prepares them for sacrificial love.

Where present sex education targets getting through adolescence without mishap, true sex education gives young people a sure foundation for the rest of their lives.

Parents

There is another big difference, which is why I have left it till last. From the very beginning sex educationalists ousted parents from their necessary roles as prime educators. What I would propose is a close collaboration between parents, schools and also parishes, accompanied by outreach to the medical profession. The medical profession got us into this mess, and we will need the help of good doctors, nurses and fertility consultants to bring us out.

a close collaboration between parents, schools and also parishes

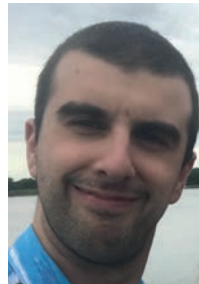
We will also need hard work and intense prayer. This is principally a spiritual battle and it will take a united effort to win.

*Louise Kirk is UK Co-ordinator for the Alive to the World character education programme and author of *Sexuality Explained: a guide for parents and children*.*

¹ See www.values.foundation under "Initiatives" for further useful information.

Discovering the churches of Trastevere

More British people than ever before now visit Rome. Donato Tallo invites pilgrims to explore the Eternal City.



In Trastevere, medieval meets the modern day: historical architecture, horticultural beauty, culinary delights, stunning churches, cobbled streets and Romanesque landmarks jostle with shops and cafes and bars.

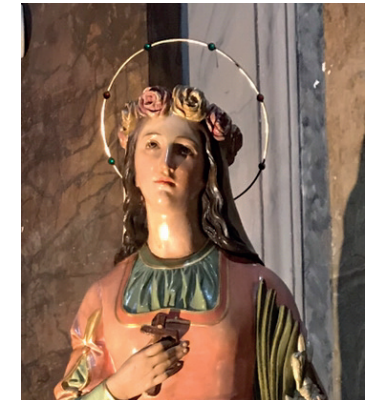
Situated south of the Vatican the name originates from the Latin *Trans Tiberim* meaning “beyond the Tiber”, and was given to this area by the long-ago Romans who historically did not regard it as part of the wealthy and prosperous City of Rome. Over the centuries Trastevere has been home to fishermen and craftsmen and despite many changes in the area the picturesque and hard-wearing cobbled streets enable the old quarters of Rome to flourish today.

the sounds of church bells



Window boxes rich in colour, greenery and foliage overflowing from rooftops and washing hanging from ancient houses across the narrow streets and alleyways produce a rustic charm. A deep inhalation of air offers the aroma of fresh bread, coffee, pizza and pastries and the sounds of church bells, fountains and vespers are plentiful throughout the day. In the summer no visitor is far away from an ice cream stall.

The area generates a huge income for the City with its many restaurants, cafes and shops. There is also a sense of tradition and history: feasts of the Church's calendar are marked not only in the churches but with local events and festivals.



Beautiful

Trastevere is home to some of Rome's most beautiful and significant churches. One of the most well-known is Santa Maria in Trastevere in the beautiful central piazza with a large fountain designed by Carlo Fontana in the late seventeenth century. The church is at the heart of Trastevere and has mosaics by Pietro Cavallini as well as an impressive bell tower and portico.

definitely worth a visit

A short walk away from the central piazza is the church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, is home to a religious community who occupy the adjoining convent. The church is on the site of St Cecilia's martyrdom in AD 230 and the crypt has her shrine, located beneath the main body of the church: and is most definitely worth a visit and incidentally beautifully cool in a Roman summer's heat.

The Tiber

The church of San Crisogono, not far from the Tiber, is famous for being built on the site of one of the City's oldest private houses that was used for Christian worship. The interior has contains some fine frescos and mosaics

The church of San Dorotea is one of the smallest in the Trastevere and is close to the Ponte Sisto. Its simple exterior invites the visitor to explore further: the bones of St Dorothy lie beneath the high altar and has some beautiful stained-glass windows that add to the peaceful and prayerful atmosphere inside.

No visit to Rome would be complete without a visit to Trastevere: ponder the history, reflect on the fact that we still honour the saints and martyrs whose relics are here, and allow it all to nourish your faith!

OBITUARY - Dr William Oddie

FAITH magazine reports with sadness the death of long-time contributor Dr William Oddie. We send our condolences to his wife Conny and the family.



William Oddie (1939 - 2019) was a Yorkshireman. For some that will be enough to summarize his whole demeanour and head-on approach to problems and difficulties. Born to parents in a small way of manufacturing in Wakefield, he was educated at Silcotes

School – one of a small but proud group of northern ‘dissenting academies’. The religion there was, by his own account, dour enough to end the youthful Oddie’s interest in religion and make a thoroughgoing atheist of him. This cannot have been much moderated by his undergraduate years reading English and French at Trinity College Dublin – by then no longer the stronghold of the Protestant Ascendancy it had once been, but a college whose student body was made up largely of Post-Catholics of a belligerent kind.

He went on to the University of Leicester, where his PhD, interrupted by a bout of illness, was to form the basis of his first book *‘Dickens and Carlyle: A Study in Influence’*. Oddie’s return to religion was gradual – perhaps influenced by a short time as Secretary of the Ancient Monuments Society. English literature of the seventeenth century (Donne, Herbert, Traherne) and the sublime architecture of the great northern minsters, York and Beverley, drew him towards religion, and confirmation in the Church of England.

In due course Oddie felt a calling to ordination, and trained at St Stephen’s House, Oxford, in those days a centre of fervent Anglo-Catholicism. Perhaps it was at St Stephen’s House that he learned the combative polemicism which was to be the hall-mark of his career as a Catholic journalist.

As a Librarian of Pusey House, and Bishop’s chaplain to graduate students, Oddie found himself fulfilling the original aims of the House’s foundation which was to supplement and ultimately replace the pastoral care of college chaplains in an increasingly secularised University. It was during his time at Pusey that he published what was probably his most important book. *‘What will happen to God?’* was not favourably reviewed at the time. Probably it was too combative for the cosy seclusion of the Church of England. But the book, forensically uncovering the deeper implications of the ordination of women as a direct attack upon the Doctrine of God, was to prove prophetic. As history unfolded in the following twenty years, and as the connections with the homosexual and ultimately pansexualist

agendas became more and more apparent, Oddie’s 1984 warning came to seem not strident but realistic. It might have been said, as Rowan Williams was to say of a book boldly stating the same opinions from a feminist standpoint (Daphne Hampson’s *‘Theology and Feminism’*), that it was ‘required reading’.

Subsequent to Pusey House, Oddie spent a short time as parish priest in a working class parish in Romford, where bewilderment at his sermons was matched by admiration of his pastoral enthusiasm. But by the late 1980s it had become clear that the ordination of women in the Church of England was an inevitability, and William, whose hopes of eventual reunion of Rome and Canterbury were crushed, became a Catholic. Many expected that he would avail himself of the provision for the ordination of married Anglicans to the Catholic priesthood. But for whatever reason Oddie chose to remain a layman.

So began a distinguished career as a Catholic polemicist. Oddie’s experience as a working and crusading journalist on the *Telegraph*, the *Sunday Times* and the *Daily Mail* put him in an ideal position to succeed as editor of the *Catholic Herald*, which he reshaped and redirected as it continues today. He saw that there was a place for a trenchant voice of orthodox Catholicism and set about providing it in a new format. Oddie was never far from controversy – with even the Monarchy in his sights. *The Tablet* was outraged. But Conrad Black’s choice of editor remained at the *Herald*, and vindicated his choice not only by notoriety, but by increased circulation.

Never far from controversy, Oddie nevertheless continued his scholarly work. His edition of Newman’s *‘Apologia’* did much to re-establish its author’s reputation as a formidable debater. Closer to journalism was his forensic analysis of the Gareth Bennet affair, *‘The Crockford’s File’* which subjected the then Archbishop of York, John Habgood to severe criticism. His *‘The Roman Option’* was in many ways a lament for the failure of the Catholic Church to extend to Anglicans like himself the generosity which Benedict XVI was later to exhibit.

In his later years Oddie, with increasing rotundity and love of combative paradox, came more closely to resemble the subject of his last – and arguably his best – book *‘Chesterton and the Romance of Orthodoxy’*. If in the eyes of many it failed entirely to vindicate its subject in the matter of anti-semitism, it stands beside Ian Ker’s biography as one of the most significant achievements of Chesterton scholarship.

William Oddie was a man of many friends. He was genial, humorous and always intelligently engaged with the affairs of the moment. His writings, by turn trenchant, opinionated, scholarly, reflective and prophetic, are testimony to a life lived with a vivid enthusiasm and a love of Catholic truth.

Geoffrey Kirk

Candlemas

by John Henry Newman

The Angel-lights of Christmas morn,
Which shot across the sky,
Away they pass at Candlemas,
They sparkle and they die.

Comfort of earth is brief at best,
Although it be divine;
Like funeral lights for Christmas gone,
Old Simeon's tapers shine.

And then for eight long weeks and more
We wait in twilight grey,
Till the high candle sheds a beam
On Holy Saturday.

We wait along the penance-tide
Of solemn fast and prayer;
While song is hush'd, and lights grow dim
In the sin-laden air.

And while the sword in Mary's soul
Is driven home, we hide
In our own hearts, and count the wounds
Of passion and of pride.

And still, though Candlemas be spent
And Alleluias o'er,
Mary is music in our need,
And Jesus light in store.

Cardinal John Henry Newman was canonised by Pope Francis
in October 2019



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Interview

A response to a call – and a look ahead

Joanna Bogle talks to Fr Christopher Pearson at the Ordinariate and parish church at The Borough, London Bridge



The church stands in a rapidly-changing corner of South London near the Thames. The oddly-named Flat Iron Square opposite is busy with clubs, bars and restaurants and London Bridge nearby has been the scene of two terrorist attacks, in 2017 and in 2019.

The brick building with its twin bell towers is floodlit at night and a major part of the scene. Assumed by many to be earmarked for closure a decade ago, the Church of the Most Precious Blood has been recently renovated and – more than a century after it was first opened – consecrated. Then as 2019 drew to a close, it received its first-ever visit from a Cardinal.

This has been a busy time for Father Christopher Pearson, who, as an Anglican clergyman in 2010 accepted the invitation from Pope Benedict XVI in *Anglicanorum Coetibus* to come into full communion with the Catholic Church along with a substantial number of his flock.

Union

As vicar of St Agnes Church, Kennington, he had always seen union with the Catholic Church as the way ahead and when the Pope issued this direct call, there could, he says “really only be one response.” He took a journey into an unknown future – the Church does not and cannot automatically offer ordination. But when, after due instruction and Confirmation the group became part of the Catholic Church, and he was accepted for the priesthood, he was ordained at St George’s Cathedral, Southwark, and a new chapter began.

The Church of the Most Precious Blood – or MPB as many parishioners call it – was given to the care of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham in January 2013. A fine 19th century building, it required some urgent attention. First project was new under-floor heating, and a full restoration of the sacristy which – because proper church heating in winter had been abandoned on weekdays for some years – had been turned into a makeshift weekday

a fine 19th century building



Fr Christopher Pearson assists Mgr Keith Newton at the Mass for the consecration of the Church of the Most Precious Blood

chapel. Its transformation, complete with discovery of a lantern window that had been covered by polystyrene ceiling tiles, revealed the possibilities for further projects, while the new heating brought rising numbers into the church for the daily 1.05pm lunchtime Mass and the Sunday Masses.

Team effort

“It’s been a team effort – anything like this has to be” says Fr Christopher, reflecting in a noisy parish room over post-Mass coffee on a winter morning as 2019 draws to a close. He isn’t smug: recent discoveries of dry rot in the beams in the church roof will require scaffolding and fresh work. But he and the team could surely allow themselves a certain sense of achievement. After much hard work and fund-raising efforts, the church has been restored to its original glory – its baldachino gleaming in white and gold, a fine marble floor in red and grey reflecting the theme of the church’s name, and a magnificent new font – an exact replica of the original – in place and in regular use for baptisms.

The summer of 2019 saw the consecration of the church – “I went through all the records, and found, to my surprise, that it had never been consecrated, so once all the work was done that was obviously

Anglican and Latin chant

the next thing to do” – by Archbishop Peter Smith of Southwark in one of his last public acts before his retirement. It was a memorable day – the children’s choir, established and trained by the able choir director and churchwarden Christopher Smith – sang Anglican and Latin chant, and a packed congregation watched as the walls were anointed in a joint action by Archbishop Peter and by Mgr Keith Newton of the Ordinariate.

“They took one wall each, anointing with oil. And the relics were placed in the altar by the man who had carried out the restoration work there, and the flowers by the regular flower team. Everything was done by the people who had been involved from the beginning.”

Historic

The day might be regarded as one of historic significance – but was perhaps topped by one in November, when Cardinal Vincent Nichols came to preach at a Mass marking the 10th anniversary of *Anglicanorum Coetibus*. This marked another first for the parish – no Cardinal had ever visited this corner of South London before.

*a day of
historic
significance*

“We’ve got lots of history here – from martyrs held in the Clink prison in the 16th century to immigrants settling in the 19th and 20th – but a Cardinal arriving was something new.”

Fr Christopher’s own spiritual journey began at the Minster in Sheppey when, as a chorister and altar-server he was first introduced to the thought of priesthood. In the sacristy at MPB he has pictures of his parents and of the Anglican vicar who first inspired him to consider a vocation.

Like others in the Ordinariate, he is looking forward rather than backward following the 10th anniversary celebrations. “We met recently to seek the vision for the future. The last ten years have seen something established and now we look ahead.”

*looking
forward rather
than backward*

Joanna Bogle is editor of Faith magazine.



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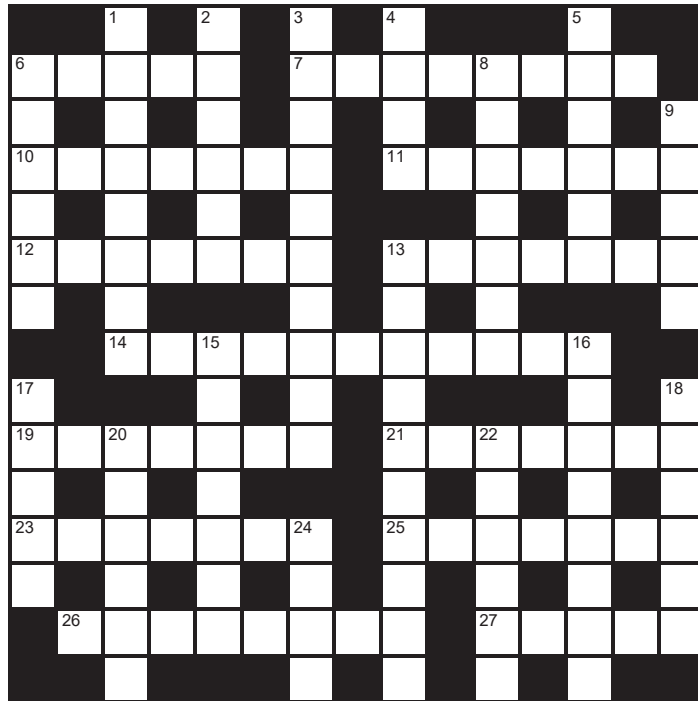
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CROSSWORD 20 by Aurora Borealis



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

A prize will go to the sender of the first correct solution opened by January 31st 2020. Entries may be the original page or photocopy and may be sent to 45, East St.Helen Street, Abingdon Oxon, OX 14 5EE. Please include your full postal address.

The winner of crossword number 19 is S.W. of Didcot

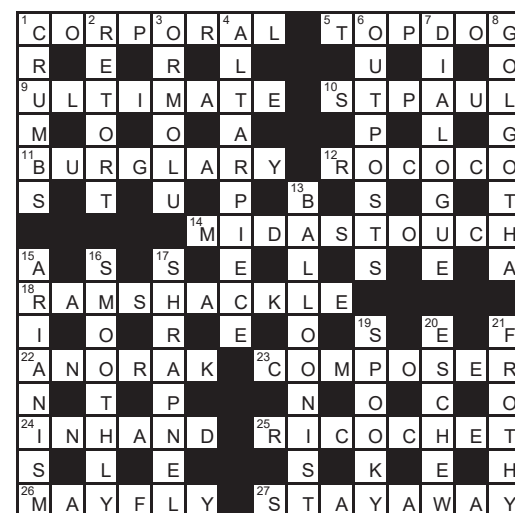
Across

- 6 Salt or pepper perhaps, missing start of tea, left to be nasty (5)
 7 Enjoys chutneys (8)
 10 American uncle goes to ancient city to get prime warrior (7)
 11 Elf fans head west to pinch something (7)
 12 Fruit firm in a hole, right inside (7)
 13 Reference book has one page - useless, complex (7)
14 Seating for singers in a cathedral (5,6)
 19 A senior monk has one way of reasoning (1,6)
 21 Famous in some of them, in entertainment (7)
23 The eighth plague (7)
 25 Not in a hundred old minute errors - result! (7)
 26 Semester end (8)
27 One of the two sinful cities in the Book of Genesis (5)

Down

- 1 Recruit Frenchman cooking spice (8)
 2 Vicar, perhaps, gets involved in miracle rich man describes (6)
3 The Pope's Easter message (4,2,4)
 4 A girl is cut short, sadly (4)
 5 Complain half of soup is missing and increase in strength (4,2)
6 Martyred under Diocletian alongside Damian (6)
 8 Boy turns round after careful look reveals malicious gossip (7)
 9 Oddly, the hassle became an attempt to provoke someone (5)

- 13 Soho tune he plays is free (2,3,5)
 15 Ducks around public school start to swim under magic marsupial (7)
 16 Little planets do not begin to make man-made drugs (8)
 17 Aristocrats remove end from necklace (5)
 18 Flow into empty store by morning (6)
20 Mother of Joseph and Benjamin (6)
 22 Measure of brightness (1,1,4)
 24 You have to be in this to coincide (4)

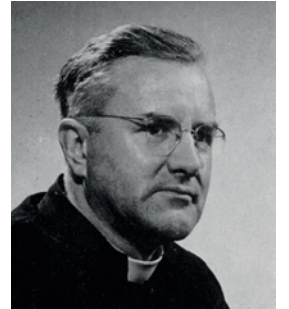


Solution crossword 19

Holloway on...

Jesus: The Self-Conscious Manifestation of God - Part 1

EDWARD HOLLOWAY



In dialogue once with hostile scribes Jesus Christ asked "How can the theologians (scribes) say that the Christ is the son of David, for David himself, inspired by the Holy Spirit calls him *Lord*. How then is he his son?" And they were not able to answer him.¹ For Jewish tradition, with magnificent truth, forbade any king, however high, to accept the title of "Lord" from his father. Out of the life of his father came his own life in subjection. His father was forever his Lord. The Holy Spirit, author and vindicator of the Law, inspirer of the Holy Writ, would not belie his own ordinance. They could not answer him. St. Paul gives the answer, almost as if the question had been put to him: "And to them (the Israelites) belong the patriarchs, and of them the Christ, according to the flesh; the same being God over all things, blessed for ever and ever."² The Son of God made Son of Man has two sources of generation, one from eternity, the other from David, through Mary Virgin, in time. Only by his Self-Revelation could the Son of God reveal the meaning of the Spirit whose words are the prophecy in sacred scripture.

The reality of our being

Likewise we must say to those theologians (scribes) who teach a 'kenotic' theory of Christ's consciousness of His own Person and oneness of being with the Father — if Christ is to manifest Himself as God, how can He not be conscious of Godhead, literally and factually so? It is a gross misuse of St. Paul to insinuate that he teaches that Christ emptied out his consciousness of his own being and person. On the contrary, Paul teaches that Christ *knew* that he was in the 'reality of God' (*morphe*) and thought it no robbery to be equal to God. Yet, he *emptied* himself, taking on the outward appearance (*schemati*) of man. Then, going further yet, he emptied himself yet more, being obedient to a criminal's death, even death by crucifixion.³ St. Paul indeed implies by his very words that Christ *consciously* emptied Himself of his proper form and reality. If he did it consciously, then indeed He knew who he was, at all times, and all the time.

rejoicing in the rich experience of existence

¹ Matt 22.42-46

² Rom 9.5

³ Phil 2.5-11

Consciousness as Being

Who *was* Jesus the Christ? We have it from St. John that He was the Eternal Word, who was with the Father in the beginning and who *was* God. We have it from John that in this Word was Light — light that was the life of humankind: through that Word, that Intelligence, all things were made, and without Him was made nothing that was made, either visible or invisible. Can you have an Eternal Word, the Intelligence through whom all things are made, the true Light of every man that comes into this world, who revealing Himself and being manifest in the flesh, does not know who He is? Does it make the slightest bit of sense, or is it an unconscious but quite dreadful blasphemy against the Divinity of that One Same Word, Eternal as the Father, now made man “for us men, and for our salvation”?

What is conscious personality in ourselves? Is it not the full, the *existential* reality of our being, grasped and possessed in fulfilment as being, as knowledge, as love, as our full self ... is this not my consciousness of being me? Consciousness is my being, through all that my nature is and possesses, rejoicing in the rich experience of existence. In us who are creatures, this experience of richness can and should grow, for we are not self-defined, self-determined, nor self-fulfilled. We should grow, and the conscious joy of being should grow, even as according to his manhood the boy Jesus grew “in wisdom, age, and favour before God and men.”⁴ The personality of Christ is the personality of God. In our own personality we experience the richness of being, of our existence, through the nature that we possess. In Jesus Christ, the person who was God must experience the richness of his personality through the natures, plural, which He possesses. In ourselves, all that we possess, including our bodily senses and feeling, are experienced through that ‘personality’ which is active from *the peak of our being*, and through which, and unto which, all the experiences of both soul and body are drawn up, and through which they are co-ordinated in the rightful order of our twofold nature, as body and as soul.

“I Am” Spans God’s Nature and Experience

Can we think that in Jesus Christ, the *person in Him* did not experience, necessarily and always, the richness of his being through the *divine* nature which He possessed and through which alone that ‘personality’ of His was defined? For Jesus, to experience the joy of existence which defines His being is to know and love Himself as “from the Father, in the love which is the Holy Spirit”. For God to know Himself in the simple, unsplitable richness of the experience of being God is to know “MYSELF” as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; one I AM. The divine persons of this necessary Trinity, through which God’s Unity is defined, cannot be unaware of each other, cannot be siphoned off from each other. For Jesus, *if He is Divine*, is always to know the Father and to love the Father in the Holy Spirit: this is the experience of being God, and also of being the second Person of that Trinity through which the divine nature necessarily is, and through which Father, Son, and

Holy Spirit experience themselves as One God. Approaches to Christology which deny this necessary, simple fact either have not worked out and in humility understood from the whole philosophy and theology of the Church’s present and past what must be so ... or else, they proceed from a first, deeply unconscious approach to Jesus Christ which does not accept his transcendence, nor his eternal pre-existence, nor his identity and equality of being with the Father.

The prayerful reader

For the prayerful reader, the understanding and love of Jesus, as He is for us and was for us, must come from reading the bible and from the liturgy of the Church and the great saints of the Church (not forgetting the principal documents of the Church), for in these sources the life, the consciousness of Jesus, who He is, is breathed out for us. Take St. John — it is impossible to give constant texts; the entire Gospel of John is the revelation to men, and especially to the intellectual and sophisticated Christian, of Jesus, who He was.⁵ For this the ‘beloved disciple’ was raised up: for this he was and became the beloved disciple, that he might enter into the self-consciousness of the Word made Flesh and reveal to us, in prayer and teaching, in parable and assertion, in meditation, power, and in pain, the complex consciousness of Jesus the Christ. It is useless to claim that “John gives us only a theological meditation, not the actual words of Christ”. John gives us in words and ethos the impact, with word, power, fact and feeling, of what Jesus did and Jesus said. Who formed this mind and heart, this way of speaking in St. John? Did the facts he relates, the claims he makes, ever find denial in the early Church or in the great Fathers of the Church? Do or do not the first great Councils of the Christian Church base themselves solidly on his doctrine of Christ and his vision of Christ? Besides, the Synoptics themselves, Matthew, Mark and Luke, echo this doctrine; so does Peter in his doctrine of our being made through Christ “co-sharers of the divine nature”; so above all does Paul in the Letters to the Romans, the Ephesians, the Colossians, the Philippians, the Hebrews, in the most explicit manner.⁶ The doctrine of St. Paul is, in fact, the universal, the *cosmic* application of the doctrine that John manifests in Christ’s teaching concerning Himself, and in Christ’s *meditative prayer* unto the Father through the Holy Spirit of them both. John also makes a cosmic application, harder to penetrate than Paul’s, because again more intimately and inwardly of the divine self-realisation of Jesus, in the Book of the Apocalypse.

*the complex
consciousness of
Jesus the Christ*

The “Thunder” of St. John

In an article it is impossible to delineate and analyse texts, at least in their abundance. We

⁴ John, Prologue passim; Luke 2.40-52

⁵ Representative texts are John, Prologue; 3.12-18; 3.31-36; 5.1718,21-29; 6 passim; 7.46; 8.12,51-59; 10.14-31

⁶ See e.g. Rom 8.9-17; 9.1-6; Eph 1.21; 2.18-22; 3.9; Phil 2.5-11; Col 1.12-20; 2 Cor 4.4-7; 5.19; Heb 1 passim; 2.10-18; 5.5; 11 & 12 (Jesus as author and finisher of Faith); 2 Pet 1.1-5

can however ask: does St. John insinuate this *consciousness of being God* which permeates the whole personality on earth of Jesus the Christ, and which defines his nature as He knew Himself, through the Father, in the Spirit? It is clear from the very opening Prologue of the Gospel according to John. This Prologue is a summary of the whole work, life and mission of Jesus from the Divine Self-Possession to the bestowal on men of the birthright of those who are born not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God. It spans the conscious identity of the Word through and from the Father; the nature of the Word as God — *“and the Word was God”* — and follows through to his vocation as the life and light of men, the coming of the Heir with grief and rejection unto *his own things* (not own people), and His perseverance in the divine work of Redemption. Redemption is the gift of being made co-sharers in the divine nature.

And finally it states one other thing. That other indication of St. John is mistranslated in our Jerusalem bible as “No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, *who is nearest to the Father’s heart*, who has made him known”. The Greek, the Old Latin of the Vulgate, and the Revised Standard Version (the most humbly accurate of modern English texts) translate *“who is in the bosom of the Father*, he has made him known”. To say that Christ has his being in the bosom of the Father is to state unity of being, equal Divinity, and Christ’s consciousness, in his Divine Person, of his own divine being. To say “nearest to the Father’s heart” speaks the merest Adoptionism of this man, Jesus Christ. In fact, it says nothing at all except “the most loved”. It is a patent mistranslation, and to be denounced as such. Interestingly, the most ancient of the Greek readings, and the one accepted by the Pontifical Biblical Institute in their edition of the critical Greek New Testament (Augustine Merk, 1938), reads *“God the Only-Begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has expounded Him.”*

The earliest Fathers of the Church

Apart from the occurrence of this reading in the earliest of the Fathers of the Church, this reading is the more likely because it concludes the Prologue of St. John, at the end of the summary of the life’s work of Christ, with the proclamation which begins it: *“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.”* Thus in the beginning of his Prologue, so akin as a summary in epic style to the first chapter of Genesis, St. John proclaims the divinity and the divine personality of the Word made Flesh. This again, is to present Christ in the Prologue as ‘alpha’ and to conclude it with Christ as ‘omega’. This presentation of Christ, together with the explicit naming of Jesus as “the Alpha and the Omega”, occurs also in the Book of the Apocalypse, which the tradition of the Church rightly attributes also to John the Evangelist.

The revealing of God

The Greek word (*exēgeisthai*), which we commonly translate “reveal” or “declare” in the

above passage from the Prologue of St. John’s Gospel, means to tell at length, to describe, and therefore one presumed to render it as ‘expound Him’. For John is making the profound distinction between the *prophetic* word which, though guaranteed and holy, can never penetrate with authority to God’s own inner being and self-expression (“No man has seen God at any time, the Only-Begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father. He has made Him known”), and the Word of the Living Truth, divine, absolute, certain in his Magisterium. This revealing of God, in God the Only-Begotten, is more than the revelation of a word or the gospel of the true good. It is the revelation of a communion of life and love — for the *law* was given by Moses, *grace and truth* came by Jesus Christ.⁷ Upon this vision of Christ, this preaching, and this experience of Christ in prayer and liturgy, the very constitution and self-manifestation of the Catholic Church has always depended. From this experience of the Christ the Church’s own conscious awareness of her own divine magisterium proceeds. The infallibility which crowns her solemn witness in faith and in morals is the voice of The Word who is the Living Word of God. That Word may, through the Holy Spirit, speak again and again to develop and to fulfil. It can never unspeak what in the past has been said of faith or laid upon the consciences of the people as solemn obligation. For the Church is conscious in herself on earth of the voice of the Living God.

*the voice of the
Living God*

The word of prophecy

Here is the difference between the word of prophecy — as of Moses or of The Law — and the Word who fulfills every partial prophetic word in his Living Self-Consciousness as God. Such a presentation of Christ is the whole ethos of the Gospel according to John. It comes across to us most fully in that “Sacerdotal Prayer” which concludes the public teaching of Jesus on the eve of his Passion.⁸ It is the thoughts and aspirations of Christ in these chapters which alone, and fully, explain the dramatic and explicit sixth chapter of St. John, the revelation of Him who is “the Bread of Life” to men, and the statement that “as the Living Father has sent Me, and I live through the Father, so he that eats of Me, the same shall live through Me”. Did ever man speak, like this man? Could ever sane human, being only creature, conceive the thoughts that this man spoke? Could He speak this way and not be conscious of sheer Godhead in person? Could He reveal what he said as true doctrine and *not* be consciously God in person? Did ever man *speak like this man*? The Temple police of Jesus day posed this question. We pose it also to the theologians of our own day.

*Did ever man
speak, like this
man?*

This is a slightly edited version of the first half of Fr. Holloway’s editorial for the January/February 1987 edition of FAITH. It will be concluded in our next issue.

⁷ John 1.17-18
⁸ John 17 passim

Book Reviews

How nice is God?

God is Not Nice. Rejecting Pop Culture Theology and Discovering the God Worth Living For by Ulrich L. Lehner, Ave Maria Press, 146pp, £11.43

reviewed by William Massie



People have rejected an image of God which is the God of their imaginations rather the true God revealed to Israel, recorded in the pages of the scriptures. The 'god' they have rejected is the version they were presented with by their teachers and preachers, a 'nice, sweet God... *personal*, like a life coach'. But this false version is not one people would be prepared to get out of bed early to worship, let alone to die for. And simultaneously Christianity has collapsed in the global north and west. This is the thesis proposed by Ulrich Lehner in *God is Not Nice* and applauded by Scott Hahn in his Foreword. There is a polemic running through this book probably born of the frustration of Lehner and Hahn at the presentation of a poor 'Theology of God' which has filtered into popular culture. But are they likely to claim back many souls to Christian orthodoxy by claiming that 'God is not nice'?

Can the Church survive without truth?

The opening chapter resonates with

those who follow Faith's theological line. It is a plea for a strong realism in both philosophy and theology before the very being of creation which witnesses to being and relationality. Lehner draws on diverse thinkers to show the need to recognise that things have 'natures' which are givens, and so we live in world of objectivity and not ultimate subjectivity where everything depends on incommunicable versions of truth. From truth come convictions, virtues, humility, fortitude and martyrdom. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI is quoted but not his recent essay on child abuse in which he also stated that the collapse of moral code into relativism means there is no longer need for the witness of martyrs. 'Can the Church survive without belief in truth?' A question of the author which is echoed by Benedict.

Flawed inclusivism

'The God of no use' is the flippant title of the second chapter. Faith may not be valued solely for its social or communitarian utility without the loss of the core of true religion. Don't we know this in our own

country where Catholic schools are lauded for their 'gospel values' but only a tiny percentage worships God on a Sunday. But it is not enough simply to criticise flawed inclusivism and the contradictions inherent in those who would insist dogmatically that the one truth that must be held absolutely is that there are no absolute truths. Christianity *is* 'useful'. It does hold the key to revealing the mystery of every human person to themselves and their fulfilment, in the person of Jesus Christ, to paraphrase (the unquoted) article 22 of *Gaudium et Spes*.

'Feeling' something is right

Ulrich Lehner teaches religious history and theology to university students. He understands the Zeitgeist of late 20th century and early 21st century youth. He is used to challenging his students. For example, he says they are happy with the idea that 'being a good person' is enough to get to heaven even if this seems to do away with the need for the Paschal Mystery. Similarly, 'feeling' something is right or wrong is taken to be the voice of inviolable conscience and has replaced moral absolutes.

Lehner offers helpful analysis of the origins of the problem. Such assumptions can be traced back to the Enlightenment's rejection of providence and the supernatural, for example 'grace' as the denial of human freedom. There is also a neat reflection on the incompatibility of Aquinas and Adam Smith. The transcendental Thomists like Karl Rahner have tried to address these points, but they are not mentioned. Enlightenment

thought also reduced the value of religion to imparting a moral code. Well, it could no longer be transformation through the grace of Christ since grace effecting real change no longer existed. A consequence of this has been the rejection of the faith when the scandals promised by the Lord himself have come – there is a nod to the current crisis of child abuse and failures in Church authority. But we need to go back to the source of the problem not just the effects, the conundrum raised in the first chapter. We need to define what a 'nature' is and how natures relate to each other and to the 'Nature' of God. Lehner focusses on the concept of undeserved 'gift' as the necessary starting point for an approach to God, creation and redemption, which will be both intelligible and orthodox.

The reduction of the Bible

Another consequence of Enlightenment thought has been the reduction of the Bible to a work of literature. Much has been written by the Magisterium in recent years defending scriptural exegesis against philosophical presuppositions irreconcilable with the Bible as the book of the Church, inspired by Holy Spirit working through human authors. Lehner does not draw on these but makes a passionate plea for a rediscovery of the self-revealing God of 'anger', 'awe', 'energy' and 'utter otherness', which is far more exciting than simply 'God the morality-teacher'. This is true God who can be encountered through the lines of the scriptures and once encountered both convicts us of our sinfulness and communicates his love. Scripture is referred to sweepingly throughout but there are few quotations. For example, we all need 'the vaccine

of knowing the true transforming and mysterious character of God: God who shows up in burning bushes...’, who ‘invites you on a great adventure that will change your life... to be uncomfortable in our lives and to stretch towards heaven.’

Polemical

What makes me uncomfortable with this thought-provoking book is the polemical style. The moderns have ‘tamed’ the real, ‘wild’ God and ‘domesticated’ him to be a heavenly social worker’. Is this, we are asked, ‘because we do not want an unpredictable God?’ And throughout the book we are hit with the ‘truth’ that the real God is not the ‘nice’ God we would prefer: a ‘god’ who does not make us ‘tremble’ at his anger but reassures us and wants us to ‘feel happy’. Lehner is very distrustful of ‘feelings’. I

engage with feelings but not be driven by them

think St Ignatius would want us to engage with them but not be driven by them. Long before I had finished the book I grew tired of being told that the real God is not ‘nice’ (the term is nowhere properly defined).

In short, there is much insight and useful wisdom in this book but it does not set out to convince but to bludgeon its opponents. There are many good ideas but sometimes they are spoilt by polemic - by accusations of downplaying sin or overstating feeling to the point of sentimentalism. Young people like debate and perhaps they would persevere in a book which is certainly accessible, orthodox and earnest. A student of theology and philosophy would certainly understand the world-view and there is material in abundance for apologetics.

Fr William Massie is the Catholic chaplain to Hull University.

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.

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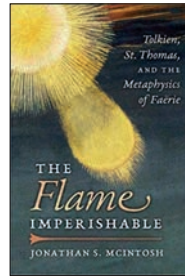
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Tolkien as theologian and philosopher

The Flame Imperishable - Tolkien, St. Thomas, and the Metaphysics of Faerie by Jonathan S. McIntosh, Angelico Press, 306pp, £15.50

reviewed by Robert Asch



Unlike many studies of Tolkien and his world, *The Flame Imperishable* is not animated by enthusiasm, nor does its tone reflect any concessions to a popular readership. It is a difficult book about a complex and serious subject: the substantial accord between Tolkien's sub-creation and the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. Although the subject is demanding, the style is admirably clear and in no way restricted to students of philosophy. Any intelligent reader with a serious interest in Tolkien or St. Thomas is bound to find McIntosh's study fascinating and even engrossing.

The author soon establishes the inadequate earlier identifications of Tolkien's worldview with Platonism and the surprising neglect of Aquinas, even among Catholic scholars – the more so considering the very prominent revival of Thomism in the period following Leo XIII's 1879 encyclical *Aeterni Patris* promoting the restoration of Thomism, and its prestige over the next half century. McIntosh is at pains to insist on the probably unconscious assimilation and

instinctive understanding of Thomism informing Tolkien's *legendarium*, one the author likens to Chesterton's: '[His] profound insight into the thought of St. Thomas does not seem to have been the product of his own careful research' but rather (quoting R.V. Young) of a 'flash of insight ignited by an innate philosophical affinity.'

Next, McIntosh identifies which 'version' of Thomas he is drawing comparisons with: it is not the Thomism of the Neo-Scholastic tradition but – following Rudi te Velde *inter alia* – one with nuanced distinctions between grace versus nature and faith versus reason. In a passage which is a key to the whole book, McIntosh asserts

the divine revelation of faith for Aquinas consists in something far more than a mere positivist, factual claim that 'escapes any verification by reason,' but constitutes instead an entire body of truth invested with its own intrinsic, intelligible meaning....[F]or Thomas, Christian truth represents a comprehensive, coherent, and integrated worldview comprised of ... both a way of faith

and a (perfected) way of reason, which are and must be taken together and whose intelligibility must be appreciated ... 'from the inside'... [I]n this arrangement we have an instructive parallel for understanding the apologetic dimension to Tolkien's own work. (pp. 33-34)

Specifically, the author argues that the richness of Creation implicit in Tolkien's world is best served by such a Thomist account of the world.

After making a convincing case for the assumptions of his analysis, McIntosh divides his study into the following chapters:

- 1.'The Metaphysics of Eru' or God [Being]
- 2.'The Metaphysics of the Ainur' [God, the Angels, and Creation]
- 3.'The Metaphysics of the Music and Vision'
- 4.'The Metaphysics of the Valar' [the Angels and Sub-Creation]
- 5.'The Metaphysics of Melkor' [Satan and the problem of Evil]

It can be seen from this breakdown that McIntosh's primary philosophical concern is with metaphysics, ontology, and religion, and his secondary concerns include epistemology and the Arts.

What becomes increasingly clear as we make our way steadily through the book is how convincing McIntosh's thesis appears to be, and, by extension, how astonishingly consistent in overarching unity and teeming detail Tolkien's vision is. Hitherto, it has been a commonplace to acknowledge the scope of Tolkien's achievement in the

consistency and richness of his linguistic and cultural-sociological vision, but we are now obliged to recognise that there is also an unsuspected unity of philosophical undergirding which is arresting and will surely prove deeply satisfying to the many admirers of the master of Middle Earth who have long been convinced of the high seriousness of his achievement: Tolkien may be a classic of Fantasy (sadly considered a rather frivolous genre in English letters), but he is now clearly established as a profoundly philosophical writer.

I found two of these concerns to have very wide-ranging implications: Sub-Creation and the Arts – linking Middle Earth to Lewis's Narnia and the Creation through music, and to Dorothy L. Sayers's work in *The Mind of the Maker*; and the problem of Evil, dealing with the integrity of Being and Augustine's Privation Theory. The latter chapter also investigates in some detail the question of the extent to which Tolkien does (or doesn't) depart somewhat from Thomist thought – in the course of which Thomas is as much an object of creative analysis as Tolkien.

The Flame Imperishable is also noteworthy for the incidental light it sheds on Tolkien's relationship to the English Catholic (and Anglo-Catholic) Revival in its wide-ranging references to such figures as Leo XIII, Chesterton, David Jones, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, Dorothy L. Sayers, Gilson and Maritain; but also more recent authors such as René Girard, the Radical Orthodoxy group, Stratford Caldecott, Brian Davies, and David Bentley Hart, as well as such anti-Christian authors important to Modernity as Nietzsche and

Umberto Eco.

The sources drawn on include *The Lord of the Rings*, 'On Fairy Stories,' *The Silmarillion* (particularly 'Ainulindalë'), and the Letters. Not *The Hobbit*, however. There is a substantial body of writings within Tolkien's oeuvre – *The Hobbit*, *Farmer Giles of Ham*, *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* – whose primary function, so to speak, appears to be delight, and which does not lend itself to metaphysical exegesis; which perhaps tells us something about why certain admirers of *The Hobbit* have never taken to *The Lord of the Rings*.

delight, not
metaphysical
exegesis

In conclusion, *The Flame Imperishable* is a judicious and important book which is certain to become a classic of Tolkien studies but also makes a signal contribution to the history of the English Catholic Revival and the study of the relationship of literature to philosophy and theology.

Robert Asch is a literary critic and co-editor and co-founder of the Saint Austin Review. He is author of *The Romantic Poets* (Ignatius Press) and the forthcoming *Lionel Johnson: Poetry and Prose* (Saint Austin Press). He lives in Preston with his wife and five children.

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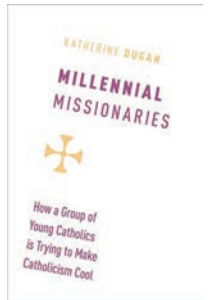
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How not to write about evangelisation

Millennial Missionaries - How a Group of Young Catholics is Trying to Make Catholicism Cool by Katherine Dugan, Oxford University Press, 185pp, £22.99

reviewed by Lucy de Vregille



In her *Introduction* to *Millennial Missionaries - How a Group of Young Catholics is Trying to Make Catholicism Cool*, Katherine Dugan, Assistant Professor of Religion at Springfield College Massachusetts, proposes an "...ethnographic study of U.S. Catholic identity and an examination of the relationship between Catholic prayer and Catholic identity..." (p.4). However, I find the title both inaccurate and a little patronising. The text remains exclusively concerned with a very specific group named FOCUS, a lay Catholic missionary organisation present on U.S. university campuses, and trying to define a sub-culture of what she terms as 'millennial' Catholics. It essentially recounts the history of FOCUS and tries to establish links between their activities and the wider changes in the Catholic Church in the U.S. over recent years. I therefore find it astonishing that FOCUS, the niche basis of her eight years of scrutiny, is left out of the title, which instead erroneously promises to encompass a much wider field.

about sums up Dugan's mistaken and mildly belittling attitude towards the incredible, authentic and joyful work of the missionaries involved with FOCUS: young graduates giving one year or more of their lives in direct evangelisation of other students and a committed prayer life rooted in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Perhaps we can see Dugan's own faith struggle at play as she cannot bring herself to accept entirely the authentic effect, nor identify the real root, of Catholic Mission work. She represents the familiar worldly tone of failing to see the necessity of evangelisation. Moving testimonies that she includes in her research are reduced to puffed-up theatrics, and her descriptions are not entirely free from a gently mocking air. Dugan adopts a sceptical tenor, something which permeates the text, in a misguided pursuit of professional neutrality.

mistaken and
mildly belittling
attitude

The Church as a human construct

Sceptical

"Trying to make Catholicism cool" just

She describes evangelisation as 'recruitment' and drily paints missionaries

as those who are employed to present the Catholic Church as attractive, implying the use of a premeditated façade to make people like the Church. Whilst she does (a tad patronisingly) allow them a certain authenticity of prayer life, she mistakenly attributes a grandiose commitment to the cause and fails spectacularly to grasp the real and only motivation for becoming missionaries: the overwhelming truth of the love of God for each person and the dramatic effect of this truth on an individual's life. Missionaries are presented as "triumphant" (a word used more than once), nervously self-convinced and proud. This being all very earthly, it poses rather a large problem when documenting mission work in general and presents a significant obstacle to readers gaining any authentic understanding of a 'millennial' missionary's life, or even Dugan's wider aim of shedding light on recent changes in the dynamics of U.S. parish life. More subtly dangerous, it serves to confirm the mind-set that the Church is an entirely human construct.

Painfully secular research

There is no doubting her competence as an engaging writer, though her chapters are a little long. Her descriptions are catchy, and the religious landscape of a post-conciliar U.S is well laid out. However, I do find the concept of attending Holy Hours four times a week as an "observer" of other attendees (something the author did for seven months) verging on the ridiculous. Dugan comments on what missionaries are reading and whether they are kneeling on the floor or on kneelers. She sets herself up as a researcher who goes adventurously close to the line whilst

observing communities of people (there is even a moment where she is not sure whether to personally go to confession or not because she declares a conflict of professionalism!) The result is that, through an entirely misguided sense of professionalism, she behaves in a certain way for the sake of good, or rather, painfully secular, research practices. This is problematic as I am not sure it won't be interpreted by some as a bit close to the line.

Hollow

It is clear that whilst Dugan's research methods are probably comprehensive, by current academic standards, the tone sits uncomfortably with anyone of faith. Acknowledging that missionaries believe *disappointingly hollow* that God is behind it all is somewhat fundamental, if not traditional, to understanding the vocation of the missionary and so to speaking with authority on the subject. If we do not accept this as a basic premise we essentially render the idea empty and the research spiritually uninteresting. Dugan's attempt to engage with this period of Church history, as experienced through the personal faith stories of young American campus missionaries, remains disappointingly hollow of the true evangelistic joy these 'millennial' missionaries radiate and are fuelled by.

For me, this text is a painful testament to the pervading secular influence on modern academics in the United States. In research, secularism is preached as objectivity: to remain 'neutral' one must

adhere to the secular belief system. Dugan does admit in her Acknowledgements preceding the official document that she has been "reshaped" by her time spent following the missionaries, but she states that it has no place in an academic text, more's the shame. The notion that one can, and should, separate out one's faith from one's work, or any other part of one's existence, as if it is not an integral part of an individual, is impossible, and attempting it limits the human person and thus what they can accomplish at work.

Categorisation attempts

Many a book has captivated us on the Church at historical turning points and on the role of missionaries in challenging conditions, and I am sure this 'millennial' generation of the faithful will not disappoint future authors. However I cannot help but feel Dugan's attempt, amongst other things, is a little early. The movement is not finished, people are still living it, and without any reasonable distance we lose a sensible or complete understanding of events. With the dramatic increase in the social speed of media and global communications we are frantic to write the pages of history before the dust has even thought about settling. Films of great persons can be attended by the person in question before their life and great works are even finished. Dugan tries to write definitively on a subject (and on people) that has not run its course, which poses major problems for her conclusions and

for drawing any conclusion in general.

The Church, chased by categorisation attempts and secular measures of success, will never effectively be written about in these terms. *Millennial Missionaries- How a Group of Young Catholics is Trying to Make Catholicism Cool* is not a spiritual work, nor an history of FOCUS (although a factually complete history is provided); rather it is a work of academic curiosity with the unsatisfying non-conclusion expected from attempting to quantify the existence and effect of Faith.

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

Making a Marian Garden

A Garden for Our Lady by Felicity Surridge, Gracewing, 97pp, £9.99

reviewed by Ella Preece



A Garden for Our Lady is informative and easy to read, beginning with a history of Mary gardens and then talking about them in the context of a parish project or for personal use in the home. It has certainly inspired our family to plant a Marian garden. The book discusses all the plants that have legends and links with Mary, giving each a little paragraph. I had not realised that so many plants had links with Our Lady. Many of the plants in my garden qualified, and I wondered how I would make a Marian garden have a clear distinctness in relation to the rest of the garden.

A teaching tool

The great number of Marian plants makes these gardens accessible to all people, varying from herb garden, flower garden, basing the theme on the particular meaning of the flower or just the budget that you have. The garden allows a focal point, a moment of peace and reflection in our busy lives as well as a teaching tool for deepening your children's faith and understanding through the discussion of which plants you pick and why, and which aspects of Christ's ministry and teaching they remind us of.

The book is split into sections that allow easy reference, there is a discussion of the plants and their meanings in a Marian context; tables that suggest various flowers for each of mystery of the Rosary,

including a short meditation; a selection of Marian hymns, several pieces of art with the discussion of the use of flowers in the piece, and to conclude a table summing up the plants common name, botanical name and Marian name.

The parish community

Creating a Marian garden on a parish level would certainly enrich the parish community, allowing on a practical level for the community to come together to tend the garden and pick seasonal flowers for it; as a focal point for Marian devotions to take place as a parish community or even just a place for people to come to when they need some time for personal prayer, particularly if the Church is unable to be left open but parishioners can sit on a bench outside.


I would recommend this book: it is concise, informative and easy to use; handy for those who have a Marian garden but want easy referencing to the plants, meanings, meditations etc; for those wishing to set about making their own on either a personal or parish level; or even those who are just curious about them and want to know more.

Ella Preece is a home-educating mother of four, whose hobbies include archery, juggling and general adventuring.

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