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by Edward Holloway

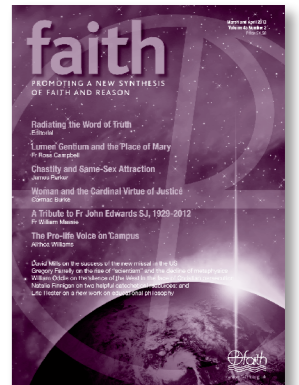
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“Beauty grows in you to the extent that love grows, because charity itself is the soul’s beauty”

St Augustine (Ninth Homily on the First Epistle of St John)

Pope Benedict clearly wishes this Year of Faith to be a graced opportunity for Catholics to grapple with the content of their faith. He quotes approvingly his predecessor Paul VI, who exhorts us to strive after an “exact knowledge of the faith, so as to reinvigorate it, purify it, confirm it, and confess it” (*Porta Fidei* 4). The Holy Father continues: “In order to arrive at a systematic knowledge of the content of the faith, all can find in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* a precious and indispensable tool” (PF11). The Catholic faith is not amorphous and vacuous. It has a definite content: it has dogmas. These are not simply dry nuggets of information. They centre upon and lead us to the living person of Christ, and through Christ to the inner life of God: the Trinity. But, nonetheless, they are dogmas and Pope Benedict wants us to know them. He wants us to apply our minds in this Year of Faith, so that we might acquire an intellectual apprehension of the data of our faith.

However, the Pope also writes: “Christians are called to radiate the word of truth that the Lord Jesus has left us” (PF6). This idea of radiating “the word of truth” is subtle and evocative. It suggests that the “word of truth” must also be communicated in a way that escapes what might be quantified by a teacher’s classroom outcomes and objectives. It implies that somehow the beauty of Christ must shine forth. Indeed in the next edition of *Faith* magazine we will have an article by Dr Dudley Plunkett that is a sustained reflection on just this theme: beauty as a path to God. But the Pope is here more specifically talking about the witness value of our Christian lives. The Catholic faith finds its most compelling proclamation in the lives of faithful Catholics, but within the prevailing cultural context of the western world we would suggest there is one reality that most effectively “radiate[s] the word of truth”: the family.

The Importance of the Family

The priestly and religious life have been held up as paradigms of holiness. And there can be no doubt that, notwithstanding the scandals of recent years, many priests and religious continue to lead lives of heroic virtue. These vocations and the form of life they entail make sense to those who have been adequately catechised and whose hearts are in tune with the mind of the Church. Hence while someone might not himself have received a religious vocation, nonetheless on encountering a truly devout nun that person may well be touched by the nun’s fervour and thereby inspired to a deeper devotion to Christ.

Sadly, even within the Church there are many for whom this is no longer true. For a variety of reasons, perhaps including inadequate catechesis, many Catholics are ill-equipped to make sense of the priestly or religious life and are therefore incapable of discerning that the priestly or religious life, in its simple existence, might “radiate the word of truth”.

Outside the Church many of our contemporaries have been scandalised. One might query whether in all cases they have been *justly* scandalised or whether this has come about through the agency of a deeply hostile media. Nonetheless, in their eyes the priestly and religious life appears incapable of radiating anything good. Even among those who have not been entirely scandalised the celibacy, the commitment to prayer, the obedience to authority and the lack of status and financial remuneration stand in stark contrast to everything they have been taught to value. The priestly or religious lifestyle is so alien to their lives that it has little or no immediate power to sway them. Regrettably, in the present cultural milieu the priestly and religious life is now very limited in its pulling power. However, quite the opposite is true of family life.

In our society, even now, there is still a basic consensus that the natural nuclear family is inherently a good thing. Why else are politicians forever posing for photo opportunities with their families? Why is it that the great and the good have replaced the images of the Holy Family on their annual Christmas cards with pictures not of Father Christmas or robin red-breasts but of their own families? Why is it that advertising agencies use the family to sell anything from holidays to department stores, from cars to brands of gravy? These are all cynical forms of cashing in on the family, but why is that this reality, the family, lends itself to such forms of exploitation? The simple answer is that, even though our own families often fail to live up to these idealised images, we still intuitively grasp the goodness and value of the traditional family. In our jaded, consumerist society we still aspire to family life and desire it for ourselves because somewhere deep down we recognise that family life is good, beautiful and true.

Threats to the Family

However, this simple human goodness of the family is fragile. Families can be broken. The very notion of the family and the legal framework that supports it is now being dismantled by our ruling classes. Politicians are seeking to redefine marriage, which is at the basis of family life. But they remain muddle-headed and opaque on quite what their new definition will be. Then there’s the sustained assault on the family from our media. Often this takes the form of debates in which pundits put forth their ideas, but more insidious are the soap operas, dramas (often children’s dramas!) and celebrity magazines which relentlessly bombard us with propaganda pushing alternative forms of the family.

All this is taking place within a profoundly hedonistic culture that sees value only in short-term gratification and which is inimical to and corrosive of any form of commitment. Our culture reduces deep, committed, inter-personal love to nothing more than casual encounters, friends with benefits or at best serial monogamy.

The Church’s Role

This is the state of affairs in which we find ourselves. Through the inherent goodness that remains in our human nature we recognise and aspire to family life but nonetheless everything in our culture militates against it. In this context the Church has an important role to play. First of all her teachings sustain the human structure of the family, which even those outside the Church grasp as good. There is something special and uncompromising about the Catholic vision of the family. The Church has always maintained that the committed stable relationship of marriage is the environment God intended for the bringing about of new life. Marriage is the bed-rock of family life. The Church has never and could never compromise on the three goods of marriage. Marriage is exclusively faithful. Marriage is an indissoluble lifelong commitment. Marriage is at least in principle open to new life. The Church is not being judgmental in this. She is supporting marriage, and because she uncompromisingly supports marriage she uncompromisingly supports the family.

However, the Church doesn’t just support the natural human good of marriage. Through the sacrament of marriage the Church raises marriage and family life to an even higher nobility and beauty. The point of the three goods of marriage is that the spouses become living images of Christ’s complete self-sacrificing love. The exclusive fidelity is much more than a negative prohibition and its demands go much further than simply the physical intimacy of marriage. When Christ’s side is pierced on the cross there flows forth blood and water. One interpretation of this episode, aside from the eucharistic and baptismal symbolism, is that the water flows forth as a sign that Christ has given himself entirely for us. He has no blood left to shed for us. In the same way the sacrament of marriage challenges spouses to give themselves so generously to each other that their self-gift is complete.

If you give yourself in a married way completely to your spouse then you cannot simultaneously give yourself in a married way to another. And herein lies the rationale for the exclusivity of marriage. It is not primarily about temptations outside marriage; rather it is about the degree of self-giving within marriage. Marriage is for life. Again this is a corollary of the generosity and completeness of the self-donation that is required of the spouses. When you give yourself completely that includes your tomorrow as well as your today. Someone who says “I love you just for today” doesn’t really understand what love is. And finally marriage is open to new life. This again is patterned upon Christ’s love for us. Christ’s love is always creative and always life-giving in one way or another and this is reflected within the spousal love of marriage.

By no means are we contending that Catholics have been untouched by the corrosive atmosphere of our present culture, but the Church has not stopped teaching the ideal of marriage that is the bedrock of what we find beautiful in family life. Furthermore, the simple fact of having to speak the vows in the wedding service means there is one, concrete,

tangible moment when those married in the Catholic Church must assent, externally at least, to the ideals of Catholic marriage. In this perhaps very weak sense there remains something special about the way Catholics “do” marriage and the family. And many Catholics do take Christ’s self-sacrificing love as the basis of their family lives. This love of Christ in them is nurtured and sustained by the sacraments. And this way of living makes these families, for all their human frailties, shining examples of goodness.

Humanae Vitae: “the elephant in the room”

The presence of this goodness within our culture is a sign of hope. It is in itself salvific. But here we must mention what one bishop in the UK has had the courage to call “the elephant in the room”. If these wonderful families, which are such an inspiration to so many, are to reach their full potential and “to radiate the word of truth” that is our Catholic faith in all its luminosity and beauty, then we as a Church must recover the fullness of our faith’s teaching on sex and loving.

It is not our purpose in these few pages to develop arguments that have been developed elsewhere and at greater depth. We do, however, have to come to a new recognition of the wisdom of the Church’s ban on artificial means of contraception. We must recognise that we human beings are body and soul and that what we do physically affects us spiritually and emotionally. Barrier methods of contraception compromise the deep act of physical union between two spouse and, perhaps subtly but nonetheless inevitably, this will play itself out spiritually and emotionally. A medication that manipulates the body into withholding its fertility from this act again undermines the union that is an integral dimension of the marriage act. How can you accept someone completely if that acceptance doesn’t embrace also their fertility?

By no means are we arguing that a marriage cannot survive the use of artificial contraception. There are any number of marriages, even happy marriages, in which spouses choose to use artificial contraception. But we would ask how much more might these marriages have been and still become? The use of artificial contraception undermines the physical unity of a couple and therefore must to some degree compromise their spiritual and emotional unity. When lived with full generosity this unity touches even the smallest details of a married couple’s life together and it gives their marriage a lambent beauty that radiates to the utmost “the word of truth that the Lord Jesus has left us”.

The Pastoral Reality

Nearly half a century has passed since Paul VI wrote *Humanae Vitae* and things have changed. The teachings of that encyclical have not been passed on to the lay faithful. At least two generations of Catholics in our pews on a Sunday have not heard the Church’s teaching on sex and loving. And among those few who have heard it proclaimed, how many have had it proposed as a *realistic* possibility for their

lives here and now? There is a world of difference between seeing this teaching lived out with generosity and grasping the difference it makes and, for example, being told by a tired, cynical RE teacher: “Well, no one believes it anyway but we have to go through the motions of teaching this.” The truth is that, through no fault of their own, only a tiny minority of Catholics have received the life-giving message of the Church’s teaching on sex and love. This means that many of the Catholics who are only now beginning to learn of it are already in stable and committed marriages.

Embracing this teaching may be extremely difficult. It may mean that they have to overturn a settled pattern of life. And what are they then to make of perhaps the last 20 years of their married life? Moreover, the repercussions of this teaching touch both the husband and wife. Even if one of them becomes convinced of the Church’s teaching, what if their spouse isn’t? We must recognise that today this life-giving message is not being proclaimed in a morally neutral context. We are confronting an uphill struggle.

However, some changes at least have been for the good. For example, the Billings method of natural family planning was unheard of half a century ago. And when in 1968 Paul VI warned that “a man who grows accustomed to the use of contraceptive methods may forget the reverence due to a woman, and, disregarding her physical and emotional equilibrium, reduce her to being a mere instrument for the satisfaction of his own desires” (HV17) many would have dismissed this as scare-mongering. Today, with the breakdown of marriage, the explosion of pornography and the reduction of women to sex objects, who can deny the force of Paul VI’s words?

Above all, in this new context we must trust in God. Through his grace, conversion is possible even in the most difficult of circumstances. Pastorally this means we have to trust more in God than in our own ingenuity or eloquence. It means more prayer and less activism. We have to trust that in God’s providence a moment will come when we can win the hearts

and minds of these often fine and generous couples to the fullness of Christ’s message. Nor is it fair just to assume that absolutely everyone is using contraception. Though few in numbers, there are now families – even in secular Britain – who live out the fullness of the Church’s teaching and who are compelling witnesses to the beauty of our faith. But we must also recognise that we cannot expect our culture to change overnight. It may take generations for the prophetic nature of Paul VI’s encyclical to be fully appreciated.

Even so, certain pastoral contexts are more clear-cut. In our schools, in university chaplaincies and in our marriage preparation courses, for example, we must be fearless in proclaiming the Church’s teaching. In these situations we are usually dealing with people who are not yet in a settled pattern of life and who have not made implicit relationship commitments to others. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to give the fullness of the Church’s teaching.

To do less is at best a gross dereliction of duty and at worst a personal betrayal of Christ. It would be wrong to assume that people, the young especially, are incapable of generosity or nobility of heart. No one aspires to be mediocre. We all want to be noble and beautiful and to do extraordinary things with our lives. And what is more noble and more beautiful and more extraordinary than the family?

When we compromise or fudge the Church’s teaching on this matter we betray our own Catholic faithful, which is terrible – but we also let down wider society. Our society needs families simply to survive and it needs the example of good families in order to flourish. Only the fullness of the Church’s teaching can provide a credible alternative to the nihilistic hedonism of our culture. The compelling witness of Catholic families and the manifest beauty and nobility of married life will be the most effective counter-arguments to those forces that now menace the family. And in our society, and for our contemporaries, Catholic marriage and family life lived in its fullness is the most eloquent proclamation of “the word of truth that the Lord Jesus has left us”.

Christians, and gives us a role as believers surrounded by our brothers and sisters who long to know God and to know what it is to be authentically human. Faith is our strength and our comfort, helping us to resolve the fundamental problems of existence. It is our certainty and our consolation.

But faith is also our first duty before God, who speaks to us and wishes us to believe Him. Faith is our duty before our mother and teacher, the Church, who hands on to us the doctrines of our faith and helps her children to know and in turn to hand on the faith in prayer and in works. It is also our duty before the world which at every step asks us: what do you believe? And waits upon our act of witness.

Lumen Gentium and the Place of Mary

By Fr Ross Campbell

In the first of a two-part article Fr Ross Campbell, assistant priest in Kirkintilloch, analyses the background to the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium* and its teaching on the role and importance of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

At the dawn of the new millennium, we notice with joy the emergence of the “Marian Profile” of the Church that summarises the deepest contents of conciliar renewal. (John Paul II, Wednesday audience, 25 November 1998)

One of the slow growing fruits that has developed out of the Second Vatican Council is an emerging deeper understanding of the relationship between Mary and the Church. This was not always the case and it has been far from a smooth ride. Even today much confusion remains with regard to where we place Mariology within the overall context of theology. Anecdotaly, during my seminary formation it was evident that the theology faculty was undecided on this matter. Each year Mariology was taught from a different perspective, using a different methodology: in my first year it was taught as a subject in its own right, the following year it was taught within the Christology course and then in my final year it was taught within the ecclesiology course.

The point here is that there still seems to be some confusion regarding where we should locate the study of Mary in Catholic theology. This article focuses on the relationship between Mary and the Church; however, this is not meant to be exclusive. There is a danger that in subsuming Mariology into ecclesiology we could neglect to study the role of Mary in relation to Christ. Likewise, if Mariology is taught solely in Christology we could easily forget the Marian dimension of the Church, and her relationship to each believer.

In the hope of elucidating some of these issues this article offers a thumbnail sketch of the history of Mariological development during the second half of the 20th century. For the sake of clarity this can be broken into three periods: the situation prior to the Second Vatican Council and the teaching of chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*; the ecclesiological developments immediately following the Vatican II; and finally the rediscovery of the Marian profile of the Church, in particular as expressed in the ecclesiology of the great Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar.

This third period is the focus for the second half of this article, to be publish in the next edition of *Faith* magazine. This article will focus on the first two periods.

The Second Vatican Council

Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium* is the final chapter of the Council’s document on the Church. It is titled *The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God in the Mystery of Christ and the Church*. This chapter was intended to mark both a point of arrival for the theological debates regarding Mary which preceded the Council and also a point of departure for further theological reflection in the years following the Council. The

chapter offers a synthesis of what had gone before, but it in no way is it meant to have the final say: it offers no real dogmatic definitions. Thus, the Council Fathers wrote the document with the intention that it would lead to further theological development.

In fact the discussion on the role of Mary in the economy of salvation was one of the most emotive and debated themes of the Council. Three times the Fathers changed their minds on whether Mary’s role should be treated in a separate document or included within the document on the Church. When it was final decided to include Mary in *Lumen Gentium* it was the closest vote of the entire Council (1,114 in favour, 1074 against).

Vatican II as a Point of Arrival

In the years prior to the Council there were two seemingly opposing tendencies that dominated much of Mariological debate. The “Christo-typical” approach tended to consider Mary in terms of her relationship to Christ. It is from her relationship with her Son that Mary’s privileges derive. At the Council, proponents of this school sought to defend the traditional Marian dogmas and were even in favour of a fifth definition: Mary as Co-redemptrix or mediatrix. They would assert that Mary is mother of the Church in the sense that she is above the Church. Naturally they favoured a separate document on the Mary.

The second Mariological approach may be called “ecclesio-typical”. This approach emphasised Mary as a figure or type of the Church, which implies that her privileges must be understood in light of the Church of which she is the first and pre-eminent member.

Interestingly, Pope Benedict, writing then as Cardinal Ratzinger, suggests that these two approaches were in fact linked to two broader spiritual movements that existed before the Council. The Marian movement (for the Christo-typical) was a charismatic movement emphasising the privileges of Mary. It gave prominence to Mary’s closeness to Christ and was based on a subjective and personal piety. The second was the liturgical movement (from which the ecclesio-typical school emerged), which sought a renewal of the Church from the Scriptures and the Fathers. This movement was characterised by an objective and sacramental piety.¹

Anyhow, this issue split the Council Fathers. Cardinal Ruffini, arguing that Mariology also had close links with Christology and soteriology, was the main proponent of having a separate document. Cardinal Frings and the German bishops wanted to include Mary in *Lumen Gentium*. In the end it was Cardinal Koenig who attempted to reconcile the two groups.

Perhaps one reason for such a strong reaction against a separate document for Mary was the fact that the proposed document (*De Beata*) completely neglected Mary in relation to the Church. Nevertheless, to see chapter VIII as an overwhelming victory for the ecclesio-typical movement would be to oversimplify things. The chapter includes elements of both approaches. It begins by speaking of Mary in relation to Christ and goes on to speak of her in relation to the Church. It is in this sense that the document can be seen as offering a synthesis of the theological debates that had emerged in the years before the Council.

Vatican II as a Point of Departure

“Wherefore this holy synod [...] does not, however, have it in mind to give a complete doctrine on Mary, nor does it wish to decide those questions which the work of theologians has not yet fully clarified...”²

Paragraphs 63-65 of *Lumen Gentium* detail the relationship between Mary and the Church. Paragraph 63 begins by reaffirming the Christological teaching that had been stated at the start of the chapter. Mary is united to the redemptive work of her Son. It then asserts that in terms of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ, she is the type of the Church. Here the document is alluding to some idea of a future reality: Mary, as virgin and mother, is the perfect type of what the Church is called to be. Paragraph 64 speaks of the response of the Church in light of Mary who is her type. By following the example of Mary, the Church becomes like Mary in responding to the will of God. After the example of Mary the Church is both Mother (of the faithful, through preaching and baptism) and Virgin (through keeping the pledge of fidelity to Christ her spouse, keeping the purity of faith intact). It is that same faith of Mary that enables her to utter her fiat.

Paragraph 65 builds on the previous two paragraphs but moves from typology to moral example. It seeks to show the relevance of this Marian dimension which shapes the Church for ecclesial life. Just as Mary is the model of the Church, so she is the model for each member of the Church. Her example prompts the faithful to come to her Son, thereby shaping the Church’s apostolic activity. By following Mary the Church enables Christ to be born in the hearts and minds of the faithful.

In terms of her divine motherhood Mary is the example for the Church to imitate. In terms of her motherhood in grace, Mary is the model for each disciple who is called to bring Christ into the world. Mary is therefore viewed in her relation to Christ and in her relation to the Church. Again we see attempts to reconcile the two Mariological schools.

Post-Conciliar Developments

Although the intention of the Council Fathers was to provide a framework for further theological reflection on the role of Mary within the life of the Church, this never really happened. In the years immediately after the Council things stagnated.

Mariologists such as Stefano De Fiores and Heribert Mühlen put this down to a number of factors. First, there were weaknesses in chapter VIII. It did not adequately deal with Mary’s relation to the Holy Spirit. It did not make the necessary clarifications between acts attributed to Mary and acts attributed to the Holy Spirit. In the years after the Council this led to a trend which drew people’s attention away from Mary to focus on the Holy Spirit. Secondly, chapter VIII said nothing of Mary’s relationship to the Father.

Consequently Mariology was untouched by the general theological renewal that came in the years after the Council. According to Ratzinger, the victory of the ecclesiocentric approach at the Council led to the collapse of Mariology altogether and the development of new forms of theology, such as liberation theology, that attempted to replace the Marian dimension of the Church.

“The fact that later the two fell apart, that Mary was portrayed as an individual showered with privileges and thereby infinitely removed from us, while the Church was seen as being non-personal and merely institutional, damaged both Mariology and ecclesiology in equal measure.”³

A further factor was the dominance of the ecclesiology of Karl Rahner in the years immediately after the Council. He concentrated on developing certain parts of *Lumen Gentium* and despite his vast theological output, he gave no real emphasis to the relation between Mary and the Church. In fact, he appeared not to like using feminine terminology when describing the Church. Again this led to a further separation of Mary from the Church.

The Consequences of this Separation

According to Ratzinger, to understand the Church merely as sacrament and as the people of God is to see her in a predominantly masculine sense.⁴ He believes that the feminine dimension is essential in that it clarifies and deepens the concept of the Church. Only by recognising this dimension can we understand the Church’s maternal and bridal nature and so move beyond a mere sociological understanding of the Church:

“The Church is more than ‘people’, more than structure and action: the Church contains the living mystery of maternity and bridal love that makes maternity possible. There can be ecclesial piety, love for the Church, only if this mystery exists.”⁵

To reduce the Church to the mere masculine is to lose what is authentically ecclesial about the nature of the Church. For Ratzinger, Mary’s motherhood gives the Church her ultimate personal concretisation in history. A particular consequence of such an objective approach to the Church, which characterises Rahner’s ecclesiology, is that ecclesial life falls into the trap of masculine rationality.⁶ This reduces the

Church to a merely human–rational institution, which thus ceases to be the maternal womb of Christ.⁷ This loss in the understanding of the Church’s feminine nature, together with an inaccurate postconciliar interpretation of episcopal collegiality, has led to the Church becoming excessively bureaucratic – which, ironically, is something that Rahner himself had initially sought to prevent.

According to Henri De Lubac, the dominance of such an impersonal ecclesiology leads to the following problems in ecclesial life: a dry practice of the faith; an abstract theology which is expressed in objective rather than personalist categories; and a danger of reducing theological mysteries, as well as ecclesial relations, to the impersonal.⁸

“The loss of this feminine dimension of the Church gives rise to a false feminism in the Church”

In this context Hans Urs Von Balthasar observed that since the Council the Church has become more than ever a male institution, which without the Marian dimension threatens to become inhuman and irrelevant.⁹ It is essential that we rediscover the feminine, Marian dimension of the Church because viewing the Church as a mere organisational or institutional entity not only impoverishes her from within but also “severely diminishes her authentic religious appeal and

“There still seems to be some confusion with regard to where we should locate the study of Mary in Catholic theology”

misleads women who are seeking a legitimate and fruitful role”.¹⁰ The loss of this feminine dimension of the Church gives rise to a false feminism in the Church – one which expresses itself in appeals for the ordination of woman. It has led to an emphasis on the ideology of doing at the expense of contemplation. This in turn makes the Church over-bureaucratic and functional.

Ultimately, for Balthasar, the answer to these difficulties which arose in the postconciliar understanding of the Church can be found in the concrete, living person of Mary, who constitutes the true life and mission of the Church.

Notes
¹J. Ratzinger, *The Church at the Source*, (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005) 22.
²*Lumen Gentium* 54.
³J. Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005), 151.
⁴J. Ratzinger, *The Church at the Source*, (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005) 25.
⁵Ibid.
⁶L.Blair *Masculine and Feminine Symbolism in the Church: A Reappreciation of the Marian/ Feminine Dimension*, (Rome: PUST, 1997), 29.
⁷L. Scheffczyk, “*Mary as a Model of Catholic Faith*”, trans. Gordon Seely in the Church and Women: A Compendium, 89.
⁸H. De Lubac, *The Motherhood of the Church*, trans. S. Englund (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1982), 160.
⁹*Elucidations*, 70.
¹⁰Blair, *Masculine and Feminine Symbolism*, 39.

Chastity and Same-Sex Attraction

By James Parker

James Parker, facilitator of the London Chapter of EnCourage, gives an insight into the aims, ideals and work of EnCourage in supporting people who experience same-sex attraction.

EnCourage is a part of Courage International (<http://couragec.net>), a ministry of the Catholic Church which ministers to persons with same-sex attraction and their loved ones.

Five Goals of EnCourage

- 1. Live chaste lives in accordance with the Catholic Church’s teaching on homosexuality. (Chastity)
- 2. Dedicate one’s life to Christ through service to others, spiritual reading, prayer, meditation, individual spiritual direction, frequent attendance at Mass, and the frequent reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist. (Prayer and Dedication)

- 3. Foster a spirit of fellowship in which all may share thoughts and experiences, and so ensure that no one will have to face the problems of homosexuality alone. (Fellowship)
- 4. Be mindful of the truth that chaste friendships are not only possible but necessary in a chaste Christian life and in doing so provide encouragement to one another in forming and sustaining them. (Support)
- 5. Live lives that may serve as good examples to others. (Good Example/Role Model)

Looking at the Western Church of the 21st century, you would think it was preoccupied with the topic of same-sex

relationships. Maybe you wouldn't be far wrong. Never before has the need been so great for the people of God to provide spiritual and truly fraternal support for persons who experience differing degrees of same-sex attraction or gender uncertainty. The Church needs to be *the* place where truth can be looked in the eye without fear and without a person being pigeon-holed or stereotyped because of what they might, or indeed might not, feel. It is for this reason that the Church, out of great love and wisdom, rejects contemporary labels such as "homosexual", "gay" and "queer" while taking very seriously someone's sexual attractions.

More than 30 years ago, Cardinal Cooke of New York saw the need to provide a setting where Catholics, their families and friends, plus any interested others, could gather in confidence and safely address questions on human sexuality in a setting of prayer and celebration of the Sacraments while remaining wholly rooted in the mainstream Church. And so *Courage* was born, a spiritual and fraternal support group of Catholic lay men and women who aspire to live chaste lives in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Courage, currently known as *EnCourage* in Britain, but soon to change its name to *Courage* in union with the international Catholic apostolate, has been in operation for more than 20 years across the country.

What does *EnCourage* offer? We meet in the evening at least twice a month as a group in the centre of London and sometimes have a midweek celebration of the Mass. More groups are being set up across the country as priests request help to deal with the growing pastoral issues they are being presented with.

With more parents of children with same-sex attractions wanting support we have begun a system to help them to be in touch with one another. We are beginning a women's group, a group for married men and another for young adults. We have regular retreat days and social events and welcome others who do not experience same-sex attraction or gender uncertainty but who share our vision, values and goals. We also help the clergy to understand more deeply the labyrinth that same-sex attraction and gender uncertainty can be.

Above all, we keep returning to the truth that living chaste lives in accordance with the Catholic Church's teaching truly does bring about a deep joy and peace to the soul, whatever one's sexual attractions. We aspire to serve as good examples to others, being mindful of and witnessing to the truth that chaste friendships are not only possible but also necessary as Christians.

There is a strong sense of genuine companionship and healthy intimacy among those who attend. Our gatherings are made up of people of every age and from every continent, as

well as others from different denominations and occasionally different faiths. We also enjoy strong relationships with other *Courage* chapters across the world. Whatever same-sex attraction or gender uncertainty a person may experience, whether outright or only even very slightly, *EnCourage* seeks to provide a safe pastoral place where each story is listened to, heard and understood.

We place no expectations upon a person but merely hold each individual in a place of prayer and genuine support wherever they are at on their journey. In his recent visit to the London group, Archbishop Vincent Nichols praised those present for their commitment and said that "many will be encouraged by the example that the group will give."

Above all we are about deeply respecting and honouring one another. We don't demand or expect change, yet this often takes place as a gradual unseen process and looks different for every individual once a significant spiritual walk with Christ begins to take root. Some people attend *EnCourage* never having practised sexually. Others have practised for years but sense there genuinely has to be more to life. Some attend while still in short-term or even long-term partnerships, desiring a safe place to assess where they are at and to ask some deeper questions.

Above all, the group is very much a hospital for sinners rather than a hotel for saints. And yet the call remains the same: to be holy and chaste before God, however often, much or little we may fall into sinful patterns of behaviour.

Aside from offering support to individuals only just beginning to discuss their sexual attractions, *EnCourage* seeks to provide space for those who have already identified themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender and who wish to explore moving beyond a socio-political mindset to an eternal perspective rooted in their true identity in Christ.

More and more people are beginning to see this as a second and more significant and life-giving "coming out". This often leads to them taking their rightful place alongside the thousands of others who, week in and week out, stand on our sanctuaries and in our pews and offer their challenging same-sex attractions and temptations to the Lord along with everyone else's problems and struggles.

With genuine love and understanding, and without fear or prejudice, that is what *EnCourage* seeks to help individuals achieve. But then again, isn't that what the Church has always been about?

If you want to know more about EnCourage or its goals, visit <http://couragerc.net/>, email encouragelondon@yahoo.co.uk or call 077 9921 6623.

Pastoral Recommendations for the Year of Faith

In January of last year the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a series of recommendations for the implementation of the Year of Faith. We reprint below the recommendations aimed at parishes.

1. In preparation for the Year of Faith, all of the faithful are invited to read closely and meditate upon Pope Benedict XVI's Apostolic Letter *Porta Fidei*.
2. The Year of Faith "will also be a good opportunity to intensify the celebration of the faith in the liturgy, especially in the Eucharist". In the Eucharist, mystery of faith and source of the new evangelisation, the faith of the Church is proclaimed, celebrated and strengthened. All of the faithful are invited to participate in the Eucharist actively, fruitfully and with awareness, in order to be authentic witnesses of the Lord.
3. Priests should devote greater attention to the study of the documents of Vatican Council II and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, drawing from them resources for the pastoral care of their parishes – catechesis, preaching, sacramental preparation. They should also offer cycles of homilies on the faith or on specific aspects, such as "the encounter with Christ", "the fundamental contents of the Creed", and "faith and the Church."
4. Catechists should hold more firmly to the doctrinal richness of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and, under the direction of their pastors, offer guidance in reading this precious document to groups of faithful, working toward a deeper common understanding thereof, with the goal of creating small communities of faith, and of giving witness to the Lord Jesus.
5. It is hoped that there will be a renewed commitment in parishes to the distribution of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and of other resources appropriate for families, which are true domestic churches and the primary setting for the transmission of the faith. This might be done, for example, during the blessing of homes, the baptism of adults, confirmations and marriages. This can contribute to the deepening of Catholic teaching "in our homes and among our families, so that everyone may feel a strong need to know better and to transmit to future generations the faith of all times."
6. The promotion of *missions* and other popular programmes in parishes and in the workplace can help the faithful to rediscover the gift of baptismal faith and the task of giving witness, knowing that the Christian vocation "by its very nature is also a vocation to the apostolate".
7. During this time, members of Institutes of Consecrated Life and of Societies of Apostolic Life are asked to work towards the new evangelisation with a renewed union to the Lord Jesus, each according to their proper charism, in fidelity to the Holy Father and to sound doctrine.
8. Contemplative communities, during the Year of Faith, should pray specifically for the renewal of the faith among the People of God and for a new impulse for its transmission to the young.
9. Associations and Ecclesial Movements are invited to promote specific initiatives which, through the contribution of their proper charism and in collaboration with their local pastors, will contribute to the wider experience of the Year of Faith. The new Communities and Ecclesial Movements, in a creative and generous way, will be able to find the most appropriate ways in which to offer their witness to the faith in service to the Church.
10. All of the faithful, called to renew the gift of faith, should try to communicate their own experience of faith and charity to their brothers and sisters of other religions, with those who do not believe, and with those who are just indifferent. In this way, it is hoped that the entire Christian people will begin a kind of mission towards those with whom they live and work, knowing that they "have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man".

Woman and the Cardinal Virtue of Justice

By *Cormac Burke*

Mgr Burke continues his series of reflections on the cardinal virtues and their place in recovering an authentic understanding of womanhood. The article that follows was originally delivered as a lecture at Strathmore University, Nairobi.

Introduction

Justice is the virtue by which we habitually give to each his due: what is owed to him or her. Justice also applies to our relations with the governing authority, or the government with us: what is owed in one direction or another. Most questions of justice arise between individuals; then we have what is termed commutative justice.

A just society is one where each gets his or her due. I have a right to what is due to me. And by the same token I have a duty to respect or give what is due to others. The upsetting factor here is the tendency, deeply rooted in all of us, to think much more of “*my* rights” than of “*my duties*”. That self-centred tendency is the main obstacle to a just and harmonious society and to the personal, human fulfilment of each one.

Pope John Paul II points out that “if the promotion of the self is understood in terms of absolute autonomy, people inevitably reach the point of rejecting one another... society becomes a mass of individuals placed side by side, but without any mutual bonds” (*Evangelium Vitae*, 20).

We live in an aggrieved world. An ever-growing number of people feel exploited, victimised, and entitled to compensation. There is a real temptation for people to take themselves too seriously and lose their sense of humour. They can no longer laugh at adversity and still less at themselves. They tend to sink into self-pity, which is the most miserable type of selfishness, as well as perhaps the most potent factor for loneliness and self-isolation. These tendencies need to be borne in mind because they can powerfully inhibit a proper understanding of justice.

One must not *take* as one’s own what is *not* one’s own. If one does, one must give it back. This of course applies also to gifts. I can *give* what is my own; then it becomes another’s possession, not mine. I cannot take that back, without injustice.

It is against justice to violate the rights of another by taking or damaging what is his or hers, and not just in relation to material goods. A person has a right to their good name. Gossip (undermining the good name of another, even if the faults spoken of are true) is one of the most common and most mean-spirited faults against justice: mean-spirited because one takes away from another without any gain to oneself – except the sad satisfaction of giving vent to envy or dislike.

Issues of justice arise when there is a contract or a mutual agreement between two people by which one does

something for the other and the other agrees to give something equivalent in return; this equivalence is what is termed the *quid pro quo*. For instance, one agrees to build a house for another and the other agrees to pay for the finished house. Or two people may enter a partnership to achieve something together, with or perhaps without a clear agreement as to a specific division of responsibilities and payments or returns.

Justice and Marriage

Matters of justice might seem to have little to do with whether one is a man or a woman. A thief is a thief whether a he or a she. And it is fraud whether one defrauds a man or a woman. Yet it is true that sex and justice may on occasions have a particular relationship. This certainly arises in that very special area of human life which is marriage.

It is too often said today that marriage is a matter of love, and hence if love dies, marriage dies with it. This reflects a false idea of marriage and a poor idea of marital love. Marriage is more than an emotion; marriage changes love into a lifelong commitment to be mutually faithful and to accept and care for the children that may be born of this commitment.

We can speak of marriage in different ways. It is a sacrament. It is a covenant. It is a contract. These last two terms mean basically the same thing: that to marry creates a real legal relationship, with specific rights and obligations between a woman and a man: in relation to each other, to society, and to God.

What is the object of marital consent? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* gives an appealing but also a very self-committing description, saying that consent is the act “by which the spouses mutually give and receive one another” (no. 1639). So the marriage contract or covenant means that each spouse undertakes to give his or her own self, and each undertakes to accept the self-gift of the other, as she or he actually is.

But what exactly does this mean? Does “giving oneself” actually mean that each spouse becomes the *possession* of the other, losing all rights over himself or herself? No, that is not possible. There are certain personal rights and duties that are untransferable; for instance, the right and duty to work for one’s own salvation; or, for that matter, the right to vote in an election according to one’s personal convictions. Nevertheless, the phrase “mutually give and accept each other” has a real and profound meaning that corresponds precisely to the nature of true spousal love.

Two people in love marry because they want to be united, to be one. He wants to feel that she is his, and she that he is hers. Now, for a man and a woman to become truly one is not possible. What they can become, in the biblical phrase, is “one flesh”, which occurs through the conjugal act carried out in all its human fullness, meaning and dignity. There the spouses achieve conjugal oneness as they in effect say to each another: I share with you what I will not share with anyone else. I give to you what I give to no one else, and that is my seed, my procreative power, which, united to your seed, can incarnate our love, take on flesh that will be the living fruit of our love, the proof also that we want our love to be a gift to God and to the future.¹

I have expanded on this at length elsewhere.² Holding to our present topic, let us look a bit more closely at those issues of justice involved in this divine plan of the union of man and woman in marriage.

It should be obvious that the greatest infringement of justice in this matter is when husband or wife, by having sex with a third party, violates the exclusive right to intercourse which they have solemnly pledged to their spouse. The crime of adultery is not only a grave sin against chastity but equally a grave violation of justice towards the other spouse and towards the children there may be. Given the close association of the sexes in modern working life, men or women need to observe delicate respect for the commitments of married colleagues; carelessness here could make them responsible for the collapse of a marriage and the destruction of a family.

The “Marriage Debt”

Now let us examine what is due in justice between husband and wife themselves. Moral theologians would probably single out the *debitum* or “marriage debt”, that is, the right to conjugal intercourse which each spouse has and owes in regard to the other. It is a matter of justice that binds whenever reasonably requested by the other. The husband should know when it is not reasonable to make that request: for instance, when his wife is ill or at periods late in pregnancy or just after childbirth.

The debt is of course equally owed by the wife. One particular case might be referred to in this regard, and that’s where a wife denies the conjugal act to the husband because she is annoyed with him for some real or imagined fault. This form of vengeance, taking advantage of male weakness, is unwise as well as usually unjust. It solves nothing and tends to make relations worse.

Married life cannot be lived on the basis of tit-for-tat. When justice becomes an issue between husband and wife, the marriage is entering serious difficulties. After all, where there is love and above all committed love, matters of justice, of rights and wrongs, claims and debts, should be easily solved. Love does not stand on its rights; it forgives. Love

“To marry creates a real legal relationship, with specific rights and obligations between a woman and a man: in relation to each other, to society, and to God”

does not think of its rights or measure its wrongs. To do so is to fall into calculation. And love does not calculate. It does not centre on its own “rights”, but thinks of the rights, or the simple likes, of the other.

A wife might say that in that case her husband will always win. A husband, equally, might say that in that case his wife will always win. Yet it is not a question of winning but of loving. If one were to try to base a marriage on a strict *quid pro quo*, on well-measured calculations, giving as much as the other gives, it would not work. But then he will take advantage of me, the wife might say. He might, but a husband certainly won’t learn to love his wife more if he sees that she is a calculator. After all, Jesus himself said that it is happier to give than to receive. But our modern world seems far from understanding or heeding that divine pointer to happiness.

“Love does not stand on its rights; it forgives. Love does not think of its rights or measure its wrongs”

The individualist who marries just out of interest in his or her personal happiness, no more, is not really in love, except with himself or herself. Even if we take the frequent case of a slightly toned-down individualism – I’ll make some effort to make you happy, provided you make as much of an effort to keep me happy – that is not married love either. It may indeed be the approach of both spouses; but it is still the meeting of two selfishnesses, of two fundamentally inward-looking persons, who are simply not up to forging a happy marriage.

In most cases this is the result of a lack of real marital commitment from the very beginning. In the words of Pope John Paul II: “The fear of making a permanent commitment can change the mutual love of husband and wife into two loves of self – two loves existing side by side until they end in separation.”³

The problem that John Paul warns against is not inevitable. Self-love remains in all of us as an obstacle to growth in true oblation love. A true commitment to marriage gives the grace and strength to gradually overcome individual self-love, to learn to understand the other in depth, to learn to forgive and to ask for forgiveness, to be tolerant with the defects of the other and intolerant with one’s own defects.

In short, married love, to be true, must be more determined to make the other person happy than to be made happy by that other person. Otherwise it is not true married love and will be too weak to make either happy. That is one side of the story.

However, there are further aspects to marriage where important issues of justice enter. Justice towards the

children. Justice towards the world. Justice towards God. Let us take a brief look at these, bearing two important points in mind. First, nothing that follows will have any impact on those for whom marriage is simply a self-satisfying venture and who are incapable of seeing it as a calling, a mission, and a commitment of service and love. And secondly, in principle, the themes of justice and mission in marriage apply equally to both husband and wife. Yet the bringing of children into the world asks more of the woman than of the man. To regard this as an unfair burden is the modern feminist tendency. It takes prudence and wisdom, as well as fortitude, on a woman’s part to see it as a distinctive feminine privilege.

Justice Towards the Children

Children are not an optional extra to marriage. To choose to marry is to choose to found a family; that is the only natural approach, and the only one likely to give happiness.⁴ So, the other side of the story is that couples have a mission to form a family, open to the natural fruit of their love.

This is a God-given mission. Most married people are strangely unaware of what this implies, in terms of both privilege and responsibility. They think that the number of children, along with how spaced out they are in age, is their choice and no one else should have a say in the matter.

Well, first of all the children should have a say. The spouses are called to be parents, to form a family; but not a family most convenient to their calculated way of thinking, but one most generously conducive to the children making it up. That generally means a family of four or five children (or more), who are close enough in age to be able to fight together, to learn to make up, to realise that one cannot always have one’s own way, to be loyal to each other. And all of that under the dedicated and impartial refereeing of the parents, who too are kept together by their shared resolve to teach humanity to the unruly brood God has given them.

Couples marrying are called not just to be a good husband and wife to each other, but to be good parents together towards their children. There are fewer greater missions: to form a real family where children find the atmosphere that helps mature them as honest, generous and responsible citizens.

Justice Towards Society

Modern western society is beset with problems. Humanly speaking it can be said to be sick.⁵ The problem is not poverty; most people in the West have plenty to live on. There is indeed a population problem, but it is not one of over-population but of an ageing population (more and more old people, fewer and fewer young) and a people divided against itself, the old fearing the young and the young despising the old. One of the reasons the young have lost respect for the old is that the old perhaps never

showed them much respect or love. What or who today inspires a natural respect? Loss of respect for everyone and everything is a hallmark of a civilisation in ultimate decline.

Nothing today is held as sacred, least of all sex and marriage. Chastity, before marriage or in marriage, is ridiculed; only fools would try to hold by it. The family means nothing. Why build a home when a mall or a disco is much more fun? Having children? Well, perhaps just one or two, outside or inside marriage, may give some satisfaction to me, but a child is such a burden! With an approach like that it is no wonder that Western society has been summed up as “The Lonely Crowd”.

In the developing societies the problem is not over-population but corruption and mis-government. The solution will only come from the children of generous parents who have devoted themselves to creating a family with a distinctive and cheerful personality, where the atmosphere is one of generosity, mutual respect, honesty, loyalty and pride in one’s human ideals.

Here in Nairobi we are not strangers to the western consumerist and hedonistic mentality; far from it. We can surrender to it, and lapse each one into a selfish, pointless and lonely life. Or we can fight to give to our children and to the future what we owe them. And so, whatever else happens, we won’t die spiritually bankrupt.

Justice Before God

Marriage is not a human invention. It was instituted by God as a privileged gift to man and woman. People can misuse or despise that gift as they are doing today. The great task is to restore its dignity. That will only be done through couples who see marriage as a God-given gift, rejoice in its challenge and beauty, and respect the nature God gave it. Then it will come to life again.

God is the creator of marriage, and a party to each marriage covenant. He blesses the spouses and gives freely to them. Through the Church he teaches them their mutual rights and duties. But he also *has his rights* in regard to married couples – which means that, in marrying, a man and a woman also take on special *duties towards God*: duties to marry *so as* to create a home, duties to accept generously the children God wishes to give them,⁶ duties to maintain a united marriage and a united home that will both keep the spouses engaged in the task of learning to love, and help the children grow in the reflection of their parents’ and of God’s love.

God does not want children to be born outside wedlock, or to grow up in a broken home. Nevertheless, he loves all children. What he wants is that all be born and brought up in families where the parents, however poorly, reflect his fatherly love. God’s clear right in this, as well as the clear duty of couples, stems from the very institution of marriage.

How easily we ignore or try to explain away the very first command God gave to Adam and Eve and to all married people: “Be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 1:38).

Are there unwanted children in the world? Not for God! Although, sadly, it would seem that there are for world planners, and, more sadly still, for many parents. In a real sense they are violating God’s will in depriving him of children he wanted and that they themselves in time would have learned to love and treasure.

Spouses need to sense the pride as well as the challenge of this God-given mission and duty. Facing up to it is the only way for persevering and growing in married love; the only way to that relative personal and family happiness that God wishes for married people here on earth, and for the absolute happiness that he wishes for all in heaven.

Conclusion

Our topic is justice. So, as we conclude, we must emphasise that those who marry *are in debt towards God*. They owe him what he has entrusted to them. Recalling the parable of the talents, we can say that the special talent entrusted to the married couple is the generous formation of a family, and the determination to create a bright and cheerful home. Those who, at the end, can render a positive account of how they have administered that talent, will be assured of a quick entry to the joy of the Lord.

Finally, apart from being a matter of justice, it is also of course a question of faith and trust in God – always tests of the Christian life. As the prophet Isaiah says: “The Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him. At the sound of your cry, when he hears it, he will answer you. And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it’, when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left” (Is 30:19-21).

God indicates the way. The question is whether we trust and love him enough to walk in it.

Notes

¹In the measure in which one grasps this, one will be closer to understanding how a contraceptive marital act does not unite the spouses, but tends rather to separate them.
²*Covenanted Happiness*, Scepter Press, Chapter 8.
³Homily, 7 Oct 1979 (Washington, DC): http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/homilies/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19791007_usa-washington_en.html
⁴We leave aside the few cases where a couple turn out to be naturally sterile.
⁵It is John Paul II who makes this grave diagnosis: “our society... from various points of view, is a society which is sick, and is creating profound distortions in man” (*Letter to Families*, 1994, no. 20).
⁶Allowing for the use, when justified, of NFP; cf. CCC 2368.

Paul VI and the Year of Faith

In 1968 at the close of the last Year of Faith Paul VI published a *motu proprio*, the Credo of the People of God. Below we publish the text of article 19, On the Church.

We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, built by Jesus Christ on that rock which is Peter. She is the Mystical Body of Christ; at the same time a visible society instituted with hierarchical organs, and a spiritual community; the Church on earth, the pilgrim People of God here below, and the Church filled with heavenly blessings; the germ and the first fruits of the Kingdom of God, through which the work and the sufferings of Redemption are continued throughout human history, and which looks for its

perfect accomplishment beyond time in glory.(24) In the course of time, the Lord Jesus forms His Church by means of the sacraments emanating from His plenitude.(25)

By these she makes her members participants in the Mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Christ, in the grace of the Holy Spirit who gives her life and movement. (26) She is therefore holy, though she has sinners in her bosom, because she herself has no other life but that of grace: it is by living by her life that her members are sanctified; it is by removing themselves from her life that they fall into sins and disorders that prevent the radiation of her sanctity. This is why she suffers and does penance for these offences, of which she has the power to heal her children through the blood of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

A Tribute to Fr John Edwards SJ, 1929-2012

By *Fr William Massie*

Fr William Massie, parish priest in Scarborough, pays tribute to a great Jesuit.

John Edwards was a gunnery officer on a naval frigate during the Korean War when thoughts of the priesthood first began to form in his mind. They followed a deeper conversion of life brought about when he learned from a pamphlet picked up randomly from the back of a church about the extraordinary miracle of the sun witnessed by several thousands during the Fatima apparitions of 1917. *“If this is true then God is real...”* Fr James Hanvey SJ preaching at Fr Edwards’ requiem Mass in December told how, speaking recently about his vocation, Fr Edwards had reflected thus:

“Now, it occurred to me that this was a just war and we were fighting it well, but [what] would [make] more sense, rather than trying to blow people up, [would be] to try and make them better: to be a doctor or a nurse; rather than inflict a blockade, [it would] be better to grow food for them and, because I was a practising Catholic – although not a good one – I realised that the centre of the whole thing is sin actually. If you want to get to the fulcrum point and do something about that, you start with yourself. I thought of being a monk, but then I thought the idea of forgiving sin, just once, just one venial sin, was so tremendous, that it would be worth anything trying for the priesthood.” Fr Hanvey commented: “Though the manner in which he expresses himself is fairly straightforward, there is nothing naïve or simplistic about John’s reasoning or his insight. It is his response in faith to the evil in the world. It is a direct and personal response to a direct and personal experience and I believe it was with him throughout his life. He understood then that the answer to the deep evil in the world and the suffering that we inflict on each other cannot, in the end, be some clever argument. It must be God himself and His Church and the capacity which only God has to bring ‘a greater good’ – as John expressed it in his writing – out of situations which seem completely lost. ... It was to that co-operation with God’s work that he gave himself with all the supernatural resources of the priesthood, the sacraments and the spiritual exercises of Ignatius.”

That “co-operation with God’s work” touched many lives and transformed them. If the ministry of a priest is “tremendous” were he only ever to absolve one sin, then the ministry of Fr John Edwards was rich indeed.

Early Life

John Edwards was educated at Ampleforth and then entered the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, at 13. He went to sea in 1947 but left the Navy in 1953 to seek his vocation with the Society of Jesus. He was ordained a priest in 1964 and continued his studies in Rome. Already as a young priest he was acquiring the skill of explaining the faith in ways fresh and convincing yet true to tradition. In a letter to the Jesuit community in Farm Street read out at his requiem, Archbishop Nichols recalled Fr Edwards giving a day of recollection to English College seminarians in the late Sixties. He recommended a method of prayer, centred on

the gospels, which owed much to eastern methods of mystical contemplation – the rosary.

Fr Edwards worked as a parish priest in north London for some years but entered into his stride when he began preaching missions – in parishes and schools – up and down the country. He also conducted retreats for many religious congregations and groups of clergy and lay people. In a preface to one of his books, a former bishop of Paisley, Stephen McGill, recalled a retreat given by him to clergy years before, in the strength of which he felt certain he had been stepping out briskly on the paths of the Lord.

Retreats and Missions

So what was so special about Fr Edwards’ missions and retreats? First, no one ever complained that what he said went over their heads. Cardinal Giuseppe Sarto, later Pope St Pius X, warned against sermons “preached from the lofty heights of the pulpit” that were “nearer to the organ pipes than to the hearts of the faithful”. He advised priests: “Preach to the people with simplicity and piety; give them the truths of the faith and the precepts of the Church; tell them the meaning of virtue and the danger of vice.” And this was the style and content of Fr Edwards. On one evening of a typical mission he would speak of the “geography of the afterlife” and encourage people to pray for their beloved dead. He explained indulgences as the “healing of the mutilations left by our sins though they have been forgiven”. Then he would invite people to come forward with names of their deceased loved ones on scraps of paper to lay before the monstrance on the altar. That showed true pastoral care. The truth that not only can we still have contact with those we have loved who have died but we can also help them is immensely consoling to the bereaved. At another time he would retell the story of the woman recorded in Luke’s gospel, chapter 7, who bravely forced her way through to Jesus in the home of Simon the Pharisee to weep for her sins at Jesus’ feet, wipe his feet with her hair and be told that her sins, her many sins, had been forgiven. Fr Edwards would comment: “We might think, ‘Lucky girl... to go to Jesus and be told that.’ No, not really. We can do the same when we go to Jesus and get our hands round his body, *the Church*, in the Sacrament of Penance.” With such beautiful and faith-filled ways of getting close to the Jesus of the gospels and finding there the Jesus of faith, of the Church as we live in her today, those who heard him were struck to the heart. Fr Edwards would hear confessions during the Sunday Masses of a parish mission (a practice some priests frowned upon until John Paul II gave explicit recognition of its legitimacy and value in his 2002 Instruction *Misericordia Dei*) and it would touch the hearts of priests to see their parishioners making their way to the confessional – some of them, one suspected, for the first time in years.

Faithful to the Truth

Fr Edwards would often give repeat missions in parishes and re-visit priests once they had been moved on. As a result one often knew what he was about to say before he said it. But then he taught many a young, inexperienced priest how to speak about matters which otherwise are rarely spoken about in the



“Preach to the people with simplicity and piety... tell them the meaning of virtue and the danger of vice’ – that was the style and content of Fr Edwards”

contemporary Church, or at least not in ways that are pastoral and convincing and true! So to make sense of “the Church’s teaching – *God’s teaching actually*” about sex and loving he would imagine listening to two experts, to two young lovers who have just had sex for the first time, who were two *real* lovers, who want the best for each other. For the girl it would go something like this:

“For this to be true and complete, I must know that you understand what it means to me. Because of what we have just done, I am now a different person. Not just in my body... but in my very self. It is not just my body which I gave you and which has been changed, it is my very self. It is *I*, totally, who have been ‘possessed’ by you. And I see now why they use that word: I can never be the same again now. And I want you to know that I am very, very glad. Glad to be possessed by you; glad to have given myself to you; very, very glad that it is *you* who have changed me.” Unfortunately Fr Edward’s book *Ways of Loving* is out of print, but I can assure the reader that all the ends of marriage were very adequately discussed and that his conclusion – “outside of marriage: no deliberate, willed, intended experience of sexual pleasure at all” – was clear and coherent. Even the Lord’s prohibition of lust was made attractive as “an enormous compliment to women”. And his final remark won general if painful acceptance: “Tell me the Church’s teaching on sex and loving is hard and I’ll agree with you; tell me it’s not beautiful and I’ll tell you you’re a liar!” When the history of the Church in our times is written, the question will be asked why, after the summer of 1968 when *Humanae Vitae* was published, restating the truths on the need for sex to be open to life and within marriage, men like Fr John Edwards were not asked to travel the length and breadth of our land, to publish in our Catholic papers, to speak to our diocesan catechists and teachers.

Son of Ignatius

Some of those who first encountered Fr Edwards at a parish mission then had the privilege of being guided by him through the Ignatian Exercises. The Jesuits are surely on home territory when preaching the *Exercises* and Fr Edwards was skilful and deeply inspiring. His conferences were never dull. Just as Admiral Lord Nelson urged his fleet to get alongside the enemy and engage, the retreatant was told to get alongside Jesus Christ and ask for *intimate, internal knowledge and union*. Those familiar with the *Exercises* will know the form: daily meditations on the entire history of salvation – from the creation of the angels, and their fall, to the creation of the universe and man, and our fall, to the arrival of Christ the Great King. “Crack, crash... watch out, here comes our Lord. Terrifying? No – he comes... as a baby”. Once again, Fr Edwards’ skill, born surely of his own prayerful meditation on Christ’s life and work, was to explain the mystery of Christ with convincing insight and beauty. Here too was practical advice. More on ways of praying: the acronym for remembering the stages of lectio divina was odd but strangely memorable: *Royal Marines are Politically Correct – Read, Meditate, Pray, Contemplate*. There was more on how

our sufferings, even when brought about through our own sins, can be a call on God for grace. For as the Church prays, the sufferings we endure, if taken to Christ in the Sacrament designed for forgiveness, can bring us “increase of grace and the reward of eternal life”, or, quoting from St Vincent de Paul, “the throne of God’s mercy is set on my wretchedness”. Here was immense encouragement to virtue alongside warnings against vice. “Does the Lord admit us into his presence with caution as a ‘remedial apprenticeship’? Not a bit of it. He bounds towards us and says, ‘Follow me!’ Imagine his choice of Levi, a man hot in his sins – a traitor, an apostate.” And to those who have been disciples and have let their Lord down time and again there were presented the scenes of Jesus after his resurrection. “St Ignatius says the Lord always comes as Consoler. The disciples fleeing Jerusalem for Emmaus deserved to have their shoes blown off them... Jesus rewards them with the Mass. Thomas doubted for eight days – he publicly denied a truth of the faith taught by the Magisterium [of Peter!]. The Lord says ‘Peace be with you’ and the punishment was the invitation, ‘Touch me – more closely than anyone except my mother and the soldiers.’”

Several of those who took part in the most recent retreats were discerning their vocations with an eye to priesthood. The priesthood was not stressed, but the discernment of spirits was offered and explained in a way simple and enlightening. If we’re “blundering towards God” we’re led by consolations: “joy, peace, high spiritual morale, hope in high things”. If we’re pulled out of this direction the result is “desolation and low spiritual morale, darkness, doubt, depression, scrupulosity”. If we’re “blundering away from God”, willingly or unwillingly, “the devil incites us – sweet and plausible reasons given. The voice of the good Spirit can then be sharp! The spirit of darkness can disguise himself as an angel of light but he will give himself away by a cloven hoof – excitement and compulsion rather than peace and tranquillity”. If uncertain as to a course of action, “experiment if you can and see if God ‘rewards it’. But never change a previous good decision in a time of desolation.”

Oh, and advice for priests labouring in the vineyard, apparently with little success: “If our work should be marked by self-emptying and humiliation, that’s ‘promotion’. Then we’re really identifying with our Master, whose life was marked by the crib, poverty and crucifixion.”

Perhaps Fr Edwards was saying in his missions and retreats little that had not been said by countless good Jesuits over the years. But, thanks be to God and the Society of Jesus, he was *saying* these things. He once remarked that he had only ever had a few things to say but was discovering that he was now “fashionable” again, and to an ever younger audience. His audience from Youth 2000, from the *Faith* movement, in parishes in England, Ireland and Scotland, his loyal group of those who attended Mass in the Extraordinary Form at Farm Street, were happy to fill his days with meetings and gatherings and a considerable correspondence. May this loyal son of the Church, son of St Ignatius, son of God, rest in peace.

The Pro-life Voice on Campus

By Alithea Williams

Alithea Williams, a recent graduate from Cardiff University and the former president of Cardiff University Students for Life, is now a director and founding member of the Alliance of Pro-Life Students (APS). In this article she explains the origins and aims and ideals of APS.

The Pro-life Voice in Universities

It often seems that there is an ever expanding number of pro-life organisations demanding our attention, and ultimately looking for our financial support. There are those who engage in political lobbying, those who provide for women in crisis pregnancies, those who educate, those who hold demonstrations or prayer vigils... the list goes on. Consequently people rightly ask, do we really need another pro-life organisation? Can't those already existing all just work together? This is a common response made by those sympathetic to the pro-life cause upon hearing about the mission of the Alliance of Pro-Life Students, a new organisation dedicated to building, supporting and connecting pro-life students. Although at APS we are all for co-operation, and although we fully support the fantastic work of existing pro-life organisations, we nonetheless firmly believe that APS addresses a real need. Now, more than ever, we need a dedicated body to encourage and protect the interests of pro-life students.

The last few years have seen a real surge in student pro-life activism. Hundreds of young people have been brought together at events like SPUC's youth conference, and Life training days. New student pro-life societies have been formed up and down the country, from Exeter to St Andrews. However, despite these positives, or perhaps because of them, students who stray from the so-called pro-choice line that is so entrenched in universities today are facing increasing levels of opposition and oppression.

Although the strength of this opposition is a clear indication that the pro-life movement is vibrant and making progress, the mounting protests highlight the need for action to prevent the pro-life message being completely stifled. Indeed, the censorship being enforced through pro-choice motions in student unions is alarming not least because it endangers the right to free speech. The leadership of APS know, from first-hand experience, how isolating it can be for anyone trying to give voice to the pro-life cause on campus, and how much true bravery is required to make a stand.

The Bristol University Pro-Life Experience

The story of Bristol University Students For Life (BSFL) is a case in point. In March 2010 the Cardiff University pro-life society invited two Bristol students to attend the Third International Youth Pro-Life Conference. Despite not having thought very deeply about pro-life issues before, within a year they had started their own group. It would be safe to say that these students were wholly unprepared for the opposition they faced from the outset. At their first public outing, the freshers' fayre, their stall was ransacked by the feminist society and their leaflets taken. When they complained to

the students union, the only response was to suggest they change their name. The next year, the same feminists put forward a motion that would require all students and student organisations affiliated to the students' union at Bristol University to adopt a pro-choice stance. The SFL committee spent months fighting this undemocratic motion, but despite much hard work – which resulted in its members becoming notorious on campus – the motion was sneaked through. It seems incredible that in a democratic society, a students' union, which is supposed to represent the interests of all students, one group can seek universally to impose one ideological view, and silence those who dissent from it. Fortunately, BSFL has managed to continue despite these restrictions, and later even put forward a joint motion with the feminist society to help student parents. This led to the provision of crèche facilities and more flexible appointment hours for students, thereby allowing Bristol University to become more inclusive towards those students who find themselves with child-care commitments.

Lamentably this attempt to gag open and free debate was not an isolated event. Motions have also been put forward at Oxford, Leeds, Cambridge and UCL. The case at UCL was notorious enough to receive media attention. After the Catholic society hosted a pro-life speaker, a motion was passed stating that “any future open events focusing on the issue of termination must invite an anti-choice speaker and a pro-choice speaker as well as an independent chair, to ensure there is a balance to the argument”. Although this pays lip-service to the notion of being even handed, push it to its logical conclusion and its absurdity is apparent. Would this happen to any other student society? Would the Conservative society be forced to host Labour speakers for “balance” or the Atheist society a Muslim speaker? Of course not. Imagine the uproar if a student Lesbian Gay and Bisexual society were forced to give a platform to homophobes. Why then must those who hold pro-life views be subjected to such draconian measures? The immediate purpose of the motion was to obstruct the work of pro-life societies and ultimately to strangle the pro-life voice on campus. The UCL Student Union also voted to adopt a fixed pro-abortion stance and formally affiliate itself to the organisation Abortion Rights.

Fortunately, after a hard battle by students and with advice from the barrister Neil Addison, union trustees were forced to admit that this move was “completely illegal”. In recent weeks, a radically pro-choice motion was withdrawn from King's College London, but it is expected to return in March and we need to be ready. It is hardly surprising that these motions arise when the official website of the National Union of Students states: “NUS [...] will unite against MPs who try to take women's rights away... NUS believes women should

always have the right to choose and is working with Abortion Rights...” So yes, APS is going head to head with the biggest and most well financed and resourced student organisation in the country. But the pro-life voice can and must be heard – and victories recognised. Recently, at Queens' University Belfast, students successfully campaigned to have a pro-choice motion retracted, keeping the students' union neutral.

“98% of the student body in the UK does not even have the chance to hear the pro-life message”

Attempts to silence the pro-life voice at universities remind us just how important it is that pro-life societies continue to exist and grow. A key insight of the *Faith* movement is that ideas matter. Ideas trickle down from academia and influence and shape our culture. APS shares that insight with the *Faith* movement and we are deeply conscious that universities are where the leaders of tomorrow are formed. We desperately need pro-life intellectuals, doctors, lawyers and politicians; where will they come from if students never get to hear the message of life? The average student knows next to nothing about abortion, euthanasia and embryo research, and consequently cares even less.

In fact, we often welcome a bit of opposition, because at least we know people are paying attention. It can often feel like an uphill battle just to get people to attend talks, but great things can be done. As well as BSFL's student parents motion, there's the example of Edinburgh Lifesoc, who held a debate with a physical audience of 300 and a Facebook audience of 3,000. Often, such events are the only chance students have to hear crucial facts about life. But, out of 343 universities, only seven so far have pro-life societies. This means that 98% of students in the UK do not even have the chance to hear the pro-life message.

Challenges Facing Pro-life Work on Campus

Another challenge facing student pro-life societies is their transience. Often these societies die out once a key individual has graduated; sometimes they last only as long as their founder's degree course. Many readers of *Faith* magazine will have known about, or been involved in, student pro-life work, but the oldest current society (Cardiff SFL) is only in its fifth year. Rather than being able to capitalise on the hard work of a previous generation of students, much time and energy is spent setting up pro-life societies in universities which until recently had one already.

Furthermore, students who are committed to the pro-life cause, even if they have great leadership potential, will not necessarily have the know-how or pioneering instinct necessary to start up a pro-life society from scratch. External support, leadership training and connecting with other pro-life students are essential in the work of building a culture of life in our universities.

“APS is going head to head with the biggest and most well financed and resourced student organisation in the country”

APS is Launched

Despite these difficulties, APS was formed in a spirit of optimism. In February 2012, 10 students from four universities met to create a national body for pro-life students. For a disparate group of people who at first couldn't agree on anything we have come a long way. But even at the end of that meeting, I think we all had the sense that something significant had happened. We are now a registered company, with a full-time executive director and support from figures including Lord David Alton, Ann Widdecombe and Sr Roseann Reddy. Being a registered company does not mean that we are a profit-making organisation – far from it! However, it does give us a governing structure and a degree of accountability and transparency.

At this early stage of our development we do not have the administrative capacity to fulfil all the stipulations required to become a registered charity. We have just held our first launch event at the Merchant's Hall in Edinburgh. This was intentionally a high-profile event. More than a hundred people turned up to listen and support us, despite being heckled on their way in by protesters, who had even tried to get the venue to cancel our event. A crowd of nearly 200 came to our London launch to support APS and to hear Lord Alton speak eloquently in defence of the unborn. We were delighted with the success of our launches, and heartened by how many people believe in us.

But APS is about so much more than one-off events or high-profile gestures. Our mission is “to build university communities in England, Scotland and Wales that have a lasting and profound respect for human life from fertilisation to natural death”. Essentially, we will be an umbrella group for student pro-life societies across the country. Our minimum requirement for societies who affiliate with us is that they share our understanding of what pro-life means. That is, that they respect life from conception until natural death. Our role is not to micro-manage individual pro-life societies. APS does not take an official view on many things; for instance if a society wanted to use graphic imagery, we might advise them on the pros and cons, but would ultimately leave it to their own discretion. We believe very much in the principle of subsidiarity. APS will not control individual societies: they will continue to run themselves as before.

Aims and Ideals

Our key aims and ideals can be summed up in three words: build, connect and support. Following our Edinburgh launch, an eighth student pro-life society has joined the seven existing ones in the UK. We aim to build more. Students for Life of America, from whom we take great inspiration, helped found 350 societies in six years. If we could achieve even a tiny percentage of that success, think what a difference that would make. We also want to build and train existing societies. We do this by having a full-time member of staff available to talk to students. And we aim to speak at

universities and hold training events and video conferences. We also aim to produce a handbook, which would include information about how to set up a pro-life society, fund-raising ideas, a guide to writing a constitution and a list of useful contacts. This, along with our website, will be a great resource for pro-life students.

We also aim to connect. It is so important that like-minded students are brought together to share and inspire each other. Being part of a (generally disliked) minority in a university can be very isolating, and knowing you are not alone means so much. Events like the SPUC Youth Pro-Life Conference have been instrumental in bringing students together, and have been very fruitful. It was because of events like this that APS could come into being, with four directors across the country, in London, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Bristol. We plan to bring students together for training days and a summer pro-life festival, as well as online. Our Facebook page has already been very useful for sharing and stimulating debate. We are also connecting with other organisations, nationally and internationally. We have spoken

at events run by SPUC and Life, and are in contact with Students for Life of America, Stand True, Priests for Life, Youth Defence in Ireland, and the National Campus Life Network in Canada. We would like to encourage students to work with and perhaps take internships with these groups.

Finally, we aim to support. We will be available to help any pro-life group who needs it, by sharing our experience, providing resources and protecting their interests. We expect that pro-choice motions will continue to be put forward at student unions. We plan to pool the experience of those who have already faced such motions, and put together packs with all the necessary legal information. We also want to provide packs for new groups to use at freshers' fayres. And with the help of video conferencing we can talk to students face to face whenever they need it.

If you would like to find out more about the work and mission of APS, please visit our website: www.allianceofprolifestudents.org.uk or call us on 07568 355 677.

Notes From Across the Atlantic

by David Mills, executive editor of *First Things*

Justice, Peace and the Martyrs

Thousands and possibly tens of thousands of Christians die for the faith every year, notes Daniel Philpott, writing in the Jesuit magazine *America*. They have died in India, Vietnam, Iraq, Colombia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Mexico, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, North Korea, Sri Lanka, China and Indonesia, most killed by Muslims. More Christians were martyred in the last century than in all of Church history before 1900.

Their deaths, Christians know, bear much fruit. Writing in *America*, Dan,

who teaches at Notre Dame and wrote "Peace After Genocide" (June/July 2012), offers four ways in which the modern martyrs advance the Church's work of justice and reconciliation.

First, their deaths testify "to the justice that is violated in their very murder: that of religious freedom."

Second, their deaths "afford church communities the chance to recognise in each other what all Christians regard as the truest devotion to Christ – following him in his death on the cross." Third, and similarly, "martyrdom witnesses to

friendship not only among Christian churches but also between religions," because "members of different faiths recognise holiness in martyrdom."

Finally, martyrdom invites forgiveness, which for the Christian not only cancels the debt but invites others to conversion and reconciliation.

Martyrdom, Dan concludes, is an act of remembrance, like the Eucharist, in which "we make the past present", and is an act we should perform often, and with gratitude. We would add that the highest form of gratitude is imitation.

Anglicans and Ecumenism

After centuries of "good and truly brotherly relations" things have got rough – there are "tangible difficulties", in the diplomatic language of church statements – between the Russian Orthodox Church and the churches of the Anglican Communion, and the Orthodox insist it's the Anglicans' fault. So writes Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, the Russian Church's ecumenical officer, to the newly appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby.

He brings up women priests and bishops, the blessing of same-sex "unions" and "marriages" (he uses the quotation marks), and the ordination of homosexuals.

These "deviations from the tradition of the Early Church ... increasingly estrange Anglicanism from the Orthodox Church and contribute to a further division of Christendom as a whole". He hopes the Anglicans will listen and that "good fraternal relationships between us will revive".

We presume he's not holding his breath.

Liberal Ultramontanism

The distinguished Catholic historian Eamon Duffy is "a theologically liberal ultramontanist" in his fellow Catholic historian William Tighe's striking phrase, used in a short review we published in November. Bill tells us that he heard one TLU insist that before breakfast the Pope could declare that women could be ordained and then after breakfast ordain as many of them as he liked.

This liberal ultramontanism helps explain the hatred some dissenting Catholics (not Duffy) have for the Pope, writes an English priest, Fr Ray Blake, on his weblog.

"They seem to have the idea that anything they object to is the personal responsibility of the Pope, that he alone is the brake, holding back their own vision of the Church. This is the

"More Christians were martyred in the last century than in all of Church history before 1900"

terrifying Spirit of Vatican I that really sees the Church as the Pope's personal fiefdom and him as its master rather than its servant."

"Imagine There's no Heaven"

Look at suicide bombers, the guy at the other table was saying. They show what happens when you believe in heaven. The other guys at the table nodded or grunted in agreement.

Everyone knows that. It's the *Time/Vanity Fair/Slate.com* line. Religion lets people do horrific things to other people "in the name of God". Belief in heaven makes people reckless. The world would be safer without it.

Of course, speaking with all due respect, this is stupid. Recklessness goes both ways. If you believe in heaven, you'll also sacrifice pleasures in this world, and maybe even your life, for the good of others. All those Catholic hospitals didn't get built by people like the guy at the other table.

It's a matter of drawing out the timeline far enough. If you think, and really believe, that your life lasts through eternity, the cost of giving up even life itself shrinks to nothing.

Look at it this way. You're 20 years old and someone tells you that if for just one day you work like a dog with a psychopath for a boss, being alternately baked in the Sahara and frozen in Siberia, and being eaten by mosquitoes and horseflies the whole time, you can cruise through the rest of your life without a care in the world. You'd take the deal.

At the crassest level, the level the theological expert at the next table should understand, belief in heaven makes saints as well as suicide bombers. We'd just point out that it's produced a lot more saints.

Mixed Marriages

In an article on English women becoming Muslims that we quoted a couple of issues ago, the author

mentions a Vatican statement on interfaith marriages. The one paragraph that mentions the subject appears in a 2004 statement titled "The Love of Christ Towards Migrants".

Since you're probably as ignorant of the thing as we were, It says that marriages between Catholics and non-Christians "should be discouraged, though to a varying degree, depending on the religion of each partner, with exceptions in special cases in accordance with the norms of the CIC and CCEO [in other words canon law]."

It closes with a quote from John Paul II: "In families where both parents are Catholic, it is easier for them to share their common faith with their children. While acknowledging with gratitude interfaith marriages which succeeded in nourishing the faith of both spouses and children, the Synod encourages pastoral efforts to promote marriages between people of the same faith."

Pro-Life Lefties

"Abortion", writes the political director of the Huffington Post UK, "is one of those rare political issues on which left and right seem to have swapped ideologies: right-wingers talk of equality, human rights and 'defending the innocent', while left-wingers fetishise 'choice', selfishness and unbridled individualism."

We think that's much less of a surprise than he does, but to his credit Mehdi Hasan rejects the cultural left's "my body, my life, my choice" line. Writing in the *New Statesman* he says: "Such rhetoric has always left me perplexed. Isn't socialism about protecting the weak and vulnerable, giving a voice to the voiceless? Who is weaker or more vulnerable than the unborn child? Which member of our society needs a voice more than the mute baby in the womb?"

"I consider abortion to be wrong because of, not in spite of, my progressive principles," he concludes. "That I am pro-life does not make me any less of a lefty."

SSPX

Readers may know that the Society of St Pius X, the group that sort of left the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council (the theology of communion and schism is a subtle one), has ejected one of its four bishops.

Already infamous for his Holocaust denial, Richard Williamson led the opposition to the reconciliation with the Church offered by Pope Benedict. He apparently refused to obey the group’s superior general and his council and wrote an open letter demanding that the superior general resign.

The SSPX, headquartered in Écône, Switzerland, has insisted that the current pope is the pope but that the Church he runs is somehow deeply defective and “modernist”. The society’s members are, they say, true Roman Catholics, faithful to the Church as she really is, without the deformations brought by the Second Vatican Council (all of whose documents their founder signed). Theirs is “the Rome of the ages”, as they like to put it.

The group’s announcement said that “this painful decision has become necessary by concern for the common good of the Society of Saint Pius X and its good government, according to what Archbishop Lefebvre denounced: ‘This is the destruction of authority. How can authority be exercised if it needs to ask all members to participate in the exercise of authority?’”

The SSPX demands more obedience to its leader than it is (at the moment) willing to give the pope it acknowledges as the pope. But perhaps Williamson could say that despite all appearances he really and truly still belongs to the SSPX because, though he disobeys “Modernist Écône,” he is faithful to the “Écône of the Ages”.

The New Translation

As we write, the Catholic Church in the English-speaking world is finishing the

first year using the new translation of the Novus Ordo, and everyone seems happy. No one complains, anyway, and everyone we hear around us at Mass seems to have learned the new responses. There’s not an “And also with you” to be heard. OK, there was this one elderly man sitting behind us one Sunday who bellowed out all the old responses, and he certainly looked angry, but just one man on one Sunday.

Not what some people expected. Back before the American bishops finally approved the new translation, the bishop of Erie, former head of the bishops’ liturgical committee, warned that it might lead to a “pastoral disaster”. In a major public lecture, Donald Trautman declared that “as a text for public proclamation, in many instances it borders on failure... As it stands, the New Missal is not pastorally sensitive to our people... Our liturgy needs not a ‘sacred language’ but a pastoral language”.

The bishop smuggles in a lot of dubious ideas in that distinction between “sacred” and “pastoral,” and his understanding of “vernacular” is more than a little biased. He overlooks the problems with the previous version, which is a little like ignoring the approaching white light when you’re standing on a railroad track.

But we agree with him in calling for a translation, faithful to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, “that is accurate, inspiring, reverent, proclaimable, understandable, pastoral in every sense – a text that raises our minds and hearts to God”. We just think that’s what we’ve got now.

The Public Order Act

Last month, we published English barrister Paul Diamond’s report on official bigotry against Christianity in England, which uses the Public Order Act and its outlawing of speech that is “threatening, abusive, or insulting” as an excuse. As it happens, a recent issue of *The Spectator* includes more evidence.

Starting with the absurd. A man in the north of England was arrested and convicted under the act for ... even the Anglophobes among you won’t believe this ... growling at some labrador retrievers. Oh yes, and saying “Woof.” The conviction was later overturned. It only cost the English £8,000.

More worrisome, writes Melanie McDonagh, the respected writer Matthew Parris, a Tory, reported listening to a pro-life Member of Parliament and, noticing the man’s name, checked his religion. Finding out that the MP was a Catholic, he dismissed his argument because “he presumably believes that ... almost any termination after conception is not just a sin but a mortal sin.”

McDonagh also mentions the criticism that a professor of psychiatry at University College Dublin received for not declaring her Catholicism when writing on abortion for the British Journal of Psychiatry.

No one called for a pro-choice foundation to admit its bias in a recent paper on the same subject. “It’s religious belief that appears to undermine the validity of your research and your academic integrity,” she notes. “Secular prejudice doesn’t count.”

Finally, James Delingpole mentions that his niece told him that whenever students at her state school mention Muhammad, they are required to add “Peace Be Upon Him,” though they’re allowed to say “PBUH” instead.

“You can imagine the fuss,” he writes, “if at every mention of the name Jesus Christ all children of whatever creed were forced to raise their arms in the air and add ‘Our Lord and Saviour, He is risen, Alleluia.’”

The Public Order Act, argues Rod Liddle, source of the first story, “is used ... to criminalise people who express inconvenient political views”. And also against anyone “who has been a bit arsey to the fuzz and they can’t get him on any other charge”.

Science and Scientism

At the heart of the natural sciences is falsifiability, the ability to prove a theory false by experiment or observation. Usually, when a theory is contradicted in this way, it is not immediately abandoned but rather adapted, or the data treated as suspect, or other unknown factors invoked, until the contrary evidence becomes overwhelming or an alternative theory produced that accounts for the new data as well as the old.

Such a revision concerning the early stages of evolution on earth has recently been proposed by Gregory Retallack¹ of the University of Oregon in the magazine *Nature*. Many devout Christians still doubt the scientific evidence for evolution, yet material evolution is part of the unfolding of what might be termed God’s script written within Nature, something of key importance to the philosophy and theology of the *Faith* movement. The article referred to should remind us of the detailed work that has been done and is still being done in this field.

Evidence for the common descent of all living things is clear from their biochemical similarities. For example, all living cells use the same basic set of nucleotides and amino acids. Evolutionary biology has come a long way thanks to developments in biochemistry and genetics, particularly the ability to analyse DNA and genomes.

The consensus on the evolution of primitive life is that simple life forms (prokaryotes, organisms whose cells lack a distinct nucleus) inhabited the Earth about 3–4 billion years ago, eukaryotic cells (those with a nucleus which contains the genetic material) emerging 2-3 billion years ago. About 600 million years ago, in the Ediacaran period, multicellular organisms began to appear in the oceans. Then came the Cambrian explosion, which gave rise to a huge diversity of life forms: most types of modern animals appear in the fossil record from this era. About 500 million years ago, plants and fungi

colonised the land and were soon followed by other animals.

However, something as seemingly old-fashioned as fossil science may provide a new twist to this story. Retallack has investigated palaeosols (sediments linked to fossilised soil indicating exposure to air, and thus dry land) from the Precambrian era. Fossil soils are usually recognised by such things as plant roots, but it is difficult to recognise a palaeosol in sediment that lacks plant roots. Geology and geochemistry show that palaeosols are associated with rock formed under non-marine conditions. Retallack concludes that these palaeosols are from rocks from the Ediacaran period. In his analysis the Ediacarans lived not only on the sandy beds of shallow, sunlit seas but on land, in dry air, perhaps like lichens. These, then, were the first creatures to colonise the land. If this theory is correct, the evolution of life from water to land did not happen in the way we thought it did.

The Folly of Scientism

Austin L Hughes, a professor of biology at the University of South Carolina, has written a perceptive, thought-provoking article in *The New Atlantis* magazine, concurring with my own view of current philosophical trends in popular scientific presentations.² One of these trends is “scientism”, the view that science is the only source of truth and reality. Hughes states: “It is frequently claimed that natural science does or soon will constitute the entire domain of truth. And this attitude is becoming more widespread among scientists themselves.”³

Contemporary philosophers have largely abandoned metaphysics and the resulting vacuum has been filled by vocal, intelligent, but (usually) philosophically untrained scientists whose pronouncements generally go unchallenged. Religion, and especially Christianity, is derided as fiction. This attitude has influenced metaphysics, epistemology and ethics. Hughes quotes Stephen Hawking as saying:

“What is the nature of reality? Where did all this come from? Did the universe need a creator? ... Traditionally these are questions for philosophy, but philosophy is dead.”⁴

Hughes points out that we must distinguish science from the opinions of scientists on non-scientific subjects. It is not the number of scientists who hold an opinion that makes it valid, but the scientific or philosophical merits of their arguments. He gives the example of the debates over embryonic stem cell research. Many of its defenders were scientists and many of its opponents were religious, so it was easy to caricature the debates as a clash between the modern, rational, scientific view and an irrational, religious mindset. However, it was not the science that was in dispute but the ethics, and ethics are not (to use the language of the *Faith* movement) materially determined – and so cannot be empirically falsified.

It is said that Albert Einstein stated: “The most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible”, in other words governed by scientific laws. Even the strongest scientific arguments concerning the apparently unique human ability to comprehend the material universe fail to explain why this should be so. Hughes rightly criticises scientists such as Richard Dawkins for viewing humanity’s intellectual achievements merely as examples of a generalised “survival of the fittest”; after all, many of these achievements have no evident survival motive, nor do they confer any fitness advantage.

Hughes points out that the advocates of scientism labour under conceptual confusions that are obvious upon philosophical reflection. In fact, far from philosophy being obsolete, scientism gives a new impetus for its revival.

Notes
¹Ediacaran life on land’, Gregory J Retallack, *Nature* 493, 89-92 (3 January 2013).
²See Cutting Edge, *Faith*, May/June 2012.
³Austin L Hughes, Fall 2012 issue, *The New Atlantis*.
⁴Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design* (2010), Random House Publishing Group.



Comment on the Comments

by William Oddie

Western Leaders and the Persecution of Christians

We have all realised, of course, that we are living in an increasingly secularised society; we don't need to be told it. Most us above a certain age can remember a time when the Christian religion, or at least Christian values, attracted from the surrounding culture at least a basic minimum of apparent respect. A politician would tend not to draw attention to the fact that he wasn't particularly a churchgoer. If asked about Christianity, he would make it plain he was in favour of it: Churchill famously said he was "not a pillar of the Church, but a flying buttress, supporting it from the outside".

But we are now at a different stage in our growing secularity. In the West – and everything I now say applies as much to the US – we have now reached the point at which, not only is there a good deal of overt hostility to Christianity, but even those who say they are themselves Christian behave as though they have no belief in or loyalty to the Christian religion and their fellow Christians.

We are living in a world, for instance, in which Islamic persecution of Christians has in many countries reached crisis point; but the leaders of most formerly Christian countries apparently do not even notice that it is going on, let alone protest about it. Buddhists in Burma, yes. But Christians in the Middle East?

Consider the shocking story (one among an increasing number of examples of the growing oppression of Coptic Christians under Egypt's brand-new Islamist dictatorship) of Nadia Mohamed Ali, who was brought up as a Christian, and converted to Islam when she married a Muslim, 23 years ago.

He later died, and his widow decided to return to her Christian faith, together with her children. She registered as such under the Mubarak regime, and applied for and received new identity

cards containing this information, between 2004 and 2006. When her re-conversion to her old faith emerged under the Morsi regime, Nadia was sentenced to 15 years in prison; so too were her seven children. Even the clerks who processed the identity cards were imprisoned.

The case is the latest example of the increasingly dire plight of the nation's roughly seven million Christians, say human rights advocates.

"Now that Sharia law has become an integral part of Egypt's new constitution, Christians in that country are at greater risk than ever," writes Jordan Sekulow, executive director of the American Center for Law and Justice. "This is another tragic case that underscores the growing problem of religious intolerance in the Muslim world. To impose a prison sentence for a family because of their Christian faith sadly reveals the true agenda of this new government: Egypt has no respect for international law or religious liberty."

So, what, it might be wondered, will President Obama, himself supposedly a believing Christian, say about all this? In an interview in *Christianity Today* magazine, Obama once made the following avowal:

"I am a Christian, and I am a devout Christian. I believe in the redemptive death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I believe that that faith gives me a path to be cleansed of sin and have eternal life. But most importantly, I believe in the example that Jesus set by feeding the hungry and healing the sick and always prioritising the least of these over the powerful.

"I didn't 'fall out in church' as they say, but there was a very strong awakening in me of the importance of these issues in my life. I didn't want to walk alone on this journey. Accepting Jesus Christ in my life has been a

powerful guide for my conduct and my values and my ideals."

Well, now. President Morsi of Egypt is due to meet President Obama, possibly in March. Jordan Sekulow thinks (writing of the case of Nadia Mohamed Ali) that the US State Department should play "more of a role in discouraging this kind of persecution. The US should not be an idle bystander. The US provides more than \$1bn to Egypt each year. The State Department should speak out forcefully against this kind of religious persecution in Egypt."

But will it? Will President Obama use that billion dollars (which he will add, don't forget, to America's multitrillion-dollar deficit) to bring pressure on Morsi to protect his own Christian minority, Obama's fellow Christians? Does the "devout" Barack Obama give a flying fig about his brothers and sisters (even his sisters and brothers) in Christ?

Of course, no other Western leader has attempted to defend the Copts, either. But no other Western leader has described himself as a "devout" Christian, certainly not David Cameron, though Cameron does say he's a believer, of sorts.

"I believe in God and I'm a Christian and I worship – not as regularly as I should, but I go to church," he said. "Do I drop to my knees and ask for guidance whenever an issue comes up? No, I don't. But it's part of who I am."

Not, though, so much part of who he is as to make him want to defend his fellow Christians in Egypt against persecution. He's a Tory so he's a Christian seems almost to be what he's saying. David Miliband, unlike his two immediate predecessors as Labour leader is an atheist, and so is Nick Clegg. The real point is that so far as their social beliefs and values are concerned, all three of our party leaders are as alike as peas in a pod.

Take the recent appeals of four Christians, considered together by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, three of which the Court rejected, one of which it upheld. By a majority of five to two, judges of the European Court of Human Rights supported the claim of Nadia Eweida, a BA check-in clerk who was sent home in November 2006 for refusing to remove a small silver crucifix, that this was a violation of her rights. Mr Cameron duly tweeted that he was "delighted that the principle of wearing religious symbols at work has been upheld". The genial Eric Pickles said that he too was delighted.

But what about the three Christians whose claims were rejected by the court? Cameron and Pickles said nothing about them; nor, in most reports that I heard, did the BBC (later it mentioned them in passing).

The court ruled against Shirley Chaplin, a nurse who was told to remove a crucifix necklace at work. The judges said Chaplin's employer banned necklaces for health and safety grounds, so asking her to remove the symbol was not excessive – though how this argument could be seriously upheld, when after a nursing career of 30 years not a single incident had occurred remotely involving her crucifix in either health or safety, beats me.

The judges also rejected the claims of Lillian Ladele, a local authority registrar who said her Christian faith prevented her from overseeing same-sex civil partnerships, and Gary McFarlane, a marriage counsellor who refused to offer sex therapy to gay couples. In both cases, the court argued that employers had been entitled to strike a balance between claimants' rights to manifest their religious beliefs and the rights of others not to suffer discrimination.

Freedom of religion, they piously intoned, is "an essential part of the identity of believers and one of the foundations of pluralistic, democratic societies ... However, where an

"Islamic persecution of Christians has in many countries reached crisis point; but the leaders of most formerly Christian countries apparently do not even notice it, let alone protest about it"

individual's religious observance impinges on the rights of others, some restrictions can be made."

But exactly how does refusing to conduct a same-sex civil partnership ceremony, or refusing to give sex therapy to gay couples, impinge on anyone's rights? There are plenty of registrars prepared to carry out this procedure (which did not exist when Ladele became a registrar): and the couples involved would have been quite unaware even of Lillian Ladele's existence, let alone of her views on civil partnerships.

As for giving "sex therapy" to gay couples, how on earth would a heterosexual person remotely know how to do that? And would a gay couple having difficulties in that department really want the advice of someone so totally unqualified to give it? Would a heterosexual couple want the advice of a gay sex therapist? So why did Relate fire Gary McFarlane in the first place?

And why exactly didn't David Cameron and Eric Pickles support them? Even in the case of Nadia Eweida, are we not entitled to doubt their sincerity? If Cameron, in particular, is so keen on religious liberty, whatever happened to his promise to legislate to protect it? This is yet another promise which has not been and probably will not be kept. And more to the point, why were government lawyers sent to Strasbourg to argue against all four claimants, including Nadia Eweida?

This is what James Eadie QC, Cameron's Government's expensive barrister, told the court (on his behalf): that the refusal to allow an NHS nurse and a British Airways worker to visibly wear a crucifix at work "did not prevent either of them practising religion in private", which would be protected by human rights law.

He argued that a Christian facing problems at work with religious expression needed to consider their position and that they were not

discriminated against if they still had "the choice of leaving their job and finding new employment". The essential thing, of course, however hard it may seem at first, is to see this marginalisation not as a sign of defeat but as the opportunity predicted more than 40 years ago by the present Holy Father:

"The church will become small and will have to start afresh more or less from the beginning... As the number of her adherents diminishes ... she will lose many of her social privileges... It will be hard going for the Church, for the process of crystallisation and clarification will cost her much valuable energy...

"But when the trial of this sifting is past, a great power will flow from a more spiritualised and simplified Church... And so it seems certain to me that the Church is facing very hard times. The real crisis has scarcely begun. We will have to count on terrific upheavals. But I am equally certain about what will remain at the end: not the Church of the political cult, which is dead already, but the Church of faith.

"She may well no longer be the dominant social power to the extent that she was until recently; but she will enjoy a fresh blossoming and be seen as man's home, where he will find life and hope beyond death."

It has become a famous passage; but how are we to respond to its challenge? It is undoubtedly full of hope; but it warns us, in an almost Churchillian way, of struggles and apparent defeat ahead before the "fresh blossoming", the broad sunlit uplands, of life in the true "Church of Faith" of the future.

The wonderful thing about this visionary pope, though, is that even as he looks towards the struggles we will all have to go through, he makes real and convincing his vision of the future: he works it into the present reality in which we already live. We only need to know that these things are true, and that he has seen this future; and lo, it is so.



Letters to the Editor

The Editor, St Mary's and St David's, 15 Buccleuch Street,
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“In any organisation which tries to legislate its way to equality some will end up being more equal than others”

WILLIAM ODDIE AND ‘GAY RIGHTS’

Dear Father Editor,
From time to time William Oddie has asked if “gay rights” are now the most prominent defining issue delineating the gulf between the Catholic Church and the modern world (*Faith* magazine January-February and November-December 2012). I am not certain. While few reasonable people across the divide dissent from the Catechism of the Catholic Church's teaching that homosexual people “must be accepted with respect compassion and sensitivity”, few too, in my experience, support a notion of “gay rights” which involves intolerance and oppression of those whose views differ from “gay opinion”.

Writing in *The Times*, Henrietta Royle, chief executive of the coaching and strategy consultancy firm Fanshaw Haldin, made the point that while most Conservatives have no difficulty with equality for gay people, “a significant chunk of the party's core supporters clearly doesn't think that has to include redefining the traditional concepts of marriage to suit a small portion of the population without so much as a by your leave”. She continued: “There are plenty of Labour supporters who feel the same, as that party well knows.”

Tim Montgomerie, founder of the Conservative Home website, also writing in *The Times*, seemed to question the wisdom of “a plan to introduce gay marriage which will so enrage some Christian voters that they'll form a campaign that endangers [Tory] MPs in marginal seats.”

And Paul Simons, writing in the *Times* correspondence columns, described as “dysfunctional” a society which is

willing to “enshrine gay marriage in law on the grounds of equality of right for all, while in the name of the same principle of equality forcing Catholic adoption agencies with long and successful records of placing children in loving homes to close down because those agencies will not place children with homosexual couples”.

The above were writing in a national newspaper of liberal inclination within a few days of each other, so I do not think Catholics or Christians in general can claim a monopoly of concern over aspects of “gay rights” campaigning.

Furthermore, the judge who ruled against the Leeds Adoption Agency said very firmly: “Those who follow religious beliefs long established across Europe cannot be equated with racist bigots. Christian views have a legitimate place in a pluralist, tolerant and broad-minded society.” The era when gay presumptions cannot be questioned and challengers are silenced by police intervention or smeared as phobic has passed.

Susie Leafe, a member of the General Synod from the Truro Diocese, and a feminist, provided us with a wider and useful analysis. She pointed out that we have become used to thinking that equality has been achieved when the state ensures that everyone is treated in the same way. She went on to say that George Orwell recognised that “when the authorities claim they are acting in the interests of ‘equality’ it is usually little more than a thinly veiled attempt to establish the supremacy of one factional interest over all others”. She believes that in any organisation which tries to legislate its way to equality some will end up being more equal than others.

Homosexual people do not form a homogeneous group; they hold a range of opinions on gay rights, equality and tactics. The fanatical impetus for change is coming not from gay people as such but from a small caucus surrounding David Cameron, whose interests and affiliations make

interesting reading, and from Nick Clegg. With the emergence of the black churches, which are engaged in electoral registration drives and are seeking to become a political force as in America, the Coalition parties risk punishment in the marginal seats.

It could be argued that “gay rights” are but a side show and that the defining issue delineating the gulf between the Catholic Church and the modern world, or the “wider world” as Dr Rowan Williams calls it, is the acceptance or rejection of the Jesus of history, his Revelation and the structures he left for the transmission of that Revelation.

Yours faithfully,
Kenneth Kavanagh
Byron Crescent
Bedford

RICHARD DAWKINS AND CARDINAL PELL

Dear Father Editor,
I welcomed the commentary in *Faith* magazine (July-August 2012) regarding the “debate” between Cardinal Pell and Richard Dawkins.

It appears to me that Professor Dawkins is presented as some kind of “bogeyman” to frighten those with faith.

Yet having travelled through his book *The God Delusion* it is clear that Dawkins has a very childlike image of God. He seems incapable of understanding that a mature faith, like a mature relationship, knows and accepts that life between the lover and the loved is not always easy.

Dawkins presents his ridicule of faith as a positive proposition: there is probably no God so we should just get on with life. If he is going to adopt this stance he must be prepared to accept the philosophical burden of proving the non-existence of God.

Dawkins has failed to debate with that excellent American Protestant

apologist William Lane Craig – why? Because in Dawkins' view Lane Craig is an apologist for a genocidal deity with an inferiority complex who delights in dashing children's heads against walls. If this were true we could equally argue that Mr Dawkins is an apologist for the men who brought us the Nazi death camps, Cambodia's Year Zero and the Soviet gulags.

Interestingly, a fellow Oxford professor and atheist, Dr Daniel Came, said: “The absence of a debate with the foremost apologist for Christian theism is a glaring omission on your CV and is of course apt to be interpreted as cowardice on your part.” If you want to see Lane Craig in action there's a YouTube video of him beating Christopher Hitchens in a debate.

I have no problem with reconciling a form of evolution with scriptural accounts of creation: does not Genesis tell us that God formed Adam from the (pre-existing) dust and breathed life into Adam? Faith and science are complementary.

Yours faithfully,
Christopher Keffe
155 Butler Road
West Harrow
Middlesex

EVOLUTION AND THE ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN BODY

Dear Father Editor,
In your comment on Fr Kevin O'Donnell's letter, in your November-December issue, you use the words “emergence”, “progress” and “evolution” in connection with the origins of the human body.

What strikes one about these words – all of which denote a process – is that they owe everything to Charles Darwin and nothing to Holy Scripture. The Bible is eloquent that God created by His Word – by fiat. One has only to read Genesis and the Psalms to see this. There is also an ineluctable chemical obstacle to Creation as process. There

isn't a shred of evidence of any living thing ever evolving into some different kind of living thing capable of breeding but infertile with its parent stock. All living things go on producing young after their own kind and no other kind.

The Church's teaching is incompatible with an evolutionary origin for Eve's body. Leo XIII's encyclical *Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae* speaks in a way that would rule out such an origin. He also uses the word “mirabiliter” to describe the formation of Eve's body from the side of the sleeping Adam – indicating an event which transcended the laws of nature.

The doctrines concerning the formation of Adam and Eve were proposed by the Catholic bishops and popes for more than 1,800 years before Leo XIII wrote that encyclical. They did this in their role as authentic teachers in the Church. Why does the *Faith* movement seek to overturn this teaching?

Yours faithfully,
Tim Williams
Madison Terrace,
Hayle, Cornwall

EDITORIAL COMMENT

We are extremely grateful to Mr Williams for his letter. We would wholeheartedly agree with him that God created “by his Word” but would argue that to understand properly what is meant by God's “Word” one must read the Prologue to St John's Gospel.

The Word was with God in the beginning and was God but that Word became flesh. In *Faith* magazine we propose a vision in which God's creation is ordered unto the Word becoming flesh.

We would note, too, that the Church has never interpreted the book of Genesis in a simplistically literal way. Long before Darwin published his *Origin of Species* St Augustine was interpreting the book of Genesis in a highly sophisticated way. We would refer Mr Williams to the great bishop of Hippo's *De Genesi ad litteram*.

Further we would draw Mr Williams' attention to the words of Pius XII in his encyclical letter *Humani Generis*: “For these reasons the Teaching Authority of the Church does not forbid that, in conformity with the present state of human sciences and sacred theology, research and discussions, on the part of men experienced in both fields, take place with regard to the doctrine of evolution, *in as far as it inquires into the origin of the human body as coming from pre-existent and living matter* – for the Catholic faith obliges us to hold that souls are immediately created by God” [*italics added*].

The teaching authority of the Church does not define on this issue but does grant that it is quite legitimate to enquire into the origins of the material body. Mr Williams may disagree with us on this matter, and he is free to do so, but we take issue with the implication that we are trying to overturn a settled teaching of the Church.

PRAISE FROM ACROSS THE POND

Dear Father Editor,

Sorry to bug you, but I just wanted to say thanks for making your religion page – <http://www.faith.org.uk/Links/EducationLinks.htm>

My name is Sarah Taylor and I'm a Sunday School assistant in Oklahoma. While I usually work on the music coordination, I've recently been helping out with a world religion seminar. Your site has been very helpful! Thank you!

Yours faithfully,
Sarah Taylor
Oklahoma



Book Reviews

A Concise Companion and Commentary for the Catechism of the Catholic Church

By James Tolhurst. *Gracewing*, 1994, 218pp, £9.99

In this Year of Faith it seems that we are all being called, at a level suited to our own situation, to engage with, be challenged by, and essentially grow in understanding of our own personal faith and also the faith that has been passed down to us by the Apostles.

One of the key works that grants us access to information about the latter is the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* which, while being a document of fundamental importance and accomplishment, can for some seem complicated, dense and intellectual. For these and other reasons, Fr Tolhurst observes that the Catechism is too often left unused and unconsulted in many homes. *A Concise Companion and Commentary for the Catechism of the Catholic Church* is written as a remedy to these reactions and experiences of many Catholics and as a work that will hopefully provoke the faithful into a living relationship with their faith, which is underpinned by knowledge and understanding.

Fr Tolhurst begins his book by explaining the journey and purpose of the Catechism. For those of us who have never known our faith as separate from the existence of the Catechism it provokes a response of gratitude and thankfulness for the clarity of message granted to us in its pages. He then systematically follows the four sections of the Catechism from the Profession of Faith to Christian Prayer.

In its layout the Companion is designed to be a working document with space left for notes and reflections. It includes enhanced references to *Veritatis Splendor* and comes with the original Catechism paragraph numbers, which are very useful for cross-referencing. Comparing several paragraphs allows the reader to see that Fr Tolhurst's intention is to make the language of the Catechism more fluid and less academic. It also has an excellent appendix that looks at Catholic Prayers in an attempt to further bolster the link between faith learning and faith practice.

While the language used by Fr Tolhurst is certainly easier to understand, the Companion is by no means simplistic. It requires us to be active participants in our own learning, not passive and unthinking. Not only is Fr Tolhurst encouraging the faithful to use the Catechism as a living document, something that is integral to maturation of faith, but he is also attempting to equip us to answer questions about our faith that others may ask of us: "I fervently hope that this volume will help to highlight what is basic and essential in Catholicism and encourage us all to live it in our lives and explain it to those who ask it of us."

The beauty of this Companion is that it is not another person's view of the Catholic faith. It is the same faith we live and profess, explained in a way that will be much more accessible for many Catholics.

I Believe In One God: The Creed Explained

By Pope Benedict XVI, *St Paul's Publishing*, 2012, 160pp, £9.99

Both the foreword and the introduction of *I Believe In One God: The Creed Explained* draw our attention to the monumental opportunity that lies before us in this Year of Faith. It is an opportunity to further develop our own faith but, as the many events and publications planned for this Year testify, it is also an unmissable chance

for us to experience and encourage within one another a shared thirst for the truth about God and about our existence.

Praying the Creed together at Mass defines what we believe as a Catholic Community. How we receive, understand and essentially put into practice this experience marks us out as Christians. It is fitting then that Pope Benedict has chosen to explain the Creed further in this book, working his way systematically through each section, hoping throughout to reawaken and re-educate.

What underpins the entire body of this text is the desire of the Holy Father to communicate the essential nature of the love of God. Love as freedom, love as relationship, love as sacrifice and love as hope: "Whoever is moved by love begins to perceive what 'life' really is." He constantly directs us towards understanding our relationship with God as a living and lived reality, always nudging us to take this understanding out into the world in service of our neighbour, which in turn leads us into a deeper and more fulfilling relationship with Christ.

Throughout this book, the Holy Father weaves clarity of understanding of the historical context of the constituent parts of the Creed with succinct and thought-provoking contemporary insights for Christians today to ponder. Essentially, he brings the Creed to life for us and invites us to respond.

This book is a satisfying and enlightening read, sharpening the focus on something so integral and familiar to us as Catholics. During this Year of Faith, this book could be read in sections as part of a more meditative approach to understanding the Creed or as a resource for use as part of a study group. However it is approached, an enhanced and deeper understanding of the core beliefs of our Church will surely follow.

Natalie Finnigan
Glasgow

Beauty In the Word – Rethinking the Foundations of Education

By Stratford Caldecott, *Angelico Press*, 2012, 168pp £9.95

Stratford Caldecott is a serious author who has a high view of education, which this book expresses. It is a noble book which will be a stimulus to all concerned with education.

The book considers a Catholic philosophy of education, with especial regard to the *Triduum* of ancient civilisation: grammar, dialectic (logic) and rhetoric. The author outlines what these were in the ancient world, gives something of their development through the centuries and then explains how they fit in today and why they are so important. Those who recommend the book – and there are several celebrated names – are highly distinguished in the world of philosophy.

There is, of course, very much a need for books of theory, especially curriculum theory, which is predominant here. The English National Curriculum has many weaknesses and they almost all spring from its lack of any coherent philosophical basis. This book is at its strongest in relating its theory of the curriculum to theology. The book is subtitled "Rethinking the Foundations of Education".

The book is concerned with fundamentals of religious educational philosophy. Anthony Esolen, writing in the Foreword, states the nature of the problem: "We do not know what or how to teach children because we do not know what a child is, and we do not know what a child is because we do not know what man is – and Him from whom and for whom man is." The author himself says that we cannot talk about the curriculum because we do not know what life is for: "It is as though we were attempting to construct the top floor of a building without bothering with the lower floors or foundations." Well put. The book emphasises what the Catholic

"The English National Curriculum has many weaknesses and they almost all spring from its lack of any coherent philosophical basis"

philosophy of education has always said: "The 'Catholicism' in a Catholic school cannot be added on to an existing curriculum or atmosphere."

The author writes: "This book is part of a wider ongoing project, and I am excited at the prospect of helping to develop over the next few years ... other books and supporting materials for homes, schools and parishes." Is this a weakness, the current lack of the practical applications of the theory? Not at all, but it could be seen as such in pragmatic England, where theory is not highly regarded.

One would also want to argue that in England, in the independent sector, there are Catholic schools with a very Catholic curriculum. One of my grandsons, aged 14, studies at his Catholic independent school the following subjects: English (with visits to Shakespeare productions and poetry learned by heart), Latin, Greek, French, history, geography, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, art, music and, of course, religious education, as well as learning three musical instruments, debating, acting in Shakespeare and playing number 8 for the rugby XV of his age group.

His cousin, one of my granddaughters, at another Catholic independent school has a similar curriculum. I think that the best Catholic independent schools in England represent a practical model that should be considered alongside the theory of this most interesting book.

I do hope that teachers will read this book as well as governors, those important people whose powers are being stolen in many Catholic maintained schools by local authority and – dare one say – diocesan bureaucrats. One knows of schools where the important duties of governors are being concealed and they are being sidelined by being given most unsuitable, and essentially trivial, tasks such as superficial school visits.

It would be good to get the bureaucrats to read this book – prayers to St Jude,

please. One important practical point: the governors of Catholic schools can now opt for Academy status. This enables them to determine their own curriculum instead of being forced to follow the politically correct, and anti-Christian, National Curriculum. So a Catholic maintained school could implement the ideas of this book.

Since Academy schools are not under the control of local authorities, it is a source of great wonder to me that *all* Catholic maintained schools have not opted for this status; it is an even greater wonder that the Catholic diocesan authorities are, it seems, actually discouraging the governors of Catholic schools from exercising their legal right to opt for Academy status. One of the most distinguished Catholic maintained schools in England describes itself thus in its official literature: "State-funded Independent Catholic School". O si sic omnes!

Something of the flavour of the book can be obtained by visiting Stratford Caldecott's website <http://beauty-in-education.blogspot.co.uk/>

Eric Hester
Bolton

The Unintended Reformation

By Brad S Gregory. *Belknap Press of Harvard University*, 2012, 574pp, £25

Nowadays, historians are presenting the Reformation without all the anti-Catholic propaganda: no longer it seen simply as a victory over Roman obscurantism. Cardinal Wolsey was no advertisement for the Church, but the machinations of someone like Thomas Cromwell leave a bad taste. ...

Professor Gregory takes an original approach to the upheaval of the 16th century. He divides his book into six sections: God, doctrine, the Church, morality, capitalism and knowledge. In each section he examines what the reformers taught – with their concentration on the *ipsissima verba* of Scripture, and the influence of the new



Book Reviews continued

learning – and the *unintended* results of their teaching.

In the case of doctrine, the rejection of Rome in favour of Scripture as the sole authority led to conflicting views among the reformers themselves concerning who was to interpret the Word of God. Those who argued from the fundamentalist approach were always going to be in the minority. The more latitudinarian majority gradually saw reason as a way to interpret God's revelation. The view of God as Creator of all tended to give way to the natural science view, which seemed to offer a satisfactory explanation.

The author is particularly interesting in his section on capitalism, which he calls "the goods life". The Golden Age of Holland plays a major part in the process because it was seen how complete religious toleration went with conspicuous growth in GDP. With less emphasis on a single religious denomination, avarice came to be seen as "at worst a public virtue, despite being a private vice".

That this mentality spread can be gathered from the portrait of Captain Bernardo de Vargas Machuga, painted in 1599 with the motto "By compasses and the sword, *more and more and more*." Whereas surplus income had formerly been diverted to charitable causes, now it was diverted to oneself: "merchandise of gold and silver. ...wine and oil. ...chariots and slaves, and the souls of men" (Rev 18:12ff).

He also highlights the marginalisation of theology – as a result of the nature of internecine religious squabbles, and the increasing role of the new learning. This gradually lessened the influence of religion on those who formed national policy and tended to substitute ethical considerations for religious morality – making governments the arbiters, and social expediency the rationale. So now you know...

Catholicism reacted slowly (the Council of Trent's 18 years make EU summits look like a walk in the park), and in

many ways, badly. The Counter-Reformation retained the virtues and devotions and produced saints and new religious orders, but regarded with suspicion any new insights (especially in the sciences). The Jesuits, who made cautious attempts to bridge the gap, ended up being suppressed for their pains by Clement XIV. It is only recently that there has been any sort of a synthesis – and this is still being fiercely resisted in some quarters.

Professor Gregory calls attention to the effect of concentrating on the value of Scripture at the expense of the ordinary pursuit of virtue, bolstered by the sacraments (especially the Mass), the consecrated life of priesthood and religious and the whole devotional life – all banished as popish superstitions. The new house, "empty, swept and put in order", brought with it new problems. The reformers paid a dearer price, but the Catholic Church – having corrected many of the abuses of which it was guilty – was then content to insulate itself from new insights, and it too is now suffering the unintended consequences of its isolation.

Readers will have to forgive the technical expressions – some of which may be familiar to Ivy League graduates, though I am still not sure about '*supersessionism*'. They will also note that there are nearly 150 pages of notes – in case you think that the author is short-changing you! There are many other little gems in this well-written and frequently amusing book. The author presents cogent arguments which need to be considered. This book should keep you going till Lent.

Fr James Tolhurst
Chislehurst, Kent

The Trinity: An Introduction to the Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God

By Giles Emery OP, trans Matthew Levering, The Catholic University of America Press, 2011, 219pp, \$24.95

Anyone educated in theology in the last 30 years might be forgiven for thinking

that Trinitarian speculation began with Karl Rahner. Intending no disrespect to the great Jesuit theologian himself, the way Trinitarian theology has been taught, with admittedly a few honourable exceptions, has left many of us unaware of the preceding 2,000 years of reflection on the matter. The course I followed on the Trinity in seminary threw me straight into Rahner's "grundaxiom" with no background whatsoever. I don't think I am alone in this experience.

You will have noticed that the price of this book is marked in dollars rather than pounds. At present it is difficult to get hold of in the UK. Nevertheless for anyone trying to plug a hole in their theological knowledge I heartily recommend taking the trouble to find a copy and read it. I am thinking here especially of busy priests in a parish.

At 200 or so pages it is relatively short. Not being a French speaker I can't vouch for the accuracy of the translation, but I can vouch for its readability. One might need some theological background but it is basically accessible. The chapters follow a traditional format moving from Scripture to Tradition and the councils of the Church. After that comes a sort of doctrinal synthesis which is basically Thomistic. This is then followed by an illuminating chapter on how the Trinity relates to us and how our salvation is wrought by the Trinity. This chapter in particular is helpful because it brings home the relevance of the Trinity to our lives.

The book does not, perhaps, offer the most daring of speculative analyses nor is it the last word in Trinitarian theology, but it is full of good, solid Catholic doctrine. This volume is the first to be published in a new series entitled "Ressourcement Thomism" by the Catholic University of America Press. If the subsequent volumes are as useful as this, the series is something to get excited about.

Fr Kevin Douglas
Hawick

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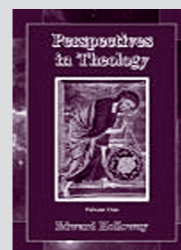
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