

faith

November and December 2011
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OF FAITH AND REASON

The Eclipse of Authority

Editorial

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Kathleen Curran Sweeney

GCSE Lessons on Catholic Marriage: A Syllabus of Errors

Hugh MacKenzie

Does Modern Scientific Discovery Have Significant Metaphysical and Theological Implications?

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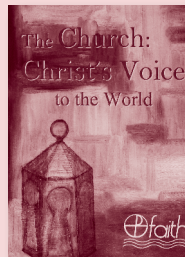
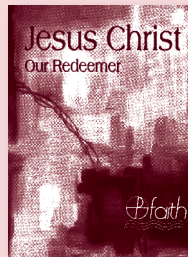
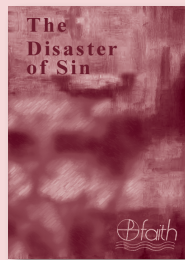
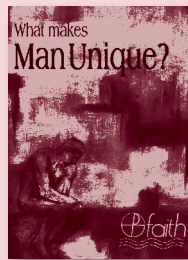
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In speaking to the Bundestag last 22 September Pope Benedict issued an “urgent invitation” to engage in “a public debate” on the cultural influence of positivistic philosophy (see our **Road from Regensburg** column). The Pope reemphasised a key theme of his last twelve months (which are movingly described by **William Oddie** in this issue) by calling the growing relativism of Europe a “dramatic situation which affects everyone”. Two days later he told seminarians to sift the “enduring insights” from the “nonsense” of modern philosophy of science.

As ever in our magazine we want to foster such debate. In this issue we present different angles concerning whether and how modern science should influence our metaphysics. **Fr Selman** succinctly presents the prevalent view of neo-scholasticism concerning the policing role of metaphysics over experimental observation. We present a differing emphasis in our editor’s **review** of Stephen Barr’s generally excellent use of modern science to show the existence of God and the human soul. However, we argue that whilst Barr acknowledges the rise of philosophical materialism at the expense of the Catholic vision he does not give credible reasons for why this happened. We think it is partly explained by the influence of certain *a priori* affirmations of neo-scholasticism.

Kathleen Sweeney historically roots the problem in the philosophy of nominalism and links it with the heart issue of the place of Christ in creation. What she very clearly does for the concept of ‘nature’ our **editorial** attempts to do for the related concept of ‘authority’. The denial of both concepts with regard to the meaning of man is at the basis of modern individualism.

Our editorial takes up the Pope’s own linking of the British riots to this “dramatic situation” in the world and the Church. It does not deny positive signs in the Church, such as those described in our Truth Will Set You Free column by **Joanna Bogle** and **James Tolhurst**. Yet, in terms of the failure to hand on authoritative revelation concerning human nature, our **editor’s piece** on an EdExcel text book develops one of our editorial’s examples: namely the symbolic and very worrying issue of sex education in Catholic schools. It is surely a “dramatic” situation that at the heart of our Catholic community we are pushing many, probably most, of our 14 year olds into the moral minefield of the current Religious Education GCSE.

Basic to this latter issue is the meaning of sex. We are then very pleased, as part of the debate strongly requested by the Pope, to have stirred up discussion, as exhibited on our **Letters** page, concerning one particular elephant in the room: namely the Church’s traditional emphasis upon the primacy of the procreative end of the marital act.

The debate will continue in these pages because, as the Pope recently told the new British Ambassador to the Holy See, “it is too big to fail” (see **p27**).

“These debates are now over.” That was the response of the Prime Minister, David Cameron, to recent arguments over how to tackle the disorder in our schools and on our streets. The words, echoing the former US Vice President Al Gore’s somewhat optimistic pronouncement on the global warming discussion, are from a speech Cameron made on 9 September on the role of schools in “mending our broken society”. “Because it’s clear what works,” he explained. “Discipline works, rigour works. Freedom for schools works. Having high expectations works. Now we’ve got to get on with it – and we don’t have any time to lose.” What he did not say, crucially, was that marriage and family work. That omission, we think, was in tension with his strongly felt need for parents to control “children [who] constantly play truant”, and for those who fail in this duty to have their benefits cut. As with global warming, so too with the lawlessness in our society: the debates over its causes are far from finished. Blaming parents, for one thing, is a little too easy.

The context of the speech was the previous month’s riots across England, largely perpetrated by groups and gangs of apparently nihilistic youth, who seemed on the whole to be enjoying themselves rather than protesting about anything – except perhaps the meaningless of the world-view bequeathed to them.

Cameron was really just riding the resultant wave in favour of a renewal of authority in our culture. For, against the fashion, the role of the police has been reinvigorated and the role of parents reaffirmed. The justice system is being praised for having gone into overdrive and new legislation and stricter sanctions are being proposed.

The heart of this discernment concerning the need for a greater command, control and direction in our society is surely good. Yet if we are to turn around the decline in the authority of police, teachers and parents it is crucial we understand how it happened. In fact the proper exercise of authority, which would seem to have been a dwindling skill for a long time, must be founded upon not mere expediency, but a belief in the good and the true concerning the heart and soul of man. From the Christian perspective it needs to be rooted in the authority of God the Father, who made the human person in His image.

On the very same day as the Prime Minister’s speech his new Ambassador to the Holy See was being welcomed by the Pope with words which, “in the light of events in England this summer”, similarly confirmed that this debate is not quite over:

“When policies do not presume or promote objective values, the resulting moral relativism ... tends ... to produce frustration, despair, selfishness and a disregard for the life and liberty of others ... The active fostering of the essential values of a healthy society, through the defence of life and of the family, the sound moral

The Eclipse of Authority

Editorial

education of the young, and a fraternal regard for the poor and the weak, will surely help to rebuild a positive sense of one's duty, in charity, towards friends and strangers alike in the local community."

The collapse of authority, parental or otherwise, is both a cause and an effect of this relativism. Yet, as we would want to draw out below, this dynamic in English secular and ecclesial culture is itself rooted in the Reformation's individualistic rejection of ecclesial magisterium.

The Absence of Moral Authority

For leaders of our society to focus upon, even to blame, parents, whilst missing the undermining of their role by relativism involves a tragic hypocrisy. In our last issue William Oddie produced convincing examples of such active undermining, from the "disastrous" affirmation of the primacy of "children's rights" by the Children Act in 1989 to the "analysis by the Institute for Public Policy Research (which) found that, among other factors linking the 18 areas worst hit by public disorder, is a high rate of single-parent families and broken homes."

His quote from Fr Tim Finigan's blog bears repeating in full:

"Few people have noted the irony of the appeals by the police to parents to 'contact their children'. For several decades our country has undermined marriage, the family, and the rights of parents. Agents of the state can teach your children how to have sex, give them condoms, put them on the pill, give them the morning-after pill if it doesn't work, and take them off for an abortion if that fails – and all without you having any say in the matter or necessarily even knowing about it. Now all of a sudden, we want parents to step in and tell their teenage children how to behave."

A conspiracy of silence has smothered the public teaching of any specific moral meaning concerning sex. And the range of authority figures involved in it, whatever their private beliefs, will surely amaze future generations.

It is no wonder most of us have stood back as advertisers have tried to get parents to spend money through targeting children, and as a culture has developed whereby, as a recent independent Home Office report put it, it is now not a case of if a teenager will view pornography, but of when. The fashionable sportswear company Nike, whose trainers many a child will have begged parents to buy, captures the dynamic quite well. Its slogan is "Just Do It" – and one can now see this appeal on many a youthful T-Shirt on our high streets.

It is hardly surprising that teachers are unsure of how to deal with miscreant pupils claiming their "rights" to receive warnings before punishments, and that head teachers who dare to try are largely unable to force boys to do their ties up and girls to refrain from wearing mini-skirts. It really is no surprise at all that most 3:30 pm bus passengers do

nothing in the face of the unruly school pupils, even when they are in small groups, who pile into the buses that dare to stop for them at the end of the school day. Peter Whittle pointed out in the September *Standpoint* magazine that "If faced with a group of gang members playing music unbearably loud in the car next to them at traffic lights I personally know of nobody – nobody, from *Daily Telegraph* reader to *Guardian* reader – who would risk asking them to turn it down ... but it's not just the gang culture."

There are of course many encouraging examples of young people prepared generously to put themselves out in service of the needy, and of parents and other adult role models who foster such behaviour. It would still seem that young people who are, against their nature, dominated by vice are in the minority. Furthermore the recent World Youth Day provided a great example of many young people wellformed in their faith, especially by new communities and movements. But the fact remains that the older generation has largely failed to pass on to the younger generation a clear sense of purpose beyond possessions and pleasures, let alone a vision of why duty to others comes before the rights of self, let alone a "reason for the hope within" (1Peter 3:15). And it would certainly seem to be a small minority of young people who are explicitly trying to swim upstream and to grow in virtue and the life of the Spirit.

The rioting was just the extreme result of the institutional and inexorable undermining of youthful respect for the authority of elders and objective values. Its reach and thoroughness might well have had the organisers of China's millions of Red Guards in Mao's Cultural Revolution looking on in envy.

Current Ecclesial Compromise

In our January 2006 editorial, "Truth, Compassion and the Secularisation of the People of God", we argued that in the Church "we have adopted a fashionable but false dichotomy between truth and compassion. A wholly legitimate concern to show gentleness in our pastoral approach has become confused with compromising the content of the faith itself." The effect upon Catholic families which we charted there is even more marked now. Today even some very strong and wellformed parents are tempted to throw in the towel concerning trying to protect their children from aberrant sex education in Catholic schools. In this issue we present a piece overviewing aspects of an RE text book widely used in Catholic schools which lean towards relativism in this area. But, more fundamentally, Christian leaders have, in recent decades, failed to preach Christian morality with clarity, conviction and, crucially, authority.

A couple of recent Episcopal pronouncements serve to make the point. Paradoxically they are both basically positive developments.

The Eclipse of Authority continued

First, at the time of writing, Bishop Philip Tartaglia of Paisley diocese has mounted a strident and courageous defence of the traditional family against the Scottish executive's movement toward recognising homosexual "marriage". The fact that this is such an exception "proves the rule" that there has been a long-term policy of silence concerning the redefinition of the family and sex since the 1968 Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (see our July 2007 editorial). We would emphasise here that *Humanae Vitae* clearly claimed the authority of Christ, obliged us to comply. As Fr Dylan James brought out for us in our last issue, the failure to resist the separation of sex from procreation has been a key moment in the modern collapse of Christian behaviour and conviction concerning sex and the family. In this context Bishop Tartaglia's intervention seems little more than a straw in the wind.

Secondly, the Bishops of England and Wales, hot on the heels of an admirably thorough implementation of the new translation of the Roman Missal, have restored the universal norm concerning not eating meat on Fridays. Yet there has been a certain semi-official reticence concerning clearly explaining the "sinful" implications of such a canonical restoration. Perhaps in the current culture it might have been better just to "recommend strongly" a return to the abstinence tradition. Yet in the light of the general drop in seriousness concerning the Sunday Mass obligation, and that for Holy Days of Obligation, there seems to be a pattern here concerning attitudes to Our Lord's words "what you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven".

The effect of failing to teach the serious *obligation of* obedience to ecclesial authority, and to challenge prominent dissent and disobedience, clearly has a direct effect upon Catholic families. But it has a more subtle, yet for all that more harmful, social effect.

Magisterium and the Social Fabric

Our Lord Jesus claimed to mediate the ultimate authority of His Father, that authority which is the source of all other. And the Catholic Church claims to continue this Incarnational "But I say to you," in a manner that is true to human communication – namely socially and with clarity. St. Paul said "In Him we live and move and have our being." And as the plant needs sunshine and the fish water, so the human personality needs an ultimate truth and love to complete and give meaning to his spiritual intellect and will. God in Christ is our Envioner, in a personal, private and public manner. The Church is his means for clearly passing on his teaching and the powerful grace which we need. It is the ecosystem in which we can find peace and sustenance for the journey.

When its magisterial power to teach is undermined, especially by those to whom its exercise has been committed, this will seriously undermine wider society. If it is removed from the social fabric the coming of God

is likely to be interpreted in a purely historical rather than sacramental manner, frustrating the reach of God into our human, social world, undermining the human hope that God can answer our deepest yearning.

Once Church teaching becomes just one opinion among many in the public square, as well as becoming an embarrassment to prominent Christian leaders, then God is being gagged. He came to bear witness to the truth and to give us life in abundance, so he must use decisive words which are relevant to each age.

Man is a being that yearns for a convincing truth upon which to base his life; our very nature is radically incomplete and incompletable without a credible claim to ultimate authority amidst the body politic. Without the ability of the fallen creature to receive infallibly the truth concerning his meaning and design, the fact that there may be objective truth at all becomes increasingly irrelevant. The history of the growth of the modern world shows an interplay between the rejection of the authoritative impact of Incarnation, traceable at least as far as the 16th century Reformation, and the post-Enlightenment development of the philosophy of relativism, which the Pope highlighted to the British ambassador on 9 September last.

Deeper Roots of Modern Breakdown

So just as we want to look for a clear-cut, specific cause for the riots beyond the easy targets of contemporary parents, so also do we need to look beyond the easy target of contemporary Bishops. And if we see the roots of the riots in the effect upon parents of the 1989 Children Act, and the roots of such legislation in the western episcopal response to the 1968 *Humanae Vitae*, so we would place the roots of that neo-protestant silence in the success of the Reformation. For the roots of individualistic rejection of the source of all authority go back at least as far as the removal of the role of the Petrine office from the European mindset.

In 1978 Edward Holloway wrote in this space:

"The Roman Catholic Church... is at the end of an era, that is why she finds herself in crisis. This era is the end of the Counter Reformation and the Counter Reformation is only the final development of the old philosophical and theological synthesis of Scholasticism. Scholasticism is not a dirty word in the Church. It spans the magnificent and comprehensive achievement in the Christian West, which extends from St. Augustine to St. Thomas, and continues through to the great saints, mystics, and teachers of the post Reformation period.

"This synthesis of Christian thought is not the Faith: it is the frame through which the Faith has been presented and focused in the Western Catholic Church. The last time it was an adequate frame through which to focus definitions of faith and morals was the First Vatican Council of 1870. From that Council developed the period of 'Fortress

“This synthesis of Christian thought is not the Faith, it is the frame ...”

Vatican’ which lasted until 1960. From that fateful date the Holy Spirit, speaking through the Pope and the Fathers of the Council (not the periti) told the Church that a new frame was needed, both to safeguard the ancient treasury of the Faith, and to draw forth from that treasury ‘new’ things for this age, as well as the old things.

“It has been the tragedy of the Church that men blew up the portcullis of the fortress and filled in the moat with a happy zest, before they had any new strategy or new formulation of thought through which to focus anew and to develop anew the riches of the Faith. So many of the bishops did not know that the old mould of Scholasticism would not do as the means to recast the ideas and the ideals of the Aggiornamento. Besides, any new mould had to be adequate to safeguard the old, and still objective and utterly divine, teaching of the Church.

“A large number of the theologians, and some very influential European prelates did know that the old mould would not do, but they had no alternative mould to offer, except what is technically called ‘Modernism’ or rationalism in theology. That is why the theology and cult of the Subjective is sweeping the Church: there have been no fruits, only increasing divisions and disintegration. Obviously the will and leading of the Holy Spirit is to be looked for elsewhere...”

Conclusion

Perhaps a more potent sign of the drawing towards the end point of Reformation influence might be the development of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham for Anglican converts. To date about fifty groups of Anglicans in England have joined it with their ministers, and many more across the English speaking world have made similar moves. The purpose of Ordinariate is

“to maintain the liturgical, spiritual and pastoral traditions of the Anglican Communion within the Catholic Church, as a precious gift nourishing the faith of the members of the Ordinariate and as a treasure to be shared”
(Anglicanorum Coetibus)

Up to the Reformation there had been one major breaking-off from the Church of Christ, by the Orthodox tradition. Since the Reformation the Protestant tradition has split into thousands of “denominations”. Now, as authoritative teaching within the Anglican tradition gradually dissipates, significant numbers have discerned the need to return, yet hoping to bring with them traditions of prayer and practice which have some unique claim to go back even to English Catholicism as it was before the Reformation. For we do not and should not deny the ability of the Catholic tradition to gain from the ecumenical movement. Yet it has become increasingly obvious that, in the Reformed traditions, God the Father cannot and does not unequivocally utter, through his Son, his “I tell you solemnly”.

Such absence of the definitive and divine authority is now manifest and manifold in the wider culture. And it is our culture’s affirmation of an absentee God the Father which is a key cause of the absentee fathers which the Institute for Public Policy Research’s riot report recently highlighted. A new era beckons. It will need our obedience and our humility and our openness to new works and new words from God the Father, as the Spirit gradually “leads us into all truth”. Let us keep looking and listening. We owe it to future generations.

Is Christian Life Unnatural?

De Lubac's Development *by Kathleen Curran Sweeney*

Kathleen Sweeney offers a very accessible approach to a central problem of modern western Christian thought, namely the relationship between nature and grace. She brings out the significant contribution towards a solution made by Henri de Lubac's recovery of the Greek Father's insight that we are made for divinisation in Jesus Christ, God made man. Our June 2008 issue was largely dedicated to discussing the way in which Edward Holloway suggests developing this vision further (it can be seen at www.faith.org.uk/MagOldIssues.htm). Ms. Sweeney is a freelance writer and graduate of the John Paul II Institute in Washington.

"God in the beginning of time plants the vine of the human race; he loved this human race and purposed to pour out his Spirit upon it and to give it the adoption of sons."

St. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*

The sexual mores of our day throw out a challenge to Christians with an assumption that the requirements of Christian life impose an unwelcome stricture on "natural" uninhibited sexual expression. Other periods of social history perceived Catholic teaching in particular as an obstacle to economic or political "progress" that would enhance human life. Beneath these attitudes is often a belief that the practice of Christianity somehow squelches our human nature and freedom which usually tend toward something more "human" or "realistic." This has left some practising Christians feeling that the struggle is too exhausting or the challenge too lofty, so they give up and drift away, or else they explode in anger and enmity against Christianity.

There is frequently a misunderstanding of what human nature is and what its relationship to God's gift of grace is. Sadly these misunderstandings about nature and grace distort people's understanding of Christian life, raising questions such as: Is grace at odds with our humanity? Or is it our human nature that is an enemy? We then hope to answer two questions: Where did such misunderstanding come from? What is wrong with this picture?

How Nature Got Lost

The ideas at the origin of this problem are present deep in late medieval history in the thought of the Franciscan friar from England, William of Ockham, (1287-1347), who challenged the integrated view of the relationship between grace and nature with his philosophy of nominalism. Ockham rejected the real existence of a human nature because he had concluded that one can only know particular individuals and that universals that can be applied to multiple individuals, such as human nature, or the essence of a dog or a tree, or properties such as white or black, square or round were only names that we create in our mind. As a result, nominalists did not consider human nature to have any real objective and permanent existence. Thus anything that might be considered as "natural" to human beings became a matter of subjective interpretation.

Ockham was concerned to maintain the absolute omnipotence and freedom of God. Because of this concern, he believed that any patterns in creation or permanent natures in things would limit God's freedom. He rejected much of Greek philosophy, in particular Aristotle's teaching that human beings exist as a stable substance whose nature is a rational animal and whose

rational soul is the principle of unity and organisation of the human person. According to Aristotelian metaphysics, particular persons differ in accidental qualities but all share the same essential nature which has real existence in each existing human being. The classic definition by the Christian philosopher Boethius, who formed a bridge between Greek philosophy and medieval Christian philosophy, is that the human being is "an individual substance of a rational nature," which became a standard definition.

A key to understanding the problem created by Ockham is the concept of analogy of being which was developed in detail by St. Thomas Aquinas and other Christian thinkers, most recently augmented by Hans Urs von Balthasar. Since the creature shares in a finite way in the gift of "being" granted by the Creator who is Absolute Being, there is an analogous relationship of similitude at the same time that there is radical dissimilitude. Because being is the source of goodness and perfection, the creature also possesses a finite goodness and perfection that reflects analogously the Perfect Goodness of Divine Being. The difference, however is always great: man's existence is totally dependent on God's act of creation whereas God's existence is eternal, infinite, omnipotent and dependent on nothing else. At the same time, we know from the book of Genesis that man contains something similar to God because he is created as an image of God. This is particularly reflected in his gifts of reason, freedom of will and relationships of love. Moreover, God gave Adam and Eve the further gift of grace to share in His divine life. This was lost through their sin of disobedience, but God clearly intended from the beginning to create man's nature to be receptive to the grace of participation in divine life.

Ockham's approach, however, made an equivocal comparison between man and God, i.e. God and man were totally different and there was nothing in common between them. Man can know nothing about God through his use of reason because nothing in man's experience was anything like God's reality. This set up an opposition between God and man, between divine knowledge and will and man's reason and free will. With an equivocal concept, man has nothing good in common with God's goodness and can know nothing about it. In fact, anything good in man was thought to subtract from God's glory and power. This was a zero-sum equation, an either-or opposition that replaced the Catholic "both-and" approach to man's relationship with God. Since man could do nothing good of himself, according to Ockham, revelation and faith are the only sources of knowledge of right and wrong or of God's will. This meant human reason could have little or no role in support of Christian faith.

“Only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light” Vatican II”

Reform Undermined

It is ironic that the positive reforms that Protestant leaders sought in the 16th century were undermined by the faulty medieval philosophy of nominalism. French Catholic theologian and convert from Lutheranism, Fr Louis Bouyer, comments:

“If the Reformers unintentionally became heretics, the fault does not consist in the radical nature of their reform....The structure they raised on their own principles is unacceptable only because they used uncritically material drawn from that decaying Catholicism they desired to elude, but whose prisoners they remained to a degree they never suspected. No phrase reveals so clearly the hidden evil that was to spoil the fruit of the Reformation than Luther’s saying that Occam was the only scholastic who was any good. The truth is that Luther, brought up on his system, was never able to think outside the framework it imposed, while this, it is only too evident, makes the mystery that lies at the root of Christian teaching either inconceivable or absurd.”¹

Martin Luther and John Calvin both absorbed the nominalist idea that God is unapproachable by reason. Biblical faith could be the only connection to God because of the equivocal understanding of God’s being and man’s being, and the conclusion that it was not possible for man to do anything good or positive in any way without subtracting somehow from the power and glory of God. Luther had not studied Thomas Aquinas but received most of his academic theology through the commentaries of Gregory Biel who was a prominent nominalist. Biel had accepted Peter Lombard’s view that original sin involved a fundamentally disordered desire instead of the definition held by St. Augustine, St. Anselm and St. Thomas Aquinas that original sin is rooted in privation of grace, and does not fundamentally corrupt our nature. Luther believed that every time we are tempted by a disordered desire, even if we resist it, we are sinning. Man thus is in a constant state of sin.

The nominalist theory that there is no existential reality to properties surfaced in Luther’s belief that grace does not have any real existence as an internal property given to man by God, a spiritual reality that enters into us and affects us. Instead grace was considered by Luther as an attitude in God that covers our sins and does not count them against us, an external legalistic condition that does nothing to change us internally. This idea of external justification has no basis in Scripture which consistently speaks of the “new creation” or “new man” brought about through baptism. According to Fr Bouyer,

“Occam, and following him Biel, thought out the idea, without precedent in tradition, that justification, properly speaking, consists only in the acceptance of man by God, and that this acceptance in itself is independent of any change in the person justified....that God could also ‘justify’ the sinner and leave him in his sin.”²

The only way to salvation for man was his faith in God’s promise of salvation. But this faith could not be expressed as an act or “work” of man. The Church had always taught that

man cannot come to believe in God’s revelation and salvation without God’s grace first softening our heart and enlightening our mind to lead us toward Him. But Catholic teaching considers that the grace of baptism really exists in us as a share in divine life, a real gift of God that changes us, that makes us new creatures reborn to a new life. Sanctifying grace, in Catholic theology, is a stable disposition that quickens our spirit to act in union with the Holy Spirit and gives us the gift of faith that works through love and is active. Luther held to a more external understanding of grace as God’s action in seeing the person with faith as righteous and not seeing that person’s sinfulness. He states, for example: “*God imputes this faith for righteousness in his own sight.... They are received into grace.*”³

Like Ockham, Luther emphasises God’s omnipotence and freedom as being in opposition to man and rejected a universal human nature. Specifically, Luther denied that man has free will: “*There can be no ‘free will’ in man, or angel, or in any creature... If we believe that Satan is the prince of this world,... it is again apparent that there can be no ‘free-will’.*”⁴ Luther concluded “*that man without grace can will nothing but evil.*”⁵ Catholic understanding of original sin is that it only weakened human nature and did not destroy the basic inclination of the human will toward good and of the human reason toward truth; therefore, man can use his will and reason in cooperation with God’s grace which will perfect these faculties of human nature in directing them toward their true purpose to give glory to God.

Calvin was even more insistent on the principle of the total depravity of human nature, which is a staple of the belief of Protestants who follow Calvinist theology.⁶ Thomas Aquinas taught in this regard that grace restores the freedom of the will where it had been in bondage to sin, so that the person can cooperate with God’s grace willingly and with joy; the mind also is freed to receive greater light and participate in God’s creativity. In this way, human nature is internally brought to its perfection, not manipulated by external power. It is relevant also to realise that God who is Perfect Being does not create negative states or non-being. Since sin and evil are an absence of good, of being as well as of grace, God cannot be responsible for these negative states or man’s lack of grace.

Protestants were not alone in being influenced by nominalist thinking. Catholic theologians were also under its influence. Fr Bouyer points out that this prevented them from detecting the philosophical errors in aspects of Protestant teaching and distinguishing these from the positive elements. This led to unfortunate and unfruitful polemics, extending the schism and fragmentation of Christianity. Since man could not abandon his own development and activity, many turned to a humanism focused on the improvement of man’s life on earth while leaving the unfathomable God in his heaven.

Univocal Tendencies

The empiricism and scepticism embedded in nominalism came to the fore in the 17th and 18th centuries and many gradually drifted away from Christian faith. Under nominalist influence, there was no basis for understanding what is

Is Christian Life Unnatural? De Lubac's Development continued

universal in human nature, and the chasm between God and man appeared unbridgeable. Some concluded that only rationalistic philosophy and material reality could be a source of knowledge, since God was extrinsic to life and unknowable by reason. Others followed a univocal understanding of God and man: that God and nature are the same, (i.e. a form of pantheism,) and man is simply a part of universal eternal being. Hegel is an example of univocal thinking. He concluded that the history of the world is simply the unfolding of the divine mind, that divine reason and created natures are one and the same with no distinction. Without analogical thought, the swing from the equivocal separation of transcendence and immanence to the other pole of their univocal identity becomes inevitable.

Some univocal tendencies appeared in 20th century Christian thinkers who sought to encourage dialogue with non-Christians by emphasising a universal ethics that paralleled Christianity in the moral sphere. Speaking in terms of a humanity that was making "progress," such thinkers risked the danger of confusing human progress with the Kingdom of God. A tendency to collapse nature and grace into one reality (a univocal identity) made grace too immanent within an unredeemed nature, ignoring the universality and timelessness of Christ's Redemption as central to man's history and identity.

The Fathers of the Church and medieval theologians never taught that there is a natural order of man that could parallel God's salvific work in Christ. They consistently maintained that in the one historical order that exists, God created humanity for one destiny, the supernatural one of sharing in divine life. Man from the beginning has experienced sin and the need for grace to restore him to the supernatural destiny God originally intended for him. This destiny is not extrinsic to man's nature but is embedded in it, even though it requires God's gratuitous gift of grace to realise it.

The Paradox of Man's Destiny of Grace

French theologian, Fr Henri de Lubac, S.J., during mid-20th century discussions of this topic, took up the challenge of the paradox that man is called to a destiny he is incapable of achieving on his own without the freely given gift of God's grace. The following is a summary of his important and needed development of the theology of nature and grace.⁷

De Lubac points out, first of all, that man as a spiritual being has an intrinsic openness to the infinite, even though as a created being he is finite and incapable on his own of filling this open space within himself. His calling to have a share in infinite divine life is not extrinsic to his nature, but is an internal capacity for God – the "capax Dei." God gave man not only the gift of being but also, de Lubac maintains, "upon this being he has given me, God has imprinted a supernatural finality; he has made to be heard within my nature a call to see him."⁸ These are two separate gifts which logically precede and make possible the actual gift of grace offered to man's free will. The finality of man, embedded in his nature, is to share in God's life, yet he must be offered and must freely accept the gift of grace to pursue this end. His intellect is ordered to the vision of God, and his will to the relationship of love with the Lord.

At the same time, "between nature as it exists and the supernatural for which God destines it, the distance is as great, the difference as radical, as that between non-being and being; for to pass from one to the other is not merely to pass into 'more being' but to pass to a different type of being. It is a crossing by grace of an impassable barrier." Having a capacity for this is not the same as receiving actual participation in divine life. "The longing that surges from this 'depth' of the soul is a longing 'born of a lack.'"⁹

De Lubac clarifies that man cannot know that his desire is for the beatific vision. "Man needs revelation, then, in order to know distinctly what is his last end." The book of Genesis tells him he is made in the image of God. Since the source of the image is infinite in depth, the image bears something of this depth, something beyond the limits of human reason. St. Maximus the Confessor asserts that the rational creature does not naturally know "those deep and strong roots" which only in the opening of grace operating in his being does he come to understand that he cannot entirely understand himself.¹⁰ St. Augustine confirms that, "there is something of man which the inner spirit of man itself does not know."¹¹ Man is a mystery to himself. The nature of his soul is spiritual without the limits of matter, and closer to the angels than to inferior animals. It has a potency which leaves it unsatisfied by anything less than God Himself. "Certain depths of our nature can be opened only by the shock of revelation," de Lubac declares.... It is by the promise given us of seeing God face to face that we really learn to recognise our 'desire.'.... The bride only knows herself when she answers the bridegroom's invitation," de Lubac says, drawing from Paul Claudel who further said, "He will instruct her and teach her who she is, for she does not know.... It is Jesus Christ who reveals within us someone whom we do not know, it is Christ who speaks our soul to us."¹²

Nevertheless, man's intellect, which is never satisfied with knowledge already possessed but is always pushing on to know more, gives a hint of this "more" of our hidden desire. Man's will also in its constant seeking for a happiness which is never completely found reveals an implicit desire for God. There may be in man an intuition about this desire without having any clear idea of its nature.

"It is the Christian faith which, by setting the notion of the infinite being and our relationship with him at the centre of the whole revealed idea of God, makes us understand our nature, our destiny, the nature of the material world, of morality, and of the history of mankind."¹³

The spiritual nature of man, created directly by God as an image of God, is intrinsically capable of transcendence. St. Bonaventure stated: "Because [the human soul] was made to participate in beatitude...it was made with a capacity for God and thus in its image and likeness."¹⁴ As Origen has said, our participation in God's image is "our principal substance," which means it is essential to us. Yet the mind of man needs knowledge of God to prepare it for the transcendent destiny God intends for man. De Lubac traces the searchings of ancient thinkers whose restless questioning revealed a

“Corresponding to the desire in man is the revelation of Christ’s saving act”

sense of divine calling but without the means of interpreting the signs pointing to it. He quotes Jacques Maritain’s description of this as “the great pagan melancholy.” De Lubac comments that today still we “misunderstand what we are.... Turned inward upon our human smallness, we neither know nor even wish to discover within us the void whose capacity will grow as it becomes filled with the fullness of God.... All too often indeed we do not discern it. Revelation gives us the key.”¹⁵

Corresponding to this desire and destiny in man, then, is the revelation of Christ’s saving act which offers to man the possibility of becoming “a new creature in Christ Jesus,” (2 Cor. 5:17), reborn in Him as adopted sons of God. This is the knowledge that is needed to dispose man to receive the grace Christ won for us on the Cross. This re-creation in Christ is a completely gratuitous act on God’s part, offered to our freedom. It is an invitation to “a human exaltation from which man participates excellently in the things that are God’s,” as described by St. Bonaventure.¹⁶ It is a real deification which also perfects all that is good in man. It is, in fact, this supernatural reality that fully explains human nature, fully develops its faculties of intellect and will. This is the end for which rational nature is created, its highest good which is above it and yet for it. Vatican II confirmed that

“Only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light... Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear.”¹⁷

The Mystery of the Supernatural

With this in mind, let us reflect on the word “supernatural.” What does this term mean? Some have oversimplified the reality this word signifies and considered it a kind of superstructure placed on top of human nature, ending up with a form of dualism of nature and grace. Although intending to preserve the gratuitousness of this gift from God to men, the result was that it became something external to man and therefore something man could live without if he chose to disregard this “extra.” The Christian life of grace became one of several “options” available for human life. From this point of view there developed the further attitude that this “call” to “supernatural life” was actually “unnatural,” i.e. some kind of contortion of human life which should be rejected. But this pushes aside two thousand years of Christian tradition that insists that man must live by the vision of God, a participation in divine life existing within his being by grace or else end up with a profound loss. There is no natural human life that exists without this call and no ability of man to follow through on it without the intervention of grace, won through the redemptive act of Christ.

This supernatural grace is much more than just redemption from our sinful state, although it is that as well. Once the soul is awakened to the infinite horizon of God’s goodness and beauty, the human innate desire to know and to love God opens up to a vista that continually expands, and as one responds, the desire grows as well. The early Greek father,

St. Gregory of Nyssa, declares, “For those who run towards the Lord, there will always be a great distance to cover. When he says, ‘Arise and come,’ the Word demands that one constantly arise and never cease to run forward, and every time he gives the grace of a greater advance.”¹⁸ However, this journey toward God should not be considered to be without a determined goal, de Lubac points out. The intellectual soul reaches its finality in the beatitude of knowing and seeing God in a happiness that satisfies, in a perfect rest from its restless seeking.

What is particularly new, in contrast to pagan notions of God, is that the Son in showing us the Father has revealed that God is a Person whose very substance is love. “In the gift of himself that God wills to make, everything is explained – in so far as it can be explained – by love, everything, hence including the consequent desire of our nature.”¹⁹ Unfortunately, in our current society the word love has been too closely associated with “eros.” Therefore, de Lubac points out, it is important to understand that the “desire” spoken of is different from the desires of our common experience and must go through a transformation in order to attain its goal. The form of this love is revealed in the Word that is uniquely begotten by the Father and is “the reason for all things.” The Word who lives in the bosom of the Father, equal in divine nature, grounds within himself all the intelligible world. The love between the Father and the Son is the foundation of the world. This love (the Holy Spirit) is freely given to the world, and God’s will to love creates the human being to whom he desires to give himself freely. This is a condescension of willed love.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who... chose us in him... that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the beloved.” (Eph. 1: 3-6)

Notes

¹Louis Bouyer, *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1956) 153.

²*Ibid.*, 162.

³Martin Luther, *The Confession of Augsburg, IV Of Justification*, 1530.

⁴Luther, *Bondage of the Will, xix: Of faith in the justice of God in His dealings with men*, translated by J.I. Packer and A.R. Johnston (London: James Clarke and Co. Ltd., 1957).

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Lorraine Boettner, *The Reformed Faith*, www.reformed.org/calvinism.

⁷Henri de Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, trans. Rosemary Sheed, (NY: Herder & Herder, the Crossroad Publishing Co., 1998. See also de Lubac, *A brief catechesis on nature and grace*, trans. Richard Arandez, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1984).

⁸De Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, 76.

⁹*Ibid.*, 83-84.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 210-211.

¹¹St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk 10, c.5, n.7.

¹²De Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, 217.

¹³*Ibid.*, 224-225.

¹⁴St. Bonaventure, 2 Sent dist.5, dubium 1, vol 2.

¹⁵De Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, 136-137.

¹⁶St. Bonaventure, 2 Sent. D27, a1 q,3, 158.

¹⁷Vatican II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, 22.

¹⁸St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Canticle of Canticles*, homily 5.

¹⁹De Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, 229.

GCSE Lessons on Catholic Marriage: A Syllabus of Errors *by Hugh MacKenzie*

Fr Hugh MacKenzie, Editor of FAITH, presents some worrying weaknesses in a popular text book for 14 year old Catholics.

The Catholic Church is struggling more and more to make its voice heard in the western world. An example of the complexity of the problem can be found in the content of many of the religious education text books used in our Catholic schools. Below we would like to highlight some serious weaknesses in one section of one such book. As we hope will be clear from the context from which this book has emerged, we do not question the good intentions of the authors, nor their skill, evident throughout the book, in presenting relevant issues clearly and effectively. The nature of this piece will be to focus upon some serious problems.

The text book in question is the official one for the Religious Studies GCSE set by EdExcel, the country's largest examination board. Most London Catholic schools follow its syllabus. Some Catholic pupils begin studying for the exam in Year 9 (aged 13-14), but most start in Year 10.

The Catholic paper, Unit 3, is entitled "Religion and Life Based on a Study of Roman Catholic Christianity". The main Unit 3 text book is *Roman Catholic Christianity*. Section 3, "Marriage and Family Life", is profoundly antithetical to the Catholic faith. The book is produced and recommended by the examination board, but it is not mandatory, nor is it approved by the Church. The current edition was published in 2009. A previous version was critically reviewed in the March 2006 edition of *Faith* magazine.

The culture fostered by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is that of learning facts in order to pass an exam. The Curriculum Directory produced by the Bishops' Conference of England Wales accepts that the purpose of RE textbooks is to provide a framework to ensure that RE classes are as rigorous, objective and factual as those in any other academic subject. The directory acknowledges that there may be an overlap with catechesis, understood as fostering young people's faith, an essential aspect of formation in a Catholic school. But the bishops also accept that RE is an activity distinct from catechesis and evangelisation. They do not question the role of the QCA in determining public examination curricula, and nor do we. Catholic pupils need to understand both sides of the debates that are prominent in our culture. We would also acknowledge from experience that most Catholic pupils are aware that studying for a GCSE in RE is not the same as being formed in the faith. Sometimes they are even aware that the course's content is set by people who hold no brief for the Catholic Church.

Our objection would be that the Catholic side of the argument in section 3, on marriage and family life, is woefully inadequate, and that the non-Catholic side is presented with unacknowledged quasi-relativist assumptions which are profoundly opposed to Catholic thinking and formation.

Even so, if a student is being taught by a well-formed teacher, or is receiving sound catechesis, the negative effects of such RE can be mitigated. The problem is that, with notable exceptions, few secondary school pupils are receiving such formation. This is not to denigrate the many excellent teachers, parents, priests and youth workers involved in young people's lives; we are merely recognising a fact of the cultural battle in which we are engaged.

Faith and Reason

The third of the four sections, "Marriage and Family", is about "changing attitudes" and "Christian attitudes" to sex. It encourages students to separate facts from feelings, reason from faith, head from heart.

Great emphasis is placed upon the Bible as the origin of our faith. Nature and the Church as sources of our faith are never explained, and observations from the former (let alone the Catholic Natural Law tradition) are rarely explained. The two main reasons given for Catholics being against sex before marriage are that "sexual intercourse is a gift from God" and that "Church teaching" is against it (p63). The two main reasons for Catholics being against contraception are couched in terms of the fact that God just decided that procreation is inherent to sex. (p76).

The presentation of Catholic teaching on contraception and homosexuality is very weak, and counter opinions are presented more convincingly. For example, the phenomenon of "love" is used to justify arguments in favour of abortion (p41), contraception (p76) and homosexual sex (p76). By contrast, the presentation of the Catholic position never mentions love, despite its central place in Christian civilisation. The basis of the Church position is apparently that Catholicism *claims* that God gave the procreative purpose to sex, and, for that reason alone, this claim must not be contradicted.

These weaknesses, and the ones outlined below, undermine the coherence of Catholic teaching. A convincing catechesis based on Natural Law could lessen the damaging effects of this presentation. But, as we have mentioned, such catechesis rarely happens, inside or outside school.

Homosexuality

Two key omissions in the text book's presentation radically undermine the coherent presentation of Catholic teaching in the area of homosexuality.

First, it fails to mention that the Church "refuses to consider the person as a 'heterosexual' or a 'homosexual' and insists that every person has a fundamental identity: the creature of God and, by grace, his child and heir to eternal life" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, para. 16, 1986). While we

“many Catholic 14 year olds will find themselves perusing a slick, youth-centred website whose moral vision is profoundly alien to the Catholic vision”

acknowledge the relevance of using the words to refer to the phenomenon of same-sex attraction, the Church does not accept the labelling of people as homosexual and heterosexual. We are all wounded in this area. Our sexuality involves a complementarity in the image of Christ, the Bridegroom, and of His Church, the Bride. This basic biblical and Catholic theme is completely missing from the text book.

Rightly central to the book's presentation is the Catholic view concerning the distinction between homosexual tendencies (not sinful) and homosexual acts (sinful). Yet there's no mention of the Catholic doctrine that such tendencies, along with numerous others, sexual or otherwise, are “disordered” (cf. CCC 2358). This is no doubt a delicate theme to present, and one that would call upon all the skills of the authors. We would refer to our well-received editorial of November 2003, “The Debate about Homosexuality”, for our own attempt to present these issues truthfully and with sensitivity.

The book would seem to deny the crucial point of CCC 2358. For instance, we are told that “Roman Catholics believe that all forms of discrimination are wrong, including homophobia, because the Bible teaches that we are all equal” (p69). The term homophobia (which is nowhere defined in the text) captures a range of negative attitudes towards people with same-sex attraction. Devaluing people who experience same-sex attraction, let alone being “phobic” towards them, is indeed condemned by the Church. Yet, in our culture, the Catholic belief that same-sex attraction is “objectively disordered” is sometimes itself regarded as “homophobic”.

Consider the following statement, which is presented as a model example of the “development” of Catholic teaching, one that is likely to “gain higher marks” if used appropriately in the GCSE exam: “The Roman Catholic Church thinks that homosexuality is wrong, but that homosexual feelings are not. They argue that you cannot change your sexual orientation, but you can control your actions” (p69). This statement, which typifies the way Catholic moral teaching is presented in the book, is incoherent. For it would seem from the preceding text that by “homosexuality” the authors actually mean homosexual sex (which is confusing because elsewhere “homosexuality” is used as a general term covering “orientation” and actions). Moreover, the word “wrong” would appear to mean “morally wrong”. Yet without this qualification the word also has the meaning “disordered”, which would render the second half of the statement false in the light of CCC 2358, as explained above.

The implication is that the Church teaches, without reservation, that sexual tendencies cannot be changed (in this life, at least). While in many cases this would seem to be the case, the Church does not rule out the possibility. To do so would be perverse given that the Church considers some such tendencies to be disordered, and must do so for the coherence of her position. Indeed, as we made clear above, the Church ultimately rejects the concept of “sexual orientation” as something that defines a person.

The attitudes that infuse so much of section 3 of the book are hinted at in countless dubious affirmations, suggestions and examples. For instance, we are told: “Civil partnerships were a huge step forward in the recognition of homosexual love and commitment in a relationship” (p69). It is difficult to use the word “forward” of a campaign that one might think is bad. While the Catholic Church would certainly want to recognise that love and commitment between two people of the same sex is a good thing, the term “homosexual love”, understood in the sense in which it is used in our secular environment and in this book, is an oxymoron for the Catholic mindset.

We also find the suggestion: “Make a list of as many famous homosexual people as you can” (p68). This encourages internet searches which could easily reveal material that is profoundly antithetical to, and undermining of, Catholic formation. The last section, on community cohesion and the media, offers three picture examples of relevant issues. One shows the character Todd Grimshaw from *Coronation Street* about to kiss another man. Whilst this certainly raises a relevant issue the appropriateness of displaying this to Catholic 14 year olds is surely a parental decision.

Contraception

The text of the “Christian Attitudes” section includes a list of internet links which students are strongly encouraged to follow to get “more information about contraception devices” (p75) and “about views on contraception” (p77). The first points to the home page of the Brook Advisory Centre

Once on the Brook site it is easy for a young person to access all sorts of “reproductive” advice that strikes at the heart of Gospel values and right reason. At the time of writing, visitors to the site are prominently invited to sign up to a campaign to “support young people’s right to enjoy and express their sexuality”. The research “information” provided on this site is highly contentious and the “views” one-sided. The result is that many pupils studying RE at our Catholic schools will find themselves perusing a slick, youth-centred site whose moral vision of human life and sex is profoundly alien to the Catholic vision, and therefore potentially extremely harmful.

Here are some examples of the skewed emphasises that, throughout this text book, are being presented to pupils aged 13 to 15 in our schools. Under the title “Natural Family Planning” the student is told solely about the rhythm method, which was pioneered in the 1930s. Since then, a great many other methods using periodic abstinence have been developed, all of which are universally accepted as more effective than the rhythm method. Examples include the temperature method, the sympto-thermal method, the Billings ovulation method, Napro, and even the Persona kits from Boots that test hormone levels. The Billings method was independently tested by the World Health Organisation and found to be 98.5 per cent effective.

The main reason given for the Church’s opposition to artificial contraception is this: “Artificial methods are wrong because

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they prevent humans from fulfilling God's command to 'be fruitful and multiply'" (p76). Given that the Church places no moral obligation on couples to have as many children as they possibly can, the insinuation contained in this statement is a crude caricature of Catholic teaching.

In the section "Can contraception be viewed as abortion?" there is no mention that the "conventional pill" can have an abortifacient effect. And concerning "the use of contraceptives to protect against sexually transmitted diseases" the students are told, without further qualification, that sexually transmitted infections are "a greater threat to people than pregnancy ... some Catholics are looking again at this issue for this reason" (p77). No doubt, as we mentioned at the beginning, a good teacher could provide the necessary context for this statement. Yet the official text is loaded against Catholic teaching, and pregnancy is placed in the category of misfortunes to be avoided at all costs.

Conclusion

In our November 2006 editorial, "Catholic Schools Revisited: What Future Now?", we argued that the crisis concerning whether or not we should fight for the integrity of State-aided

Catholic education had rapidly deepened. We have now reached the point where many respected Catholic schools are failing so conspicuously to present the Church's sexual teaching in a forthright and coherent manner that, in effect, they have already raised a white flag. No wonder the taste for forcing upon Catholic schools and parishes moral agendas incompatible with Catholic teaching seems to be getting stronger among our political elite.

Still one response might be for dioceses to introduce integrally Catholic text books which, if it is possible, do not compromise the principles and syllabuses of public examining boards. The option of home schooling, or of withdrawing children from aspects of the curriculum, seems to be increasingly considered by Catholic parents. In our current editorial we mentioned that some sound Catholic parents are being sorely tempted to throw in the towel and leave their children to cope as best they can with whatever is thrown at them in their RE classes. Yet the role and example of good Catholic families, parishes and movements has never been more important. We need to ask for the grace to grow in mutual awareness and to support each other against the developing storm.

Does Modern Scientific Discovery Have Significant Metaphysical and Theological Implications? *by Fr Francis Selman*

Fr Francis Selman, lecturer in philosophy at Allen Hall seminary in Chelsea, succinctly offers some thought-provoking evidence against the thesis in the title. As our review of the CTS "Science and Religion" pamphlet later in this issue shows, we would have a different angle, particularly concerning the nature of the renewed concept of the "form" to which Fr Selman refers.

The relation between philosophy and natural science must be a close one, for both are concerned with physical reality. The point on which both philosophers and scientists have differed is whether only natural science tells us about reality or whether there is a reality beyond that which science can reach. If you take this second point of view, you are led from physics to metaphysics. Metaphysics in its traditional sense leads us to see that the world has a cause outside itself and also has purpose in itself. Philosophy in the West began as an inquiry about nature and thus was the beginning of natural science. For example, the atomic theory goes back to Democritus and Leucippus. Philosophy has to take notice of what is established by natural scientists but, equally, philosophy enables us to judge some of the things said by scientists, for example, about the nature of matter. I shall discuss how much traditional metaphysics and theology

needs to be revised in the light of modern scientific discoveries with four examples: the 'new physics' of the 17th century, the theory of relativity, quantum theory and evolution.

The New Physics

One might think, like Anthony Kenny, that the discovery of momentum, that things just keep moving unless acted upon by an external force, renders a first mover that is itself unmoved unnecessary. But momentum contains an assumed clause, that an object is already in motion; so momentum still brings us back to the question why things move in the first place. Richard Feynmann once wrote that there is no known origin of gravity.¹ The same can be said about momentum.

“There is a special need to return to the concept of ‘form’”

Relativity

The first thing to notice about relativity and quantum theory is that one is dealing with theories, not with laws of nature that have been demonstrated beyond doubt. The General Theory of Relativity has obviously provided a necessary addition to Newton’s view of gravity, and Einstein’s predictions about the bending of light in strong electro-magnetic fields were confirmed by observations of the eclipse of the sun in 1919. But Einstein’s theories also caught the popular imagination in a way that allowed people to think that everything is relative. The consequence has been the widespread relativism in most people’s thinking about religion and morals in our society today. I make just two comments about relativity. A few years ago I saw a poster for the observatory at Greenwich, which claimed it was the centre of space and time. Is this as untrue as one might first think? After all we take all our measurements of space, for example, of latitude and longitude and the positions of the stars, and of time from an agreed starting-point: the meridian at Greenwich. Second, everything relative is relative *to* something else; we thus eventually come back to something that is not relative to anything else. This also applies to many universes if there are many (I believe there is only one). Einstein’s theories of relativity are themselves founded on something that is not relative to the observer but constant in all directions: the speed of light.

Quantum Theory

In 1900 Max Planck discovered that bodies do not radiate heat in a continuous stream but in small packets of energy, called *quanta*. It was later found that when a photon is fired at a screen in a chamber through a barrier with two slits, the photon appears to pass through both slits: only this could account for the interference pattern on the screen. Quantum theory overthrew the deterministic and mechanistic view of the 18th century and made people think that matter moves at random in unpredictable ways. Quantum theory, however, has deflected people’s attention from the larger pattern of the universe, which still moves and keeps its order according to universal laws of nature that must come from an Intelligence, for laws do not arise by chance but need to be thought up by someone. We thus have little reason for ignoring the view of Plato who, when he contemplated the order of the universe, thought it did not come about automatically (of itself) but from reason (*logos*) and knowledge.² Quantum theory is still very debatable and in part counterintuitive.

As Feynmann said, “We do not understand it, but it works”. It needs further clarification before we can regard it as overthrowing a more stable view of the universe.

Evolution

Perhaps no scientific theory has done more to persuade people that we no longer need God to explain the universe than Darwin’s theory of evolution in the mid 19th-century.

There are, however, several major difficulties for a purely materialist theory of evolution. First, as Aristotle remarked, things do not on the whole turn out for the best in nature (and reproduction) by chance. Second, any theory that wants to explain the evolution of living species by the chance movement of matter by itself will also have to show that life could have arisen from inanimate matter by itself to begin with. No scientist has yet succeeded in making living matter out of non-living matter. It is far from certain that if scientists succeeded in synthesising all the chemical constituents of an organism or of a piece of DNA they would thereby produce a *living* thing.

Third, it is difficult to see that reason could have occurred in one species (the human) in an otherwise irrational universe (where everything happens by chance). As Alfred Russell Wallace saw, human intelligence is not explained by physical evolution but by “some new cause or power”.³ But Wallace’s voice is not heard besides Darwin’s today.

Conclusion

Modern science has extended rather than radically altered our understanding of the universe, in two directions: the very large, with the expanding universe, and the very small, in genetics and particle physics. In some ways, modern science leads us to theology.

For example, the Big Bang theory is a logical consequence of the expanding universe: all the matter of the universe must be flying outwards from one point. This calls for creation out of nothing, for how was the matter there in the first place?

On the small scale, our knowledge of atomic particles seems to make the old philosophy of substance, matter and form obsolete. But recently some philosophers have begun to recognise that perhaps Aristotle was not altogether wide of the mark. There is a special need to return to the concept of ‘form’, which has been absent from modern philosophy from Descartes. Things like chairs are not just a mass of moving electrons and protons but have a unity, with a form and a nature. We need to see things again as *wholes*.

Some major issues in the science of the past century remain unresolved, notably the inconsistency between relativity and quantum physics. Only when these issues have been resolved shall we see whether we need to give up classical metaphysics. Far from science determining philosophy, it may even be that science requires metaphysics. As Mary Hesse wrote: “A society which is uninterested in metaphysics will have no theoretical science.”⁴

Notes

¹ *The Character of Physical Law*, p. 19.

² *Philebus* 30a; *Sophist* 265c.

³ *Darwinism* (Macmillan 1890), p. 474.

⁴ *Forces and Fields* (1961), p. 303.



The Truth Will Set You Free

Catholic Doctrine in the Pastoral Context

REPORT FROM MADRID

by Joanna Bogle

I'm looking back and thinking about it all. I must admit that I went partly because I had read some rather ill-tempered criticisms of the event, so I decided I'd find out about it for myself. I had heard that it was noisy, ill-conceived, possibly immoral, a distortion of real Catholicism.

But World Youth Day was none of these things – except, possibly, at times, the first, and the noises made were cheerful, enthusiastic, and at times very musical. I attended as a freelance journalist, loosely connected with a group organised by our diocesan Director of Vocations and including a number of young men training for the priesthood. I was by turns edified, amused, cheered, inspired and exhausted.

The burning sun, teeming anthills and large, sneering grasshoppers on the scorching airfield at Cuatros Veintos on the outskirts of Madrid were horrible, the thunderstorm frightening but magnificent, the Holy Father simply magnificent, the united silent prayer at the subsequent Blessed Sacrament vigil unforgettable and moving, and the sincerity and enthusiasm of the young people tangible and significant.

Of course World Youth Day isn't just a day – or even a night and a day. It actually isn't even a week. Most of the young people who take part make it a ten-day or two-week event, staying at a local parish, helping with some community project, visiting a well-known shrine or shrines, taking part in catechesis, or doing all of these things. The mood is that of a pilgrimage – at times slightly Chaucerian in its cheerful Catholicism and its journeying.

The thing that everyone noticed in Madrid was the joy. Groups broke out into song on street corners. Crowded railway platforms erupted into “Vive el Papa!” or “Benedicto!” Guitars were produced and singing groups gathered anywhere and everywhere. You also noticed the prayer. People drew into a quiet group beneath the trees in a park and prayed the Rosary. At one overcrowded station, a group began to pray the Hail Mary in – I think – Portuguese, and other groups joined in, using their own languages, and a calm descended. I didn't see any pushing or anger – not even at the long queues waiting for water at that scorching airfield.

If you look at some TV film of some of the events, you'll see young people talking together, or dozing off, or trying to find shade from the sun, or drinking water, or walking off in search of some necessity. It does happen like that. But overall, what most of us experienced – on a huge scale and in a way that will touch our lives for ever – was an atmosphere of prayer, of unity in the Catholic Faith, of a youthful Church focused on the reality of Jesus Christ.

Because Britain's mainstream mass media – BBC, newspapers – focused mainly on the protesters opposed

to the Pope visiting Spain, it was hard to explain to people, once I got home, the reality of what World Youth Day was like. For the young pilgrims, the main means of communication are Facebook, twitter, text messaging, and phone conversations. They honestly don't know or care what version the BBC put out.

There were some moments which deserve to be noted as hugely, hugely significant. The night vigil at the airfield following the thunderstorm – and the huge wave of affection that greeted the Holy Father as he calmly stayed with us and refused to budge even while busy monsignori bustled around him with umbrellas and all-too-evident pleas that he should depart. Some beautiful music – I remember in particular a lovely Ave Verum. The formal dedication, by the Holy Father, of the Church's young people to the Sacred Heart – possibly the most under-reported and most important event of the whole week.

Things to improve? Organisation, of course – too many people couldn't get into the main airfield even though they had tickets. There was chaos and muddle there. And we needed a lot more water, and a lot sooner. For the liturgy, the young pilgrims could have been urged in the months beforehand to learn how to sing the Pater Noster and Creed and Agnus Dei and in Latin. The chant was a standard one, and it is tragic that despite the urgings of the Second Vatican Council this heritage has been sidelined (my guess is that this will in any case change as the Benedict XVI style in the liturgy slowly takes hold).

Behaviour of the young? I saw nothing to shock or horrify, much that was impressive, courteous, kind, cheerful, well-mannered and above all prayerful. Don't focus too much on girls who insist on wearing strappy tops despite being told to cover up, or youngsters shrieking with glee as they run in scorching heat to get drenched by fire hoses. Don't be surprised if young people sing and talk and dance on a summer night in the open air.

I saw young people sitting or kneeling in prayer together. I saw seminarians calmly reading their Office amid great heat and discomfort. I saw young people in huge numbers going to confession – at the great Festival of Forgiveness in the central park where a city of special white confessionals had been erected, but also at dozens of other places, in meeting-places, on long walks, on the airfield, on coaches or buses, anywhere and everywhere that offered the opportunity.

I saw young priests, and nuns and brothers, hundreds and hundreds of them. I saw the Church which John Paul II shepherded into this third millennium and handed over to his successor, Benedict, who is guiding it with a steady and loving hand. At World Youth Day, I saw a Church that Christians down all the previous centuries would know as their own, and love. When I am very old, I will be glad and grateful to look back and know that as a middle-aged journalist, I went to World Youth Day 2011.

A PRAISEWORTHY TRANSLATION...

by Fr James Tolhurst

Even those who were inclined to condemn the new liturgical translations out of hand – often the same who muttered about the Pope’s visit – have had to concede that there is a majesty in the Eucharistic Prayers which was missing from the former version.

But the means by which the translation was achieved could be described as somewhat tortuous – Bishop Maurice Taylor would use another expression. We like to think that there are no politics when it comes to liturgy but Cardinal Newman’s image is not without point: “The rock of St. Peter on its summit enjoys a pure and serene atmosphere, but there is a great deal of Roman *malaria* at the foot of it.” (*Anglican Difficulties II* p. 297). He was speaking of a time before the Pontine marches were drained by Mussolini. But nevertheless, ecclesiastical politics showed itself during the replacement of the ICEL translation by a more faithful rendering of the original Latin. This was always the aim of Pope Paul VI who said in 1969 “that the *same prayer*, expressed in so many different languages [might] ascend to the heavenly Father...” (*Apostolic Constitution on the Roman Missal 3 April 1969*).

ICEL opted to apply this, using Ronald Knox as a guideline (in his translation of the Bible), not keeping *ipsissimis verbis* but providing the overall sense of the words. Those who have read Archbishop Bugnini’s work, will appreciate that there were other ingredients in the mix. A contributory factor was the decision to reach an international English version for countries as diverse as India, the USA and U.K. Effectively this meant a *dumbing down* of the sacred and reverent aspects of the liturgy in favour of more familial and societal terms. Thus *Dominus Deus Sabaoth* became *God of power and might*; *Verbum tuum per quod cuncta fecisti* became *The Word through whom you made the universe*; *Haec munera, que tibi sacrandam detulimus, eodem Spiritu sanctificare digneris* became *And so Father, we bring you these gifts. We ask you to make them holy by the power of your Spirit*. And the translation of *Beati qui ad cenam Agni vocati sunt* as *Happy are those who are called to his supper*. We need hardly mention “...*ex hoc uno pane participabunt et calice as all who share this bread and wine*.” Compare these with their new translation, and appreciate the richness that has been restored.

However we might praise the new translation, we need to acknowledge that it bears the wounds of an extended and often bitter conflict. The aim undoubtedly was to provide an accurate translation of the Latin text, and by and large this has been achieved especially in the *Order of Mass*. One can note the return of through my fault, through my fault, *through my most grievous fault*; *born of the Father before all ages and consubstantial with the Father in the Creed*; *blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb...* and *...graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will*. In Eucharistic Prayer 4, it is good to see that political correctness has not triumphed and the generic noun “Man” is retained. Also we have the fuller “that we now might live no longer for ourselves but for him who died and rose again for us”. We also have

restored to us *the whole Order of Bishops* and the Blessed Virgin Mary conceiving *by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit* (in her Preface). The blood of the martyrs is now *poured out like Christ’s to glorify your name and in their struggle the victory is yours*.

There are also some nice touches: ...*sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall* in Eucharistic Prayer 2, for *Spiritus tui rore sanctifica*; and *realm of the dead* in Eucharistic Prayer 4 as translating “*inferos*”.

Sometimes the very literalness grates. We ask God in the Preface of Holy Pastors to keep the Church *safe* (ICEL has *protection*). The introduction to the *Our Father* “*Præceptis salutaribus moniti...*” becomes “At the Saviour’s command and *formed by divine teaching*, we dare to say”. Why not “taught by our Saviour’s command and following his divine instruction we dare to say”?

But should we see the final result as a compromise? Was an opportunity lost to look at the original Latin, to see if it could be improved, or was that a casualty of the conflicts?

There is the expression in the presentation of gifts of *potus spiritalis* which has been lifted from the *Jewish Benediction*. The only scriptural reference to *spiritalis/πνευματικός* is however in 1 Corinthians 10:3 where Paul refers to ‘*spiritual food*’. The Jewish reference to the blessing of wine refers to *the fruit of the vine*, and could the translators not have decided to say, *Jesus, the gift of the true vine*? This would seem to express the phrase in the *Constitution on the Liturgy* that “the *Ordo Missae* is to be revised in a way that will reveal more clearly the real function of *each of the parts and the connections of the various parts with one another*.”(n. 50)

The Prefaces reveal the attempt to keep to the literal translation often at the expense of fluency and comprehension. In the Sunday Preface 2, *Qui humanis miseratus erroribus* is translated as *out of compassion for the waywardness that is ours*. Admittedly, it is poetic, and the root verb means *wandering*, but surely a translation should read “out of compassion for our human errors or failings”?

In Sunday Preface 8 we are given an inelegant although accurate construction, *For when your children were scattered afar by sin...be manifest as the Church*. This would appear to have been compiled by the author of the current words of absolution in the sacrament of Penance (with all its subordinate clauses); and does not provide any means of drawing breath. It tries to say too much and it would be helped if it was divided up. “*When your children were swept away by their sins, you wished to gather them again to yourself. You united them as a people formed into one by the Blood of your Son and the power of the Spirit so that they might be the Church, the body of Christ and the temple of the Spirit to the praise of your manifold wisdom*.”

So, it would seem there are at least two parallel streams at work in the new translation, one literal and one poetic. Perhaps it would have been better if the literal had been more poetic and the poetic had been more literal. Yet all in all, we should be extremely grateful for what has been achieved.



Letters to the Editor

The Editor, The Parish House, Moorhouse Road,
Bayswater, London W2 5DJ, editor@faith.org.uk

THE PURPOSES OF SEX

Dear Father Editor,

We write as a married Catholic priest and wife (ex-Anglicans) in response to the article by Fr Dylan James, "Contraception and the Imperfection of Natural Family Planning". There is much to praise in this, and he gave a clear exegesis of pertinent sections of *Humanae Vitae* and also affirmed that NFP is good in itself. We have been glad to discover this teaching and practice. The whole issue of contraception was one that we had to struggle to understand as we came into full communion. There is so much of the Church's teaching and its wisdom that is not understood. We see the virtue of working with nature and the body and the principle of being "per se destinatus" to life.

Having said this, we were very concerned about some of the statements from Fr Holloway's writings. We fear that he reduced sex in marriage to a function, a tool, and speaks so highly of the primary purpose of procreation that he downgrades and devalues the relational intimacy and bonding through sexual intercourse.

We can critically deconstruct his thinking in three steps. Firstly, to stress that sexual intercourse was created to allow the incarnation to happen contains a beautiful truth. However, it needs to be recast. Let us recast his maxim, "God did not fashion sex 'for loving' but that the incarnation might be the gift of creation..." as "God fashioned sex as a beautiful way of intimate sharing and loving that provided a vehicle for the incarnation to happen." Sexuality is such a dynamic vehicle of relationship and trust, of tender intimacy, desire and mutual self-giving, it was an appropriate preparation for the coming of the Son.

Don't relegate sex but put it up there in the spotlights; it is God's good creation in itself and how much more wonderful it seems when we see it as a rightful passageway for God making flesh.

Secondly, to state that "sex is not for loving, sex is for children in a state of loving" is again to devalue sexuality as a function. In the creation story, Adam looks upon Eve as one like himself after discovering that the animals cannot be soul mates. That I/Thou relationship reflects something of the sharing of the Holy Trinity in whose image we are fashioned. The self-giving of sexual intercourse involves and embraces this and takes a general quality of respect, trust, communication, touch and intimate surrender deeper and further. Sex does not create love by itself; that is true, but it can *deepen* love. Love and sexuality are more than sexual intercourse for they are part of our make-up, of our whole being as embodied beings. Surely Fr Holloway is mistaken to equate God with asexual angels and the human soul with such. God is beyond sexuality but God includes it as it is part of his creation and it reflects something of himself. God is totality, not incompleteness. Angels are partial. Remember the various traditions where the angels long to understand what has been disclosed to humans, and the jealousy of the fallen angels at the creation of man. Something of the dynamic of human sexual relationships reflects the creativity, life giving and mutual sharing of the Trinity.

Thirdly, Fr Holloway's sexless soul idea leads him to the static and sterile view of human sexuality before the Fall. This is pure speculation and he wrongly equates human being with animal nature. The latter work by instinct and by seasons. We work by freewill and choice. Such things make mature, caring relationships. His vision is degrading, actually. To return to the creation story again, Adam does not see his own face reflected in the animals, but only in woman, that which was from him and of the same stuff. Humans work differently, following the *imago dei*.

It is true that our present sexuality is corrupted and a pre-Fall sexuality would have been pure and harmonious, but

this does not necessarily mean it was ritualistic, utilitarian and passionless. The passions are out of control but passion is a zest for life that can be holy and balanced. Allowing sexual intercourse for secondary purposes only as a remedy for concupiscence is also degrading, for sex can be bonding and uplifting and not just about self-gratification. Rather let us see sex as a celebration of intimate, sharing love that takes all our communication and contact a dramatic stage further, which, in its most perfect expression creates new life from the coupling of the two.

To have a primary purpose does not devalue the secondary. That is also sublime and beautiful and we are dealing with a whole, a whole that is in many ways greater than the sum of its primary and secondary parts. Likewise, an infertile couple can work with nature and experience the bonding effect of sex, as can a post-menopausal relationship. Both, like the analogy Fr Dylan uses of the damaged eye, are ordered to procreation in general terms. Too strict and cold a view of sex could lead some to counsel abstinence for both sets of people with dire pastoral consequences.

Fr Holloway, for all his erudition and defence of the faith is not to be equated with the Magisterium. He can be criticised, and on this matter, we think he misses the mark terribly. He writes very much here as a celibate male. Listen to the responses of the married much more when seeking to evaluate sexuality.

Yours faithfully

Fr Kevin and Gill O'Donnell
Norton Road, Hove

EDITORIAL COMMENT

We thank Father and Mrs O'Donnell for their constructive and thought provoking comments. The manner in which they have attempted to synthesise Holloway's insights with a rich view of the unitive dimension seems very helpful. We feel that this needs to be synthesised a bit more closely with the insight at the heart of Fr James' article that the unitive is defined through the procreative.

The overarching goal of the vision we propose is to place the Incarnation at

“let us see sex as a celebration of intimate, sharing love ... which, in its most perfect expression creates new life.”

the heart of creation, proposing that it is not in any sense an after-thought in the plan of God. So the division of the sexes develops the womb as the environment in which human nature is formed and fostered. Christ's is, in the plan of God, the foremost human nature, and ours following in his image. This feminine dynamic is separated from the human creature's wonderfully delegated power to determine the creation of a new human person, because Christ is an uncreated person. Hence the Virgin Birth. From this the primary meaning of sex as procreative follows. It is by fully engaging in the procreative act that a couple exercise their office of marriage and thus are unified as potential parents.

This dynamic is true and fruitful even if other factors prevent the specific high point of fruitfulness which is the conception of a new eternal life. As with all virtue the degree of perfection is related to the extent that the participants' intention is also generously in harmony with this design. Of course few of us, if any, reach perfection in this life.

We hold that the failure to recognise that sex has this primary purpose is a major reason for the current confusion over sexuality. Without it sex becomes just for loving, and it becomes very difficult coherently to defend Catholic teaching in this area. We would then beg to differ from the O'Donnells in as much that we believe that it is the view of sex as primarily unitive that ends up with “sterile” sexuality.

We made some suggestions towards a synthesis of this vision with some of John Paul II's insights in our March 2009 editorial, “The Assault upon the Sexes: Fostering the Papal Defence”, and would also refer to Luke Gormally's pieces in our March 2006 issue, “Marriage and the Prophylactic use of condoms” and in our March 2004 issue, “Marriage, the true environment for sexual love”.

Dear Father Editor,

Although I agree with the Fr. Holloway's interpretation of marital intercourse as oriented principally to procreation, I suspect that the physical union of the spouses unites love and procreation

more than Fr. Dylan James' presentation admitted. While common acts of charity effect an increase of love (“make love” in Fr. James' sense) among spouses as among all men, marital intercourse seems to enjoy a pre-eminence in the symbolisation and augmentation of love. Love affects the greatest unity while preserving the greatest diversity. That is true in the Trinity and in Christ's union with His Church, which fully actualises human freedom and self-consciousness. The spouses should seek the greatest union, corporeal as well as spiritual, in marriage. They should use the marital act to express and increase their love. But marriage should not devolve into an egoisme à deux. Marriage, recognised as the primordial sacrament of creation by Blessed John Paul II, joins spouses to God as well as to each other, because only God can ground the absolute commitment which the marital vows profess, preferring another human being to oneself even to death. The spouses partake of a mystery of love greater than themselves, the mystery of divine love. But God's love is not self-complacent; it is self-giving and, as such, expansive. In the Holy Spirit the Father gives all that He has, His divine nature, to the Son, and the Son returns the gift fully. Similarly Christ bestows His Body and Blood upon the Church. Marriage then should be expansive, going beyond the merely human love of spouses to involve them in God's creative and procreative love for the world. Certainly children draw parents out of themselves in sacrifice and thus contribute to an increase of love in the family. Hence procreation is seen to be the final purpose of marital love – St. Thomas held that the final cause is the principal cause – and the physical openness of spouses in the physical act of marriage reflects and deepens the spiritual love that unites them to each other and Christ. This argument is spelled out in greater detail in my article, “Science, Sexual Morality, and Church teaching: Another Look at *Humanae Vitae*,” in *Irish Theological Quarterly* 70 (2005), 237-61, if anyone is interested in pursuing the question. Needless to say, such an understanding of love also involves life-long monogamous fidelity and rules out homosexual unions. Christ

restored the order of creation over the cross, and if marital love involves sacrifice, such is a deeper participation in Christ's life.

Yours faithfully

John M. McDermott, S.J.

Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit

CELIBATE LOVING

Dear Father Editor,

I'm sure Bishop Edward Daly, in his much reported comments against mandatory celibacy for priests last September, has unintentionally overlooked that to allow priests to marry would make the spiritual situation worse. Communication with Protestant bishops and clergy has confirmed to me the long and deep experience of our Catholic Church. Despite problems, celibacy considerably helps the dynamic of following the Lord in his priestly mission, providing more commitment, love and stability. This, I would suggest, entails a greater prospect for future recruitment.

The Lord abundantly demonstrates that the quintessence of human love is personal sacrifice. This is the key to deep involvement in the life to which priests are called. The more one follows this pattern of daily taking up one's cross in love, the more our inspiring, strengthening and stabilising Lord is in the midst of it all.

I have found it helpful, especially when confronted by “heart-breaking” situations, to remember the nun who once told me, “if we do not go to God, there's nothing else”. That's right yet there's more. In having God alone, we have everything. Moreover the more we turn to God, the more everybody finds something to quench our incessant thirst for love. We're all tempted to think like Bishop Daly at times but reflection upon truly following Christ shows us something deeper. Our Church possesses an enormous, sacred and unique deposit of truth on the meaning of human love. We need to explore it much more.

Yours faithfully

Fr Bryan Storey

Bossiney Rd, Tintagel, Cornwall

LOVING GOD

Dear Father Editor,

The Editorial of the Sept/Oct 2011 Issue of *Faith* seems to make the possibility of knowing and loving God very difficult. It is not only our intellect that we need, but also our will. We must desire to know God and desire to love Him. And it is the Holy Spirit who moves us to this desire, because God wants us to know and love Him.

But surely the riches of our faith are the sacraments. There we meet Christ and Christ comes to us. How can we not know our Creator when he comes and dwells in us under the guise of Bread and Wine? Quiet contemplation after reception of Holy Communion surely touches our very being with the very essence of God. This is the glory of the Catholic Faith and it needs to be continually repeated. Left to ourselves we cannot know and love God but he comes to us and all is well.

This was echoed in the Communion Antiphon the Sunday after receiving *Faith*, 'The Lord is good to those who hope in him, to those who are searching

for his love', and Psalm 62, 'O God, you are my God, for you I long; for you my soul thirsts'. Hence it is so important to pray before Mass, imploring Him to come to us and vivify and sustain us as we make our way into the reality for 'in Him we live and move and have our being'.

St. Ignatius (Loyola) said he learnt more about God on his knees in prayer than he did studying his theology books!

Yours faithfully
Christopher Bull
Reed Avenue, Canterbury

LUNAR CALCULATIONS AND JOHN'S GOSPEL

Dear Father Editor,

I recently read, in a Catholic newspaper, a positive review of the new book 'Jesus of Nazareth' by Maurice Casey. Yet the book's negative view of the Gospel's chronology are outdated.

Pope Benedict writes "... *there are good reasons to consider John's account chronologically accurate ... well informed concerning times, places, and sequences of events ...*" (page 18 Jesus

of Nazareth Part Two). Since 1983 we have had scientific evidence supporting the Pope, not Professor Casey. This shows that Mark conflates several visits of Jesus to Jerusalem into a single narrative while John separates each visit into correct historical order.

In all gospels, Jesus died on a Friday. But was this before the Passover meal while lambs were being sacrificed in the Temple (the 14th of the Jewish month of Nisan) as described in John 13:1, 18:28 and 19:14, or the day after (15th Nisan) as implied by Mark 14:12-16? This question was answered in 1983 by the lunar calculations of Colin J Humphreys and W Graeme Waddington, Oxford University, and refined and confirmed in 1989 by Bradley E Schaefer of NASA/ Goddard Space Flight Centre, now Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics at Louisiana State University. Their papers are "The Date of the Crucifixion" and "Lunar visibility and the crucifixion" and are available online. They confirm two plausible dates for the crucifixion, both in favour of John.

Yours faithfully
John Leonard, Totnes Walk, London

faith

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Notes From Across the Atlantic

by Peter Mitchell, Lincoln, Nebraska



Healing the Pain of Abortion

In a nation where about one out of every three women has had an abortion, one bright light in pastoral outreach to women wounded by the culture of death is the Rachel's Vineyard retreat. Founded in 1996 by Theresa Burke, Ph.D., it is now offered in numerous dioceses throughout the United States. The retreat invites women who have been wounded by abortion to enter into three intense days of prayer in a group setting, led by professional counsellors, clergy and, usually, other women who have had an abortion. The safe and affirming environment of the retreat enables healing to occur in a beautiful and life-giving way for the retreatants, many of whom have never felt that they had permission to mourn the loss of their child. Often such women have struggled for many years to move beyond the traumatic experience of their abortion.

The Rachel's Vineyard retreat employs creative "living scripture exercises" which help bring about a transforming encounter with the Word of God through the imagination and the senses. On the first night the story of the woman caught in adultery from the Gospel of St. John is read, followed by a guided meditation in which the retreatants are invited to enter into the woman's experience of shame and despair. The words of Christ are repeated to each participant: "Is there anyone here to condemn you?" Each retreatant responds with the words of the woman, "No one." Then the answer is given to them, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more." Their spiritual burden is physically symbolised by a heavy rock which is passed around and taken from each participant as the merciful words of Christ are spoken to them. The very tangible experience of the weight of the rock leaving their hands expresses the possibility that the weight of guilt and shame that they carry is able to leave their souls through

encounter with Christ. Similar exercises are conducted using the stories of the healing of Bartimaeus (Mark 10), the raising of Lazarus (John 11) and Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well (John 4). These meditations with the Word lead to an invitation to each retreatant to share the painful story of her abortion(s) in the context of her life. Each story is listened to by the retreat community without comment, allowing each woman to tell her story for what is often the first time. The powerful experience of group sharing enables an atmosphere of trust and healing to pervade the retreat. Following further prayer and meditation, the retreatants are given the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Penance, and then to spend time with the healing love of Jesus in Eucharistic adoration.

Rachel's Vineyard moves systematically through a process allowing the retreatants to express grief at the loss of their children, something that the anti-life culture rarely, if ever, encourages them to do. One of the most important steps in this grieving process is the giving of a name to each child lost through abortion. This important action enables the retreatants to restore their relationship with their children through an understanding of Divine Mercy. Drawing on the beautiful words of Blessed John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae* paragraph 99, the mothers are encouraged to have hope that their children are with Jesus and to trust that he is taking care of them. A guided meditation helps them to imagine Jesus introducing them to their children, and to realise how much God loves their children and how powerfully his love overcomes the past. The meditation emphasises to the retreatants how much their children love them and how much they are looking forward to being reunited with them in eternity. Each retreatant is then invited to take a bereavement doll for each child they have lost. Participants naturally hug

and kiss the babies, rock them, cry with them, and hold them lovingly. The therapeutic interaction with the bereavement dolls enables the retreatants to release the love and tenderness for their children which has often been frozen or blocked by traumatic memories of the abortion.

At the conclusion of the Rachel's Vineyard retreat, a memorial service is held at which retreatants are invited to read letters which they have written to their children, expressing love and sorrow and asking for forgiveness. In union with the entire retreat community, they ask their child to pray for and with them, begging God for strength and courage to continue on the path of faith and hope. The memorial service is then followed by the celebration of a "Mass of Entrustment," in which each retreatant is invited to reconsecrate herself body and soul to Christ and to entrust herself and her beloved children to the Infinite Mercy of Jesus.

Women who have the courage to make the Rachel's Vineyard retreat invariably find that they rediscover hope and a new freedom from the burden they have silently carried, sometimes for many, many years. Its mission was affirmed in its infancy by Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who wrote a letter to Dr. Burke encouraging her work: "Jesus Himself said that He came to call sinners and not the self-righteous. I pray that all who participate in Rachel's Vineyard with the longing to be free and healed by Jesus, may find Him, the source of true joy, peace, and love, and allow God to restore them to wholeness and happiness. I am praying much for you." With that kind of endorsement and heavenly assistance, the mission of Rachel's Vineyard is sure to be abundantly blessed as it continues to provide hope and healing to those most wounded by the culture of death.

For more information see www.rachelsvineyard.org.



Comment on the Comments

by William Oddie

A Year of Papal Caritas

Which of us predicted, reading the sermon delivered after the death of Pope John Paul by the then (but only just) Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, with its frontal attack on relativism and the secularisation of modern culture, that the secularists would come to respond as violently as over the last two years – in England, then in Madrid and Germany – they have done to this Pope's steadfast anti-secularism?

The sermon looked at the time almost like an election manifesto: this, he almost seemed to be saying, ought to be the message of the next Pope. "How many winds of doctrine", he asked, "have we known in the last ten years? How many ideological currents, how many fashions of thought?.... Having a clear faith based on the creed of the Church, is often labelled as fundamentalism. Meanwhile relativism, which is letting oneself be tossed and swept along by every wind of teaching, looks like the only attitude acceptable to modern standards." He described the Church as a "little boat of Christian thought" tossed by waves of "extreme" schools of modern thought – Marxism, liberalism, libertinism, collectivism and "radical individualism.... We are moving toward a dictatorship of relativism which does not recognise anything as for certain and which has as its highest goal one's own ego and one's own desires...." Great stuff, it was, I thought; And that's what I was expecting from his pontificate.

What I was not expecting was that he would begin to be seen by the secularists as such a threat to them and their values. Most Popes in the last century and in this (even John Paul II, despite the vast geopolitical importance of his pontificate) have increasingly been seen as ultimately irrelevant to modern times: so obviously out of tune with modern values that their utterances could be

regarded as self-destructive in terms of any influence Catholics might hope they would exert. And at first, it wasn't clear where Papa Ratzinger was going. Many secularists (and Catholic liberals) really did suppose for a time that the Pope's first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, indicated that after all, he would settle down to be a low key liberal Pope, utterly transformed from the "controversial" and abrasive Panzer Cardinal of former years.

The Tablet had gloomily expected from the encyclical a "hammering of heretics and a war on secularist relativism". Instead, the paper gushed, "he has produced a profound, lucid, poignant and at times witty discussion of the relationship between sexual love and the love of God, the fruit no doubt of a lifetime's meditation". So, what did *The Tablet* think had happened? Had there been a transformation? Was this a different Joseph Ratzinger?

And that really is what they all imagined, Catholic liberals and the secular press, too. What they expected now was to see the Catholic Church return to the spirit of the sixties, to be more 'open' to the values of the modern world (and thus less uncomfortably critical of them). One liberal English churchman said that *Deus Caritas Est* was a 'wonderful document', which was 'much ... less prescriptive than some past encyclicals ... We are seeing the substance of the man as a pastor and shepherd of the flock. A cuddly Benedict? Well, well'.

But there had been nothing unpastoral about Cardinal Ratzinger as prefect of the CDF when he said "no" to one egregious heresy after another. And now as pope, this was no soft-centred "cuddly Benedict"; this was exactly the same Joseph Ratzinger as he had always been. There was no contradiction: "Christianity", he had

written, "is at its heart a radical 'yes,' and when it presents itself as a 'no,' it does so only in defence of that 'yes'."

It was, I suspect, at the point when the penny finally dropped, that this Pope was as anti-relativist and anti-secularist as he had ever been, and that the battle against the secularisation of the modern world was going to be the great work of his pontificate, that the secularists began to think of actually organising against him. For, it was now becoming clear that he was going to be a serious problem: he was beginning to be taken seriously. In this country, that became very evident when Gordon Brown invited him here on an actual state visit, not just a pastoral one. And so, Protest the Pope (remember Protest the Pope?) was cobbled together, with such national treasures as Dawkins, Tatchell and Stephen Fry at its head.

The sheer venom of the campaign was one of the things which most undid it in the end I suspect. But as I wrote at the time, "Before this deeply unpleasant organisation retires from the field, licking its wounds, it is as well to reflect on what it really did achieve. First, in the media battle that raged before the Pope's arrival, the Protest the Pope coalition got a huge amount of coverage, so much, indeed, that some of us began to fear that the visit might turn out to be a disaster. They really did seem successfully to be whipping up an anti-Catholic hysteria which looked a lot more durable than in the end it turned out to be."

The sheer venom of the attack, at times, had me rattled. Remember Claire Rayner? "I have no language", she spat, "with which to adequately describe Joseph Alois Ratzinger, AKA the Pope. In all my years as a campaigner I have never felt such animus against any individual as I do

“What happened in Germany was all very reminiscent of what had happened here.”

against this creature. His views are so disgusting, so repellent and so hugely damaging to the rest of us, that the only thing to do is to get rid of him.”

With the experience of the Pope’s British visit behind us, we in this country were able better than some in Germany to assess the opposition to his visit there (very reminiscent of Protest the Pope) and how successful it was likely to be. The fact is that the penny hadn’t dropped there as it has here, though now maybe it has. You would think, wouldn’t you, that the anti-papal protesters, after their humiliating failure to get on to the national radar during the Pope’s visit to England, and the stunning success of World Youth Day in Madrid, would have gone out of business, or at least shut up for a bit. But no: there they all were, German Tatchells and Dawkinses (there’s a frightful thought) and of course including the Pope’s old pal Hans Kung, salivating over the numbers they thought, in their dreams, were going to turn up to protest against the Pope in Germany, and the number of Parliamentarians who were going to boycott his address to the Bundestag (in the end, 84% turned up: a considerable success for the Pope, I would have thought, probably as many as turned up here). “The website *Der Papst Kommt!* [the Pope is coming]”, excitedly reported something called The Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason [pah!] and Science, “is the home for a coalition of now 59 and growing, organisations united in criticism of the Pope. It is the nerve centre (cor! A nerve centre, there’s posh) for organising the upcoming protest which expects 15,000 to 20,000 demonstrators to protest during the Pope’s speech to the Bundestag...”. That kind of estimate was made, of course, about the numbers who were going to turn up to the Protest the Pope main demo in London: it turned out to be (police figures) more like a paltry 3,000.

What happened in Germany was all very reminiscent of what had happened here. According to the

journalist Peter Seewald, author of “Light of the World,” the Pope’s visit to Germany was “a small miracle” because “shortly before there was a very aggressive, anti-clerical assault by the media.” (What does that remind you of?) “All of this”, said Seewald, “brings to mind George Orwell’s ‘1984,’ in which an imaginary enemy, a nightmare, is created in order to scare people:”

“And yet, despite all of this incredible effort by the media, an innumerable amount of people stood up and refused to be deceived.”

“They said the Germans would turn their backs on him and all kinds of other stupidities. There appears to be nothing more offensive in our times than being Catholic. As the magazine *Stern* said, “The brief euphoria at the outset was followed by an irreparable distancing between the majority of Germans and their fellow countryman.” It’s as if they were saying that everything would be wonderful and orderly in the world if the Vatican just ceased to exist.”

However, Seewald continued, “We were all witnesses to something much greater. Where were all the masses of critics and protesters? They never showed up. And yet 350,000 people made great sacrifices in order personally to listen to the Pope and to attend Mass with him. Millions watched on television. The Pope’s books are selling faster than ever ... And undoubtedly never before has so much intelligence, wisdom and truth, so much of what is fundamental, been heard in Germany.”

Why is everyone so surprised when this happens? A noisy and vicious secularist campaign is, time and again, gently swept aside by the by the intelligence and sheer transparent goodness of this extraordinary man. The fact is that these people are on a hiding to nothing. This Pope is supposed, preposterously, not to be “charismatic”. Well of course he’s charismatic: he’s a proven people magnet. He’s also, in his quiet and

kindly way, a human dynamo. In Germany, he addressed the German parliament, met Jewish and Muslim groups, held a prayer vigil with young people and celebrated Mass in Berlin’s Olympic Stadium (built by Hitler, nastily said all the non-German critics; and in use ever since, like the autobahns, one might riposte). Among very much else: that’s just the headlines; I counted 34 events in four days, not including several internal plane and helicopter journeys. And we’ve seen here how visits by this supposedly frail old man go: they begin well, and then build up from there. He hardly had time to recover from Madrid before preparing for Germany: and immediately on his return to Rome he was preparing to be off again: Benin in November and Iraq in January. A man 30 years younger would find this exhausting: my only comment is that nobody of his age could do it without the constant comfort (*Latin cum fortis*) and support of almighty God, for Whose existence this Pope is almost a one-man proof.



Book Reviews

The Council in Question. A Dialogue with Catholic Traditionalism

Doorly, M & Nichols, A., Gracewing, Leominster, (2011) ix+97 pages

Liturgical Reflections of a Papal Master of Ceremonies

Marini, G., Newman House Press, Pine Beach NJ. (2011) 111 pages

The publication of Pope Benedict's *Summorum Pontificum*, stating that the older form of the Mass had not been abrogated, and clarifying that it is therefore not forbidden, has brought about a shift in the "centre of gravity" of the debate in the Church concerning the sacred Liturgy. These two books, in different ways, demonstrate that shift.

Fr Aidan Nichols OP and Moyra Doorly, in a series of articles published in the *Catholic Herald*, engaged in a serious, respectful and good-natured debate concerning the second Vatican Council. It is useful to have those articles collected in book form to enable a thoughtful examination of the arguments on both sides. Essentially the topics covered are those which have been under discussion in the recent dialogue between theologians of the Society of St. Pius X and the Holy See. Those discussions have quite rightly taken place privately in order to avoid the inevitable disruption that would ensue if they were picked over in the press or in the Catholic blogosphere. Without prejudice to the important debate in Rome, it is not unreasonable to take *The Council in Question* as a helpful introduction to the topics that are under consideration there.

The reform of the Liturgy and the theological questions that arise from the Missal of Pope Paul VI naturally take a major place, but the debate concerning the Council itself is also rightly addressed. Moyra Doorly firmly sets out the traditionalist position that it is not simply a matter of the implementation of the Council but the documents themselves. Fr Nichols defends the Council but without a naïve insistence that everything in the garden is rosy. For example he admits (p.54) that there are ambiguous statements in some of the Council documents, but takes the line that these must be interpreted in accord with the hermeneutic of continuity, a principle that Pope Benedict has espoused but one which still needs further development in itself.

In addition to the question of the rite of Mass, the dialogue addresses ecumenism, religious liberty and inter-religious dialogue. (One subject that concerned Archbishop Lefebvre, and continues to be an obstacle for many traditionalists, is that of collegiality. This is not addressed at length in the book, but perhaps might be the focus of further, similar discussions.) The really heartening thing about this book is that such questions can now be addressed with courtesy and respect by a theologian of international repute without his immediate deletion from everyone's Christmas card list. Myra Doorly presents the arguments of the SSPX with intelligence and good humour; Fr Nichols responds imaginatively and with the resources of his vast erudition without a hint of patronising or superiority. It is worth mentioning this, since both traditionalists and the neo-orthodox are often accused of clericalism or the denigration of women. Although it is indeed a side issue, it should be noted that this book, without even considering it necessary to mention the fact, sets out a perfectly respectable and courteous debate between a Dominican theologian and a lay woman on equal terms.

Mgr Guido Marini replaced his namesake, Archbishop Piero Marini as

the Master of Pontifical ceremonies. Since his appointment, the Papal Liturgy has seen various changes that can be viewed by means of various Catholic blogs that have rejoiced in them. Commentators have observed the use of Roman vestments, Cardinal Deacons, and the throne of Blessed Pope Pius IX. Those who attend papal Masses are struck by the renewal of sacred music, the sense of reverence, and particularly the place of silence in the Liturgy. It is a powerful witness to the sacrality of the Liturgy to be in a crowded St. Peter's and experience the silence after Holy Communion.

In Rome, there are some who feel that Mgr Marini has gone too far, that the Pope is the focus of ridicule because of the lace on his alb or the stole of St. Pius X. Yet around the world, Catholics seeing these things are encouraged because the Holy Father, with the help of his MC, is sending out the message that we no longer need to be constrained by the assumption that everything old and beautiful must be discarded in favour of abstract designs on polyester fabric in the context of man-centred liturgy that replaces the sacred ritual with an informal dialogue in which the priest acts as presenter.

The first part of Mgr Marini's book is an address given to the Liturgy Conference at Mileto in September 2010. Essentially it is a call for a return to the sacred. As he says "The grandeur of the liturgy does not rest upon the fact that it offers us an interesting entertainment, but in rendering tangible the Totally Other, Whom we are not capable of summoning. He comes because He wills. In other words, the essential in the liturgy is the mystery, which is realised in the common ritual of the Church; all the rest diminishes it." Following the masterly book of the Holy Father himself, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, Mgr Marini points out that it is a deception when the mystery is transformed into a distraction and the priest himself becomes the chief actor in the Liturgy rather than the living God.

The second half of the book consists of a collection of short articles on

“The sacred Liturgy is important to every Catholic who sincerely desires to worship God in spirit and in truth”

particular matters. First of all the papal MC explains why at the papal Masses communicants are asked to kneel down and receive Holy Communion on the tongue. (A way of emphasising reverence and care for the Blessed Sacrament in case you didn't guess.) The articles on silence, beauty, and the use of Latin show how the improvement of the papal Liturgy can give a good example to bishops and priests throughout the world. It might be thought that the staff, the Greek gospel, and the Cardinals wearing dalmatics are of esoteric interest, but Mgr Marini's explanations show how these particular aspects of the papal Mass demonstrate continuity with the tradition of the Church's ancient liturgy as a model for liturgy throughout the Church.

The heading “The Crucifix” might seem of passing interest but it is perhaps one of the more important of Pope Benedict's initiatives in the “reform of the reform.” The Holy Father has shown by example that the celebration of Mass facing eastward is to be valued in the newer form of the Liturgy: on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord he regularly offers Mass in the Sistine Chapel in this way. When Mass is celebrated “facing the people” there is a temptation to make the priest the focus of the liturgical action. Pope Benedict has offered a means of avoiding this distortion by placing six candles on the altar and a crucifix which becomes the centre of attention. Many parishes have found this an easy way to make a small step in the re-sacralisation of the Liturgy in union with the Holy Father. It is not uncommon nowadays to visit a parish Church with what has come to be known as the “Benedictine arrangement” at the High Altar.

In *Summorum Pontificum*, Pope Benedict expressed his hope for a reconciliation at the heart of the Church. The sacred Liturgy is important to every Catholic who sincerely desires to worship God in spirit and in truth. Myra Doorly, Fr Nichols, and Mgr Marini demonstrate in different ways how this reconciliation might be

achieved. What is at stake is not simply rubrics, vestments and lace, but the way in which, as Catholics, we carry out what is, as Vatican II put it, the source and summit of the whole Christian life. As Catholics we believe that the celebration of the sacred Liturgy is vital to our witness to the gospel, to our works of charity, and to our personal holiness. Getting the Liturgy right is of major importance. It is good to read two books that contribute in different ways to furthering this vision of our Holy Father for the good of the Church.

Fr Tim Finigan
Blackfen

William Lockhart: First Fruits of the Oxford Movement

Nicholas Schofield – Gracening (2011)
220 pages, £12.99

This is a timely publication. The State Visit of Pope Benedict XVI to our shores in 2010 brought many blessings, not the least of which was a renewed interest in Blessed John Henry Newman, and his disciples. One of these disciples is now the subject of this book.

Because we see Newman, rightly, as the leader of the original Oxford Movement, we might assume that he was the first of that circle to become a Catholic. In fact, this was not the case – that honour fell to William Lockhart, then ‘a young, rather highly-strung graduate’, who had spent the inside of a year with Newman at Littlemore before being received into the Church by the Rosminian missionary Luigi Gentili, on 26 August 1843. Lockhart's conversion, given his residence at Littlemore, made Newman's position in the Church of England virtually untenable, and provoked his famous sermon ‘The Parting of Friends’ which may be said to have marked the end of his Anglican ministry.

Lockhart's entry into the Church then, was certainly a momentous event. What of his subsequent life as a Catholic? This is sketched for us in

Father Schofield's short but scholarly life, the first real study of an almost forgotten Victorian priest, who called himself, with some justice, ‘the first fruits of the Oxford Movement’.

Having been received by a Rosminian priest, it is perhaps unsurprising that Lockhart should have entered that order himself. His novitiate was spent in Leicestershire and he was ordained to the priesthood on 19 December 1846. Like most Rosminians, he then spent some time preaching missions – all over England and indeed in Ireland. Later he became a much-loved parish priest at two important London parishes. The first was Kingsland, near Hackney in North London, the second the famous church of St. Etheldreda, Ely Place, the sometime London chapel of the medieval bishops of Ely, which the Rosminians had managed to acquire. Lockhart could take a particular pleasure in his association with St. Etheldreda's, since he came from an ancient noble family, and could make some claim to be a direct descendant of the saint, although as he noted ‘it would be such an absurd dandyism to speak of the connection. I will just enjoy the blessed privilege for my own sake and we won't talk about it to anybody’. Alongside these pastoral labours Lockhart was also active in the ‘apostolate of the press’, writing books on subjects as diverse as the correct cut of the chasuble and the corporate reunion of Christians. He was also drawn into the controversy surrounding the writings of Antonio Rosmini (since beatified), the founder of his own order. Father Schofield guides us skilfully through this rather complex theological debate, noting some interesting points along the way. One would not immediately have guessed, for instance, that the ‘arch-conservative’ and ultramontane Cardinal Manning should have favoured the Rosminians, even after they fell out of favour in Rome, while Newman (supposedly the ‘theological progressive’) should have regarded Rosmini's philosophy very dubiously (‘I wish to believe it is all right, but one has one's suspicions’). It is also salutary to be reminded that it was the



'reactionary' Pope Pius IX who defended Rosmini's writings, whereas the more 'liberal' Leo XIII (who made Newman a Cardinal) had those same books placed on the Index. Such are the intriguing side-lights this work is able to shed on a well-trodden period of English Catholic history.

Father Schofield's work reminds us of other half-forgotten episodes as well. He notes that immediately after his conversion in the mid 1840s, the Rosminian Lockhart undertook direct missionary work around the villages of Leicestershire, as Gentili had done before him, tramping the country lanes and preaching in the open air, accompanied by a Tyrolese confrere, the two of them resplendent in clerical soutane and feriola. However, the wearing of such distinctive priestly dress soon became impossible due to the anti-Catholic fervour stirred up by the Restoration of the Hierarchy in 1850, while direct missionary activity among English villagers was abandoned in favour of providing pastoral care to the immigrant Irish who flocked in ever greater numbers to the great cities of England (Lockhart himself devoted much of his pastoral ministry to the Irish poor, and despite his rather patrician background, became much loved by them).

There is then, much to discover and enjoy in this book. William Lockhart was a fascinating character (as were his mother and sister, who both followed him into the Church and whose lives are also sketched here). Moreover, he can stand for the many hundreds of humble Catholic priests who made the 'Second Spring' of English Catholicism possible. As Pope Benedict XVI has consistently reminded us, a renewal of priestly life and ministry is necessary in our own time if contemporary society is to be reclaimed for Christ: these great figures of the past can light us on our way today as well.

Fr Richard Whinder
Mortlake

Science and Religion: The Myth Of Conflict

Stephen Barr, Catholic Truth Society, (2011) 72 pages, A6 paperback, £2.50

This pamphlet would be brilliant if it only took seriously how unusually good it is. For the very rarity in the Catholic world of its excellently argued affirmations concerning the theistic implications of modern science brings out an aspect of the estrangement between the Church and modern science which is not properly dealt with by Professor Barr.

Where else since the 17th century scientific "Revolution" has a prominent Catholic thinker uttered statements such as "the discoveries of modern physics actually strengthen the ancient argument from design", or "the idea of 'purpose' in nature is by no means dead the evidence for this comes largely from physics and cosmology"? Catholics, and other Christians, tend either to deny the relevance of science to proving the existence of a transcendent creator or to deny the possibility of so proving.

Explaining why this is the case and why such statements are so unusual should be an important aspect of justifying the thesis in the pamphlet's title. For such synthesising of modern science with traditional theism is certainly the way to diffuse what the pamphlet calls the "sharpest" conflict in this whole relationship of science and religion. This has been a conflict "between the Catholic faith and a certain philosophy called 'scientific materialism' that falsely claims to be the logical outcome of scientific discoveries." The lack of showing this philosophical falsehood *through these scientific discoveries* has allowed such reductive materialism to become the most influential philosophy of science. Culturally speaking reductionism has tragically won the argument. And the fall out is all about us.

Diffusing the Heart of the Conflict

As we explain below Professor Barr does dispel the myth that prominent scientists and prominent churchmen have been at loggerheads in recent centuries but does not properly deal with the incompatibility of their thought-systems. He does ask the question: "Why have the discoveries of science led so many people to embrace this [materialistic] philosophy?" Yet the two reasons he gives, in his otherwise first class essay, are surely inadequate. First he asserts that "materialism is an 'occupational hazard' of being immersed in the material world" and secondly he argues that the laws which science has discovered are, by definition, "impersonal" in their operation. Yet already in the pamphlet Barr has shown that medieval thought was not against science. Through the concept of "secondary causation" this thought argued that only on "extraordinary occasions" does God "interfere" with nature." If this belief did not lead to scientific materialism, why should the clearer establishment of laws of nature by the New Science?

The "Scientific Revolution" is so named because the success of its mathematical, experimental and developmental methodology realigned not just Aristotelian cosmology but also his understanding of the "nature" of things. This latter concept explained the purposeful intelligibility of substantial things and their movement towards rest at the centre of planet earth, the centre of the universe. Historically speaking this paradigm shift marks the moment after which prominent Catholics stopped arguing convincingly from physics to metaphysics and to the one Transcendent Creator. Barr has brilliantly bucked the trend in this pamphlet. But rather than reflecting on this fact he restricts himself to recording that purpose in nature was "set aside by the Scientific Revolution ... and replaced by a mechanistic view ... [such that] events were ... seen ... as being driven along blindly."

“the concept of purposefulness implied by the discoveries of modern science has profound ramifications for scholastic metaphysics”

The absence of using modern science to develop metaphysics continues today and prevents an appropriate updating of the arguments for God. Against the flow this CTS pamphlet has very well attempted the former theistical task whilst not acknowledging the implications concerning metaphysical development.

On the one hand, Barr provides excellent arguments based on modern science for the whole of creation being under one law, and having purpose written into it. He even acknowledges with regard to the purpose present in the universe that “some of the arguments for it in the past have come to seem naïve in the light of the insights of Darwinian biology”. On the other hand, he does not take the further step of showing how the concept of purposefulness implied by the discoveries of modern science has profound ramifications for scholastic metaphysics, especially the concepts of formality, finality and universality. A development in this area of metaphysics is the fateful step demanded by modern science. It is implicit in Barr’s argumentation for the one God, but needs to be explicit to dispel the apparent conflict between science and Catholic thought.

Proving God

Barr begins his argument by showing that a “law” concerning the arrangement of chairs in rows and columns does not explain the arrangement without reference to mind. He goes on to affirm Newton’s appeal to an “order throughout the whole universe”, showing how Einstein and others have confirmed this basic insight. “Few theoretical physicists doubt that beneath it all there is a truly basic set of laws that govern all of physical reality.” He concludes that “the intimate structure of the *laws themselves*, the *ultimate laws*” cannot, by definition, be explained by further laws. “Such an order based on ideas which take the greatest efforts of the finest human mathematical minds to grasp, must surely originate in a mind far greater.”

He then argues to purpose within the evolution of the universe through the existence of the environmental conditions necessary for the evolution of life and the now famous anthropic cosmological “coincidences” necessary for the evolution of the cosmos. He correctly points out that the hypothesis of a multi-verse, that is the existence of “regions” where other cosmological constants apply, does not detract from the basic unity of the fundamental laws. All this is evidence that “we were part of the plan and purpose of the world’s existence”.

He concludes with the example of the play *Hamlet*. The laws of grammar and character and plot development may explain aspects of the play, such as its beginning, but the reason “why there is a play at all is that William Shakespeare decided to write one and conceived it in his mind.”

The Historical Myth

Barr ably puts the case against the idea, widespread among historians of science, that science and religion have been in open and active conflict for many centuries. He demonstrates this is a misnomer first propagated with some success in the nineteenth century. The reason for this success, according to Barr, and numerous other Catholics, is the “contempt many thinkers of the Enlightenment had for revealed religion” and “anti-Catholic prejudice”. In the light of our above comments we would suggest a qualification of this generally accepted view. Namely it should be acknowledged that Catholic lack of interest in the metaphysical and theistic implications of modern science over the two centuries leading up to the invention of the “direct conflict” myth, aided that invention – and the continued lack continues to aid it.

There are today prominent Catholic and non-Catholic philosophers who take science seriously, but they, almost unanimously, take its agnostic interpretation seriously also. On 13 July 2009 at the Royal Society the Reverend Professor John Polkinghorne captured such agnostic philosophy of science in candid manner. He replied to a questioner concerning St Paul’s claim that the existence of God could be clearly seen in nature (Romans 1:20) that he disagreed with St Paul since he did not think his atheist friends were stupid. Barr has provided a significant step towards overcoming such atheistic philosophy of science. We think that acknowledging the Catholic failure effectively to challenge the inexorable development of such philosophy is part of the reason why atheists are not necessarily stupid.

Fr Hugh MacKenzie

Bayswater



Cutting Edge

Science and Religion News

Towards a Paradigm Shift in Modern Physics

1. Does Relativity Need to be Updated?

In September, the unbelievable was reported by another research group working at CERN: the detection of faster-than-light motion. It is a central plank of the current understanding of physics that nothing at all can travel at a speed faster than that of light in a vacuum (namely, 186,000 miles per second). Physicists of the “OPERA” collaboration have been measuring the speed of neutrinos (a fundamental particle of little or no mass) as they travelled 730km through the earth’s crust between CERN (in Geneva) and the Gran Sasso laboratory (in central Italy). They found that, after many repeated experiments, the neutrinos were arriving about 60 nano-seconds earlier at the detector than they should have been if travelling at the speed of light. This translates into their computed velocity being a factor of 25 millionths faster than the speed of light.

This result is, of course, highly surprising, and the experimenters spent six months checking and rechecking their data prior to publishing their result. Even so, in their conclusions, the authors of the paper are highly cautious, and say: “Despite the large significance of the measurement reported here and the stability of the analysis, the potentially great impact of the result motivates the continuation of our studies in order to investigate possible still unknown systematic effects that could explain the observed anomaly. We deliberately do not attempt any theoretical or phenomenological interpretation of the results.” They are asking the scientific community to scrutinise their findings, accepting that there could be some factor that has hitherto escaped their notice why this result could for some reason be false. If not false, of course, it would force a radical rethink of the laws of physics. Einstein’s “special

theory of relativity,” for example, uses the speed of light being a constant, faster than which nothing can travel, as a fundamental axiom, and to date nothing has challenged this idea. If nothing is found wrong with this neutrino-velocity measurement, then of course the modern understanding of physics is thrown entirely “up in the air.”

A link to the published paper can be found here:

<http://arxiv.org/abs/1109.4897>

2. Is There Anything There?

Much of the reason for the huge decade-long upgrade to the CERN particle-accelerator facility in Geneva – creating the “Large Hadron Collider” (LHC) – was the prospect of finding evidence for one of the keystones in the theoretical edifice that is the “Standard Model” of particle physics, the “Higgs boson.” Named after the British physicist, Peter Higgs, in the 1960s, it remains a “missing link,” as yet undetected in experiments and yet crucial to much of the current theoretical understanding of the fundamental properties of matter on the quantum scale. A boson is a sub-atomic particle which obeys statistical rules. The Higgs boson is postulated as that which, through its interaction with the “Higgs field”, gives mass to particles such as electrons and quarks which are basic to standard physical theory.

In July, the physicists of the LHC experiments announced that whilst the Higgs boson had not yet been discovered, they were specifying tighter limits upon what its mass could be – which is about 300,000 times less than that of the electron!

CERN’s research director, Sergio Bertolucci, gave an upbeat assessment of the LHC’s capabilities in the search for the Higgs: he said, “These are exciting times for particle physics. Discoveries are almost assured within the next twelve months. If the Higgs exists, the LHC

experiments will soon find it. If it does not, its absence will point the way to new physics.”

Also, if it does not exist, Professor Stephen Hawking will have won his infamous and provocative \$100 wager, placed in the year 2000, that the Higgs will not be found! Echoing Bertolucci, he is on record as saying, “I think it will be much more exciting if we don’t find the Higgs. That will show something is wrong, and we need to think again.”

Along with the above neutrino result, the current lack of detection of the Higgs boson are indications that the more physics uncovers about nature, the more there seems to remain surprising and undiscovered. As ever such a paradigm shift would have implications for philosophy of science and metaphysics. But this would be most marked for those philosophers of physics who tend to reduce all to a posited low-level common denominator such as bosons, or atoms or (in Richard Dawkins case) genes. God’s creation is truly an amazing place in which man’s scientific ventures are always awe-inspiring!



The Road From Regensburg

Papal words in search of a new apologetic

Objective Values Needed in England

9 September, Castel Gandolfo, welcoming the new UK Ambassador

... As you pointed out in your speech, your Government wishes to employ policies that are based on enduring values that cannot be simply expressed in legal terms. This is especially important in the light of events in England this summer. When policies do not presume or promote objective values, the resulting moral relativism, instead of leading to a society that is free, fair, just and compassionate, tends instead to produce frustration, despair, selfishness and a disregard for the life and liberty of others.

... The sustainable development of the world's poorer peoples ... is why I remarked in Westminster Hall last year that integral human development, and all that it entails, is an enterprise truly worthy of the world's attention and one that is too big to be allowed to fail ...

Rediscovering Existence of God Through Science

18 September, TV message to the German people

It is, indeed, true that we cannot place God on the table, we cannot touch Him or pick Him up like an ordinary object. We must rediscover our capacity to perceive God, a capacity that exists within us. ... We can use the world through technology because it is made in a rational manner. In the great rationality of the world we can intuit the creator spirit from which it comes, and in the beauty of creation we can intuit something of the beauty, of the grandeur and also the goodness of God.

Developing Beyond Positivism

22 September, Berlin, to the Bundestag

The idea of natural law is today viewed as a specifically Catholic doctrine, not worth bringing into the discussion in a non-Catholic environment, so that one feels almost ashamed even to mention the term. Let me outline briefly how this situation arose. Fundamentally it is because of the idea that an unbridgeable gulf exists between "is" and "ought". An "ought" can never follow from an "is", because the two are situated on completely different planes. The reason for this is that in the meantime, the positivist understanding of nature has come to be almost universally accepted. If nature – in the words of Hans Kelsen – is viewed as "an aggregate of objective data linked together in terms of cause and effect", then indeed no ethical indication of any kind can be derived from it.

... The same also applies to reason, according to the positivist understanding that is widely held to be the only genuinely scientific one. Anything that is not verifiable or falsifiable, according to this understanding, does not belong to the realm of reason strictly understood. ...

Where positivist reason dominates the field to the exclusion of all else – and that is broadly the case in our public mindset – then the classical sources of knowledge for ethics and law are excluded. This is a dramatic situation which affects everyone, and on which a public debate is necessary. Indeed, an essential goal of this address is to issue an urgent invitation to launch one.

The positivist approach to nature and reason, the positivist world view in general, is a most important dimension of human knowledge and capacity that we may in no way dispense with. But in and of itself it is not a sufficient culture corresponding to the full breadth of the human condition. ...

Developing Beyond Modern Philosophy of Science

24 September, Freiburg, to seminarians

Our world today is a rationalist and thoroughly scientific world, albeit often somewhat pseudo-scientific. This scientific spirit, this spirit of understanding, explaining, know-how, rejection of the irrational, is dominant in our time. There is a good side to this, even if it often conceals much arrogance and nonsense. The faith is not a parallel world of feelings that we can still afford to hold on to. Rather it is the key that encompasses everything, gives it meaning, interprets it and also provides its inner ethical orientation: making clear that it is to be understood and lived as tending towards God and proceeding from God. Therefore it is important to be informed and to understand, to have an open mind, to learn. Naturally in 20 years' time, some quite different philosophical theories will be fashionable from those of today: when I think what counted as the highest, most modern philosophical fashion in our day, and how totally forgotten it is now ... still, learning these things is not in vain, for there will be some enduring insights among them. ...

Meditation: “Who Takes No Interest on a Loan...” (Psalm 15)

From a Newsletter of Fr Edward Holloway In the Parish OF THE HOLY NAME, ESHER Sunday 1 September 1982 .

This sermonette is prompted simply by one's eye catching the phrase ,in the responsorial psalm for today's Mass. So a few words about it.

The Old Testament forbade usury totally, and the Christian Church right through the middle ages. The ultimate 'toleration' of usury by the Church of Rome is often, but quite falsely actually, quoted by modern critics as a change of doctrine. As usual St. Thomas Aquinas went to the heart of the matter. Money he said, though as metal a valuable means of exchange was a dead thing. It did not multiply itself, did not have offspring, of good or bad yields. It was always immoral to ask more by way of interest than the basic, overall value of the fruits of the earth, or the maximum output of honest human labour. He reckoned that the very most you could ask was 5%. On average, agricultural production in his day could never improve by more. Without power machinery, goods could not be 'hastened' in production. You could claim interest only for loss of gainful use, inconvenience of lending the money, and the danger of losing the lot. An agricultural peasantry could be reduced to utter penury by famine conditions, and in the Sudan recently, they have been.

“Do Governments, either of right or left, ever stop to think how much wealth depends upon the common morality”

What changed the situation was the introduction of power machinery, because the standard of output, and value of labour was changing all the time, and from one area to another. Power made goods other than agricultural much cheaper by nature, and quite soon began to affect food yields as well. The function of money changed, in as much as there was no longer a natural average standard of “increase of wealth” which decent people could see and admit to be a maximum. Of course, as interest soared, usury did remain, especially among the poor, and bank interest rates of some 15% are sheer usury. Governments however had gained more social control over the economy, and they could, and they do, offset in large measure the effects of intrinsically unjust money rates.

With the rise of Capitalism however “faith money” began to replace real money, and the Old Testament would have been horrified at it. I mean, solid money, like gold and silver had a real metal value, it was worth something in its own entity or being, whereas our money drafts and cheques and bank notes are literally not worth the paper they are drawn on. They are just promises to pay, and their real value is based simply on the stability, good order, productivity, and all round trustworthiness of the community as a whole, in whose name Governments issue them. So, in war or revolution your 'paper savings' at the bank, building society, or shares, are worth nothing, or very little. Think of Germany in 1922. In primitive societies you could ruin the poor by excessive interest and prices. Nowadays you can do it by social break down alone; and then only goods and houses and gold and gems and antiques and food, are worth a thing. It is a sobering thought.

Do Governments, either of right or left, ever stop to think how much wealth depends upon the common morality, the common co-operation and mutual honour between man and man, worker and manager?. It is time for us to begin to think, or we could perhaps relive Weimar 1922 over again in our own country. Morals do matter, and we all need to have them.

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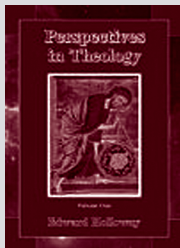
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From the Aims and Ideals of Faith Movement

Faith Movement offers a perspective upon the unity of the cosmos by which we can show clearly the transcendent existence of God and the essential distinction between matter and spirit. We offer a vision of God as the true Environment of men in whom “we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28), and of his unfolding purpose in the relationship of word and grace through the prophets which is brought to its true head in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Son of Man, Lord of Creation, centre of history and fulfilment of our humanity. Our redemption through the death and resurrection of the Lord, following the tragedy of original sin, is also thereby seen in its crucial and central focus. Our life in his Holy Spirit through the Church and the Sacraments and the necessity of an infallible Magisterium likewise flow naturally from this presentation of Christ and his work through the ages.

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

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