

faith

September and October 2008
Volume 40 Number 5
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Joanna Bogle

Loss and Retrieval of the Holy Trinity in Catechesis

Caroline Farey

The Holy Trinity in the Catechism and Holloway

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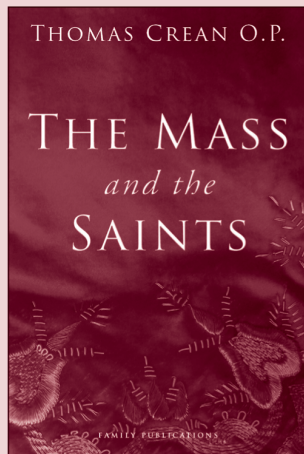
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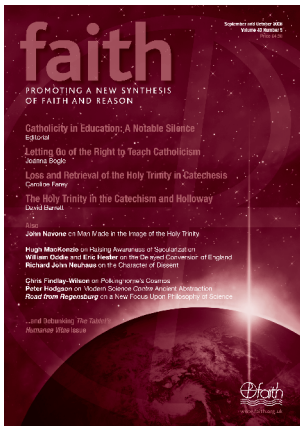
Fortieth Anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*

The Tablet and *The Pastoral Review*, two of the most prominent and promoted Catholic periodicals in Britain, have both published dissenting articles, without anything supporting the core teaching of the encyclical (see p.6 of this issue for our comment on the former's editorial and survey).

This makes it especially worthwhile to be aware of excellent and faithful resources, also published for this anniversary. Here are some:

- Pope Benedict May 10th to the Lateran University's *Humanae Vitae* anniversary conference, under his 'Speeches' at www.vatican.va, where the Pope teaches that the "The truth expressed in *Humanae Vitae* does not change" and is as relevant as ever.
- Richard John Neuhaus's 'Anatomy of Dissent' on page 35 of this magazine.
- August '08 *First Things* article, "The Vindication of *Humanae Vitae*" available free online. Magnificent overview of the evidence in favour of this teaching.
- *L'Osservatore Romano* 26.7.08 with some helpful observations concerning Pope Paul VI's life.
- Family Publications, in collaboration with Maryvale Institute, Birmingham, have published *Humanae Vitae: 40 years on* by Fr George Woodall, Family Publications, a very helpful and practical description of the "perennial" and "prophetic" nature of the truth taught by the Encyclical.
- *Catholic Times*, August 3rd, Fr Frank Marsden, 'Prophecies of *Humanae Vitae* have come to pass.'
- 'A spiritual answer to coping with infertility', 26.7.08 interview with Professor Marie Meaney on zenit.org.
- See also our March-April 2006 issue, especially 'A Parish Approach to the Church's Teaching on the Marital Act', including a discussion of 'hard cases' and 'the Practicality of Conversion', available at www.faith.org.uk.

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faith

**September and October 2008
Volume 40 Number 5**

A Spiritually Deafening Silence

Editorial

“And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart: And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

It is not often that the silence of *The Tablet* on a particular issue is felt to be troubling. After all, it is not the silence of the magazine which is normally a source of annoyance to the believing Catholic. It is rare for *The Tablet* not to offer a word or ten concerning prominent orthodox initiatives from the hierarchy of the Church, especially when they come from Rome, but also when they come from local hierarchies. The lack of comment would normally be welcome since much of what *The Tablet* has to say tends to favour dissent in the Church, which has little to do with fostering the act of faith. However, on this occasion, the silence seems to be studied. There has been little reference or analysis of the initiative of the Bishop of Lancaster, the Right Reverend Patrick O'Donoghue, in trying to evaluate and renew the life of schools in his diocese.

As mentioned by William Oddie in the March-April edition of *Faith*, Bishop O'Donoghue's proposed scheme, called *Fit for Mission? Schools*, has provoked a good deal of comment. Firstly, he was summoned to a parliamentary committee to explain the document, amidst press reports of Bishops promoting a “fundamentalist brand” of Catholicism in their schools. Secondly, he has received a good deal of praise and support internationally for this document: Archbishop Mauro Piacenza, secretary of the Congregation for Clergy wrote to congratulate the Bishop for carrying out what the General Directory for Catechesis had called for following the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and expressed his hope that it “will become an example for other Dioceses in the country”; dioceses in Australia, America, France, Canada and Malta have asked for copies; the Catholic Truth Society in London has published the document following high demand.

More recently Cardinal Levada, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, who has made clear his desire to promote and encourage “good practice” in the Church, has also added his appreciation. He has written a foreword for the CTS edition of the document in which he says, “It is to be hoped that others will follow the example of the Diocese of Lancaster in establishing educational and pastoral programmes that implement the Catechism of the Catholic Church as the fundamental guarantee for keeping Christ's Gospel whole and alive in their schools and colleges.”

With all this comment even at an international level, one might expect a well-known weekly such as *The Tablet* to say something. Instead there is silence. Is this a silence of ignorance? Some would say that it is not, and that perhaps it is a silence of deliberate omission, a silence designed to ignore, to close one's eyes and wish something didn't exist. But it does.

Silence at the CES

The same worrying silence is found elsewhere in the life of the Church in England and Wales. This writer decided to visit the website of the Catholic Education Service (CES), and see what it had to say about this document. At first sight there seemed to be nothing at all. A further glance, including typing in “Fit for Mission?” into the search engine of the website, showed that the first sight was the full sight: nothing. No reference, no appreciation, no welcome, no comment, no link. One would think that such a major overhaul of Catholic schooling in a Diocese in England Wales would excite some interest from the CES. Is the silence a sign of disapproval? Or is it a sign of a lack of interest? Whatever it is, like the silence of *The Tablet*, such a silence is a cause for worry. For even if it could plead that it covers educational work for the Bishops' Conference nationally (which surely as a body is there not for its own existence but to help the Bishops in the countries of England and Wales), yet ignoring something which is having international impact is surely at the very least puzzling.

One clue comes from an admittedly very slight and seemingly enforced break in this silence when Oona Stannard, head of the CES, told the *Daily Telegraph* that *Fit for Mission? Schools* represented “the aspirations of one bishop for his diocese.” In the light of the significant Episcopal interest abroad this comment seems only to be true within our country. Her comment might be seen as wishful thinking in the light of her active promotion of another diocesan document on Catholic schools, namely Birmingham's undoubtedly helpful *Christ at the Centre: A Summary of why the Church provides Catholic Schools*, published in 2005. On the CES website, which makes it easily available, Ms Stannard encourages all to look at it and “to submit any comments, observations and requests that you may have for its future development via the CES”.

So, in the absence of any explanation, we must ask what, in the eyes of our national Education Service, is the big difference between these two constructive diocesan documents on Catholic schools?

The most obvious distinction is that *Christ at the Centre* focuses upon general educational values whereas *Fit For Mission?* goes beyond this and sets specific parameters for Religious Education and Catechesis. Moreover the former does not mention the Catechism in its text apart from one brief quotation, whereas the latter is explicitly and implicitly imbued with it. With regard to the specifics of Religious Education the CES website promotes “The National Project”.

The National Project was the process that bequeathed to the Church in this country the programmes *Walk With Me*,

“The Church’s ‘faith story’ ... is the response by the redeemed Bride of Christ ... to the Lord who lived, died and rose again in history ... mediated through the historical reality of the Church.”

Here I Am and *Icons*. Interestingly there is no discussion or presentation of *Weaving the Web*, and only one mention, in a chronological overview. These programmes have been the subject of much sustained criticism for a number of years, criticism that many in the ecclesiastical education establishment have waved away and ignored, but to which they have failed to give a significant and clear response. *Here I Am*, for example, is seen by many as woefully inadequate in its presentation of the sacraments, of sin and original sin, of the Trinity, of the Redemption, of the spiritual life and of the Church itself. The very fact that it nowhere appears to give a clearly comprehensible list of the sacraments, for example, but prefers to distribute them in different models, while never synthesising them simply and clearly, is surely not only inadequate doctrinally, but also unhelpful educationally for teacher and for student. It is still vigorously promoted through diocesan led inspections and widely used.

The CES is conducting a review into these programmes to see what has worked and what has not been so successful. Any such review is of course usually to be welcomed. However, it is worth noting what the website says about it: “The review is taking place against the background (*sic*) *On The Way to Life*, of the re-examining the (*sic*) Religious Education Curriculum Directory and of embedding the second edition of the Levels of Attainment.”

There is no mention of the *General Directory on Catechesis* published in 1997 and mentioned by Archbishop Piacenza in his praise of Bishop O’Donoghue’s initiative. There is no mention of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, published in 1992 and surely, as Bishop O’Donoghue in his document says, “the most important book published by the Holy See in this generation for Catholic education.” Instead one of the two notable documents mentioned by the CES is *On the Way to Life* by the Heythrop Institute. Our May ‘08 issue contained critiques of this 2005 study of contemporary culture and theological development commissioned by the Bishops’ Conference for reflection upon developing a framework for education, catechesis and formation. We argued that its dallying with modernity’s ‘turn to the subject’ was dangerously too sympathetic, whilst not being without important insight concerning the need to develop our philosophy and theology. The CES believes that the Heythrop study gives “the foundation for a review of strategy at national diocesan and parish level.”

The Very Significant Impact of *Our Faith Story*

What the CES and *On the Way to Life* have in common is praise and promotion of a very notable book. This is what the CES website has to say: “*Our Faith Story: its telling and its sharing* which was written in 1985 explored how this ‘story’ would be passed to the next generation at a time of significant cultural change. *Our Faith Story*, and other subsequent documents, have been significant in determining the shape and direction of Catholic Religious Education and

Catechesis in England and Wales.” This book, by Fr Patrick Purnell SJ has indeed had a very “significant” impact on Catholic educational circles in England and Wales for the past twenty years or so.

A footnote in *On the Way to Life* also discussed in our May issue (footnote 79 on page 35) gives a helpful and similarly flattering, though not entirely uncritical, overview of *Our Faith Story*. The book begins with the person’s graced nature – indeed “grace is somehow constitutive of human nature” and the way to come to an explicit understanding of this grace is through narration, through “telling the story”. Apparently, “the text is the person’s life.” This should immediately raise alarm bells. After all, is a person’s life always graced? What of the need for objective Divine Revelation? How is it that my life is graced without the Mystery of Christ and the Mystery of the Church? Indeed, Christ is within us, but only because He was and is out there, objective, in history and now in heaven and mediated to us through the Church.

The footnote goes on to point out that “The language of *Our Faith Story* also marks a significant and influential shift. It is written in a highly personal way, thus modelling the approach it proposes.” We argued in May that such a focus upon the personal subject effectively excludes linguistic objectivity – and so the unchanging validity of doctrinal statements. Many priests trained in the past 20 years have attended catechetical courses given by national figures using precisely Fr Purnell’s approach where the Church teaching and liturgy are just the explication of what is going on in each person. If that is so, then they become the manifestation of my subjectivity, and it is hard to see why my manifestation of this graced subjectivity should be any better or worse, more true or more false, than say that of a group of Muslims or Hindus.

If this criticism appears a little harsh, the following observation from the footnote should clear up any concern on that account:

“The source of authority here is not a teacher or a Magisterium but one’s own experience and narration. It is the subject that controls and shapes the story. The language is significant in other ways: its way of speaking of ‘spirituality’ and the Kingdom is presented not in terms of an ecclesial vision but as a utopian state which is counter-cultural to ‘this worldly reality’.”

Self-Consciousness as a Competing Authority

This is the very nub of the issue. We should first reaffirm that in this magazine we are certainly not against taking account of the self-conscious subject’s affirmation of the environmental relationship in which he constantly, experientially finds himself. But we would see this as an inbuilt acceptance of our being personally invited into an objective universe which is bigger than us, rather than implying the existentialist primacy and authority of subjective experience and control – as is Fr Purnell’s so very influential approach.

A Spiritually Deafening Silence

continued

In the authentically Catholic vision of the Second Vatican Council, the source of authority for the transmission of Revelation is Jesus Christ Himself, the Word of God made flesh for us, handed down to us in Scripture and ecclesial Tradition. To receive this revelation is to be caught up in the deepest personal relationship possible. The authentic, authoritative teacher of this is the Magisterium, and rightly so. The history of the Church itself has shown that “graced subjectivity” and my own “experience and narration” can indeed be flawed: there is a thing called sin and we are all damaged by it. That is why the Church has had to have recourse to Ecumenical Councils and the Magisterium when an Arius, a Nestorius, a Luther or a Tyrrel have come along. Subjectivity alone is not enough: it needs to be healed and it needs to be enlightened by the grace-filled truth of Christ.

The paradigm of Emmaus is so significant in this matter but often misused by catechists schooled in the approach of *Our Faith Story* to bolster up a false approach to catechetics and religious education. It was not that Jesus helped the two disciples to discover their own subjectivity, to make explicit the grace that already made them what they were; no, he said to them, “You foolish men!” He proceeded to teach them about the scriptures that were pointing to Him. It is true that he begins when he meets them on the road by asking about their discussion, that he takes them where they are; but this is because they are where they should not be – they need to come to faith, these foolish men so slow to believe what was in the scriptures.

Heythrop’s overview goes on, “In so far as the formal structure of doctrinal catechesis is not explicit in *Our Faith Story*, its ecclesial mediation represents a more explicitly ‘person-centred’ approach.” Here again is a central problem with such an approach. It implies that the formal structure of doctrinal catechesis is less person-centred than the approach of *Our Faith Story*. Nothing could be further from the truth. Again we would want to note that in *Faith* movement we do affirm the need to develop the traditional presentation of this point, as we briefly attempted, for instance, in our May editorial. But, living in a world where sin, violence, division and warfare are around us, activities embarked upon by believers and non-believers alike, it is hard to maintain that Fr Purnell’s vision is very reality-centred. How is it that a graced subjectivity, indeed one who’s nature is somehow constituted by grace, can engage in such actions? The whole approach of *Our Faith Story*, *Here I Am* and *Weaving the Web* lacks a serious catechesis on the reality of sin and, in particular, the damage of original sin with which each person is born. A truly “person-centred” approach would deal with these issues. But perhaps that would be a little too close to “the formal structure of doctrinal catechesis”. For although *Our Faith Story* does deal with some issues of “painful situations and responses in us – sense of guilt, failure, etc.”, yet it seeks to see them against the backdrop of cultural pressures and circumstances. Such a consideration can indeed be useful

but only if its foundation is in a more realistic account of the intrinsically wounded though redeemable and indeed redeemed nature of humanity.

The next two sentences of the footnote in *On the Way to Life* are of interest:

“While acknowledging these very considerable strengths, there is a risk that the doctrinal structure of faith, the grammar of the Church’s narrative, can be played down so that the actual incorporation into the ‘Church’s faith story’ is not as effective as it may be. *Our Faith Story* has proved its worth and is a rich, significant work of considerable insight and methodological wisdom which should not be lost.”

At least there is an explicit recognition of this “risk” and in the body of the document, what our May discussion saw as an inadequate attempt to mitigate this. The point is that this is more than a risk: it is the methodological problem with Fr Purnell’s approach. It is very hard to see the need for the historical mediation of revelation and grace by the Church in a system which sees each person as graced already. Furthermore, the doctrinal structure of faith is much more than the “grammar of the Church’s narrative”: it is the reality of communion with the Trinity through the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God made Man and the centre of all human history. The Church’s “faith story” is more than just a graced subjectivity: it is the response by the redeemed Bride of Christ, of which we are all members by Baptism (note, by Baptism, not by some a-sacramental graced subjectivity), to the Lord who lived, died and rose again in history and whom she awaits to complete all things in His Second Coming. This response is indeed already the work of grace, but this is the grace achieved and communicated to the Church by the Lord’s redemptive work. This is a work accomplished in history and mediated through the historical reality of the church. Ultimately it is indeed hard to see the proper place of doctrinal teaching as captured by the Catechism and emphasised by *Fit for Mission?: Schools* outside of this Catholic vision.

Has the Alternative Vision Borne Fruit?

The final sentence of the passage quoted above from the footnote makes for depressing reading. Apparently, *Our Faith Story* has achieved something which few of us actually see in the pastoral field: it has “proved its worth.” But it hasn’t. Indeed the past thirty years, and the past twenty-three years since the publication of Fr Purnell’s work have seen the virtual complete failure of this approach in catechetics and in religious education in our schools. Our schools, through no fault of the many highly dedicated teachers, have become factories of lapsation, where the overall peer pressure to lapse from the Faith is too strong for most young people. The content of religious education is too feeble to sustain faith and lacks the power to convince young people that there are reasons for believing and reasons for living their lives for God.

“It is indeed hard to see the proper place of doctrinal teaching as captured by the Catechism and emphasised by *Fit for Mission?* Schools outside of this Catholic vision.”

If the review of the CES of these programmes is going to use such documents as its background then we should all be very worried. Instead of using the Church's own teaching and approach, summed up in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the CES imagines that it is better to use the ideology which has dominated Catholic education in England and Wales for too long and with woeful results. The level of faith awareness among most children in our schools and among most adults is actually fairly low. The experience of many interested observers is that most young people who go to a secondary Catholic school are not sure what a sacrament actually is or does and would find it hard to name them. In one class this writer was told there were twenty-two, then nine, then three sacraments. Again this is not the fault of our teachers. They have to use the materials pressed upon them by diocesan education departments – and these mostly form part of the National Project. Of course those formed in the theological vision behind the National Project may well not think the above findings of factual ignorance are particularly lamentable. But this is our point. In terms of handing on a revealed, incarnational, religion and its 'saving truths' the National Project as presently constructed is not 'fit for purpose' and thus certainly not 'fit for mission'.

So what is the way forward? Bishop O'Donoghue's document shows the way – which in turn may partly explain the silence and shyness we highlighted at the beginning of this piece. By using the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* the bishop actually shows how Catholic education, and also ultimately catechesis, can be presented in an organic way. *Fit for Mission? Schools* says, "The organic structure of the Catechism of the Catholic Church is divided into four parts or movements corresponding to the four fundamental aspects of our life in Christ that we see in *The Acts of the Apostles*." It goes on to list the four pillars as the Profession of Faith, Sacraments, the Moral Life and Prayer. Then it tells us what Cardinal Schönborn said, that "the Four Pillars of the Catechism without doubt constitute the fundamental sources of the life, the faith, and the teaching of the Church" (page 27). Indeed, the whole basis for catechesis from the earliest times of the Church is summed up in these pillars. This has been a tried and tested pattern of handing on the Faith in the life of the Church. In the light of where British Catholics find themselves at this juncture it is particularly worrying that the CES clearly does not see this as the "foundation" or "background" for their review.

Some in this debate have pointed to a difference between catechesis and religious education. Yet while there is indeed a distinction between them, the distinction should not become a polarised dualism. In this regard Bishop O'Donoghue quotes the words of Pope John Paul II to the Bishops of England Wales: "Religious education is broader than catechesis but it must also include catechesis, since a principal goal of the Catholic faith must be to hand on the faith" (page 22).

The Catholic Vision: Based on the Holy Trinity

The ultimate reason for the unity of what we hand on is found in what God has said about Himself in Divine Revelation. As Bishop O'Donoghue writes, "The organic unity of faith flows from the perfect and infinite unity of the Most Holy Trinity. The *Catechism* is a synthesis of the faith, conveying the 'melodious symphony of revealed truth' that originates from God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (page 25).

In the Trinity, there is the most profound unity of Truth and Love, of Knowledge and of Life. At the heart of the celebration of Baptism and of Confirmation is a profession of Faith in the Persons of the Trinity. Indeed the Church's whole mission and life is one of leading humanity to communion with the Trinity, a communion that indeed reaches into our subjectivity, but which at the same time heals us and enlightens us and leads us to receive that which we could never attain by ourselves – a share in God's own life, in the immense glory of eternal life in the resurrected body of Jesus Christ. This is the true vision of the Church of the final meaning of human life, something that could and should be presented to young people as fundamental to their spiritual lives and indeed to every aspect of their lives. Human life is called as an entirety to be drawn into intimate union with the Trinity here and now, and in this way be transformed.

This is a far more beautiful vision than the limited ideology of *Our Faith Story*. It is not based upon one man's personal insight – his subjectivity – but on the real Life and Faith of the Church which is the handing on to each person of real transforming and divine life in Christ. This is the very reason why the CES should exist at all. It gives a real solidity to the spiritual life and if articulated well it can give a radical alternative to the secularism and relativism so prevalent in British culture today.

For an alternative is needed, a real answer, a Truth that fulfils the human heart and transforms it, and does not just abandon it to its subjectivity or even a collective subjectivity. Subjectivity needs interpreting, it needs correcting and it needs teaching. God has given the answer: it is called Revelation and it is handed on in fullness by the Catholic Church.

Bishop O'Donoghue's programme should therefore be welcomed loudly and clearly by every Catholic in our country. *The Tablet* claims to be "the International Catholic Weekly" but shows little in its editorial utterances and its editorial silence to show that it is indeed Catholic. The CES claims that it is "promoting and supporting Catholic education in England and Wales." But there is nothing on its website or public pronouncements to show that it even has an interest in, let alone support of, Lancaster Diocese's attempt.

For how many more decades will the silence of those who should be speaking continue?

Habits of Mind at *The Tablet*

1. False Assumptions in the Editorial Line

Fr David Barrett

The assumptions made by *The Tablet* throughout its issue for the fortieth anniversary of *Humanae Vitae* (26th July 2008) throw a light upon its editorial stance. They are pre-judged, never fully articulated or worked out, and they significantly damage even the magazine's interpretation of the survey of Catholic attitudes and actions which they published in that issue.

In her editorial, Catherine Pepinster reproaches Pope Paul VI for what she claims are his assumptions in *Humanae Vitae*, but she is painfully unaware of her own. For example, she writes,

"Thinking Catholics, who knew what had happened in Rome before the encyclical, who had absorbed all that Vatican II had to say about the Church as the People of God, had assumed that their concerns would be listened to and change in the Church's stance on birth control was inevitable."

The assumption here is that only unthinking Catholics did not expect or desire such a change in the Church's teaching. We can presume that not only was Pope Paul therefore necessarily an unthinking Catholic but also the then Karol Wojtila, or the other highly accomplished theologians and experts who formed the so-called 'minority group' of the Papal Commission set up to discuss the question of the contraceptive pill. *The Tablet's* unthinking characterisation is evidently ridiculous. Pope Paul was known as a subtle and profound thinker, and there have developed numerous schools of moral theology in the period since 1968 which not only think intelligently but also support and have sought to develop the teaching enshrined in *Humanae Vitae*.

This brings us to another assumption of *The Tablet*. Throughout the editorial there is no mention of the notable and profound development of the Church's teaching in the area of human sexuality in the Magisterial teaching of Pope John Paul II. Most serious schools of moral theology are attempting to get to grips with the huge legacy left to the Church in the area: John Paul carefully expounded the link between the Church's teaching on sexuality, which includes the question of contraception, with a more personalist approach to moral theology and also a deeper appreciation of the goodness and meaning of the human body as expressive of the person – the so-called 'Theology of the body'. To focus exclusively just on *Humanae Vitae*, notwithstanding that the 26th of July saw its 40th anniversary, and to use this text as the sole representative of the Church's teaching is to lose a sense of the continuum and real development that the articulation of the foundations for the Catholic Church's teaching on artificial contraception has seen in the period since then. If *The Tablet* is going to engage in an attack on the Church's teaching in this area, it cannot assume that the Church's teaching in this area was solely and exhaustively articulated in Pope Paul VI's encyclical. To do so is culpable if not in actual dissent then at the very least in ignorance.

The next interesting assumption of the editorial is to pronounce the survey undertaken as "definitive". For any student of ecclesiology the very term should raise a smile. For although the survey is described as definitive by the Magisterial editor, the Church's teaching is not deemed so – even though John

Ford and Germaine Grisez have argued most persuasively against Francis Sullivan that the teaching enshrined in *Humanae Vitae* (note, not the document itself but the teaching it articulates) fulfils the criteria of *Lumen Gentium* 25 for a teaching taught by the Ordinary Magisterium of the Church "as a teaching to be held as definitive" – that is, infallible. Indeed, the contrary assumption is found in several places in the 26th July edition of *The Tablet*. Charles Curran – a noted dissenter from the Church's teaching on this and other issues – has the following to say: "These issues are not core to Catholic faith but are somewhat peripheral. They fall under the accepted category of non-infallible (read: fallible) teaching." This is simply not true.

As Ford and Grisez have shown, and subsequent Magisterial teaching has expressed, the charism of infallibility extends to faith and morals – to specific moral norms, not just to matters directly revealed, but also to those matters closely connected (such as the Natural Law) to the Deposit of Faith and needed to safeguard that deposit. For a teaching to be infallible, it does not need to be defined formally by Pope or Council or be explicitly revealed. The conditions are plainly set out in the Second Vatican Council. One need only read *Lumen Gentium* 25. Yet, here Curran not only dissents from the Church's teaching on contraception but also denies a teaching of the Council itself.

If the matter were not so serious, it would be a cause for amusement to see *The Tablet* attribute to this survey a definitiveness which it denies to the actual Teaching Office of the Catholic Church. Perhaps the Lord should have said to Peter, "Upon this Tablet I will build my Church" – except that *The Tablet* seems more into the business of demolition than of construction. For evidence of this, one need only re-read the disgraceful attacks of the journal and its editor on the person and teaching of John Paul II after his death.

A last assumption in *The Tablet's* editorial concerns the character of modern non-acceptance of the Church's teaching. The editor informs us:

"*The Tablet's* survey of Mass-going Catholics in England... shows that, 40 years on, more than nine out of 10 of them do not think the use of condoms is wrong. That is their verdict on *Humanae Vitae*, though surprisingly half of them have never heard of it."

How can half of the nine out of 10 give a verdict on something they have not heard of? This is not an attempt to be clever in argument against *The Tablet*. We are simply highlighting the point that at least a major factor in the so-called rejection of the doctrine is that most people in Britain have never heard the doctrine adequately explained, never mind convincingly argued. The editor herself in her own article later in the issue interestingly highlights this silence in the Church, attributing it to a breakdown of communication between the Church hierarchy and the laity. Now there is a truth here, however it is not the whole truth. The deeper reason is that there has been an almost total lack of a compelling presentation of this doctrine as a life-giving truth and not just a Vatican policy that we are "stuck with". After all, the survey itself said that only 16 per cent were fully aware of *Humanae Vitae*, 37 per cent "somewhat aware" (whatever that means), and 47 per cent "not aware/never heard of it." Furthermore only 33 per cent had even had the issue discussed at their marriage preparation class.

“Many have not had a well reasoned and attractive presentation of the Church’s teaching.”

In reality, there is a growing number of clergy who accept this teaching and are seeking to show it in its positive and life-giving fullness in their pastoral work: many of them have had the opportunity to be involved in movements which embrace the Church’s teaching and/or have come into contact with *Humanae Vitae* for themselves and subsequent Magisterial teaching. Some clergy are afraid that by teaching the doctrine they will lose their people. Yet it is the experience of many that if it is taught within the full context of the nature of the human person and of relationships and sexuality, it is more readily welcomed than *The Tablet* supposes. This author has found many people more positively receptive to the teaching than he would ever have imagined.

There is a last reason for the silence. It is akin to the silence in the Church concerning the Nicene Creed for about 20 years or so after its formulation in 325: there were many bishops and clergy in the East who did not accept *homoousios* and who thought that silence, obfuscations and subsequent formulations of the creed would sweep away this inconvenient and troublesome doctrine. The same is true today. Many – even bishops and clergy – see the teaching concerning contraception to be troublesome, inconvenient or even false. When the strength of argument began to swing against them the Arians of the fourth century changed tack and decided to focus on a particular individual – Athanasius – in order to defeat the teaching. It was a clever tactic which almost succeeded: but many in the West realised that a condemnation of Athanasius was in reality a condemnation of Nicea. So too today, instead of engaging with the entirety of the twentieth century Magisterial teaching concerning artificial contraception – Pius XI, Pius XII, Paul VI, John Paul II – *The Tablet* focuses on *Humanae Vitae* and seeks to knock that down so as to knock the whole edifice of teaching in this area. For over forty years *The Tablet* has remained vociferous in its campaign against the teaching. It is not to be congratulated for this consistency, but to be pitied. How sad that a once great Catholic publication should become an instrument of something so counter to the Catholic spirit – and more akin to the machinations of fourth century heresy. Now is the time for clergy and people to get to grips with what the Church really has to say and not to read everything through the misleading prism of an organ of dissent.

2. Ignorance of Sin in the Sex and Relationships Survey

Fr Hugh MacKenzie

The Von Hügel Institute’s relationships survey, as presented in *The Tablet*’s 26th July issue, seems seriously flawed. It cannot be used as an indicator of the moral belief concerning contraception of Mass-going Catholics in England. Yet this is how they have tried to use it, in their editorial and in their news report “Catholics shun Church contraception doctrine”. Reports in other publications have also used it in this way.

Their mistake appears to be to equate the admission of past use of contraception with currently holding the *belief* that it is morally acceptable. Many people sometimes, or for a while, act contrary to sincerely held convictions (by committing a sin), and other people, given time, come to recognise past behaviour as wrong (they may repent and convert). So on two counts past use of contraceptives need not imply any degree of approval in the present. It would appear to be something of a shock, not

to say disappointment, to *The Tablet*’s mindset, but a Catholic who has acted against Church teaching does not necessarily join that magazine in attempting to justify their action through dissent. Repentance of disobedience is a real option for some. How many? We don’t know, for the survey designers, as we shall now see, seem oblivious to this phenomenon.

The Tablet presents statistical tables which imply that they asked people if they “had used” contraceptives. In answering yes to this, the respondent is not expressing an opinion. Respondents could alternatively answer “Never use”, or “Would use”. The latter seems to mean “wouldn’t mind using”. Those not answering are described as “expressing no opinion”. But those in the “have used” column are not expressing an opinion either. “Wouldn’t mind using” does seem to be expressing an opinion, and “Never use” could be taken to be saying “would mind using”, and, at something of a stretch, to be saying, as *The Tablet* assumes it is, “I believe it’s morally wrong”.

But “have used” does not necessarily correspond with moral acceptance at the time, let alone now. Ignoring this fact leads to misleading conclusions. For instance, they conclude from increasing “Never use” figures for increasing age groups that “More of the older respondents say that using various means of contraception, including condoms, would be wrong.” This is not justified. We just do not know the percentages who “Have used” a particular type of contraceptive who believe it is morally wrong. It is quite possible that the “Have used” figures for young people contain a higher proportion of people who believed it was wrong back then or believe it is wrong now.

The Tablet’s editorial tells us that “more than nine out of 10 (respondents) do not think that the use of a condom is wrong”. This seems to be based upon the survey report’s affirmation that “only 9 per cent said they wouldn’t use (condoms) as it would be wrong.” Now “wouldn’t use ... as it would be wrong” is, as we said above, if given some lee-way, a possible interpretation of the “Never use” answer. But as we’ve pointed out this does not include those who once used them but think they are wrong. Indeed there seems to be more than 9 per cent who think it’s wrong because “a total of 15.7 per cent regarded the teaching (of the Church on contraception) as right.”

The Tablet editorial has maintained the category confusion, which might more accurately be called a disregard for the phenomena of sin and conversion. In proudly telling us how many do not agree with Church teaching on condoms they seem to have ignored those who did once use them even though their belief was then and/or is now that it is wrong.

Based upon this statistical analysis *The Tablet* editorial has the Church shuddering in our seats concerning the “Verdict of the people”: “... the time has come”, it tells us, “to face the reality of Catholics and contraception by means of this definitive survey, in the interests of truth.”

In the interests of the “definitive” truth of the “verdict” which *The Tablet* is throwing at our feet, it would of course be very helpful to see the actual questions asked. Despite communications and conversations with *The Tablet* and the Von Hügel Institute the actual questions didn’t quite arrive on our desk. Is it actually “in the interests of” divine truth or a political agenda that this survey has been undertaken? We think we should be told. ■

Letting Go of the Right to Teach Catholicism

Joanna Bogle

Joanna Bogle, a Catholic journalist, brings out the contribution that is being made by the Catholic unpreparedness to teach effectively on marriage and related issues towards making it illegal to do so.

'Being a Catholic isn't just something for church on Sundays' we are told, and simply because that's a modern cliché doesn't mean it isn't true. I think it captures one of the reasons why I try to propagate, through my chosen profession of journalism, the Church's message on marriage and family.

I follow up stories concerning the latest research and statistics on marriage. I'm interested in social trends concerning marriage – both here in Britain, in Europe, and in the rest of the world. I take part in debates on the subject in the mass media. I talk about it in schools. I'm the editor of a paperback (*"Engaged to be Married"*, Gracewing Books, 2001) produced by a Catholic women's organization and in use by RC marriage preparation groups.

So I've got a problem. I'll come to the details of the problem in a moment. But first I must establish the nature of the thing.

What is Marriage?

When I speak of marriage, I mean the lifelong bond of a man and a woman, as defined in the law of England and Wales and as established in culture, tradition, testimony and Canon Law by the Church.

The law sets the tone, establishes the basis of the social relationship of marriage and confirms its status in the community. I became aware of this in a particular way. When I married some 25 years ago, it was in a Roman Catholic Church but due to a falling-out between the local registration authority and our parish priest which had occurred a year or two earlier, it was necessary for brides from our parish to go to the local Register Office and arrange personally for someone to come along to the ceremony to witness the legal side of things and sign the relevant papers. I expected this to be a quick matter of a phone call – but discovered this was not the case. Marriage was taken seriously. On arrival at the Register Office I was ushered into a rather grand office and asked to take a seat.

"Now. Marriage under the law of England and Wales is the union of a man and a woman, exclusive of others, for life" said the kindly, rather serious official in front of me. "Can you confirm that you understand that?" And with a seriousness that I had not known I would feel, and a sense of solemnity about what I was considering undertaking, I answered "Yes."

I appreciated then – and appreciate now – the solemnity with which the matter was approached. As he proceeded to explain to me what I needed to know (including the information that, when making my vows, I must speak loudly enough for the registrar, sitting in the front pew, to hear me!), I was very much aware that I was embarking on something that was of huge legal and social as well as personal and spiritual significance. I have never forgotten it, and that spring day in 1980 is as etched on my mind as the later September day when Jamie and I made our vows together before God

with all the glory of a Mozart Mass and bridal finery and hugs and the tears and fun and joy of a family wedding.

So what's my problem? The problem is that by reiterating what I was told by that registrar, let alone what was stated in church and what I know and believe as a Catholic concerning marriage, I could, under certain circumstances, be in legal trouble.

As a Catholic journalist and commentator on these issues, I am – or have been up until now – sometimes invited into schools and colleges to take part in conferences and seminars on marriage and linked issues. You know the sort of thing: Religious Education lesson, or General Studies, or Sixth Form debating group...programme for the year...um...capital punishment...vegetarianism...hunting...smoking...oh, and something about sex and relationships of course...um... maybe that woman who was on the TV, she does the hard-line Catholic bit...

And up until now I have welcomed all such opportunities, indeed relished them.

A Beautiful Vision to Offer

"By its very nature, the institution of marriage and married love is ordered toward the procreation and education of the offspring and it is in them that it finds its crowning glory... Sexuality is ordered to the conjugal love of man and woman. In marriage the physical intimacy of the spouses becomes a sign and pledge of spiritual communion. Marriage bonds between baptised persons are sanctified by the sacrament". (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1652, 2360).

In explaining the Christian understanding of marriage – and the fact that it echoes the natural law written into the very fabric of our being, and undergirds the law of our country which governs how we are to live – I have been privileged to be part of some excellent classroom discussions, heard some forthright views, been touched by young people's statements of their beliefs and hopes and aspirations.

But under the Sexual Orientation Regulations, effective from April 30th 2007 and passed with rather minimal Parliamentary debate despite a valiant attempt in the House of Lords to tackle them properly, it is going to be difficult for me to talk about marriage in schools any more, or even to be of much use as a visiting Catholic journalist. The new regulations expressly ban my doing anything which might make pupils of homosexual inclinations uncomfortable. Suggesting – let alone firmly stating – that marriage is, by definition, a bond between a man and a woman, is going to be rather too antagonistic. Affirming the Catholic Church's position on other sexual relationships, including the homosexual one, is going to be trickier still unless I am prepared (which I'm not) to state that it is possible that the Church is wrong and/

“...a clear defence of the rights of all Catholics to speak and act in accordance with our teaching ... is called for.”

or that other opinions on homosexual activity are of equal moral worth and validity, and/or that I recognise that everyone has the right to affirm his or her own sexual desires in his or her own way.

“Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, Tradition has always declared that ‘homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered’. They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved”. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2357). I have never actually quoted that in a school, and have no particular desire to do so. In general, I steer well away from the subject. I’m concerned to communicate the facts about the Church’s message on marriage, and/or my own involvement with this as a Catholic journalist. But if the issue comes up (“Well, what d’ya think about, like, gays, then?”) I am certainly prepared to quote the Catechism and to explain that I support its teaching – and I’d probably link the section just quoted with the next, which says, among other things: “The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. They do not choose their homosexual condition: for most of them it is a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided” (*Catechism* 2358). I might go on to add that such people are not just a “they” – for among such people are personal friends, people I enormously like and whose company I enjoy.

So what am I to do? Probably, I’m not going to be asked to speak about marriage or relationships much more anyway. I have benefited from a desire in some – not many – schools to attempt to put “both sides” of the debate on relationships, so getting in someone who has links with the “pro-life”, Catholic, pro-family, or just vaguely Christian, network has been a way of offering a little more than the usual school-nurse-with-contraceptives deal. But it now seems likely this will cease, or gently dry up.

Will there be a test case, getting this whole thing examined in the courts? The stated idea is that people of various “sexual orientations” should not be denied “goods or services”. It was made clear to the Bishops that adoptive children are, in this instance, to be regarded as “goods and services”. Church adoption societies cannot, while remaining true to the Church, offer children to homosexual couples who by their lifestyle openly oppose Catholic teaching.

An Ecclesiastical ‘Hot Potato’?

The dioceses of Westminster and Lancaster seem prepared to maintain their integrity in this regard and leave themselves open to prosecution. Others seem to be allowing their agencies to close and the dioceses of Southwark, Arundel and Brighton and Portsmouth, appear to have decided to create a new society, to be called the Cabrini Society, which will take on adoption work, while being officially a non-Catholic organization, not formally affiliated to the diocese.

The aim, presumably, is to be able to continue providing services and obey the law whilst assuring the authorities in Rome that no, no, this is in no way a Catholic group, it’s wholly independent, we can’t be responsible.

But as I have mentioned it is not only the adoption issue that is at stake. There are all sorts of other issues – including that of the right to teach about marriage, human relationships, the significance of our being male and female, and much more.

This is because “denial of goods and services” will, it seems, be linked to the notion that people must be free from any sort of harassment – which could include being told, in a classroom, that certain activities are “intrinsically disordered” or that a civil marriage with a person of the same-sex is simply not a marriage as understood by the Catholic Church.

The secular challenge to Catholic teaching, which has already had such a confusing effect upon our people, is reaching a new level. A continued lack of authoritative Catholic rebuttal of this redefinition of sexual morality and of any convincing reaffirmation of Catholic teaching on ‘gay’ and related issues will permit deeper malaise. At this present juncture a clear defence of the rights of all Catholics to speak and act in accordance with our teaching and a well-formed conscience is called for. At present, we are leaving it to the Evangelicals to speak out – as a recent tribunal case (on the right of a Christian to refuse to officiate at a same-sex “wedding”) has shown. But it is properly the task of the Catholic Church, and it needs to be done with love, courage, unity and a sense of commitment to the common good.

It is also a matter for concern that there has been inadequate discussion of this in the Catholic press. The *Catholic Herald* has run one or two news items but seems to prefer not to tackle the moral teaching issue, being busy with liturgical matters. *The Tablet* fails, at every turn, to see beyond “gay rights” myopia and to consider threats to magisterial teaching.

The Lay Vocation’s Need of Support

As a lay Catholic, trying to make my faith more than a Sunday thing, I frankly need and deserve this support and leadership from my Bishops. That is the sort of teamwork envisaged by the Second Vatican Council when it urged people like me to take up positions in community life and work to build a society and culture on sound human values.

Speaking in schools is only a small part of my work and journalistic talents can be flexible. I might decide to open up a new area of work by producing materials for weddings – helping with Orders of Service, choosing nice quotes for wedding-programmes or menus. If I am then approached by a lesbian couple and politely decline to do business with them, I could be prosecuted, even if I simply find some polite excuse and express it in a pleasant and friendly way, designed not to give offence. If I was helping to run a publication and we chose not to have an advertisement from some organization promoting homosexual marriage, there could be legal consequences. And so on and so on.

Letting Go of the Right to Teach Our Faith

continued

What do I do? What do any of us do? Shrug, I suppose, and admit that male/female marriage is now a personal thing. Something to be spoken of with confidence only within the confines of our church (they are protected under the law – an echo of the old Soviet legislation which confined all religious activity to church buildings, with penalties for anyone who took part in Christian activities beyond those walls). Something to be affirmed as a private belief, for those who like that sort of thing. Technically, for the time being at least, the law of England and Wales will continue to affirm that marriage is a lifelong bond between a man and a woman – but will a registrar have quite the same confidence in uttering those words as that nice chap had in saying them to me a quarter of a century ago? He has presumably long since retired, and I expect his successor has been fully trained in officiating at Civil Unions – homosexual marriage in all but name. A Catholic, according to a detailed and useful statement issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, should not officiate at such a ceremony. But is it likely that any Catholic in modern Britain who tried to affirm his conscientious objection to such duty would get very far?

We all know the Church itself is compromised – sinners within its own ranks (those hideous clergy-abuse cases: no use in pointing out that the numbers were tiny, statistically insignificant compared to members of other professions – that's not the point), disloyalty to Church teachings ("Who listens to the Pope anyway?"), confusion among teachers and pastors and even Bishops, a desire to fit in with the ways of the world, and not appear "right wing" or eccentric.

So where do we go from here? The Sexual Orientation Regulations were pushed through into law by a prominent Catholic, Secretary of State Ruth Kelly. She is a member of Opus Dei (I checked with their official spokesman at their London office). If Opus Dei tried to expel her, there would be an outcry: look at this terrible group, ganging up against a defenceless woman and interfering in the freedom of someone in public life to do whatever she believes is right!

Who will come to the defence of another public woman, standing in a classroom or some other public place, stating what she believes is right? Because if you're prepared to do so, contact me. I'd like to go on defending marriage, and it would be useful to reflect about the best manner in which to do so.

Other Angles

The Challenge to Greek Epistemology of Clever Observation *by Peter Hodgson*

"To become perfect", remarked Newman, "one must change often". Our knowledge and our understanding are inevitably limited and if we are to grow we must add to our knowledge and correct any misunderstandings. This requires receptivity and flexibility as well as humility in the face of reality.

Scientists are well aware of this. Very often they will have a well-developed theory about some aspect of the natural world that is suddenly confronted with a contrary fact. For example, physicists had always believed in the conservation of parity, namely that the mirror image of an experiment would give the same result. This was considered obvious, and any theoretical formalism had to conserve parity. Then Lee and Yang asked themselves whether it had ever been proved and found that it had not. So they devised an experiment to test parity conservation and when the experiment was done it was found that parity was not conserved. This was entirely unexpected. Schwinger believed that "parity was too lovely a symmetry to be easily abandoned", but when he received a telephone call from Rabi with news of the experiment he sadly announced: "Gentlemen, we must bow to nature". There were regrets, but no hesitation in accepting the verdict of experiment.

There are many other examples. The conservative Planck tried to find the spectral distribution of the black-body radiation. He succeeded, but to his dismay found that to derive his formula he had to assume that the radiation is emitted not continuously but in discrete quanta. He tried for years to avoid this unwelcome result, but in the end he had to accept it.

Not everyone accepts results contrary to their cherished beliefs. Many philosophers in medieval times believed that Aristotle had said the last word on every subject and that the answers to all problems could be found in his works. One of them attended an anatomical demonstration that nerves come from the brain and not from the heart, so that the heart is not the centre of our intellect and emotions, as Aristotle taught. He was asked if this convinced him, and he replied: "I would have believed what I see if Aristotle had not taught the contrary". Another of these Aristotelian philosophers refused to look through Galileo's telescope.

Sometimes a belief is so strong that it prevents us even seeing any contrary evidence. A remarkable example of such blindness is provided by the supernova of 1052. This was seen and recorded in China, but there is no mention of it in medieval records. Aristotle said that the heavens are unchangeable, so it could not be there, and so was not seen.

Doris Lessing has written "Research into the workings of the human mind shows that a percentage are incapable of changing their minds, no matter what the evidence. If they have been imprinted at some point in their lives with, let's say, the information that all cats are black, then for ever after they will say that all cats are black, even if they are paraded before them with labels saying White Cats".

The scientific mindset is against such closure of the mind. ■

The Holy Trinity and the Psychological Analogy *by John Navone S. J.*

The revelation of the Triune God inevitably has implications for our understanding of human personhood. From the time of Augustine through the medievals and despite their fascination with Aristotle, the prime analogate in the Christian explanation of the divine activity has been the self, the human person. The history of the biblical community of faith, from Abraham forward, has ever taken the narrative form of a cognitive-affective response to a personal call. When God chose to be revealed perspicuously, it was in the person of Jesus. When theologians, on a more reflective note, elaborated the consequences of this revelation in calling on the conceptual resources available to them to delineate the inner life of God, they fleshed out the category of relation with analogical reference to “persons”. And when Augustine, followed by Aquinas, offered a more developed treatment of the Triune God, it was with reference to the intentional capacities of human persons to relate to their world through understanding and the love which follows upon it.

Given the analogy between the Holy Trinity and human consciousness, Hugo Meynell finds a practical or pastoral significance in the comparison (“*The Holy Trinity and the Corrupted Consciousness*,” in *Theology*, May 1976, pp. 143 -151). He finds the clue in the doctrine that we are created in the image of God and its corollary that it is our paramount duty and interest to preserve and foster the reflection within ourselves of God who is true conception because of unrestricted understanding and infinite love. Our prime sin and the source of all our other sins, is that distortion and inversion of the divine image which consists of the mutual reinforcement of ignorance and misplaced affection. This, Meynell argues, is the road to hell, which is the absence of God. For the more we distort the divine image in us, the more motive we have to avoid God; since to come closer to God is to come closer to the truth about ourselves and the more we have protected our self-esteem with self-deception the more painful this is.

The Western form of the doctrine of the Trinity is that God as Father “begets” God as Son and God as Holy Spirit “proceeds” from both. Interpreted in terms of psychological analogy, this is to say that infinite understanding forms a conception of itself and infinite love is formed in accordance with this conception. As forming this conception God is Father, as the conception so formed God is Son and as the love evinced in accordance with this conception God is the Holy Spirit. In God’s understanding, conceiving and loving of himself, God understands, conceives and loves all else that exists. To be asked to share in the divine life, as Christians believe humankind has been, is to be invited to an unimaginable increase in that understanding and loving which are themselves nothing but a creaturely image of the Triune God.

The psychological analogy is not entirely without scriptural foundation. John says that God is light and love (1 Jn 1:5, 4:8, 16); and for “light” one may well read knowledge or understanding. He speaks of an eternal Word who is with God and of a Spirit who come both from God and from his Son who is the Word (Jn 1:1, 2; 16:13-15). Also, he says that to love and to hold to the truth is to share the life of God the Father, the Son and the Spirit; whereas lies, malice and even murder manifest the refusal and repudiation of this life (Jn 1:10; 5:24; 13:34-5; 14:15-17, 21,23: 15:21; 16:2-3; 17:25).

The corrupted consciousness, for Meynell, is a kind of inverted image of the Trinity as conceived in the psychological analogy. It is the mark of the person of such consciousness that he cannot “face” himself because he hates himself as he would conceive himself if he proceeded honestly in accordance with the available evidence. He has to abuse understanding to form a conception of himself sufficiently gratifying to his self-esteem. If in God perfect love is evinced in accordance with a conception which is framed in accordance with unrestricted understanding, in ourselves it is always to a considerable extent the case that distorted love and avoidance of understanding reinforce one another. The same applies to our relations with others. It we have a clear conception of the effect we have on others and of how others see us in consequence of this, it is liable to wound our self-esteem. It is more agreeable and less intellectually and morally exacting, either to form a false conception of their attitude towards ourselves, or to affect hatred and contempt towards them for their actual attitude, or to settle for some compromise between these two. The same applies to relations between groups. Social lies buttress the self-esteem of rival groups. Shattering our illusion systems is a painful business. Illusions would not be so prevalent if they did not serve some useful purpose. Admission of individual or group self-deception, of basic theoretical error or moral fault, may seem to threaten the collapse of an entire way of life or system of values. We tend to shirk the moral shock of self-recognition.

We become faithful images of the Trinity to the extent that we increase in true conception and honourable love of ourselves and of one another. (The commandment to love our neighbours as ourselves presupposes a properly ordered self-love). The gift of God’s Word of truth and Spirit of love enables us to face the truth about ourselves with the courage to deal with our illusions and rationalisations. We corrupt the divine image to the extent that we avoid understanding and distort conception in the interests of hatred and contempt and foster both in deference to misunderstanding and misconception.

The life of the community of faith reflects that of the triune God. Its activities – believing, hoping, loving, serving, preaching, and teaching – originate in the Father. The meaningfulness of those activities is that of the Father’s Word (Logos). The joy of the community engaged in these activities is that of the Spirit of both Father and Son/Word. The beatitudes are the joy of the Christian community in the meaningful life it receives from the Father, transfiguring it into the living icon of the triune God for the transformation of all mankind.

Irenaeus of Lyons allegorically calls the Son and the Holy Spirit the “hands of God” (*Adversus Haereses* 5, 1, 3; 5, 5, 1; 5, 28, 1). Irenaeus believes that the Father is always at work in human history, shaping mankind into the image of the triune communion of the three divine Persons, because the words “*Let us make mankind after our image and likeness*” are addressed by the Father to the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father creates embraces and draws all mankind to himself through his Son/Word and Spirit/Love. He draws all mankind with his two “hands” into the triune communion. ■

Loss and Retrieval of the Holy Trinity in Catechesis *Caroline Farey*

The Director of the BA in Applied Theology (Catechesis) at Maryvale Institute, Birmingham, discerns a worrying weakness at the heart of modern British catechesis, and suggests ways forward. Miss Farey also teaches philosophy at Oscott seminary.

Is the doctrine of the Holy Trinity actually taught any more? This may sound like an alarmist question. One would imagine that the sign of the cross and its accompanying words, 'In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen', are still used and explained by the vast majority of Catholic parents, catechists and teachers. Sadly, this is not as common as one might have presumed in the past. In many catechetical resources the Blessed Trinity is no longer mentioned at all. In this article I'll be highlighting three simple points: a) that the Trinity is being eliminated from Catholic teaching materials, b) that this matters, and c) that we can know the reasons why the Trinity is not being taught and can thus retrieve effectively the very foundation of Christian faith, hope and love.

The editor of *The Sower* recently revealed the following statistic: the report of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales Working Party on Sacramental Initiation, *On the Threshold*, "manages to compile a 66 page report of recommendations about RCIA without once referring to the Trinity, to the Father, to the Son or to the Holy Spirit".¹ The text uses unvaryingly the word 'God' throughout. Another document, from the Catholic Education Service, called, *On the Way to Life*,² subtitled, 'A framework for Catholic Education, Catechesis and Formation', in its 99 pages, mentions the Trinity only once and that is in a quotation from Pope John Paul II. An electronic search of the document for 'God the Father' reveals that the phrase appears only twice and each time as part of the title of Mary Daly's book, *Beyond God the Father*!³

Of course, these are not catechetical programmes in themselves but guidance documents. Surely, you might say, actual sacramental programmes will be imbued with references to the persons of the Trinity? At a recent diocesan day for catechists it was discovered that, in the participants' examples of catechesis of the Christmas story, not a single catechist present referred to Jesus either as God or as the Son of God. Such catechesis about Christmas will be portrayed as a story of a strangely extraordinary man (or baby) if it is not explicitly taught that Jesus is God become man, Son of God sent by his Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. More and more frequently one finds catechetical texts referring to 'Jesus' and to 'God' and 'Jesus praying to God' as though he were a man like us and not God, or with a special relationship (never explained) with God.

There are, then, different ways of *not* teaching the doctrine of the Trinity. One, as we have seen, is by omission; the other

is by teaching heresy. For example, the adult formation programme for the Archdiocese of Westminster, *At your Word Lord*, began with a session on the Trinity as 'three aspects' of the one God. These three aspects, it continues, have a loving relationship with each other. The notion of aspects rather than persons having a loving relationship, sadly increases the confusion. Resources for children's liturgy almost invariably teach children the heresy of modalism on Trinity Sunday, prompting children to draw (or even wear in the offertory procession) three different types of hat.

Does it Matter?

Yes! And the reasons why it matters are summed up in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 'The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them.'⁴ There are four key phrases here that might awaken us.

Firstly, if the Trinity is not portrayed as central, consciously or unconsciously, then something else will be in the central place instead. *The General Directory for Catechesis* asks for all catechesis to be Christocentric and Trinitarian.⁵ Whatever else is placed centrally, then, is, by that very fact, out of its rightful place. This in turn causes disorder in all the other doctrines and in their relationships with each other. *The General Directory for Catechesis* speaks of the necessary internal structure of catechesis in the following way:

'Every mode of presentation must always be christocentric-trinitarian: "Through Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit" (cf Eph2:18). "If catechesis lacks these three elements or neglects their proper relationship, the Christian message can certainly lose its proper character"'.⁶

Secondly, the Catechism reminds us that the mystery of the Trinity is the mystery of God in *himself*. It is primarily a revelation about God, about the immanent Trinity. A fundamental point of Christianity compared to a typical pagan understanding of God is that God is not a higher part of the created world but utterly other, and is not there simply for our sake. The Christian faith in the Holy Trinity can be too easily reduced to a natural Deism, a non-revelatory religion of a metaphorical father-God, father of creation and of us but not Divine Father of a Divine Son and Spirit; not Trinity in himself. There is a natural tendency in man 'to make pagan the Christian sense of the divine'.⁷ It is 'the normal tendency of reason to situate itself within the world and its necessities and to define everything within that context'.⁸ Von Balthasar, in a similar

vein, speaks of an ‘Islamisation’ of the Christian God.⁹ Catechetical texts that speak only of God-creator, God-redeemer, God-sanctifier, risk neglecting the mystery of God as he is in himself, as distinct from the relationship of God towards creation.

Thirdly, let us consider the implications of the revelation of the Trinity as being the *source* of all the other mysteries of faith. Where do all the doctrines of the faith come from? How do they all hold together? How can we speak of a unity of truth and faith without the *Source* of all being proclaimed? What stunting of reason occurs in the mind and then the heart of the believer who is not given acquaintance with the Source of all life and the whole faith? What happens to one’s understanding of Jesus Christ if one does not recognise him in the Trinity, what happens to an understanding of the Holy Spirit, salvation, the Church?

“...if the Trinity is not portrayed as central ... then something else will be in the central place instead.”

Rahner asserts in his much quoted book on the Trinity that the doctrine of the Trinity made so little difference to people’s lives that few would miss it if it disappeared. Perhaps it is true that people are largely unconscious of the Trinity as a source of their Christian beliefs and the effect of this in their lives but since the Catholic faith draws all its belief and grace from it, I suspect it deeply imbues Christian life, whether one realises it or not. *The General Directory for Catechesis*, says that ‘the presentation of the innermost being of God ... has vital implications for the lives of human beings’¹⁰ and it goes on to give examples.

So, does the doctrine of the Trinity matter? *The Cruelty of Heresy*, by C. FitzSimons Allison,¹¹ argues that heresy, by distorting the truth, distorts our beliefs, our deductions from those beliefs and so our behaviour towards ourselves, towards God, towards our neighbour and towards creation. The distortions hurt mankind cruelly, and through this cause damaging social patterns and structures. When Allison was asked in an interview what it is that makes heresy cruel, he identified the problem very simply: ‘It panders to our worst inclinations.’¹²

Fourthly, and most poignantly, the Catechism says that this mystery gives the *light* needed to enlighten all the mysteries of faith. Without light people are left in darkness, in error, in ignorance, in confusion, in blind faith. Without the light-source itself people are left in pitch darkness, with no true guidance, no ability to see. It is then not possible to see the truth of the Church’s teaching, or how to worship, or the meaning of life in Christ or how or to whom to pray. Removal of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity from catechesis entails a loss of light from the faith of those being catechised.

The doctrine of the Trinity is the *only* light that can truly enlighten catechesis. Any catechesis that does not start, continue and conclude with explicit prayer and reference to the Trinity is in grave danger. Sadly, for, example, there is a widely-used book of prayers¹³ supposedly ‘in the spirit of Vatican II’ in which every prayer ends ‘In the name of God. Amen’. Not only is ‘God’ not a name but the ‘name’ of God has been revealed to us, firstly to Moses from the burning bush and lastly by the Son of God who taught us to pray, ‘Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name.’¹⁴

A repeated tripartite formula for a blessing is provided in the same book:

“O God, we love you without end. O Spirit, we listen to your voice. O Jesus, we adore you.”

At no point does he use the terms Father and Son, so at no point is it clear that Jesus and the Spirit are also God, persons of the One Triune God. The implicit indication is that there are three beings, God, a spirit and someone named Jesus. The author of the book, Bill Huebsch was the key note speaker in the UK in 2007, in the dioceses of Westminster, Plymouth and Portsmouth, and his books are widely available, and attractive, as is his specially set up UK website.

Reasons for Loss; Solutions for Retrieval

There may be many reasons for the loss of teaching on the Trinity in much current catechesis; I would like to mention five that are widespread in my experience.¹⁵ The solutions for each are not difficult but sustaining good practice and retrieval of it needs consciously to take place.

Firstly, one can speak simply of ignorance. One cannot teach what one doesn’t know. There are catechists who simply don’t know, for example, that Jesus is really God. Neo-Arianism, (‘Jesus is a very special divine-like person’) Neo-Nestorianism (‘The man Jesus was united with God in some way’) and Neo-Adoptionism (‘Jesus was a man adopted by God because he lived a holy life’) are rife.

The logical solution is to re-instate on-going formation for catechists in love and appreciation of the Trinitarian foundations and formulas. These, in practice unite us to Christ in his filial relationship with his Father and thus sustain in us a living and lively faith.

A second reason is simply that many people find teaching the Trinity difficult. There is generally a confusion here about teaching a mystery.

Parents and catechists need encouragement to understand that a mystery is not a difficult puzzle to be solved, or something so abstractly theological that only theologians should attempt to tackle it.

Every catechist can be helped to transmit the reality of our tri-personal God of self-giving Love as a mystery revealed, to be proclaimed and embraced.

Loss and Retrieval of the Holy Trinity in Catechesis

continued

A *third reason* is the result of 'betrayed trust'. Eamonn Keane speaks in his book on catechesis of a 'generation betrayed'.¹⁶ How does this happen? There are faithful Catholics who offer to help in catechesis, who believe in the Trinity and are actively discouraged to do so by certain books or conference speakers; their faith falters which then affects their teaching of the faith to others. Some no longer speak of the Trinity because they are no longer sure what the Church teaches or they think that they have been naïve all along to speak in terms of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, terms that they have now heard called 'antiquated' or 'paternalistic'.

The start of a solution here is for every priest, parent and catechist to be attentive to the books and conference speakers in this regard; to check resources for the occurrence of the terms 'Blessed Trinity', 'God the Father', 'Jesus, Son of God', and to take seriously avoidance of such terms.

Fourthly, the use of gendered names has become a stumbling block. Many accept the validity of the plea for inclusive language to make explicit the inclusion of women in the story of salvation and the life of the Church. They cease to be aware of, or to follow, the age old analogous understanding of 'man' as standing for the whole human race as a unity. Two key underlying reasons exist for this, one, the desire to include women in the patriarchal magisterium of the Church, and secondly, the individualism of the Western world at this present time is no longer comfortable with such a sense of the unity of the human race because of the moral obligations that it implies. Male gender terms such as Father and Son, but also words such as, filial, sonship, master, or bridegroom, 'all come under a hermeneutic of suspicion and are quietly dropped'.¹⁷

Catechists and parents need encouragement to trust the language of the Church, language that has fed the people of God for 2,000 years, to trust the hierarchical nature of the Church and find the unique dignity of women within the plan of salvation as taught by the Church.¹⁸

Fifthly, there are catechetical resources influenced by an antipathy towards the hierarchical nature of the Church. These are recognised primarily by their pedagogy, a pedagogy that deliberately avoids male gendered language in order to reduce the sense and origin of a male priesthood and hierarchy. One example of this is the catechetical approach of Thomas Groome. His approach was partly influenced by the 'pedagogy of the oppressed' of Paulo Friere.¹⁹ *The General Catechetical Directory*, on the other hand, speaks of the importance for catechesis of following the 'pedagogy of God'.²⁰ Both pedagogies claim to be pedagogies of liberation; the difference is that the 'pedagogy of God' is the way the Blessed Trinity lovingly, persistently and mercifully offers to man liberation from sin by the death and resurrection of Christ, from one generation to the next. The 'pedagogy

of the oppressed' is an educational process for revolution, designed to stimulate a critical consciousness in its participants so that 'the old paternalistic teacher-student relationship is overcome'²¹ and new beliefs are formulated for the sake of transforming the future.

Loss of Fatherhood

Thomas Groome has developed this pedagogy in the context of the Church as a five-step process known as 'Shared Christian praxis'.²² He starts with the raising of consciousness about one's current way of life (sharing of experience); then follows a period of listening to a passage from Scripture or the Church's teaching, followed by opportunities for personal and communal decision-making about the future and the beliefs one might choose to hold. The purpose of the process is to overcome what is perceived in the Church as a 'paternalistic teacher-student relationship' in passing on the deposit of faith from generation to generation, and to help people form their own religious beliefs equally and mutually.²³

In the 'shared Christian praxis' approach Gospel truths, then, are preceded by, and compared and contrasted with, the shared experience of the participants. When, for example, the experience of fatherhood is shared as a negative one (and no earthly fathers are perfect), catechists using this method find it almost impossible to then speak of God as Father, Son and Spirit, a Trinitarian God of love, let alone explain the Church's teaching on it.

An underlying element in the approach is to eradicate paternalistic language received from earlier generations. Groome asks catechists to 'help end sexism in the Church by not teaching it, and by teaching for inclusion and mutuality'.²⁴ Groome, (and thus resources using his pedagogy) is against teaching children the Trinitarian prayers of the Church and particularly of the liturgy. He says, for example, 'An issue of particular concern for catechists is the strong tradition in primary catechesis of referring to God exclusively as 'Father'. (This is often occasioned by the teaching of the Lord's prayer, the sign of the cross, and the 'Glory Be').²⁵ He goes on to say that children need rather to understand that 'Jesus intends us to approach God as a trustworthy, forgiving and loving parent'.²⁶ And he proposes to catechists and religious educators different ways of avoiding using 'Father' or 'Son'.

The answer, of course, is not to throw out the greatest mystery and revelation of all time, but the method that is designed explicitly to hinder its transmission. One initial way to check a programme is to look for explicit references to Jesus as God, Son of God, Son of the Father, God made man.

Priests responsible for catechesis and key catechists who assist them, need to grow in an appreciation of the 'pedagogy of God', a pedagogy by which catechetical methods can be judged as to whether they are 'a guarantee of fidelity to content'²⁷ or not.

Priests and catechists “need to grow in an appreciation of the ‘pedagogy of God’.”

A final problem remains for those desiring to eradicate paternal and therefore Trinitarian language from catechesis: that is that the language of the liturgy is irrevocably Trinitarian. No sacramental preparation can completely avoid the words of the liturgical rite of the sacrament. Groome’s conviction that ‘all presiders and ministers at mass or communion services can address and lead the assembly in prayers that are gender-inclusive for God and ourselves’²⁸ is only possible in Catholic gatherings by avoiding the Church’s liturgy and liturgical language and encouraging para-liturgies in its place.²⁹

To conclude, the editor of *The Sower* neatly sums up the retrieval process,

“We are to speak simply and naturally about the Father and his love for the Son; of the desire of the Son to fulfil the will of his Father; of the mutual knowledge, love and union between them. ...Only an understanding of God as personal and relational can make sense of the doctrine that God is Love. And of course we understand ourselves and our destiny only within this Divine relationship of infinite delight: we are adopted children of the Father, living in the Son through the power and joy of the Holy Spirit.”³⁰

Catholicism a New Synthesis

by Edward Holloway

Pope John Paul II gave the blueprint for catechetical renewal with the Catechism of the Catholic Church. *Catholicism: A New Synthesis* seeks to show why such teaching makes perfect sense in a world which has come of age in scientific understanding. It offers a way out of the current intellectual crisis, a way which is both modern and orthodox.

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Notes

¹Petroc Willey, *The Sower*, Editorial July 2007.

²The full title is: *On the Way to Life: Contemporary Culture and Theological Development as a Framework for Catholic Education, Catechesis and Formation. A Study by The Heythrop Institute for Religion, Ethics and Public Life*, Published by The Heythrop Institute for Religion, Ethics and Public Life, for the Catholic Education Service, 2005.

³The word ‘Father’ appears in only five other places.

⁴CCC234. General Directory for Catechesis (GDC)114.

⁵See GDC99, ‘The trinitarian christocentricity of the Gospel message’.

⁶GDC100.

⁷Robert Sokolowsky, *The God of Faith and Reason*, Catholic University of America Press, 1995, p.36.

⁸Ibid. p.36.

⁹See Thomas Norris, *A Fractured Relationship, Faith and the Crisis of Culture*, Veritas, 2007, p.215.

¹⁰GDC100.

¹¹C. FitzSimons Allison *The Cruelty of Heresy: An affirmation of Christian Orthodoxy*, Harrisburg: Moorhouse publishing, 1994.

¹²<http://www.layman.org/layman/news/news-around-church/bishop-warns-allison.htm>

¹³Bill Huebsch, *People of God at Prayer, 18 services in the Spirit of Vatican II*, Twenty-Third publications, 2000.

¹⁴Matthew, 6:9.

¹⁵Reasons 1-4 have come from direct conversations with catechists – none are theoretical, all are real occurrences.

¹⁶Eamonn Keane, *A Generation Betrayed*, Hatherleigh Press, 2002.

¹⁷Petroc Willey, *The Sower*, Editorial, July 2007.

¹⁸See John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatis*.

¹⁹See Eamonn Keane, *A Generation Betrayed*, Hatherleigh Press, 2002, pp.29-30.

²⁰GDC139.

²¹Paulo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Penguin Books, 1972, p.12.

²²This method is explicitly used by Diana Klein, Catechetical Advisor for the Archdiocese of Westminster, in many of her catechetical resources, in which she explains in varying ways her understanding of Groome’s approach. She also describes her adaptations of it, sometimes to three steps instead of five.

²³See Eamonn Keane, *A Generation Betrayed*, Hatherleigh Press, 2002. p.145. An example of this can be found in Diana Klein’s resource, *Prepare to be Confirmed*, McCrimmons, 2002. In Session 9 the participants discuss the Creed and after some critical reflection are told ‘Write your own creed now – either in a group or on your own; but write a statement of what you believe in.’ p.53.

²⁴T Groome, *Language for a Catholic Faith*, Sheed & Ward, 1995, p.v.

²⁵Ibid, p.146-7.

²⁶Ibid, p.146-7.

²⁷GDC149. Several resources exist that explicitly follow this pedagogy: the *Echoes* parish-based programme for handing on faith by CTS; Adult formation on the Lord’s prayer by CTS and ACM materials for RCIA also distributed by CTS.

²⁸Ibid, p.146.

²⁹Cafod’s paraliturgies are an example of this and are now widespread in schools and at youth events.

³⁰Petroc Willey, *The Sower*, Editorial, July 2007.

The Holy Trinity in the Catechism and Holloway *David Barrett*

Fr David Barrett draws out the beauty of the Catechism's presentation of the central doctrine of our faith, and of Fr Edward Holloway's developmental insights in his 1970 work *Catholicism: A New Synthesis* (Faith-Keyway Publications). This long but accessible piece was first given at the 2006 *Faith* Theological Symposium. Fr Barrett is a doctoral student at the Gregorian University, Rome, and a priest of Northampton diocese.

INTRODUCTION

One of the striking features of the sections dedicated to the Doctrine of the Trinity in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992) and Fr Holloway's explanation in *Catholicism: A New Synthesis* (1972) is the relative brevity of both. Holloway begins to look at the doctrine specifically only in chapter 15 of Part 6 of his work and he does so after having shown the existence of God through examining evolution, looking at the spiritual nature of man and his relationship to God as Envioner and the preparation for and advent of the Messiah, with the disaster of sin thrown in for good measure. The context in which he deals with the Trinity is that of Jesus Christ, Saviour and Redeemer, the Word Incarnate. The Catechism sets forth the Faith of the Church concerning the Trinity after it has explained the notion of Faith; and it only commences its examination of the Trinity after it has looked at the Oneness of God, His uniqueness – the God who IS, the God who is merciful, who is Truth and Love.

In a sense, both the Catechism and Holloway are looking at this teaching from very different angles. However the one anchor that holds them together is of course Divine Revelation. Both root their explanations in the Incarnation. However, Holloway, as we shall see, also sheds light on the Doctrine through using human experience. In doing this he is not following the path of some Transcendental theologians who locate within graced human experience (and for them human experience is forever and always graced, and graced with the full measure of God's self-communication) the content of Divine Revelation, which the categoricals of doctrine, dogma, liturgy and prayer seek to make explicit. Holloway's approach is very different and is based on the more biblical and Augustinian understanding of man as made in the image and likeness of God.

One further point is worth making. Both the Catechism and Holloway are peppered with other references to the Trinity throughout their pages. They show how the doctrine of the Trinity is more than just a theological treatise isolated in one part of their work, but that it dominates the life and liturgy of the Church because *this is who God is*, the God with whom we enter into communion, the God whom we praise.

THE CATECHISM

Revelation: Source of Our Knowledge of the Trinity

The Catechism begins with Baptism. The three-fold questioning of Baptism is an indication of the constancy of the Church's Faith in the Triune God. Quoting St Caesarius of Arles, it says, "The faith of all Christians rests on the Trinity" (CCC 232). "It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the 'hierarchy of the truths of faith'" (CCC 234).

However because it is so central to the Faith, the Catechism also makes clear that this is "a mystery of faith in the strict sense" (CCC 237). Without direct Revelation, we could not have discovered this teaching through reason alone or even in what God revealed to Israel prior to the Incarnation. The Catechism does admit that traces of God's Trinitarian being can be seen in creation and in the Old Testament revelation as well. However, none of these are enough to convey clearly what only an explicit communication from God could convey. Here the Catechism sees Revelation as more than just words or a message: it is deeds and words ("*gesta et verba*" in *Dei Verbum* 2), the whole Person of Christ in His life, death and resurrection. All of this is what conveys the Trinity: not just a doctrine but a communion of life, truth and love as well. Revelation in this sense is also dynamic: it is not just a disclosure of who God is but an invitation to man to participate in this life through the Church – beginning with Baptism.

Theologia and Oikonomia

The Catechism also mentions how the Fathers of the Church called the mystery of God's inner life "*theologia*" and the works which He accomplished to reveal and give Himself as "*oikonomia*". They showed that the *theologia* could only be revealed through the *oikonomia*. However, once known, the *theologia* also helps to shed light on the whole *oikonomia* (CCC 236). Here are the roots for the subsequent distinction of the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity.

Later in paragraphs 257-260, there is an explication of the meaning of this. It is worth noting paragraph 257 in full:

"O blessed light, O Trinity and first Unity!" God is eternal blessedness, undying life, unfading light. God is love: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God freely wills to communicate the glory of his blessed life. Such is the "plan of his loving kindness," conceived by the Father before the foundation of the world, in his beloved Son: "He destined us in love to be his sons" and "to be conformed to the image of his Son," through "the spirit of sonship." (Eph1:4-5; Rom 8:15,29) This plan is a "grace [which] was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began," (2 Tim 1:9-10) stemming immediately from Trinitarian love. It unfolds in the work of creation, the whole history of salvation after the fall, and the missions of the Son and the Spirit, which are continued in the mission of the Church.

The whole *oikonomia* is conceived as one unique plan for the whole of creation. It is not an afterthought and it is always something to be done "in Christ Jesus" from before the foundation of the world. From our perspective, this is another

“...the whole Person of Christ in His life, death and resurrection ... is what conveys the Trinity: not just a doctrine but a communion of life, truth and love as well.”

indication of the rightness of the Greek-Scotist insight that the plan of salvation as culminating in the Incarnation is not determined by the agency of man or by the impact of sin. God's will and His grace are always “prior” to us and never subjected to us. It is a course of action which is ultimately a plan of love, an economy of divinisation of humanity, whose origin is always in the Father and carried out through the Son.

All Actions the Work of the One Nature

The Catechism goes on to explain a key feature of Catholic doctrine. The whole economy is always the common work of the divine persons because they all share one nature alone and the nature is always the source of activity for any reality. There is only one operation. None can be separated from the other. At the same time the Catechism goes on to state that “each divine person performs the common work according to his unique personal property” (CCC 258). So it is the one God who creates all things, because creating is an activity and all activity is something that belongs to the one nature – yet each person is involved in this one Divine act in ways that spring from their unique personhood (and here all language is a little precarious!). In the same paragraph the Catechism quotes Constantinople II in this context: “one God and Father from whom all things are, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things are, and one Holy Spirit in whom all things are.” (*Unus enim Deus et Pater, ex quo omnia; et unus Dominus Iesus Christus, per quem omnia; et unus Spiritus Sanctus, in quo omnia.* DS 421)

What this seeks to do is to establish that although all are involved as one principle of operation in any of the acts of the economy (what is often dubbed actions *ad extra* by the scholastics), yet the actions also show properties that are best attributed to one Divine Person in particular. The Catechism says that the missions (*ad extra*!) of the Son's Incarnation and of the giving of the Holy Spirit above all “show forth the properties of the divine persons” (CCC 258). In this sense therefore, although but one operation of Divine activity is involved it is only the Person who is the Son that becomes incarnate. All three Persons are not made incarnate. Yet they are evidently involved in a clearly attributable way in what is effected: the Incarnation has its origin in the Father who is always the one who sends the Son; it is the Son who becomes man and He does so through the working of the Holy Spirit who is the giver of life and the one “in whom all things are.” The Catechism makes the same point from another angle – from the perspective of the Christian. “Everyone who glorifies the Father does so through the Son in the Holy Spirit; everyone who follows Christ does so because the Father draws him and the Spirit moves him.” (CCC 259)

Incarnation: Why the Son?

Interestingly, the Catechism does not really explain why it should be the Son who should become incarnate, rather than the Father or the Holy Spirit. Assuredly there are indications: if the plan of salvation is for all to be drawn into communion of life with the origin and source of all things (God as Father) then it is more appropriate that this be carried out through

the mediation of the one who mediates all things – the Son “through whom all things are”. After all, in the very *theologia*, as the Catechism says in 248, the procession of the Spirit takes place *through* the Son – and this “through” is not a passive mediation but an active one, based on the oneness of the nature shared by Father and Son. Hence although the Father is always the first origin in the Trinity, yet at the same time (another loose use of words!) as He generates the Son He gives the Son all that He Himself is except actually being Father to the Son – that is His unique Personhood – and so the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son – “and the Son” taken in the sense that the Father is always origin but this originating power is also given to the Son. In this sense the “*through* the Son” of Eastern Tradition makes more sense. It also shows that “through the Son” can never be seen as something passive but as a real active work attributable to the Son. From this perspective one could see why the Incarnation, *through* which God is communicated to man, needs to belong properly to the Person of the Son. The Catechism itself however does not draw these conclusions – it is something that the readers must do for themselves. Fr Holloway, as we shall see, is interested in this question and gives his own argument as to why it is fitting for the work of the Incarnation to be a work of the Son.

The Fatherhood of God and Analogy

The Catechism roots the revelation of the Trinity most fully in the Incarnation. Yet it also shows that the Fatherhood of God is often confessed by other religions and that in Israel the Fatherhood of God is revealed through creation, through the Covenant, through the adoption by God of the king and through God's loving care for the poor, the orphaned and the widow. None of this is the complete revelation of the Fatherhood of God in the Trinity. It points rather to God as origin of all and as transcendent authority and also as one who cares providentially for His creatures. The Catechism emphasises that although language about God's fatherhood (and often this fatherhood is described with qualities pertaining to motherhood) is drawn from the human experience of parents, yet the truth of this insight, because its origin is in the work of progressive Revelation, has its origin in God. In this sense God transcends the normal characterisation of the sexes, of man and woman, of father and mother in the human sense. However transcendence does not mean that there is no relationship at all. Indeed, this is more than an analogy that is drawn from human experience and applied to God. In fact, parenthood and fatherhood in human existence are images of the perfection of what it means for God to be called Father. The Catechism puts this simply but brilliantly: “He is their origin and standard: no one is father as God is Father.” (CCC 239)

This is important for us because it locates the origin of meaning not in our experience alone but in the very identity of God. Analogy in this sense is not some arbitrary imposition of human consciousness but the perception of the ways in which reality ultimately flows from God (i.e., it is created by Him actively, knowingly and wilfully) and in its meaning and

The Holy Trinity in the Catechism and Holloway

continued

structure reflects – often in a very partial way because it is marked by a finitude and a temporality which are part and parcel of what it means to be created – the infinite measure of God’s own Existence. He is the Fullness of all Meaning and knowledge. Created reality in varying degrees, depending on its place in the hierarchy of being, reflects that meaning in its own coherence of existence.

This was an important argument during the whole Arian crisis. For the Arians, as is often the case for some modern-day feminists, analogy was always arbitrary. In a sense they looked at the knowledge of God always from the subject, always from the human point of view, and they emphasised the creatureliness of human experience and knowing, indeed of all creation. Of course, we would not want to diminish this notion of creatureliness. However, what Arianism did was to put the emphasis in all language on its finitude, its imperfection, its lack of similarity to God. For them the imperfection of human language about God was so marked that it was very difficult to draw any real knowledge about God at all. Language about God could never convey any real meaning. Hence if Jesus calls God “Father” or Himself “Son”, these words could in no way mean that God was actually a real and true Father to a real and true Son. They had dislocated all the images of creation away from God and made Him an isolated figure, whose dissimilarity to and separation from the rest of existence could only be emphasised.

The Catholics quickly realised that if this was true then no relationship with God is possible and that God’s revelation in Christ had effectively been thwarted through the inherent inability of human language to convey any meaning at all. Many modern-day feminists argue in the same way as the Arians. Language is (sinfully) sexualised and so all language about God, including that used by Jesus, is sexualised as well. Therefore we need to neutralise all language about God to get anywhere near any meaning about Him. However, they know they can only locate the sexualised nature of language within a broader critique which highlights the inability of language to convey any perennial meaning. After all, if there is a perennial meaning, then it is hard to see how Jesus’ use of the term “Father” can be devoid of meaning and can be discarded. It is interesting to note that in much feminist theology and much modern catechetics the tendency is to emphasis process rather than content; it is more important to tell a story than to communicate any clear truth. After all, we can never really grasp any truth but can only approach it in an adjectival way.

What the Catechism does is to follow the basic Catholic insight that although analogy has its limits because God is infinite, yet it is not useless because meaning is more than just our perception of possible patterns and structures; it has its origin in the Fullness of Meaning Himself and is a reflection of the Mind from whom all things are and the Logos through whom all things are and the Joy in whom all things are fulfilled. In this sense, the relationship of creation to God is not a dialectical opposition. That is the mistake of Arians, feminists and, this writer believes, some German theology –

especially Rahner. Analogy’s usefulness and relevance has its origin in God himself and it is displayed in the organised and hierarchical manner in which the universe purposefully evolves, a purpose embraced by the Alpha and Omega of God Himself.

Revelation: The Missions From the Father of the Son and the Spirit

The Catechism goes on to show how the direct Revelation of the Trinity takes place. This is through the two missions – that of the Son and that of the Spirit. Both missions reveal to us both the oneness of God and also the reality and identity of the three Persons.

The Son’s mission reveals that “God is Father in an unheard-of sense” (CCC 240). He is truly and eternally Father of the Son. What characterises the deepest truth of their relationship is that one is Father to the Son and the other is Son to the Father. In this sense, God’s Fatherhood as explored earlier in the Catechism, in terms of His relationship as Creator and carer of all things, is radically different from the unique Fatherhood that Jesus reveals is His personal Origin in a unique and incomparable way. Here the relationship of Fatherhood to Sonship is personal and inheres in God’s personal identity from all eternity. It is not derived and has no beginning; it is unlike the Fatherhood of God with regard to creation which is characteristic of the creative and providential action of the whole Godhead towards created reality (i.e. the activities of ‘from’, ‘through’, and ‘in’). Yet seen in the light of the direct Revelation of the Trinity, it can be seen how this Fatherly creativity and care does have its origin in the Father Himself.

The Catechism uses the language of St John and St Paul (including Hebrews) in order to delineate more clearly the Revelation that takes place in the mission of the Son: He is the Word, the image of the invisible God, the radiance of the glory of God and the very stamp of His nature (CCC 241). All of this highlights the profound unity of Godhead that the Son has with the Father, while at the same time revealing the uniqueness of each Person. This fundamental oneness is emphasised by the language of the first Council of Nicaea (325 AD) and used also by the first Council of Constantinople (381 AD) which says that the Son is “consubstantial” with the Father – rendered not so decisively in our present translation of the Creed as “of one Being with the Father”. This oneness is still emphasised when the Creed goes on to show how it is a real Person, a real Divine Person, who is begotten by the Person of the Father: “God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made.” All of these phrases show a real procession of a real Person who shares the same identical nature.

The mission of the Spirit in time reveals His eternal origin. “The Spirit is sent to the apostles and to the Church by both the Father in the name of the Son, and by the Son in person, once he had returned to the Father (cf. Jn 14:26; 15:26; 16:14). The sending of the person of the Spirit after Jesus’ glorification (cf. Jn 7:39) reveals in its fullness the mystery of

“The Son as Man expresses a real relationship of Sonship to the Father who sent Him. The Holy spirit has a special office ... handing on the content of Revelation.”

the Holy Trinity” (CCC 244). The way the Spirit is sent in time then gives the grounds for understanding who He is and how He proceeds within the Godhead. He proceeds as from His origin from the Father but at the same time He is truly from the Son as well, insofar as the Son is generated from the Father. He is as much God as Father and Son, and He too is “of the same substance” (“*unius substantiae, unius quoque esse naturae*” Toledo XI 675 AD – DS 527). The Catechism goes on to quote the Council of Florence (1439 AD) in paragraph 246: “He proceeds eternally from both as from one principle and through one spiration.” (DS 1300)

The word “spiration” is closely linked to the word “spirit” in its meaning as “breath”. Elsewhere the Catechism highlights the inseparability (though they remain distinct) of the Son and Spirit in the work of salvation by using the same concept: “When the Father sends His Word, He always sends His Breath.” (CCC 689) Indeed 683-744 of the Catechism can be profitably read to discover more deeply the identity of the Spirit who comes to unveil Christ ever more deeply. The Catechism’s description of His work in the one Divine Plan of God ties in beautifully with the Unity of the Master Plan that lies at the heart of Holloway’s vision:

The Holy Spirit is at work with the Father and the Son from the beginning to the completion of the plan for our salvation. But in these “end times,” ushered in by the Son’s redeeming Incarnation, the Spirit is revealed and given, recognised and welcomed as a person. Now can this divine plan, accomplished in Christ, the firstborn and head of the new creation, be embodied in mankind by the outpouring of the Spirit: as the Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. (CCC 686)

Dogmatic Formulations

The Catechism also presents the various terms used by the Magisterium of the Church with regard to the Trinity (in particular *substance/essence/nature, person/hypostasis* and finally *relation*) and also the various key points of doctrine that need always to be kept in mind. With regard to relation, the Catechism emphasises that the distinction of the three Persons “lies in the relationship of each to the others” (CCC 252). It goes on to articulate three important statements that we have already covered in one way or another. Firstly, “the Trinity is One” (CCC 253). Secondly, “the Divine Persons are really distinct from one another” (CCC 254). Thirdly, “the Divine Persons are relative to one another” (CCC 255).

For our purposes, the last point is worth emphasising. The Catechism says that the real distinction of the Persons comes about because of the real relations that each has to the other. As Toledo IX says, “In the relational names of the persons the Father is related to the Son, the Son to the Father, and the Holy Spirit to both.” (DS 528) This suggests that the names or words used in Divine Revelation have a correspondence to reality that is valid and enduring. If the words and actions of Revelation, as enacted by Christ, do not have this validity it is hard to see how any teaching or action

(this is particularly relevant with regard to the sacraments) cannot ultimately be surpassed or changed. Ultimately, the Arian/feminist dislocation of meaning from words results in either a remoteness of God which can never be accessed and whose gap no creature (not even the *Logos* creature of Arianism) can ever hope to bridge (i.e. Arianism); or it means an immanence of God who is one with creation and its articulation in such a way that every articulation of meaning can be surpassed by a further better one, as evolution/God evolves to a higher state of being. Either way none of these approaches to knowledge and reality really corresponds to the way in which we actually work, and the way in which reality is structured, as other symposium papers have discussed (*Editor: See our September 2006 and May 2008 editorials*). For Arianism/feminism all meaning is either inaccessible or too fluid to ever hold on to. This destroys not just the foundations of science and everyday living but also the very heart of the Faith as revealed in both the Old Testament and the New. “I am with you for all time” – the words of Christ in Mt 28:20 can always be rendered as meaningless and so ineffective in such a view of reality.

FR EDWARD HOLLOWAY

I hope now to develop upon these Catechism themes through aspects of Edward Holloway’s insights in *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*.

The Trinity is Mystery

One of the things that Holloway is keen to emphasise is that the Trinity is indeed “Mystery”. As a result, the Trinity cannot be “proved” in the same way a scientist may prove something (p. 224). It can neither be demonstrated by looking at creation or the human mind; neither can it be fully delineated in exactitude. Indeed, like the Catechism, Holloway sees that the knowledge of the Trinity by man can only be granted through Revelation. In this sense, this is more than an unveiling of the fact of the Trinity. It is a real communication of who God is and an entry into a relationship of life, truth and love on the part of the created person, all of which is accomplished primarily by the act of God. In this sense the unveiling of the fact and the entry into relationship constitute the only way to begin to perceive, even to know, this fundamental Mystery. For Holloway, therefore, Mystery “does not mean incomprehensible, but ‘comprehensible till lost in the distance’.” (p. 227) It will involve a deepening of perception and knowledge that is accomplished through communion, doctrine, grace and prayer. In this sense the notion of “Mystery” should not be an impediment to the mind of man, especially those who demand rationality. Mystery is a fact of human knowledge and experience: it is embedded, for example, in the relationship of child to parents. The child’s deepening knowledge of the mystery of who his/her parents are depends on their revealing themselves and communicating themselves in a relationship of family communion. This is one of the reasons why the Trinity cannot be proved without God revealing Himself: the personal inner life of anyone can only be revealed partially by their works but only decisively and

The Holy Trinity in the Catechism and Holloway

continued

most revealingly though their own definitive disclosure of themselves. In this sense, Holloway is showing that even Mystery has a certain reasonableness to it.

There is a further and more fundamental reason why Holloway sees the Doctrine of the Trinity to be something the human mind can neither alone arrive at nor fully delineate. It lies in the reality that God is Uncreated, utterly Necessary, Infinite and pure Act of Being. “Nobody could comprehend God without the experience of being God”(p. 223). To understand or grasp God fully means to be God. Indeed this is a key insight for Holloway’s doctrine of the Trinity. It also means that for man in the Beatific Vision he will be given a share by charity in what God is by right – but never the right to it. He is divinised and sees God as He really is, but “there will always be left something above the comprehension of the creature” (p. 224). At the same time, the Beatific Vision is being prepared within us now by grace, the giving of God’s very Life, a real share in it which transforms us so that ultimately we are not just made like God but also “fulfilled like God” (p. 227). We will exist fulfilled as a gift from God in that same “Self-Relativity” in which God knows and rejoices in His Being.

Analogy Through the Human Being

God’s fullness of Existence, His very infinity of Act of Being and completeness, do not destroy the possibility of analogy for Holloway. Indeed the best analogy must be found in man who is made in the image and likeness of God. He is at pains to emphasise that this is analogy and “not a strict similarity” (p. 218). The created spirit is the best pathway to understanding the Mystery of God’s life, who is Himself Infinite and Uncreated Spirit.

One of the key hallmarks of man is his ability to engage in reflection upon himself. This shows his spiritual and free nature: he is able to understand and know himself as “self”, to use the reflexive pronoun, to form an understanding of himself as a knowing, personal being. It is here that Holloway begins to see a useful analogy for the Trinity.

He appeals for the reader – indeed any human being – to think about himself. For Holloway the reality of consciousness means that always and everywhere each person is “knowing myself”, even if not consciously thinking this. It is part and parcel of what it means to exist as spiritual. I am always aware of myself, I am always knowing myself. I cannot exist otherwise. To be as a spiritual creature entails a permanent presence to self which can never but be there. In this Holloway sees a procession within the human being of knowledge which is constitutive of whom I am. If I exist at all as a spiritual being I always exist as “I knowing myself”.

Holloway then goes on to say that from this flows, as equally constitutive of who and what we are as spiritual beings, a further procession. He says that the act of “self-reflexion” in man cannot just proceed according to knowledge alone: “it must of its very nature be completed in that to which it is of itself relative, it must cause within a man the self-assertion

and self-procession of ‘I love myself’” (p. 219). At first sight the reason for this next step may seem a little obscure. However it rests on the fact that in saying “I know myself” the creature then must also in knowing himself accept himself. There is a need for an acceptance of that knowledge, a welcoming of it, a possession of it in peace and joy and contentment. It is here that there is the procession of “loving myself”. In this sense too we can understand the commandment, “Love your neighbour as yourself.” Within human consciousness there is always a sense of the goodness of one’s own existence (*pace* original sin) which is the basis of the sense of what rightly belongs to us, what makes us truly happy, what brings our existence to joyful fulfilment. Self-acceptance in the act of knowledge of self is indeed a loving of who and what I am.

Holloway sees this “basic self-contemplation and basic self-love” as essential to our nature, to man’s “existential definition” (p. 223). This means that this is fundamentally what a spiritual being is and what it does. It cannot prescind from this or deny this. In a sense these processions are “spirit-in-act” or spirit actually existing. For Holloway, a suicide always ultimately is an action that is seeking to recover or affirm a deeper love of self, a love of what should have been even though now seemingly thwarted, because life seems filled with an unhappiness that should not be there.

Thus the kernel of the analogy in human beings is “I know myself, and knowing love myself” (p. 219). The first procession of knowledge not only necessarily happens in a spiritual being but it must also happen first. The second procession of acceptance or love follows on from and through this because we can only love and accept something once we actually know it. Yet at the same time both the processions which result in two “myselfs” from the first “I” form a real unity within, indeed of my person. This is what constitutes the spiritual being: to truly know oneself and to have as a completion of this a true love of that self as known. As Holloway puts it, “It involves also ‘I’, ‘myself’ and again ‘myself’ in a threefold and different relativity, and in doing this it realises ‘me’ as me, it does not disintegrate but manifests the unity of my person.” (p. 220)

The Trinity Itself

For Holloway, the strength of this analogy is that it shows how spirit has as essential to its existence this threefold aspect (I, myself, myself) through the two faculties of knowledge and will. However, because the creature is finite, the processions within ourselves do not result in other persons. For even though we are able to know and love ourselves in these processions, it is always a finite grasp of who we are that we attain and never a complete grasp. We do not know ourselves completely because our existence is owed to others – to evolution, to parents and ultimately to God. In this sense, although the procession of “I knowing myself, loving myself, am” actually constitute our spiritual existence, there is a ‘more’ in this process which we never quite grasp – a more in terms of our past (we are derived from others) and a more in terms of our future (there is more of our existence to be realised).

“...if God is to express who He is in knowledge then it will always be a full expression, involving all of His Divinity, as much Person as the Original...”

With God it is very different. It is the complete Actuality and eternity and infinity of God's Existence that show the inadequacy of the analogy but at the same time help to enlighten us as well in what this means for God's own Life. God is totally and fully fulfilled in Himself. He is in no way derived from another or defined towards another. In no way is there any lack in His existence. This completeness does not entail a static Pure Act. It means a vitality and a life whose infinity is dynamic and forever exceeds all creaturely attempts to encapsulate. This completeness of God means that when God knows Himself we are not dealing with a finite faculty of self-knowledge as seen in the created spirit. God's knowledge of Himself is one with His existence, with His immeasurable and uncircumscribed existence or Reality. His self-knowledge is therefore not something that He engages in at one particular moment rather than another. It is something that is forever who He is, what He is doing, in an analogous manner to the created spirit. But in God, when He knows Himself, when He expresses the content of who He is in a term of knowledge, this term must be as Real as He is if it is to express fully who He is as God. It must be fully all that He is, but also just as real as Himself as an Expression. This term of knowledge must express infinitely and eternally and fully who God is, while at the same time being diverse as Expression from the Original that it is expressing. Its diversity lies in the fact that it is an Expression – but everything else is there: infinity, eternity, Divinity, for only one who is God can truly and fully express who God is. And if God is to express who He is in knowledge then it will always be a full expression, involving all of His Divinity, as much Person as the Original, because only as Person can He fully express who God is, who the Original is. Anything else would be subordinate and so not-God. It is God's nature as Necessary Existence, as Self-Subsistent Being that holds the key as to why the processions of knowledge and love in God “result” in Persons. The word ‘result’ is written with caution: there is no priority of moments in any temporal sense here, as if the Trinity is an emanation of the divine nature. This is who and what God is forever and always, as one Act. As Holloway puts it:

“Only in Self-Relative Act can there be Self-Reflexive Terms which are Necessary and Subsistent Relativities, which are best named as ‘Persons’ in human language, and which again are much better reflected than in the language of technical theology by the titles of ‘the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” (p. 222)

From this Divine Possession of Self as known, as expressed, there flows also for Holloway the Divine Possession of the Godhead as Joy or Fulfilment (cf. p. 222). In a similar argument to what has been presented so far, such a Divine Fulfilment of the Self Known and expressed will be a Joy that is more than just some subordinate reaction in God. It will be a fulfilment in the fullness of existence, a fulfilment in the Full Content of what it means to be God. As such, it too will need to be as fully Act as the Content to which it thrills. Once again the foundational principle holds true: “Nobody could comprehend

God without the experience of being God” (p. 223). This could be rendered as, “Nobody can fully love God without the experience of being God.” “It is an Immanent Procession within the Being of God according to Love” (p. 222). In this sense this Third Person is the ‘fulfilment’ of the Father through the expression of himself as the Word or Son. In this way Holloway holds together the notion of the procession of the Spirit through the Son (the Greek approach) and that of the Spirit proceeding from Father and Son (the Latin approach), though he is clear that this latter procession is through one principle of spiration (or breathing forth). However he states, “More simple to say ‘from the Father, through the Son, as the Immanence of them both’.” (p. 223)

Holloway seeks to maintain the reality and diversity of the Divine Persons, while at the same time maintaining their one Act of Existence. The reality of the three Persons is the manner in which the Divine Being exists.

The Oikonomia

For Holloway, as for the Catechism, the Trinity is directly and fully involved in the work of creation which is the one plan of salvation. In particular, it is more fitting for the Son to become man. The work of the Incarnation is to reveal and communicate the whole Life of God in Person. As “the term by intellectual generation of God's self-contemplation” (p. 228), it is the Son who is to embody or translate all that the ‘through’ of His Person within the Godhead entails. He it is who is best suited to reveal Who God truly is while at the same time being the Way by which humanity reaches its supernatural destiny in God.

However, the *oikonomia* is not just the work of one member of the Trinity. All are involved in it directly. Indeed by becoming man, the Son thereby reveals the Father and communicates Him. However, in terms of time, this communication is not completed until the Holy Spirit, who is the Joy of possession in the Trinity, is given to us so that He can lead us into the joy and love and perfection of relationship that the Father and Son have. Thus God's action in the world will always express the *theologia*: the work will proceed from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. It is in this way that the work of God in history will always be the common work of the Trinity. Holloway applies this to the Redemption which he sees as “a work accomplished by Christ unto the Father, in the love of the Holy Spirit, and this mutual relationship is to be found in all the works of God ‘ad extra’.” (p. 231)

Holloway goes on to wonder in what way should a work *ad extra* which is appropriated to one Person in the Trinity not be proper in the same way to the other Persons. He emphasises that the taking on of a human nature is obviously something proper only to the Son: only He is made incarnate. Holloway does not want the roles of the members of the Trinity to be diminished because the acts are always those of the one God. He seems to argue that the appropriations must have some real relevance to the Persons. Thus the Father has a special work as creator of all things and as sender of the Son.

The Holy Trinity in the Catechism and Holloway *continued*



The Son as Man expresses a real relationship of Sonship to the real Father who sent Him. The Holy Spirit has a special office attributed to Him from Pentecost onwards in relation to the life of the Church, handing on the content of the Revelation made by the Father through the Incarnate Son.

Nevertheless, Holloway insists that the works of God *ad extra* are indeed common to the Person as of the Blessed Trinity as a whole. He says that this is because their temporal Mission follows on from their Eternal mission. Is he trying to have his cake and eat it? Perhaps, but perhaps only with the Trinity is such a thing possible!

Conclusion

In a way, Holloway admits that words fail us in considering this mystery. After all, human beings “are not big enough in being to take in all that is meant by ‘God’, not with entire clarity” (p. 224). As quoted earlier, “Nobody could comprehend God without the experience of being God” (p. 223). In a sense this is the key not only to understanding something of the Trinity (what grounds the “possibility” for the Trinity is that the One who understands or expresses God must be God) but also to why its full meaning is beyond us. Once again our knowledge is partial and our expression is poor. Fr Holloway ends his chapter on the Trinity in similar vein: “Perhaps what we want to say can best be summed up, if it is necessary to be extremely brief (!), in the first fourteen verses of the epistle of St Paul to the Ephesians.” (p. 232)

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are also faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

“He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us.

“For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

“In him, according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will, we who first hoped in Christ have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of his glory.

“In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”

Raising Parochial Awareness of Anti-Life Culture

The articles at the beginning of this issue have touched upon the extent to which secularization has entered within the Church. Our January 2006 editorial had this as its main theme (see faith.org.uk/publications/oldissues.htm). Many parish priests can confirm that relativist, utilitarian and/or anti-life priorities concerning the moral life have been allowed, in varying degrees, to take hold in the minds of many parishioners. Challenging this gradual but relentless process is itself a challenging and wide-ranging task.

This Autumn is a particularly opportune time for encouraging our parishioners to reflect upon the fact that there is actually a significant gap between modern moral values and those of Christ in the Church. It looks as if the Human Embryology and Fertilization Bill is to become law, allowing, among other things, cloning up to birth, and probably ‘liberalising’ our abortion law. British Catholic Bishops have earlier this year been clear about the Catholic position, which makes engaging with the task at hand a lot easier.

Opposite are two possible leaflets directed at some such awareness raising. These have been used in newsletters in Willesden Green, London, as a way of inviting parishioners further to come together to reflect about and freely discuss the past and present undermining of human life. As a result a PIA (Pray, Inform, Act) pro-life group has formed. The first table focuses upon anti-life attitudes in general, the second upon the above mentioned Bill.

The Truth Will Set You Free

Fr Hugh MacKenzie, Parish Priest of Willesden Green and Editor of *Faith*

MIND THE GAP! No. 1.

THE PRESENT: Concerning the beginning of human life you have probably noticed the following massive 'gap' between the left hand side column and the right hand side

The majority of British people seem to think that:	Catholic Church teaches, and always has:
A woman's right not to bring her pregnancy to term can trump the unborn human's right to life.	It is never, ever right deliberately to kill an innocent member of the human species.
Human embryos can be created purely for the harvesting of their cells for research into cures for debilitating disease.	New human life should only ever be created for its own good.
Any form of medical or scientific research can be justified if it results in a treatment for serious illnesses.	The end does not justify the means and if research is immoral in itself it cannot be justified by the hope of some future good.
Infertile couples are entitled to create new human life in test tubes through IVF	New human life should only ever be created in the womb of an accepting mother as a result of the marital act.
Sex outside marriage is fine.	Sex is exclusively for marriage and family

THE PAST: Two possible explanations of the cause of this gap

Catholic Church has been seriously mistaken, and modern world has become deeply enlightened about human life and love.

or

The effects upon England of Original Sin, the 16th century Reformation's denial of Christ's bestowal of authority upon the Pope, and the 1960's reduction of the meaning of sex, have been cultural 'atomic explosions' with massive fall out.

THE FUTURE: Two possible scenarios

The family will continue to be redefined along secular lines. Catholic Church will continue to dwindle, with continuing loss of religious vocations, young people, parishes etc

or

Catholic Church renews its and society's understanding of the teachings about love which it has received and handed on from Christ.

**WHICH FUTURE WILL BE HAPPIER?
WHICH IS THE WILL OF GOD?
MIGHT NOT THE OTHER LEAD TO SOCIAL CALAMITY?**

Pray about it and come to an open discussion on <date> to discuss these issues.

MIND THE GAP! No. 2

Concerning the recent legislation in Parliament between two belief systems both claiming to be rational, both attempting to convince others, but both cannot be true

Catholic Teaching as expressed by numerous British Catholic Bishops' earlier this year.	Policy of Government and 50 Top Medical Charities etc...
Strongly against Hybrid Embryo Bill.	Strongly in favour of Hybrid Embryo Bill.
Believing that alleviating suffering is closely linked to respecting fundamental dignity of every member of the human species. They go together & don't work apart.	Believing in regulation of what is permissible case by case according to cultural norms. Absolute limits to what can be done to alleviate suffering do not exist.
At the heart of western civilisation up to the 1960's.	Increasingly at the heart of the post-1960's culture.
Sees revelation through Church as inherent to healthy society, as can be shown by reason.	Tends to see religious teaching, concerning absolute limits, as irrational & so not particularly relevant in public decision making.
Jesus' "But I say to you" continues today.	God's word has no clear role in public life.
Christianity is true. Relativism is building a 'Brave New World' upon sand.	Claims that relativism is right, Christianity is an out-dated restriction upon humanity.

Note

In taking the Christian position we are being profoundly rational and human. This does not mean that we think our political leaders are evil people. Nor do we have "phobias" against people who want to do things we think are wrong. We just profoundly disagree with their opinions. We think these particular opinions of theirs are seriously false. And whatever they might say about tolerance, they think our *opinions* are seriously false. We can respect other aspects of each others' lives and are called to love each other (i.e. by Christ!)

Let us take up our Cross and take heart. Christ is knocking at the door, already forgiving and beginning the rebuilding of his Kingdom.

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Letters to the Editor

The Editor, St. Mary Magdalen's Clergy House, Peter Avenue,
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REALISM AND MYSTERY

Dear Father Editor

This sentence is part of your Editorial in the May/June number of *Faith*:

"The perennial paradox of existential epistemology is to be definitively against the realism of definitive statements." The problem to which this sentence refers is of interest to many besides those who are acquainted with philosophical language. It touches on the question, 'In what sense do we know God?'

The existentialist view may seem to be supported by scriptural texts such as, "No one has ever seen God" (John 1:18) and "Now we are seeing a dim reflection in a mirror; but then we shall be seeing face to face. The knowledge I have now is imperfect; but then I shall know him as fully as I am known" (1 Cor 13:12). And from the Fathers we have this, "Through his love and infinite kindness God comes within the grasp of man's knowledge. But this knowledge is not in respect of his greatness or his true being; for no one has measured that or grasped it" (Irenaeus: *Adversus Haereses*, III, xxiv, I).

To say, as these statements do, that until we have been fully sanctified and have entered into the life of the resurrection our knowledge of God is imperfect, is not to say that we cannot make meaningful and correct theological statements, couched in the concepts of human intelligence. What they do imply, however, is that all propositional statements, however true, are limited in what they achieve.

Doctrinal propositions guide us safely on the way to sanctity, but they never let us see "*him as he really is*" (1 John 3:2).

The development of doctrine in the early Church – the emergence of the creeds – is the story of how people tried to *explain* mysteries, that is to draw them down into the grasp of human imagination. The doctrinal propositions which rejected the heresies do not explain, but insist on, the truth of the mystery. Thus these statements, although intelligible at the human conceptual level, are presented to, and accepted by, faith. When I profess that I believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I know what I mean, but I do not clam to understand how God is one and yet three Persons.

At a deeper level, however, and kept on the right track by the doctrine given through the Church's *magisterium*, I learn through prayer to know the God who exceeds the grasp of my imagination. "By his love (for this is it which leads us to God through the agency of his Word) we ever learn, in obeying him, that this great God exists, and that he himself by his own will and act disposed, ordained, and governs all things" (Irenaeus: *Adversus Haereses*, IV, xx, I). The beatific vision is reached gradually through a life of contemplative prayer.

Yours Faithfully
Fr Ronald Walls
Main Street
Kirkwall

EDITORIAL COMMENT: As a contribution to this important discussion we would recommend David Barrett's discussion of Fr Holloway's approach to Mystery on page 21 of this issue.

GALILEO AND MODERN CATHOLIC FEAR OF SCIENCE

Dear Father Editor

John Farrell, in your July issue, brings out the modern Catholic Church's devaluation of science. What appears to be a certain fear before science is surely another example of the crisis of confidence, which have characterised the reception of Vatican II. The insightful Peter Hodgson, in the same issue, surprisingly displays something akin to this in supporting the fashion for Church apologies, in this case with regard to Galileo.

He somewhat misrepresents the clash between Galileo and the Pope. It was not primarily a theoretical one, concerning Galileo's desire to reconcile the Bible and science against the Pope's desire to defend the Bible from possible incursions by unproven scientific theories. It was more to do with a clash of personalities.

It has needed an agnostic Jew, Arthur Koestler (in *The Sleepwalkers*), and more recently John Gribbin (*Science – a History*, Penguin, 2003), to show the Church's role in the 'Galileo Affair' in a favourable light, because Catholic scholars and scientists have been too timid.

As Hodgson points out, Aristotelian scientists started the so called 'witch hunt'. The draft copy of the *Dialogue Concerning The Two Chief World Systems* only reached Urban VIII by a tortuous route. He handed it over the Dominican, Fr. Riccardi whose community were favourable but pointed out that since one was dealing with a hypothesis this should have been noted in a preface to the Dialogue together with a revised ending. This is where Galileo made his fatal mistake.

Galileo was a brilliant scientist, philosopher and mathematician, but his use of sarcasm against his opponents made him many enemies.

"We work extremely hard at defending the right to life."

Unfortunately when he turned it against the Pope he picked the wrong man. The draft of the *Dialogue* was given the required preface, but in a different printing format to the rest, thus showing that Galileo did not believe it. To make matters worse he placed the Pope's own words in to the mouth of a negative protagonist.

When the Pope realised he had been challenged he went into 'Henry II' mode and handed Galileo over to be judged by a panel of ten cardinals. They found him guilty by a majority of 7 to 3. Due to the influence of his chief defender Cardinal Barberini, he was allowed to live in 'internal exile' in his own villa. This allowed him before he died to write his greatest work *The Dialogue Concerning Two New Sciences*. The Church was not against careful science.

Yours Faithfully
Bill Fielding
Greenford Close
Orrell
Wigan

DIOCESAN PRO-LIFE WORK

Dear Father Editor
I've always been greatly edified by Eric Hester's letters and articles in *Faith* magazine. Might I take up one point however from his most recent letter to the Editor regarding the lack of emphasis by diocesan Justice and Peace groups on pro-life issues.

I agree that unless we understand the right to life as an issue of fundamental justice all the other claims for justice somewhat ring hollow. However, it's not strictly correct to imply that Westminster diocese (by virtue of the work of the Justice and Peace Commission's omission in this regard) does not give any attention to right to life issues or pro-life activity. That is something which comes in under the remit of my department under the supervision of an auxiliary bishop.

We work extremely hard at defending the right to life of the unborn (for example working closely with LIFE and SPUC amongst others) as well as doing what we can with limited resources to promote anything and everything that proclaims the Gospel of Life in parishes and to individuals.

Westminster and other dioceses can and should do so much better. But, in support of diocesan employees faithful to the magisterium of the Church, I would not want *Faith* readers to get the wrong impression from Mr Hester's letter as to what is really being achieved on the ground, against all the odds.

Were his implications correct concerning diocesan Justice and Peace commissions in general one would think that their members have not read the *Compendium of The Social Doctrine of the Church* from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace where in paragraph 233, paragraph 14 of *Humanae Vitae* is quoted in full to reinforce, within the context of justice and peace, the prohibition of abortion.

Yours Faithfully
Edmund Adamus
Director, Department
for Pastoral Affairs
Diocese of Westminster
Francis Street
Victoria

DEFENDING THE HOLYDAY OF OBLIGATION CHANGE

Dear Father Editor
Might I comment on *Comment on the Comments* in the current July/August Issue?

I am sure the decision to move the three Holy Days of Obligation, when they fall on weekdays, to the nearest Sundays was made with the best intention, with the faithful in mind and for building up the Body of Christ. This is the only reason the hierarchy exist in the first place. To suggest otherwise serves no good purpose.

Of course the changes have a down side but also it must bring the feasts to the attention of those who could not get to church on a weekday. What other motive could there be for the move? The decision was not made unilaterally but with the approval of Rome.

Surely what matters is that Christ manifested Himself to the gentiles, ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us and left behind the Eucharist for which we show gratitude on the feast of *Corpus Christi*.

Yours Faithfully
Christopher Bull
Reed Avenue
Canterbury
Kent

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Comment on the Comments

by William Oddie

Attitudes to Converting England

Well, the C of E has done what everyone knew it *would* do sooner or later; it has decided to proceed at some point to the ordination of women-bishops). Of course it was always theologically absurd that a separate legal procedure had to be gone through: if the women who have been ordained actually are priests, it necessarily follows that they may be ordained bishop. The fact is, however, that the original Synodical legislation to authorise women-priests would not have been ratified by Parliament unless it had also interdicted women-bishops: such are the absurdities which attend an established Church.

This time, the Synod has made no provision for a fudge which would satisfy the Anglo-Catholics, who last time were given “flying bishops” – a provision enabling them to erect a church within a church. This was never more than a holding operation. As I wrote in a book on this entire problem, published in 1997 and entitled *The Roman Option*, “I do not believe that the ecclesial entity that Forward in Faith has created is intended, even by them, as a permanent structure: it is a provisional solution, a desert encampment.” And all this was made necessary principally by the utter pastoral failure of our bishops to respond to the situation that confronted them. Most of the Anglo-Catholic clergy who stayed in their ghetto did so because of their refusal to leave their people behind: as one Anglican priest who had attempted to take his Parish to Rome and had been repulsed by his local Catholic bishop put it to me, the essential was that “Rome has got to have a more creative view of the corporate nature of our present existence”.

So it is important, if the Catholic Church is to get it right this time, that we should understand clearly why so many Anglicans stayed inside the C of E when women were ordained in the first place. It is because their clergy really had been given an apparently well-founded hope that they would be able to “cross

the Tiber” with their people (possibly under provisions made by Pope John Paul for the reception of whole Anglican parishes in America): and because of the sense of massive betrayal they felt when some of our bishops confronted Cardinal Hume, who had originally been inclined to respond positively, and forced him to back down. I described the negotiations towards this hoped for solution, involving a number of representative Anglo-Catholics and a group of English Catholic bishops, in my book. My account was based on conversations with most of the Anglicans involved and – more to the point – on the minutes of the meetings, which had been leaked to me by more than one participant. These conversations took place in the aftermath of an interview by Cardinal Hume in, of all places, *The Tablet*, in which he said of these conversations that:

“This could be a big moment of grace, it could be the conversion of England for which we have prayed all these years. I am terrified now that we are going to turn round and say we do not want these newcomers. We have prayed for Christian unity and now it could be happening....”

Cardinal Hume, indeed, went some way towards responding to Anglo-Catholic hopes by establishing two convert Parishes in his own archdiocese. These were, in fact, a considerable pastoral success. Not only were they an “accessible door” into the Catholic Church for ex-Anglicans: they were also a way back into the Church for quite a few lapsed Catholics. I described these parishes at some length in *The Roman Option*.

When my book was published, Cardinal Hume was furious, since it inevitably highlighted his volte-face in the face of pressure from some of his more liberal bishops: this made him look weak. The book was published on a Tuesday. On Thursday it was, apparently, officially condemned by the Catholic

Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales. And on the Saturday, both the parishes I had approvingly described in the book (then still happily in existence) were abruptly closed down. No Catholic bishop apart from Cardinal Hume had, of course, read the book: I was later told by the author of the statement condemning it that when asked how it should be presented, Cardinal Hume had replied simply “issue it in the name of the Bishops’ Conference”.

It was, after all this, inevitable that when, recently, conversations took place over the possible Catholic response to the legalisation of women-bishops in the Church of England, they would be in Rome and not in Westminster. The Anglo-Catholics will never trust our bishops again: and their mistrust is well-founded in bitter experience.

The latest episode in this long and continuing story was first fully broken shortly after the Synod’s decision in July by *The Catholic Herald*, who had a long news piece, an article by “flying bishop” Andrew Burnham (who had just returned from discussions in Rome), and an opinion piece by Damian Thompson containing “well-informed” speculation as to the shape of any agreement over some form of corporate solution to the Anglo-Catholics’ problem.

“Traditional Anglo-Catholics”, wrote Bishop Burnham, “must now decide whether to stay in the Church of England in what, for a while, will be a protected colony – where the sacramental ministry of women bishops and priests is neither acknowledged nor received – or to leave.”

He then went on to anticipate the main possible Roman Catholic objection to any substantial exodus on this issue; it had figured largely in the hostile reactions voiced last time. “You don’t”, continued Bishop Burnham, “become a Catholic, for instance, because of what is wrong with another

“How, then, will the Church, respond to the appeal of those Anglo-Catholic clergy who wish to bring their people with them?”

denomination or faith. You become a Catholic because you accept that the Catholic Church is what she says she is and the Catholic faith is what it says it is. In short, some Anglo-Catholics will stay and others will go.”

“...As for those who choose to go, like in the early 1990s these will include some of the finest Anglican clergy. Most of them are not motivated in the least by gender issues but by a keenness to pursue Catholic unity and truth. For them, the decision of the Church of England to proceed to the ordination of women bishops without providing adequately for traditionalists renders the claims of the Church of England to be part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church shaky or simply untenable. ... The synodical process for traditional Anglo-Catholics is over. Some will try to draw new lines in the sand. But what the General Synod of the Church of England [has] demonstrated... is that... it has decided that it is unilaterally competent to alter Holy Order. ...What we must humbly ask for now is for magnanimous gestures from our Catholic friends, especially from the Holy Father, who well understands our longing for unity, and from the hierarchy of England and Wales. *Most of all we ask for ways that allow us to bring our folk with us. Meanwhile we retreat into the wilderness and watch and pray.*” (My italics).

To this, some will respond that the General Synod “demonstrated” all that in the early 90s. And even at that point, the die was surely already cast: those Anglo-Catholics who fought tooth and nail to prevent the 1991 vote in the Synod – and who then “crossed the Tiber” – had, if we are being rigorist about this, already sold the pass since they had, by getting involved in the Synodical game, accepted the fundamental principle that the C of E had the authority to make the decision in the first place. They would (many if not most) have stayed in the C of E if the vote had gone the other way. I (if I may interject my own experience at this point) went before the vote,

since there had been a clear *de facto* arrogation of authority to decide on a matter over which the Pope himself has said he has no authority (thus unilaterally establishing an entirely new ecclesiological identity from that which Anglicanism had always claimed to possess). I had realised it was no longer possible, for me at any rate, to believe that I could be a Catholic without being in communion with the Holy See. But I wouldn’t, nevertheless, dream of saying that any of the conversions which followed the vote were unprincipled. There is, surely, no such thing as an illegitimate conversion. There are many reasons to convert: but once in full communion with the Catholic Church all that is in the past. One has come home, and everything is changed, changed utterly: “Behold, I make all things new”.

How, then, will the Church respond to the appeal of those Anglo-Catholic clergy who wish to bring their people with them? Will there be “a more creative view of the corporate nature of [their] present existence”? It is possible that this time Rome will not allow the negativity emanating from some liberal bishops in England to undermine such a response. Damian Thompson presented a number of what he described as “informed guesses”. My own instinct – as one who has in his time given a good deal of attention to the history of Rome’s responses to Anglo-Catholics wanting solutions which, in Bishop Burnham’s words “allow us to bring our folk with us” – is that these are more than disconnected guesses, since taken together they constitute a coherent strategy of a not entirely unfamiliar kind. Here are his first five “guesses”:

- 1 Rome will set up an “Apostolic Administration” under a Catholic bishop to offer pastoral care to former Anglican priests and their parishioners.
- 2 The ex-Anglicans will form an umbrella organisation called something like the Fellowship of St Gregory the Great. The Fellowship, under the guidance of their new Catholic bishop, will consist of former Anglican priests who have been ordained into the Catholic

priesthood. Their parishes, though open to anyone, will consist largely of ex-Anglicans.

- 3 Some Fellowship parishes will occupy their former church buildings, though this will require an unprecedented degree of co-operation with the Church of England.
- 4 Former Anglican communities may – if they wish – be allowed to use parts of the Book of Common Prayer adapted for Catholic use, as in a few American parishes. In practice, there will be little demand for this concession, I suspect.
- 5 Former Anglican priests will undergo an accelerated programme of study allowing them to be swiftly ordained. (Conditional ordination is unlikely to be on offer.) Marriage will be no bar to ordination, but no actively gay priest will be knowingly ordained, and this will be strictly enforced.

This last policy has of course been up and running since the last exodus, that over women-priests: but it would have to be continued now. Thompson claims that his “guesses” are “informed”; my own information is that they are. But we have been here before. Plans are agreed; then there is a long silence from Rome. This time, “Rome”, or at least, that part of Rome keener on propagating the faith than on meaningless ecumenical goodwill towards the disintegrating Anglicans (the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity are likely to oppose these concessions) should be proactive in supporting the scheme. We have a pastoral responsibility to those outside the Catholic Church who long for the conditions which will allow them into full communion without failing in their own pastoral responsibilities. This time we must not fail them.



Book Reviews

The Way the World Is

by John Polkinghorne, Westminster John Knox Press (distributed by Alban Books), 130pp, £9.99

Leaving behind twenty-five years as a theoretical physicist and Cambridge professor of mathematical physics for Christian ministry was bound to raise a few eyebrows. John Polkinghorne was ordained in 1982 in the Anglican Church and this book was originally written as an apologetic for his evidently surprised colleagues. There is also a promise to other readers of something more universally appealing: "The more we learn about the structure and history of the natural world, the more we need to ask the question of whether there is a meaning and purpose behind that fascinating story."

Polkinghorne aims to approach Christianity with "a scientist's articulation of his understanding of the religious side of that frontier region" (p. xi). He wants to use a scientist's 'bottom-up' approach to New Testament evidence to vindicate Jesus not only to his colleagues, but also to any agnostic reader who accepts the authority of science.

The chapters move systematically from a contemporary scientific cosmology through the human 'personal' approach to the world to the coming of Jesus with his death, resurrection and subsequent impact. The concluding section provides a glossary of some of the scientific and theological terms to which he refers. The style is fairly conversational, almost anecdotal; this is not so much a tightly argued treatise as a personal justification of his faith.

Polkinghorne's scientific background is everywhere evident; often he uses examples from the laboratory: the historical appearance of Jesus in the world is seen in terms of the apparently undramatic discovery of penicillin on a windowsill; the two natures in Christ find a possible parallel in the wave/particle duality of light, and Dirac's equation concerning quantum mechanics is used in reference to the doctrine of the Trinity. In particular he seeks to convince his readers that there is good evidence to accept the claims of the New Testament. A summary of recent biblical critical scholarship attempts to provide a similarly credible ground for accepting its authority. He then takes a sort of common-sense scientist's view to dismiss liberal interpretations of why Jesus had to die and of the reality of his resurrection.

"Polkinghorne seems only to make use of his scientific background for anecdotes and metaphors."

It may already have become apparent that his methodology is somewhat overstretched; a 'bottom-up' approach to the divinity of Christ tends easily to underplay that very divinity. This comes through frequently in his Gospel exegesis, which gives little weight to Scriptural interpretation within Tradition: "Jesus preached the coming of the kingdom of God and it is very improbable that he gave precise instruction for future ecclesiastical discipline" (p. 41). In fact, although he might aim for a certain orthodoxy, he ends up espousing liberal-protestant approaches:

"There are times when it is hard to decide whether a word of Jesus is original or a subsequent creation. A notorious example is the extra saying to Peter at Caesarea Philippi found only in Matthew (16:18), 'You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church.' The Lord's confirmation of the natural leader of his disciples, or a post facto authentication of the Petrine party in the early Church? I can't make up my mind about that one." (p. 43, my emphasis).

A limited understanding of the foundational role of Christ's divinity will hinder faith in the Church as divinely guided in aiding us to 'make up our minds' on key doctrinal issues. It is hardly a surprise that he later dismisses the idea of an infallible church (p. 101).

Beyond this, if there are one or two theological howlers, such as reference to the *mingling* of Christ's two natures (p. 67), perhaps most unfortunate are the philosophical shortfalls. Evolution is described as a remarkable interplay of *contingent chance* and lawful necessity (p. 8). Rather than a coherent concept of the creative work through evolution of the absolute God we are offered a certain 'God-of-the-gaps' metaphysic: "Mankind would be so much more plausibly the work of a benign Creator if it had come into being a mere six thousand years ago in the limited arena of a garden" (p. 14). Although he tries to argue for the transcendent, there is no cogent description of the nature of the spiritual soul in man. When it comes to Original Sin, he makes a frankly quite baffling statement at the end of the book that "Christianity cannot explain the origin of the marredness which we see around us." (p. 111). There is no attempt to link Christ with Creation. Perhaps most striking of all is that Polkinghorne sees no point in using contemporary scientific cosmology to provide arguments for the existence of God.

A respected scientist who sees his discipline as a springboard to the ordained ministry must surely command interest amongst all contemporary believers. That Polkinghorne seems only to make use of his scientific background for anecdotes and metaphors and then takes significant false turns in terms of Christian orthodoxy and coherent metaphysics is disappointing. Sadly I cannot see his agnostic colleagues going away after reading this book thinking "ah, yes, perhaps there is a link between what he believes and what we do."

Fr Chris Findlay-Wilson

Camborne
Cornwall

The Realm – An Unfashionable Essay on the Conversion of England

by Rev Aidan Nichols OP, Family Publications, 160 pp, £8.95

This is a most important book. In saying this I do not in the least imply that it is worthy but dull. Worthy it most certainly is, most worthy; but dull it most certainly is not. It is gripping reading. Indeed, in places it reads like a thriller; and a thriller it is, imparting the thrill of embracing the faith wholeheartedly and wanting to spread it to all our friends and neighbours.

The subtitle, “an unfashionable essay on the conversion of England” unashamedly reveals Fr Nichols’s ecclesiastically-incorrect intentions. This prolific Dominican author wants England to become Catholic again. The book is an effective commentary on the statistics showing that the Church in England is in decline. Fr Nichols pinpoints the reason for that decline: “Let me begin by simply stating my conviction that... the key to the situation is not dissent but apathy.” But the trumpet of this Dominican gives no uncertain sound: “We need to recover confidence in the Catholic tradition, as corporately interpreted by the *magisterium* of the Church.” This book will help to recover that confidence.

First, we have a historical context, with insights into the Celtic Church and that of the Anglo Saxon, and its relationship with the English nation. Fr Nichols is fascinating on analysing the words and actions of our coronation service, still essentially Catholic in its intent and symbolism. He quotes Goethe to show how “the ultimate significance of the French Revolution to be one of *politicisation*.” We are certainly seeing this today where the Government is politicising every aspect of life and nationalising many institutions. To realise what is happening to Catholic schools you have to realise that they are, in effect, being nationalised.

A chapter on “The needs of the Nation” sets out the situation today. The author is critical of the European Union which is “neither liberal nor democratic”. He warns of a new dark age. Then the longest section “Critics of the Culture” analyses the writings of Christian writers who have criticised the way that society is going: T.S. Eliot; Coleridge; Matthew Arnold; Maritain; Maurras; David Jones, the Welsh poet; Christopher Dawson; Chesterton; Belloc; and Tolkien. Those readers who are none too literary may find this hard going, but it is the heart of the book and carries its own summaries of, and quotations from, the authors and so does not need any prior knowledge of them, though this book is likely to send its readers hastening to their works. On T.S. Eliot Fr Nichols displays great intellectual and cultural courage by writing sensibly and approvingly about Eliot’s *After Strange Gods*, a book now seen as controversial because of one sentence that some have interpreted as anti-Semitic. Fr Nichols rehabilitates this book, which he shows is not at all anti-Semitic but is opposed to cosmopolitanism.

In the final chapter, Fr Nichols writes of what he calls “integral evangelisation... the aim of which is the metaphorical baptism of the cultural as well as the literal baptism of the individuals who inhabit it.” He has already identified “the single greatest social problem” as “the collapse of family structures and discipline.” He suggests remedies: “intellectual, mystical and institutional.” He is clear that the whole of our culture and society is involved. He wants Catholic religious education to concentrate again on apologetics. “Where the information media are hostile, we can bypass their hidden or not so hidden agenda by creating alternative forums for instruction and public debate.” He has a message that should be especially relevant to readers of *Faith*: “Might the Church do more to encourage Catholic

professionals to see themselves as members of a Catholic intelligentsia with a special mission to society?” Many of us will agree with his greatest priority: “Above all, the Church must make it a priority to educate young people thoroughly and persuasively in its Creed.” Here, after years of neglect and such awful books as *Weaving the Web, Icons and Here I Am* all backed by the Catholic educational establishment, we have had an encouraging sign with the publication by the Bishop of Lancaster of his inspired document, spiritual and practical, on Catholic education and schools. Three Vatican Congregations have now publicly praised this document, something that I believe has never happened before in England. However, as I write this review in mid May, this most important document is being neglected by other bishops. The website of the Catholic Education Service does not even mention it and one cannot locate it at all via the search engine (see our *current editorial, Editor*).

They say that people are putting money on this Dominican, Aidan Nichols, to be the next Archbishop of Westminster. Others say the smart money is going on the Bishop of Lancaster, despite his age. We should all work and pray so that, as the late Cardinal Hume said, - in a remark that the spin-doctors of Westminster tried to retract - soon we will have “the conversion of England for which we have all prayed.” If you have any spare money, send a copy of this outstanding book to your local Catholic school and diocesan leadership. Its wide dissemination might do much good.

Eric Hester
Bolton

Visits to the Most Holy Sacrament and to Most Holy Mary

by Alphonsus de Liguori, Translation and Commentary by Dennis Billy, CSSR, Ave Maria Press (distributed by Alban Books), 158pp, £9.99

A tatty version of the *Visits to the Most Holy Sacrament and to Most Holy Mary* was for me a formative and treasured devotional companion in the first years of my seminary training. This new translation and commentary opens the way for anyone who wants either to revisit this spiritual gem, or to discover it for the first time.

Many Catholics know St Alphonsus through his meditations on the way of the Cross. The same heartfelt Christ-centred spirituality that we find there is communicated with equal power through the 'visits'. Before the mystery of Christ's Eucharistic presence, St Alphonsus gives us a vocabulary with which we can open our mind and heart to the Lord in personal conversation. In the presence of Our Lady he helps us to express that filial devotion characteristic of so many great saints.

The devotion, as proposed by St Alphonsus in this book, is made up of a series of thirty-one daily visits to the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle. The visits begin with a prayer to Jesus which takes the same form on each day. The main part of the devotion is made up of a short reflection which is drawn from the Scriptures and the teaching of the saints. This reflection flows naturally into personal expressions of contrition, thanksgiving, petition, praise and adoration. The reader is then invited to make an act of spiritual communion of which several forms are suggested. The devotion concludes with a shorter visit before an image of Our Lady which, in structure, mirrors the visit to the Blessed Sacrament. A second set of visits to our Lady are included as an appendix. These replaced the original texts in the 1758 edition and draw more explicitly on the teachings of the saints, perhaps in response to some who accused Alphonsus of an exaggerated devotion to Mary.

Dennis Billy has provided the modern reader with a very accessible and faithful translation, based on the critical Italian edition of 1939. His general introduction includes a good sketch of the saint's life and works and explains something of the background to Alphonsus' spirituality as communicated through the visits. He has also written an introduction to each visit that highlights key aspects of the prayer and meditation which follow. In providing dates for St Alphonsus' sources an extra element of interest is added. The points for consideration which are inserted after each visit offer an opportunity for further reflection. These reflections occasionally seem to steer the reader away from the text of St Alphonsus imposing a theological and devotional emphasis that differs from that of the saint. For the reader who feels at home in the devotional world of St. Alphonsus this aspect of the new edition might seem unnecessary.

Despite the attractive cover, the volume does not lend itself well to the devotional use for which it is intended, on account of its size and cheap binding. This paperback of average dimensions might usefully be made available in churches and chapels of adoration but it is not the sort of volume that is conveniently carried on one's person. This having been said, in making this devotion of St Alphonsus available and accessible to our generation this book is a significant contribution to the revitalisation of Eucharistic and Marian devotion, so evident in the new movements in the Church.

The value of this publication lies principally in the new translation of the text of St Alphonsus. A devotional pocket version of this translation would be a great asset to the spiritual life of anyone seeking to discover or deepen the art of personal conversation with Christ in the Eucharist and his blessed mother.

Fr John Cahill

Holy Souls
Scunthorpe

The Mass and the Saints

by Thomas Crean, OP, Family Publications, 208 pp, £13.50

Quoting from authors throughout the centuries who are mostly (but not exclusively) canonised saints of the Church, this book forms a continuous commentary on the various parts of the Mass as well as related questions such as the Eucharistic fast, the appropriate time for Mass to be celebrated, liturgical orientation and language.

It must be said at the outset that this concerns the traditional Mass. (There is no commentary here on offertory processions or children's Eucharistic prayers.) However, this volume should be read by anyone nervous about Pope Benedict's "hermeneutic of continuity". In the first place, it forms a salutary reminder that for almost 2000 years this was the form of the Mass offered and heard by the saints. It is surprising to find so many of the 'modern' objections anticipated and answered, by not only those engaged in Counter-Reformation apologetics, but also the patristic authors. For example, St Basil on the silent canon: "Those things may be easily despised to which we have access straightaway and constantly." St Robert Bellarmine on the same issue: "this concerns the *action* of sacrifice, which Christ suffered silently, and therefore is not a subject for prolixity".

Fr Crean assembles an impressively Catholic array of sources from the Fathers to the Scholastics (unsurprisingly, Albert and Thomas feature large), through the Counter-Reformation to the *ressourcement*. In doing so, he helps us recover something too easily lost sight of: that like Scripture, the Mass has not only a literal, but also a spiritual, meaning. It signifies, of course, the sacrifice and the communion actually made present, but also, mystically, the whole of the divine economy, especially the earthly life of the

“The presence of these small books gives a sense of confidence in the life of the Church.”

Incarnate Christ. (“This sacrament embraces the entire mystery of our salvation” – St Thomas Aquinas.) In penetrating the spiritual meaning of the Mass in its entirety and its parts, the saints offer sometimes differing, but always complementary, interpretations of the Church’s noble ceremonies.

There is strong support here for the theory of the organic development of the liturgy going back to the ninth century: “...the beauty of the Church increases over the years by new means and new rites; nor will it cease to the end of time” (Strabo). Yet our own John Fisher makes clear that the Rite of Mass is not something to be lightly changed: “Take away ceremonies from the Church and you will straightaway destroy the worship of the greater part of Christians.”

Here are profound insights into the essence of the Mass, fascinating details of liturgical history and the occasional challenge to our prejudices. Without Latin and Gregorian chant our churches would be like “an extinguished candle, which no longer gives light, or attracts the minds of men” – not Pius X, but Paul VI. “Those who hear Mass are not only present at it but also offer it, and have themselves a right to the title of priests” – not Vatican II, but St Leonard of Port Maurice.

Fr Crean makes clear this is not primarily a work of scholarship, but an aid to meditation and devotion. As such it is recommended to nourish and deepen a love of the Holy Mass for anyone offering or assisting at the sacred mysteries in either form.

Fr Mark Vickers

St Peter’s
Hatfield

A St Paul Prayer Book

Family Publications, 48pp, £4.50

The Greatest of these is Love. Daily Meditations on St Paul

by Bishop Michael Campbell, St Paul Publications, 80pp, £6.99

Catholic publishers have not been slow to respond to the announcement of a year dedicated to St Paul. Here are two prayer books, both pocket-sized and attractively presented, which will be a good introduction to the saint and are a realistic way to use him as a guide in prayer.

I say ‘realistic’ because St Paul is perhaps to many of us a rather stern figure, familiar through his Epistles, which we have heard read to us at Mass for as long as we can remember, and somehow not a person to whom we would go for spiritual advice. He seems more remote than, say Cardinal Newman, or Pope John Paul II, or the present Holy Father, all of whom have written much that we can use in our prayers. St Paul’s heroism, his shipwrecking, his missionary journeys, his martyrdom, and the fact that he lived such a long time ago, all make him somehow the stuff of legend rather than of daily spiritual inspiration.

But in this Year of St Paul we do need to get near to him, and in these small prayer-books he suddenly seems much nearer than in a formal reading at Mass.

Family Publications has produced a booklet which is beautifully illustrated with photographs of places visited by St Paul, and images of events from his life from stained glass. Each page, fronting on to a picture, has an extract from St Paul’s own writing, followed by a short prayer. The result would work very well either for personal use or for a small prayer-group. The book ends with a Litany of St Paul, which is rather inspiring as it recalls the events of his life – after praying it you certainly feel somehow strengthened, perhaps sensing this warrior for God interceding for us in Heaven.

Bishop Michael Campbell’s book is nicer to use and handle: it is only slightly more expensive than the Family Publications book, but is hardback, and has a ribbon marker. We get less of the writings of St Paul himself – just a short paragraph for each day, followed by a meditation written by Bishop Michael, and a short prayer. But the format is a useful one – there are 31 different sections, one for each day of the month, and the book also includes a short section with information on the saint’s life, conversion, missionary journeys, and martyrdom.

It would make an attractive gift, e.g. for Confirmation or for an adult convert. Such gifts are not easy to find, and this would be ideal for the teenager unfamiliar with the basics of the life of St Paul and unlikely to read something large and forbidding. It is pleasing to hold – pocket-sized, nicely-bound, with an icon on the front.

How good it is to be able to recommend attractive prayer-books on a theme announced by the Holy Father: somehow the presence of both these small books gives a sense of confidence in the life of the Church and indeed of modern Catholic publishing trends in Britain.

Joanna Bogle

New Malden
Surrey

Notes from across the Atlantic

by Richard John Neuhaus



On Liberal Democracy

In a *Christian Century* interview, Nicholas Wolterstorff, longtime professor of philosophical theology at Yale, says: “I don’t agree, then, with the view of many political theorists that when making up our minds about political issues or debating them in public, we have to appeal to some body of principles that we all accept, or would all accept if we did things right. I don’t believe that there is any such body of principles. It’s not that we Americans disagree about everything. But we don’t agree about enough things to settle our basic political issues by reference to a body of agreed-on principles.” He acknowledges that it is prudent when trying to persuade people who do not share your religious principles to use reasons they do find persuasive. Disagreeing with the critics of liberal democracy, he declares, “I regard liberal democracy as a pearl of great price.” Such an order, he says, is based on a belief in natural rights, and that belief, in turn, has its source in biblical religion. There is also an understanding that the state does not represent a community with a shared vision of God and the good. The American polity is, instead, “an association of such communities”, and this is at the heart of the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom. Each such community pursues its vision of the political virtues of “justice and the common good”. Limited government, respect for natural rights and accountability to the people lead him to the conclusion that “liberal democracy has a very thick moral basis”. One need not agree with Nicholas Wolterstorff’s politics – for

instance, his position on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict – to welcome his commitment to the liberal-democratic project that makes possible the engagement of disagreements, including disagreements over the merits of the liberal-democratic project.

Natural Law Affirmed

Myron Magnet of *City Journal* revisits Saul Bellow’s *Mr. Sammler’s Planet* in order to revisit the New York City that it so powerfully describes. New York in the 1970s, with 2,200 murders per year, one every four hours, most people living behind armoured doors with three or more locks, muggers on every corner and Leonard Bernstein entertaining the Black Panthers in an exhibition of what Tom Wolfe memorably described as radical chic. What happened to turn the city around to its present vitality commonly described as its golden age? Rudy Giuliani is part of the answer, with his “broken windows” approach to crime. But mainly, says Magnet, people had had enough, especially the unfashionable people from the “outer boroughs”. They knew there was a better way to live. Magnet: “How did they know it? A residue of the old culture, too strong to die? A pragmatic or instinctive understanding that there is a right and a wrong life for man, which some of the old philosophers called Natural Law? From page one of *Mr. Sammler’s Planet*, Bellow himself insists that, beyond the explanations we construct through Enlightenment reason, the soul has ‘its own natural knowledge’. We all have ‘a sense of the mystic potency of humankind’ and ‘an inclination to believe in archetypes of goodness. A desire for virtue was

no accident.’ We all know that we must try ‘to live with a civil heart. With disinterested charity.’ We must live a life ‘conditioned by other human beings’. We must try to meet the terms of the contract life sets us, as Sammler says in the astonishing affirmation with which Bellow ends his book. ‘The terms which, in his inmost heart, each man knows. ...As all know. For that is the truth of it – that we all know, God, that we know, that we know, we know, we know.’”

Obama-Wright Continued

The Obama-Wright affair has not disappeared. Jayson Byassee is assistant editor at *Christian Century* and an occasional contributor to *First Things*. Whatever else you think about the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, Byassee says in *Christianity Today*, “Jeremiah Wright is a serious Christian.” He contrasts Wright with James Cone, the 1960s proponent of black liberation theology who disparaged a focus on Jesus as Saviour as “Christofascism”, along with others who contend that black folk should find their primary identity in race rather than religion. “Wright’s break with America,” writes Byassee, “is no unforgivable sin – only blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is that.” “Wright’s recent media tour was so unfortunate,” says Byassee. A friend in the Obama campaign told him, “They’re freaking out at HQ – Wright’s going on tour, and they can’t do a thing to stop it.” Byassee comments, “Wright was throwing Obama, a parishioner and former friend, under the bus – and he knew it.” Byassee concludes: “But coming from a community that’s been told for so long what they’re allowed to say and not say has an impact on you.

“The people ... who incessantly lament the gap between teaching and the reception of teaching are typically the same people who for years have worked to undermine the credibility of the Church’s teaching office.”

Precisely when you’re told to shut up, you preach. At the top of your lungs. For you’ve got fire locked up in your bones. Evangelicals, I think, know something about that.” There is much to what Jason Byassee says. From what I know from him and others, Jeremiah Wright is a serious, albeit woefully wrongheaded, Christian. We have a lot of other brothers and sisters in Christ who are crazier, and even some who think we’re just a bit tetchy. The controversy, however, is not over whether Wright is a Christian but whether he is right in saying, as Senator Obama has also said, that he represents the black church and, by extension, the black community. And over why, for twenty years, Obama submitted himself and his family to the wackier elements of Wright’s ministry.

An Anatomy of Dissent

Commenting on the number of lapsed and collapsed Catholics, Father Andrew Greeley writes in *America*: “What went wrong? What might reverse the decline of the credibility of the Church’s teachers? Whatever happened to the blind obedience that the Vatican always assumed it could count on from the devout laity?” Father Greeley has been around for a long time and can remember when the “blind obedience” myth still had a modicum of plausibility. He goes on to say, “Perhaps the answer is that the Church should have banned higher education for Catholics.” Educated Catholics, you see, think for themselves. Greeley concludes: “It seems that there is a pedagogical law that the taught will not listen to the teachers unless they believe that the teachers have listened to them. The rhetoric and style of the curia give no evidence that anyone there is listening.” There are several problems with this, aside from the fact that, as Father Greeley undoubtedly knows, he has been writing the exact same thing in almost the exact same words for, lo, these forty-plus years. Here are a few things that are wrong in this view of what went wrong: 1) The people, including Father Greeley, who incessantly lament

the gap between teaching and the reception of teaching are typically the same people who have for years worked to undermine the credibility of the Church’s teaching office; 2) Their measure of whether the Church is listening is whether teaching is brought into line with their preferences; 3) The curia in Rome coordinates and corrects as necessary, but the teachers of the Church are the bishops, priests and catechists who too often find it easier to blame Rome than to do their job; 4) Catholic Americans are about 6 percent of the universal Church, and Greeley’s think-for-themselves educated Catholics who are unhappy with church teaching, usually on matters sexual, are a much smaller part of that 6 percent. It is an egregious instance of chauvinistic hubris to think that the Church through the ages, currently composed of 1.2 billion members of every nation and culture, should change its teaching to please the disaffected of the latter class of Americans. There are many answers to Father Greeley’s question “What went wrong?” Some of the more dubious are to be found in his answer.

Indispensable Reading

You might say it is just in time for the 2008 elections, and you would be right about that. But any time is a timely time for *Render Unto Caesar: Serving the Nation by Living Our Catholic Beliefs in Political Life*. The author is Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver, the publisher is Doubleday, and the price should be no obstacle to a book that offers a fresh analysis of what has gone wrong with the Church in America, a convincing case for encouragement, wise counsel on how to engage the public square and, not incidentally, restored confidence in the ability of (some) bishops to teach on faith and morals. Of course cloning is morally prohibited, but just imagine the difference it would make if there were, say, two dozen or more Archbishop Chaputs. He addresses the hard questions with candour and

clarity. For instance, can a Catholic in good conscience ever vote for a pro-choice candidate? “The answer is: I couldn’t. Supporting a ‘right’ to choose abortion simply masks and evades what abortion really is: the deliberate killing of innocent life. I know of nothing that can morally offset that kind of evil.” Acknowledging that there are serious Catholics who believe that there can be “proportionate” reasons for supporting a pro-choice candidate, Chaput writes: “One of the pillars of Catholic thought is this: *Don’t deliberately kill the innocent, and don’t collude in allowing it*. We sin if we support candidates because they support a false ‘right’ to abortion. We sin if we support pro-choice candidates without a truly proportionate reason for doing so – that is, a reason grave enough to outweigh our obligation to end the killing of the unborn. And what would such a ‘proportionate’ reason look like? It would be a reason we could, with an honest heart, expect the unborn victims of abortion to accept when we meet them and need to explain our actions – as we someday will.” *Render Unto Caesar* is about much more than abortion politics. There is hardly a question agitating the Church in America – from higher education and episcopal leadership to the sorry state of catechesis – that is not addressed here with intelligence, courage and a pastoral heart. Read, mark, learn, inwardly digest his words – and pray for more bishops like Charles Chaput.



The Road From Regensburg

Dialogue beyond Catholicism in the search for a modern apologetic

DIALOGUE WITH MODERNITY

Pope Benedict: New Realist Vision of Man Urgently Needed.

Last June Pope Benedict suggested that, in response to modernity's "prolonged crisis" and posing of "an 'anthropological question'" Catholic thought must take account of modernity's "more exact understanding of human nature". We should recognise modern thinkers' "sincere desire to move away from the self-sufficiency of philosophical reflection".

Drawing on *Spe Salvi* he affirmed that

"Christian faith cannot be enclosed within an abstract world of theories, but it must descend into the concrete historic experience that reaches man in the most profound truth of his existence. This experience, conditioned by new cultural and ideological situations, is what theological research must evaluate and with which it is urgent to initiate a fruitful dialogue with philosophy. The understanding of Christianity as a real transformation of man's existence, *if on the one hand it impels philosophical reflection towards a new approach to religion, on the other, it encourages it not to lose confidence in being able to know reality.*" (our italics).

Not only should we "encourage new lines of theological and philosophical thought, but" also foster

"a new openness to the reality in which the human person in his uni-totally finds himself, rising above ancient prejudices and reductionisms, in order to be open to a true understanding of modernity. The desire for the fullness of humanity cannot be ignored, it awaits appropriate responses.

"... The new dialogue between faith and reason, required today, cannot happen in the terms and in the ways in which it happened in the past. If it does not want to be reduced to a sterile intellectual exercise, it must begin

from the present concrete situation of humanity and upon this develop a reflection that draws upon ontological-metaphysical truth."

To the Vatican's 6th Symposium for European University Professors, June 7th, '08, www.vatican.va Translation by the editor.

The Faith Suggestion

In our May 2008 editorial (as in our current editorial) we acknowledged the need to take account, within philosophy of religion, of modernity's 'turn to the subject' whilst maintaining confidence in the human subject's ability to know reality (i.e. 'realism'). We pointed out that:

"Holloway suggests that the concept of environment is a helpful way in which to preserve the relevance of the subject without losing its realistic objectivity because a subject is inherently related to its environment whilst at the same time distinct from it ... We would propose it as a sort of medium between ... (the fairly uncritical) adoption of the post-modern subject and ... 'scholastic rationalism' ... If then we further understand the human person as being within a personal environment, that of the living God ... We can affirm that human nature is intrinsically ordered to God" (page 4).

We went on to affirm that "The evangelisation of modernity calls for a realist reclamation of the concept of human nature, fulfilled in Christ" (page 6). *Faith, May '08*

Spe Salvi and The Need to Reflect More Upon the Impact of Science

On June 28th last, in response to the 2007 Papal Encyclical *Spe Salvi*, *L'Osservatore Romano* published a piece by Ernesto Galli della Loggia. He is a historian and editorialist with *Corriere della Sera*, who described himself in the piece as "devoid of faith."

We recall that in his encyclical the Pope pointed out that "it is not the laws of matter and of evolution that have the final say, but reason, will, love – a Person" (n. 5). Despite this fact, and following the inspiration of Bacon,

modernity began to interpret the advance of science so as to foster an illusion of self-sufficiency, whereby "a totally new world (should) emerge, the kingdom of man ..." (n.17). This involved "the two key concepts of 'reason' and 'freedom', (being) tacitly interpreted as being in conflict with the shackles of faith and of the Church." (n.18). These insights should be the basis, the Pope indicated, of a "self-critique of the modern age" which should be matched by "a self-critique of modern Christianity, which must constantly renew its self-understanding setting out from its roots..." (n. 22). The Pope went on to suggest foundations for these two self-critiques. It was "wrong to believe that man would be redeemed through science. ... On the other hand, we must also acknowledge that modern Christianity, faced with the successes of science in progressively structuring the world, has to a large extent restricted its attention to the individual and his salvation." (n. 25)

In his response Ernesto Galli della Loggia states that the Pope "identifies with conviction the terms theoretically crucial for Christian reflection on modernity as, no longer, as Vatican II had done, 'justice', 'peace' and individual and collective self-determination, but 'reason' and 'science' (the latter of these in particular is essentially absent from conciliar expression)."

The encyclical contains a "recognition, in the field of the history of ideas, of the causes that led to the expulsion of Christian history from the world, especially through the influence of the pairing of science-freedom ... neither science nor the always partial political realizations of freedom will ever be able to satisfy the need for justice and love stirring in each human being."

We are still left with the questions: "Why did the story of the Christian West go this way? Why does it seem to have concluded with the entrapment of the religion so deeply involved in its creation? The answer can perhaps be found in what ... the encyclical itself calls the necessary 'self-critique of modern Christianity'".

www.chiesa

The Need for a New Philosophy of Science

Massimo Pigliucci, associate editor for *Biology & Philosophy* and member of the Philosophy of Science Association has, in his *Philosophy Now* column, emphasised the philosophical incompatibility of the success of scientific method with *a priori*, transcendental metaphysics (e.g. of Kant), whilst acknowledging the general lack of a coherent philosophy of science. He begins his piece with a tacit acceptance of the Pope's highlighting, at Regensburg, of the modern philosophical crisis, whilst also exhibiting what the Pope, in his June 7th speech as noted above, called modern thinkers' "sincere desire to move away from the self-sufficiency of philosophical reflection":

"Unfortunate it may be, but despite the spectacular successes of modern science, there is no ultimate foundation for our knowledge of the world...

"(And so) there is now a small but vociferous group who claim that philosophy of science should take Kant more seriously, in particular that it should admit that its unabashedly naturalistic take on science is deeply flawed. ... Kant teaches us that 'it is impossible to objectively understand the essence of the living.' Ergo, scientists are embarked on a hopeless quest, marred by their blind commitment to naturalism.

"... The problem ... is that both science and philosophy have moved on since Kant's insights. After all, the guy wrote before Darwin, quantum mechanics and Quine, to mention just a few. Modern philosophers of science are very aware of the impossibility of a God's eye view of the world. On the other hand, I'm not aware of a single transcendental insight that has illuminated anything at all about science, its operation, or its products. In other words, transcendental philosophy hasn't given us any answers we can use in this area – it has simply told us (in rather vague and quasi-mystical terms) that we can't do what we are, in fact, doing.

"... In the meantime, analytical philosophers like me are more than happy to keep thinking about science from within the deeply flawed

naturalistic framework."

Philosophy Now, April-May '08

The Relevance of Cosmic Unity

In the lead letter of the same issue of *Philosophy Now* the prominent anti-reductionist philosopher of ethics and of science Mary Midgely makes a point often made by Edward Holloway (though he might not have used the word 'choice'), namely that "simple logic surely shows that natural selection cannot be the universal explanation because 'selection' only makes sense a clearly specified range of choices – an idea to which far too little attention has been given." She also labels Michael Behe of the Intelligent Design school a Creationist, given his apparent affirmation of the distinction between 'direct' creation of some phenomena and the "autopilot" mode of others. *Philosophy Now*, April-May '08

Pedigree of Atheistic and Creationist Philosophy of Science Ambiguous

A very positive review in the science journal *Nature* affirms that the new book *Worlds before Adam*, by the "influential historian of Earth Science" Martin Rudwick, "challenges the view that geology's development is a story of secular progress. He shows that the founders of geology were almost all men of faith. Yet they often engaged in fierce debates with pseudo-scientists who ascribed absolute authority to readings of the Bible." *Nature*, 24th July '08

OF ISLAMIC INTEREST

Saudi Organised, Papal Encouraged, Forthright Dialogue

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, head of the Holy See's Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, has described a three-day July Interfaith Conference in Madrid as "an act of great courage" by King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, who convened it.

In his address, the French cardinal said that the Pope believes "that dialogue between believers, based on love and truth, is the best way to contribute to the harmony, happiness and peace of the peoples of the earth." The Cardinal

spoke forthrightly on the theme of religious liberty, which had not been discussed at the conference, saying that "the need to have places of worship, ... is the least one can hope for."

Arab News and zenit.org

Islam, the West and Truth

The Venice-based Oasis Centre, which promotes mutual understanding between Christians and Muslims, held an international colloquium in Amman last June on the relationship between truth and religious freedom. The Centre's founder Cardinal Scola said that in the West:

"... freedom of conscience and the freedom to convert coexist with a paradox. They are certainly recognised in Western legal systems and ... worldview(s); however ... (human) consciousness ... cannot itself actively determine what is good and what is evil (and) ... these freedoms are essentially thought of as mere individual prerogatives."

This all contrasts, the Patriarch of Venice continued, with Muslim cultures where, for example, "when Muslims want to convert to another religion it is perceived as a threat to their collective identity."

Oasis website

Fostering the Reclamation of Islamic Reason

The prominent American Catholic journalist John Allen recently interviewed the influential Algerian Mohammed Arkoun, 80, senior research fellow with the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London. Arkoun suggested that the Pope, at Regensburg, had been "right" to affirm that today "an intimate relationship between reason and faith does not exist in Islamic elaboration and expressions", but that it was unfortunate that he had not mentioned the very different situation that prevailed "before the death of the philosopher Averroes in 1198". Muslims need to be educated about this history Arkoun emphasised.

National Catholic Reporter Conversation Cafe, May '08



Cutting Edge

Science and Religion News

John Templeton RIP

Having described the life and work of this year's Templeton-Prize winner, Fr Michael Heller, in the *Cutting Edge* column in the last issue, we now have sadly to record the death of the founder of the Prize, Sir John Templeton, on 8th July 2008. Born in 1912 in Tennessee, he attended Yale and then Oxford Universities, and made his fortune as a Wall Street investor between 1937 and 1992. He became a naturalised British citizen, and in 1987 was knighted by the Queen for his many philanthropic works.

Templeton started his Wall Street career in 1937 and went on to create some of the most successful international investment funds. In 1972, he established the world's largest annual award given to an individual, intended specifically to honour living innovators in spiritual action and thought. Past prize-winners include Mother Teresa of Calcutta and Solzhenitsyn and, more recently, physicists, cosmologists and philosophers including Paul Davies, John Polkinghorne, George Ellis and Charles Taylor. His John Templeton Foundation (est.1987) supports scientific research at top universities in such fields as theoretical physics, cosmology and evolutionary biology, and also supports informed dialogue between scientists and theologians.

Templeton was long associated with the US Presbyterian Church. He "did not claim to be a theologian, but he was determined to support the work of those who might deepen our 'knowledge and love of God'." It was "Templeton's [own] belief that rigorous research and cutting edge science are at the heart of human progress." And indeed he felt that "scientific revelations may be a gold mine for revitalising religion in the 21st century."

May he rest in peace.

The quotations above are from the official obituary which can be read at www.templeton.org

'The Big Questions'

A recent project of the Templeton Foundation has been the promotion of a series of conversations on what they have called 'the big questions.' The latest question to be tackled in this series is the very direct one: 'Does science make belief in God obsolete?' The variety of answers from the thirteen invited contributors range (in brief) from "Yes" to "No, but it should" to "It depends" to "Absolutely not," and their individual essays expand on these opinions. The public is then encouraged to join in this wide-ranging debate.

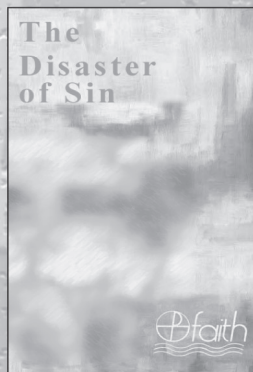
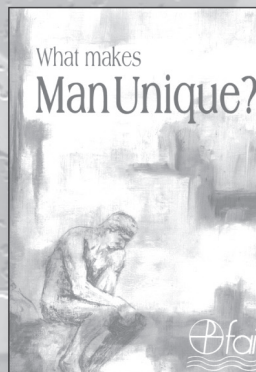
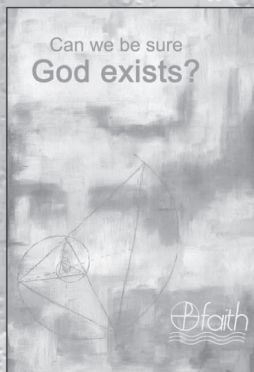
One of these thirteen contributors is Cardinal Schönborn of Vienna who reminds his readers that "The knowledge we have gained through modern science makes belief in an Intelligence behind the cosmos more reasonable than ever." He goes on to comment: "if we wish to explain the observed world in terms of Matter without reference to Mind, then it must be explained by things material, ultimate and simple all at the same time — by indivisible, notional 'atoms' and a chance 'swerve' that sets them in random motion. If the things of everyday experience are mere aggregates of these 'atoms,' and if the cosmos is infinitely old and infinitely large, then chance can do the rest. ... [But] modern science has shown that Nature is ordered, complex, mathematically tractable and intelligible 'all the way down.' ... And order, complexity and intelligibility exist 'all the way up' as well. We see a teleological hierarchy and chain of emergence from quantised physics, giving rise to stable chemistry, enabling the nearly miraculous properties of carbon and biochemistry, providing the material basis for the emergence of life with its own ontological hierarchy of metabolic (plant), sensitive (animal), and rational (human) existence. In short, the Nature we know from modern science embodies and reflects immaterial properties and a *depth of intelligibility* ... To view all these extremely complex, elegant and intelligible laws, entities, properties

and relations in the evolution of the universe as 'brute facts' in need of no further explanation is, in the words of the great John Paul II, an 'abdication of human intelligence'."

The other contributions and the whole 'conversation' around this 'big question' is at www.templeton.org/belief

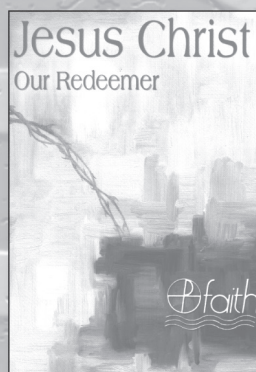
Atheism and IQ

A faith-science debate has also emerged in the pages of the *Times Higher Education*. Taking its lead from the imminent publication of a research paper by Lynn, Harvey & Nyborg entitled 'Average intelligence predicts atheism rates across 137 nations,' (in press, in the journal *Intelligence*), the *THE* on the 12th June suggested that "High IQ turns academics into atheists." The authors of the paper report a high correlation amongst their data between IQ and 'disbelief,' and that large proportions of academics decry religious belief. However, a retort to these claims by Denis Alexander, research biologist and director of the Faraday Institute at St Edmund's College, Cambridge, has been published in the *THE* on the 26th June. He analyses the non-homogeneity of questionnaires used, and points out the discrepancies in this research. "What sort of prediction is it," it asks, "when UK and US populations are reported to level-peg at IQs of 100 and 98 but have disbelief levels of 41.5 per cent and 10.5 per cent respectively?" He concludes: "More data are needed to draw conclusions, but suggested answers clearly have nothing to do with IQ. Fundamental atheists, as much as fundamentalist religious believers, like simple answers that ignore the complexities. One task of a good education is surely to show how difficult questions can have quite complex answers. If silly publications about IQ and atheism provide an opportunity to convey this message to our students, then maybe they are not a complete waste of time after all."



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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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UK £25/year, Europe (inc.Eire) £29/€37/year. Surface Mail overseas £28/\$56/€36/year. Air Mail overseas £33/\$66/€42/year. Student rate £17/\$34/€22/year. Single copies

£5 inc. p&p. Bulk orders £3.50 plus p&p. Published by the Faith-Keyway Trust, registered charity No. 278314. Printed by Tudor Printing 01772 633098, ISSN 1356-126X.