



# Faith

Promoting a new synthesis of faith and reason

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# Freedom, Martyrdom and the Church

**One of the early pamphlets produced by the Faith Movement was on religious freedom. It was the early 1970s and it chiefly focused on the plight of Christians in the USSR and Communist-dominated Eastern Europe.**

Thanks to the excellent work of the then recently-established Keston College and the heroism of dissidents in the USSR and of Catholics in Poland, Lithuania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, much material about the persecution of Christians under Communism reached the West. We learned about prisoners in the Gulag, the horror of incarceration in mental “hospitals” in the USSR, and about the excellent underground newsletters such as the *Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church*.



## Back then

Although in those days we sometimes spoke and wrote about the need to affirm our right to full religious freedom here in Britain, it was not a right that was seriously challenged. Announcing that children should be taught about marriage as the union of one man and one woman for life might have seemed rather forthright – with divorce and remarriage common, and unmarried cohabitation increasingly normal – but no one imagined losing their job or being publicly denounced for such an announcement. We wrote freely about Christian moral and social teachings, and Christian campaigners on such issues battled in open debate with their opponents when given the opportunity on TV or radio.

## And now

It is superfluous to note how different things are now, which is why we make no apology for returning to the topic of religious freedom. We note that we have a certain confidence in quoting the Church in defence of such freedom, as the Second Vatican Council – ahead of its time, but mindful of the grim totalitarianism that had stained Europe in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – had tackled the issue and given us equipment with which to work.

The Catholic Church recognises freedom as being allied to truth. If human beings are not allowed to affirm the truth, then they are not free.

Of course, there are limits to speech in all sorts of ways – laws protect people from libel, countries have secrets relating to their defence and security, doctors and lawyers and banks can and should be prevented from revealing private information about people's health and personal problems and finances. Community life requires laws to ensure civilised behaviour. But there can and must be a presumption in favour of free debate on religious and ideological issues.

## At home and abroad

Looking at events here at home, we commend the work of the Christian Institute which has been defending people who have spoken publicly about the Christian understanding of the significance of male and female, and about homosexual activity. Looking abroad, we pray for the Christians of China, commend the work of the international charity *Aid to the Church in Need* – which we are proud to advertise in each issue of FAITH – and point to the stories of the martyrs of the modern era that alert us to the realities of martyrdom.

## Knowledge

True freedom also requires a sharing of knowledge, not just opinions. There is real concern about the quality of education in Britain's schools. How is history being taught? Is it just a matter of children being urged to affirm current political opinions on various issues, or are the events, and attitudes of the past presented and explored? Is it just a matter of looking at the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, or is attention paid to, for example, the Roman Empire, the Saxons, the early Middle Ages? What about literature? Are they reading some of the great classics? Are they expected to read everything through a "feminist" lens? And how is Christianity treated?

There is now strong pressure from officialdom to adopt coercive forms of sex education and linked material that is damaging to children and contrary to Christian understanding of human dignity.

## Schools

Catholics in Britain can be proud of the traditions of their schools. But there is now strong pressure from officialdom to adopt coercive forms of sex education and linked material that is damaging to children and contrary to Christian understanding of human



dignity. There is also a grave shortage of Catholic teachers: and this in turn is partly due to the huge pressures faced by young men or women entering a classroom today. Broken family bonds make for frustrated, angry, unhappy boys and girls. It is not easy to teach a group among which are several going through the agony of a parental break-up, or where the complications of "Mum's new boyfriend" or "Dad's ex-partner" intrude into everyday life and attempts to concentrate on schoolwork. Today's prospective teachers face challenges not faced by those of the past – including the fairly recent past – and they know it.

The Church has learned through the centuries the importance of people being allowed to explore, affirm, and debate publicly their religious beliefs without fear or coercion.

## Fostering freedom

The Faith Movement will continue to uphold religious freedom, and to foster it through teaching and through support and encouragement of priests, parents, teachers, catechists and others in passing on the truths of the Faith. In doing so, we also affirm our support for those – notably in China – who are denied the freedom we have in Britain. The Church has learned through the centuries the importance of people being allowed to explore, affirm, and debate publicly their religious beliefs without fear or coercion. The learning process included an admission of the Church's own discovery of this importance.

The booklet mentioned in our opening paragraph was published in the 1970s. That decade culminated in the election of Karol Wojtyla as Pope and his triumphant pilgrimage to his home country, and the beginning of the unravelling of Communism. The message for every Catholic facing the challenge of public affirmation of the Faith and of teaching it in its fullness, is the words of Christ, which the great Pope – who knew something about oppression, under both the Nazi and the Communist regimes – made his own: "Do not be afraid!"



# China's Oppression of the Church

**Benedict Rogers reveals what is happening under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party.**

**China today faces the worst assault on human rights since the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989, and the most severe crackdown on religious freedom since the Cultural Revolution. Pastor Wang Yi of Early Rain Church in Chengdu, who was sentenced to nine years in jail just after Christmas 2019, has said that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime has launched “a war against the soul.” The former United States Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback has used similar language, saying the regime is “at war with faith.”**

**The CCP has always been hostile to faith, but not since Chairman Mao Zedong's era has the repression been so intense.**

When the CCP first took power it sought to eliminate religion in general – and Christianity in particular – but failed to do so, only succeeding in driving believers underground. As China began to open to the world under Deng Xiaoping, the approach changed from the goal of eradication of religion to one of ‘control’.

Until Xi Jinping became President of China in 2012, the picture varied throughout the country, dependent more on the attitudes of provincial authorities than central government. That meant that while harsh persecution persisted in some parts of the country, life for religious adherents in other areas became more relaxed.

There was never full religious freedom, but, in general, if believers met in small groups and kept their heads down, they could practice their faith. In some cities even large, unregistered Protestant churches – outside the State-sanctioned religious body – functioned, owning their own property or renting venues and meeting openly. Beijing's Zion Church operated for years with hundreds of worshippers, while the Golden Lampstand Church in Shanxi province attracted a staggering 50,000 members before it was destroyed in 2018.



## Campaign of repression

All that has changed in the past decade as Xi Jinping has increasingly determined religious affairs policy in Beijing and accelerated a campaign of repression throughout the country. Churches have been closed or in some cases dynamited, thousands of crosses destroyed, CCP propaganda and portraits of Xi placed alongside – or sometimes instead of – religious imagery in State-controlled churches, surveillance cameras erected at the altar to record the attendance of worshippers and under-18s prohibited from going to places of worship.

Without doubt, the most egregious persecution has been inflicted on the predominantly Muslim Uyghur population in China's Xinjiang region. Both the previous and current United States Administrations and the Canadian, Dutch and British Parliaments, as well as a growing number of legal experts and scholars, conclude that what the Uyghurs

are enduring amounts to crimes against humanity and genocide. An independent Uyghur Tribunal is underway this year, chaired by the barrister who prosecuted Slobodan Milosevic, Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, to investigate these claims.

At least a million, perhaps as many as three million, Uyghurs and other Muslims are held in prison camps, subjected to the worst forms of torture, sexual violence and slave labour. Those outside the camps endure an Orwellian surveillance state, with a combination of facial-recognition technology, artificial intelligence, cameras on every street corner, frequent checkpoints and the presence of Han Chinese agents inhabiting Uyghur homes to watch their every move.

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Mosques have been destroyed, Muslim-burial grounds desecrated, and Muslims found praying, having long beards or wearing headscarves are accused of 'extremism' and thrown into the prison camps. Muslims are prohibited from fasting during Ramadan or forced to eat pork and drink alcohol.

Children have been separated from their families and placed in boarding schools where they are forbidden from practicing their faith, speaking their own language and are indoctrinated by Communist Party propaganda.

Uyghurs have been transported en masse on trains across the country, for use as slave labour in supply chains for global brands, and Uyghur women have been subjected to a campaign of forced sterilization, forced abortion and birth prevention.

## Jewish community

In a highly unusual move, the Jewish community has itself pointed to comparisons with the Holocaust. Last year, the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Marie van der Zyl, wrote to the Chinese ambassador in London, observing "similarities between what is alleged to be happening in the People's Republic of China today and what happened in Nazi Germany 75 years ago: People being forcibly loaded on to trains; beards of religious men being trimmed; women being sterilised; and the grim spectre of concentration camps." Her letter followed frontpage coverage by the *Jewish News* of the discovery of 13 tonnes of Uyghur hair on a US-bound ship, describing this as having "Nazi resonance".

The repression of Tibetan Buddhism has intensified, too. According to *Christian Solidarity Worldwide* (CSW), religious practice in Tibet is "tightly controlled" with "ongoing reports of religious services being disrupted, religious institutions intrusively monitored, religious sites closed, property confiscated, as well as cases of arbitrary detention and restrictions on religious teaching and training."

Falun Gong, an ancient Chinese spiritual discipline in the Buddhist tradition, continues to be severely persecuted, as well. In particular, jailed Falun Gong practitioners have been targeted for their organs. In 2019 an independent tribunal into forced organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience, known as the China Tribunal, concluded that it was “beyond reasonable doubt” that “forced organ harvesting has been committed for years throughout China on a significant scale ... and Falun Gong practitioners have been one – and probably the main – source of organ supply.” The distinguished seven-member panel, consisting of four experienced lawyers from different jurisdictions, an eminent medical expert, an academic and a businessman, argue in their final judgment that this amounts to a “crime against humanity” and that anyone interacting with the Chinese regime must do so in the knowledge that they are “interacting with a criminal state.”

## Stranglehold

To return to the situation for Christians, according to a report published last year by CSW called *Repressed, Removed, Re-educated: The stranglehold on religious life in China*, one of the first to experience this new wave of repression was the Protestant Living Stone Church in Guizhou, closed in 2015. Both its pastors, Yang Hua and Su Tianfu, were arrested and accused of revealing state secrets, while Yang was imprisoned and threatened with death. A church member told CSW: “The crackdown on Living Stone Church was like an experiment. Now the authorities see that this is an effective approach, they have adopted this approach in many different regions.” Revised regulations on religion issued in 2018 show, according to this same Christian, “the government’s determination to tightly control the churches.”

The regime has even said it wants to produce a new translation of the Bible, to “reflect socialist values.” Wang Yang, Chairman of the

Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, which oversees ethnic and religious affairs, called for “a comprehensive evaluation of the existing religious classics, aiming at contents which do not conform to the progress of the times.”

## ‘Normalising’?

Just under three years ago the Vatican signed an agreement with Beijing in an attempt to ‘normalise’ the status of the Catholic Church in China. While the Vatican’s intention was to better protect and unify Catholics, it has had the opposite result, leading to disunity in the Church and no improvement in religious freedom. In fact, life for Catholics in China has got worse. Not only were no Catholic clergy or laity released from prison before the deal – something that ought to have been made a precondition – but a number have been detained since the deal was signed. Many dioceses in China are without bishops, and some who have been loyal to Rome for decades have been forced to retire in favour of Beijing’s appointees. Clergy – Catholic or Protestant – who refuse to join the State-controlled churches risk jail.



The Catholic bishop of Baoding Diocese in Hebei province, Bishop James Su Zhimin, is one of the world’s longest-serving prisoners of conscience. In 1996, while leading a religious procession, Bishop Su was taken into police custody and has not been heard of since. He had already been imprisoned for 26 years and severely tortured under Mao Zedong’s rule. Last year Congressman Chris Smith held a hearing in the United States Congress titled: “Where is Bishop Su?”



Just two months after the deal was announced, Bishop Peter Shao Zhumin of Wenzhou was arrested for the fifth time in two years. He was released later that month but continues to face harassment. Father Zhang Guilin and Father Wang Zhong of Chongli-Xiwanzi Diocese were detained in late 2018 and their whereabouts are unknown.

In January 2020, Bishop Vincent Guo Xijin of Mindong, Fujian Province, who had already been demoted to the position of auxiliary

bishop to make way for a Beijing-appointed bishop, was forced by the authorities to leave his residence, which was shut down. This 61-year-old prelate ended up sleeping in the doorway of his church office and only after an international outcry was he

permitted to return to his apartment, but with the utilities cut off.

In June last year, 70-year-old Bishop Augustine Cui Tai, coadjutor bishop of the underground church in Xuanhua, was taken away again – having already endured 13 years in detention.

In September last year in Jiangxi Province dissenting Catholic priests were placed under house arrest – in breach of an agreement to protect clergy from coercion. Priests from Yujiang Diocese, under surveillance, were forbidden from “engaging in any religious activity in the capacity of clergy” after they refused to join the regime’s so-called “patriotic church,” and Bishop Lu Xinping was barred from celebrating Mass.

## Hong Kong

As Xi Jinping’s regime has dismantled Hong Kong’s promised freedoms, in fla-

grant breach of an international treaty, the Sino-British Joint Declaration, religious freedom in Hong Kong is already showing signs of being under pressure. Freedom of worship may still be intact, but freedom of conscience is already threatened.

Consider the case of Protestant pastor Roy Chan, whose Good Neighbour North District Church was raided by police last year, in retaliation for his pastoral support for young pro-democracy protesters. “Beat me, not the kids,” Chan said at the time. And he was beaten — not just by the police but by HSBC which, under pressure from the authorities, have frozen the assets of the church, pastor Chan, and his family.

Despite the courageous example of Hong Kong’s Bishop Emeritus Cardinal Joseph Zen, a long-standing outspoken critic of the CCP, the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese is already showing signs of surrender. Last year, when a group of lay Catholics tried to organise a public prayer campaign for the city, the diocese actively discouraged it. The lay Catholics were inspired by a call to pray for Hong Kong by the President of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences, Myanmar’s Cardinal Charles Bo. A few weeks later, Hong Kong’s Apostolic Administrator, Cardinal John Tong, issued an instruction to clergy to “watch your language” in homilies, and the diocese has since published religious textbooks with guidance on how Hong Kong students can “contribute to their nation” — a clear pro-Beijing slant. Whether it wants to or not, the diocese is undoubtedly feeling — or at least anticipating — the CCP’s pressure.

## Assaults on freedom

In addition to direct assaults on religious freedom, it is important not to forget the crackdown on human rights defenders, many of whom are motivated by their religious faith, who try to defend religious freedom. In 2015 the regime launched a



severe crackdown on human rights lawyers and their associates that resulted in over 300 being detained, disappeared or disbarred. In August 2017 China's best-known human rights lawyer, Gao Zhisheng, who defended many religious freedom cases and had disappeared and been jailed multiple times previously, went missing again and today his whereabouts are unknown. On 28 December last year Christian human rights defender and citizen journalist Zhang Zhan was jailed for four years after posting videos and articles on social media about the Covid-19 pandemic. And on 2 February this year her lawyer Ren Quanniu was disbarred, his license revoked.

One of the biggest tragedies of the current situation is the position in which the Vatican has found itself. The deal it agreed with Beijing in 2018 and renewed – seemingly with no review or transparency – last year has not only failed to improve the lives of the faithful in China or enhance religious freedom, but it appears to have bought the Pope's silence.

Pope Francis – who most Sundays highlights one or another area of injustice and human rights around the world and rightly so when he prays the Angelus – has stayed conspicuously silent on the persecution of Christians in China, the atrocity crimes against the Uyghurs which may well amount to a genocide, or the repression in Hong Kong or Tibet.

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Until now not a word of prayer or solidarity for the repressed peoples of China has passed his lips publicly. The most he has said is a passing reference to the Uyghurs in his latest book *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*, published late last year, where he mentioned

them as one of the “persecuted peoples” he thinks of often. It drew a flurry of attention not because it was anything of substance, but because the mere fact that he mentioned them at all was progress. But could he not reference China in his *Urbi et Orbi* address, or in his Angelus prayers, even just once?

## Listen to Chinese Christians

Perhaps current Vatican officials are still trapped too much in the mentality of ‘Ostpolitik’, a belief that they can somehow find compromises with the CCP that will protect the Church. The reality is, the current regime in Beijing cannot be trusted to abide by any agreement, and does not respect weakness. Perhaps the example of St. John Paul II, in standing up to dictatorship, is one to reflect upon and take inspiration

from, rather than the policy of kowtowing, appeasement and silence. And at the very least, next time Vatican officials are in China, perhaps they should devote more time to meeting with and listening to Chinese Christians – Catholic and Protestant – rather than CCP officials.

Yet while the Vatican keeps its silence, other Church leaders are increasingly speaking out. A year ago, 75 faith leaders including Myanmar's Cardinal Charles Bo, Indonesia's Cardinal Ignatius Suharyo and the Bishop of Clifton Declan Lang, alongside former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, signed an open letter expressing concern about the plight of the Uyghurs.

And earlier this year, just as his own country was plunged into bloody turmoil following the military coup d'état on 1 February, Cardinal Bo issued a call for a Global Week of Prayer for China. In a statement on 14 March, in his capacity as President of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences, Cardinal Bo urged the faithful to extend the annual Worldwide Day of Prayer for the Church in China, designated in 2007 by Pope Benedict XVI as 24 May – the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians – to a week of prayer.

While referencing his own country's plight, he focused on humanity as a whole, and the inter-connectedness of the world today. "Many parts of the world are currently challenged, including my own country of Myanmar at this time, but in a spirit of solidarity it is right to focus not only on our own challenges but to pray also for others, in the clear knowledge that their well-being is closely linked to ours," he said.

Cardinal Bo emphasised the importance of prayer for both for the Church specifically, and all the peoples of China, saying: "Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the peoples of China have faced increasing challenges, which impact us all. It is right that we should pray not only for the Church but for all persons in the People's Republic of China. We should ask Our Lady of Sheshan to protect all humanity and therefore the dignity of each and every person in China."

He added: "In proposing this Week of Prayer I am expressing my love for the peoples of China, my respect for their ancient civilization and extraordinary economic growth, and my hopes that as it continues to rise as a global power, it may become a force for good and a protector of the rights of the most vulnerable and marginalized in the world." Pope Francis rightly reminds us that "there is also a deeper hunger, the hunger for a happiness that only God can satisfy, the hunger for dignity. I am calling for prayer for each person in China, that they may seek and realize the full measure of happiness that our Creator has given to them."

"We should also pray for the day when the clouds part and there is again a Chinese regime in power which recognises the spiritual dimension of life." – Lord Patten

## Prayer

In response to Cardinal Bo's call, a group of lay Christians from six continents, including prominent Catholic legislators such as US Congressman Chris Smith, British politician Lord Alton of Liverpool, Canadian Member of Parliament Garnett Genuis and Australian Parliamentarian Kevin Andrews, together with Canada's former ambassador for religious freedom Andrew Bennett, Hudson Institute Senior Fellow Nina Shea, Ave Maria Law Professor Jane Adolphe, myself and numerous others, came together to facilitate the Global Week of Prayer.

The last Governor of Hong Kong, Lord Patten of Barnes, endorsed it, saying: "I support very strongly Cardinal Bo's call for special prayer for China and of course for Hong Kong. The Chinese Communist Party has always been and remains an enemy of religious belief. Whether one is talking about Muslims, Buddhists or Christians we should remember in our prayers all those who practice their faith despite tyranny and repression. We should also pray for the day when the clouds part and there is again a Chinese regime in power which recognises the spiritual dimension of life."

And the Bishop of Paisley, Bishop John Keenan, got it right when he said: "The Church in China is facing increasing persecution, the plight of the Uyghurs is increasingly recognised as a genocide, Hong Kong's freedoms have been dismantled and any form of dissent, civil society activism or independent media in China is repressed. Cardinal Charles Bo, on behalf of Asia's bishops, has called for a worldwide Week of Prayer for the Church and the Peoples of China, building on the annual Day of Prayer established by Pope Benedict XVI, and I am delighted to support him in this call. I have invited all parishes in my diocese to participate, and I encourage my brother bishops and priests, religious, lay Catholics and Christians of other traditions around the world to take up this call at this critical time for China and her peoples."

## Reflect

The Vatican should reflect on these messages from Cardinal Bo, Bishop Keenan and Lord Patten, or on the words of the former US religious freedom ambassador Sam Brownback, who said recently that "the moral authority of the Vatican is significant. You do not negotiate with evil. You kick it out." When faced with a regime in Beijing that is at war with faith, surely it is the responsibility of the Church to defend religious freedom for everyone in China?

**Benedict Rogers is a human rights activist and writer. He is the co-founder and Chief Executive of Hong Kong Watch, and Senior Analyst for East Asia at the international human rights organisation CSW.**



# Expanding our Horizons



## Francis Hunter urges a new look at some ancient literature.

**Frequently there is a conversation among Catholics who are literarily inclined as to which authors are worth reading. Chaucer, a magnificent Catholic writer, reminds us in *The Nun's Priest's Tale* that "saint Paul said, that all that written is, to our doctrine it is written, immediately. Taketh the fruit, and let the chaff be still" (NP I.672-677). However, which authors write favourably for "our doctrine"?**

Some familiar names may come to mind. The two most common are probably Dante and Chaucer, then others like Flannery O'Connor, J.R. Tolkien, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine follow in familiarity. In my teaching ministry, I have found that some of the pagan authors of antiquity write both fiction and non-fiction in a manner which certainly can be seen to support Catholic doctrine. One who comes to mind wrote the famous tale of a boy turned into a donkey who meanders the Mediterranean Sea seeking salvation from his animal state and a return to the higher human form. This man is Apuleius, and his book is *The Golden Ass*.

The man Apuleius was a pagan Roman, born in modern day Algeria in the mid-120's AD to a wealthy family whose father was a magistrate in the Roman colony of Madauros. Apuleius was a renowned philosopher of the Platonic school. He was so famous for his status as a philosopher that an inscription stating "To the Platonist Philosopher" was inscribed on a statue bearing his image. As a Neo-Platonist in Imperial Rome, we may conclude that he certainly was no Christian. However, St. Augustine acknowledged that the Platonists were dedicated to seeking *veritas* (truth). However, where the Platonists boasted strength in their reasoned approach of truth, they were running a race with one leg because they rejected divine revelation. The Church has always associated faith and reason as two tools whence the truth may be reached and preserved.

The man Apuleius was a pagan Roman and a renowned philosopher of the Platonic school.

Although a renowned philosopher, Apuleius was also an artist of the highest degree and is studied today primarily for *The Golden*



Ass, which was perhaps the first novel ever written. Rather than reviewing the text chapter by chapter, I will discuss a tale in the novel which not only supports a Catholic's typological perspective of divine revelation, but even directs one's attention to Marian devotion.

Books 4, 6 and 6 of *The Golden Ass* cover the famous tale of Cupid, the god falling in love with Psyche. Psyche, a woman said to rival Venus in beauty, engages in a love affair with a mysterious figure whom she is forbidden to see – this figure is Cupid. In the midst of her marital exercise, Psyche discovers that she is pregnant with her husband's son, the son of the god of love. Eventually, Psyche violates her restriction of avoiding her husband's true countenance and lights a lamp above him while he sleeps in an attempt to murder him. Psyche then discovers that she has been entangled with not just any god but Love itself: "So all unknowing and without prompting Psyche fell in love with Love, being fired more and more with desire for the god of desire". Unfortunately, because of Psyche's lack of faith, Cupid leaves her only to return after she is tormented by Venus, Cupid's mother. Jupiter – who resembles God the Father in this text – acts as the ultimate instrument of justice and provides the mother and wife of gods her eternal reward: "He [Jupiter] gave her a cup of ambrosia, and said: 'Take this, Psyche, and become immortal. Cupid will never part from your embrace; this marriage of yours will be eternal'".



The Marriage of  
Cupid and Psyche  
ca. 1540  
Andrea Schiavone  
(Andrea Meldola)

Although a pagan, Apuleius does live in the Christian era and must have been introduced directly or indirectly to the Gospels. As Catholics, we believe in the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, who is informed of by the messenger archangel, Gabriel, in the Gospel of Luke: "Hail, favored one; the Lord is with you...for you have found favor with God; and behold, you shall conceive in your womb and bring forth a son" (Luke 1:28). Mary, *Mater Dei*, is at this point engaged in the allegory told by Apuleius: the woman

Although a pagan,  
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the Gospels

chosen by God will bear the son of that God; however, for Psyche this brings her reverence as someone who is divine, while Mary will be praised for her cooperation with divinity and her role as the *Mater Dei*. The greatest similarity here may be found between the nature of the Numina (god heads) which conceive in their respective women.

As we read above, Psyche is bearing the child of love itself. A Catholic's attention should readily connect with this idea, and he or she should refer to Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical letter, *Deus Caritas Est*.

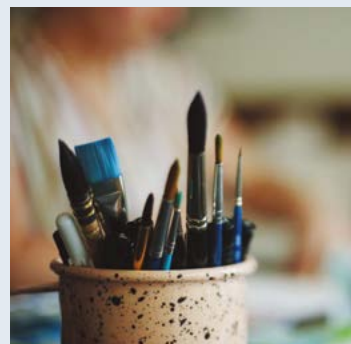
Pope Benedict beautifully denotes the nature of God as Love both ascending and descending, loving simultaneously with *eros* and *agape* (Benedict 10-11).

Pope Benedict evaluates the nature of love – principally the difference between *eros* (erotic love) and *philia* (love of a friend) – to establish a continuity between the ancient view of the Pagan gods versus that of our true monotheistic faith. While Pope Benedict acknowledges the problem of *eros*, specifically how “Eros, reduced to pure ‘sex,’ has become a commodity, a mere ‘thing’ to be bought and sold,” (8) he nonetheless recognizes that “there is a certain relationship between love [*eros*] and the Divine” (7). God gives us love through his very being, his *actus essendi*; we experience His love not just through our existence, but also by the life and ministry of Christ in the Gospels. Any person, having been made in the image of God, must return the love which he or she receives. Pope Benedict notes that God’s love is fully *eros* in that He receives love from us when we have faith and follow His laws; however, it is also descending in *agape* in that “so great is God’s love for man that by becoming man he follows him even into death, and so reconciles justice and love” (14). God’s love is not absent in Apuleius’ Pagan illustration, in that Cupid puts himself at risk, specifically with his mother Venus, to give his love to a mortal woman (*agape*) and to receive that love in return (*eros*). Furthermore, our Pagan friend Apuleius touches God’s truth by depicting Love itself as entering a marriage

with Psyche rather than just an affair. Pope Benedict stresses the importance of this form of Divine Love by discussing the union of God with Israel (to me the archetype on which the tale of Cupid and Psyche may be based): “God’s relationship with Israel is described using the metaphors of betrothal and marriage; idolatry is thus adultery and prostitution” (13).

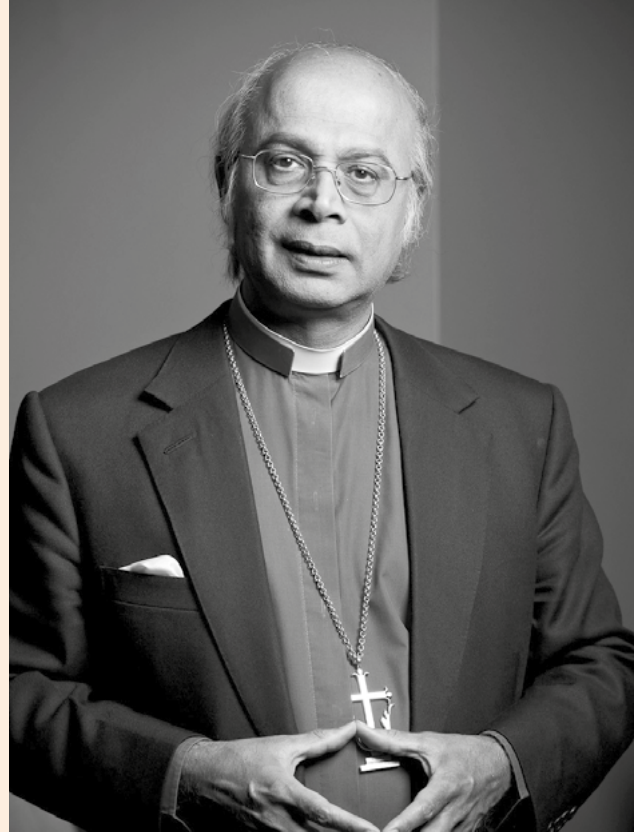
In writing this essay, I do not wish to merely emphasize the greatness of Apuleius (which is undisputed), but rather to enter into a dialogue with the Western Canon in order to expand our Catholic literary horizons and seek true art wherever it may be found. *Ars gratia artis et artifex gratia Deo*. Art is only thus in that it is beautiful. Beauty is always a goal when producing art. In fact, for the Christian artist, a work that lacks beauty fails to acknowledge the splendor of the Great Artist, our Creator God. Although works of art, whether they be statues, paintings, symphonies, or literature are made “in the image of man,” man behaves in *imago Dei* when he or she creates something. Just as God created all things with His *logos*, so too did Apuleius, and all the other magnificent pagans and Christians craft a cornucopia of works which directly, or indirectly, point to His truth.

Francis Hunter teaches at a Catholic preparatory school in New York.



## The Ethics of Monkey-Human Embryos

**Bishop Michael  
Nazir-Ali looks at a  
major ethical issue.**



**Some weeks ago, there was a shocking story in the newspapers about scientists creating a human-monkey embryo and allowing it to survive for some twenty days. The news reports all said that there were huge ethical implications in this development, but none went on to discuss what these were!**

I was the Chair of the *Ethics and Law Committee of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority* for a number of years and these moral issues were being presented to us all the time because of developments in the sciences. Moral reflection was always lagging behind and 'catching up' on what went on in the laboratory.

On the one hand, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act (HFE Act) itself, and the regulatory rules that flow from it, recognise the special status of the human embryo or foetus. On the other, they allow for experimentation on such an embryo for a period of up to fourteen days, or when the 'prim-

itive streak' appears, whichever comes first. The alleged significance of the latter term is that this is the latest stage at which twinning can occur - after which, and if it occurs, we are certainly dealing with two individuals. As John Ling, however, in his *Bioethical Issues* points out, this the *latest* stage at which twinning can occur, but not the earliest. According to him, this can occur on day one or two of fertilisation! The limit then seems to be arbitrary and to provide a cut-off point to satisfy public opinion that there was no untrammelled licence for embryonic research.

### Opinion

The prevailing opinion since the Warnock Report in assisted-fertility circles seems to be that embryonic and foetal development is continuous and that no one stage is more significant than another. This makes the identification of fourteen days (or the primitive streak) as a cut-off point

for embryonic research as indeed arbitrary, and perhaps neglectful of the precautionary principle that there may be a person at an earlier stage. Because the limit is arbitrary, there is now pressure from some scientists to extend it. Once again, we can ask how far such extensions might go.

The justification usually given for research on embryos, after which they are 'disaggregated' or left to perish, is that 'stem cells' obtained from human embryos can be programmed to provide

Moral reflection on scientific possibilities is simply not keeping pace with what is happening in the laboratories.

'miracle' cures for a host of degenerative diseases. It is also justified by claiming that embryonic research helps in the treatment of infertility. As far as the latter is concerned, surely our energies should be directed at human gametes, i.e. sperm and eggs, and the organic processes for producing them? No controversy would arise here as no one claims that such material is a person. Where the former justification is given, in fact, the use of adult stem cells

derived from bone marrow, umbilical cord blood, etc. can be and are used to provide treatments for illnesses like leukaemia. The Japanese scientist, Shinya Yamanaka, has shown, moreover, that ordinary adult skin cells, for example, can be reprogrammed to become 'pluripotent' and thus usable in treating some degenerative disorders.

### Bolder

Yet still the industry of research on embryos not only goes on but becomes bolder, and trespasses on more and more hitherto prohibited areas. If the 'slippery slope' argument is anywhere to be demonstrated, this area of research is surely it. The pursuit of scientific knowledge is certainly a most worthy aim. From the Christian point of view, it is made possible by the correspondence between the rationality of our own minds and the predictability and order of the universe.

As the early Fathers saw, such a correspondence is itself made possible by the Logos, or the Eternal Word of God, who has become incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:1-18). Like any other human pursuit, however, the work of scientists can also be attended by hubris and by a disregard of the means used to achieve desirable ends. Just because it is possible to do something, does not necessarily mean it should be done. Moral reflection on scientific possibilities is simply not keeping pace with what is happening in the laboratories. Society and the Church have to find ways of making sure there is due diligence before possibility turns to practice.



## Problematic

One, particularly problematic feature of embryonic research has been the deliberate creation of human-animal hybrids. This can be done in one of two ways: the nucleus of an animal egg is removed and replaced with the nucleus of a human cell. It is to be noted that the mitochondrial material of the animal egg remains. With some electrical wizardry, the human and animal material are fused to result in an embryo which can then be used for experimentation up to the limits as discussed above. Such embryos are known as cybrids because it is only the cytoplasmic material of the animal egg which is used. There are, however, also 'true hybrids' which are created by mixing human and animal sperm and eggs. It seems that the human-monkey embryos mentioned in the news reports were true hybrids. The reason most often given for creating these potential monsters is that animal eggs are more easily available than human ones and, in the case of cybrids, much of the material is human and so the research can be closely related to the interests of human medical research. Interestingly, the reason given by scientists involved in the creation of the human-monkey embryo was that it could help in creating hybrid species, from non-primate animals, which could be used for the harvesting of organs, thus meeting the endemic shortage of organs for transplantation!

## Moral and medical questions

If creating human embryos solely for experimenting on them sends shivers down your spine, what do human-animal hybrids do to you and, worse, monkey-human ones? Although there are strong disavowals from the scientists involved, there is the possibility that, one day, someone will implant these embryos in a human or animal or make them come to term in some other way. Frankenstein is no longer a fantasy. What is a human-monkey hybrid? Is it human or animal and who decides?

As to the possibility of using hybrid creatures for spare parts, xenotransplantation itself raises a whole host of moral and medical questions: what will be the quality of life for such creatures brought into being solely to be the means to human ends? For their organs to be usable, they will have to be raised and to live in a sterile environment throughout their lives. Is this compatible with the animal welfare which is an aspect of human stewardship of creation (Gen1:27-31, 2:15)?



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## Human organs

During the Coronavirus pandemic, we have become increasingly conscious of the dangers of cross-species infection. Even with all the precautions in the world, can we be sure that, in the course of transplantation, we will not cause viruses and other organisms to break through the species barrier? The transplanting of organs has, undoubtedly, saved many lives, but this has involved sacrifice by those donating organs, either their own or of recently, and sometimes tragically, deceased loved ones. To my mind, the processes involved in preserving and harvesting organs makes transplantation a strictly intermediate technology until better ways

are found and developed for saving human lives. One such could be the reprogramming of adult stem cells or somatic cells to grow human organs. Such a method will not require the loss of human or animal life or the costly sacrifice of the live donation of an organ, like a kidney, for a loved one. There is also and always the possibility of producing, at least some,

human organs synthetically. Should research efforts and funds not be directed into these potentially fruitful areas rather than on experimentation on human or hybrid embryos?

Behind the culture of embryonic research lies a kind of utilitarian worldview which justifies benefits for some humans at the cost of others who are weak and voiceless by denying their humanity.

Behind the culture of embryonic research lies a kind of utilitarian worldview which justifies benefits for some humans at the cost of others who are weak and voiceless by denying their humanity. In spite of evidence, there is no acknowledgement as to when there is a person or even a prudential use of the precautionary principle to treat the human embryo, at every stage, as if there was a person.

## Christian tradition

Some moralists, relying on the Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Bible at Exodus 21:22 and its interpretation by some Fathers, such as St. Augustine, and scholastics, like St. Thomas Aquinas, have attempted to make a distinction between the 'formed' and 'unformed' foetus. Thus, while they would be opposed to any experimentation and destruction of the formed foetus, they would accept that this might be possible with the unformed foetus. Such a position is not dissimilar to the fourteen-day limit set by the HFE Act. Against this, it needs pointing out that both the Bible and the Fathers regard the destruction of any embryo or foetus as morally culpable, even if some did not think that the destruction of the early embryo was homicide. Secondly, the Aristotelian distinction between the 'ensouled' or 'vivified' and the 'unformed' embryo, although it has parallels in modern embryology with the

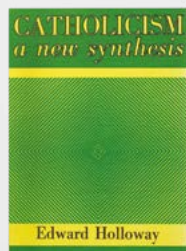
establishing of the nerve net and the beginning of brain activity, cannot continue to be held in the light of our knowledge about the processes of fertilisation and implantation in the womb. We know now that the complete genetic makeup of the embryo is present from fertilisation. It is true that there are important stages in its development such as implantation, sentience, mobility and, of course, birth, but it would be hazardous to claim that personhood was linked to any one of these and did not exist before a particular stage. If we had to choose between the Warnock Report's alternatives of the embryo being 'a potential person' or 'a person with potential', we should choose the latter.

Science has its own independence and society should not needlessly interfere in its work, except where there is the possibility of harm to persons, the family or society. In judging when this may happen, we need to have a view of personhood, family and society that is not simply determined by the shifting sands of public opinion but is based on concrete evidence, natural law and the ways in which the Judaeo-Christian tradition has articulated and taught these in the light of biblical revelation as brought to us by the Apostolic teaching of the Church.

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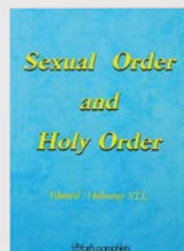
### CATHOLICISM: A NEW SYNTHESIS

Edward Holloway's major work in which he shows in detail how orthodox Catholic theology can be synthesised with the philosophy of evolution to produce a coherent understanding of Catholic Christianity for the modern age. The thinking behind the Faith movement, this theological vision has been inspiring Catholics, especially the young, for over 50 years. It provides a way forward for the Church to meet the intellectual challenge of the modern secular worldview.



### SEXUAL ORDER AND HOLY ORDER

The Church through the ages has always taught that priests should be male. But in an age when woman has, through the cultural and intellectual development of society, been able to vindicate that status of equality with the male which was always hers by right of nature and grace, we have to look for the intrinsic reasons behind the works and words of God in Christ about the priesthood. Fr. Holloway explores why human beings are created male and female and the role of sexuality in God's self-giving to us which climaxes in the Incarnation and the Eucharist.



## From Across the Pond...

### Fr. Peter Stravinskas with reflections from the USA



**The Church in the United States continues on a generally positive and strong thrust amid various crises, internal and external.**

#### Ad extra

##### Pro-life

States have introduced more than 500 pro-life pieces of legislation in the first months of the Biden Administration, in what the pro-abortion *Guttmacher Institute* is calling the “most devastating” legislative session in decades. The organization noted that lawmakers have introduced 536 pro-life pieces of legislation since January. This includes 146 abortion bans, with 61 of them having been enacted in 13 states. The Institute bemoaned this development as “unprecedented.”

##### “Equality Act”

In a March 16 article at Public Discourse ([www.thepublicdiscourse.com](http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com)), Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York wrote a detailed critique of the so-called “Equality Act,” promoted by the Biden Administration. The Cardinal opens his reflection thus: “The Equality Act goes far beyond the noble desire to protect vulnerable people. It burdens consciences, severely curtails the rights of people to practice their faith, smuggles in an abortion mandate, and explicit-

ly exempts itself from respecting religious freedom." What is the precise problem with the legislation? "It makes 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity' protected categories in the Civil Rights Act."

This law would impose serious burdens on Catholic schools, health care facilities and social services. Cardinal Dolan concludes his observations thus:

**"While Catholics must accompany all individuals, we cannot accept an ideology of gender, which, as Pope Francis says, 'denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family.' In fact, the Holy Father seems to be speaking directly to the problem represented by the Equality Act when he says: 'This ideology leads to educational programmes and legislative enactments that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female. Consequently, human identity becomes the choice of the individual, one which can also change over time.'"**

### **"Equality Act"**

On May 6, President Biden issued a proclamation for the National Day of Prayer (observed since 1775). Only this time around, one word was missing from the document: God!

And this, from the Sunday-Mass-goer, rosary-clutching, devout Catholic Joe Biden.

This put me in mind of a story shared with me by Professor Paul Vitz, the esteemed Catholic psychologist. Several years ago,

he was visiting a government elementary school (as part of his review of social studies textbooks being used in the state schools) in the week leading up to Thanksgiving Day. The children were engaged in an art project connected to the feast. Dr. Vitz asked the kids what the feast was all about. "The Pilgrims gave thanks for landing safely." "To whom did they give thanks?" he asked. All he got were quizzical looks from the befuddled pupils, until one piped up: "I know! They gave thanks to the Indians!" Yes, that's the answer from an educational system poisoned by secularism.

## **Ad intra**

### **More dissent from Biden**

During a press briefing on April 27, EWTN reporter Owen Jensen pointed out that the nation's Catholic bishops, "the leaders of the President's own faith," have condemned Biden's recent order forcing Americans to fund research with aborted baby parts with their taxpayer dollars. Jen Psaki (White House press secretary) said that "the White House respectfully disagrees" with the Catholic Church on the issue; so much for Biden's delight in presenting himself as a strong, church-going Catholic.

### **Critical Race Theory (CRT), LGBTQ, and Black Lives Matter (BLM)**

Since the Church does not live in a hermetically sealed bubble, societal issues naturally have an impact on her life and mission, especially for a Church that has such a large institutional footprint.

There have been a few instances when Catholic school administrators have been lulled into supporting CRT on the assumption that this is merely an attempt to combat racism, which it is certainly not. *It* is racism (making white children feel guilty for being white or for having "white privilege") masquerading as anti-racism to

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counter supposed racism. When discovered, pastors or parents have had to demand the reversal of the addition to the curriculum, putting the Church into an embarrassing public position.

Not a few Catholic universities (pretending to be such) have bought into the BLM agenda and now proudly display that logo on their athletic uniforms, either ignorant of the profoundly Marxist program of the movement or – worse – supportive of it. Of the more than 200 colleges/universities

which self-identify as Catholic, only a handful could ever be convicted of Catholicism in a court of law.

### Communion for pro-abortion politicians

This has been a neuralgic issue within the Catholic community for decades. That big elephant in the living room has been even more conspicuous with the election of a supposedly “devout” Catholic as president.

Archbishop Joseph Naumann of Kansas City and chairman of the pro-life committee of the episcopal conference has been relentless in calling out the hypocrisy of Biden and has repeatedly declared that Biden should not be receiving Holy Communion. Archbishop Samuel Aquila of Denver wrote an article on the topic of “Eucharistic coherence” for – of all places – *America* magazine. He was immediately challenged by Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago, which gave Archbishop Aquila the opportunity to re-visit the issue in an article in *The Catholic World Report* (it's here <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2021/04/18/eucharistic-coherence/>), with even greater clarity (his “take’ on all this was seconded by Capuchin Father Thomas Weinandy, a member of the International Theological Commission: <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2021/05/01/politicizing-the-eucharist-2/>)



The only bishops publicly aligned with Cupich (who, interestingly, has never been elected to any office in the bishops’ conference, so disliked is he by his peers) are Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark, Bishop Robert McElroy of San Diego, and Cardinal Wilton Gregory of Washington.

The Biden-Communion controversy has even more currency because his home diocese of Wilmington (Delaware) has a new bishop. His former Ordinary refused to “politicize” the Eucharist by denying Biden access to the Sacrament, seeming to forget that



the one who is “politicizing” the Eucharist is the dissenting politician who presents himself for Holy Communion. The new Ordinary, Monsignor William Koenig of Rockville Centre (New York), was asked about his position on the matter during his first press conference. He replied: “I certainly pray for him (Biden) every day”; “I would certainly be open to having a conversation in the future with him.” When pressed further, he said: “As a bishop, I’m called to teach the fullness and the beauty of the Catholic Faith.” That sounds like a move in the right direction.

*“Taking Measure of the ‘Biden Effect’: American Catholics and the President”* was a conference sponsored by Villanova University in Philadelphia on April 23. The biggest take-away was the headline of an article by Christopher White in the *National Catholic Reporter*: “Villanova conference elevates calls for Biden to be denied Communion.” Joining the ever-growing chorus is a now-monthly call from the indomitable speaker and author Mary Eberstadt to Biden, published as an open letter in *Newsweek*, for him to abandon his stances which have put him on a collision course with the Church.

Our responsibility to the rest of the Catholic community is to assure them that the Church of Jesus Christ does take most seriously her mission to care for “the least of these,” as Our Lord has commanded us, and to correct Catholics who erroneously, and sometimes stubbornly, promote abortion.

The biggest shoe to drop on this topic is the teaching document of Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco, *“Before I Formed You in the Womb I Knew You: A Pastoral Letter on the Human Dignity of the Unborn, Holy Communion, and Catholics in Public Life,”* promulgated on 1 May 2021, the memorial of St. Joseph the Worker. Not only do his reflections apply to Biden, but also to another notorious dissenter from Church teaching who masquerades as a “devout” Catholic: Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives and a canonical subject of Archbishop Cordileone.

Section 4 of the letter focuses attention on “Catholics in Public Life,” in which the Archbishop writes with great passion: “. . . we pastors have a responsibility both to them (the politicians) and to the rest of our people. Our responsibility to them (pro-abortion Catholic politicians) is to call them to conversion and to warn them that if they do not amend their lives they must answer before the tribunal of God for the innocent blood that has been shed.”

He goes on:

**Our responsibility to the rest of the Catholic community is to assure them that the Church of Jesus Christ does take most seriously her mission to care for “the least of these,” as Our Lord has commanded us, and to correct Catholics who erroneously, and sometimes stubbornly, promote abortion. This**

**correction takes several forms, and rightly begins with private conversations between the erring Catholic and his or her parish priest or bishop. The experience of some of us in Church leadership over many years demonstrates the sad truth that often such interventions can be fruitless. It can happen that the conversations tend to go nowhere, thus leaving it easy for the individual to continue participating fully in the life of the Church. Such a situation is a cause of scandal to many of the faithful.**

**Because we are dealing with public figures and public examples of cooperation in moral evil, this correction can also take the public form of exclusion from the reception of Holy Communion.**

The document is very long but very carefully reasoned in the clearest of terms and deserves an equally careful reading by all.

Finally, it is believed that the doctrine committee of the bishops' conference is drafting a document on Eucharistic coherence to be presented for the review of the full body of bishops during their meeting this June. Given the flurry of episcopal statements demanding accountability from those presenting themselves as Catholics in public life, it is hard to imagine a text emerging which would be any less demanding; if it were to be such, it would never garner the needed votes.

Bishop Joseph Coffey, Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Military Services, has pledged to pray daily for the President because of his pro-abortion position. He explained: "What I would like to say to him if I could is that none of us are promised tomorrow. And each day could be the last day on earth, and he has such power as the most important, most powerful man in the world as President."

## **Seventh annual seminar on the role of priests in our Catholic schools**

For a number of years, the annual Summer Conference of the *Catholic Education Foundation*, was hosted by Seton Hall University in New Jersey; last year, it was forced to go virtual (which was less than optimal); the same was going to happen this year, so a "free state," that is, one not laboring under draconian restrictions, had to be found. We found a beautiful home at Our Lady of Florida Spiritual Center in Palm Beach! We have had priests from beyond our shores participate in the past; they would be most welcome again, if they can evade any draconian strictures they may be experiencing. Dates: July 13-15. For further information, visit our website: [catholiceducation.foundation](http://catholiceducation.foundation).

## **The Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter**

The Ordinariate is opening two schools this coming fall. This is extremely good news as those schools will be authentically Catholic, will adopt a classical curriculum – and will thus attract school families to the parishes. Bishop Steven Lopes is exercising true leadership; he also knows the inestimable value of Catholic education because his own mother was a Catholic school teacher for more than four decades.

## **Black Catholics**

On February 16, Al Roker of NBC (Black and former Catholic) interviewed Cardinal Wilton Gregory of Washington (the highest-ranking Black cleric in the U.S.). Cardinal Gregory bewailed the allegedly pervasive racism in the country; he indicated that this is also a phenomenon in the Church. He observed that when he is dressed in clerical garb, he is treated with respect and even deference; when in lay clothes (which he shouldn't be!), he has had negative experiences. A few days later, Father Bryan Massingale (a Black priest of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and professor at

Fordham University) weighed in on the race issue (as is his wont).

I would like to apprise the two reverend gentlemen of some interesting data. Please understand that I am not in favor of “affirmative action” (giving special consideration to representational recruitment/promotion), however, if that were a policy to be pursued, I offer the following data for their consideration. There are roughly 3 million Black Catholics in the country, with 250 priests (out of 40,000) and 16 bishops (out of 434). Six percent of Black priests are bishops. For comparison purposes, let me highlight data on the 9 million Polish Catholics, with approximately 2,000 priests and 27 bishops. Simple math reveals that 6% of Black priests are bishops, while fewer than 1% of Polish priests are bishops.

Again, the criterion ought to be suitability for an office, not race, however, using the standard of “representation,” it should be Polish Catholics on the grievance line, not Black Catholics.

### **Influx of new families into Catholic schools**



As reported earlier here, because of Covid lockdowns in state schools, Catholic schools received a record number of new students. The question, however, was whether those children would remain when state schools finally opened up for in-person education. The very good news is that the vast majority of those families are remaining, so pleased are they by what they have found in our schools. Even happier, pastors are reporting that many of these new families are being integrated or re-integrated into Catholic life as a result of their children's Catholic schooling. One pastor is delighted to tell all that 16 new families received “missing” sacraments, in addition to two marriages being regularized.

The new parents express surprise at what they had been missing by having their children in the godless state schools, but also at how “cheap” our schools really are: tuition at an elementary school usually hovers around \$5,000, while a secondary school generally costs double that figure. That is surely “cheap,” compared to other non-public schools, however, it is common for the second working parent's entire salary to go for Catholic school tuition – a great tribute to our parents' commitment to the Faith and to the integral education of their children.

**Fr. Peter Stravinskis is the President of the Catholic Education Foundation, Editor of *The Catholic Response* and publisher of *Newman House Press*.**



Edward Holloway

## Holloway on...

### God the Real: Can we Know and Love Him?

#### Part 2

***In the first part of this article, published in our previous issue, Fr. Holloway critiqued the view, held by some theologians in the post-conciliar years, that we cannot comprehend the nature of God and therefore cannot love God in a personal sense.***

Let us come to the heart of the matter. What is the relationship between the body and the soul? First, it is wrong to look upon the soul as made simply to control and direct the body, to “look after it” so to say, because the brain of man is a matter-energy formula that needs the soul and is unintelligible in nature without it (see *Catholicism: A New Synthesis* p. 81). This statement may be true, but through the spirit the body is meant to be taken up and ennobled in the order of the spiritual. This is the whole meaning and majesty of the Incarnation of God in Christ, and why we must place the Incarnation in its meaning, not at the Fall but at the meaning and purpose of the Universe itself. The body is not made to be a burden and a nuisance to the spirit. It is the effect of Original Sin

which has brought something of this truly into the relationship of the body to the spirit (Romans 7:13-25).

The soul has its own proper powers, superior to the powers and senses of the body. It is through these powers of the intellect and will which define the spiritual substance that we do, even in this life, come to the partial but real inner “knowing” of God, and the partial but real “love” of God. Man is a union and communion of matter and spirit, but these are distinct energies of being, the spirit cannot evolve from, or with matter. The senses of the body, the word read, spoken or thought, these can and do prompt the soul to union with God through the powers of the soul, for man is a unity in nature.

From the same unity, the direct action of God upon the substance of the soul can, and often does, exalt the body in the spiritual joy of God known and savoured. In this communion with God in grace, to quote from memory a quaint phrase from St. John of

the Cross, “both constituents of the human person feed on God, from their own separate plates.” But the experience is *one* in the one personality of man. It is through the superior powers, proper to the soul, and not dependent intrinsically upon the body for act that, after death and before the final restoration, we may hope to enjoy the blessed possession of God “as He Is”, as “co-sharers of the divine nature.” It is within these powers of the soul, the only true intellectual and volitive powers in human nature, that the Godhead itself, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit comes *to indwell* in the communion of grace, according to the explicit teaching of Christ and of the Church (Aquinas, Grace, Wisdom, Joy in God: 1.2. QQ 110, 112, 115). How this can be without some sort of communion in knowing and in love, simply does not, at least to this writer, appear.

### Mystics who have mapped “The Way”

We cannot ignore the explicit teaching of the Fathers of the Church in this matter, nor particularly of the two greatest and most easily available of the canonized mystics of the Reformation period, St. John of the Cross, and St. Teresa of Avila. It is for their teaching on the degrees of the communion of the soul with God in grace, and the continuity of that knowing and loving into the beatific possession, that they are both declared “doctors” or teachers of the Church. They are not infallible, but they do have very great authority. In the prayer of quiet for instance, in that higher degree of contemplative union in which the agony of the “dark night” of purgation is either not present or is suspended, a man or woman will find no desire to commune with God through “discursive” meditation, but will rest simply in the happy possession of “Him.” Yet, if the need of others should call for sermon or exposition, then “words, similes and metaphors will pour forth with greater abundance, and more certainty of conviction” according to

St. John of the Cross. In this we understand how an apparently “nameless” but sweet savouring of God as wisdom through the interior virtue of faith contains and prompts all the knowledge which we strive to express by words and pictures, or what in technical scholastic philosophy would be called the “*species expressa*” of sense data.

One could suggest that this supports St. Thomas Aquinas’ theory of the “analogy of the degrees of being and reality,” and the “linkage” between them, and does more. It implies that between this inner wordless possession in spiritual joy, and the outpouring of words in perhaps beautiful similes, there is also a *natural proportion*, so that in their own order as matter serving the spirit in man, these words and metaphors have a genuine similarity, intrinsically in their own order, to the simple union of the spirit. If it were not so, how would we explain the union and communion of man as one nature? If it were not so, what authority and intrinsic truth would be contained in the parables of Jesus Christ, especially those from St. John’s Gospel, which portray the intimate, inner union of man with God? Such parables as the Vine and Branches, the Good Shepherd, or even the relationship of the body of Christ to his divinity, given to us as “the Bread of Life”? Whatever the testimony of reliable mystic saints to the reality of God known in peace and love, there can be few statements more explicit, or more shattering than Aquinas (2.2 QQ 24, 28, 45. 2. 2. Q 180). himself in this matter, in which he says of personal sanctifying grace that: “*it is nothing other than a certain participation of the divine nature, which exceeds every other nature, and can be caused by none other than God.*”

### God the “energy” of the soul: grace as response of “life”

There is an enormous volume of writing upon the nature of grace. Shall we say starkly that it is that inner response of the soul through



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intellect and will, which prompts, at the divine communing the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. The sunshine is the natural life-energy of the bough that bursts into flower and fruit in the springtime, on earth.

In that "environment" it lives, moves, and has its being. In the terms of sharing in his own divine life, God alone is the proper, and the only possible life-energy of the created spirit, whether angel or man. God is *our* "environment": in Him we live, move and have our being. God is the Sun, the Day-Star from on high who has visited us. In the person of Jesus Christ, God has said of Himself that "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" and again, "I am

come that they may have life, and have it the more abundantly" (John 14:6 and 10:10). God is the sun: on earth, even in the life of grace his Fulness overwhelms us, we do not compass it. Yet, God's "sunshine" could be called the ray of participation, the real possession of his being in which the soul does bathe. This degree, like our earthly sunshine, differs in degrees of life-energy according to our response, just as earth's sunshine differs according to favoured latitudes and positions.

### "The Bread of Life"



The response of man's spirit and whole person to God, like the setting of the blossom on the bough, is a growing in real life, a deepening in God. The virtues and the fruits of the Holy Spirit are the true harvest of the soul. Christ's own analogy is similar – the Vine and the Branches – except that as the Vine he expresses not alone the office of the Godhead to the created spirit, but the office also of his manhood to us through the divine nature. This office is one with Christ's relationship as *Bread of Life*. Thus body and soul we live in and by Him, and the whole man is "raised up" again at the last day. In the order of the Incarnation (Aquinas. *Link between The Eucharist and Incarnation*: 3. Q79, art I.) of God we perceive how, in the nature of mankind, body and soul, sense and spirit, are linked in a unity of comprehension of God and fulfilment in God. The words and the sacraments of Christ effect what they signify, in the body and also in the spirit. The dual energies, material and spiritual, of man's being receives understanding and love in its own formality. The body, in its sensory imagery and expression, *expresses faithfully* like the sacraments of the Church, in a unity of symbolism, the inner communion of God upon man as a unity of body and soul. This writer at least sees no way of expressing this order of creation, which is in fact the order of the Incarnation of God, and of the action of God in the sacrament, except through the philosophy and theology of Aquinas. It means that the soul, through the data of sense can faithfully express the simple, higher possession of God in the inner man, and that God the purest of spirits, HE WHO IS, can faithfully reveal Himself, and be truly "grasped" by us in the flesh and in the spirit in the revelation of The Word, and the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

## Testimony of mystic saints

Dare one suggest that there is no need to say that God creates any sort of spiritual “representative impression” (*species impressa*) within the soul in the order of grace. The soul itself can well be the limiting principle which makes it possible to join itself to God, and yet by its limitations be unable at first either to know Him as he is, or even to possess him to that degree at which deliberate sin becomes morally impossible. Aquinas himself and more expressly St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila” (St. John of the Cross: Allison Peers ed. works: see *Dark Night* and *Spiritual Canticle*. St. Teresa of Avila: Allison Peers ed. works, esp., *Way of Perfection* and *Interior Castle*) imply that as the soul develops in likeness to God through grace, in its very being, that concupiscence is bound, and can even die out. In any case, as the “two flames become one Flame” the affection for that which is contrary to God’s perfection dies in the will and becomes distasteful. St. John of the Cross, in his degrees of love, through the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive way; St. Teresa through the imagery of the Interior Castle, in the centre of which the King dwells in his own regal state, express a continuity of process in which the limiting factor to fulness is the created spirit itself, and the fulness of which is the culmination of that process into blessedness when the web of the body (which must rise again, remade without the innate tendency to disobedience implanted by Original Sin) is cut from the transformed spirit.

## The soul as image of the Trinity

Finally, this writer would like to express a leaning to Augustine rather than to Thomas, in being unable to accept the doctrine of Aquinas that in the possession of beatitude the intellect is superior to the will in the creature. Neither however is the will superior to the intellect. It is a matter of philosophy and has never been expressed in FAITH (for alas there is no market at all for pure philosophy in our readership!)

The possession of God in beatitude is more than “vision,” it is joy proceeding from vision, and the degree of the joy is determined in proportion to the fulness of the wisdom, of the intellectual vision.

but it seems that we need to develop our concept of the intellect and will as merely “faculties” of the soul. They should be defined rather as integrating aspects of the very substance of the angel, or of the soul of man. The possession of God in beatitude is more than “vision,” it is joy proceeding from vision, and the degree of the joy is determined in proportion to the fulness of the wisdom, of the intellectual-

al vision. In the same way, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the “vision” between the Father knowing and the Son known. The Holy Spirit who proceeds according to will, or “love” is in no way inferior to, or superior to the Father and the Son.

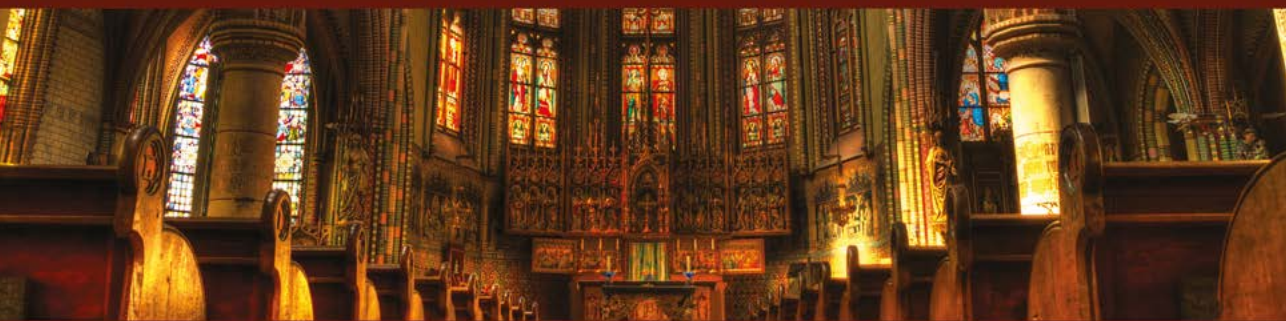
One is saying that the Trinity is of the simple essence of God, and we are made to that image of the Trinity which in God is his "natural" Being. The intellect and will proceed within our substance by a direct analogy with the being of God, and the consequences need to be rethought, and Christian philosophy developed a little here. It will make of course all sorts of delightful controversies about whether or not a "natural" end for the nature of man, given that man's nature expresses the God who is the Supernature by definition, is conceivable etc. Alas, such carnal indulgence cannot detain us here. It is enough for us to know that we can know God and love Him for real, person to person, and that His Incarnation is testimony enough to it. "As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you, abide in my love ... and this is my commandment unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 14:9, 12). *"Holy Father, I pray not only for these, but for*

*those also who through their words will believe in Me. May they all be one Father: may they be one in Us, as you are in Me, and I am in You. So that the world may believe it was you who sent me. I have given them the glory you have given to me, so that they may be one as We are One. With Me in them and You in Me, may they be so completely one, that the world will realise that it was you who sent me, and that I have loved them, even as You have loved Me.* (Jn 17:19-23). So, the sweet union and communion of God with men that the disciples knew in their lives on earth, belongs also to us, in the prayer of Christ. Let us confess that love, and abide in that love.

**This was first published in the July/August 1989 issue of FAITH. For more information about Fr. Edward Holloway's writings, visit [www.faith.org.uk/ideas/edward-holloway](http://www.faith.org.uk/ideas/edward-holloway).**

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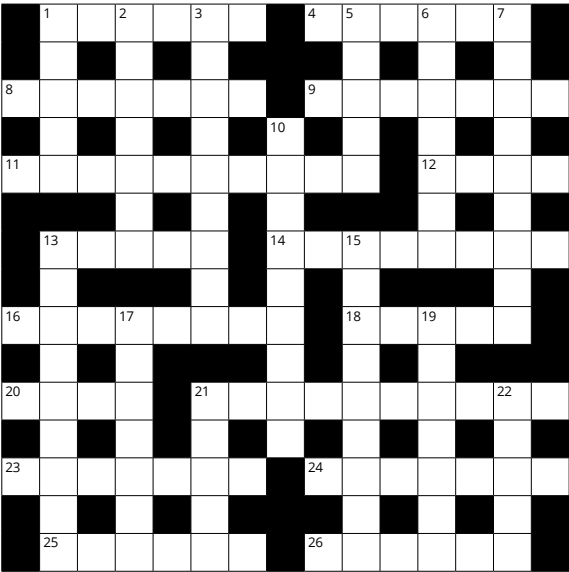
Crossword 29

by Aurora Borealis

We invite you to complete this crossword.

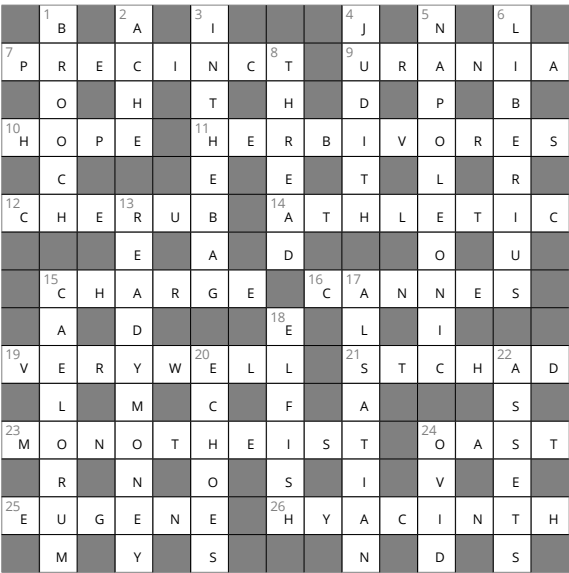
The clues in bold involve general religious knowledge.

The others are cryptic clues with secular answers.



A prize will go to the sender of the first correct solution opened by August 1st 2021. Entries may be the original page or a photocopy. Entries should be sent to 45 East St. Helen Street, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 5EE. Please include your full postal address.

The winner of Crossword 28 was A.H. of Wallington.



Solution Crossword 28

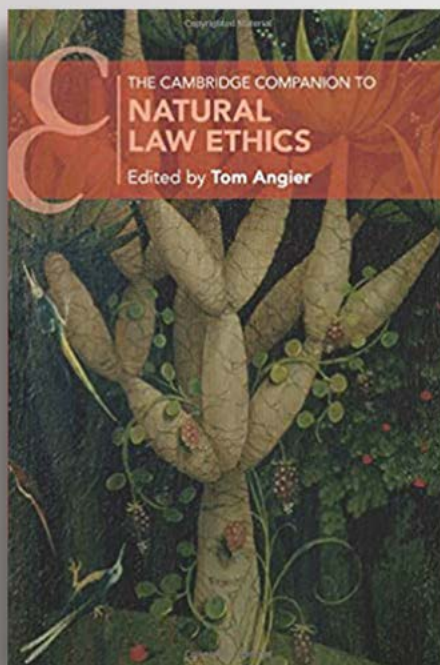
Across

- 1. Larks are against clear sky first thing (6)
- 4. Horrific device, less quiet, produces repeated words (6)
- 8. How to understand what cannot be heard? Boy swallows one before (3-4)
- 9. Disorder in sunny port, never heading west (7)
- 11. Very old, bright, ample (10)
- 12. Strong French garrison (4)
- 13. Tapas: tapas includes Italian fare (5)
- 14. Charm a slim aunt - not posh - in a confused state (8)
- 16. Early British heresiarch (8)**
- 18. Pilchards are stuffed with vegetable (5)
- 20. Oh celestial sound! Part of it returns (4)
- 21. The art of preaching (10)**
- 23. With a lot of ale, Henry and I have a source of the sweet stuff (7)
- 24. Drunkard with time in Brazilian city makes dish from Italy (7)
- 25. The Book of Ecclesiasticus (6)**
- 26. Stone soldiers in this place, by the sound of it (6)

Down

- 1. In the morning I turn to Spanish friend (5)
- 2. Are these for the books or the trousers? (4-3)
- 3. Daily one varies - mostly - creating noisy serenade (9)
- 5. Young virgin martyr of Rome (5)**
- 6. Sailor is far from sea at first and gets taxes (7)
- 7. And man spread chaos (9)
- 10. See! In to visitors, including last of rotters - odious! (9)
- 13. Dominicans: Order of ..... (9)**
- 15. Pub final call: what the clocks say here (5,4)
- 17. Mama, not here! Someone else is in there (7)
- 19. Earliest Gentile Church of Acts 11 (7)**
- 21. Originally heavy artillery volley overhead caused devastation (5)
- 22. Give food to feline with hesitation (5)

**Cambridge  
Companion to  
Natural Law Ethics**  
ed. Tom Angier



Cambridge  
University Press  
358pp  
£19.99 Paperback

## Useful Natural Law textbook

### Review by Dylan James

This is not a Catholic textbook, but, as one might expect, the *Cambridge Companion to Natural Law Ethics* brings together contributions from a number of well-established and prominent Catholic scholars, including Edward Feser, Steven Jensen, Patrick Lee and Christopher Wolfe. The collection includes a description of Natural Law theory within Judaism, Islam, and Protestant Christianity, but given that this field is generally regarded as Catholic territory, it's unsurprising that we find Catholic authors contributing. That said, its coverage of the field doesn't necessarily cover what you might hope for in a *Catholic* textbook on the subject. I shall focus my review on the *Companion's* treatment of the 'New Natural Law Theory'.

### New Natural Law Theory

Ever since Germain Grisez, John Finnis, Joseph Boyle *et al* started defending *Humanae Vitae* using their 'New Natural Law Theory' (NNL), the debate about their school of thought has been one of the defining issues in Natural Law writings. Is it an authentic presentation of St Thomas' thought? Can, or cannot, you derive an 'ought' from an 'is'? etc. It is thus to be expected that the *Compan-*



ion offers a summary and defence of the NNL, as Patrick Lee does ably. You would then expect a 'Traditional Thomist' (as they are usually called) to offer a presentation of the alternative. Sadly, however, the collection only offers this in what might be considered an implicit or indirect manner. I would have to consider this a significant omission in the collection. In addition, given that so much Catholic literature on Natural Law has focused on issues of sexual morality, it is somewhat curious that this is not touched on in the articles.

## How can we know moral truths?

The heart of the NNL-'Traditional Thomist' debate is one of epistemology: How do we know the Natural Law? Both sides of the debate agree we can know moral truths, but the two sides disagree as to *how* we can come to know these truths. 'Traditional Thomists' hold that "the basic moral criterion is human nature itself" (p.73): we know that good acts are good because we evaluate them as fulfilling the ends built into human nature. In manufacturing, a good watch is evaluated by whether it fulfils the telos of a watch: telling the time. In morality, a good act of eating is evaluated by whether it fulfils the inbuilt telos of eating: nourishment (with various secondary ends like social intercourse over meals). In contrast, we judge gluttonous eating to be sinful because it thwarts the telos of eating. We know the 'ought' by knowing the 'is': We know moral norms by knowing human nature with its various inbuilt ends and purposes. Such a teleological view of human nature will be familiar to those acquainted with the vision of the *Faith* magazine: evolution forms nature purposefully and we can know those purposes by knowing nature.

## Basic human goods

The NNL approach, in contrast, argues that while morality is grounded in nature metaphysically our knowledge of morality is not dependent epistemologically on our knowledge of nature. "Knowledge of the natural law does not ... begin with theoretical knowledge of human nature; rather, practical reason begins with its own, self-evident practical principles" (p.73). There are certain "basic human goods" that are self-evidently recognised and the task of moral analysis is to discern how to pursue these in a manner that is "open" to all the goods and exclusive of none. The eight goods are "incommensurable" (p.82) and cannot be ranked or pitted against each other. This, Lee argues, creates a system that defends "moral absolutes" (p.86). Lee's articulation and defence of the NNL position is clear, well-defended, and as good as any exclusively-Catholic textbook might hope for.

## Virtue

The less-satisfying coverage in the *Companion* is its presentation of the non-NNL approach. Given that this is the approach more likely to interest *Faith* magazine readers, and given the wealth of scholarship by 'Traditional Thomists' in recent years, this might be considered somewhat disappointing. This said, there is an indirect comparison in that the *Companion* groups Lee's article with one by Jennifer Frey on 'Neo-Aristotelian Ethical Naturalism'. Frey draws on Elizabeth Anscombe and Philippa Foot to summarise the resurgence of the concept of 'virtue' as the paradigm for moral analysis within certain secular academic circles. She writes, "Human beings... given the kind of kind they are, need and therefore ought to develop... virtues" (p.93), i.e. the 'ought' of behaviour is derived from the 'kind' of beings human

are, their 'is'. While not referring to the NNL *per se*, Frey's article thus provides an epistemological foundation at variance with the NNL claim.

## Human foundational tendencies

Probably the best two articles in the *Companion* are those by Steven Jensen and Edward Feser. Jensen, a well-published Thomistic scholar, focuses his analysis on St Thomas' account of the 'inclinations'. These 'inclinations' are those foundational tendencies of the human person that define us, something much more foundational than conscious 'desires'. He uses this analysis to elaborate St Thomas' understanding of a number of points, including 'obligation'. The 'inclinations' direct us to specific ends that define us. For example, at our most foundational level, along with plants and animals, a man is inclined to self-preservation – he possesses this inclination without choosing to possess it; it is simply part of what he is. These ends provide reference points to evaluate action, to ground our sense of 'obligation'. While not referring to the is-ought debate, Jensen thus outlines a 'Traditional Thomist' response to the NNL.

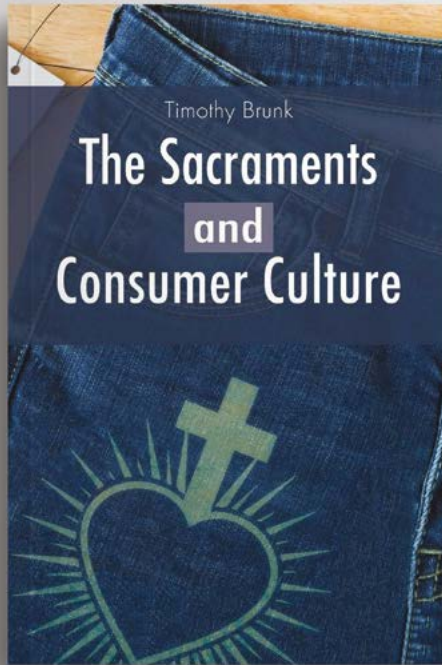
## Metaphysics

Edward Feser, one of the foremost scholars of our day, contributes an article that offers a detailed defence of the underlying metaphysics. He seeks to defend St Thomas' account of Natural Law by defending "a metaphysics of Aristotelian essentialism and teleology" (p.276), showing in detail how they are connected. Drawing in turn on the philosophies of physics, chemistry, and biology, and quoting numerous recent authors in these fields, he argues convincingly that evolution actually supports rather than undermines the notion that there are distinct species and distinct 'essences'. Thus, there are 'natures' and we can thus speak of a 'Natural Law'. While only briefly referring to Grisez, this article is another implicit defence of the 'Traditional Thomistic' position on Natural Law.

Who then should buy this book? Like any *Cambridge Companion*, it's a technical work and not for the casual reader. In addition, as noted, much of the focus is not specifically Catholic. Nonetheless, it offers much useful material.

**Fr. Dylan James is a professor of Moral Theology at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio.**

***The Sacraments and  
Consumer Culture***  
by Timothy Brunk



Liturgical Press  
Academic  
212pp  
£7.73

## Consuming the sacraments

### Review by Peter Coxe

Our author compiles a series of articles on how “consumer culture” has impacted on the way each Sacrament is celebrated in the developed world and how a richer and deeper Sacramental theology can creatively challenge that culture. Many readers, including myself, may begin by thinking that “consumer culture” refers merely to lavish expenditure, as for example on family parties, gifts, garments and suchlike for Baptisms, Confirmations, First Communions, weddings, Ordinations, etc. However, the author explores far deeper in a well-researched study of each Sacrament, using data from every era of Sacramental theology as well as findings of contemporary (mainly North American) social surveys.

### Three features

I pick out three commonly repeated features of consumer culture identified by Brunk: (1) separation from context and community; (2) transactions with purchasers’ and sellers’ rights; and (3) tailor-making for the individual.

**Separation from context and community.** For example, a can of beans in a supermarket may seem as if it comes “from nowhere.”

Without careful research, the buyer is unaware of the context in which it came to be, e.g. farming methods, fair or unfair payment of workers, etc. In earlier cultures the market's produce would have come largely from local farms and the buyer may have even known the farmer who produced it and many others in the community involved in any processes undergone between field and market counter.

**Transactions with purchasers' and sellers' rights.** In a modern shop, any buyer who hands over the product price has an automatic right to take the goods from the shelf. Beyond the stated guarantees and conditions of sale, this transaction confers no further obligations or rights on the supplier or buyer. The buyer leaves the shop with the goods and the matter is closed. Except when the goods turn out to be faulty, there is no further mutual obligation or interpersonal relationship.

**Tailor-making for the individual.** The individual has the right to choose the product that best suits one's personal taste. The items selected reflect the kind of person the buyer is.

## The early Church

All this impacts on the attitude of many contemporary people to the Sacraments. In the early Church, all Sacraments had a clear community context. Baptisms (followed immediately by Confirmation and Communion in the case of adults), Reconciliation (originally for the most serious of matters after a rigorous period of belonging to the Order of Penitents), Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony and Orders would have involved the whole local Christian community, which would be discerning, praying and/or helping people prepare for these life-changing events and follow up after them.

In the early Church, most Sacraments would have involved long periods of preparation and follow-up. They would not be one-off events, but part of a process of journeying with others in faith. There would also be a strong sense of Sacraments being gifts of God's grace, and not as "rewards" for passing through various "hoops" (e.g., length of instruction, complying with minimal canonical requirements, etc.). The recipients and the community would have discerned together when the moment was right for receiving the Sacraments and how to continue the journey of faith thereafter.

By contrast, many of our contemporaries risk seeing the Sacraments as mere transactions in which the recipient who fulfils the right terms and conditions has an automatic "right" to receive, with little sense of how the Sacrament relates to the rest of one's life or to the lives of fellow Christians. For example, First Communion can become a mere single event, rather than beginning a regular life of prayer, sacrifice and weekly Eucharistic nourishment alongside the rest of the community.

In the early Church, the Catechumenate, preparations for Ordination and suchlike would have involved the community. The sacramental celebrations would not have been private individual or family occasions, designed in tailor-made fashion to personal idiosyncrasy (as happens for example in preparation for weddings, where individuals often want to leave their personal “mark” on the unique design of the wedding garments, décor, etc.)

## Actions of Christ

The central figure in all the Sacraments is not the recipient, but Christ Himself. The Sacraments, before being actions of the minister, are actions of Christ and actions of the Church. Sacraments change us, not vice-versa. When we receive the Body of Christ, the opposite happens to when we receive common food – we are transformed into Christ’s Body. The reforms of Vatican II, when well applied, bring us back to the true nature of Sacraments. Sacraments are not consumer products divorced from the community or tailor-made to individual tastes. They incorporate us more closely into Christ’s Body.

Occasionally, a provocative statement by Brunk raises my eyebrows as, for example, when he questions the wisdom of highlighting First Communion (when every Communion is highly significant) or of strictly limiting Rite 3 of Penance (where in practice even Rite 2 often fails to be seen sufficiently as a community celebration, with each person leaving the Church after individual Confession and saying a prayer).

## Challenging consumer culture

I guess that many a reader will find it refreshing to be reminded of the vitality of the early Church and how we can challenge consumer culture in a way that goes far beyond bemoaning the degree of expenditure and waste. A short review of this nature cannot do justice to the detail and depth of this study, as our author carefully examines each Sacrament.

I finish with a quote from the first page of the Introduction: “Concerning a shared world of meaning,” Bernard Lonergan writes:

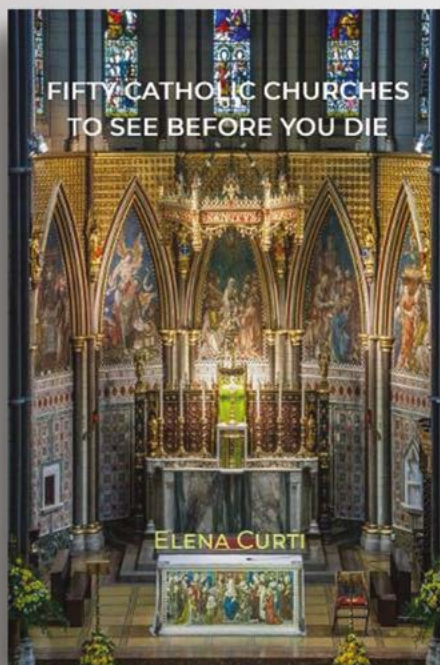
**For what is community? It is not just a number of men within a geographical frontier. It is an achievement of common meaning, and there are kinds and degrees of achievement...**

I leave the reader to enjoy the rest at leisure. Those seeking to study the subject in depth will find the numerous footnotes and the index of persons helpful.

**Fr. Peter Coxe is a priest of the Diocese of Plymouth. He has ministered in parishes, chaplaincies and the English College, Valladolid.**



*Fifty Catholic Churches to See Before You Die*  
by Elena Curti



Gracewing  
280pp  
£14.99

## Our beautiful churches

### Review by Paul Marsden

Cardinal Basil Hume once said, “Churches are not just places in which we worship God but with which we worship God.” This book bears testimony to the huge importance of both sacred space and beauty in our worship, and is, as well as being a guidebook, an account of our Catholic history in this country. It will lift the spirits of any Catholic reader and will surprise most at the richness of our heritage. *Fifty Churches* shows that Catholic churches are among the great architectural and decorative treasures of England and Wales, but we know they are largely unknown, underappreciated and unvisited. This book puts that right. This practical guide is meant for making visits and caters to the growing popularity of church tourism. But the author gives a warning: visits require careful planning. Some churches are locked outside of Mass times for reasons of security. Curti advises telephoning ahead to check opening times: the website may be out of date, or there may be a funeral.

### Lost heritage

Elena Curti was born in Italy, educated in England and trained as a journalist, being Deputy Editor of *The Tablet* for a number of years.

More recently she has specialised in writing about Catholic heritage and conservation, and in *Fifty Churches* she shows a knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, her subject which is utterly infectious. The tone of the writing is one of respect and affection and shows that, at least compared with half a century ago, we are today more respectful of tastes and fashions that are different from our own. Curti deals with this issue in the excellent Introduction. She discusses the impact of the “noble simplicity” set out in the Second Vatican Council and how this influenced not only new buildings but also how much of our heritage was regarded. As she says, “rood screens, altar rails, high altars and their, often elaborate, stone-carved reredoses, were ripped out and destroyed. To visit historic Catholic churches is to learn how much was lost in this way.” Notwithstanding, five of the fifty churches she has selected are from the 1960’s and represent good examples of the new approach to the ordering of churches and their decoration.

### Faith and generosity

Each church selected has an entry of either four or six pages with superb quality photographs. (The photos are without caption, and perhaps, in a future edition, consideration could be given to including some.) The history of the building is invariably interesting and frequently tells edifying tales of faith and generosity, whether it be the largess of the nobility or the pennies (and, in some cases, the labour) of the Irish poor. Curti’s highly scholarly and well-researched detail will satisfy the most demanding architectural and decorative enthusiast, but there will probably be too much detail for some readers who may be tempted to skip bits, perhaps having tired of constant referrals to the glossary at the back. *Fifty Churches* is immensely practical, giving the address and phone number of the church, together with a “Visit Also” paragraph which gives mention of other churches (or other things of interest to Catholics) in the vicinity. The entries are up-to-the-minute, including the sad news that the Benedictines are moving out of Downside.

### Problems and developments

The author addresses some difficult facts. Changing demographics were behind the foundation of many of these churches (not least Irish immigration into largely urban areas), and are now part of the problem (together with falling rates of Mass attendance). Churches are closing, while others (especially nineteenth century ones) are in need of unaffordable repairs. But there are many positive developments. St Francis Xavier in Liverpool (built in 1848), which once had a Catholic population of 13,000, was facing closure by 1981, as the population had moved away. Now its sumptuous interior has been beautifully restored and the church is supported by a group

of Friends who act as welcomers and guides. Ushaw College chapel is another encouraging example of resurrection from severe decay. And some endangered churches have been successfully put into new (and loving) hands: the Institute of Christ the King has acquired two redundant churches – St. Walburge, Preston, and another on the Wirral – while the Syro-Malabar Catholics are now established at St. Ignatius, Preston.

## Historical context

After the entries on each of the fifty selected churches, there are three appendices which are thorough and well-researched. The first covers the life and work of no less than thirty of the most important church artists and architects, placing them in their historical context. Indeed, the historical context of these churches is one of this book's strongest points. This is followed by a glossary not only of definitions of architectural and decorative features, but also matters pertaining to Catholic history and devotion which might not be known to those outside the household of the faith, itself an indication that this book is expected to be of interest beyond Catholic circles. Lastly, there is a short Bibliography and some useful Websites.

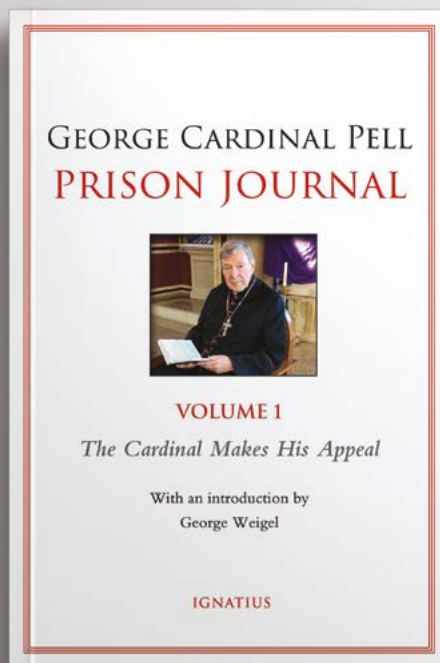
## For the glove-compartment

Inevitably, this book will be compared with *A Glimpse of Heaven* by Christopher Martin, published in 2006 as a collaboration between English Heritage and the Patrimony Committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. This latter book also covers cathedrals, which *Fifty Churches* does not. In some cases the photos are actually the same, by the distinguished architectural photographer Alex Ramsay. Both books are warmly recommended, but I see them in different places. *A Glimpse*, hardback with double the page-size of *Fifty Churches* and luxuriously produced, is like a solemn hymn of thanksgiving for our glorious heritage that would grace any coffee-table in the most elegant surroundings. *Fifty Churches*, once read through perhaps twice, I see residing in the glove-compartment of the car, next to the road atlas. (That probably dates me – I should have said the sat nav.)

Now let us all pray that these beautiful buildings may be filled with worshippers.

**Paul Marsden is a retired banker and a Trustee of Aid to the Church in Need (UK).**

***Prison Journal: Vol 1.  
The Cardinal Makes  
his Appeal*** by George  
Cardinal Pell



Ignatius Press  
348pp  
£14.40

## Pell in prison

### Review by Joanna Bogle

**This is not Gulag literature: a 21st century Australian jail is not a place of horror, and Cardinal George Pell had a cell with its own shower and lavatory, received regular meals and medical attention, was allowed books and writing materials, and above all had regular visitors and contact with his lawyers. What matters about this book is two things: first the fact of an innocent man, a leading public figure, being unjustly convicted and imprisoned for a crime he did not commit – and all of this happening in a modern Western country – and, second, the way in which he handled this.**

### Gutsy courage

The first of these was shocking and has worrying implications for the future. The second is enriching and, to my astonishment, a truly gripping read. I had honestly not expected this. Part of me had vaguely imagined a book of with some courageous but bleak affirmations of hope and trust in God, coupled with information about the trial and various details which help to build up a picture of it all. But it's not like that. Cardinal Pell emerges from these pages as a man of gutsy courage, wide reading, intellectual curiosity, and a deep and manly

faith centred wholly in the life of the Church and, especially, in his daily Office of Readings, the lifeblood of every Catholic priest.

Because he is innocent of the horrible crime, he has an inner serenity that is immoveable: he knows the truth and will work determinedly to help ensure that everyone else involved knows it, too. That the truth will finally triumph is something about which he is not really in doubt, but he is fully aware of the massive media campaigns against him and the challenge that all this presents.

## A retreat with Job

This is a genuine diary, entries written daily, small details sometimes noted, general points made, activities described (half an hour of outdoor exercise in a small high-walled yard: he notes the changes in the light and the clouds). Cardinal Pell couldn't celebrate Mass, but the prison chaplain, a nun, brought him Holy Communion weekly, and he watched daily Mass on TV and – above all, supremely – he prayed his daily Office. He remains, even in his private diary, a teacher: the readings (all too appropriately!) in his early days in prison are from the Book of Job, and his insights are fascinating. I felt as if I was taking part in a really good Retreat or seminar, with Job – and in due course other Scriptures – opened up to me daily.

Pell is a man without anger or bitterness – and it's clear that this is because he is a man who takes good spiritual advice, places himself in God's hands, and takes a steady approach allowing both these things to form and shape his daily journey. It's impressive. He is also hard-working and patient: he works with his lawyers and replies to letters, listens, asks questions, reads things through, notes details.

## A real diary

Each day concludes with a prayer, sometimes drawn from one of the many letters he has been sent, more often drawn from his daily Office, or from some other book that he has been reading. He reads widely (making good use of the permission to have six books at any one time), and comments in depth on what he is reading and also watching on TV, so we get short dissertations on Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, and on Jordan Peterson, American politics, the future of the Church in China, and more.



Cardinal George Pell © AFP

The process of Cardinal Pell's lengthy trials and mistreatment at the hands of the media grinds on – and by the end of Volume 1 is not over. What is, of course, authentic for the reader is that the Cardinal doesn't know what happens next. This is a real diary. As it finishes in July 2019 the end of the story hasn't come. There is drama yet to follow – and, yes, final vindication. We know this as we've followed the events and are reading this after the triumph in Australia's High Court. So I am most certainly going to order Volume 2, and am looking forward to it.

**Joanna Bogle is the editor of FAITH magazine.**



# Syria's Christians still need your help

Hanna and her child are among the 1,800+ families in Syria's Valley of the Christians counting on ACN's support. These families include those who fled the civil war and those targeted by extremists. ACN is providing food, rent and other essentials for those who have lost everything.

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