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The Cardinal and the Neo-Darwinians: A Question of Analogy

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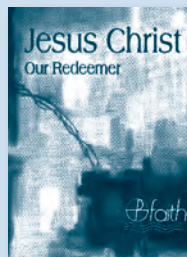
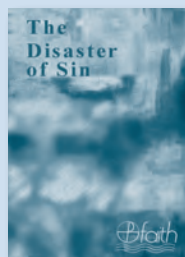
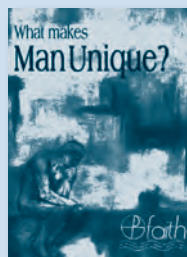
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Editor Hugh MacKenzie, St. Mary Magdalen's, Clergy House, Peter Avenue, Willesden Green, London NW10 2DD, Tel 020 8451 6720, editor@faith.org.uk

Deputy Editor Kevin Douglas

Editorial Board David Barrett, Timothy Finigan, Andrea Fraile, Roger Nesbitt, Christina Read, Dominic Rolls, Luiz Ruscillo, Mark Vickers.

Book Reviews Mark Vickers, St. Peter's, Bishop's Rise, Hatfield, Herts AL10 9HN, coradcor@hotmail.com

Advertising Manager Scott Deeley, c/o Holy Cross, 11 Bangholm Loan, Edinburgh EH5 3AH, advertising@faith.org.uk

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The issue of development lies at the heart of so much that besets the Church today. For development, which is a sign of growth, is as much a healthy characteristic of the Church as it is of creation.

Lack of appropriate development implies a conservatism that seems to shy away from the claim that the Spirit is leading us into all truth. The conservative reaction to the 17th century rise of experimental methodology and the new thinking that followed has significantly reduced the intelligibility of the Church's proclamation in the modern world. In this issue Joanna Bogle engagingly describes her own movement beyond the conservatism surrounding the role of women in the Church.

On the other hand, when development oversteps itself evolution becomes revolution, and growth an unhealthy transmutation. Ecclesial revolution, as experienced in some post-1960s catechetical and liturgical experimentation, cuts us off from Christ, whose Incarnational teaching and presence is founded upon the faithful handing on of Word and Sacrament in the Church's Tradition. In his column William Oddie puts his finger on a manifestation of this dynamic.

Blessed John Henry Newman plotted a way through the above extremes in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. Sadly, despite his clear rejection of “liberalism”, Newman's ideas have been falsely labelled “liberal” by the ecclesial establishment of his time and of ours. As a result, the faithful intellectual development that he called for in his introduction to that essay remains an even more urgent need today than it was 150 years ago.

Our latest Road from Regensburg column once again shows Pope Benedict grappling with this same issue, inspired by the insights of Blessed John Paul the Great, himself an outstanding exponent of truly Catholic development. Both Popes tell us, for instance, that “The Church's preference for [St Thomas Aquinas's] method and his doctrine is not exclusive, but exemplary”.

Our editorial tries to show how understanding the humanity of Christ as the foundation and exemplar of our humanity deepens traditional Catholic thought on the meaning of His death. In our main articles, Professors Paton and McDermott illustrate, in their own way, the importance of taking modern knowledge into account. In our next issue we will publish a discussion on Fr McDermott's implication that the concept of analogy removes the need to fine-tune scholastic ontology. Our lead letter laments, with us, the failure of the scholastic tradition, from Descartes to its virtual collapse during the 20th century, to allow the implications of scientific methodology to shape our metaphysics.

We believe that the Catholic understanding of the Cross developed through a deeper theological insight into the flesh of Christ, and the Catholic understanding of Creation developed through a deeper metaphysical insight into the matter of the cosmos, can be beautifully harmonised. Such development is called for today.

“He emptied himself ... being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death”. [Philippians 2:7-8]

In our January-February issue we republished an article by Fr Edward Holloway about the problem of evil. Responding to feedback from one of our younger readers (see our March-April letters page) we continue the theme here, looking more closely at how we are saved by the death and resurrection of Christ, and the place of suffering in the economy of redemption.

New Atheists and the Problem of Evil

One classic atheist objection runs as follows: if God cannot prevent evil then He is not omnipotent, and if He can prevent it and does not, then he is not good. The problem here is that our notion of omnipotence and, even more so, our notion of goodness is defective. Our idea of omnipotence is often subsumed into childish dreams of merely magical power. Our grasp of goodness generally stops at the horizon of intra-mundane and creaturely comforts.

God is not constrained by our categories of rationality, nor by some higher cosmic law which predefines what goodness means, but neither is God arbitrary and despotic. God is constrained by Himself, so to speak, which really means that God is perfectly Self-consistent and always true to Himself as Wisdom and Charity. The more we grasp and contemplate who God is, the more we realise that this is no “constraint” at all but in fact perfect freedom and perfect goodness.

Since God creates the spiritual creature for union with Himself in freedom, which is the highest good, the possibility of sin, and hence suffering, comes from the realities of creaturely contingency. Protection against this is what we call “grace”, the Self-giving of God to the creature as wisdom and increase in being, or Light and Life in the language of Scripture. Grace prompts communion in love that terminates in the gift of perfect union, which we call the Beatific Vision. However, unlike the environment of purely material creatures, this relationship of growth to fulfilment is based on freedom of response, because that is the condition of existence as spiritual personality, and it is the very nature of God who is Love.

Wishing it could be otherwise is really wanting to “have our cake and eat it”. We want to be like God but on our own terms. We want freedom but freedom from consequences. The original lie told to Eve by the tempter was that humans could “be like gods” if they asserted their free will in defiance of God's word. The ironic tragedy is that God willed us precisely to become co-sharers of the Divine Nature through the Word made flesh. Human self-adoration and self-assertion as the measure of our own truth and goodness is actually the negation of that destiny, the rejection of the One in whom it is given.

The book of Job tells us that we will never get our heads round the unfathomable mystery of God, but the seer also foresaw

The Wisdom of the Cross: Developing the Catholic Tradition *Editorial*

that the answer to evil lies in a Divine initiative of Love which will restore beyond measure whatever was lost. That initiative is precisely the mystery of the Word made Flesh though Our Lady's freely given obedience. In spite of all, "I know that my Redeemer lives" (Job 19:25).

The Cross at the Heart of Christian Faith

Contemporary atheist objections to Christianity are often posed with an intellectual smugness which implies that religious belief is based on naïve and even delusional optimism. It is worth pointing out in response that anyone who thinks Christians have never grappled with the problem of evil can never have noticed that the crucifix is the central symbol of Christian faith. The crucifixion, viewed simply as an historical event, is the ultimate evil: the betrayal, denial, unjust and cowardly condemnation, blaspheming and brutalising, flogging, public humiliation and torturing to death of the Son of God himself. How could a good God allow such a thing? Could he not have prevented it?

Christians do not sidestep the problem of evil. If anything Christianity confronts it head on. However, the mystery of the Cross tells us that in God's Wisdom, which is the ultimate wisdom, evil and suffering are conquered in a way that goes against our natural instincts and expectations – not by miraculous intervention, but by humble acceptance; or at least, that the miraculous triumph follows on from sacrifice rather than preceding it.

Could God have prevented the crucifixion? In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed that that might be permissible. Yet he accepted with a perfect resignation of his human will that a greater good, indeed the greatest good willed by The Father lay in His enduring the cross.

Christ and the Battle for Souls

Our Lord was aware that he could withdraw and escape from death by the force of His own Divine power. When Peter lashed out against those who came to arrest his master, Jesus reminded him sharply that he had only to appeal to the rights of His own eternal Sonship and the Father would immediately send a legion of angels to confront those who were coming against Him with swords and clubs. At any time He could overwhelm his attackers with the highest Power of all, but this could not be the way that humanity was to be redeemed from the power of evil that held it in thrall. The battle for human souls had to be fought with human weapons, with the weapons of mind and heart, obedience and charity. If man was to be redeemed, human nature must be changed from within, by the total offering of an innocent mind and will for the sake of goodness and for the good of others.

Pious speculation has sometimes argued that God could have redeemed us with "just one drop of Jesus' blood". We do not find the thought helpful nor – subject to correction – do we think it true. Redemption is not a reprieve from the Father's wrath granted in return for the Son's vicarious acceptance of punishment. It is the efficacious pledge and promise of a real reformation of humanity by the Son of Man who gives Himself as the antidote to the lethal poison that has infected us.

He gives Himself to meet the measure of "buying back" to perfection of His own brethren. The terrible personal cost is not something demanded by the Father; it is the consequence of what sin has done to human beings in destroying the image and glory of God within our nature. His total giving of self is the antithesis of sin, which is the rejection of God through the adoration of self.

The details of his suffering are also something imposed by the conspiracy of evil that He confronts when rescuing us from the power of the Devil – who is not an imaginary personification of human weakness, but a spiritual and personal power of corruption and malice. If a parent rushed into a burning house to rescue their children, they may themselves be horribly burnt in the process. We may speak of this as the "cost" of saving them. If the fire was started by arson we may see the "price" as being paid to the evil-doers in order to undo the damage they intended. And if the criminals resisted the rescue attempt with sabotage and violence, then the sufferings caused by their malice would be multiplied.

Paying the Ransom for Fallen Humanity

The language of "cost" and "price" and sacrifice would describe something very real, but we would not think that Love was therefore something cold and punitive in demanding such a high price to be true to itself. Neither then does the Father demand a "blood price" in order to absolve humanity from sin. But in order to be true to Himself and also true to what we are, the confrontation with evil and all its consequences must be played out in the terrible drama of Calvary by God the Son who is also the Son of Man.

This last point is important. The key to understanding Redemption is not just that Christ's is the perfect martyrdom – although it is – it is *Who* He is that is crucial.

"The existence in Christ of the Divine Person of the Son, who surpasses and embraces all human persons, and constitutes himself as the head of all mankind, makes possible his redemptive sacrifice" (CCC 616)

As Son of God and Son of Man, He is the One who speaks and acts directly into the Father's heart, and He is also the exemplar and root of human nature.

The Koran says "No one can bear another's burden" (Sura 35: 18), which is often taken as a specific denial of the Christian idea of Christ's redemptive sacrifice. This moral individualism ignores the profound solidarity of humanity, not just physically but morally and spiritually too. We are affected by each other's lives. We do take responsibility for each other – parents for children, for example – and we feel the pain of a loved one's failure, the desolation of a loved one's moral destruction and the damage they do to others.

With extreme sin – think perhaps of the blasphemous horrors and murderous corruption of children perpetrated by the so-called Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda – we feel that the fabric of the universe, the order that underpins the cosmos, has been ruptured. And we are right. The outrage affects us all, drags down the whole of humanity. Actually every sin is a derogation from God's glory manifested in his creatures.

The Wisdom of the Cross: Developing the Catholic Tradition

continued

The order of creation and the glory of God needs to be re-established by some monumental act of human nature, not just of “kindness” but of absolute innocence, goodness and selflessness.

“A Second Adam to the Fight and to the Rescue Came”

The solidarity of humanity has its origin in our common descent according to the flesh. We are one family, almost one literal body, budding off from one another through genetic inheritance. But this solidarity is now a damaged inheritance, a solidarity in corruption through the sin of our first parents. However, human identity is not just framed through our origins, but through our destiny. Our origin in the first Adam is from the earth, but our fulfilment and our final identity comes from the second Adam who is a living Spirit (cf. 1Cor 15:45). As creatures of spirit as well as flesh, our identity and destiny, our environment and fulfilment lies in God. He alone can grant it. Human nature is built upon the plenary gift of God to his creatures in the Incarnation. Our destiny lies in Christ in whom we are chosen before the world began to share all the blessings of Heaven (cf. Eph 1,1). “The masters of this age did not understand this or they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1Cor 2:8).

“Redemption is not an event
but a relationship”

The Word made flesh alone can restore the lost dignity of Man and make satisfaction to the glory of God in his own humanity for His corrupted brothers and sisters. The Incarnational (or “Scotist”) vision of Creation therefore increases our understanding of the cross, helping to avoid a purely punitive and juridical view of the Redemption. For as St. Paul observes in the middle of the classic statement of Christian redemption: “Adam ... is a type of the One who is to come” (Rom 5:14). So we belong to Christ more fundamentally than we do to our first parents. We are His by right of His own title and nature. He is the Bridegroom who has come to win back and purify his fallen Bride. He is the Heir of the vineyard of Creation who reclaims His ruined inheritance from murderous usurpers. In this perspective we can see more clearly that it is the Person of the Son of Man suffering in perfect charity, not the pain as such, that constitutes the redemptive value.

The crucifixion, awful though it was, is not, arguably, the most physically excruciating martyrdom in history. The tortures endured by some of the Japanese and Korean martyrs or by St. Jean de Brébeuf, for example, were yet more terrible and prolonged. However, we cannot begin to fathom the spiritual pain that afflicted our Lord, who suffered for and within every living soul and for every human sin. Our own horror and grief at scandals in the Church may perhaps give us a glimpse of the agony of Jesus that caused Him literally to sweat blood in Gethsemane as He contemplated the outrage and the consequences of sin in countless souls, each of whom are more dear to Him than children to their parents. And that awful cry that was wrung from His lips on the cross can only make us bow our heads in awe and sorrow. But that was not His last word, and neither does sin have the last word.

The Sacrifice of Christ

It is His innocence and His charity, maintained and offered continually throughout His suffering that constitutes His sacrificial offering. The redeeming merit comes from Himself as God the Son in Person and also The Son of Man. As God the Son He acts within the communion of the Blessed Trinity Itself, and the Father loves us unto perfection again for the sake of His beloved Son. As Son of Man He is the exemplar and root of our humanity, the Head and identity of every man who sets Himself to be a living apology for the blasphemy of our fallen state and medicine for our wounded lives.

His sacrifice is unique and His death, vindicated by His resurrection, is the definitive transforming fact from which every martyrdom for the sake of truth and goodness derives its meaning and its reward. All other martyrs have Him to turn to for strength and consolation in their sufferings, for the grace to endure and the hope of triumph. As the sufferings of Christ overflow in us, so too do His consolations (cf. 2Cor 1:5). But He trod the wine press alone (Is 63:3), as a pure gift for others.

The merit in the suffering of other martyrs, or indeed in our own little sacrifices that we offer up each day, does not come from ourselves. All redemptive merit comes from Christ. Yet our lives and our actions are given real merit in God’s eyes if we are joined to His Son through the sacramental bonds of the Church, which is, through these same bonds which we traditionally call “mystical”, the fuller Body of His Incarnation. This is why St. Paul can say in a remarkable statement that we “fill up in turn what is outstanding in the afflictions of Christ for the sake of his Body which is the Church” (Col 1:24). The implications of this one sentence of Scripture alone, pondered deeply and honestly, should be enough to convert a sincere Protestant to the Catholic view of salvation.

Suffering in itself has no value, indeed it is destructive. But Jesus’ sacrificial death has given value to all suffering if it is accepted and offered in union with Him out of love for the Father, sincere sorrow for sins – our own and those of the whole world – and charity towards those who have caused it. In this sense we are all “co-redeemers” with Christ, becoming one great offering of atonement in and through Him, as we form one Body and one Spirit in the Lord.

Mary’s Predestination and Preservation in Christ

Whether the Church will deem it wise or opportune to define Our Lady as Co-Redemptrix we do not know. The title would invite many misunderstandings, not least ecumenically, but it is certainly capable of orthodox comprehension. It does not mean that she is her Son’s co-equal, but she is without doubt the greatest, most perfect and uniquely essential collaborator with her Son throughout her life. She shared his sufferings and she entered into the charity of His Sacred Heart and His prayer for the world, not just as only a mother could, but as only a sinless soul can. The prophecy about the sword that would pierce her heart was given in the same breath as the recognition of Jesus as The One destined “for the rise and fall of many” (Luke 2:34). She is bound to Him by both natural and spiritual bonds with a closeness we can barely comprehend. And she now shares His glory and His

“It is the Person of the Son of Man suffering in perfect charity, not the pain as such, that constitutes the redemptive value.”

heavenly ministry with an honour that is above all the saints and angels.

Yet, of course, the Sacrifice of Christ remains unique and incomparable. All other offerings participate in His and derive their worth from Him. As God He is the author of our Being, our Life and our eternal Joy; as Man He is the means by which we receive that Life to the full. He is the Way and the Truth of all humanity, and so He is also the primordial source of that Life restored. For His Mother, too, He is the source of her holiness and the reason for her preservation from Original Sin.

Indeed Jesus and Mary are predestined by God “in one and the same decree”; the phrase is used in both *Ineffabilis Deus*, defining the Immaculate Conception, and *Munificentissimus Deus*, defining the dogma of the Assumption. So her vocation and her privileges are primordial to creation, you might say. As Jesus is superior to Adam, although born later in time, Mary is superior to Eve, although born a descendent in the flesh. Therefore in view of the Fall, which in the historical order of inheritance threatened to infect Our Lady with corruption, the theologically secondary decree of Redemption forbids that she should be touched by evil in any way, even for a moment, because she takes her identity and her vocation directly from the theologically primary decree of the Incarnation.

She was created for His sake, and her preservation from the effects of the Fall is guaranteed by her Son’s faithfulness to his original historical mission, even unto death. As her protector from the sin of Adam in this way He is her Redeemer, therefore, “through the merits of the cross foreseen”, as the Church puts it. That total redemptive work which encompasses Our Lady’s preservation and our own restoration from sin is paid for in the coinage of His own flesh and blood, which He inherits from His Mother and which is now stamped with the sign of the cross, the wounds of suffering love. So she is both the first beneficiary and also the unique vessel of God’s redeeming grace.

The rest of us are not primordial to the plan of God in Christ in this way. We are known and created as children of Adam and Eve, then chosen and called in Jesus through Mary within the network of sacramental relationships and pastoral vocations that form the Church. So the merits of Christ and his redeeming grace are applied to us by the Church to rescue us from both Original and personal sin.

Redemption “In” Christ, Not Just ‘By’ Christ

We are redeemed not just *by* Christ but *in* Christ. Redemption is not just an action in the past, nor a judicial enactment by God which we either accept or reject. It is a relationship within which we are restored and grow to perfection as children of God with the eternal Son.

It is important for us to emphasise in our teaching and our preaching that the death of Jesus was neither desired nor demanded by the Father, otherwise we make an ogre of our God. Christ’s sufferings were imposed by the conspiracy of demonic malice and human weakness. But it was the Father’s will to redeem humanity from slavery to evil and eternal corruption, and precisely for the sake of His Son in whom humankind was created and called to become co-sharers of the Divine Nature.

The human vocation of the Word made Flesh unavoidably leads Him to confront the full force and fury of the enemy. Of his own free will He walks naked and alone into the heart of the storm as broken and twisted creatures wreak upon his innocent humanity the damage that mirrors the broken image of God in their own souls. From the heart of the darkness He cries out in a plea for forgiveness for those who crucify Him. This is what the Father wills. It is, it seems, the only way. Only the Son could ask it, and the Father can only grant it to the Son who has embraced and endured the worst that sinful humanity can do.

“It is love to the end that confers on Christ’s sacrifice its value as redemption and reparation, as atonement and satisfaction”. (CCC 616)

The Blood that Cries To Heaven For Forgiveness

When He sees the blood of Christ, the Father is not blinded by it, as Luther would have it. Rather He sees its life-giving efficacy for human nature. He sees the shining integrity of the Son of Man, His holiness, his humility, his obedience tested and proven through the most bitter suffering unto death; He sees His superabundant charity towards even the worst of sinners, and His endless thirst for the salvation of souls. All of which is offered through the infinite glory of His Divinity as God the Son. This is the currency of atonement.

The blood of Christ does not cover us over like a cloak. It is like a transfusion, truly healing from within. “He made the sinless one into sin that we might become the goodness of God” (2Cor 5:21) Jesus makes good the damage done by sin by literally making good again those who have done the damage to God’s glory and to themselves. As in Adam all men die so in Christ are all men made alive (1Cor 20:22), and that life is a real, active regeneration and growth into perfection, not just an imputed holiness.

This is why redemption is not an event but a relationship. For redemption is not a simple legal acquittal, it is the organic work of rebuilding the desecrated temple of the Spirit. Our Lord dies once and for all; He is risen, His victory is assured, but His work continues through time and space even until the Parousia through the Church, above all in the Mass.

We often forget that the Easter Triduum *begins* with the institution of the Eucharist. So we do not need to tie ourselves in mental knots trying to connect the Mass with Calvary, for it is the Eucharist that went to the Cross. It is the one same Sacrifice because it is the one same Christ. The Word who is Life (cf. 1 Jn 1:4), who tabernacles among us in the flesh (cf. Jn 1:14), this same Jesus is The Lamb who was sacrificed on Calvary. And He is for all time our active and present reconciliation and healing for sin and its effects in the here and now, on earth, through the hands of His priests as it is in Heaven through his unveiled presence before the Father. His living Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Eucharist are the whole of our Pardon and Peace, personally and communally, and also The Bread of Life and the foretaste of the unending joys of heaven.

Research into Sex Education: Positive Implications for the Church *by David Paton*

David Paton argues that academic studies of the effects of the government's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy strongly support the primary role of parents. He also brings out how this role is far from upheld by simply ensuring the parental right to withdraw a child from Sex Education. Professor Paton is Chair of Industrial Economics at the Nottingham University Business School.

The issues of sex education and teenage pregnancy are rarely out of the headlines. Although underage pregnancy rates in the UK have fallen slightly in the past two years, they are still among the highest in Europe, while rates of teenage sexually transmitted infections (STIs) remain at epidemic proportions and show no sign of coming down.

The response of the last government was essentially more of the same: earlier and more detailed sex education, family planning clinics in schools, promotion of emergency birth control (otherwise known as the "morning after pill") easier access to abortion, all without the need for parental consent even in the case of underage girls. Catholic pupils attending state schools are in the direct line of fire of these policies, but even Catholic schools are not necessarily exempt from their effects. The Connexions service, school nurse service and Healthy Schools standards are just a few of the many routes whereby inappropriate sex education or access to abortion and contraception may sneak in under the radar of unwary teachers and governors.

Matters came to crisis point a year ago when the last government's Children, Schools & Family Bill sought to impose a statutory sex and relationship education (SRE) curriculum on all schools from the primary stage (currently SRE is only compulsory in secondary schools and the content can be determined by each school) and to remove the right of parents to withdraw their children from inappropriate SRE lessons from the age of 15. The proposals were given broad, if somewhat ambiguous, support by the Catholic Education Service. Ultimately the clauses in the Bill relating to SRE were stood down in the government's "wash-up" before last year's General Election. Whether or not the present Government will seek to reintroduce some of these measures remains to be seen, but there has certainly been no let-up in the efforts of the sex education establishment to lobby in favour of statutory SRE and to remove the right of parents to opt out.

Although parents (and indeed governors and teachers) are often uneasy about early or explicit SRE or providing access to family planning services, their feelings are sometimes ambiguous due to a concern that, if they do not follow such a course, children will be at greater risk of underage pregnancy. In fact, an examination of the academic literature in the area makes it clear that irrespective of any ethical or moral considerations, most of the controversial measures simply do not reduce early pregnancy and may make matters worse.

Let's take the case of providing easier access to emergency birth control (EBC) to adolescents. Good evidence will try to examine the effect of a policy on a particular group by looking at, for example, how adolescent pregnancy rates changed

before and after the policy, relative to the change among adolescents to whom the policy did not apply. Leaving aside the issue of whether or not EBC may act in an abortifacient way in some cases, every single such study has found that schemes promoting EBC simply do not reduce observed rates of unwanted pregnancies or abortions. The lack of impact of EBC schemes has been well known for some years and is admitted even by those who support EBC in principle. It might well be queried why these schemes continue to be promoted in pharmacies and schools. They are not cheap to run and, in an environment where resources are particularly scarce, there seem to be only two explanations: either policy makers are simply ignorant of the evidence or there is an ideological agenda at work.

Why don't EBC schemes cut unwanted pregnancy or abortion rates? In a recent *Journal of Health Economics* paper, Professor Sourafel Girma and I test whether the answer lies in the concept of "risk compensation" or "moral hazard". Insurance companies are well aware of the phenomenon in which people who take out insurance against, say, burglary, are known (on average if not in every case) to modify their behaviour so that the risk of being burgled increases. Could this same concept apply to teenage sexual behaviour? When adolescents have easy access to EBC, they may be more likely to engage in sexual behaviour or to take more risks when they do so, e.g. by being less likely to use condoms. More pregnancies will result from this increased risk taking and these will counter-balance any reduction in pregnancies from those who were taking risks anyway but who are now more likely to use EBC. Given that EBC provides no protection at all against sexually transmitted infections, if moral hazard is indeed at work, then we might expect to see EBC schemes leading to increases in rates of STIs.

The *Journal of Health Economics* paper tested this by examining the effect of recent schemes in England in which EBC is provided free of charge and without a prescription to adolescents, including those under the age of consent, and without any need for parental consent. We examined how STI rates among teenagers changed before and after the scheme was introduced relative to changes in areas that did not introduce the schemes. We controlled for a variety of other factors that may also have influenced STI rates in particular areas and we also used older age groups, unaffected by the schemes, as a further control. The results were very clear. Areas with EBC schemes experienced a 5% increase in STIs among all teenagers relative to other areas. The relative increase was 12% amongst under-16s. This is a clear case of unintended consequences of Government policy. Scarce resources continue to be

“contrary to assumptions of the sex education establishment, it may sometimes be desirable for schools to do less rather than more.”

spent on a measure which does not cut teenage pregnancy rates, but appears to lead to greater numbers of young people getting sexually transmitted infections that may have serious repercussions for the rest of their lives.

The academic evidence relating to the impact of SRE in schools is not much more hopeful. For example, an official analysis of the English Teenage Pregnancy Strategy published in the *Lancet* found no link between those areas judged as having high quality SRE and reductions in teenage pregnancy rates. Most other studies have similarly found that SRE in schools has little or no impact on unwanted pregnancy or abortion rates.

In a way the finding that SRE in schools has such modest effects is very liberating. Schools often feel that they must implement a particular SRE scheme because otherwise their pupils will be at greater risk of early pregnancy. The evidence is just not there to support such a view. This does not mean that SRE has no place in schools. Rather it frees governors and headteachers to focus more on deciding what type of sex education parents want their children to experience in school and, in the case of primary schools, whether there should be any formal sex education at all.

Being aware of the evidence base should also encourage the Bishops of England and Wales and the CES that they can unambiguously promote the fundamental primacy of parents in the area of SRE without any risk that they will compromise the sexual health of young people. Indeed, the academic evidence is clear that involving parents in all aspects of the decision-making process (including whether a minor receives an abortion) actually promotes adolescent sexual health.

With this in mind, we can think of a number of specific measures which could be taken forward by the Catholic Church in England and Wales. In the first place, Bishops and the CES should vigorously oppose any attempt to weaken or remove the current right of parents to withdraw their children from school SRE should they feel it necessary to do so. Further, the CES could helpfully encourage schools to be completely transparent and open about the content and delivery of SRE. It should be easy, for example, for any parent to view and comment on the SRE materials used by Catholic schools.

More fundamentally the Church's teaching concerning the primary role of parents and the delegated role of teachers puts her in a good position to share an important practical insight with policy makers. For, contrary to assumptions of the sex education establishment, it may sometimes be desirable for schools to do less rather than more.

Take for example, the case of a school nurse putting up posters with contact details for local sexual health services that provide contraception and abortion services. Some parents may believe such a practice to be acceptable, while others would be fundamentally opposed. It is impossible for parents to exercise the right to opt out and to stop individual children accessing the information. So, in such a case, the

only way of maintaining the primacy of parents with regard to SRE is for schools not to undertake such activity and to leave such matters to the discretion of parents. Of course, giving this information in a Catholic school would be wrong on principle, but that is a slightly different point.

In terms of what actually should be provided in SRE, a recent trend has been to suggest that schools should be doing more on relationships (e.g. renaming Sex and Relationships Education to Relationships and Sex Education). At one level, this is very appealing, but it is hard to pin down what it means in practical terms. Further, teaching about personal relationships is an area in which parents have a significant advantage over schools and one in which we should have low expectations about the benefits that schools can deliver.

The area in which schools should have a very significant role to play (and where perhaps some Catholic schools currently underperform), is the promotion of a culture in which young people understand and engage with the Church's key teachings relating to sexuality and the inherent dignity of human life. In this regard, several external groups such as the Challenge Team and the Ten-ten Theatre Company offer useful services to schools, while some good supporting materials are available – the primary school “This is My Body” scheme and Education for Life aimed at secondary schools spring to mind. In many schools, however, the activity is ad hoc, often dependent on one or two key staff members and not systematically embedded across the whole life of the school. So, for example, there is currently no comprehensive PSHE text available to secondary schools written from a Catholic perspective. Similarly, although many schools do excellent work promoting knowledge and understanding of racism and poverty, it is much rarer to find even Catholic schools having Pro-life Awareness Weeks as a standard annual whole-school activity in which pupils are encouraged to understand the justice and coherence of Church teaching on abortion and related issues. These are all initiatives on which Bishops and the CES could take a lead and disseminate good practice.

So there is much to be worried about, especially with regard to the continuing pressures the Church faces to conform to the perceived wisdom about how to respond to problems such as early sexual activity, teenage pregnancy and STIs. At the same time, Catholics need to be aware that the existing research evidence base is largely consistent with orthodox moral teaching. Such an understanding is essential in giving policy makers, Bishops, governors, teachers and parents the confidence to promote an authentic and positive view of Church teaching on human sexuality and the inherent dignity of human life in schools, parishes and the home.

Contemporary Catholicism on Femininity: An Appreciation *by Joanna Bogle*

In a frank reflection Joanna Bogle, writer and journalist, helpfully offers a short case study concerning the necessary interaction of Catholic tradition and contemporary culture.

The arrival in the Church of new groups of Anglicans, whose journey to Rome was begun by the decision of the Church of England to ordain women, has thrown a new spotlight on the whole topic of the Church and women. “They think we’re all misogynists” sighed one of the group heading for the Ordinariate, who had had spiteful – there is no other word for it – letters and messages from those opposed to his decision.

Easy to brush it off, or to say it doesn’t matter. But it does. There are a good many people who, without really thinking about it, are convinced that the Catholic Church is “against women”, that it oppresses women and that intelligent RC females somehow manage to steel themselves against this and cope by denying a reality all too evident to everyone else.

For some years now, I’ve been grappling with this. At first, the issues seemed simple – hard-line feminists eager to promote abortion as “a woman’s right to choose” who saw the Catholic Church as the Number One Enemy, and then, alongside, tiresome women within the Church who offered spurious, and often downright silly, tirades on the priesthood, or invented self-pitying quasi-liturgical rituals to demonstrate women’s empowerment in the face of male oppression. It was fairly easy – and rather fun – to ridicule these last, and I had a very enjoyable time in the 1990s when a group called the “Catholic Women’s Network” fell for a spoof which I wrote about a group of well-to-do ladies sitting round a swimming pool with wine and salads bemoaning their lot and denouncing the Church’s teachings on marriage and sexual morality.

At the same time, it was clear that, for all their wrong-headed and occasionally malicious attacks on the Church, these ladies were giving voice to something which was also generally felt within society and particularly by younger women who knew nothing of the Network or its antics but who were not comfortable with answering the Church’s critics. These younger women, including Catholics – born post-Vatican II by a good many years, and growing up in a society which sets much store by “equality” and assumes a high level of independence and assertiveness on the part of its young – were not to be placated by 19th century images of saints, by bland claims that “the Bible says women should just keep quiet and obey their husbands” or by coy assertions that feminine wiles and feminine charm would ensure that they would find ways to cope with any unpleasantness that came their way.

I came to see, and to say, in debates and discussions on this subject, that the feminists, and those who gave them a measure of support, were raising some good questions but coming up with the wrong answers. The Church too, I note, tends to take this line, and is right to do so. No sane mother fails to listen to her daughters. What emerges as a crude and insolent expression of anger may actually include some genuine questions that need real answers, and possibly even some genuine grievances distorted or enlarged by ignorance and prejudice. Mothers need to be good listeners.

After all, shorn of its insolence, the question “Why can’t women be priests?” is a good one, and indeed productive of some useful teaching on the nature of the priesthood and of the Church, of Christ as Bridegroom and the Church as Bride, and of a greater meaning in all this than we had perhaps realised. The Church has some crucial insights here, and it seems likely that they will be explored and presented in greater depth and with greater understanding as the years go by. The whole history of the Church shows us that teaching is developed and deepened in response to heresy. Developed – not changed. The differences between men and women, and the part these play in God’s plan and purposes, are greater and more significant than we had perhaps hitherto supposed. As the Church explores this, our understanding of the significance of a male priesthood is likely to grow. In doing so it will give us a greater understanding of the dignity and importance of both men and women, bringing insights into all sorts of aspects of the Mass (its nuptial meaning, its unity with the Marriage Feast of the Lamb in Heaven) and much more.

Role Models

And this discussion takes place in a culture in which the Church honours the role and achievements of women: in the recent past we have perhaps too often simply taken for granted the women saints, but it’s time to take a good look at the great range of them. There they are, from the very earliest days – greeting the risen Lord in the Garden, suffering death in Rome’s Colosseum rather than deny their faith in him, giving themselves in service to the Church and to the poor and sick and lonely and imprisoned. As mystics and missionaries, heroic martyrs and courageous founders of religious orders, in public life as sovereigns or in quiet service in convent or school, the Church’s women saints are testimony to the fact that Mother Church takes legitimate pride in her daughters. And, no, she doesn’t think that they are of less worth than her sons. She sees and rejoices in the complementarity of the two sexes, knowing – and teaching – that this is part of God’s plan, not to be downplayed or ignored, much less regarded as a nuisance.

We should therefore approach the “women thing” with some confidence, with good humour and goodwill. It doesn’t get us anywhere merely to sneer: the young man who denounced the ageing and muddled ladies of a rather sentimental group – whom he had never met – as “feminiNazis” had hoped to raise bellows of raucous laughter from his young hearers but was greeted with silence. It won’t do just to produce insults. This merely gives younger women a sense that the Church doesn’t have any answers. But she does have answers and we must listen to them, develop them, teach them, explore them, taking them into the places where a confused generation is looking for insights in what life is all about and why we’re all here, and how we can work together.

“I came to see that the feminists were raising some good questions”

Social Advances

We do need to see things in the perspective of our times. The present Pope, and Pope John Paul II, both brought real insights into this discussion. For the first time in modern history, we have had Popes who as young priests met and worked with women at university as a matter of course and on ordinary terms. They saw nothing strange or unusual in tackling academic subjects with women, talking through large topics, assuming academic standards. They worked with women who expected to take degrees and go on to professional jobs of all kinds, or to have doctorates or professorships, or to write and publish on a range of subjects, or to hold public offices. And the tragic circumstances of post-war Poland – and of post-war and bombed-out Germany – meant that contacts and relationships which might previously have been formal and remote were rather different.

More importantly, there was a common recognition within society – the more significant because it all felt easy and natural – that women playing a full role in academic and professional life was something that had been long overdue and was here to stay, and that the Church should be entirely at ease with that. So when the Second Vatican Council said that “The hour is coming, in fact has come, when the vocation of women is being acknowledged in its fullness, the hour in which women acquire in the world an influence, an effect and a power never hitherto achieved” it was saying something that everyone could see was true, and had important implications. And it went on: “That is why, at this moment when the human race is undergoing so deep a transformation, women imbued with a spirit of the Gospel can do so much to aid humanity in not falling”.¹

Throughout the 1960s and 70s and 80s of the 20th century, the Church was – slowly – grasping the reality of the situation. Sometimes the period of reflection preceding a magisterial response to new ideas can seem unfortunately extended. Paradoxically insights into the dignity of women in our civilisation flowed from the fact that it was a Christian civilisation imbued with a recognition of the dignity of the human person.

A parallel can be made with other social changes. In the 1820s and 30s, industrialisation took root in the scientifically and politically advanced Christian lands of Europe and North America, and the faces of many cities changed dramatically. People flocked from the countryside, and the old patterns of life – farming communities centred on a village with its church – vanished for many people as they made their homes in crowded city dwellings and worked in factories. This continued throughout the 1840s, 50s, 60s, 70s, and 80s. Finally, in 1893 – at the very end of the century, and when two or three generations had lived their lives in the industrialised world – the Church under Leo XIII produced a document exploring the social and financial implications of it all and giving some guidance. The document was *Rerum Novarum* – “Of new things”. Well, hardly very new by then. But the document did offer magisterial insights and wisdom.

Magisterium

So with the changing roles of women. The 1970s saw developments. Pope Paul VI declared Catherine of Siena to be a Doctor of the Church, and he hinted that there was much more to be done here, and that new things would be happening over the next years: “it is evident that women are meant to form part of the living and working structure of Christianity in so prominent a manner that perhaps not all their potentialities have yet been made clear”. Indeed. And the Church in the 20th century hadn’t always got its language and style right: *Casti Connubii* in the 1930s says wise and true things about marriage and family life, but didn’t somehow quite manage to tackle the emerging questions being raised by women as educational opportunities for them expanded and new responsibilities came their way in public, commercial, and professional life.

It fell to others – notably, in the 1930s, Edith Stein, later St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross – to explore this new territory of women’s education and its implications at a spiritual and cultural level. And – partly under the influence of her writing – a Pope in the 1980s began to say fresh and interesting things about women, answering some of the challenges posed by feminists and adding a large and interesting perspective.

Clearly, the role of Mary is central in any Christian discussion about women, and Pope John Paul brought this out in his letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*:

“Thus the ‘fullness of time’ manifests the extraordinary dignity of the ‘woman’. On the one hand, this dignity consists *in the supernatural elevation to union with God* in Jesus Christ, which determines the ultimate finality of the existence of every person both on earth and in eternity. From this point of view, the ‘woman’ is the representative and the archetype of the whole human race: she *represents the humanity* which belongs to all human beings, both men and women. On the other hand, however, the event at Nazareth highlights a form of union with the living God which can *only belong to the ‘woman’*, Mary: *the union between mother and son*. The Virgin of Nazareth truly becomes the Mother of God.”²

The Church has always honoured Mary, always seen her role as crucial – and in doing so has found her a sure anchor in holding fast to truths that need to be taught with clarity. When the Church at the Council of Chalcedon needed to affirm the full divinity and full humanity of Christ it was through expounding the teaching that Mary, his Mother, was fully *theotokos*, God-bearer, truly Mother of God, that this was done. Mary is the key. And “to look at Mary and imitate her does not mean, however, that the Church should adopt a passivity inspired by an outdated conception of femininity.”³

Modern Pressures

Today’s young Catholics face many pressures. Most young practising Catholic women definitely want to marry. How to find a suitable spouse? How to affirm chastity without seeming to be a prig? How to communicate a sense of shared values in a culture so often very much opposed to all that is dignified and truly human in our deepest relationships?

Catholicism on Femininity Today: A Frank Assessment

continued

Girls are also trained to think of careers. The whole vast range of jobs and professions is there for them to consider, and throughout their secondary education they are being urged to look at all of the options available. A young Catholic should be aware that each person has a mission in life and should fulfil it, and that true fulfilment involves looking at the whole of life's responsibilities – home and family and community as well as just work. John Henry Newman was writing for all the men and women of the Church when he wrote "God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission: I may never know it in this life but I shall be told it in the next..."

Endless talk of "choices" can itself be confusing and worrying – for both men and women alike – and a real difficulty for young people in the West today is that of making a definite commitment: to a job, to a way of life, and, very notably, to marriage. There is talk of "commitment-phobia", and it is something of which girls often accuse young men – although the female sex is hardly immune. It affects even quite small things such as social events ("I might go to Sue's party – not sure. I'll let you know...") The facebook/twitter/mobile phone culture of course feeds into this with its possibilities for endless changes of plan).

Pope John Paul gave real and useful guidance in *Mulieris*

The Church needs to offer not only sound doctrine and moral teachings – on marriage, on priesthood, on male/female relationships – but also inspiration and guidance. Most young people do know that the Church teaches, for example, that abortion is wrong (sometimes it's about the only thing they do know about the Catholic Church!), but they have only very hazy ideas about what the Church really says on human dignity, the value of each one of us, the beauty of human love, the value of authentic family life, the mutual companionship of men and women. There is a tendency to assume that the Church is out of touch and out of date, that it doesn't recognise the realities of modern life.

Understanding the Church's Teaching

We need to be informed, and to offer the true message of the Church when challenged. It really won't do to offer – as happened at a church in the USA attended by a friend – leaflets urging women to "be veiled" at Mass as a sign, apparently, of submission to male authority (surely a very odd reason to give for putting on a hat?). It won't do to invent a panicky post-feminist theology on muddled foundations.

And it is no use quoting St. Paul on women speaking in Church as the reason for a male priesthood. The Church specifically doesn't use this as a proof-text on ordination. The issue here is priesthood, and the specific bond between Christ and his Apostles. You can't duck this, and if you have an inadequate theology of priesthood you will run up a good many blind alleys. Women can certainly be teachers, and millions have given excellent service to the Church and to society in this capacity. They can speak up in church too – most parish Rosary groups are led by women. They can organise and run

Catholic organisations, launch new ones, take initiatives and chivvy the clergy into action where necessary – was it not Mary Magdalen who ran to tell the Apostles about the Resurrection?

Dignitatem. He spoke of the "genius" of women, of the special gifts they bring, of their necessary skills in "humanising" modern society, in reminding people of their true worth. In a powerful climax to the document, he gave public thanks to women, hinting that perhaps this was slightly overdue from the Church, that it came from the heart, and that it carried a genuine desire to ensure that women should not be slighted or marginalised within the Church or by Christians in everyday life:

"Therefore *the Church gives thanks for each and every woman*: for mothers, for sisters, for wives; for women consecrated to God in virginity; for women dedicated to the many human beings who await the gratuitous love of another person; for women who watch over the human persons in the family, which is the fundamental sign of the human community; for women who work professionally, and who at times are burdened by a great social responsibility; for 'perfect' women and for 'weak' women – for all women as they have come forth from the heart of God in all the beauty and richness of their femininity; as they have been embraced by his eternal love; as, together with men, they are pilgrims on this earth, which is the temporal 'homeland' of all people and is transformed sometimes into a 'valley of tears'; as they assume, together with men, *a common responsibility for the destiny of humanity* according to daily necessities and according to that definitive destiny which the human family has in God himself, in the bosom of the ineffable Trinity."⁴

And this means that the Church defends women – their rights, their dignity, and their specific needs, including those relating to the indispensable role of motherhood.

Motherhood is so important that the Church can never see it as just an optional extra, a biological experience, a burden or a hobby. A mother has a particular dignity of her own, a particular status, extraordinary responsibilities, the greatest of joys. To be a mother is one of the most basic and natural of longings, and it is a terrible distortion of reality to see it as merely a lifestyle choice.

Pope Benedict has spoken of this and followed up with practical and assertive statements emphasising the real needs and aspirations of today's young men and women. He spoke rather movingly to a major gathering of municipal leaders in Italy about the importance of allowing people to have a family life, and of the sadness caused when economic and social factors block this: "The desire for fatherhood and motherhood is engraved in the human heart. Many couples would like to welcome the gift of new children but are compelled to wait. It is therefore necessary to give motherhood concrete support as well as to guarantee women with a profession the possibility to reconcile family and work."⁵

The Church, in speaking about women, still has lots more to say. The whole understanding of the role of Mary, the understanding of Christ's relationship with his Church as

“‘commitment-phobia’ is something of which girls often ‘accuse young men’

that of Bridegroom and Bride, and the understanding of men and women as a gift to one another – all this is crucial.

Back in 2004 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith brought out the importance of St. Paul to this theme:

“Reflecting on the unity of man and woman as described at the moment of the world’s creation (cf. Gn 2:24), the Apostle exclaims: ‘this mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church’ (Eph 5:32). The love of a man and a woman, lived out in the power of baptismal life, now becomes the sacrament of the love between Christ and his Church, and a witness to the mystery of fidelity and unity from which the ‘New Eve’ is born and by which she lives in her earthly pilgrimage toward the fullness of the eternal wedding.”⁶

Charity and Trust

We don’t need to be afraid: people are genuinely seeking answers to the puzzle that is humankind, and we have so much that is glorious and precious to present and to teach. And people need a practical and honest vision which can be offered as a realistic way ahead, devoid of angry rhetoric: “The proper condition of the male-female relationship cannot be a kind of mistrustful and defensive opposition. Their relationship needs to be lived in peace and in the happiness of shared love.”⁷

So it is also relevant that men face specific problems today: they can be denied their true role as fathers through unjust divorce laws; boys and young men grow up without good role models; fatherhood and manliness are often denigrated; and men are often depicted as fools or buffoons in the media in ways that would be unacceptable in portraying women. Unsurprisingly, some react to all this by being rude about women.

Debates and discussions about all of this are not always going to go smoothly. But the rule of kindness and courtesy – not always afforded to the Church by her enemies, but always incumbent upon her to observe in both internal and external debates – still holds. Pope Benedict reminded us of this just recently, speaking of St. Peter Canisius, a great preacher and teacher at the time of the Reformation: “In a historical period marked by strong confessional tensions, he avoided – and this is something extraordinary – he avoided giving into disrespect and angry rhetoric. This was rare at that time of disputes between Christians.” A message for us all there.

Notes

¹Vatican II: Closing Message.

²Apostolic letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* on the Dignity and Vocation of Women on the occasion of the Marian Year. John Paul II 1988

³*Letter to the Bishops of the World on the Collaboration of men and women in the Church and in the World*, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2004.

⁴Apostolic letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* on the Dignity and Vocation of Women on the occasion of the Marian Year. John Paul II 1988

⁵Pope Benedict XVI, address to the Administrators of Lazio Regions and Municipality of Rome, January 2010

⁶*Letter to the Bishops of the world on the collaboration of men and women in the Church and in the World*, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2004

⁷*Ibid.*

The Cardinal and the Neo-Darwinians: A Question of Analogy continued

Notes (continued) from page 17

¹⁷Hawking, 46, notes that at the Big Bang moment “the density of the universe and the curvature of space-time would have been infinite,” yet “because mathematics cannot really handle infinite numbers, ... the general theory of relativity ... itself breaks down.”

¹⁸Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, XI, 4; R. Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995), 102f. For Aristotle cf. *Phy.* VIII, 1f. 250b11-253a21; 6-8 258b10-265a12; *De caelo* III, 2 302a1-9; *Metaphy.* III, 4 999b4-16; VII, 7; 1032b30f.; XII, 6 1071b6-11; for Plotinus cf. *Enneads* II, 4, 5; III, 2, 1; V, 8, 14; 18, 9. Most ancient interpreters understood the *Timaeus’* *arche* to regard a metaphysical, not a temporal, principle: Wallis, 20, 65, 68, 77, 102f.

¹⁹For the metaphysical grounding of these statements cf. J. McDermott, S.J., “Faith, Reason, and Freedom,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 67 (2002), 307-332.

²⁰Cf. *Redemptor Hominis* 9; Dives in *Misericordia* 8; *Evangelium Vitae* 51, 81, 86.

²¹In claiming that “nothing is more certain nor more secure than our faith” Pius IX referred to external signs of credibility (DS 2780). Yet previous tradition referred faith to God’s freely given grace (DS 375, 378, 396-400, 1525, 1553, 2813) with which man must cooperate for salvation (DS 1525, 1554f). Faithful to it, Vatican I recognised that faith involves a free act which cannot “be produced necessarily by arguments of human reason” (DS 3035, 3010); hence the Council added to those external signs the “internal helps of the Holy Spirit” so that the former might be “most certain signs of divine revelation adapted to every intelligence” (DS 3009f., 3033f.); as a result faith relies on “a most firm foundation” and “none can ever have a just reason for changing or doubting that same faith” (DS 3014, 3036; 2119-2121). Cf. also Pius XII (DS 3876).

²²*Mulieris Dignitatem* 29; *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Boston: Pauline, 1997), 76, 333-336, 341-354.

²³“Parable” properly understood finds its deepest grounding in “sacrament”: cf. J. McDermott, S.J., “Jesus: Parable or Sacrament of God?” *Gregorianum* 78 (1997), 477-499; 79 (1998), 543-564.

²⁴S. Jaki, O.S.B., *The Savior of Science* (Washington: Regnery Gateway, 1988).

²⁵In his discourse to the Pontifical Academy of the Sciences, August 22, 1996, John Paul II spoke of “an ontological jump” that occurs when man is considered. But he found the discontinuity to depend upon a different point of view from “the sciences of observation” dealing with the “experimental level” since man’s spiritual moral conscience and freedom are not caught by them (*Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XIX/2-1996 (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998), 574f. The “gaps” to which our text refers, however, are problems to sciences of observation. Modern studies in DNA may reveal how an apparently small change in regulatory genes can effect momentous changes in morphological and physiological aspects of the organisms involved. But why the changes should occur at all and at the time that they do and why they should advantageously adapt the organisms to their environment and not produce monstrosities so different from their environmentally adapted parents, monstrosities which would normally be condemned to a quick extinction, that is a mystery. Appeals to randomness mean that science has hit an obstacle.

²⁶K. Miller, *Finding Darwin’s God: A Scientist’s Search for Common Ground Between God and Evolution* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 53f., distinguishes the “fact” of evolution, grounded on so much evidence, from various theories of evolution. But evolution is more than change, and every theory accepts as evidence only what fits the theory. Nineteenth century physicists considered gravitation a fact, but Einstein altered their understanding of gravitation, just as Newton altered Aristotle’s. New questions may provide new parameters and change biologists’ understanding of evidence. Cf. following note.

²⁷K. Miller, 57-164, uncovers the inconsistencies and difficulties in major proponents of “intelligent design.” His own reliance upon Darwinian biological mechanism to explain evolution does not admit final causes. Yet he realises that quantum physics excludes pure determinism and so opens the way to a reconciliation of evolution with human freedom and divine providence. But once randomness is introduced into an explanatory science, “mechanism,” understood as a necessitating chain of efficient causes, no longer suffices as an explanation. Room is left for other types of causes. The body is not a machine but has an implanted teleology. Biological laws are not simply reduced to laws of physics. Why should not final cause also be admitted as a complementary way of explaining biological processes and “evolution”?

The Cardinal and the Neo-Darwinians: A Question of Analogy *by John M. McDermott*

Fr McDermott argues that paradoxes concerning the intelligibility of the universe, along with the incompleteness of neo-Darwinian philosophy, reveal the prevalence of the dynamic of analogy. This points to the need to ground human reason in the existence of a loving God. In our next issue we will publish our brief response to this and Fr McDermott's last word. He is a faculty member of the Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit. Since 2003 he has served as a member of the International Theological Commission, and since 2008 as a consultant to the USCCB Committee on Doctrine. This is a developed version of a paper published in the Fall 2005 edition of *The Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Quarterly*.

In the Thomistic tradition Jacques Maritain more than once remarked that intelligence, like being, is analogous.¹ Not only do God, angels and men think analogously but also men, sentient beings bound to knowledge by abstraction, approach various sciences in ways that are complementary rather than opposed. A while back Cardinal Schönborn's op-ed in *The New York Times* about evolution and design caused that newspaper's editors to raise the spectre of past debates between science and religion (7/7/05, p. A27 and 7/9/07, p. A1). Had they recognised the role of analogy in thought much fuss could have been avoided. But their intervention into questions beyond their ken provides a welcome opportunity, at some remove, for clarifications. Without doubt it is possible to combine a neo-Darwinian theory with Catholic faith, as many scientists do. The difficulty emerges when evolutionary theorists go beyond the evidence to deny a providential plan for all reality. This essay intends to indicate that evolutionary theory finds an intellectual justification only if God's providence rules.

Not Chaos But Mystery

Against the prevalent journalistic opinion that the Catholic faith is compatible with evolution, the cardinal made the qualification that while "evolution in the sense of common ancestry might be true,... evolution in the neo-Darwinian sense – an unguided, unplanned process of random variation and natural selection – is not." That should be fairly obvious to anyone believing in a creator God. Since God made everything from nothing, nothing can be outside His control. He is a good, omnipotent, omniscient God, who remains in control of His creation, over which He will pronounce ultimate judgment. Otherwise evil might win out as in the Germanic myths, Zoroastrianism, and ultimately all secular thinking. The biblical assurance that nothing is impossible to God (Gen. 18:14; Job 42:2; Lk. 1:37; Mk. 10:27) rests upon belief in a creator God. Because God can give life to the dead and make existent what does not exist, faith in God is always possible and nothing created can separate the believer from God's love (Rom. 4:17-25; 8:31-39). Believers in such a God cannot acknowledge that the world is "an unguided, unplanned process of random variation and natural selection" without contradicting their faith.

That basic article of faith does not, however, imply that human beings know God's plan in detail. Quite the contrary: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," says the Lord" (Is. 55:8). That hard truth Job

learned to his humiliation after his vain insistence that God appear before the tribunal of his intelligence. Faced with the wonders of God's salvation, St. Paul cited Isaiah and Job in writing: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable His ways! 'For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counsellor?' 'Or who has given a gift to Him that he might be repaid?' For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. 11:33-36). God remains a mystery that creates salvation.

That God's transcendent mystery is not utterly beyond man's ken is implied in the fact of revelation. Addressing man, God presupposes that man can somehow understand Him. The God of Sinai wrapped Himself in dense cloud, thunder and lightning, but He made known His will to Moses and His people. The 45th chapter of Isaiah expresses the vital tension between the hidden and the revealed God that pervades the Bible. After Israel's confession, "Truly, you are a God who hides yourself, O God of Israel, the Saviour," God responds, "I am the Lord and there is no other. I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, 'Seek me in chaos.' I, the Lord, speak the truth, I declare what is right" (45:15-19). The New Testament heightens the paradox, "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the Father's bosom, has made Him known" (Jn. 1:18).

Between Chance and Determinism

That the believer should be caught in the oscillation between knowledge and ignorance of God does not surprise the philosopher. Not only is God known analogously in relation to the world but also God's knowledge is analogous to man's knowledge. To non-believers analogy must appear to be a contradiction since it affirms both similarity and dissimilarity. The Enlightenment never understood this type of thought because it simplistically insisted on a science that would banish all mystery, just as Newtonian physics allegedly did. But for believers and true philosophers it is clear that God does not think as humans do. Whereas God knows directly the individuals that He creates, humans know by abstraction, seeking the universal in the multifarious variation of sensible experience. There is obviously a difference between God's exhaustive knowledge and man's a posteriori groping toward truth.² Although human abstraction aims at the essential and universal amidst sensible data, it often misses

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the mark. Erring seems almost congenital to scientists as well as to gamblers, stock market experts, and weather forecasters. Countless scientific theories have been shown inadequate and surpassed. Something was overlooked or a general theory was pushed beyond the evidence, which a later generation of scientists discover to the chagrin of their predecessors.³ The Enlightenment's battle with religion wished to exclude God because the deterministic laws of Newtonian physics rendered Him superfluous; of course such determinism also abolished human freedom. Today neo-Darwinians postulate chance and randomness, not determinism, at the basis of their hypotheses. In their fundamental assumptions the positions of “scientists” now and then are radically opposed.

The opposition is not just between then and now nor between physicists and evolutionary biologists. At the present time a conflict still rages in modern physics between Heisenberg and Einstein. In dealing with sub-atomic particles Heisenberg claimed that human science at best attains probabilities. Einstein rejected that theory: “God does not play dice.” He recognised that some absolute is necessary as a standard of measurement for all probabilities. In simple terms, unless he knows what 100 per cent purity is, no Ivory soap salesman can claim that his product is 99.44 per cent pure. Similarly someone playing a game of craps knows the odds for a certain number at any single throw of the dice since each die is constructed with a limited number of faces. Consequently Einstein postulated the speed of light as his absolute constant in terms of which everything else, including space and time, is measured. Neil Bohr's rejoinder to Einstein was just as simple, “Nor is it our business to prescribe to God how He should run the world.”⁴ Indeed, if the speed of light is postulated as an absolute, how can it be measured?

Since in Newtonian physics time and space were considered absolute objective schemas of reference, it was possible to measure speed in terms of so many miles per hour or feet per second. Newton postulated the existence of space and time in God's sensorium, but when later physicists like Laplace found God “an unnecessary hypothesis” they neglected to explain where or how spatial and temporal absolutes exist and how absolute continuums might be divisible, as seems necessary for the measurement of particular, or partial, motions.⁵ Einstein avoided those conundrums. But once light's speed becomes the norm of measurement, in terms of what might speed itself be measured? Clearly a norm must have something in common with what is measured, yet at the same time it transcends what is measured. The same problem emerged from Augustine's considerations of time: God's eternity has to be postulated to explain the unity of past, present, and future – without some commonality they cannot be distinguished from and compared to each other – yet God's eternity cannot be measured by man's mind.⁶ In all these “physical” problems, dealing with the stuff of this world, analogy is clearly involved. But analogy seems paradoxical since it affirms both similarity and dissimilarity.

Paradox and Analogy

These reflections recall the limitations of human knowledge, which constantly arrives at or produces paradoxes. Space and time have seemed both continuous and discontinuous from Zeno's paradoxes up to current debates about the reality of electrons and photons: are they (continuous) waves or (discrete) particles? Yet more is involved. On the one hand human thought presupposes universally valid laws; otherwise it could wind up with contradictions or basic incomprehensibility. On the other hand the human mind cannot establish itself in its finitude and contingency as the ultimate judge of reality. Hence, human knowing oscillates between determinism and contingency. Man's cognition thereby corresponds to the hylomorphic structure of reality [ie to the way in which physical objects are defined by a combination of matter and form]. Lest human inquiry be frustrated in its root, knowing presupposes a correspondence between itself and reality in one way or another. Such is the classical definition of truth. Classical philosophy understands man and all sensible reality as a combination of form and matter. Form is an intelligible universal, what can be abstracted from the hylomorphic composite. But matter is the principle of individuality, which the abstracting human mind cannot grasp in itself. Since truth involves the conformity between mind and being, ie reality, and “matter” cannot be understood, matter must be “non-being.” Paradoxically “non-being” exists because it contributes to the constitution of the sensible world around us.

Matter is the equivalent of chaos, that which is without intelligibility. But chaos cannot be recognised unless it is contrasted with order. If everything were chaotic, language and intelligence would not exist. Conversely, if everything in sensible creation were reduced to deterministic order, no one would recognise it. The very act of recognition withdraws the subject from the object being observed and analysed. On this basis existentialist philosophers revolted against the deterministic philosophical theories which dominated a great deal of thought at the end of the nineteenth century. By emphasising the “alienation” of the subject, the *pour-soi*, from the object, the *en-soi*, philosophers such as Sartre and Camus concluded that reality is absurd. For Sartre “existence” denotes the individual and is the equivalent of “non-being.” His celebrated saying that existence precedes essence, once it is translated into classical terms, means only that non-being precedes the essences formally constructed by human thought. When nothingness is king, no laws hold and absurdity rules.⁷

Such existentialism in many ways resuscitates medieval nominalism. The late medievals, however, were more pious than their 20th-century heirs. They arrived at their nominalism precisely because an infinite creator God existed, whose mind could not be fathomed. Material individuals are real and they are known by the God who created them. But the human mind can grasp neither the reality of individuals nor the mind of God. At best by approaching individuals from without, the human mind can establish provisional categories permitting

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some pragmatic generalisations to guide action. But the nominalists trusted that a good God upheld the universe and for that reason their intellectual probings were not completely vain. Nonetheless their distrust of universals went a long way toward undercutting the analogy which instils confidence into human thought and supplies the presupposition for biblical revelation.

Freedom and Analogy

The unintelligibility of the world not only destroys the root of science, it also deprives man of any meaningful freedom. Sartre understood freedom as the arbitrary postulation of values which are created by their very choice. Not only does man suffer “anxiety” because he has no objective reason for any choice, but the values are mortal, perishing with their “creator”.⁸ Sartre was doubtless revolting against the determinism of scientists like Laplace and Freud. Pushing Newtonian determinism to the extreme, the former wrote, “We may regard the present state of the universe as the effect of its past and the cause of its future.” Freud denied human freedom lest it introduce irrationality into the world. He insisted on a necessary causal link between every choice and its determining precedents; otherwise “science” would be overthrown and with it all hope for humanity. In practice, however, Freud presupposed that his patients would be able to change their lives once they became aware of the sources of the psychological mechanisms disrupting their behaviour.⁹ As so often happens, theory and practice do not coincide. Abstractions do not completely cover real individuals.

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Human freedom presupposes some intelligibility in the world; otherwise man would have no reason for his choice and would thus be reduced to the state of the brute beasts. Yet the intelligibility available to him cannot be exhaustive and determining. He must leave some room for indetermination or chance. Classical philosophy allowed for chance because, despite all its insistence on intelligible causes, it recognised that the coincidence of several causal series in the “here and now” cannot be totally foreseen.

One can amusingly expand upon Maritain’s version of Aristotle’s explanation by recounting the story of the Athenian travelling from Athens to Megara.¹⁰ Upon his departure his friends presented him with a spicy sausage. Its consumption along the journey left him thirsty. Seeing some water dripping down the side of a rock, he climbed up to its source in a pool hollowed out by time. A band of robbers, however, had selected a nearby cave for a hideaway because of its proximity to water. Emerging from their hidden den to perpetrate another crime, they were seen by the Athenian traveller. To prevent their discovery being reported to the authorities the bandits killed the traveller. Were his friends then responsible for his death because they had given him

the sausage? Certainly, without the donated sausage the Athenian would not have died, but much more was involved than a sausage. One might assign causes, or reasons, for the dripping water, the position of the pool near the road, the choice of the cave, the emergence of the bandits, the presence of the Athenian, the decision to kill him, etc., but his death resulted from the coincidence of many causal series in the “here and now” or “there and then” of his murder. Since the “here and now” indicates a unique position in space and time, it is equivalently “matter.” Thus the presence of matter does not explain, but allows for the chance or contingency of many events. Since free acts all occur in individual “heres and nows” matter prevents history from being reduced to a determined series of events and, without denying causality, leaves room for freedom. In this way classical philosophy effects the reconciliation in theory of freedom and intelligibility. While the individual instance is not equated to the universal law or abstraction, it does not destroy the relative intelligibility required for freedom but permits the application of reason to free choice.¹¹

Analogy and God

In protesting against random natural selection as the universe’s guiding principle Cardinal Schönborn was defending intelligibility and ultimately science itself against the neo-Darwinians who preach randomness. Pure randomness is chaotic and meaningless. But the cardinal was also defending the Catholic position that God can be known through created works (Rom. 1:20). Naturally all the rational proofs of God’s existence have to employ analogy whether they appeal to man’s interior experience of knowing and loving or to his understanding of the external world. St. Anselm best synthesised the first method, arguing that the mind’s necessary grounding in truth must surpass all contingency to arrive at a Being whose existence is necessary. Since the truth grounding knowledge cannot be arbitrary or contingent, yet nothing finite can ground its own existence, there must be a Being, than which nothing greater can be thought, who supplies the final necessity for all thought.¹²

The argument is brilliant and powerful. Its difficulty, however, resides in this dilemma. If, on the one hand, the human mind really knows by necessity, it need not go outside itself for the grounding of its thought; but that would be to make the finite absolute, rendering it necessary. If, on the other hand, the human mind belongs to a rational animal, whose being is contingent, all its arguments are laced through and through with contingency; they cannot prove necessarily. Anselm was clearly seeking to uphold the balance of analogy between Infinite and finite because he did not want to refer all human meaning to nothingness. He realised that intelligence illuminates reality, but to be consistent with itself it has to point beyond itself; the mind must turn upward if its quest for greater illumination is to be fulfilled, even if final fulfilment does not come in this life.

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Analogously in their Aristotelian appeal to the sensate order of the external world St. Thomas's five ways rely on the insufficiency of the universe to explain itself. The human mind seeks causes, be they final, efficient, or formal. A formal cause responds to the question why a being is such as it is; a final cause explains why or for what purpose something acts or exists; an efficient cause seeks the why, or reason, for a perceived motion from without. Since regression in an infinite series of causes explains nothing – the human mind cannot comprehend the infinite, be its extension temporal, spatial, or spiritual – there must be, so goes the argument, a First Cause.¹³ This First Cause must be similar to the other causes, since He is a First Cause; yet He is also dissimilar since, as First Cause, He is uncaused. Analogy must be employed if the universe has an ultimate intelligibility, an answer to man's basic question "why?" The employment of analogous language is all the more indispensable if God is recognised as infinite; an infinite Cause is in His transcendence unlike all finite causes, which can be opposed to their effects. Agnostics and atheists refute such "proofs" by insisting on the dissimilarity between the First Cause and all other causes; they reject the leap from the series of relative causes to an absolute First Cause. By doing so, they ultimately preclude a final intelligibility of the universe, or at least one that can be affirmed by men.

Similar conundrums arise in modern physics. In Newtonian physics an infinitely extended space and time allow for infinite causal series. But series of efficient causes in space or time are unintelligible; one never arrives at a final answer explaining the origin and goal of motion. Similarly a spatial universe infinitely extended is inconceivable. Without any centre nothing can be objectively measured. Moreover, since an infinitely extended universe must contain an infinite number of bodies, each exerting a gravitational attraction upon the others, the infinite force exerted must result in the splintering of finite bodies subject to their attraction. But the Earth and other bodies maintain their solidity.¹⁴ Einstein avoided such conundrums by postulating a curved space turned back upon itself.¹⁵ There results a finite, self-contained universe apparently hanging on nothing in space. What limits it from without cannot be answered any more satisfactorily than the Hindu philosopher's postulation of an elephant standing upon a turtle standing upon a serpent, etc, to explain why the universe maintains its position in space.¹⁶

Analogously regarding time, the Big Bang theory hypothesises an original moment when a minute speck of reality exploded into the energy-mass continuum constituting our universe. How so much comes from next to nothing presents a problem.¹⁷ The human mind cannot explain something from nothing nor imagine a beginning time without a previous time. For that reason most ancient pagan philosophers rejected the Christian Creator.¹⁸ Perhaps a similar dissatisfaction with the apparent production of something from nothing leads to those exponents of string theory who try to go behind the Big Bang's initial moment. In either case the mind is faced with a conundrum: an

endless regress without possibility of finding a First Efficient Cause, or ultimate reason, on the one hand, or an absolute beginning without necessity, on the other. At all events the physicist and the philosopher have a choice: either the infinite supporting the finite structures of intelligibility is material and hence meaningless or there is a personal Infinite, whose intelligibility surpasses human intelligibility even while supporting its analogous understanding.

The Mystery of God's Love

Precisely because the Catholic Church believes in a good creator God on the basis of Jesus' resurrection, it affirms a supra-intelligibility and a supra-intelligence for the universe. Because it knows that God appeals to human freedom, human freedom can find intelligible signs indicating God's existence and will for men. Insofar as this finite world cannot explain itself in terms of itself, the reason for its being and intelligibility must lie beyond it. The finite human mind cannot comprehend God's infinite mystery, but it can have some awareness of God, reading the signs of His presence and activity in the world. The world is a parable of God for those who have the eyes to see. Just as God's infinity does not crush or exclude but creates and supports finitude, just as God's omnipotence does not destroy but empowers human freedom, so also God's knowledge does not render human knowledge void or superfluous but gives it its source, ground and goal. The finite is grounded in the Infinite in its being, knowing and acting.¹⁹

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If the biblical God is a God of love – Christianity draws the ultimate conclusion about that in affirming a Trinity of self-giving divine persons – the human response to God should occur in freedom. Knowledge does not exist for its own sake but in order to point to the objective mystery surpassing it. Hence there must be reasons for obedience and love which cannot force the consent of faith but which help to motivate and support the choice of love in return for love.

In a paradisiacal world where God's goodness was readily experienced in created things, it would have been relatively easy to affirm God's existence with certitude. But in a fallen world, tainted by sin, where selfishness, suffering and death deface the primordial goodness of the world, further signs are needed for man's sake. That is why God initiated a history of salvific revelation aimed at liberating human freedom. The great deeds done for the fathers and the people of Israel bear witness to the concrete reality of God's protective love for His people. Christians see the supreme sign of love in Jesus' death and resurrection. There, as John Paul II frequently pointed out, they learn that love is stronger than sin and death.²⁰ Love is not a theory excogitated by a philosopher in an easy chair. It is a reality realised on the altar of the cross, a reality rooted in the deepest depths of God. For in Jesus Love became incarnate and was lived in a human nature to

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the end, and that end was just the beginning for the rest of mankind. However vigorously the Catholic Church defends human reason, a necessary presupposition of freedom for love, even defining that reason can know with certitude God's existence, the reason envisaged cannot be a deterministic reason that would banish all ambiguity and freedom. For the Church simultaneously insists that faith's certitude surpasses the certitude of reason.²¹ It has done so not just because *de facto* not many people would be willing to give their lives for the principle of contradiction while countless believers have sacrificed their lives for Jesus Christ. More profoundly, it recognises that by accepting Jesus Christ in faith and loving Him, that choice is grounded in God Himself. Because Jesus died freely for sinners, His initiative broke their hardened hearts and converted them to Himself. In that love the greatest unity is combined with the greatest diversity. The lover seeks the greatest union with the beloved but does not seek the beloved's absorption; he wants the beloved to remain different in unity. That is the deepest truth of the Trinity, and it is applied analogously to man for his salvation.

In the freedom of love unity and diversity, similarity and dissimilarity, are both preserved and elevated to a divine level. Thus the ultimate grounding of analogy is love. Man is the image of God, ie the analogy of God, for in loving each other men love God. Only God can ground the absolute commitment and fidelity inherent in love. No finite creature dare say to another, "You have to love me; you have to give your life for me." Love happens because one is pulled out of oneself to acknowledge the goodness of another. That is the attraction of God working originally in marriage, which John Paul II identified as the primordial sacrament.²² Once that image of love was desecrated by sin, it had to be recast in the furnace of divine love. The Incarnation marks the moment when the image of the invisible God became man, renewing man's image in a new creation so that men might become in Him who they were forever intended to be in God's eyes, the image of the God who is love (Eph. 1:3-10). Jesus is then the living analogy of God, and it is not by chance that He expressed His message in parables and gave Himself in finite symbols.²³

Biblical religion holds that man was made in love for love. Human reason cannot explain itself: it cannot make itself absolute. In the mystery of matter, or corporeal individuality, it strikes a limit to its knowing. It is then forced in freedom to choose either to postulate a fundamental nothingness or absurdity in existence, thus denying intelligibility and destroying itself, or to transcend itself toward the infinite God of love who has made Himself known through the finite, visible structures of this world. God's love is mediated, however imperfectly, to the newborn child in and through the frail vessel of matrimony. Because humans are so weak in their love, so easily distracted, so fearful of love's sacrifice, God Himself had to strengthen the weak vessel of flesh by taking flesh upon Himself and showing of what it is capable. He demonstrated the goodness that created flesh can bear in sacrificing itself for love. Thus Christian faith presupposes

and deepens faith in a creator God, and Jesus Christ is truly, in the words of Stanley Jaki, "the saviour of science" as well as the redeemer of man.²⁴

Back to the Neo-Darwinians

A developed notion of analogy easily resolves the difficulty invented by the editors of *The New York Times*. Neo-Darwinians start with sensible experience. They study individual relics of bygone eras remote from themselves in time. They apply great ingenuity in teasing out similarities or connections among their "finds." But there is no straightforward line of ascent or decline. Evolutionary theories have changed so much in the forty years since I first studied cultural anthropology that the assured "facts" which I learned have been superseded by new theories. There are many gaps in the record, and the relics, as befits the dead, tell no unambiguous tales.

Even as new discoveries close some of the physical gaps, the riddles are not necessarily more easily deciphered. Sometimes they become even more incomprehensible, almost mysteries. The eye either sees or serves no imaginable purpose. How then did its immense complexity evolve so quickly? Similarly the enormous skeletal changes between upright man and his buckled-over simian ancestor have to be explained. How could some intermediate "link" survive if it could neither swing away in the trees from proximate danger nor see a distant peril in time for flight? How did language ever develop without teachers when a child's window of linguistic receptivity is so very limited? Why does a quantitative augmentation of cranium capacity imply a qualitative increase in intelligence? Do we really know what constitutes life? Efforts to reproduce it in laboratories have repeatedly failed, although not so long ago scientists confidently predicted the achievement of that milestone.²⁵

"The mysteries of His love have to be accepted if there is to be any hope at all for human intelligence"

The students of evolution have to postulate a progression towards mankind since all but the most obtuse recognise a qualitative difference between man and the beasts. But they do not understand the inherent intelligibility of that movement. God stands outside the parameters of their science since He cannot be exhumed or measured. Like many other post-Enlightenment scientists, they are wary of final causes. Like Hume, since they are limited by sensible experience, they cannot uncover a necessity connecting the various data of their discoveries. They have become more humble or at least more hypothetical in propounding their theories. That advance is to be applauded. But when any scientist "explains" any event or series of events by appeal to randomness or chance, he is not doing science. Randomness has no inherent intelligibility. At most the scientist may employ that word to indicate the limitations of his knowledge, but to make a universal statement about the

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development of the human race in terms of randomness far transcends the evidence. All science deals with hypotheses since no “fact” can be recognised without a wider horizon of meaning, and that meaning does not let itself be deduced from any higher fact or proposition. All the more hypothetical must be a science whose field of experimentation consists of partial tokens of remote events.²⁶

For all that, neo-Darwinian evolutionists can look upon their science as the study of a random progression. They are close to material remains and, as noted above, there is no final human intelligibility in material individuals. Individual instances apparently happen at random. It is the role of intelligence to make sense out of those instances. Analogies among them are discovered in the elaboration of hypotheses, and a greater intelligence can discover wider and deeper analogies, more comprehensive theories. In that sense the study of evolution is grounded in randomness. But to insist that evolution itself is random transgresses the limits inherent to any science restricted to material instances.

Were evolution ultimately random, there would be no intelligibility in the universe and all study of it would be doomed to the frustration of post-modern hypothesising. If evolutionists wish to preserve their science as “knowledge,” they might describe their method as concerned with the collection, comparison, and ordering of apparently random mutations and events, but they can never give chaos as the final explanation of the reality studied. Ultimate explanations rest with God, whose ways surpass our ways. His mysterious judgments – the mysteries of His love – have to be accepted if there is to be any hope at all for human intelligence. In his defence of design Cardinal Schönborn did evolutionists a favour. He was defending their science, encouraging them to look for intelligible signs in the universe. Admittedly the best attempts to read the signs of design in creation remain human hypotheses, subject to criticism and revision, but without divine design there would be neither analogous intelligence nor analogous science.

Finally, without God there would be no resurrection, the divine sign illuminating the ambiguity of fallen existence. If that illumination empowers believers to find signs of design in creation, who can affirm that their insight is less scientific than the neo-Darwinian hypotheses? Of course, the mere complexity of creation or the inability of a theory to explain certain “gaps” does not allow anyone to conclude immediately that God exists. Complexity depends upon human analysis, which implies intelligibility, while the lack of intelligibility allows no conclusion whatever. Some “intelligent design” proponents are overhasty in joining the intelligibility of the one to the unintelligibility of the other in order to find God in creation.²⁷ The material evidence itself is ambivalent because it is offered to human freedom, but only those who find design in creation, a providential design surpassing all human reconstructions, can uphold the final meaningfulness of human reason.

Next issue: A discussion on this piece.

Notes

¹J. Maritain, *Sept leçons sur l'être* (Paris: Tequi, 1934), pp. 23-34; ----, *Science et sagesse* (Paris: Labergerie, 1935), 42-55, 63-65; ----, *The Range of Reason* (New York: Scribner's, 1952), 6-18.

²Thomas; *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 16 indicates the analogous meanings of truth.

³Cf. T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: U. of Chicago, 1970), esp. 92-110.

⁴W. Heisenberg, “Fresh Fields (1926-1927),” in *Physics and Beyond: Encounters and Conversations*, tr. A. Pomerans (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 79-81.

⁵Cf. E. Burt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*, 2nd ed. (1932; rpt. Garden City: Doubleday, 1954), 244-264, 284-297. Cf. A. Jammer, *Concepts of Space: The History of Theories of Space in Physics* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1957), 112f., for Clarke's defense of Newton. The unanswered question remains how an infinite absolute can subsist alongside God. Cf. J. Hagen, “Laplace, Pierre-Simon,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. C. Herbermann et alii, VIII, (New York: Appleton, 1910), 797, and D. Brouwer, “Laplace, Pierre Simon de,” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. W. McDonald et alii (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), VIII, 383. On Einstein's awareness of Newtonian problems with absolute time and space cf. his 1933 Spencer lecture “On the Method of Theoretical Physics,” cited in A. Pais, *Subtle is the Lord...: The Science and the Life of Albert Einstein* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 133f.; ----, “Einstein, Newton, and Success,” *Einstein: A Centenary Volume*, ed. A. French (Cambridge: Harvard, 1979), 35; and Einstein's *Relativity: The Special and General Theory*, 15th ed., tr. R. Lawson (1952; rpt. New York: Crown, 1961), 9-24, 105-107.

⁶Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones*, XI, 15-31 (18-41).

⁷A. Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, tr. J. O'Brien (New York: Random House, 1955), 12-16; J. Sartre, *Existentialism*, tr. B. Frechtman (New York: Philosophical Library, 1947), 15-28, 56-61; ----, *Being and Nothingness*, tr. H. Barnes (1953; rpt. New York: Washington Square, 1966), 9-85, 784-798.

⁸Sartre, *Existentialism*, 21-28, 46f.

⁹The Laplace quote is from *Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris: Gautier Villars, 1878-1912), VIII, p. 144, as cited in T. Williams, *The Idea of the Miraculous: The Challenge to Science and Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1990), p. 141. On Laplace's “demon” or “superhuman intelligence” to which “nothing would be uncertain and the future, as the past, would be present to its eyes,” cf. R. Harré, “Laplace, Simon Pierre de,” *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. P. Edwards, VI (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 392. On Freud cf. H. Ruppelt, “Das Freiheitsverständnis in Psychologie und Ethik,” *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 99 (1977), 25-46.

¹⁰Maritain, *Sept leçons*, 153-55; cp. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VI, 3, 1027b 1-5.

¹¹For the pragmatic complementarity of law and freedom (spontaneity) cf. C. Peirce, “The Doctrine of Necessity Examined,” in *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. C. Hartshorne and P. Weiss (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1934-1935), VI, 28-45 (par. 35-64), and V. Potter, S.J., *Charles S. Peirce on Norms and Ideals* (Worcester: U. of Massachusetts, 1967), esp. 133-47.

¹²Anslem, *Proslogion*, I, 1-5.

¹³Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 2, a. 3.

¹⁴S. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (Toronto: Bantam, 1988), 5, cites Newton's letter for a universe infinitely extended; the universe would not crunch together because infinity has no center. But Einstein, 105f., sees that the infinite lines of force on any body would result in a field of infinite intensity, which is impossible; hence he argues that Newton had to postulate for his universe “a kind of center in which the density of the stars is a maximum, and that as we proceed outwards from this centre the group-density of the stars would diminish, until finally, at great distances, it is succeeded by an infinite region of emptiness.” This postulation, however, he also found insufficient.

¹⁵Einstein, 105-114. Cf. also Hawking, 40, 151.

¹⁶Although upholders of general relativity theory maintain the unintelligibility of such questions, the questions are unintelligible only within their system. Riemannian space depends for basic concepts upon Euclidean geometry, which is then transcended. But the origin of transcendence, be it Euclidean geometry or ordinary experience, can never be obliterated by later speculative constructions. Precisely because Euclid employed abstractions – a dimensionless point does not exist in the real world – his geometry falls short of reality. All other geometries likewise fall short of reality. They employ abstractions. Hence one can ask in what space or on what a finite universe stands. Cf. W. Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy* (1958; rpt. New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 56, 175-176, 200-2002, recognised the validity of Euclidean geometry in its sphere and noted that the concepts of ordinary language are more stable than scientific concepts because the former are closer to reality whereas the latter are “idealizations.” Abstractions break down at the edges, the infinitely small and the enormously large, and the language developed to explain the edges must refer to the primary concepts to which they are complementary. Ibid., 125: “Every word or concept, clear as it may seem to be, has only a limited range of applicability.” Man's self-conscious, reflective unity-in-duality, means that metaphysics complements physics, metalanguage complements language, statistical analyses and classical laws complement each other, and various physical theories complement Newton's. Cf. J. McDermott, S.J., “Maritain: Natural Science, Philosophy and Theology,” in *Teologia e scienze nel mondo contemporaneo*, ed. D. Mongillo (Milan: Massimo, 1989), 227-244.

Please refer to page 11 right hand column for continued notes



Letters to the Editor

The Editor, St. Mary Magdalen's Clergy House, Peter Avenue,
Willesden Green, London NW10 2DD editor@faith.org.uk

THE NEED FOR CATHOLIC PHILOSOPHERS OF SCIENCE

Dear Father Editor,

I read with great interest and appreciation all the articles in the January issue of *Faith*. Two things struck me with particular force. In your editorial overview, "Science and the Spiritual: The Unaddressed Relationship at the Foundation of Modern Evangelisation", you point out that, to the degree that Catholic thinkers have dismissed the influence that the discoveries of modern science should have had on metaphysics, Stephen Hawking's dismissal of philosophy scores a significant point.

Scientific culture proceeds today without any need for the notion of a Creator. However debased Hawking's understanding of basic philosophy, it has been encouraged by the lack of real engagement with modern science by Catholic theologians. This lack has left a deep void in our culture. In the absence of a broad metaphysics informed by modern science, people give more credence to the bad philosophising of scientists than to theologians.

And secondly, Stephen Barr's point seems to be a real solution: that theologians need to learn the language of science – not just absorbing the factual evidence of recent discoveries, but also the methodologies and modes of thought that scientists, whether quantum physicists or population geneticists, employ in their day-to-day grappling with problems in their fields.

I raised this issue before in my earlier essay for *Faith* in 2008, but I think it bears repeating. As Etienne Gilson suggested more than fifty years ago, the Church should consider establishing an Order or Academy of theologians trained as scientists

precisely to enlarge Catholic metaphysics with what science has discovered over the past century and more. But they will have to be trained from the ground up so that they do grasp science at the root level.

In the 13th century, the Church could rely on the extraordinary efforts of a single theologian, like St. Thomas. In the 21st, it must call upon many more.

Yours faithfully
John Farrell
Newton, MA
USA

REJECTING EVOLUTION BY CHANCE

Dear Father Editor,

I was a little surprised at the "Evidence of Mind and Matter" article and the seeming acceptance of Professor Ayala's idea that "the evidence of evolutionary theory is overwhelming" [*Cutting Edge* column: "Avoiding the Key Question, January-February 2011]. It suggests that Professor Ayala accepts the idea of evolution by natural chance. Perhaps Professor Ayala is postulating the idea of God as something like a watchmaker who creates the initial laws in such a way that there is no need for His later intervention. In this view, we humans have common ancestry not only with monkeys but also with trees and fungi and all other living things by a process of natural chance.

We do not assume that the similarity of cars on the road proves that they all come from a common factory and so similarity cannot be regarded as proof of descent and your article is wrong to suggest that the fossil record demonstrates this. The fossil record only shows distinct species; it does not show a single missing link. Molecular biology, contrary to the article, does not support evolution by natural chance because evolution cannot occur without inheritance, inheritance cannot occur without DNA and DNA is so complex it could not have evolved by chance unless we are to assume that molecules just happened to arrange themselves into the DNA molecule at the same

times as a nucleus formed to hold the DNA, at the same time as the cell membrane just happened to form around it, at the same time as all the cell maintaining process in the cytoplasm just happened to come into existence to form a single cell and that all these aspects just happened to come together and work harmoniously. Complexity such as this, according to Darwin, evolves by small imperceptible changes, each one of which must produce a survival advantage or else it will die out. However, to explain the origin of DNA as the mechanism of inheritance, evolutionary theory requires that hundreds of millions of small changes must be retained for thousands upon thousands of generations without producing any survival advantage until some point in the dim and distant future when, lo and behold, they suddenly start working together. This is not scientifically credible because inheritance cannot begin until DNA, the nucleus, the cytoplasm and the cell membrane are all in place. Prior to the time when they all just happened to come together there can be no inheritance, so how did DNA evolve?

Evolution by natural chance is not scientifically credible and I would hope that this would be made clear in your magazine. The Book of Genesis does seem to suggest an evolutionary process from initial elements, through plants and different forms of animals to humans. But also it does seem to suggest that the universe exists because of God's creative action and the scientific evidence we have indicates that this creative action was not a one-off event because, in addition to the problem of inheritance, the actual conditions for life to occur on Earth are so stringent that they could not have happened by a process of natural chance.

Yours faithfully
Charles McEwan
Via Email

EDITORIAL COMMENT: Mr McEwan would seem to be right (i) in his depiction of Professor Ayala's somewhat deistic leanings concerning the role of the creator (see our *Cutting Edge* column

"In the absence of a metaphysics informed by science people give more credence to bad philosophising"

July 2010), (ii) that we, with Ayala, affirm that physical, chemical and biological evolution is a well attested fact, and (iii) that the idea that this process is a chance one does not work. Where we part company is in our belief that evolution without chance does not imply, in a creationist sense, that "God's creative action ... was not a one-off event" – in other words that God continually intervened to create new species. For us evolution is one thread of the purposeful unity of the space-time fabric of the cosmos which, as a holistically layered unity from top to bottom, is the object of God's one knowing and loving through the *one* Logos.

DIALOGUE WITH NEO-PAGANS

Dear Father Editor,

Might it be fruitful to encourage dialogue between groups such as *Faith* movement and the ever-growing environmental and non-Christian "spiritual" movements of our age? It has been said that it is easier to convert pagans than materialist and reductionist atheists.

I refer in particular to the bi-monthly periodical *Resurgence*, which I have taken for many years. It is a high quality periodical (published in Devon), with a worldwide readership.

It is very environmentally conscious, and very "spiritual" (without being especially New Age). It is basically pantheist in its outlook, with strong inputs from Buddhism, Hinduism and "indigenous" religions and peoples. It is very influential. I find many articles refreshing, and quite a few irritating.

If there are not already erudite Catholics monitoring, and trying to have a dialogue with such movements (and with *Resurgence*) would it not be a good idea?

In *Resurgence* No. 262 (Sept/Oct 2010), for instance, there is a review (p. 62) of two of the books of Fr Thomas Berry O.P. (1914-2009) – a great hero of *Resurgence* and most environmentalists. The books are *The Christian Future and the Fate of the Earth* and *The Sacred*

Universe (I have not yet read these two books, but cf. C. S. Lewis' *The Discarded Image* – the sacred universe of the medieval imagination – which I have read). Berry also believed that there had been a failure in religious imagination in Christian thought over several centuries, and wished to marry it to our scientific understanding of the universe.

I do not know how far this connects with the writings of Fr Edward Holloway, or how orthodox Fr Thomas Berry may be – *Resurgence* tends to downplay orthodox Christian beliefs. For instance, there is in the same issue a review of *Eaarth* [sic] by another important American environmentalist, Bill McKibben (p. 54), without any mention that he is actually a practising Christian (Methodist). Another review (p. 56) mentions that the authors have "a Christian background" – though the review seems very pantheistic.

I am sure that the Church needs to have, where possible, a knowledgeable and sympathetic interaction with such movements and periodicals, without abandoning Catholic truth.

Yours faithfully
David Taylor
Somerset Avenue
Exeter

SAVING THE BIBLE

Dear Father Editor,

I have just read with great interest, your letter headed "Author of John's Gospel" in the March-April issue of *Faith* Magazine.

Although I am certainly not a Biblical Scholar, I feel I am sufficiently able to sniff unorthodox "Historical-critical" scholarship. Mr Leonard concludes "Against such works, I believe there is much objective evidence, and would be happy to make this available to interested readers". I am one such reader.

Father Andrew Byrne's critique of the CTS new Catholic Bible (*Faith*, November-December 2010) was superb. What a golden opportunity

the Catholic Truth Society missed by producing this elaborate edition with all its high profile publicity, including Bishop Paul Hendrick's presentation to the Holy Father. If only the CTS had published an authentic version on the lines of the *Ignatius Bible* and including the Liturgical Notes, this would have been a tremendous help to people like myself.

Yours faithfully
Frank Swarbrick
Garstang Road
Fulwood
Preston

THE NEED TO TREAD WHERE ANGELS FEAR

Dear Father Editor,

I have found your material concerning issues not necessarily central to the Science/Religion synthesis most informative and helpful, including articles addressing homosexuality (see letters on *Faith* magazine in last two issues). If the focus of your magazine were excessively narrowed to exclude topics not expressly dealing with the confluence of science and religion I would have to cancel my subscription. Your "across the pond" (from US!) perspective on Catholic orthodoxy I've found refreshing, informative and thought-provoking.

Concerning preaching on aspects of the Catholic Faith that don't always render comfort to the subjective dispositions of all the listeners I've found that the critiques frequently lie along the lines of, "Oh Father, you're always talking about (fill in the blank)" or "It's just too complicated an issue." Critiques offered in such responses more often than not say more about the critic's adherence or not to the Church's teaching on the subject in question than they do about the incessant nature of discussing the topic or its complexity.

Yours faithfully
Fr Robert Grabner
South St. Paul
Minnesota
USA



Comment on the Comments

by William Oddie

Catholic Education: A Reality Check

Last March, Archbishop Longley gave a lecture under the auspices of the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion, at the University of Birmingham, in which he questioned the Coalition Government decision to leave Religious Education out of the so-called English Baccalaureate, which was introduced in 2010 and is awarded to all students who achieve GCSEs (this is nothing like the much broader, far more advanced and highly prestigious French article) at grades A*-C in English, Mathematics, Science, a Humanities subject and a Modern Foreign Language.

His lecture followed a similar attack by Archbishop Nichols and a "call to action" by the Catholic Education Service of England and Wales, of which, more presently, "For centuries", asserted the archbishop, "the Church has made an enormous contribution to education in this land and beyond...."

Wherever the Church is, her mission and task to educate will be found." All true enough. What he was getting round to saying was that "Failing to recognise RE amongst the humanitiessurely implies a judgment about what religious education can contribute towards the formation and education of the human person?"

Well, maybe. But the real question to be asked is this: what difference will it make to anything real? It is, of course, true that RE as the English and Welsh Church conceive it, has suffered a political setback, a loss of territory: but what difference will that make to the cause of the Catholic faith?

That is an entirely different question. The archbishop was responding to a campaign led by the Catholic Education Service (from which, if I were a bishop, I would keep my distance). In its own statement demanding the inclusion of RE in the English "Baccalaureate", the CES professes quite a highflown idea of what is to be gained from this subject, a vision which I suspect that many of those who have undergone the reality,

in other words, have direct experience of what is actually on offer in our Catholic Schools, will be hard put to recognise:

"In RE pupils have the opportunity to engage not only with the most profound metaphysical questions concerning human existence and the nature of reality, but also with the most pressing ethical problems of our day. RE itself is a broad based humanity, demanding knowledge and skills in history, textual criticism, anthropology, ethics, philosophy and theology. Thus it seems aptly suited to being part of any qualification which seeks to ensure that our pupils receive a genuinely broad education. We therefore urge the government to ensure that RE be regarded as a humanity for the purposes of the English Baccalaureate."

Thus, the Catholic Education Service of England and Wales. How much the CES actually cares about "the most profound metaphysical questions concerning human existence and the nature of reality" within any recognisably Catholic perspective is, however, to put it as mildly as possible, perhaps in some doubt. The last time they hit the headlines was under the Labour government, during the passage of Ed Balls' fortunately doomed Education Bill, when after a supposedly heroic process of negotiation with the government, they almost totally capitulated. As *The Catholic Herald* reported it at the time, "Catholic schools must teach pupils where to access an abortion, Schools Secretary Ed Balls has said":

Mr Balls was speaking hours before a crucial vote on a Bill that would introduce sex and relationships education for children as young as five and forbid parents from removing their children from sex education classes once they turned 15.

The Bill, which was passed by 268 votes to 177 and now goes to the House of Lords, is *strongly supported by the Catholic Education Service (CES)*, which last week hailed an

amendment to the Bill that it said it had secured after "extensive lobbying". [My italics]

According to the BBC, the CES had "gone to ground" before the debate; so did Archbishop Nichols. The CES, however, re-emerged with a statement astonishingly claiming that the Bill safeguarded the rights of Catholic schools: "The provisions of the amendment will enable schools with a religious character to fulfil these requirements in the teaching of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education, which includes Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)."

Actually, as we soon learned, whilst they seemed to have gained a technical opt out on referring for abortion (the CES's overall support for the Bill implied no need for non-Catholic schools to have such an opt out), this is what the CES had actually agreed to (this is the BBC's report): <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8529595.stm>

Mr Balls dismissed suggestions the amendment to the Children, Schools and Families Bill, which was first revealed by the BBC News Website, represented an "opt out" for faith schools.

He told the Today programme: "A Catholic faith school can say to their pupils we believe as a religion contraception is wrong but what they can't do is therefore say that they are not going to teach them about contraception to children and how to access contraception.

"What this changes is that for the first time these schools cannot just ignore these issues or teach only one side of the argument.

"They also have to teach that there are different views on homosexuality. They cannot teach homophobia. They must explain civil partnership."

In other words, they were allowed to teach the Catholic view on these matters, but only as one option among

“Many Catholics still suppose that one way to pass on the faith to our children is to send them to a Catholic school.”

many, and not as if it were actually true. And they had to tell children how to “access” contraception and abortion. The Bill was in the end lost, of course, through delay in the Lords, Tory Opposition, and the ineluctable arrival of the last general election. If our bishops had told the government they would instruct their schools to disobey the government over these provisions, they would have had to back down. As it turned out, our schools were saved from the Bill not by the bishops but by the Tories.

But I digress; we have heard all this before. Back to the CES in 2011, now waxing indignant over the government’s recent marginalisation of RE. It will have been noted that in its windy statement about RE in the English baccalaureate, the CES doesn’t point to RE as being a way in to religious faith: that wouldn’t be of much interest to the government, of course, but it ought to be for Catholics. However, as has become increasingly clear over the years, it is not for the CES, or, indeed I fear for quite a few (though of course not all) teachers of RE.

Many Catholics still suppose (as I did when 20 years ago I crossed the Tiber) that one way to pass on the faith to our children is to send them to a Catholic school. I began to smell a rat when, at the convent school to which my wife and I finally sent one of my daughters, the sister who taught RE told me proudly that she didn’t believe in “indoctrination”. “Why not?” I said: “don’t you WANT your pupils to believe in Catholic doctrine? I do: that’s why I sent her to a Catholic school. Indoctrination is precisely what I was hoping for”. From her reaction, you would think I had uttered some grotesque indecency.

But I almost certainly wouldn’t have found any very different attitude in any of the other Catholic schools available to us: the school we had chosen was probably the best we could have hoped for. At the first school we had a look at, the sixth former who was showing us round, when I asked whether the chapel was ever open (it wasn’t) and whether the Blessed Sacrament was reserved there,

asked me what the Blessed Sacrament WAS.

There is, as the excellent Mrs Daphne McLeod has pointed out, a “total failure to teach the authentic Catholic Faith in Catholic schools, resulting in a staggering 90% lapsation rate among school leavers”. That’s worth repeating. NINETY PERCENT: it’s higher than the lapsation rate among Catholic children who go to secular schools.

And that’s because Catholic education is no longer focused where it should be focused. Compare the CES’s idea of what RE should be about with this:

“The fundamental needs of the human person are the focus of Catholic education – intellectual, physical, emotional, social, spiritual and eschatological (our eternal destiny). These fundamental needs can only be truly fulfilled through a rich and living encounter with the deepest truths about God and the human person.”

That, of course, is by Bishop Patrick O’Donoghue, and it comes from that wonderful document *Fit for Mission? Schools* (p. 17, CTS Expanded edition), about which I wrote in *Faith* magazine when it first appeared in 2008. It was, it will be remembered, received with great acclaim in Rome, among others by Archbishop Mauro Piacenza, Secretary for the Congregation for Clergy, who said that his outfit had “studied the document with great interest and hopes it will become an example for other Dioceses in the country in their implementation of the *General Directory for Catechesis and the Catechism of the Catholic Church*.” It didn’t, of course.

Bishop O’Donoghue directed that all Catholic teachers in his diocese be supplied with a copy of the Catechism. I wonder how many other bishops followed his example? And I wonder how many RE teachers not only possess a copy of the Catechism, but use it as a constant teaching resource? This is a genuine question to which I do not know – but greatly fear – the answer.

Meanwhile, forget making RE part of the English Baccalaureate. It will do nobody any good as it is taught now: and it

could do considerable harm, if any more children get the idea, as I suspect many already do, that what they are taught is really all that religion is about. But religion isn’t what the CES is in the slightest interested in. It would seem that what it’s worrying about is the loss of influence that would come in the wake of a large reduction in the number of RE teachers. Consider this, from the Times Educational Supplement:

“RE and music lose out in sudden curriculum changes

“Schools are rushing in dramatic changes to their curriculums that will cut the time devoted to subjects not recognised in the English Baccalaureate, The TES has learned. Subjects such as RE and music have already been hit as schools attempt to move pupils on to courses that will count towards the controversial new league table measure.

“Heads are even prepared to break their statutory duties to teach RE as they switch resources to other qualifications, the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) has warned.

“In a survey by the National Association of Music Teachers, 60 per cent of respondents said their departments had already been adversely affected by the EBac. Music teachers in 57 out of 95 schools said their schools plan to reduce opportunities to study music from this September.... The omission of RE from the list of approved humanities and wider arts subjects has prompted an angry response from subject associations, which fear they will be sidelined. Fears have also been raised that teachers of those subjects could face redundancy.”

Well, I’m very sorry indeed about all those redundant RE teachers, truly I am, and I certainly think that more subjects should be recognised as “humanities”. But I have to say that I’m much more worried about the possible decline in the teaching of music in our schools than of RE as it has mostly become. For, music really IS still a way in from the “post-Christian” secular world to religious belief.

Notes From Across the Atlantic

by Peter Mitchell, Lincoln, Nebraska



DOLAN'S PRESIDENCY AND A NEW CHAPTER IN THE CULTURE WARS

The election of Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York as President of the United States Catholic Bishops' Conference last November was unexpected. It generated a great amount of hope and excitement that his tenure would mark a new boldness and confidence in the leadership of the Catholic Church on this side of the Atlantic. The bishops of the United States selected a pastor whose remarkable ability to present clearly and confidently the "Catholic vision" is matched by his evident warmth and affection for his priests, his flock, and for all people of whatever creed or background. It has not taken long for Dolan's role as spokesman for the Catholic Church on the national stage to draw him into a prominent debate that was occasioned by a controversial action of President Obama regarding the definition of marriage.

In late February the Obama administration announced that it will no longer uphold the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). On 23 February, the United States Attorney General, Eric Holder, Jr., sent a letter to members of Congress in which he informed them that President Obama had determined that DOMA is in violation of the equal protection clause of the Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution, and, as such, will no longer be defended by his administration. DOMA was passed in 1996 under President Clinton with the support of large bi-partisan majorities in both houses of Congress.

The controversy centres on the definition given by DOMA of what exactly constitutes a "marriage" and a "spouse."

The act declares that "the word 'marriage' means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word 'spouse' refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife." The Attorney General stated that the Obama Administration wishes to oppose discrimination against gays and lesbians and declared that DOMA reflects "stereotype-based thinking" in its definition of "marriage" and "spouse." According to the Attorney General, "a growing scientific consensus accepts that sexual orientation is a characteristic that is immutable," and furthermore "there is a growing acknowledgment that sexual orientation bears no relation to ability to perform or contribute to society." For these reasons he and President Obama have determined that DOMA may not be constitutionally applied to same-sex couples whose marriages are legally recognised under state law in those states that recognise same-sex unions.

It should be noted here that Obama has not waited for the "inconsistency" of this law to be acknowledged by the legislature. The President, who by his oath of office is sworn to uphold the law of the land, has determined that he will no longer execute a federal law.

Enter Archbishop Dolan. On 3 March, Dolan wrote to President Obama to express his concern at the Administration's action, and in a public statement offered to any who will listen a clear and confident presentation of the Catholic Church's position on the question of the treatment of persons with a homosexual orientation in the civic sphere. Dolan's statement framed the issue in terms of social justice and respect: "Every person deserves to be

treated with justice, compassion, and respect, a proposition of natural law and American law that we as Catholics vigorously promote." Yet Dolan did not pull any punches in voicing his objection to the Obama Administration declaring that DOMA is unjust because it defines marriage as the union of a man and a woman. "The suggestion that this definition amounts to 'discrimination' is grossly false and represents an affront to millions of citizens in this country," he said. Dolan made his case simply and eloquently. It can hardly be called discrimination, he reasoned, to say that a husband and wife have a "unique and singular" relationship or to say that children – and thus the state – benefit from being brought up in a stable home with a father and a mother. It is in fact a matter of justice, said Dolan, to defend the definition of marriage and to resist any attempt to caricature such a defense as "discrimination". The very dignity of the human person hangs in the balance. Archbishop Dolan concluded his statement with a matter-of-fact declaration of what is at stake in the debate over DOMA: "The Administration's current position is not only a grave threat to marriage, but to religious liberty and the integrity of our democracy as well."

The Archbishop's clear and reasoned words reiterated the main points made by the 2009 ecumenical Manhattan Declaration, signed by Dolan and more than 150 other Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant leaders. The signatories declared themselves to be in solidarity in their unequivocal support of the dignity and right to life of every human person, marriage between a man and a woman as divinely ordained and the foundation of civil society, and religious liberty as an essential component of human freedom.

The Declaration further invoked the Christian tradition of civil disobedience, affirming the right and at times the obligation to oppose injustice by refusing to comply with civil authority if it attempts to undermine these basic human rights: “We will fully and ungrudgingly render to Caesar what is Caesar’s. But under no circumstances will we render to Caesar what is God’s.” The Declaration has been signed by over 480,000 individuals on its website since its inception in November 2009.

It drew renewed attention in November 2010 when Apple removed the

Manhattan Declaration app from its iPhones, iPads, and iTunes, saying the app was “offensive to large groups of people” because it promoted bigotry and homophobia. The organisers of the Manhattan Declaration, because of their strong desire “to maintain a civil and respectful tone”, then asked Apple to consider accepting a modified version of the app. In January Apple refused again arguing “it contains content that is likely to expose a group to harm”, that is by unambiguously upholding traditional marriage.

It remains to be seen where this legal, cultural, and moral debate may take the Catholic Church in these United States in the coming months and years. But for now it is apparent that, in electing Archbishop Timothy Dolan as their President, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has put a shepherd who is capable, confident and courageous at the helm.



The Truth Will Set You Free

Catholic Doctrine for the Pastoral Context

THE VISITATION AND TAKING THE TRUTH TO HEART

Fr David Barrow, Parish Priest of Mile End in east London.

At the Visitation we see two women who have become fruitful and pregnant with new life by the power of the Holy Spirit. One, is Mary, a Virgin who has conceived the Christ child without need of a father. She remained a virgin before, during and after the birth of her child. The second, is Elizabeth, a women past the age of childbearing whose womb has been opened by the grace of God. These two pregnant mothers point to the way that we too can become fruitful and pregnant with the new life of the Holy Spirit. How? By believing in God’s promises, the promises which were made to us in our baptism, and which are continually renewed through the proclamation of his Word at Mass.

The Hebrew term for “Word” is *dibhar*, which has a double meaning. It also means “a promise”. In other words each Word that God addresses to us depends for its fulfilment *on him* – and not on us. We are called, like Mary, to give our fiat, to give God permission to work within us. In fact Elizabeth says to Mary that she is blessed because she has believed in the “*promise of God*”. Without this prior faith in the Word of God announced by the angel Gabriel, there would have been no birth of the Messiah, no Saviour. St. Ambrose says that Mary had to conceive Christ in her heart by faith, believing in the Word of the Angel Gabriel, and consenting to the work of God, before she could conceive him in the flesh in her womb, i.e. there were two conceptions.

In the gospel of Matthew (Mt 12:48-50) is an incident where the family of Jesus seem to have had enough of his apparent delusions of being a prophet and a Saviour, and are embarrassed by his continuing ministry. They try to drag him out of the crowd to whom he is preaching. In reply Jesus, practically disowning them, says something peculiar: “*Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?*” And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “*Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother.*” He says that by believing in him, we can become his mother! Not by giving birth to him in the flesh, but through faith conceiving him in our hearts. How can we too become pregnant by the Holy Spirit?

As natural pregnancy begins when the sperm of the male fertilises the female ovum, so too the divine pregnancy in us began at our baptism. It matures and brings forth Christ when we hear and believe in God’s promises, as encapsulated in the proclamation of the Good News.

How we listen to God’s Word is therefore crucial. In listening to God’s Word with the same spirit of openness and generosity which Mary had, we can discover God’s promises for us. Belief in God’s promises makes the impossible become possible. The holiness and beauty and truth which belongs to Christ begin to become incarnate in our own lives. Living the gospel without compromise is really possible by God’s grace. True happiness can really be found in Christ. This feast of the Visitation may Christ be born in us anew.

Next issue: Roy Peachey on improving the English Curriculum.



Book Reviews

Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week

Pope Benedict XVI (Ignatius Press, San Francisco/CTS, London, 2011), 384pp, £14.95

In *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week* Pope Benedict XVI builds upon insights gained from historical-critical studies in order to probe the theological depths of the revealed Word of God. He successfully combines a historical hermeneutic with a faith hermeneutic, imitating the Church Fathers whose exegetical insights, he hopes, will “yield their fruit once more in a new context” (p. xv). The Pope puts into practice the methodological principle found in *Dei Verbum*, 12 : he reads and interprets the Scripture “in the sacred spirit in which it was written”. While the Holy Father’s study presupposes historical-critical exegesis and makes use of its discoveries, “it seeks to transcend this method and to arrive at a genuinely theological interpretation of the scriptural text” (p. 295). He insists that by attentively listening to the Jesus of the Gospels and through a collective listening with the disciples of every age, that is, through the authentic witness of Scripture and Tradition, one “can indeed attain to sure knowledge of the real historical figure of Jesus” (p. xvii).

The Pope does not trouble his reader by unnecessarily descending into exegetical details pertinent primarily to biblical scholars. He avoids such details especially when, forming “[a] dense undergrowth of mutually contradictory hypotheses” (p. 104), they threaten to impede an encounter with Jesus. The Pope assures his reader, nonetheless, that in communion with the Church’s living Tradition and under the guidance

of the Holy Spirit “we can serenely examine exegetical hypotheses that all too often make exaggerated claims to certainty, claims that are already undermined by the existence of diametrically opposed positions put forward with an equal claim to scientific certainty” (p. 105). Alternatively, he proposes Jesus Himself as a model for the contemporary exegete and the modern theologian. For Jesus “acts and lives within the word of God, not according to projects and wishes of His own” (p. 5). Similarly, we, who study the Gospels, should possess “a readiness not only to form a ‘critical’ assessment of the New Testament, but also to learn from it and to let ourselves be led by it: not to dismantle the texts according to our preconceived ideas, but to let our own ideas be purified and deepened by His word” (p. 120). Otherwise, our experience risks remaining that of Saint Paul prior to his conversion: a real expert on the Scriptures, yet ignorant of their true meaning. “This combination of expert knowledge and deep ignorance,” the Holy Father observes, “causes us to ponder. It reveals the whole problem of knowledge that remains self-sufficient and so does not arrive at Truth itself, which ought to transform man” (p. 207).

Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week addresses various issues significant for modern theology and the world today. When properly understood in the context of the Mosaic Law, Jesus’ cleansing of the Temple provides no justification for religiously motivated violence. To kill others in the God’s name is not the way of Jesus. At the same time, the ruthless destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman legions in AD 70 – “all too typical of countless tragedies throughout history” (p. 31) – confronts us with the mystery of evil which God tolerates to a degree that may indeed dumbfound us. Judas’s betrayal of Jesus is fundamentally a breach of friendship which, Pope Benedict sadly observes, “extends into the sacramental community of the Church, where people continue to take ‘His bread’ and to betray Him” (p. 68). Peter’s insistence at the Last Supper that he would spare Jesus His passion

and death reveals a perennial temptation for Christians and the Church, that is, “to seek victory without the Cross” (p. 151) – a common, even if unspoken, theme of the ‘Prosperity Gospel’ preached today by various Christian communities. In contrast the Pope elaborates in evangelical terms the doctrine of atonement, revealing at once God’s serious appraisal of sin and the depths of his mercy. While some modern theologians would prefer to set aside all notions of expiation, he appeals to the mystery of the Cross in the lives of the saints and concludes that “ [t]he mystery of atonement is not to be sacrificed on the altar of overweening rationalism” (p. 240). Finally, Pope Benedict states with great clarity that the Jewish people are not collectively responsible for the death of Jesus. Rather, his accusers were the first-century Temple authorities and the ‘crowd’ of Barabbas’s supporters. Moreover, the blood of Jesus called down upon the Jewish people in Matthew 27:25 is not the blood of Abel which cries out for vengeance and punishment, but rather the Blood of the New Covenant which heals and brings reconciliation.

Pope Benedict’s eagerly awaited volume should be seen not only as the second part of his exegetical-theological study of the figure of Jesus in the Gospels, but also as the necessary complement to his book *The Spirit of the Liturgy*. It addresses directly the question of the new and true worship which Jesus inaugurated upon the Cross. Jesus came not to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it. His death upon the Cross is the saving reality once prefigured by animal sacrifices in the Temple which have been surpassed. For this reason among others, the Holy Father favours the Johannine chronology of the Passion. He was crucified on the ‘Day of Preparation’ for the Passover at the moment when the lambs were being slaughtered in the Temple for the evening meal. Therefore, the Last Supper, while celebrated in the context of the Jewish Passover festivities, was probably not the Passover meal itself. At the Last Supper Jesus celebrated

“The combination of expert knowledge and deep ignorance ... remains self-sufficient and so does not arrive at Truth itself, which ought to transform man”

His own Passover and ushered in a new worship – true spiritual worship which opens for all men and women a pathway to God. This new worship draws mankind into Jesus’s vicarious obedience to the Father’s will. Jesus’s obedience unto death upon the Cross has restored mankind’s obedience and made man’s spiritual self-offering again possible. True worship is the offering of our own living bodies as a spiritual worship truly pleasing to God. The new Temple of our self-offering is Jesus’s Risen Body into which the Christian is incorporated by Baptism and of which he partakes in the Eucharist.

In his previous study *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, the then Cardinal Ratzinger insisted that the *ad orientem* position is an essential element of the Church’s Eucharistic celebration. That posture opens up the Eucharistic celebration and orientates it toward the Risen Christ who will come again – the *Oriens ex alto*. “The turning of the priest toward the people,” he notes, “turned the community into a self-enclosed circle. In its outward form, it no longer opens out on what lies ahead and above, but is closed in on itself” (*The Spirit of the Liturgy*, p. 80). In this light Pope Benedict’s use of the word ‘open’ in its various grammatical forms throughout *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week*, especially in reference to the new worship which Jesus inaugurates, is not without significance. He explains, in what are effectively liturgical terms, the interpretation which Jesus Himself gives for His cleansing of the Temple. Jesus understood His act “to remove whatever obstacles there may be to the common recognition and worship of God – and thereby to open up a space for common worship” (p. 18). The Temple veil torn in two at the moment of Jesus’s death reveals that “the pathway to God is now open” (p. 209; also see *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, pp. 83-84). Prayer, the heart of true worship, is “the self-opening of the human spirit to God” (p. 233). Jesus’s incarnate obedience, which is the new sacrifice itself, opens a space “into which we are admitted and through which our lives find a new context” (p. 236). Jesus’ Resurrection from the

dead is not a matter of mere resuscitation, but rather it is “about breaking out into an entirely new form of life...a life that opens up a new dimension of human existence” (p. 244). The Resurrection bursts open history. While its origins lie within history, it points beyond history (cf. p. 275). The Holy Father describes in similar terms Jesus’ Ascension into heaven: “He, who has eternally opened up within God a space for humanity, now calls the whole world into this open space” (p. 287). The ascending Christ’s hands raised in blessing “are a gesture of opening up, tearing the world open so that heaven may enter in, may become ‘present’ within it” (p. 293). “In departing,” he concludes, “[Jesus] comes to us [especially in His Eucharistic Presence], in order to raise us up above ourselves and to open up the world to God” (p. 293). In sum, even without making explicit reference to liturgical orientation, Pope Benedict’s study of the Holy Week mysteries provides evidence for and confirmation of his insistence upon the essential nature of the *ad orientem* position during the Eucharistic liturgy.

These and many other insights await the reader in *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week*. The book does not disappoint. It is at once intellectually satisfying and spiritually enriching – a worthy meditation upon the passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ; a meditation which should bear much fruit in the lives of the faithful for many years to come.

Fr Joseph Carola, SJ

Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome

Neuroscience, Psychology and Religion – Illusions, Delusions, and Realities about Human Nature

Malcolm Jeeves and Warren S Brown, Templeton Foundation Press, 136pp, £13.99

In a period of ever-advancing knowledge about the workings of the human brain, this book represents a welcome attempt to explain to a lay reader the current state of scientific

thought and to discuss the wider implications of recent discoveries in the fields of neuroscience and neuropsychology.

Both authors are neuropsychologists, and describe themselves as “enthusiastic scientists” and “active Christians”. Malcolm Jeeves is Emeritus Professor of Psychology at St. Andrews University and a past president of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Warren S Brown is a professor of psychology at the Fuller Theological Seminary (a multi-denominational evangelical theological college in the US) and a member of the UCLA Brain Research Institute.

“There is an excellent discussion about the merits of taking an emergent and top-down view of brain function”

A considerable range of material is presented in this short book. There are a number of useful early chapters on the historical context of the debate between science and religion, where the authors juxtapose and compare the differing positions taken by various prominent psychologists/neuroscientists during the last century. The authors also briefly outline the historical roots of neuropsychology.

The book explains the basic principles of brain function and the connection between body and mind, with an interesting case study on the effects of frontal lobe damage on moral behaviour. The authors discuss the evolution of the human brain, the importance of language, and compare human intelligence to that found in other animals. The authors also consider the neurological basis for being religious. Finally, drawing mainly from the thinking of contemporary Calvinist and Lutheran theologians, the authors discuss the implications of recent scientific research on theological views about the human being as a creature made in the image of God.

A key strength of this book is the quality of the scientific explanation.



Book Reviews continued

The book is informative, accessible, and thought-provoking. In particular, there is an excellent discussion about the merits of taking an emergent and top-down view of brain function as opposed to a reductionist approach.

However, this reviewer was not convinced that the otherwise good discussion of emergence/top-down causation quite hit the nail on the head in addressing determinism. For example, the idea that the brain is a complex non-linear dynamic system is mentioned only fleetingly – leaving me with the feeling that we had missed an opportunity for a useful discussion (such as perhaps making a connection with the ideas advocated by Polkinghorne regarding the possibility of chaotic systems “amplifying” quantum level uncertainties up to the macro-level).

“The authors do not address the possibility of making a distinction between the human soul and an animal ‘soul’”

The authors’ theological stance on scientific observations was often both sensible and helpful. They share some useful thoughts on a range of issues, in particular regarding human uniqueness in comparison with other animals, and the neuroscience of religiousness. The authors should be applauded for engaging honestly and thoughtfully with the scientific evidence in their search for an understanding of human nature which is consistent with the experimental evidence.

That said, I was uneasy with some of the theological content, especially in relation to the human soul. The authors argue that, as all living creatures have a soul, a soul is not a unique feature of the human being. For example, they do not address the possibility of making a distinction between the human soul as a subsistent form and an animal “soul” as a non-subsistent form (pp. 126-127).

The authors also argue that it is “no longer helpful or reasonable to consider mind a non-material entity that can be

decoupled from the body” (pp. 52-53). Much depends on exactly what is meant by “mind”, but I daresay at least some readers of *Faith* magazine might have cause to question this assertion!

Finally, although I was pleased to see the authors elsewhere rejecting the unorthodox notion of the soul as some sort of arbitrary, added-on entity which is “attached to the body”, I was concerned that their notions of an “embodied soul” may have been fast heading towards rejecting the doctrine of the immortal soul altogether. Perhaps a little more clarity was needed in the book on this important part of the discussion.

In conclusion, this is a wide-ranging and thoughtful book which provides a good explanation of the scientific material. Much of what the authors say seems both sensible and helpful, and it gave me plenty of food for thought. Despite concerns with some of the authors’ theological opinions, this book has a great deal going for it, and at 136 pages the authors have done extraordinarily well to cover so much important material so clearly and thoughtfully.

Peter Johnson
St. Albans

Generations of Priests

Fr Thomas McGovern, Four Courts Press, 456pp, £20.00

Fr Thomas McGovern has reflected deeply on the priesthood and priestly identity. Having already authored two monumental books on the priesthood – *Priestly Celibacy Today* and *Priestly Identity: A Study in the Theology of Priesthood*, this Irish priest’s latest work moves from theory to practice as shown in the lives of ten truly inspiring priests taken from 1,500 years of the Church’s history.

To limit this study to just ten priests must have been no easy undertaking. The priests chosen, St. John Chrysostom, St. John Fisher, St. Oliver Plunkett, the Curé of Ars, Bl. John Henry Newman, Archbishop Lamy

of Santa Fe, St. Pius X, Bl. Clement von Galen, St. Josemaría Escrivá, and Pope John Paul II, serve as a microcosm of the many generations of priests that have gone before us.

It is clear that Fr McGovern has spent much time researching their lives, and he beautifully presents their biographies. We learn about their influences, personal stories, struggles and moments of selflessness, and how they responded to the needs of the time.

The book comes with a foreword by George Cardinal Pell, an admirer of Fr McGovern’s works on the priesthood. He says: “This book could be read as a handbook for living the priesthood in a difficult time. ...[It is] invaluable to catechists and an inspiration to all Christians living in our age, which is no less exciting or exacting than the times experienced by these outstanding men”.

The chapters each describe one priest and are laid out chronologically, though they do not need to be read sequentially.

Generations of Priests has come at the right time, when many have become disillusioned with the Church and her priests – a time when there is a crisis in the Catholic priesthood itself, and when vocations are in serious decline. This book serves as a reminder to priests of the zeal that is essential in their ministry and illustrates to seminarians the great responsibility of their calling. It helps all to remember the countless number of priests who have faithfully responded to their calling and dedicated their lives with passion, love and generosity so that the faith could be passed on from their generation to the next.

John McAleer
Dublin



The Road From Regensburg

Papal-inspired thought in search
of a new apologetic

14th March: The Cultural Priority of Reason

Father Olegario González de Cardedal, a Spanish theologian and friend of Pope Benedict, made the below comments when presenting the second volume of the Pope's "Jesus of Nazareth".

"He is an authority who, before giving us something to obey, gives us something to think about ... Man wants to be enlightened in his intelligence and this is the great debt of gratitude we owe the Pope."

24th March: Need for Synthetic, Catholic Metaphysics

From the Congregation for Catholic Education's Decree on philosophy studies. Among other things it increases the years required to obtain a Baccalaureate from two to three. It uses numerous quotes from John Paul II's 1998 Encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, [F&R].

1. In her work of evangelising the world, the Church follows attentively and discerningly the rapid cultural changes at work, which influence both her and society as a whole. ... In fact, there is often mistrust in the capacity of human intelligence to arrive at objective and universal truth – a truth by which people can give direction to their lives. Furthermore, the force of the human sciences, as well as the consequences of scientific and technological developments, stimulate new challenges for the Church.

A New Synthesis

3. ... patristic and medieval thought ... identif[ied] the cosmos as the free creation of a God who is wise and good (cf. *Wis* 13,1-9; *Acts* 17, 24-28). ... "The metaphysical element is the path to be taken in order to move beyond the crisis pervading large sectors of philosophy at the moment, and thus to correct certain mistaken modes of behaviour now widespread in our society." [F&R 83] ...

5 ... "I wish to reaffirm strongly the conviction that the human being can come to a unified and organic vision of knowledge. This is one of the tasks which Christian thought will have to take up through the next millennium of the Christian era." [F&R 85]

7. That is why philosophy nurtured within the *Universitas* is called upon ... "to link theology, philosophy and science between them in full respect [...] of their reciprocal autonomy, but also in the awareness of the intrinsic unity that holds them together." [Pope Benedict, Regensburg, Sept 2006] ... to rediscover "this great *logos*".

An Orthodox Synthesis

10. ... "only a sound philosophy can help candidates for the priesthood to develop a reflective awareness of the fundamental relationship that exists between the human spirit and truth, that truth which is revealed to us fully in Jesus Christ." [Pastores Dabo Vobis, 52] ...

11. ... the teaching of philosophy ... [includes some] fundamental truths ... particularly relevant today: [below are from F&R & *Veritatis Splendor*]:

- the capacity to reach objective and universal truth as well as valid metaphysical knowledge;
- the unity of body and soul in man;
- the dignity of the human person;
- relations between nature and freedom;
- the importance of natural law and of the "sources of morality," ...
- and the necessary conformity of civil law to moral law.

12. The philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas is important ... He knew how to place "faith in a positive relation with the dominant form of reason of his time." [Pope Benedict 22.12.05] ... Thomas' realism was able to recognise the objectivity of truth ... The Church's preference for his method and his doctrine is not exclusive, but "exemplary" [Pope John Paul II, 14.9.80].

25th March: Openness to Wisdom from the World

The first gathering of the "Courtyard of the Gentiles" was in various prominent cultural locations in Paris. This papal-inspired project, led by Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi aims to hold cultural meetings involving theists, agnostics and atheists who share the common belief in and search for truth, justice and peace. Initial fruits have been:

- The prominent agnostic philosopher Jean Luc Ferry has asked to write a book on the Gospel of John with Cardinal Ravasi.
- The rector of the Sorbonne has asked Ravasi for reflections on secularism.
- Michel Onfray, who has been called the French Dawkins, has asked for the opportunity to show that he is not one of those who ridicules theism.
- The Bulgarian humanist Julia Kristeva has taken an active and respectful part.

Future locations include Tirana, Stockholm, Chicago, Quebec. In these last two there will be a greater focus upon science and technology. Ravasi commented that such a Courtyard "should be a fixture of the pastoral activity of every diocese."

Below are some words from the Pope's video message to young people gathered outside Notre Dame.

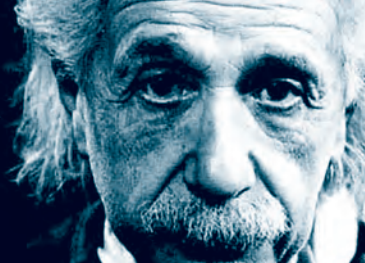
... Those of you who are non-believers challenge believers ... by your rejection of any distortion of religion which would make it unworthy of man. Those of you who are believers long to tell your friends that the treasure dwelling within you is meant to be shared, it raises questions, it calls for reflection.... discover, deep within your hearts and with serious arguments, the ways which lead to profound dialogue.

... Religions have nothing to fear from a just secularity, one that is open and allows individuals to live in accordance with what they believe in their own consciences. If we are to build a world of liberty, equality and fraternity, then believers and non-believers must feel free to be just that, equal in their right to live as individuals and in community in accord with their convictions; and fraternal in their relations with one another.



Cutting Edge

Science and Religion News



The Atheistic Spin on Quantum Theory

At the *Faith* Theological Symposium in February, Fr Stephen Dingley presented a critique of the recently published *The Grand Design* by Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow. In the book, they try to argue for a spontaneous creation of the universe that requires no explanation or origin. Yet, as was pointed out, Hawking and Mlodinow already concede that, for their ideas to work, a law such as gravity has to exist, and thus their “spontaneous creation” is not as “spontaneous” as they claim. Their book is riddled with bad logic and gives rise to false conclusions.

More importantly, it raises the perennial question of the correct interpretation of quantum mechanics (QM). As well as the above irrationality Hawking and Mlodinow rely upon the “Copenhagen” interpretation of QM to establish their “uncaused” cosmos. The Copenhagen interpretation claims that there is a fundamental indeterminism at the base of all reality. Yet this leaves many questions unanswered, and numerous physicists of the 20th century, including Einstein, were not convinced that it was the whole picture.

However, an alternative to the Copenhagen interpretation of QM does exist, developed by the American-born British physicist David Bohm. In his early research career, Bohm worked with Einstein in Princeton. Soon after this, in about 1952, he developed a “hidden variables” interpretation of QM, which is in some ways a redevelopment of ideas already considered in 1927 by Louis de Broglie (see our November 2005 editorial for our discussion of de Broglie’s helpful 1939 interpretation of QM). In chapter 4 of his book of essays summing up his life’s work, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (1980), David Bohm explains the background to the problem:

“From the fact that quantum theory agrees with experiment in so wide a domain ..., it is evident that the indeterministic features of quantum mechanics are in some way a

reflection of the real behaviour of matter in the atomic and nuclear domains, but here the question arises as to just how to interpret this indeterminism” (p. 86).

He goes on to remind us that “lawlessness of individual behaviour in the context of a given statistical law is, in general, consistent with the notion of more detailed individual laws applying in a broader context” (p. 87). His “hidden-variables” interpretation is precisely that search for an underlying (“hidden”) law that makes the higher-level indeterminism only apparent.

Despite the majority of physicists’ opinions having traditionally been against the existence of hidden variables – since Bohr and Heisenberg in fact – Bohm showed in his work in the 1950s that the objections to a hidden-variable theory were not valid.

He suggested that in the wave/particle nature of matter, it is not that matter behaves sometimes as a wave, and sometimes as a particle (the so-called “wave–particle duality”) but that in fact both particle and wave *really* exist: it is the “pilot” or “guiding” wave that determines the particle’s motion. John Stewart Bell, an Irish physicist who did much work in this area, became increasingly attracted to Bohm’s formulation and, three years before his death, explained how it works in the case of the traditional two-slit experiment in his book, *Speakable and Unspeakable in Quantum Mechanics* (1987):

“Is it not clear from the smallness of the scintillation on the screen that we have to do with a particle? And is it not clear, from the diffraction and interference patterns, that the motion of the particle is directed by a wave? De Broglie showed in detail how the motion of a particle, passing through just one of two holes in a screen, could be influenced by waves propagating through both holes. And so influenced that the particle does not go where the waves cancel out, but is attracted to where they cooperate. This idea seems to me so natural and simple, to resolve the wave-particle dilemma in

such a clear and ordinary way, that it is a great mystery to me that it was so generally ignored” (p. 191).

Bell reacted strongly to the seeming “suppression” of the successes of hidden-variable work. In the same book he wrote:

“In 1952 I saw the impossible done. It was in papers by David Bohm. Bohm showed explicitly how parameters could indeed be introduced, into non-relativistic wave mechanics, with the help of which the indeterministic description could be transformed into a deterministic one. More importantly, in my opinion, the subjectivity of the orthodox version, the necessary reference to the ‘observer,’ could be eliminated. ... But why then had Born [a colleague of de Broglie] not told me of this ‘pilot wave’? If only to point out what was wrong with it? Why did von Neumann not consider it? More extraordinarily, why did people go on producing ‘impossibility’ proofs, after 1952, and as recently as 1978? ... Why is the pilot wave picture ignored in text books? Should it not be taught, not as the only way, but as an antidote to the prevailing complacency? To show us that vagueness, subjectivity, and indeterminism, are not forced on us by experimental facts, but by deliberate theoretical choice?” (p. 160).

It seems clear that the Bohm formulation should be given much more attention when the problems that are widely taught as plaguing hidden-variable QM theories have already been overcome. A fuller overview of the Bohm interpretation of quantum mechanics can be found in the online *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/qm-bohm/>

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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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