

faith

November • December 2007 • Volume 39 • Number 6

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John Deighan

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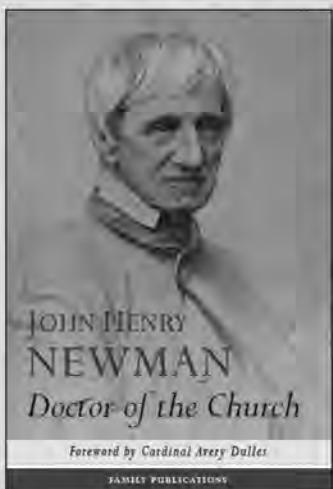
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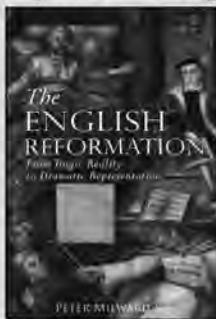


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The Church and The New World Order

"Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" (Matthew 22:22)

*"The Church('s)... presence and influence is required for society to be properly human and functional...
...We must be able to demonstrate that Catholic social thought treads the middle path between theocracy... and the atheist secularist agenda, which eventually leads to the State assuming God-like power..."*

A Global Crisis

It is always a truism to observe that we live in troubled times. Every era thinks of itself as troubled. Neither is it anything new to say that we are living in a time of crisis. Every age faces crises of one kind or another. Yet it is also true that as life on earth progresses, the scale of the troubles and the depth of the crises intensify.

As the worldwide community becomes a single intertwined economy with an increasingly homogenised culture, so the consequences of our shared beliefs and collective actions become ever more dramatic and far reaching. So it is that the battle for hearts and minds increases in ferocity and urgency.

In its original sense a "crisis" means a momentous choice, a tipping point in time. As Christians we would say that the great choice facing humanity is always whether to accept Jesus Christ or to refuse him. Of course, that is not how the average person in the street in post-Christian Europe perceives the issue, but there is a widespread perception that we are standing at a great crossroads – *a via crucis* – which could lead either to liberation or to disaster.

We live in a society that is deeply aware of its own dominion over the rest of creation, with all the benefits and threats this brings to ourselves and to the planet. We are both fascinated and troubled by our own potential. The rapidly accelerating globalisation of culture and commerce is highlighting, as never before, the profound interdependence of all peoples on earth and the mutual impact of human activity and the resources of Nature.

And yet it is a world that is still marked by extreme inequalities in the distribution of the fruits of the earth and the blessings of progress. It is a world that is riven with murderous divisions and violent political upheavals as much as any other age in history, although made more potent and deadly now through our very technological achievements.

We speak obsessively about "the environment", yet we hardly reflect on what this word really means for human beings. What is the proper environment for humanity? What conditions, values and relationships will make us flourish in peace and prosperity? We are troubled in spirit. We desperately need a new vision of our own meaning and purpose, one that will give us the wisdom to control the new powers over Nature that we are acquiring, one that will give us a new direction and a new hope. Each of the main articles in this issue persuasively point out this social need for fresh and faithful anthropological insight, in the areas respectively of the family, economics and global government.

A Broken Society

The Archbishop of Canterbury has recently caused something of a furore by saying that Britain is a "broken society" and that we should return to Christian principles as a matter of urgency. At the same time we hear prominent secular humanists conducting a campaign of propaganda in the media that seeks to blame the troubles of the world on "religion" in all its forms. Yet in the same breath we are told by these same secular evangelists – with more than a touch of arrogant triumphalism – that over 60% of people in modern Britain no longer believe in God or hold any religious creed at all. In which case

surely the blame for society's current ills can hardly be laid at the door of religion? The secularists are the spiritual establishment now. This is their world and their philosophy is manifestly failing to hold the majority of the young to any semblance of civilization and order.

In the early nineteen-seventies Edward Holloway grieved over the devastating impact of secular humanism on the young in his parishes:

"They come white of face and hideous of speech, these serfs of the Freudian overlords, their countenances are wide in that curious illusion of width that derives from utter dissipation matched to moronic mentality. They are barbarians, these poor sinned against savages of captive mothers and fathers, as truly barbarians as any that roamed primeval forests... the way of life so meaningless, the sensualism so without love, the pathless drift, the degradation of the image of God so without hope. Over it all is the aura of their own angry scorn for their very selves. This last is virtue, it is God's own ironic triumph upon their seducers. This is an act of contrition wrung from outraged nature for their own detestable corruption, and God will accept it unto a state of grace..."

"Men and women like this teemed, sweated, copulated and were crucified in the streets of ancient Rome and Greece. That was also a society run by 'Humanists' of delightful elegance and fun. History repeats itself, men repeat themselves, holiness and evil repeat themselves. There is no love of the brother, no holy and responsible care except that which proceeds from the deep roots in a man of the love of God and his rightful obedience to the creative Unity-Law."

(*Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, 1971 p.361)

Such passages in *Catholicism: A New Synthesis* (CNS) were highly controversial at the time, considered by some to be unnecessarily crude and bitter. But the passing of time is proving Holloway to be prophetically and poignantly accurate.

The Failure of Secular Humanism

Secularism seeks to exclude God from public policy as an irrelevance, an interference in humanity's autonomous self-development. Yet without any vision of meaning and value which transcends the ebb and flow of material events – without any awareness of God and of our own spiritual identity – the rights of the individual have nothing to ground them and society has nothing to hold it together in justice and charity. The spiritual environment of Man is shattered as a social fact and so it is inevitable that the dignity of both the individual and of the community is gradually degraded.

The truth is that for all its noisy propaganda atheistic humanism has nothing positive to offer humanity. And we have it in our power to do so much more than merely resist and refute the march of secularism. We hold in our own unworthy grasp the treasure that humanity longs and searches for. We have a duty to offer it again to the world in the clearest and most convincing

way possible. This demands a fresh and compelling apologetic which demonstrates to this scientifically sophisticated yet spiritually conflicted age a new intellectual, moral and social synthesis which once again places God at the heart of human thinking, planning and activity.

As in every age we need a further development of doctrine. What we really mean by this is a deeper insight into the relationship of every aspect of creation to God through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. The doctrine itself must be the same identifiable, defined teaching that is the historic Catholic faith, but this has to be projected against the backdrop of the vast new vista of creation revealed by modern science. Our failure to do this over the last several decades has been a major contributory factor in the triumph of theological error in so many catechetical centres of the Church and the devastating lapsation of the faithful across the developed world.

A Vision of Human Society

We must be able to demonstrate how the whole universe relates to God, not in some arbitrary manner but from the very laws and dynamic of material existence. We can so easily show the modern world how all creatures exist in ontological inter-definition and mutual belonging from the very fabric of matter which conforms to the fundamental Law that runs through all the laws of Nature. The very concept of 'The Environment' sums up this same reality. Our contemporary concern with environmentalism already implies an insight into the Unity Law of Creation, which in turn points to the Mind of God as its Author. We have a golden opportunity here to engage with the modern mind and proclaim the Gospel in terms that will be heard and understood more clearly.

So much can be developed from this insight. As far as our theme here is concerned, we can show how human society is the natural outgrowth and expression of the progressive Law of Nature as it applies to Man in history. But Man is more than just an animal in a physical environment. Human beings are a synthesis of the spiritual and the physical. As spiritual, the key to our well-being lies in direct communion with the living God, and as physical/social beings this essential religious dimension to our nature must also have a public as well as a private expression.

The religious dimension, therefore, can never be a purely private and subjective option. It belongs to the organic constitution of humanity. It is, therefore, an integral dimension of the State too, for the existence of the State follows from the nature of Man. And Man is defined in his basic rights and dignities as a creature made in the image and likeness of God and destined for life eternal with his Maker. Society is really the environmental framework within which human beings administer to one another from God the control and direction that is appropriate to human flourishing and fulfilment.

"Thus even the civic institutions of men, to be totally focussed, must embody something of this underlying relationship to God as the source of human truth and the dynamism of natural human happiness." (CNS, p.356)

The atheist/secularist society is, in fact, an unnatural disorientation of humanity that can only lead to a kind of collective neurosis, which is exactly what we are witnessing in modern Britain to devastating and tragic effect.

The Church and Society

Far from the Church being an imposition on the secular community, her presence and influence ensures that society remains fully human and functional. This is because the Church is the social embodiment of the relationship between God and Man that arises from the spiritual/physical/social constitution of human nature itself. The Church is the natural organ of God's enveloping care and guidance for human beings, which is a necessity of the fundamental law of the Universe – nothing created can be its own cause and control, nothing can be its own perfection or its own happiness.

It is the presence of the Church as an active presence within society that ensures moral objectivity beyond the easily manipulated views of a temporary majority or the oppression of a tyrannical State. This is especially true of the rights of the poor, sick and handicapped, and now indeed of the child in the womb. The Church often organises the healing and caring ministry of Christ at the social level. The State has a duty to implement distributive justice and communal welfare, but does not have the inner power to touch men's consciences and call men to heroic charity. In short, the State cannot make saints. Only Christ can do that through his Church.

The Church proclaims the objective principles of individual and common goodness. She also reminds society about the final good of human life and often plays a leading role in the development of society towards that end – the whole family of man united as one community in Christ through bonds of mutual justice and love as we enter together upon the Beatific Vision. The gradual unification of society on a global level, therefore, ought to be the culmination of the Unity-Law of creation and a prelude to the final eschatological transformation of all things in Christ.

In *Catholicism* again we find Fr Holloway writing that:

"Man who began as one in a community of origin under the blessing of God, is destined at the consummation of human society, to find again the same unity and community in one society on the earth. Eventually this will need a governmental centre which is the supreme authority of a federated world." (CNS p.481)

This thought may sound somewhat shocking to those who associate the idea of 'one world' society with the secularist agenda and even with freemasonry. But rightly understood, this hope belongs first to a Catholic view of the world.

Social Teaching

The idea of exclusively autonomous, self-interested and only extrinsically related nation states is alien to the Catholic vision of humanity. It arose largely from the individualism of Protestant

then Enlightenment thinking with its roots in the Nominalism of the late Middle Ages which denied any intrinsic connection, any common "natures", between entities.

In Catholic thinking, just as the principle of private ownership is limited by the common destiny of the goods of the earth, so legitimate claims to local self-determination must also be integrated into a wider commitment to the extended family of the whole human race. This not only excludes racial prejudice and excessive nationalism, which can lead to the horrors of so called "ethnic cleansing", but makes it natural and logical for the Church to encourage the political initiatives that bring humanity together as an ever closer community of nations on earth.

Enlightenment propaganda would have us believe modern progress was only made possible by secularisation. They portray the Church as a backward social force opposed to modernity on all levels. At times in history some churchmen have played into the hands of this false image, but far from the Church being suspicious of cultural and political globalisation, she actually holds the key to the future of humanity. For the Church is the custodian of that plenary truth and grace which is the wellspring of life and life in its fullness for all human beings.

Godless humanism is currently being heavily promoted around the world community as the shape of the coming world order. Religion is being more and more denigrated and excluded from public policy making. Yet by seeking to assert ultimate control over creation independently of God, we will only manage to create more oppression, division, pollution and alienation from his own happiness. The exclusion of the Church from the committee for drafting the constitution of the European Union and the growing pressure to exclude the Vatican from the UN are symptoms of the same phenomenon and will have similar if not worse results.

As Pope Benedict points out in *Deus Caritas Est*: "often the deepest cause of suffering is the very absence of God". (n.31) Far from true religion breeding extremism and violence, "a personal relationship with God and an abandonment to his will can prevent man from being demeaned and save him from falling prey to the teaching of fanaticism and terrorism". (n.37)

A New Social Synthesis

All of this confirms yet again the desperate need for a new theological synthesis capable of encompassing not only science and religion but also a new social vision that will vindicate the authority of Christ in his Church to be the ultimate source of control and direction at the heart of human affairs. It is a *sine qua non* that such a new synthesis must remain true to orthodox Catholic teaching as defined by the Magisterium. In fact we would argue that true development of doctrine, *including the social teaching of the Church*, is only possible on the basis of the orthodox doctrinal and spiritual principles.

In the Middle Ages a feudal system was developed which balanced rights and duties in a hierarchical family of men under God with the Church at the centre. This social synthesis became

ossified and eventually obsolete through a new leap forward in the development of human culture akin to the Neolithic revolution that created the pre-industrial economy in the first place. This scientific revolution, through which we are still living, consists not just in technological progress, but insight into and control over the creation itself. In short it means that humanity is coming close to the very Mind of God – at least in our ability to control and direct the foundations of matter. The need, therefore, for a deeper integration into the plenary Wisdom and Order of God is correspondingly urgent and is surely to be expected within the creative plan of God laid out in Christ.

Pope Benedict's Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* not only meditates on the personal love of God but also explores the relationship between the Church's ministry of charitable service (*diakonia*) and the political quest for a just social order. He calls for a new dialogue between those who are "seriously concerned for humanity and for the world in which we live" (par. 27) and those who expound the Church's social teaching.

This vital task needs to be set within a wider context. We must convince our post-Christian society once again why the Church is as natural to the organised community of humanity as is the marketplace, the town hall and the family hearth and home. In Britain a welcome battle has been won recently over State commitment to the place of faith schools in the national educational mix. But we should be under no illusion. The war with secularism will continue.

Two Streams of Authority

In order to convince the confused and alienated masses, we must be able to demonstrate that Catholic social thought treads the middle path between theocracy – the ambition of strict Islamist ideology – where the spiritual authorities simply subsume the powers of the State, and the atheist secularist agenda, which eventually leads to the State assuming God-like powers, yet without the compassion and respect for human freedom that is characteristic of the true God of Love.

This is most obviously true in the case of Marxism where the Communist Party promises heaven on earth by exercising total control over the lives of individuals. But secular agnosticism also ends up turning the State into a totalitarian Big Brother as humanism is elevated into to a godless religion. It happened in the aftermath of the French Revolution and we can see it gradually taking shape again in our own day.

In the Catholic vision of Church and State, while social power derives democratically upwards from the people created in the image of God, spiritual power descends downwards from God through the Body of Christ. The saving action of God upon men is not democratic but monarchical in principle. This is the only intrinsically monarchical relationship in the cosmos, and it is so simply because God is the only necessary being. We do not choose Him, He chooses us, which is why the basic principles of truth and goodness are not negotiable. Nonetheless the Church should not dictate every facet of existence nor should the Church

organise and administer the social fabric. That is the legitimate realm of democratic political activity.

Church and State are co-relative powers – transcendent and immanent in their respective derivation – which together enable human progress in goodness and truth which shape the final development of Man in Christ. Holloway writes simply that: "*the Church is from God through Men. The State is through Man from God.*" (CNS p.373) Both arise from the Unity-Law of Finality which frames the whole universe as an equation aligned on the eternal perfection of all things by union with the Trinity in Christ.

This original partnership between Church and society has been severely disrupted by sin, and it often appears to be in a state of perpetual conflict, but we must not let this blind us to the original truth of God's plan for the world. We must still try to build God's Kingdom, even though we know that it does not come without public crucifixion before the triumph of grace. Did Jesus not teach us to pray: "thy Kingdom come *on earth* as it is in heaven"?

Christ or Man?

In the end the original purpose of God in Christ will be realised, but not before the pattern of his death and resurrection has been repeated one last time at the climax of history – and therefore on a global scale. This will be the dread 'apocalypse' of the last anti-Christ before the new heavens and the new earth are revealed. We do not know when this will be or what form this will take. But we cannot withdraw from the fray and abandon the struggle.

In fact the Church should be at the table of the community of nations, not to take over civil government, but to proclaim those truths that are the foundations of human dignity and which civil government should always respect. However the Church cannot impose the will of God by force, and never should have, even though "this means for the Church to be reviled and bruised... like the poor wife of a dour husband, but never to leave him." (CNS p.353)

At the heart of the issue, as ever, is the question of the objective existence of God and that is no mere academic issue. For if God really IS, then every aspect of human life ought to defer to that fact and revolve around His saving presence.

"The choice is always the same from Eden to the End. But at the climax the stakes are raised to the ultimate choice of the whole of human society – either Man alone, which effectively means a Big Brother or anti-Christ who rules in the name of Man's self will, or it will be Man under the Father in Christ."
(CNS p.477)

The early Church managed to convert the mighty Roman Empire with all its political and technical genius, its imperial propaganda, its intellectual cynicism, moral decadence and social brutality. She triumphed through the "sheer purity and truth of soul" (CNS p.477) of her members, coupled with the conviction and the cogency of her preaching and her catechesis. We must do the same again in our own troubled times.

CHILDREN: BAD FOR THIS PLANET?

By Joseph Hine

On the 6th May last the *Sunday Times* published an article which suggested that having large families was an 'eco-crime.' It quoted John Guillebaud, emeritus professor of family planning at University College London as saying: 'The effect on the planet of having one child less is an order of magnitude greater than all these other things we might do, such as switching off lights. An extra child is the equivalent of a lot of flights across the planet. The greatest thing anyone in Britain could do to help the future of the planet would be to have one less child.'

Children are not bad for the environment – it's our selfishness that is bad for this planet. The root cause of climate change is our individualistic and materialistic lifestyle in the rich countries. We live alone in big houses, drive alone in big cars, and sit alone surrounded by our electronic gadgets.

For years we've been advised to look at children in terms of their financial viability. The logical extension of applying economic value to human life is euthanasia – killing non-productive members of society. In this new twist, we're asked to look at children in terms of their carbon emissions. What's next?

The argument that the best we can do for the planet's future is have fewer children is based on a flawed assumption: that we cannot change our lifestyle and consume less. More importantly, we need to recognise that each new life brings more to this world than economic burdens and carbon emissions. In the words of Indian poet Tagore, each child brings a 'renewed message that God has not lost faith in mankind.'

Each of my three sons has his unique personality. There are times when they humble me with their simple generosity. There are also times when they nearly drive me to distraction. They have changed me and taught me much.

Raising children requires self-sacrifice, commitment, work and – most of all – love and caring. It takes the willingness to spend my time on others, rather than my own pursuits. These are the same values needed to stop the threat of climate change.

I have a suggestion for anyone serious about saving the planet: Let's teach our children to want fewer things. And let's teach them by example.

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THE SERVANT OF GOD POPE JOHN PAUL II

"Theology, philosophy and science all speak of a harmonious universe, of a 'cosmos' endowed with its own integrity, its own internal , dynamic balance. This order must be respected. ...greed and selfishness - both individual and collective – are contrary to the order of creation, an order which is characterised by mutual interdependence."

(Message for World Day of Peace 1990)

"The new evangelisation, which the modern world urgently needs and which I have emphasised many times, must include among its essential elements a proclamation of the Church's social doctrine."

(Centessimus Annus 5, 1991)

OTHER ANGLES

THE RETURN OF NUCLEAR POWER AND POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

By P. E. Hodgson
Corpus Christi College, Oxford

Reality can be ignored for a while, but eventually it forces us to face the facts. Gradually, inexorably, it is becoming clear that there is no safe and practicable way to provide our energy needs except by nuclear power. As Governments realise this, more and more nuclear power plants are being planned and built worldwide. This is a belated recognition of the conclusions of a meeting of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences as long ago as 1980 that emphasised the worldwide need for nuclear power to provide the energy for an expanding world.

When nuclear power was first developed it was hailed with great enthusiasm. Nuclear power stations were built in many countries and provided an increasing share of world energy needs. Then the public attitude changed, and for several decades very few new power stations were built.

This change was brought about by a massive propaganda campaign orchestrated by the Soviet Union with the object of weakening the West. It was cleverly designed to make it plausible: genuine dangers were magnified out of all proportion. For example, it is well known that nuclear radiations are dangerous in large doses and this was used as an argument against nuclear power. However the radiation nuclear power stations emit is minuscule. The campaign was taken up by left-wing groups worldwide and proved very successful. It was given a great boost by the accident at Three Mile Island and the disaster at Chernobyl. Slowly the public was won over and became opposed to nuclear power.

In recent years several new developments have forced a reassessment of our energy plans. The mounting evidence for climate change, and all its tragic consequences, has provided a powerful argument against fossil fuel power stations: the burning of coal, gas and oil releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and this is almost certainly responsible for global warming. In addition, many poisonous chemicals are released as well. Alternative sources of energy such as wind turbines and photovoltaic cells are unreliable, expensive and quite unable to produce more than a minute fraction of the energy we need.

The endlessly repeated arguments against nuclear power, namely the disposal of nuclear waste, leukemia clusters around nuclear power stations, the cost of decommissioning and the shortage of uranium have all been conclusively refuted or put into proper proportion¹. Nuclear power stations produce hardly any atmospheric pollution and provide by far the safest way to generate energy (with the possible exception of gas).

Vast amounts of energy are needed even to maintain our standard of living and to increase that of those in poorer countries. Governments realise that the only practicable way to provide this is by nuclear power, and so many more power stations are being planned, using new designs that are even safer and more economical than those presently in operation².

The scale of the new programmes is remarkable. At present there are 435 reactors in operation worldwide, with a capacity 368,860 MW. According to the World Nuclear Association there are now 250 reactors planned, proposed or under construction with a total capacity of 215,821 MW, representing nearly a 60% increase. The principal countries involved are China (68 reactors), Russia (32), India (26), South Africa (25), USA (24) and Japan (14). The total for Europe is only 14.

The present British Government is now convinced of the necessity of building new nuclear power stations, but is failing to take the necessary action for fear of losing votes. Initially, Britain led the world in the development of nuclear power, but has now fallen far behind. There are immense commercial opportunities for companies ready to build the new nuclear power stations. Successive Government decisions have progressively weakened our ability to take advantage of this. Thus Toshiba's profits for the past year were \$1.16 billion, largely due to the purchase of Westinghouse from British Nuclear Fuels.

This tragic story of mismanagement, which has already cost so many lives, is due to letting decisions be influenced, not by the facts of nature, but by political propaganda.

NOTES

¹The detailed arguments may be found in many places, such as in my book 'Nuclear Power, Energy and the Environment' (Ashgate Press 2005).

²Both Mr Blair and Mr Brown have publicly admitted that Britain needs nuclear power.

The Undermining of the Family: Where are we at?

John Deighan

John Deighan outlines the legislative undermining of the family in Britain in the last seven years and some of its cultural implications, particularly in Scotland. He highlights the intellectual confusion at the heart of the Church's inability effectively to fight the secular take-over.

Mr Deighan is Parliamentary Officer for the Bishop's Conference in Scotland. We hope to publish some of his suggested practical and political ways forward in a forthcoming issue.

"The greatest obstacle to halting the advance of the secularist culture has been a failure to recognise the ambition and goal of its protagonists... There is a need to find principles that can be established around which a Christian culture can be regenerated."

The Catholic Church and Christian values in general are suffering considerable opposition in society on a variety of issues. As a result our influence is ebbing from public life and we are increasingly finding ourselves at odds with popular culture and political opinion in areas of morality such as bioethics, right to life, family and sexual ethics.

The Family: Cell of Society

The Church recognises the family as the building block of society and for good reason has carefully defended the understanding of family relationships and of human sexuality which is so intimately linked to the ordering of family life and the procreation of succeeding generations.

In human and spiritual terms the focus on the family for any struggle between conflicting worldviews is obvious since it is here that cultural and religious values are primarily passed on.

Recent changes in legislation have transformed the legal understanding of family structure and human sexuality. These changes have been preceded by changes in the views being promoted in the culture shaping institutions of society such that there are now a considerable number of people in the areas of politics, law, media and education who are ready to implement a new agenda for family and social life.

The Need to Understand

It is important to understand the nature and ambition of this agenda and to recognise the tools that are being used to permit its spread.

In a society founded on the exaltation of freedom it is understandable that the desire to satisfy one's human appetites takes an ever firmer grip on individuals who live in an environment where they have considerable spending power and great encouragement to spend on pleasures and material goods. With the decline in religiosity which has accompanied this change the meaning of life easily gets equated with the pursuit of pleasure. The overt sexualisation of society has proceeded with dramatic pace aided greatly by television soap operas, advertising, film entertainment etc.

Issues around sexuality and sexual practice are therefore powerful factors in shaping public attitudes and concomitantly the policies of public authorities.

An important aspect of this cultural development has been the influential presence of the homosexual movement in public life. The role of this movement as a tool to marginalise religion in society should not be overlooked. An overview of the progress of the homosexual movement in recent years is necessary to assess its rapid and startling success.

Dangers of Underestimating the Troubles

The greatest obstacle to halting the advance of the secularist culture has been a failure to recognise the ambition and goal of its protagonists. In seven short years there has been a massive transformation in the understanding of family life. The plans for this transformation had already been set out but were not widely known and so ambitious as not to have been taken seriously. At each stage it has usually been the prevailing view in society that it is inconceivable that anyone would want to move beyond the proposals currently being examined and there has been a broad willingness to accept assurances that developments would go no further. It has been a soft revolution to which few have raised voices of protest.

To gain an insight into the end point aimed at by homosexual campaign groups it is useful to consider and the terms 'homophobia' and 'heterosexist'. We need to understand what the abolition of the supposed social evils they label will achieve. The former is understood as dislike of homosexuality¹ and the latter as the belief that heterosexuality is the norm. By working to get these recognised as social evils akin to racism or sexism² it has been possible to get towards the goal, which is that homosexual behaviour is firmly accepted in society and that society should be indifferent to the form of relationships which individuals choose to enter or make the basis of their family lives.

Recent Legislative Changes

Thus in 2000 we saw the removal of the law which prevented the promotion of homosexuality by local authorities (Clause 2a) because it was maintained that no-one would ever want to promote homosexuality³. The logic of removing a law which prohibits what no-one wants to do is applied in no other area unless it is decided that it is acceptable to do the once proscribed activity. This is what could have been anticipated and what has in fact happened. Massive funding was available for groups to create materials and get involved in youth work, especially focusing on the areas of bullying⁴ and sexual health services.

The next stage was the promotion of the concept that sexuality is not biologically determined but rather socially constructed. The Gender Recognition Act 2004 was introduced to allow individuals to choose their 'gender' and it is permissible to be of male sex and have a female gender.

The Sexual Health Strategy allowed further growth towards the equivalence of heterosexual and homosexual behaviour. No recognition is ever made as to the disparity in health outcomes between the two lifestyles save to insist that homosexual individuals are deserving of greater recognition in the provision of services. The message promoted through the sexual health strategy also led to greater targeting of children and the policy adopted was that children could have access to Sexual Health services without parental knowledge or consent⁵. This removes

children from the protection of their family environment and allows increased sexualisation of our culture which aids the view of sex as recreation and separates it from its reproductive natural order.

Throughout local authorities and even in private business through the work of trade unions there are many 'gay and lesbian' associations and 'diversity training' courses for staff to ensure that they are sensitive to the needs of homosexuals. These are usually very supportive of homosexual relationships.

The Civil Partnership Act, passed in November 2004, raised homosexual relationships to the same status as marriage by granting the same rights to couples entering a civil partnership as to spouses entering marriage. Again it was argued that this was necessary to protect the rights of individuals in terms of property and wealth. Society was by this time well prepared to accept this measure although it was claimed that it was not at all the same as marriage despite being modelled very closely on the Marriage Act. It was also promised that the partnerships would merely involve couples signing the necessary papers with no ceremony being attached⁶. The civil partnership was devised to take effect at the signing of the contract rather than at the exchanging of vows for this very reason. Immediately upon being passed ceremonies were insisted upon and registrars compelled to offer the service by most local authorities. In wider society it is now common for those entering into civil partnership to be regarded as getting married⁷. At the same time local authorities etc. are changing forms to remove references to marriage and husband, wife, spouse being more and more replaced by partner or conflating 'married' and 'civil partner' together.

Having established that homosexual relationships are the same as heterosexual relationships the next step of promoting homosexual relationships as equal in providing a suitable environment to raise children logically and actually followed. The adoption bill permitted homosexual couples jointly to adopt and in another strike against the status of marriage also allowed unmarried couples to adopt. This bill was given overwhelming approval by the Scottish Parliament in December 2006. The Church opposed this development but also highlighted the problems that could be faced by Catholic adoption agencies that would want to follow the Church's understanding (and in fact that confirmed by sociological evidence) that married couples present the best environment for raising children. It was insisted by government ministers that at the time they had no intention of preventing or hindering Catholic adoption agencies from selecting suitable adoptive parents in line with their beliefs. No evidence that the innovation was in the interest of children was made available but rather it was assumed that same-sex couples had to be as good as a mother and father since the equivalence had already been established in previous legislation. The unusual step was taken by the responsible parliamentary committee of asking those who were opposed

to the innovation to prove that it was wrong rather than expecting the supporters of change to justify the change⁸.

Very quickly it became apparent that Catholic agencies would not be safe. The Equality Act 2006 had provisions to create regulations (commonly referred to as the SORs or sexual orientation regulations) which would establish laws banning discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods and services including education⁹. Having firmly embedded the notion that homosexual relationships are good it is now to be illegal to discriminate on sexual orientation of couples seeking to adopt children. An agency assessing a married couple alongside a transvestite and his boyfriend must be indifferent to their 'sexual orientation' when deciding who the child is to be placed with.

The Equality Act created a new body: the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, CEHR, which will have the power to take up cases on behalf of those who feel there has been discrimination under the provisions of the Equality Act. Ben Summerskill is one of the Commissioners of the CEHR and Chief Executive of Stonewall, the most influential homosexual campaigning group. His predecessor at Stonewall was Angela Mason who until recently was head of the department which produced the Sexual Orientation Regulations.

The provisions of the Sexual Orientation Regulations are binding across Scotland, England and Wales. Northern Ireland has its own version. The exemptions to faith groups are very tightly drawn such that they relate only to doctrinal and sacramental matters within the walls of the Church. Within schools it is accepted that it may be possible to state as a proposition that the Catholic Church teaches such and such a thing but not to insist that it is objectively true¹⁰. Regulation 7(4) covers detriment to a pupil such that it is not permissible, in the words of the minister Baroness Andrews, "to make a child feel that the school is not a place for them". We of course understand that this should never be the case and that all people should be supported. But we need to remember that homosexual practice and orientation are conflated by the government so that not supporting a homosexual lifestyle is not to support the person who claims to be homosexual.

End of the Line?

It would be a mistake to believe that these regulations mark the end of this process or that they can be somehow worked around. They have been carefully prepared and are in line with the agenda which has unfolded steadily always with assurances that things are not going to get worse for those who disagree. The end point should not be forgotten and that is that opposition to homosexuality ('homophobia') will be treated as a social evil. To hope for a benign interpretation of the agenda is what has prevented effective opposition to it in the past. "Heterosexism" is recognised as another social evil, more akin to 'sectarianism' as it is understood by the Executive. Thus educational initiatives

are already underway to introduce young children to positive examples of 'gay and lesbian' relationships¹¹. In Scotland the curriculum is not set by law but this does not mean that what is followed in the curriculum can breach any law. Schools will be expected to fulfil the requirements of the Equality Act.

The homosexual lobby has been very effective in aligning itself with minority groups, is prominently represented at the Holocaust memorial service¹² each year and has created an image of itself as a group of people under persecution. This further prepares the mood for dealing with those who oppose the homosexual lifestyle, or in fact not just those who oppose it but those who fail to approve it.

There has been considerable agitation from the Equality Network in Scotland because of the failure of the Scottish Executive to bring forward measures on Hate Crime yet.

In a report from an Equality Network conference the question is posed "Should we be aiming to close down all the churches that preach against LGBT or against LGBT community?" It goes on to ask "Churches aren't allowed to deny people communion on the grounds of race or disability – why sexual orientation?"¹³ In light of the recent success, should we discount the possibility of success for the homosexual lobby if these do become the campaign issues of the near future? It is worth noting that Brazil is considering laws to imprison priests who preach against homosexuality.

The media through entertainment, soap operas and film has helped to promote and reinforce values which are detrimental to family life. These have coarsened attitudes and prepared society to be more accepting of promiscuity, infidelity and a variety of sexual lifestyles. At the same time the views of Christianity are being highlighted as an impediment to the new freedoms allegedly being enjoyed.

There are no doubt many significant reasons as to why this is the case but one aspect which needs to be considered is the extent to which some lobbying groups have advanced their views to influence thinking in public life. Lessons can be learned from a simple look at Stonewall's website and the myriad of projects which have been established to influence public opinion and to raise money, much of it public money.

The Scottish Executive has been providing financial support to the LGBT Hearts and Minds Group. This group is itself divided into five working groups which cover:

- Education and family
- Media and leadership
- Citizenship and society
- Workplace
- Religion and belief

The Group will report in autumn of this year. The Scottish parliament has been encouraging the work through the Equal Opportunities Committee and continued support has been placed on the agenda of the incoming MSPs who will make up this group in the new parliamentary term.

Recently a teacher in a non-denominational school related her experience of young secondary pupils discussing their outrage that a 'mad Christian party' was standing and that they were 'anti-gay'. The pupils unanimously deplored this and some commented that some people had obviously not learned the lessons of the Jewish holocaust. This may be one example but it seems to indicate that propaganda methods are working as planned and we may expect one-day for orthodox Christian teaching to be regarded on a par with the policies of the BNP.

Balancing Respect and Truth

There is a need to be concerned about the pastoral needs of persons with homosexual inclinations. However great efforts in proclaiming the dignity of active homosexual persons, confuses many people who are not used to seeing the dignity of adulterers or pornographers proclaimed with vehemence in the same breath as their behaviour is reproved. I believe that such messages can be interpreted as a sign that the behaviour is not being clearly rejected. At the same time an effective support network for those who wish to live a chaste life in spite of homosexual temptations is necessary lest faithful people are left alienated and feeling separated from the Church.

A Way Ahead

A response I believe is to apply the antidote to the poison of the bad ideas which such groups have propagated. Society is now hostile to religion to such an extent that it will be difficult to promote Christianity directly. Government bodies will not help and businesses in turn are likely to be too nervous about attacks from secular groups.

There is a need to find principles that can be established around which a Christian culture can be regenerated. The difficulty we have is that much of the language we would wish to use has been corrupted such that it is ambiguous, so tolerance and human rights can now be used to suppress Catholic beliefs and the freedom of Catholics to teach.

Natural law principles need to be re-asserted and these have to be chosen carefully to counteract what has gone wrong.

Beyond this, in the public and political spheres I would suggest that we need a campaign be commenced which focuses on

- Freedom of conscience
- Importance of marriage
- Stability of family life

There is a variety of possibilities and I hope to offer some suggestions in a forthcoming issue of this magazine.

See also Road from Regensburg, Muslim Weekly piece p.33 and Neuhaus p.42.

NOTES

¹The following gives a typical understanding of the term and is taken from www.religioustolerance.org/hom_phob.htm "In our web site, we choose to define these words in terms of actions, not beliefs:

– homophobia as engaging in a behaviour aimed at restricting the human rights of persons who have a homosexual orientation and/or who engages in homosexual behaviour. This behaviour can take many forms: signing a plebiscite; sending an Email to one's senator or representative; participating in a demonstration; voting on a school board; voting to elect a homophobe; talking to co-workers or friends, delivering a sermon; etc. These rights include what many believe to be the most important human right: to be married; to have their spousal status recognised and registered; and to be assigned benefits and obligations by the government. Other rights are protection from hate-motivated crimes, protection in accommodation, and employment security.

– homophobe as a person who engages in homophobic behaviour.

– homophobic, an adjective referring to a behaviour which attempts to maintain special rights for heterosexuals."

²Heterosexism is based on unfounded prejudices, just as racism, sexism, ageism, and so on, are based on unfounded prejudices. Most of society's institutions unwittingly encourage these prejudices; sometimes they do so deliberately and maliciously." (http://www.glcnsnsw.org.au/documents/Infopack/09_heterosexism.pdf).

³Four examples: (i) "We believe that repeal of section 2a is about creating a more tolerant Scotland. We believe it will make it easier for teachers and schools to deal with sensitive issues that arise. But it definitely will not lead to homosexuality being promoted in our schools" Sam Galbraith, Minister for Children & Education, in letter to all school boards and headteachers January 2000. (ii) "The education minister has been at pains to stress to parents, the Catholic church and Cardinal Winning that nothing will change if the clause is scrapped." Parliament ready for Section 28 debate, By Elizabeth Quigley, BBC Scotland political correspondent, 8 Feb, 2000 (iii) "Promotion of homosexuality is impossible, and no-one has any interest in attempting it." Equality Network, Written evidence for the Equal Opportunities Committee on the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Bill 20th March 2000. (iv) "The bill also provides for the repeal of section 2A. That repeal is not, and never has been, about the promotion of homosexuality in our schools. It is not about political correctness or, even less, about marriage. It is about building a tolerant Scotland." Wendy Alexander, Minister for Communities in Scottish Parliament debate, 21st June 2000.

⁴Fergus McMillan, LGBT Youth Scotland's policy manager, said: "What we particularly bring to the new anti-bullying service is a sense of diversity and a set of skills about working with a group of pupils who are marginalised and don't have power. We want to work with the Catholic Education Service and Catholic schools just as we will engage with everyone." Equality Network News November 2006.

⁵This has been the case at least since the mid-1980's Gillick ruling. In the Scotland in recent times this practice has been based upon a very dubious interpretation the Age of Legal Capacity Act (Scotland) 1991 by the Scottish Executive. It is now explicitly part of the 2005 Sexual Health Strategy.

⁶"There is no legal requirement for a ceremony to make a civil marriage legal, and the law on civil partnerships (available from 5th December this year) mirrors civil marriage. However, the General Register Office for Scotland issues guidance to district registrars on the form of civil marriage ceremonies, including a form of words, which registrars follow (except that, at their discretion, they can agree a different wording with the couple)." Extract from Equality Network Press Release 08/03/2005.

⁷Hello magazine now refers to Elton John's partner as his "husband".

⁸e.g. Frank McAvety,MSP, Adoption and Children (Scotland) Bill: Stage 1, Evidence Session 7 June 2006 gave the "perfect example" of a woman in a long-term same-sex relationship, who herself was adopted: "... the woman is in a stable relationship, understands what it is like to bring up children in difficult circumstances, cares passionately and possesses moral values that are as strong as those of anyone around this table. Why should she not be allowed to adopt?"

⁹"The regulations will therefore impact upon how education is delivered to ensure that a classroom becomes a place where learning and not prejudice can flourish." Baroness Andrews, Hansard 21/3/07, Column 1293.

¹⁰"In our view there is an important difference between this factual information being imparted in a descriptive way as part of a wide-ranging syllabus about different religions, and a curriculum which teaches a particular religion's doctrinal beliefs as if they were objectively true." Westminster Joint Committee on Human Rights report on the regulations of 26 February 2007.

NOTES CONTINUED

¹¹'King and King' (See Appendix 4) is a story for young children which is one of several being promoted in a government sponsored project. The project report states – "Ofsted and DfES have both identified homophobic bullying (bullying based on assumptions about sexual orientation) as a key priority for all schools. Many children will have a connection, through family or friends, to non-heterosexual relationships, and some will come to identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered, but the life experience of all children will be profoundly affected by the ethos of their school, and this means creating a school environment where no-one is an outsider. This might involve, for example, including non-heterosexual relationships within discussions of family, friendship, self or growing up, exploring a range of identities and relationships through literacy, art, history or drama, or including a specific focus on homophobia within a class- or school-based initiative to tackle bullying." <http://www.noutsiders.sunderland.ac.uk/about-the-project>

¹²This link has been encouraged by some groups as one which should be made with school children, for example see www.schools-out.org.uk/teachingpack/awholeschoolissue.htm which encourages schools to have 'inclusions of oppression of gays and lesbians when looking at the Holocaust in history.'

¹³Brave New World, LGBT Equality In A Changing Scotland, Report From The Conference, 20th May 2006. The Arches, Glasgow.

¹⁴For example, following the development of the Sexual Orientation Regulations The Scottish Executive Equality Unit has stated: The key commitment from the Executive was to establish a Forum to look in detail at the issues around hearts and minds... what specific recommendations needed to be made to the Executive and partner organisations in order to challenge prejudice and tackle discrimination against people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender." (n.37). March 2006.

Appendix

TIMELINE OF CHANGE

Legal Instrument	Legal Change	Effect
Scotland Act 1998	Scottish parliament implemented Consultative Steering Group recommendations on discrimination. Established Sexual Orientation as a strand of equality.	Established a rule that all Executive Bills should have a statement of impact on equality, including for LGBT people. It set up an Equal Opportunities Committee Executive and established an Equality Unit to 'mainstream equality'.
2000 Clause 2a repealed	Decriminalised the promotion of homosexuality by local authorities.	Allowed public funding of campaigning groups who use health and bullying issues to promote their vision of sexual relationships and the acceptance of homosexuality.
Sexual Health Strategy	Promoted diversity in sexuality and easy access to sexual health services including to school children.	Groups now able to promote further the sexualisation of society and target children.
Gender Recognition Act June 2004	Allowed individuals to choose a new gender.	Reinforced the idea that gender is a social construct and undermined further the understanding of natural law.
Civil Partnership November 2004	Allowed same-sex couples to register their relationships and be treated in exactly the same way as married couples.	Civil partnerships celebrated widely as marriage. Benefits open to marriage made available to all civil partners.
Family Law Bill 2006 (Passed December 2005)	No fault divorce made easier, cohabitation recognised in law.	Weakening status of marriage in society and the legal protection of the marriage bond.
Adoption Bill 2007 (Passed December 2006)	Unmarried couples including same-sex couples permitted to adopt jointly.	Children now able to be placed with a same-sex couple.
Equality Act (Sexual Orientation Regulations 2007) March 2007	Outlaws the discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods and services including education.	Removal of right to disagree with promotion or practice of homosexuality when providing services which cooperate in so doing. Must regard heterosexual and homosexual relationship as morally equivalent and equally socially acceptable. Encompassing education to allow promotion of these values in schools and limit the freedom to dissent.
Future? Hate crime, Harassment, Expansive of educational initiatives to overcome 'homophobia' and 'heterosexism'. New Cabinet Secretary for Justice has endorsed in principle creating hate crime. ¹⁴	Aiming to eradicate the promotion of views which are seen as socially evil and to prevent those who promote what is regarded as hate.	

OTHER ANGLES

FR FLEMING REPLIES TO FR QUIGLEY

I am grateful to Father Quigley for being so ready to respond to the criticisms I have made of the *All That I Am* (ATIA) even if I find the response disappointing in so far as it does not clearly address some of my key criticisms. (cf. *Faith* Sept 07)

I questioned the programme's affirmation that "the main issue about abortion is the lack of belief in the personhood of the foetus." I offered evidence that this is not the case whether in the population at large or with regard to women having abortions, who generally do acknowledge their unborn baby's personhood. I argued how important it is that pupils should be cognisant of this fact and its implications for pro-life activity. Fr Quigley just tells us that two prominent politicians recently debated the issue on the *Today* programme.

Fr Quigley and I seem to disagree about the meaning of the word "contraception" in common parlance. He defends its application to Natural Family Planning (NFP), though three paragraphs later (for other polemical reasons, see below) he strongly denies its application to "Responsible Parenthood" as understood in the Catholic tradition. Clearly there is confusion. All the more reason that the radical difference of NFP from approaches that are both anti-life and contrary to Church teaching should be clearly delineated. All sex education programmes, particularly Catholic ones, need to employ clear language and accurate distinctions.

Where clarity of language is concerned, Fr Quigley gives insufficient weight to the power of the "informed choice" rhetoric in contemporary secular society. Indeed the opening paragraph of his "response" describes the purpose of *All That I Am*, resulting as it does from "negotiation with the Local Authority and (the Government's) Teenage Pregnancy Unit" is to allow students "to make 'informed choices' based on (their) faith." In dominant secular circles choice is seen as an ultimate value. Crucially, for Christianity it is not. True love is, and choice is for love. Contrary to Fr Quigley's suggestion there is no parallel here with any possible confusion that might arise between the use of the term "responsible parenthood" and contraception. Indeed the term "responsible parenthood" is employed almost exclusively in Catholic circles and is hardly used at all by promoters of contraception.

Homosexuality remains the least satisfactory element of the ATIA programme. It is not relevant what the authors "knowingly set out" to do. The fact is that the text as it stands significantly waters down Catholic teaching on homosexuality by, for instance, selecting out crucial parts of the text from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Moreover, such selecting out when combined with arguing for the inappropriateness of using proof texts might easily carry the implication, in the context, that the Church itself is being "fundamentalist" when it does (authoritatively) use such proof texts. The distinction between arbitrary and magisterial use of scripture is not explained. Fr Quigley again assures us that what is cut out concerning Church teaching is fully supplied in the Key Stage 4 RE syllabus. Why not leave the anti-proof text section until then also?

The fact is that that teaching has been severely and unjustifiably truncated by ATIA with little offered in the ATIA text to justify the full teaching of the Church on this important and controversial matter. In fact what is currently in the text (and what has been omitted) appears to undermine Church teaching.

Finally, Fr Quigley asserts that ATIA reflects the essence of Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body. It is not clear that it does this. For example, the notion of the nuptial meaning of the body based upon an anthropology derived from the book of Genesis is neither presented nor explained. The Church's opposition to fornication finds its coherent explanation through such positive theology. This is very different from the description of the meaning of sex presented in ATIA, inspired as it is, as acknowledged in the text, by Dr Jack Dominion.

The criticisms of the programme are made in the interests of assisting the continuing discussion on the best way to present sex education in Catholic schools and in the wider community. I am grateful to Fr Quigley for his ready cooperation in the process I have followed in the development of this critique.



Reclaiming Economics for Christians

Edward Hadas

"He has let us know the mystery of his purpose... that he would bring everything together under Christ, as head, everything in the heavens and on earth."
(Ephesians 1:9-10)

In this piece Edward Hadas argues that post-industrial Economics has focused upon the comfort not the nature of man. He argues that it has been somewhat successful in producing comfort, but cannot claim any other successes. As such it has contributed to the de-humanisation of modern society, and urgently needs renewal in the light of the human being who wonders as well as works.

Edward Hadas is a financial journalist with Breakingviews.com. He has just had a book published by ISI books: "Human Goods, Economic Evils; A Moral Look at the Dismal Science".

"... (in) the social sciences... religious motivations are virtually never accepted as fully valid explanations for behaviour... (but) replaced by some motivation that is considered more rational, logical or scientific..."

In the prologue to the letter to the Ephesians (and in the parallel passage in the letter to the Colossians 1.15-20), Paul's primary concern is clearly the totality of Christ's redemptive authority over his followers. The cosmological affirmation – that "everything" will eventually come under Christ's sway – is not central, but serves to support the injunction to believers to rely solely on "his blood" (v.7) as their "gospel of salvation" (v.13). The claim that all creation comes from, through and for Christ has profound implications for Christians, especially for those who study the wonders of men and the world.

Because Christ should be in everything, everything should be Christian. That "everything" includes all academic disciplines, from the most humanistic to the most scientific. The Christian understanding of God, man and the world is necessary for all studies, no matter how well developed they may seem in their purely secular form. As grace perfects nature, the teachings of faith complete the workings of purely worldly reason. As John Paul II put it, "The world and all that happens within it... are realities to be observed, analysed and assessed with all the resources of reason, but without faith ever being foreign to the process."¹

Such a Christianisation would not discredit all theories or change all work habits in domains generally considered to be non-religious. If, as Christians believe, all truth ultimately comes from God through Jesus Christ, then all roads of worldly enquiry should lead back towards the same ultimate source and conclusion, the truth of the Word. The findings of truly open-minded secular experts can generally be trusted because intelligent openness to reality is a basic Christian attitude. The Christian approach would ideally include the desire to uncover and probe the goodness, beauty and divine purpose of creation, as well as an emphasis upon the pre-eminence of love among men and the dire effects of sin on creation in general (see Romans 8.22) and on men in particular. The religious situation of the experts in question is less important than the commitment to the truth.

Of course, contemporary scientists (I will leave the humanities out of this article) do not cast their research in Christian terms such as beauty and sin, but in more secular categories such as laws and intuitions. However, the apparent gap between the modern scientific method and the Christocentric universe can be bridged without great difficulty. The biochemist finds rules which explain how one chemical interacts with another in the body. For the Christian, each of these rules is a speck of truth which reflects and participates in the order and purpose of "everything in the heavens and on earth".

Faith and Reason

The call for a mutual support agreement between faith and reason has often been rejected, both by some of the faithful and by many scientists. The religious objections have mostly aimed to protect God's sovereign freedom to do what He pleases with his creation, a freedom which, the dissenters argue, would be limited by the existence of universal and unbreakable laws of nature, or indeed of inevitable laws of history or human behaviour. This desire to emphasise the distance between God's ways and the ways of creation is in many ways laudable, but it can easily sweep away the closeness of God to his creation and especially to man, who, according to the first chapters of Genesis, is made in the divine image.

Like the religious objectors, scientists wishing to separate faith and reason – a minority, but a noisy one – claim that nature, which they often think of as self-subsistent rather than as created, cannot be reconciled to God, whose existence they often deny. Such scientists emphasise the autonomy of the laws of nature rather than the freedom of a possible God. These laws are thought to exclude the possibility of anything beyond them, of any mystery of Being or of any God. They argue that reason, in the form of a modern scientific understanding, has definitively undermined faith. The evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, who argues that science shows that God is a "delusion", is only the latest and one of the loudest of this group of anti-religious propagandists.

Essentially, Dawkins and other anti-faith practitioners of the hard sciences (physics, chemistry, biology and their derivatives) make two claims: 1) that everything can be explained in terms of scientific laws and 2) that those laws show that nature has no purpose, certainly no human-centred purpose. Both of those claims are philosophically incoherent. The existence of laws of nature cannot demonstrate the absence of a lawgiver, nor can the many individual regularities testify to the absence of a greater regularity or direction in the universe. Philosophers may argue whether physics and biology can definitively demonstrate the existence of God, but proof of the negative claim – that God does not exist or that men have no God-given purpose – is certainly beyond the competence of scientific reasoning.

The situation is different in the 'soft' social sciences – e.g. politics, anthropology, sociology and economics. In these domains, the anti-faith practitioners' case against the Christological-cosmological claim is more subtle, but ultimately more dangerous. Few social scientists say, "The way men are is incompatible with the existence of God". Rather, the professional rules of enquiry require that the human condition be discussed as if God did not exist. Respectful references

to the reality of God, the supernatural calling of men, or indeed to any of the concerns which Christians consider fundamental to human nature are prohibited. Serious social scientists have no professional vocabulary to deal with the mystery of death, the human search for meaning, the moral struggle, the primacy of love or the drama of salvation. Religious beliefs and practices are observed and discussed, but treated as states of mind and social customs, mere human constructions unsupported by any transcendent reality.

Methodological Atheism

The irrelevance of God to social scientists may not be as obviously offensive to believers as the non-existence of God claimed by atheistic hard scientists, but the softer denial has a more pernicious effect than crude atheism on scholarly analysis. There are three differences.

First, the hard science of believers and non-believers need not differ in techniques or analysis², but the 'methodological atheism'³ of the social sciences ignores, and thus in practice denies, man's need for holiness and redemption. To the Christian, such an atheistic approach to human nature is essentially inhuman, since men do not exist without a fundamental religious vocation any more than they exist in this life without physical needs, individuality or communities, all aspects of the human condition eagerly studied by social scientists. Indeed, Christians go further. Men cannot be understood without Christ, as John Paul II never tired of pointing out, referring to the words of *Gaudium et Spes* (22):

"The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him Who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear."

Second, while hard-science atheism falls at the first philosophical hurdle, social-science atheism cannot easily be debunked. The claim that men's actions and beliefs can be explained without any meaningful reference to God or to men's radically religious nature is empirical, not ontological. The soft claim can only be rejected on the grounds of evidence about human nature and behaviour. However, evidence can always be disputed or rejected. It is never certain that a particular attribute is truly universal and not merely common or temporary. Alternatively, claimed motivations might be illusory. As anyone who has argued with a devout Freudian or Marxist can testify, there are methodologically atheistic explanations for everything.

Finally, social-science atheism strikes closer to the heart of the Christian claim than does its hard-science cousin. The physicists and biologists argue about what Pascal called the "God of the Philosophers and the learned", which provides rules and order for Nature. But the God for whom men's hearts yearn must be something more. Christians believe that suicidal despair is ultimately the only alternative to the God who offers love, forgiveness and salvation. Indeed, Christian revelation makes no sense unless men are understood in these religious terms. If methodological atheism can provide an adequate explanation of men's ways, then there is no need, and ultimately no room, for Pascal's "God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob", who is indeed the God of Jesus Christ.⁴

A Dubious History

Current practitioners of these human sciences are often almost unaware of the atheistic presuppositions of their approach. They see themselves merely as professionals following established protocols of research. But these rules and limits to enquiry can be traced directly back to claims about human nature that were originally offered with philosophically and polemically anti-religious intentions. A quick survey of the different disciplines shows that methodological atheism has been closely entwined with most of the social sciences since their earliest days.

Sociology: Auguste Comte, the founder of sociology, claimed that the religious phase of history had ended, replaced by the higher truths of science. Comte was influential, insane and optimistic. The sociologists of the next generations were sane, gloomy and equally sure of the falsity of religion. Max Weber thought that the stripping away of the religious illusion was irreversible, but left the world "disenchanted". Emile Durkheim believed that the decline of religion was dangerous for society because it caused men to abandon laws which they had respected as God-given. But again, for Durkheim the resulting "anomie" was the inevitable result of reason seeing through the meaningless claims of faith.

Politics: For close to a millennium, the most important political question for European political philosophers was the relationship between ecclesiastical authorities and their royal rivals, whose authority was also assumed to come from God. Modern political thinkers, however, have all but forgotten such disputes. Their starting point is the entirely manmade "social contract" of Locke and Hobbes. The slightly later doctrine of the "separation of Church and State" created an almost unbridgeable chasm between the laws of God and those of men. In the 19th century, Hegel, another father of modern political science, viewed organised religion as essentially seditious unless it was reduced to a propagandistic organ of the State.

Psychology: Christian psychology has a long and distinguished history, but the modern discipline was founded by Sigmund Freud, whose unconscious drives most certainly did not include a nature driving towards perfection by the infusion of grace. Rather, Freud considered religion to be an "illusion". Some students of psychology trace their intellectual lineage to other founding ideas, for example the physical nature of mental conditions, the importance of men's "self-actualisation" or of a set of mythical archetypes. God and His love have no place in any of these.

Anthropology: The founders of anthropology had to deal with religion, as the tribes they studied were very interested in religious questions, but the professionals generally limited their study to the sociological meaning of the various religious practices. Some anthropologists do respect distinctly religious ideas such as holiness and life-after-death, but many still try to explain religion away as no more than a shared 'language' for expressing social patterns, calming irrational fears or marking men as somehow different from animals.

Urban planning: Cities and villages used to be built around churches and temples. Jane Jacobs, generally considered the founder of modern urban design, thought cities should take the everyday needs of people into account but did not mention religion or religious buildings in her foundational book.⁵

In all these disciplines the founders' methodological preconceptions have generally been maintained or fortified. Religious motivations are never accepted as fully valid explanations for behaviour. The desire to do God's will is replaced by some motivation that is considered more rational, logical or scientific, often one of which the actors themselves are not consciously aware. The motivations vary by discipline, but a short list would include the largely physical pleasure of the Utilitarians, the desire for survival of the Darwinians, the incestuous sexual cravings of the Freudians, the quest for power and class domination of the Marxists, and the blind search for unlimited affluence of modern economists.

To a Christian, these claimed motivations have one common feature, disrespect for the centrality of morality in human nature. The orientation of men's desires towards the eternal and unchanging good (an orientation which St. Thomas Aquinas treats as a definition of the nature of the human will), is now dismissed as part of a superseded "traditional morality". Instead, the social scientists leave men under the sway of one or more morally objectionable guiding principles. Some anti-atheist dissenters have tried to introduce more sympathetic models of motivation – Marcel Eliade in comparative religion and Paul Vitz in psychology, for example – but the anti-religious methodology is hard to avoid.

A Call to Action

The faithless reason of methodological atheism is dangerous to Christians, but it can be overcome. The task is not easy, because the atheistic explanations cannot exactly be disproved ("falsified", in the language of the fashionable philosophy of science). They can and should be ridiculed for making insulting claims about men and their motivations, for relying on preposterous unacknowledged motivations and for denying the power of goodness. But ridicule of one set of explanations can only be truly effective if it is accompanied by a superior alternative. What are needed are Christian reconstructions of the various social sciences, remade to be in the true image of man. In other words, a new reason must be created, one which corresponds with the teachings of faith. For scholars, the need is quite practical. If Christian social scientists and teachers cannot rely on working practices that are based on men seen as social, religious and moral creatures, they will inevitably fall back on the existing models, based on men seen as individualistic, worldly and selfish. The result will be incomplete and sometimes immoral analyses.

The reconstruction is a complex matter, different for each of the social sciences. In anthropology and comparative religion, many conventional approaches are largely unpolluted by methodological atheism. Their findings, like those of truth-seeking biochemists, do not need to be challenged or rethought. In sociology, on the other hand, there seems little that does not need thorough reconsideration. The remainder of this article is a brief discussion of a proposed radical reconstruction of economics, the social science with which I am most familiar. It is based on a just published book.⁶

Economics as a Test Case

Economics might seem like a poor place to start a Christian fight-back against methodological atheism, since it deals largely with issues that Christians have generally considered of minor importance – the body's daily needs and occupations. But its apparent low priority makes the case of economics a good trial for the thesis that the reason of the social sciences fails without the support of faith. If it can be shown that replacing methodological atheism with something better creates a more insightful and dignified approach to the relatively unspiritual domain of economics, then the case should be much easier to establish for other, higher disciplines.

In its anti-religious intellectual history and methodology, economics is like the other social sciences. The modern study of economics was started by Adam Smith, a Scottish philosopher who emphasised the practical and gave almost no thought to men's higher purposes. He was followed by Jeremy Bentham, the first Utilitarian and a man who had "the declared aim of extirpating religious beliefs, even the idea of religion itself, from the minds

of men".⁷ In turn, Bentham taught John Stuart Mill, one of the first men in Europe to be raised as an avowed atheist. Mill's economics were based on a vision of man as "a being who inevitably does that by which he may obtain the greatest amount of necessities, conveniences, and luxuries, with the smallest quantity of labour and physical self-denial with which they can be obtained".⁸

This "economic man", as he came to be called, could hardly be more distant from the Christian idea that human nature is based on gift – life received as a gift from God, love given freely to other men. Sin, which would seem particularly relevant to economics – coveting your neighbour's goods is basic enough to be condemned in one of the Ten Commandments – is completely banished from the description.

Defenders of the standard approach to economics sometimes argue that when critics complain about "economic man" they are attacking a straw man. They claim that modern economic visions of man are quite diverse. That defence fails on the evidence. Although there are many schools, a view of economic behaviour that can be reconciled with the Christian understanding is found in hardly any of them. The dominant "neoclassical" model reduces the richness of human behaviour into equations based on exactly the simplistic psychology of "economic man". Dissenters' models are hardly more respectful of good-seeking men. They are guided by a Marxist struggle for power, a Darwinian struggle for survival, Maslow's hierarchy of self-actualisation or by some Hegelian vision of historical patterns. Only a tiny group of "social economists" aims at something higher, and they are far from the professional mainstream.

The Common Defence

The more common defence of the standard approach starts by admitting that "economic man" is a simplification, but then argues that the one-dimensional immorality of seeking more for less is sufficient to explain the economic world. This defence fails in three fundamental ways.

Empirically, people rarely act in ways that economists consider rational. We are occasionally totally selfish, but more often some combination of rule-abiding, generous, ambitious, cautious and lazy. Unlike economic man, real men look for meaning more than for mere accumulation. Only in a few highly specialised situations, for example in some financial markets, can men be counted on to follow economic rationality. Even within finance, however, longer-term investors tend to have more complex goals and short-term investors tend to fall prey to irrational mob psychology.

Descriptively, the portrayal of the whole economy as no more than an agglomeration of economic men is deeply inadequate. Indeed, it misses almost everything essential about the actual

workings of the modern industrial economy: the cooperation and trust of millions of total strangers required for efficient industry to replace self-sufficiency; the inevitable centrality of government in the complex human construction of a national or global economy; large corporations with their hierarchies, multiple and shifting purposes and fragile but definite unity. Also, economists rely on an individualistic notion of property which is too simple to describe the disposition of factories, roads and the other shared artefacts of the industrial economy. At a more profound level, the description of economic man is too simple to answer the fundamental questions of what residents of industrial economies do and should want to get out of their abundant consumption and their generally quite specialised work.

Politically, the conclusions of economists are frequently little better than bizarre. Early modern economists thought that near-starvation was an inevitable aspect of any economy, and should not be fought against. More recently, the maximisation of Gross Domestic Product and the rate of growth of this GDP have become the great economic good. But GDP is an almost meaningless agglomeration of crudely adjusted prices. It increases when more money is spent, whether or not the money is spent wisely. It ignores unpaid work, most noticeably the labour of mothers. At a smaller scale, the economists' praise of what they call "markets" ignores the near irrelevance of the concept to the actual organisation of production, distribution or labour. Their focus on what happens at "the margin" ignores the great mass of economic activity. Perhaps the most irritating feature of conventional economics is its generation of an apparently endless stream of numbers, few of which represent anything easily recognisable as human.

In short, far from providing a clear explanation of how the economy works, conventional economics fails pretty much any test that it is given. It has not been able to predict recessions, guide development in poor countries or explain technological innovations. Its greatest accomplishment has probably been in monetary policy, but central banking and financial regulation remain far more arts than sciences. This failure has been recognised by many economists, but efforts to do better have been constrained, I believe, by the presupposition of methodological atheism. Even radical economists are reluctant to offer a non-numerical integration of economic activity with the rest of the human condition.

A New Start

The reconstruction of economics has to start at the very beginning, with an appropriate description of economic activity. The conventional definitions are worse than useless: the study of scarcity (meaningless in economies of tremendous affluence), of equilibrium (a vague concept that is not particularly relevant to economics) or of monetary transactions (obviously

inadequate to the non-cash part of economies). Reconstructed economics should start with the true subject of economic study, man.⁹ In particular, economics is the study of two related aspects of the human condition: labour and consumption.

Labour is men's humanising gift to the world. We labour when we give what we have and are in order to make the given world better and more meaningful for us. Labour includes paid work, but it also includes the many unpaid labours of love and service. It includes the direct domination of the earth, from farming to factories, but also the efforts required to create and maintain communities, to advance and spread learning and to keep mortal men close to their eternal destiny. It is not always easy to differentiate labour from its results – the musician's labour of playing from the music he makes – but the economist is particularly interested in the effort, the toil and the skills.

Economics is also the study of consumption, our taking in of the world's gifts, the raw gifts of creation which have been humanised by labour. We consume food, shelter and fuel, and, in some ways, we consume the services that are offered to us. However, the economic relationship of consumption is between the human consumer and the humanised world, not between two people. Personal relations are not the direct concern of economics.

Unlike the conventional view of economic activity as selfish, the reconstructed view of economics is centred on nearly symmetrical gifts – from men to the given world and from the world to men. This perspective makes the economic part of human nature worthy of a creature made with divine generosity in God's own image. It also provides a solid foundation on which to build an accurate description of all economies, from hunter-gatherer to post-industrial. It gives dignified and human terms with which to analyse such economic tools as money, property, contracts, inheritance, taxation, labour skills, capital and environmental responsibility. In particular, production can be expressed in human rather than mechanical terms. It is the combination of men and the world: of men's calling to dominate the world, their practical ability to do so, their interest in making the world serve their communities and of the world's own potential to provide the stuff men need and want.

If production is understood in this fully human and fully virtuous way, then industrial production appears as a triumph of the human virtues of cooperation, trust and intelligence. The fecundity of industry is one of the good fruits of the modern turn towards the world, a turn that has also fertilised many weeds of social and spiritual decay. Industry has supported an abundance of life, a spreading of education and the ability to share knowledge and love without concern for distance. Less significantly, it has also made life more comfortable.

Unreconstructed economists would find the claim of the lesser significance of comfort, relative to a good such as the spread of learning, inappropriate. They wish to leave such "value judgements" to the "market" of diverging individual opinions, each of which is rationally self-serving. In a reconstructed economics, moral judgements are not only possible but absolutely required. Although all human activity, labour and consumption no less than prayer or friendship, aim ultimately at the one good of serving God, different activities are more suited for different specks or aspects. The economist is responsible for the evaluation of economic goods.

A Hierarchy of Goods

I believe that the goods promoted by economic activity can helpfully be arranged in a hierarchy. At the top, I would place life. Neither labour nor consumption, both crucial for keeping people alive, can aim any higher. Economic activity plays only a minor role in the striving after goods that are worth dying for, for example the defence or promotion of faith and truth. Comfort is at the bottom of my list. It is a genuine good, crucially supported by economic activity, but it is a minor good. In-between are such goods as beauty and knowledge, which may be as important as life, or even more important, but which are more peripheral to economic activity.

Economists should also recognise that while we always aim for the good in economic, as in all human, activity, we are also morally weak. Sadly, sin shapes much economic activity. In Genesis, one of the first cited effects of the original sin is the difficulty of labour, which leads men to abandon, at least partially, their prelapsarian commitment to excellence in labour. Sin leads to distrust between men, so economies need to have rules and punishments. Sin distorts the universe, so men need to use their ingenuity to draw out the world's gifts. Sin leads to erroneous judgements of the good that economic activity can provide: too little attention was paid to it in pre-industrial societies and too much is paid now. Sin converts consumption from necessity and delight into coveting and excess.

While moral judgements are added into this reconstruction of economics, some of the familiar tools of economists disappear.

GDP and markets play no role. Marginal analysis is relegated to the margins. The inevitable battle between capital and labour, an especially important feature in Marxism, is replaced by disputes over the allocation of consumption and authority, disputes firmly set in a shared effort to make life good. Money, which is conventionally treated as a near-universal measure of economic value, plays only a peripheral role in human-centred economic analysis.

The reconstructed economics should help determine the direction of both individual economic decisions and corporate and national economic policies. The priorities need not stay the same as economies change. In my analysis, the coming of industrial prosperity has led to a great shift in the appropriate goal of economic activity, at least at the social level. A century ago, the most important task was probably the resolution of the "economic problem", the inability to keep people fed, housed and clothed. That problem has now been solved in most of the world, although with no help from economists, who – with a few notable exceptions – seem hardly to have noticed the accomplishment. The great current economic challenges now are to make that solution universal, to find meaningful labour in the prosperous economies (in which so little labour produces so much) and to deal with the moral challenges brought by the too easy abundance of consumption.

Economics, even reconstructed economics, cannot explain fully how the economic problem was resolved. The increased efficiency of production and the creation of huge, largely economic communities were made possible by the advent of the modern worldview, a shift that can only be understood with the aid of other studies: history, psychology, sociology, philosophy and theology. Similarly, even reconstructed economists cannot face the current challenges on their own. They need intellectual help, but the other disciplines must first also be rebuilt on realistic human foundations. When a methodologically Christian sociology, psychology and anthropology join up with this reconstructed economics, it will be possible to see – through the world's sin-darkened glass – that everything really is under Christ.

See also Road from Regensburg last entry p34.

NOTES

¹John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* (1998), 16.

²Some thinkers believe that the hard sciences, especially biology, need the same sort of reconceptualisation that I am suggesting for the social sciences. See the website <http://www.isnature.org/index.htm> for some texts.

³The term was coined by sociologist Peter Berger in his *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1967).

⁴The quotation is from the *Memorial* of Blaise Pascal, found sewn into the lining of his jacket.

⁵Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York, 1961). Jacobs later became somewhat more sympathetic to religion.

⁶*Human Goods, Economic Evils; A Moral Look at the Dismal Science* (ISI Books, 2007).

⁷James E. Crimmins, "Bentham on Religion: Atheism and the Secular Society", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 47, No. 1. (Jan-Mar, 1986), pp. 95-110.

⁸John Stuart Mill, *Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economics*, 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1874) essay 5, par. 46, cited in Julie Nelson, *Economics for Humans*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2006, p 19).

⁹John Paul II's *Laborem exercens* (1981) provides a starting point, although his analysis there is limited to work, rather than integrated with consumption.

Post-Modern Globalisation: A Portrait

Marguerite A. Peeters

In this thought-provoking piece Marguerite Peeters gives an overview of the recent formation of a global culture which has grown out of the success of post-modern ideas. She demonstrates the wide-ranging practical impact of this 'revolution'. In so doing she gives an interpretation of Pope Benedict's observation concerning the modern "dictatorship of relativism" and calls for us "to start again from Christ" in clearly re-presenting Christian anthropology.

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"Radical changes of mentality and behaviour (have) occurred within institutions, inside enterprises, schools, universities, hospitals, cultures, governments, families – and inside the Church."

A Global Cultural Revolution

Since the end of the Cold War, hundreds of new concepts have spread like wildfire to the remotest corners of the globe, expressing themselves through the means of a new language. Higgledy-piggledy, let us give a few examples:

globalisation with a human face, global citizenship, sustainable development, good governance, consensus-building, global ethic, cultural diversity, cultural liberty, dialogue among civilizations, quality of life, quality education, education for all, right to choose, informed choice, informed consent, gender, equal opportunity, empowerment, NGOs, civil society, partnerships, transparency, bottom-up participation, accountability, holism, broad-based consultation, facilitation, inclusion, awareness-raising, clarification of values, capacity-building, women's rights, children's rights, reproductive rights, sexual orientation, safe abortion, safe motherhood, enabling environment, equal access, life skills education, peer education, bodily integrity, internalisation, ownership, best practices, indicators of progress, culturally sensitive approaches, secular spirituality, Youth Parliament, peace education, the rights of future generations, corporate social responsibility, fair trade, human security, precautionary principle, prevention...

It is very difficult to deny the predominance of these concepts in contemporary culture – the main feature of which is to be *global*.

This apparent mishmash of words and concepts may not be altogether condemned nor endorsed. Genuine human aspirations and perennial values got entangled with the bitter fruits of Western apostasy, which corrupted the process of globalisation from within.

The new global language, however, tends to exclude words specifically belonging to the Judeo-Christian tradition, such as: truth, morality, conscience, reason, heart, virginity, chastity, spouse, husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, complementarity, service, help, authority, hierarchy, justice, law, commandment, dogma, faith, charity, hope, suffering, sin, friend, enemy, nature, representation...

Did not Jacques Derrida, the master of postmodern deconstructionism, propose in an interview with the French newspaper *Le Monde*, shortly before his death in 2004, the elimination of the word "marriage" from the French civil code so as to resolve the issue of the juridical status of homosexual couples? The exclusion of certain words is a factor that must be taken into consideration when analysing the challenges of the global ethic.

The cultural changes that have taken place since the end of the cold war have the magnitude of a *global cultural revolution*. Their implications are extremely complex and must be carefully examined.

The new culture is not limited to the adoption of a new *conceptual framework*: the new concepts became *dynamic action principles*, which have already led to concrete and

irreversible transformations in all sectors of social and political life. These transformations affect us all in our daily lives, especially in the areas that are the most important for personal and social morality, such as education and health. They involve new laws and policies, radical changes in mentalities and lifestyles, codes of conduct for businesses and institutions, changes in the content of curricula and textbooks, new norms and decision-making methods in politics, health care and education systems, new strategic priorities for international cooperation, radically new approaches to development, fundamental transformation of democratic principles and mechanisms – a new social ethos imposed on all.

New Behaviours

Everywhere in the world, societies and nations now live in a culture governed by the values of *consensus, diversity, partnerships, sustainability, holism, choice, gender equity, bottom-up participation* and so on. For better or for worse, whether or not we are aware of it, the global culture educates us all. The new values are *ambivalent*. The possibility of a genuine consensus coexists with a radical agenda. Ambivalence is not a synonym of toleration and choice, although that is how it might appear. Ambivalence is a process of deconstruction of reality and truth which leads to the arbitrary exercise of power, domination and intolerance. The paradox of postmodernity is to seek to deconstruct the modern ways of exercising power yet at the same time introducing new, more sophisticated and subtle ways of power-grabbing.

Integrated in a *culture*, the new concepts are not a jumble. They are in a dynamic driven by an inner logic. The new concepts are interrelated, interactive, interdependent, indivisible, mutually reinforcing. They belong to a *system*, a *whole* in which all is in all. For example, in the new system, *good governance*, which presupposes *consensus-building and bottom-up NGO participation*, is the way to implement *sustainable development*, which goes through *gender equity*, of which *universal access to reproductive health*, itself founded on *informed choice* and the *right to choose* (i.e. the *right to abortion*), is the precondition. The new paradigms are themselves *holistic* – to the point of totally including each other.

A new ethic gives the new paradigms their unifying configuration. This ethic is *global*. The global ethic has taken the place of the *universal* values on which the international order had been founded in 1945 and is by now considered obsolete. The starting and end points of the global ethic are not those of the traditional concept of universality: the global ethic is marred by radicalisation. It is impossible to understand it without relating it to the “new theology” which preceded the cultural revolution and pushed God’s transcendence beyond our ken, entrusting meaning to man.

A Quiet Revolution

Most of the new norms have not yet formally entered international law and therefore are not yet legally binding. Yet the power of the revolution was such that they bind differently, not only governments but, primarily, mentalities and behaviours inside all the cultures of the world.

In spite of its devastating efficiency, the cultural revolution went almost unnoticed. It has been a *quiet revolution*. It took place without bloodshed, without open confrontation, without *coup d'état* or overthrow of institutions. There has never even been, anywhere in the world, an open and sustained democratic debate on the content of the new concepts. Without wanting to minimise the responsibility of those who did not take the revolution seriously while it was happening, these factors contribute to explaining that no organised opposition or resistance manifested itself.

The revolution took place both *above* and *under* the national level. It happened through the UN and especially through the NGO movement, abusively called “the civil society movement”. The true owners of the agenda are not governments or the citizens they represent, but pressure groups pursuing special interests.

Bypassing democratic principles, the revolution did not upset the external structures of political institutions. It did not change their mandate. It did not bring about a new political regime. Radical changes of mentality and behaviour occurred *within* institutions, inside enterprises, schools, universities, hospitals, cultures, governments, families – and inside the Church. The institutional façade remains standing, while foreigners already occupy the rooms. The enemy must be sought *within*: *inside* is the new combat ground.

The Implementation of Post-Modern Globalisation

How was the global revolution implemented? The end of the East-West divide coincided with the fast acceleration of economic globalisation. The financial and economic power of multinationals grew exponentially, while the power of nation-states seemed to diminish. The UN sought to strengthen its institutions and to position itself at the strategic centre of global “governance”. Proclaiming it had received an *ethical mandate*, claiming for itself a *monopoly over ethics* in the era of globalisation, the UN presented itself as the only institution capable of making globalisation *human, ethical and sustainable*. It offered to counterbalance the global economic power of the market with its “universal moral authority”. Furthermore, the UN argued that “global problems” required not only global solutions, but global values – a *global ethic* that only the UN would be able to forge and to enforce.

No sooner was the cold war over than the UN organised an unprecedented series of intergovernmental conferences.

The purpose of the conference process was to build a new integrated world vision, a new world order, a new global consensus, on the norms, values and priorities for the international community in the new era: education (Jomtien, 1990); children (New-York, 1990); the environment (Rio, 1992); human rights (Vienna, 1993); population (Cairo, 1994); social development (Copenhagen, 1995); women (Beijing, 1995); housing (Istanbul, 1996); and food security (Rome, 1996). The conferences were conceived as a *continuum*, and the global consensus as a *package* integrating all the new paradigms within a new cultural and ethical synthesis.

It took only six years for the new consensus to be built and globally endorsed. The *implementation phase* started in 1996. Since then, the agents of the revolution have seen to it that no debate reopened or questioned the alleged consensus.

The internet revolution of the mid-1990s, the mushrooming of partnerships and of informal transnational governance networks (grouping multibillion dollar foundations, like-minded politicians, NGOs, representatives of the world of finance, enterprises, academics...), globalisation under all its forms and the decentralisation and regionalisation strategy of the UN effectively brought the global agenda to the regional, national and local levels.

By its mandate, the UN is an *intergovernmental* organisation. The "global consensus" was supposed to reflect the will of governments, themselves supposed to represent the will of the people. *De facto*, however, the global norms were constructed by "experts" chosen in function of their ideological slant and like-mindedness.

How was it possible for ideologues to grab global normative power? Since the 1960's the May '68 generation, the powerful population control lobby and its multi-billion dollar industry, 'eco-feminist' and other secular Western NGOs and postmodern academics had occupied key positions at the United Nations and its specialised agencies. While Western governments were busy containing the Soviet threat during the Cold War, a minority of like-minded ideologues working within international bureaucracies and operating in networks was acquiring indisputable expertise in the various socio-economic areas addressed at the conferences. After 1989, they emerged as *the experts* which the international community needed to address the new issues at the centre of international cooperation. Without encountering opposition, these ideologues exercised global normative leadership under the guise of their expertise.

In 1989, the most prominent thinking was that the "end of ideology" had automatically put the world in a *state of consensus*. According to the new mindset, issues had allegedly become only pragmatic in nature: the "neutrality" of the new

issues placed at the centre of international cooperation seemed self-evident: environmental degradation, gender inequity, population growth, human rights abuses, rising poverty, lack of access to education and health care and so on. Moreover, the UN argued that these problems were "global" by nature. According to this logic, governments primarily needed, not a democratic debate, but *technical expertise* and the *grass-roots experience* of the NGOs. The error of the majority was and is to adhere to the neutrality myth without paying attention to the fundamental anthropological stakes of these questions.

The global ethic posits itself *above* national sovereignty, above the authority of parents and educators, even above the teachings of world religions. It bypasses every legitimate hierarchy. It establishes a *direct link* between itself and the individual citizen – the dynamic of a dictatorship.

The Post-Modern Vision

The cultural revolution found its engine in postmodernity. Postmodernity *destabilises* or *deconstructs*, first of all, modernity, the cultural synthesis that has prevailed in the West since the treaties of Westphalia (1648). To the extent that postmodernity also deconstructs the abuses of modernity – that is, rationalism, institutionalism, formalism, authoritarianism, Marxism and liberal pessimism, it has a providential character. But postmodernity also advances Western apostasy further than modernity. In postmodernity as in modernity, not everything is black or white.

The social upheaval of May 1968, its rejection of morality and authority, its radical exaltation of individual freedom and the fast secularisation process that followed precipitated the transition of Western societies to the non-repressive civilization advocated by Herbert Marcuse, the postmodern father of the Western cultural revolution. Postmodernity implies a destabilisation of our rational or theological apprehension of reality, of the anthropological structure given by God to man and woman, of the order of the universe as established by God. The basic tenet of postmodernity¹ is that every reality is a social construct, that truth and reality have no stable and objective content. Reality would be a *text to be interpreted*. It is indifferent to the postmodern culture that the text be interpreted in this or that manner: all interpretations would be equal in value. If there is no "given", then social, political, juridical, spiritual norms and structures can be deconstructed and reconstructed at will, following the social transformations of the moment. Postmodernity exalts the arbitrary sovereignty of the individual and of his or her *right to choose*. The global postmodern ethic *celebrates differences*, the *diversity* of choices, cultural diversity, *cultural liberty*, *sexual diversity* (different sexual orientations). This "celebration" is in fact that of the "liberation" of man and woman from the conditions of existence in which God has placed them.

A Self-evident Anti-norm Norm?

Post-modernity has a paradox at its heart. The concept of free will contradicts the *normative* character of the postmodern values and in particular of the *right to choose*, the supreme value of the new culture. Post-modern radicalism postulates that the individual, in order to exercise his right to choose, must be able to free himself from all normative frameworks – whether they be semantic (clear definitions), ontological (being, the given), political (sovereignty of the state), moral (transcendent norms), social (taboos, what is forbidden), cultural (traditions) or religious (dogma, doctrine of the Church). Such an alleged “liberation” becomes an *imperative* of the new ethic. It goes through the *destabilisation* and the *deconstruction* (two key words of postmodernity) of clear definitions, the content of language, traditions, being, institutions, objective knowledge, reason, truth, legitimate hierarchies, authority, nature, growth, identity (personal, genetic, national, cultural, religious...), of all that is considered *universal*, and, as a consequence, of Judeo-Christian values and divine revelation.

When the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was adopted in 1948, Western culture by and large still recognised the existence of a “natural law”, of an order “given” to the universe (and therefore of a “giver”): “all human beings are *born free and equal in dignity*” (article 1). The *Universal Declaration* hence speaks of the *inherent* human dignity of all members of the human family. If it is inherent, human dignity needs to be *recognised*, and human rights must be *declared*, not *fabricated ex nihilo*. In 1948, the concept of universality related to the recognition of the existence of these rights. Universality had a *transcendent* dimension and therefore, *moral* implications.

Universal human rights became radically autonomous from any objective and transcendent moral framework. The purely immanent principle of the *right to choose* is the product of that divorce. Postmodernity claims the right to exercise one’s freedom *against* the law of nature, *against* traditions and against divine revelation. It re-establishes the rule of “law” and democracy on the right to choose, in which it includes the *right*, in the name of a new ethic, to make intrinsically evil choices: abortion, homosexuality, “free love”, euthanasia, assisted suicide, rejection of any form of legitimate authority or hierarchy, mandatory “toleration” of all opinions, a spirit of disobedience manifesting itself in multifarious forms. The right to choose so interpreted has become the fundamental norm governing the interpretation of all human rights and the main reference of the new global ethic. It supersedes and “transcends” the traditional concept of universality. It positions itself at a *meta level*. It imposes itself and claims for itself a *globally normative authority*.

A Necessary Lack of Clarity

The absence of clear definitions is the dominant feature of all the words and expressions of the new global language – of all postmodern paradigms. The experts who forged the new

concepts *explicitly* refused to define them clearly, claiming that definitions set limits on one’s possibility to choose one’s interpretation and contradict the *norm* of the right to choose. As a consequence, the new concepts have no stable or single content: they are processes of constant change, enlarging themselves as often as the values of society change, as often as possibilities for new choices emerge. Social engineers say that the new paradigms are “*holistic*” because they would be inclusive of all possible choices.

Let us give a couple of examples: *reproductive health* and gender. Reproductive health, the key concept of the 1994 Cairo conference, is “defined” in paragraph 7.2 of the Cairo document. The pseudo-definition is one paragraph long, fuzzy, deprived of clear substance, ambivalent, all-encompassing. The absence of clarity is strategic and manipulative. The goal is to allow the coexistence of the most contradictory interpretations: maternity, contraception or abortion; voluntary sterilisation or in-vitro fertilisation; sexual relations within or outside marriage, at any age, under any circumstance, as long as one abides by the triple precept of the new ethic: the partners’ *consent*; their *health security*; and respect for the woman’s *right to choose*. Reproductive health is the Trojan horse of the abortion lobby and of the global sexual revolution. In spite of its eminently incoherent character, reproductive health paradoxically became one of the most applied norms of the new global ethic.

Gender, the key concept of the 1995 Beijing conference, fully integrates the concept of reproductive health. It is “defined” as the *changeable* social roles of men and women, as opposed to their unchangeable reproductive functions. The agenda hiding behind this vague “definition” is the deconstruction of the anthropological structure of man and woman, of their complementarity, of femininity and masculinity. The role of the woman as a *mother and spouse* and her very nature as a woman would be nothing more than a social construct: “one is not born a woman, one becomes a woman,” said Simone de Beauvoir. The deconstruction of the human person as man and woman leads to an asexual society, to a “neutral” society, without masculinity and femininity, which however places the libido at the heart of the law. The deconstruction process eventually leads to a society without love. The gender concept is the Trojan horse of the Western feminist revolution in its most radical aspects – a revolution that has already successfully spread to the four corners of the world. Gender is at the very heart of global development priorities and in particular of the *Millennium Development Goals*.

Resultant Attitudes

There is a direct nexus between gender deconstructionism and the “sexual orientation” ideology (bisexuality, homosexuality, lesbianism, heterosexuality...). The global ethic puts all these “choices” on the same level. The Cairo conference introduced the concept of *family under all its forms*: this allegedly

holistic concept includes traditional families, reconstituted families, and "families" made up of same sex "parents". A majority of Western nations seem to be following this path now.

In postmodernity, the individual becomes the "free" creator of his own destiny and of a new social order. He can choose to be homosexual today and bisexual tomorrow (*sexual orientation*). Children can choose their own opinion, irrespective of the values they receive from parents (*children's rights*). Treated as equal "citizens", they participate in the political decisions that affect their lives (*Youth Parliaments*). Students choose their own curriculum at school, educate each other, and teachers become mere "facilitators" (*peer education, education for all, lifeskills education*). Women play the social roles of men (*gender equity, unisex society*). NGOs make global policy, and governments conform to their values (*good governance*). Women's groups "clarify" the doctrine of the Church and democratise the Church (*clarification of values, participatory democracy*). The euthanasia lobby becomes a staunch advocate of "human dignity". Reproductive health means the right not to reproduce ("safe" abortion, universal access to the "widest range of contraceptives"). We are all *equal citizens with equal rights*, bound together by contractual relations without love. The world is upside down. What the global ethic deconstructs is the very anthropological structure of the human person.

The Dictatorship of Relativism

The postmodern ethic of choice boasts of eliminating hierarchies. Yet by globally imposing the "transcendence" of the arbitrary choice, it engenders a *new hierarchy* of values. It places pleasure *above* love, health and well-being *above* the sacredness of life, the participation of special interests groups in governance *above* democratic representation, women's rights *above* motherhood, the empowerment of the selfish individual *above* any form of legitimate authority, ethics *above* morality, the right to choose *above* the eternal law written in the human heart, democracy and humanism *above* divine revelation – in a nutshell, immanence *above* transcendence, man *above* God, the "world" *above* "heaven".

The new hierarchies express a form of domination over consciences, what Pope Benedict XVI, prior to his election, called a *dictatorship of relativism*. The expression may seem paradoxical: dictatorship means that there is a top-down *imposition*, while relativism implies the *denial of absolutes* and reacts against anything it considers as "top-down", such as truth, revelation, reality, morality. In a dictatorship of relativism, a radical deconstruction of our humanity and of our faith is somehow being imposed on us in "non-threatening" ways – through cultural transformation. Relativism wears a mask: it is domineering and destructive.

In the past, what the West called "the enemy" (such as Marxist-Leninism or bloody dictatorships) used to be clearly

identifiable, single, external to Western democracies, aggressive, centralised, ideological, regional. That "enemy" used top-down, brutal methods, such as power-grab by force, a repressive political regime, imprisonment and killing. It resulted in national or regional totalitarian regimes. In the postmodern world, the enemy is fuzzy, hidden, legions, internal to institutions, "friendly", diffuse, incoherent, decentralised, subtle, quiet, global. Its strategies are soft, bottom-up, cultural, informal, internal. The end result of the global dictatorship of relativism is the deconstruction of man and nature and the cultural propagation of apostasy in the world and in particular in developing countries.

Like the ideological systems of the past, the global ethic will end up deconstructing itself. Replete with inner contradictions, it is not sustainable. Christians should not assume, however, that the emerging global civilization will come back by itself to common sense and traditional values: the new culture must be evangelised.

The Christian Specificity

The global civilization is called to be that of *love*. The new global culture is the culture that the Church is now called to evangelise.

We are, as Jesus puts it, *in the world but not of the world*. Yet the reality is that all over the world, Christians are tempted, often out of ignorance, to mistake the paradigms and values of the global ethic for the social doctrine of the Church, "culturally sensitive approaches" for the evangelisation of culture, the "equity principle" of the new ethic for the Judeo-Christian concept of justice, "awareness-raising" and "sensitisation" for the moral and theological education of conscience, "gender mainstreaming" and "women's empowerment" for the Judeo-Christian teaching on the equal dignity of man and woman, "positive living" for living with theological hope, the arbitrary "freedom to choose" for freedom in Christ, human dignity for the eternal law written in the heart of man, "reproductive health" for healthy procreation, "safe motherhood" for healthy mothers and children (whether born or unborn), "behaviour change" campaigns (that are geared towards the use of contraception and condoms) for chastity, "human rights", "entitlements" and "non-discrimination" for the good tidings of God's merciful love, the agenda of UN conferences and of the *Millennium Development Goals* for an integral development respectful of people's values and cultures – and so on.

Christians sometimes fail to distinguish the new, constructed, allegedly "holistic" ethical system from God's holistic and eternal design of salvation, not realising that the two logics lead in different directions. They are implied in countless partnerships, the drivers of which are agents of the global ethic. The Church must have self respect and keep her independence from the radical agenda. A vital line separates the post-Christian

humanism of the global ethic from a genuine and complete Christian humanism driven by salvation in Christ and promoted by the Church. In practice, this line no longer clearly appears. To recover Christian identity, to disentangle it from ambivalent agendas is an urgent task for the Church.

Confusing the Christian kerygma and the global ethic carries a double danger. First, the new concepts tend to occupy the space that should be occupied by evangelisation. Christians preach human rights, sustainability and the *Millennium Development Goals* instead of preaching the gospel. Little by little they are seduced by secular values and loose their Christian identity. As John Paul II put it in *Redemptoris Missio*, "In our heavily secularised world a 'gradual secularisation of salvation' has taken place, so that people strive for the good of man, but man who is truncated, reduced to his merely horizontal dimension."

Secondly, if Christian leaders use the concepts of the new ethic without explicitly clarifying what distinguishes them from the social doctrine of the Church and from the gospel, as is often the case, the faithful will be at a loss and will tend not to discern the difference. The resulting confusion may lead the Christian flock to a gradual erosion of the faith.

In *Novo Millenio Inuente*, John-Paul II invited us to start from Christ: such is the new departure to which we are called now.

See also Holloway p27 and Road from Regensburg last entry p34.

NOTES

¹Among influential postmodern philosophers, let us cite Sigmund Freud, Frederic Nietzsche, Michel Foucault, Herbert Marcuse, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jürgen Habermas, Jean-François Lyotard, Richard Rorty, Jacques Derrida, Michel Onfray.

MEDITATION: HEALING SOCIETY AND HUMAN SANCTITY

The Church teaches many things about the way in which society should work: about the laws we make, about how we treat one another and respect each other's rights, about behaving justly with our money, about the value of human life and the duties we owe to the communities in which we live. The Church is concerned for the future of humanity, about the way we care for our planet and use its resources. The Church encourages us all to contribute in positive ways to authentic human progress, so that poverty, hunger and disease can be brought to an end.

But the Church also warns us that we must only tackle these issues in ways that accord with human dignity and the principles of truth and goodness that God built into our human nature. We can never do something that is inherently evil in order to achieve a good aim. If we do that, we only undermine our own dignity and create many more evils and distortions in our world. The only way to build peace and justice in our world – a world where goodness is at home and real love flourishes – is for all of us to live as faithfully as we can through the grace of Jesus Christ.

It is those who live in a saintly manner who do the most to change this world for the better. Saints are selfless and generous. Saints live for others. Saints listen to God's Word and put it into action in their own lives. Saints denounce evil, but they are also willing to pay the price of putting it right. Saints sacrifice themselves – their time, energy, their own hopes, dreams and ambitions – in order to put love into situations where there was none before. Imagine what a different place the world would be if it were full of saints.

There are many practical projects – local, national, global – in which we can get involved to try to make the world more like Jesus wants it to be. But we must begin by letting Jesus make our own hearts more like he wants them to be. The most essential ingredient in any project is personal holiness. Does this mean that we have to wait until we have become saints before we do anything? Of course not, God accepts the efforts of sinners, however inadequate they may be to begin with, and he can work with generous spirits, whatever their personal history.

It is true that we cannot love God unless we also love our neighbour. It is also true that we cannot properly love our neighbour unless we love God first. So the more we gaze into the heart of Christ, the more we will see the world through his eyes. We will see there the authentic vision of justice and peace that we must try to bring about in our daily lives. We will find there the wisdom to know how to put that vision into action. We will also receive from the heart of Jesus the patience and strength we need to get the job done, as well as the humility to accept our own limits and the honesty to admit our own faults and failures.

St. Jean Vianney, the Cure' of Ars, used to say to his parishioners: "Some of us may have made a bad start, but let's all try to make a good end". That could apply to us today, not just as individuals, but as the whole human family, which is meant to be the family of God.

Peligrino

THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

Guidance in an age of unethical Charities

As anti-life values permeate more and more Charities of once great integrity one has to choose carefully how to live out one's duty to give alms. Parishioners in our under-catechised Church are often somewhat ignorant of this need for discernment. As ever such purification of secular outlook is a delicate and often lonely task of the assiduous priest in the parish. Moreover parishes can sometimes find themselves caught out in regular fundraising drives for a Charity which somewhat suddenly appears to be undermining true charity through immoral activity. One way forward might be to promote all or parts of a "Policy" such as the below.

Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are central to the Christian life, based on the teaching of Jesus Christ in the gospels. The work of the parish community in raising funds for charity is seen as a part of this almsgiving and a central part of our following of Jesus Christ.

When we give to assist others, we are expressing that solidarity with all people which comes from recognising our common dignity as human persons made to the image and likeness of God. Jesus said:

"As often as you did this to the least of these brothers or sisters of mine, you did it to me."

Each week the offertory collection is taken for the support of the work of the parish. This Charities Policy gives some guidelines on principles and priorities in our other charitable fundraising.

Administration

A basic principle is that money which is received for a particular charitable purpose must be paid out for that charitable purpose. All monies received by the parish or in the name of the parish must be accounted for in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Archbishop and his Financial Secretary in the Diocesan Notes on Parish Financial Administration.

In practice this means that money received for charitable purposes is paid into the parish account. All cash is banked (to the last penny). Cheques are made payable to Church of Our Lady of the Rosary. The stamped paying-in slip is retained together with a record of all money paid in. The receipts are then accounted for in the parish accounting records. Payments to the charity are made by parish cheque to the charity's account and a receipt from the charity is retained with the parish's accounting records. The parish's records and the supporting documentation are subject to independent audit and a Financial Return is made to the Archdiocese. The parish's records may be checked at any time by the Arch-diocesan auditors or by the Inland Revenue (in connection with our covenant tax refund claims.)

Because of the importance of these accounting records to ensure probity, individuals should not bank money in their own

account nor should they pay cheques from their own account to the charity in respect of funds raised.

If an organisation (e.g. the UCM or the KSC) has its own approved accounting practices, money may be paid into and out of their account and a record made in the financial records of the organisation.

Charities committee

To help to plan effectively and to ensure that our response to different charitable needs is appropriate, a Charities Committee meets to work with the Parish Priest to assess needs and to plan a programme for fundraising for the year ahead.

Although it is still possible to respond to emergency needs, we seek to avoid small ad hoc events that can draw attention and support away from more important activities. It is always possible to be flexible but it should be understood that the full weight of support of a very generous parish has to be treated with respect and care. It cannot always be enlisted for every good cause.

Publicising

Approved charity events are publicised in the parish newsletter for several weeks and on the "Parish" section of the Church's main noticeboard. However, word of mouth is always the most effective way of getting support. It is also possible to arrange volunteers to sell tickets, sign up sponsors or give out leaflets after Mass. This must be well organised because two people are needed for each of the Masses.

To plan publicity effectively for major events, it is best to have a lead time of 6 weeks before the event, to do a notice for the board, to arrange volunteers, to set out a schedule of newsletter announcements and one Sunday for an end-of-Mass announcement.

Selecting charities to support

Whilst the parish recognises the importance of many secular charities, its first duty is to support those charities which are run by or in the name of the Church. These often receive little support in comparison with major national charities which are able to mount expensive advertising campaigns.

Although such charities are Catholic in their ethos, that does not mean to say that they only benefit Catholics – they are run for the benefit of all people in need of the particular help they give. Typically, charities such as these have very low administrative costs and a very good record of getting their funds directly to the people who need them.

The charities which we support can be listed under three headings:

Mission charities

Charities directly concerned with the Church's mission enable the Church's work to continue. *Aid to the Church in Need* and *the Association for the Propagation of the Faith* are major examples. The various Missionary Societies are others. Each year we have a Mission Appeal, approved by the Archbishop and we may wish to support such appeals at other times. Each year, we will select a Mission Society to receive additional support from the parish.

The Missionary Societies have asked us to support them rather than individual parishes or projects. The society is able to distribute funds to those in most need. The Societies are willing to let us have some local information to give us a concrete idea of how the money is used.

Relief charities

Cor Unum (the charitable organisation of the Vatican) and Aid to the Church in Need are major examples of this type of charity. Whenever there is a major disaster, *Cor Unum* is quick to respond with its partner charities.

We wish to continue to support the Bexley Deanery *Third World Group*. This currently receives the proceeds from a box at the back of the Church as well as the £1 a month scheme supported by many parishioners

Local charities

We want to give witness locally by supporting worthy local causes. However we do not want action in this respect to overshadow the principal charitable outreach of the Church which is often for major causes. To try to solve this dilemma, we will have an event each year which will raise a sum of money that will then be divided among five different local causes.

In advance of this event, parishioners who are involved with local causes will be invited to suggest them. Five will be chosen and any that are unsuccessful will be invited to be re-submitted for the following year.

Charities to avoid

Sadly, some charities have aims or activities which we would deplore. Some, for example, directly or indirectly support abortion, euthanasia or population control as a "solution" to social problems. A good guide is the SPUC Charities Briefing

which lists various charities to avoid with reasons for the listing. Also, we do not support generic fundraising activities such as *Comic Relief* because some of the charities supported are those we wish to avoid.

Some approved charities

The charities listed below are all approved for parish fundraising activities.

This list is not exhaustive. However, any charities that are not listed here will be checked against the SPUC Charities Briefing before any preparations are made for fundraising in the name of the parish.

I would encourage you to consider some of these smaller charities which do not always benefit from the "high profile" campaigns that are heavily advertised.

- Aid to the Church in Need
- The Manna Centre
- Association for the Propagation of the Faith (APF)
- The Bourne Trust (for prisoners and their families)
- Guild of Our Lady of Ransom (makes grants to poor parishes.)
- Catholic Children's Society
- SPUC Research and Education Trust
- LIFE Care and Housing Trust
- The St Francis Leprosy Guild
- Seminary Fund (for the training of future priests)
- St Barnabas Society (offers pastoral and financial assistance to clergy of other denominations who come into full communion with the Catholic Church.)
- Little Sisters of the Poor

See also Sunday by Sunday, 33rd Sunday, p35



THE CAUSE OF POST- MODERNISM?

From Edward Holloway's 1976 May/June *Faith Magazine* Editorial, now printed in *Perspectives in Theology*, Family Publications

The first principle of the Reformation was the denial of the inerrancy and the infallibility of the Church... Insofar as Humanism and Neo-Modernism sweep whole provinces of the Church – Benelux, France and Germany in particular – then once again we live in the era of the Reformation. For all Humanism proceeds from the one prime principle: The denial of divinity in Christ, and from the denial of its corollary, Magisterium in the church as a teaching institution.

letters to the editor

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OUR SACRAMENTAL VISION

Dear Father Editor

Thank you for the last issue of FAITH. I found Fr Nesbitt's piece on baptism helpful and quite moving – speaking to mind and heart together.

I did have one or two questions concerning the editorial. On the whole it was impressive and presented a coherent vision of the sacraments.

1. Re "In the sacraments matter and spirit are linked in an effective instrumental union – 'outward signs of inward grace' – but are never identified with each other. In the sacraments, as in the Incarnation, the natures remain distinct and unconfused yet are truly joined in the person and work of God the Son."

I can see the point of this and I think the point is well put in the piece concerning the integration of matter to spirit in a unity where neither absorbs the other – in a sense, this is the structural openness to higher unity that characterises all created things in the Unity-Law. But what about the Eucharist? In Baptism the water is the instrument used for the administration of grace but it still remains water in the administration. However in the Eucharist the bread and wine become fully Christ so the Council of Trent teaches us; they no longer 'remain' because now they have been assimilated to the Son of God made Man.

2. Re "...the sacraments as objective acts of God which function ex opere operato, rather than just subjective acts of humanity which yearn for, invoke and somehow evoke the divine. Before the coming of Christ that was precisely the situation with the religious rites of Israel. They were 'sacramentals' in the wider sense, but they were not guaranteed as saving actions."

I do not think that we can say that the rites of Israel were subjective acts of humanity. The Passover, for example, was sanctioned by God. In the end the Passover is a type of the true Passover of Christ's death and Resurrection and of the Eucharist of Christ. Even for the Israelites it was believed to have a participative function in the act of redemption which saved Israel and made them God's people: it was an anamnesis in the founding event of Israel which continued to found them ever anew each year.

Now this would not mean that this was a Sacrament in the sense of those of the New Covenant: but it was an action sanctioned by God the Son-to-be-made-man in view of its completion in His Incarnation – it was a Rite in view of the sacraments. In that sense this was not the same as the rites of other religions which are, I agree, subjective acts (but care must be taken here too: these too are under the Unity-Law and will have an aspect of the evocation of the Word, though much subverted by the sowing of tares by the Devil). What is said about the Passover must also apply to the other rites of the Jews: they were more than just human formulations. They were part of what Fr Holloway termed "the evocation of the Word" and had some salvific value but only in terms of their prefiguring and participation in the plenary Economy instituted by Christ in Person.

3. Finally, the editorial rightly emphasises the sacraments as action of Christ but we do need to tease out more the role of the Spirit. It is a common concern of the Church in the West. It would be good if *Faith Movement* could contribute to developing our understanding of the role of the Spirit in the sacramental economy.

*Yours Faithfully
Fr David Barrett
Via dell' Umiltà
Rome*

Dear Father Editor

The recent *Faith* editorial on *Renewing Our Vision of the Sacraments* in citing the teaching of "the Latin Father Tertullian" in defence of "the sacredness of matter" was, all things considered, infelicitous. Tertullian was the leading exponent of Montanism and died rejecting communion with the Catholic Church. Indeed, one

learns that St Thomas Aquinas referred to him only as *haereticus, Tertullianus nomine*, cf. Josef Pieper, *Zucht und Mass*, in *Schriften zur Philosophischen Anthropologie und Ethik: Das Menschenbild der Tugendlehre* [=Werke Band 4] (Hamburg 1996) 162.

Pieper goes on to emphasise that the extreme austerity of Tertullian as a Montanist, just like that of the Manichaeans and Cathars, is based on the presupposition that what is material, because it is not spiritual, is actually evil.

Having died in heresy, Tertullian was never venerated as a saint, much less recognised as a doctor of the Church. At best, he is considered an ecclesiastical writer, with a particular importance for having enriched theological Latin with numerous neologisms.

*Yours Faithfully
Gerard McKay
Tribunale Apostolico della Rota Roma
Piazza della Cancelleria
Rome*

Editorial comment: Tertullian did indeed fall into schism at the end of his life, as most students of theology could confirm. But the phrase we quoted is self-evidently from his Catholic period and it sums up succinctly the orthodox vision of his day. Tertullian is freely quoted in Papal documents for the very reason that he expresses very well the patristic theology. We could have quoted St Irenaeus – who is indeed a saint, martyr and great teacher of the Church – at much greater length to exactly the same effect, but the succinctness of Tertullian's style serves well to express the thought no matter that the man unfortunately left the communion of the Church at the end of his life. The major point still stands that we could do well to recover the patristic vision of the sacraments updated in the light of contemporary insights.

HELPFUL SEX EDUCATION

Dear Father Editor

Apropos Father Fleming's article on Sex Education here are three points:

1. I am not 'tempted' to homosexuality. I am homosexual.
2. For those whose homosexuality is not

a phase but a condition (Catechism 2358) sexual education needs to cover not only a blanket warning on genital acts, but practical advice on such matters as falling in love, touching, kissing – how much? how far? etc. Such matters might best be handled by someone who can speak from personal experience of a chaste homosexual life e.g. as one might hope, a priest.

3. Until the quite recent past Catholics and homosexuals shared a common experience of penal laws which made them secretive about their faith/condition. Catholics are now open about their faith, and so in today's world are homosexuals about their condition, but there still seems to be something of a hush from homosexual Catholic priests. Frankly their best service to sexual education would be to come out and show the young that it is possible to be homosexual, chaste, and honest.

*Yours Faithfully
D.M. Dell
Bryanston Place
London W1*

Editorial comment: We thank Mr Dell for his honest and open-hearted letter. His encouragement of others in his position to pursue chastity is very welcome. We agree with him that practical advice along the lines he suggests is much needed for all young people today. Actually most of the advice given would be much the same whether the temptation was to unchastity with the opposite sex or people of the same gender (see our November 2003 editorial at faith.org.uk).

We would be very careful about the phrase "I am homosexual". It may, as Mr Dell seems to mean, indicate an abiding or deep seated psycho-personal condition, but we think it spiritually misleading to identify one's whole being through sexual desires. What you "are" is a child of God. So-called "sexuality" is not an either/or orientation that specifies two different kinds of human beings. Sexual attraction is part of a process of affective integration, which for many reasons can be disrupted and disorientated. This is no judgment on someone who finds themselves so wounded.

There is a hint in Mr Dell's letter that he does not see condition of being attracted to a sexual relationship with someone of the same sex as in itself wounded. There are many un-asked for human conditions which limit our lives and our short term happiness. They must be faced with patience, resignation but realism and obedience to God's will – such is the stuff of holiness. We believe that God would not give an orientation to an activity which is intrinsically disordered.

In England the *Encourage* group is gallantly trying to offer support along these lines.

Dear Father Editor

Congratulations on your July issue – which seriously addresses the virtues of chastity and the danger in schools when immoral sex education is taught.

It beats me why children/teenagers should have prolonged detailed sex education in schools. Basically all any child needs to know is that sexual activity is for adults in marriage. If a child develops inappropriate sexual feelings as they get older then these can be dealt with through God's help, prayer, scripture, clergy, parents etc.

In my opinion it is grotesque and offensive to suggest to children and teenagers that chastity is unfeasible. A recent C4 TV programme about a school called Chavagnes ([cf. www.chavagnes.org](http://www.chavagnes.org)) had a presenter baffled at the idea that young people should be encouraged to practice abstinence. That's what most young people who were brought up in Christian households used to attempt. STD's and teenage abortion were massively less common.

In fact, chastity helps young persons build deep and profound connections to the Lord. Contrariwise, glib recourse to carnal pursuits (such as masturbation) definitely do not bring happiness, contentment or spiritual progress.

Keep up the good work!

*Yours Faithfully
Kim McGowan
Pennack Road
London SE15*

PRAYING FOR THE LAPSED

Dear Father Editor

Many thanks for more enlightening issues of Faith for July/August and September/October. I was particularly moved by Fr. Nesbitt's article on baptism and his concern that people should not be denied the possible action of grace in their lives.

It is sad that there is so much to lament about the collapse of Catholicism in Britain. We are hearing so often about Catholic churches closing and parishes being merged as a consequence of ever diminishing numbers of practicing Catholics in a rising population. The emphasis of our bishops seems to be upon managing the decline. Too few of influence seem to be proposing that Catholics should pray for a reversal of this trend. The sparcity of coordinated prayer makes me wonder how many Catholics still truly believe in the priesthood. Fewer practicing Catholics must imply fewer priests which means fewer places where Jesus can be 'with us until the end of time'.

Perhaps Faith Movement would like to organise a campaign of prayer for the conversion of 'lapsed' Catholics in Britain (not a popular adjective today). With the assistance of the prayers of Our Lady & the Saints surely such a campaign will be effective and the decline in the numbers of practicing Catholics will be reversed.

*Yours Faithfully
Philip Audley-Charles
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London N7*

EVOLUTION

Dear Father Editor

Thank you for the *Cutting Edge* column on scientists and belief in God (Sept./Oct. 07). I wonder how many scientists, especially in the USA, have ceased to believe in God because they believe in evolution, and think that incompatible with faith in God? But in fact, Pope Benedict himself has linked evolution with the Creator, as you yourself quote him saying on p.15 of the same issue.

*Yours Faithfully
Dom Aldhelm Cameron-Brown OSB
Prinknash Abbey
Gloucester*

comment on the comments



by
William Oddie

THE CONTINUITY OF EPISCOPAL SELF-DEFENCE

The implications of the Pope's *motu proprio*, *Summorum Pontificum* continue to ripple out. The first and most obvious effect, as we noted in this August organ in its last issue, was that it sent out a clear ecclesiological message, one we have heard before, but never perhaps in such a direct and practical way: the message of the hermeneutic of continuity and reform against that of discontinuity and rupture. For such as *The Tablet*, the effect of the *motu proprio*'s ruling that the 1962 Mass was simply another form of the same Rite as the Mass of Paul VI, was 'to send a signal that nothing the Council did made much difference'; it was 'the strongest indication so far that the theological conservatism of Cardinal Ratzinger... is still in place...' – an analysis, perhaps which said more about the kind of difference *The Tablet* thought the Council made than about anything else.

But there was a second kind of reaction the Pope must have been expecting and it duly made itself manifest. For, here he was, ordaining in the most direct way a clear and tangible reduction in the powers of bishops over their clergy: this was not going to go unchallenged. Some bishops immediately expressed both kinds of reaction – thus demonstrating the link between the hermeneutic of discontinuity and the exercise of prelatical power over 'the people of God' whatever they might be deluded enough to think they want (naturally in their own interests). The Bishop of Arundel and Brighton, the Rt Rev Kieran Conry, said firstly that the *motu proprio* 'might send out an unfortunate signal that Rome is no longer fully committed to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council and it could encourage those who want to turn the clock back throughout the Church.'

Equally predictably, he protested against the *motu proprio*'s cession to parish priests of any decision about whether to celebrate the 1962 Rite or not, on the ground (there really is no other way of reading this) that Parish Priests, particularly 'traditionalist' ones, could not be trusted to exercise their new power of decision responsibly and with pastoral sensitivity, not to mention with plain common sense: 'Unless bishops retain their powers to control the use of the Rite', he insisted, 'it will lead to confusion in the parishes. Some traditionalist priests might want to use [the 1962 form] almost exclusively, excluding those members of their congregation who want the New Mass. If we are not careful, it could all become a bit of a mess.' Further along the South Coast (what is it about the English Channel that breeds Episcopal disaffection?) Bishop Budd of Plymouth was taking a slightly different tack, discouraging use of the 1962 rite by saying that it really was jolly hard to celebrate, all in actual Latin, with heaps of rubrics to follow that had to be 'scrupulously adhered to' and with lots of it that had to be learned by heart and recited 'so that it makes sense' even when this was being done silently (I am not making this up). But in the end, Bishop Budd's protest, like Bishop Conry's, was all about the preservation of his own authority: 'Anyone learning this rite from new', insisted Bishop Budd, '*will need to demonstrate to me* that they are competent in its celebration.' How this was to be done was not specified: some kind of liturgical driving test, presumably. We will need to return to Bishop Budd's interesting and revealing reaction in due course (as well as that of some other bishops): but first, we need to deal with that naked attempt to retain Episcopal control over the celebration of the 'old rite': for the fact is that the whole point of the *motu proprio* is that priests do *not* 'need to demonstrate' to their bishop or to anyone else 'that they are competent in its celebration'. The *motu proprio* is clear enough:

Art. 2. In Masses celebrated without the people, each Catholic priest of the Latin rite, whether secular or regular, may use the Roman Missal published by Bl. Pope John XXIII in 1962, or the Roman Missal promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1970, and may do so on any day with the exception

of the Easter Triduum. *For such celebrations, with either one Missal or the other, the priest has no need for permission from the Apostolic See or from his Ordinary.*

Art. 4. Celebrations of Mass as mentioned above in art. 2 may... also be attended by faithful who, of their own free will, ask to be admitted...

Art. 5.1 In parishes, where there is a stable group of faithful who adhere to the earlier liturgical tradition, *the pastor should willingly accept their requests to celebrate the Mass according to the rite of the Roman Missal published in 1962.*

The only foothold for Episcopal control is in the following from article 5, which suggests that the priest should 'ensure that the welfare of these faithful harmonises with the ordinary pastoral care of the parish, under the guidance of the bishop in accordance with canon 392, avoiding discord and favouring the unity of the whole Church.' In other words, he should behave with basic common sense: the bishop's 'guidance' here cannot include the authority to demand that priests should jump through hoops to 'demonstrate' to bishops that they are liturgically competent: it is simply a general injunction that the bishop should (canon 392) 'be watchful lest abuses creep into ecclesiastical discipline, especially concerning the ministry of the word, the celebration of the sacraments and sacramentals, the worship of God and devotion to the saints...': exactly the kind of 'guidance' in which bishops hostile to the Mass of blessed John XXIII are unlikely to be excessively punctilious (or even vaguely interested). I have been present at celebrations of the Mass of Paul VI in the diocese of Plymouth in which (for all Bishop Budd's demands now that priests should be 'competent' to celebrate the 1962 Rite, and scrupulous in observing its rubrics) the officiating priest was neither particularly 'competent', even in English, nor was he in any way concerned scrupulously to adhere to the rubrics – or does rubrical scrupulosity not apply under the Spirit of Vatican II? (sorry, that was a silly question. Sorry).

In the neighbouring diocese of Portsmouth, where all sorts of liturgical high jinks famously take place, the bishop's reaction was interestingly

different. The first signs of opposition came, not from its bishop, the Rt Revd Crispian Hollis, but from the 'Diocesan Director of Liturgy', one Paul Inwood, who wrote a Q & A piece clearly designed to stave off the *motu proprio*, or at least discourage the celebration of the 1962 Rite. The answer to the first question ('Why has the Pope seemingly taken a step backwards in allowing the former Tridentine rite of Mass alongside the one we have now?') was that the Pope wanted to make a gesture of reconciliation to those who have never been able to accept the rite of Mass we have now' and that for that reason 'he is *to a small extent* relaxing the rules regarding when celebrations of the Tridentine rite can take place'. This distortion was then compounded: 'The latest document' Inwood brazenly asserted 'merely eases slightly the legislation that had already been relaxed for the universal Church in 1984 by Pope John Paul II.' The 'Tridentine rite', furthermore was *not* now available freely: 'only those', he insisted, 'who have a history of celebrating in or mounting pressure for celebrations in the Tridentine rite may request such a celebration from a Parish priest... What this means in practice is that people cannot now decide that they want a Tridentine celebration and ask for

it.' In other words, if you think the *motu proprio* changes anything, forget it. The text of Inwood's piece was leaked, and caused a fine old brouhaha, on blogs near and far: at first, Bishop Hollis hotly defended Inwood's piece, saying that he did not 'have to vet everything that is said by those who advise me and Paul Inwood is our Director of Liturgical Formation. He has my confidence and I am happy that he has the responsibility for making the sort of commentary that he has done on the *motu proprio* and other liturgical matters as they arise.' He then asserted baldly: 'As it happens, I agree with what he has written... all in all, I am in agreement with Paul Inwood's comments and am happy for them to appear eventually in *Portsmouth People*.' But in the end, even he could not stand by such a barefaced misrepresentation of a papal document, and the October edition of *Portsmouth People* appeared without Inwood's piece. The bishop, furthermore, perhaps in the heat of the moment, found himself (*Portsmouth priests, please note*) undertaking to provide any training necessary for the celebration of the Rite of Blessed John XXIII: he is probably keeping his fingers crossed that nobody asks him for it, and it would be interesting to know what happens if anybody does.

All the same, it is interesting that a bishop known for his, let us say, less than fanatical adherence to the authority of the Successors of Peter should say such a thing; is this a sign that there has been a shift in the wind? Does this, together with the withdrawal of Inwood's article, portend that in certain quarters there is a dawning realisation that the jig is up? Who knows? Certainly, any such realisation is far from universal. So far as we know, no Portsmouth priest has actually been forbidden to celebrate the 'Old Mass'. In Italy, according to *Il Messagero*, Raffaele Nogaro, Bishop of Caserta, interdicted a proposed celebration of it on Sunday, September 15, at the Shrine of St. Anne by Monsignor Giovanni Battista Gionta. Mgr. Gionta, who had planned the celebration at the request of local Catholics, put up a notice at the shrine explaining that 'I obey the bishop' (though since the bishop was clearly acting *ultra vires*, it is arguable that there was nothing to obey). The bishop said he did not want to 'set a precedent', and that he was 'taking action to help his people pray properly', since 'to mumble in Latin serves no purpose.' Exactly what action he is taking *Il Messagero* does not record; but we must earnestly pray that his pious endeavours are rewarded with success.

POPE BENEDICT ON THE MODERN CULTURAL CRISIS

Vatican spokesman Father Federico Lombardi S. J. has commented on the Holy Father's question-and-answer session in late July with priests from two dioceses of northern Italy.

The Pontiff replied to one question: "I also lived the time of the Council with great enthusiasm; it seemed that the Church and the world had met again. We had hoped for a great deal – but things showed themselves to be more difficult."

Father Lombardi said Benedict XVI recalled "above all the cultural crisis of the West that exploded in '68, with the fascination for Marxism and the illusion of creating a new world, and the crumbling of the communist regimes in '89: the fall of the ideologies that did not give room to faith but rather to scepticism."

"The Christian proclamation has to come to terms with this context," the Vatican spokesman added. "And the Church faces it with realism and humility without ceding to the triumphalism of those who think that they have found the way to the new world."

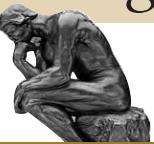
"At the bottom of this is the humility of the Crucified, which will always be contrasted by the great powers of the world, but which generates a real hope that is manifested in the creative vitality of the Church: in her communities and her movements, in the new responsibility of the laity, in ecumenical relations, in liturgical and spiritual experiences."

"The Pope of great theological ideas and great cultural wealth is also the one who helps us to live the simultaneously humble and rich condition of the hope of the Church on its way, as he says: 'With our feet on the ground and our eyes turned toward heaven.'"

With acknowledgments to Zenit.org

The road from Regensburg

Ecumenical and inter-religious developments in the search for a modern apologetic



POPE BENEDICT PICKS UP THE THEME

In his sermon at Mariazell, while on a three-day pilgrimage to Austria, Pope Benedict XVI spoke of the modern tensions arising from religious truth, interreligious sensitivity and the fear of intolerance. He affirmed that the church can and must proclaim Christ as the universal saviour. "This does not mean that we despise other religions, nor are we arrogantly absolutising our own ideas," he said. Rather it means the church will never accept an "attitude of resignation" toward the truth, the assumption that truth cannot be known. It is this attitude that "lies at the heart of the crisis of the West, the crisis of Europe."

Catholic Online, 10 September 2007

OF ISLAMIC INTEREST

Another charitable Open Letter to the Pope

On the Anniversary of the Open Letter to the Pope by 38 top Muslim clerics in response to the Regensburg lecture more than 130 Muslim scholars have issued another one. The organisers claim that this reaching out for common ground with Christians is unique in the history of Islam.

The Letter assumes a certain equation of the authoritative role of the Qur'an in Islam to that of the Bible in Christianity. It analyses passages from the Qur'an and the Bible to back up their invitation "as Muslims (to) Christians to come together with us on the basis of what is common to us, which is also most essential to our faith and practice: the *Two Commandments of love*"

The command to love God with "full devotion... of mind and heart" follows, the letter says, from the Qur'anic "There is no god but God, He Alone, He hath no associate, He is the sovereignty..." and from the Biblical quotation of the Old Testament by Jesus "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your mind" (Matt 22:37). Love of neighbour as "generosity and self-sacrifice" follows from the Qur'anic "Ye will not attain righteousness until ye expend of that which ye love" (3:92) (with examples of charity being given in 2:177) and from the

Biblical "you shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Matt 22:38).

"Thus the Unity of God, love of Him, and love of neighbour form a common ground upon which Islam and Christianity (and Judaism) are founded... Let this common ground be the basis of all future interfaith dialogue between us..."

The letter was signed by prominent Muslim leaders, politicians and academics, including numerous Grand Muftis. One of the signatories, Dr Aref Ali Nayed, a senior adviser at the Cambridge Inter-faith Programme at Cambridge University, whose post-Regensburg reflections we have summarised in both previous editions of this column, told the BBC that the document should be seen as a landmark. "There are Sunnis, Shias, Ibadis and even the... Ismailian and Jaafari schools, so it's a consensus," he said.

acommunword.org October 2007

The Letter's Genesis: "Scriptural not secular dialogue needed"

The final form of the above letter published in October 2007 was presented at a conference in September held under the theme of "Love in the Quran," by the Royal Academy of *The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought* in Jordan

The previous May the Institute's Chairman HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad of Jordan welcomed the World Economic Forum C-100 meeting by stating that dialogue based upon moderate religious "orthodoxy" and the scriptural "love thy neighbour" was necessary to win over the Arab Muslim man-on-the-street. The 9-11 Commission and the Rand report encouraged discussion among westernised academics, Muslim or otherwise. But "Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that issueth from the Mouth of God". Moreover "secular modernists command no following on the Islamic street", their contribution only "drives the moderate traditional majority of Muslims into the embrace of the fundamentalists."

He criticised the media for not reporting the 38 (now over 100) Muslim scholars "cordial" 2006 Open Letter to the Pope, and criticised both the Pope's "inflammatory" Regensburg address and his attempted apology: "His holiness just said 'I am sorry you feel bad', not 'I am sorry I did it'".

Islamica Magazine

Leading Cardinal on dialogue versus violence

As the Islamic observance of Ramadan drew to an end in September, Cardinal Jean-Louis

Tauran, the president of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, sent a message to the world's Muslim population, stressing the duty of all believers to bear witness to the Almighty. The French cardinal, who was appointed to the post in June, almost a year after Pope Benedict XVI's controversial speech in Regensburg, argued that dialogue between Christians and Muslims is "the tool which can help us to escape from the endless spiral of conflict and multiple tensions which mark our societies."

Catholic World News, 28 September 2007

The Regensburg Balance

Samir Khalid Samir SJ, a priest and professor of Oriental Studies at St. Joseph's Seminary in Lebanon said a clash of civilisations between Christianity and Islam is inevitable. With reference to the Regensburg lecture, which pointed out that in the West we have a form of rationality that lacks a spiritual content (reason without faith), whilst in Islam we find a type of spirituality that has turned into violence (faith without reason), he suggests the solution lies in the hands of believers who are not fanatical.

"Their openness to all that is human can be the basis on which to build, along with others who may or may not believe, a better world," said Samir. "This is the test of the 21st century, one that involves accepting the challenge posed by freedom that cleanses without falling into a free-for-all; one that welcomes the challenge of modernity whilst neither renege nor regretting the past; one that takes up the challenge of democracy without sliding into disorder and violence."

Asia News, 7 September 2007

An Islamic tendency to irrationality?

Peter Mullen, a London based high-Anglican minister, has suggested in *The Catholic Herald*, that the practical relevance of the Regensburg lecture concerns the modern reality of extremists of both Islamic and secular persuasion. He accepted the criticism that the scholar Ibn Hazm, whom Pope Benedict quoted concerning God being beyond reason, is on the fringe of Muslim thought.

This criticism is made by the (now) over 100 Muslim scholars in their 2006 *Open Letter to Pope Benedict* which states: "figures such as al-Ghazali (d.1111 CE) and many others are far more influential and representative of Islamic belief than Ibn Hazm (d.1069)". Our January 2007 editorial "Fostering the Regensburg insight" offered the following quote from al-Ghazali: "(God) willeth also the unbelief of the unbeliever and the irreligion of

the wicked and, without that Will there would neither be unbelief nor irreligion... In creating unbelievers, in willing that they should remain in that state... in willing in short all that is evil, God has wise ends in view..."
Catholic Herald, September 2007

Divine Will trumps Reason?

Mustafa Akyol the Muslim columnist whose interesting and prominent reflections upon the Regensburg address we reported in the last edition of this column, has, perhaps unwittingly, made a point which is of relevance to the above mentioned alleged primacy of the will of Allah over his reason.

It was in the context of calling people to remember to interpret the Koran through the "scholarly tradition called 'tafsir'... (with its) basic rule: A single verse or passage cannot be understood in itself: it has to be evaluated according to the general goal and principles of the holy text, and the way it was implemented by the prophet."

As an example of this Akyol claims that the Koran properly interpreted does not condemn non-Muslims. The Koran "actually says that the existence of different religions on earth is in accordance with the divine will: 'Had God willed,' the Koran reminds, 'He could have made you one community.' (5:48)" This attribution of division and contradiction directly to the will of God is an aspect of Islam which the Pope at Regensburg was arguing was a serious weakness of that tradition.

Turkish Daily News

Surveying written Islamic reactions to the Regensburg lecture

The Quarterly *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* has recently published an article entitled "The Muslim Reactions to Pope Benedict's Regensburg Address" by Ana Belen Soage of the University of Granada. Her survey of fairly immediate reactions ranged from the calm suggestions in the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram* that Muslims accept the Pope's 'apology' and attempt to put over a better picture of themselves to the world, through to Islamists such as Sheik Mus'ad Anwar who preached that "Islam is a self-evident truth and... does not need any proof... Do we ask for proof of daylight?".

London based Arab publications, sponsored by Saudis, contained suggestions that it was ironic that Western cultures which oppressed and pressurised Muslims lectured them on the supposed violent meaning of "Jihad" (*Al-Sharq al Awsat*), that Western Christianity is scared of losing its dominance to Islam (*Al-Sharq al Awsat*) and that this Pope has provided an opportunity for developing long-term dialogue between Islam and the West (*Al-Hayat*).

The very popular *al-Jazeera* website contained a piece suggesting that the Pope's speech was hypocritical because the Catholic Church had fought modern reason since the advent of science. It also had a piece by Nabil Shabib a Syrian writer and analyst who lives in Germany. He observed "everything Benedict XVI said does not... change the fact that... the deviation of Western civilization from human values is on the verge of destroying it, and that Islamic civilization is about to re-emerge – to the benefit of the whole of humanity.

The website ran a poll in which over 25,000 people took part. 70% thought the Pope was involved in Western anti-Islamic conspiracy, 22% thought he was just a fanatic; only 7% thought he was misunderstood.

Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions March 07

Fostering reason in Islam

In an article titled, *Islam Needs an Age of Reason*, Muslim writer and author of *The Trouble with Islam Today*, Irshad Manji, urges Muslims to question the *modus operandi* of their faith. Manji, a well-known critic of radical Islam and traditional interpretations of the Qur'an, who publicly supported the Pope's comments on the faith at the Regensburg lecture last year, advocates a revival of critical thinking, known as *ijtihad* in Islamic tradition. She claims that Islam today is on the back foot as mainstream Muslims have lost their gift of 'independent reasoning'.

During the recent controversy over whether Muslim women in Britain should wear the veil, Dr. Taj Hargey, chairman of the Muslim Educational Centre in Oxford, wrote "In contrast to a blind acceptance of specific 7th-century tribal Arabian dress and cultural norms, which have no eternal scriptural endorsement (as believers are required only to be modest), modern Muslims should revive the Islamic principle of *ijtihad* to interpret the faith for themselves."
Media for Freedom, 4 September 2007

Our religions are based on reason

The Iraqi-born imam Seyed Ali Ghazvini, of the Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno, California, described Christianity and Islam as two rational faiths in the June edition of the Fresno *Community Alliance* newsletter. 'Islam makes reasoning one of the main foundations of religious principles,' and so 'has displayed its extraordinary capability to take advantage of the constructive aspects of other civilizations and incorporate it in its political, social and cultural structure.'

California Catholic Daily, 27 September 2007

Praise for philosophical Ayatollah

Sandro Magister has praised Grand Ayatollah Al-Sistani, 78, the highest religious authority for Shiite Muslims in Iraq for his brave and Aristotelian stand against suicide bombers and Iranian-style theocracy. Al-Sistani affirms that only good citizens can create good society. He was one of the few Islamic leaders who after the Regensburg speech "expressed esteem and friendship for the Pope".
www.chiesa.it

Intelligent Design?

Mustafa Akyol (see left) makes a point that *Faith* magazine would share with his *Intelligent Design* school, whilst differing from the manner of proof and other conclusions: "... the idea that... evolution happened only via Darwinian mechanisms – and, especially, in a completely random way – seems to be a philosophical presupposition, not an empirically established fact."

Turkish Daily News

Soul and Image of God

In an article for Qatar's top selling English daily newspaper, *The Gulf Times*, Abdul rehman al-Sheha, author of *Misconception on Human Rights in Islam*, wrote: "The human soul is given, since its creation, to recognise the existence of its Creator, who has also created this Universe which demonstrates the greatness of its Creator."
The Gulf Times, 27 September, 2007

The SORS and the war against the family

A pro-life Catholic and Muslim have co-authored an article in the *Muslim Weekly* outlining the success of the gay agenda since the war which has reached its high point in the recent Sexual Orientation Regulations. Giles Rowe and Majid Katme point out how, despite prior guarantees, harassment provisions have been attached which can be used against religious leaders who preach that homosexual sex is wrong. The article highlights how conservative movements in Europe have supported such provisions, losing their traditional values.
Muslim Weekly

Right to convert

The Islamic Council of Norway and the (Lutheran) Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations jointly declared that everyone is free to adopt the religious faith of their choice, at a gathering on 22 August 2007.

Ekklesia, 28 August 2007

Contributions from Lisa Gregoire and Carlos Fuentes.

continued overleaf

OF CHRISTIAN INTEREST

Science and religion discussion

The fourth joint Christians in Science and American Scientific Affiliation conference took place in Edinburgh this summer, attended by over 300 members. Professor Alister McGrath spoke on "New Frontiers in Science" covering anthropic phenomena in physics and biology and the renewal of natural theology. Professor Simon Conway Morris spoke on "Does Evolution have a deep structure?" and offered evidence for direction in evolution. There were numerous other talks on the frontiers between evolution, neuroscience and Christian revelation.

PreCiS Newsletter, Summer 07

Templeton and post-modern culture

Last July the Templeton Prize of about £800,000 was awarded to Professor Charles Taylor, 75, a Canadian philosopher and expert of Hegel. Around that time he wrote the following:

"We are engaged in creating (we hope) a peaceful world order, based on a flourishing globalised economy, collective security and the rule of law. But this world order, if we are fortunate enough to achieve it, will inevitably be very focused on the procedures and structures of government, of adjudication; it will be concerned with economic prosperity

and equality within the narrow limits of toleration of our damaged planet; it will be concerned with the control of violence.

"...Unconsciously, we narrow our focus... What gets lost from sight are other things that motivate human beings: their search for meaning, for a sense that their world is not out of control, for a conviction of their own worth, and beyond this, for a sense of their own moral goodness. Briefly out, we lose sight of people's spiritual motivations."

Forbes.com

CARDINAL NEWMAN, POPE BENEDICT AND LITURGICAL WORDS

OTHER ANGLES

By Fr James Tolhurst

In the Authorised Version of the Bible, St Paul tells Timothy, "hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim 1:13). It relates to matters of doctrine, but John Henry Newman applied it to the liturgy on many occasions.

On the one hand Newman was accused of ritualism. He had to deny that he had wax candles burning before the altar in Littlemore Chapel, (which Anthony Russell repeated in his Clerical Profession in 1980) and that "he bowed to the Holy Elements in the Service... before Consecration" (which Newman pointed out was an absurdity since then it was "mere bread and wine"). It was all part of the campaign which sought to label him a secret Romanist before he converted. On other hand he differed from Evangelicals in their attitude to the liturgy which sought to imbue it with warmth and feeling. This found expression in the character of the prayers used. The desire to extemporise is still with us and Newman pointed out in 1829 that "prayers framed at the moment are likely to become irreverent". He was to add (in 1830) "irreverent in such ignorant, feeble, blind creatures as we are." He chose the word because he asked people to consider "into whose presence we are entering... the presence of God."

So Liturgy must have a fixed and reverent structure which argues against adding "frills" from the ritual angle, and verbiage from the linguistic side. This stems from a realisation that the ceremony and the words were like the veil which hung before the Holy of Holies, and partook of the sacredness within.

We must not seek to minimise the importance of the signs in the liturgy, nor over-dramatise them. Pope Benedict floats the idea that the sign of peace could anticipate the presentation of the gifts "as a significant reminder of the Lord's insistence that

we be reconciled with others before offering our gifts to God"; this has already been taken up at the international Mass at Lourdes. As regards the presentation of the gifts themselves, Pope Benedict points out that we should not see it "simply as a kind of 'interval' between the liturgy of the word and of the Eucharist... the authentic meaning of this gesture can be clearly expressed without the need for undue emphasis or complexity" (*Sacramentum Caritatis* nn. 48n.47).

On the other hand there is a terrible tendency to 'personalise' our liturgy – when it isn't ours at all. We need to hold fast the form of sound words. It does help if the words are sound and actually say something profound. But even if they are trite, the temptation to add words should be resisted as these are not always 'reverent' and often stroke our ego. Pope Benedict says "priests should be conscious of the fact that in their ministry they must never put themselves or their personal opinions in first place, but Jesus Christ. Any attempt to make themselves the centre of the liturgical action contradicts their very identity as priests. The priest is above all a servant of others, and he must continually work at being a sign pointing to Christ, a docile instrument in the Lord's hands. This is seen particularly in his humility in leading the liturgical assembly, in obedience to the rite, uniting himself to it in mind and heart, and avoiding anything that might give the impression of an inordinate emphasis on his own personality" (*Sacramentum Caritatis* n.23). There will always be times when we would prefer other modes of expression but we need to bear in mind that the liturgy is a duty laid on us by the Church, and not some individual devotion; we owe it to the Church to carry it out as obediently as we can, and put our own preferences to one side, as Newman did.

Sunday by Sunday



Sunday 4th November

31st Sunday in ordinary time Year C

Lk 19:1-10

The comical character of Zacchaeus points us to hope in God's grace. The Lord reaches those who seem inexorably distanced from Him. As Pope Benedict pointed out recently, *no-one* likes to pay tax. But this man has also collaborated with the Romans and by his own admission has defrauded many. Jesus has so often reached over the cultural barriers that appear to be obstacles: Mary Magdalene's seven devils, Saul's vitriol against Christians, the worldly milieu of Francis, the atheist-Jewish background of Edith Stein, even the boundless anti-Catholicism of Scott Hahn. Who knows whom Our Lord will reach with our prayers.

"Zaccheus, come down, hurry, because I must stay at your house today." Even given Zachaeus' curiosity, it is clearly Jesus who takes the initiative. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock". He proves he is the Good Shepherd who seeks out the lost. But from all eternity God planned to enter the House of Creation to dine with us. He takes the initiative according to a very ancient plan of wisdom and love. When we have our homes blest by the priest, are we not recognising the initiative of God's desire to visit us with his saving presence?

There is a sort of pseudo-marxist element in some Christianity that puts all the wealthy beyond the pale. Certainly Jesus' earlier words on riches prompt the apostles to respond: "Who then can be saved?" But here we see Jesus making

possible what is impossible. As St Bede says of Zacchaeus: "the camel disengumbered of his hump passes through the eye of the needle." Using his money, tainted as it is, Zacchaeus shows how to win friends who will welcome him into the tents of eternity. It is a call for all of us in the West – who live like kings – to be just as prodigal with what we have.

Sunday 11th November

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lk 20:27-38

The Saducees were the religious aristocrats. They evidently frowned upon what they saw as the unreasonable, even childish, belief in the resurrection. So they put what seems an unanswerable question to Jesus, to expose this belief for what it is. With the assured dignity and clarity of divine wisdom, Jesus calmly demolishes their apparently unassailable position. How often do the religious intelligentsia of our day dismiss key tenets of Christianity in the same vein as the Saducees. It is still the calm, clear voice of Jesus in the magisterium that destroys the house of cards that human arrogance substitutes for the truth.

Faith in heaven provides a framework for our lives even now. In particular, celibacy witnesses to the life to come. "The celibate person anticipates in his or her own flesh the new world of the future resurrection": Pope John Paul's words in Chapter 16 of *Familiaris Consortio* are well worth reading in full. On one hand he stresses that "when human sexuality is not regarded as a great value given by the Creator, the renunciation of it for the sake of the Kingdom loses its meaning". On the other, it is the pearl of great price: "it is for this reason that the Church has always defended the superiority of this charism to that of marriage."

Jesus' teaching momentarily parts the curtain from what is unseen; we glimpse the world of the resurrection where human beings walk as sons of God. This is the vision that St Paul tried to impart to

the world – that even now our true lives are hidden with Christ in God. How often is the dignity of human beings ranked lower than that of animals. Scientists protest that creating 'cybrid' embryos will cause no harm to cows. Our culture needs to hear loud and clear a vindication of the unique status of human beings as spiritual creatures.

Sunday 18th November

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lk 21:5-19

As the eschatological discourse begins, Jesus warns first against being deceived by false prophets. We tend to think most immediately of religions and sects that have sprung up over the centuries after Jesus. However, in our own day, false prophecy can take on a far more insidious form, arising even within the ranks of Christians. The Catechism warns in particular of the "intrinsically perverse political form of a secular messianism" at the expense of the truth. How many charities today equate with that description?

(See *the Truth will set you free* p26)

With what precision Jesus forecasts the future. In a few brief words he presents the pictures conjured up in so many TV news broadcasts. We often hear people dismiss God's existence because of the suffering that surrounds us. We need to draw them to a deeper vision, one in which our loving Creator respects our freedom as a priceless good. This passage reveals our God as Lord of History. He calls us to bear witness to him especially in the suffering around us.

Of course Christian apologetics have always been an essential dimension of the Gospel proclamation since the beginning. Pope John Paul II's foreword to the Catechism quotes St Peter: "We should always be prepared to give an account for the hope that is within us" (1 Pet 3:15). We have never understood Jesus' words as ruling out the need for diligent scholarship. However, we can marvel today at how his words have come true – the eloquent wisdom in the face of persecution of St Joan of Arc; of so many English martyrs; St Paul Miki, and of many more.

Sunday 25th November
Christ the King Year C
Lk 23:35-43

Rather as we see in Tolkien's ironic denouement when the enemy destroys the ring, it is in sarcastic mockery that Jesus' true status is proclaimed at the last. For the one who was destined as King of Creation from the first poising of matter cannot be ultimately frustrated by human sin. Against the darkness of evil the light of God's plan is yet more brilliant. It is Jesus' love-to-the-uttermost that vindicates the original wisdom of the Cosmos and his most royal status. The true nature of Christ's kingship breaks through.

The Russian crucifix has a second diagonal crosspiece representing the two thieves in this gospel – and in them the universal responses to Jesus' kingship. Through our sins we mock the truth of Christ's royal image in our human nature. All sinners "crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold him up to contempt" (Heb 6:6). St Gregory points out the saving virtues of the good thief: *faith* that God's reign will come; *charity* in defence of Jesus and *hope* in asking for entrance to the kingdom. It is in practising these virtues that we give the First-born of all Creation his due.

"Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us as well". Even the good thief – and the apostles – do not realise that that is precisely what Our Lord is doing in front of their eyes. The Cross does not look like a throne. For faith is not just a matter of accepting God exists. We must trust that Our Lord is at work in the very mundane occurrences of our daily lives. It is often precisely through our frustrations, disappointments and pain that Jesus is king.

Sunday 2nd December
First Sunday of Advent Year A
Mt 24:37-44

In mentioning the activities of mankind before the flood, Jesus is not condemning them per se, for from them half the people are taken to the kingdom. God calls us to holiness in whichever state we dwell. However, to live as though these things alone fulfil us is blameworthy in God's sight. By limiting our sights to our bodily needs we not only reduce ourselves to the status of animals; we rudely ignore our true Environer who yearns to fulfil his plan of love and sweep us up to a far more vital existence.

Our human weakness and sinfulness are the most deadly narcotics. By allowing ourselves to be satisfied by superficial pleasures and drawn into bad habits, the eyes of our souls are dulled. On military exercise, soldiers help each other not to nod off. At a time when so many Christians seem to be snoring quite loudly on basic moral issues, we surely have a duty to assist each other. How often do we bring up the subject of confession with our nearest and dearest?

Although Jesus so often tells his disciples not to be afraid, it is quite clear that here he is stirring up a healthy fear through the parable of the burglar. The Good Shepherd has to warn his sheep. It is true that each year the Church has four full weeks to refocus our gaze on our returning master. However it is not a luxury to prioritise our spiritual life in this busy world. At the least, we should be living in a state of grace.

Sunday 9th December
Second Sunday of Advent
Mt 3:1-12

"The Sun as he approaches the horizon, and before he is yet visible, sends out his rays and makes the eastern sky to glow with light, that Dawn going before may herald the coming day." So Pseudo-Chrysostom describes this passage. If the universe has been developing over aeons for the coming of the Word, then St John's place as the 'Voice for the Word' is essential to God's plan. As the last and greatest of all the prophets his arrival is as perfectly timed as the first signs of spring. Or to develop the analogy of the father quoted above, he is the dawn chorus.

John's role is two-fold. Not only does he come to bear witness to the Christ, but also to prepare the Way. In a unique way, his prophetic voice transcends his own time to reach each individual Christian in Advent, calling us all to repent. For in no way is conversion a one-off event in the past. The writings of St John of the Cross, whom we celebrate next Friday, confirm that each of us must seek constant purification and spend times of night before we see the light of Christ face-to-face. It is an opportune moment to renew our daily practice of examination of conscience.

"Do not presume to tell yourselves, 'we have Abraham for our father'". St John distinguishes the true lineage of the Covenant from the presumption of faithless descendants of the Promises. In a parallel fashion, there is a serious temptation to presumption through membership of the Church: "once a Catholic, always a Catholic" is an old chestnut brought out by the lapsed. Although we retain our canonical status through baptism, Our Lord's words echo that of his cousin: "It is not those who say Lord, Lord who will enter the kingdom of heaven..."

Sunday 16th December**Third Sunday of Advent,
Gaudete Sunday**

Mt 11:2-11

The temperate biome of the Eden project houses a ‘wilderness’ patch that at certain times bursts forth into a luxury of bloom. We’ve seen it all on T.V. There is no more appropriate image in nature for the approach of the Messiah, as the lyrical words of the first reading bear witness. Even from his prison cell, we can sense the joy that John shares with his disciples as the proof of the Messiah’s arrival is plainly before them. Even from the prison cells of all our daily anxieties, the Church lifts our spirits as we reflect upon what the Christ means for the world.

Out-of-context, this Gospel always puzzles us: was John ever in doubt as his martyrdom approached? The beginning of this Gospel (3:13-17) with the certainty of John’s witness reveals the true meaning of this passage. It is the last wonderful gift of the friend of the Bridegroom to his disciples. He is sending them to leave him and encounter the Bridegroom for themselves. With every person that we hope to bring to faith, there comes a time when we must lead them to meet the Lord for themselves, at Mass or in front of the tabernacle.

“The least in the kingdom is greater than he”. Although John is the greatest of all the prophets, indeed of all born of women, the arrival of Jesus ushers in the new era of grace. The grand sweep of the cosmos till the entrance of its Lord and Master has been one of unfolding development. Now the Unity Law of Control and Direction is about to be swept up into a new reality. As St Clement of Alexandria puts it “Just as God’s will in Creation is called ‘the world’, so His intention is the salvation of men, and it is called ‘the Church’” (CCC 760).

Sunday 23rd December**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Mt 1:18-24

Joseph’s pilgrimage of faith is played out before us with the greatest economy and in total silence. We can imagine the tension as he makes up his mind to divorce Mary informally. Yet not one word comes down to us from Joseph today. There is something about the way he keeps his counsel, his complete discretion, that goes to explain his description as a man of honour. His silence is more eloquent than words.

Matthew’s Gospel shows quite clearly that the virgin birth was part of God’s plan. Later Pope Pius VI was to condemn interpretations that deny the messianic sense of Isaiah 7:14. Against the backdrop of the wonderful economy of the Unity-Law, it becomes clear how foolish people are to deny the virgin birth as some sort of superstition. Indeed it is supremely rational – in one sense one might say *not* even a miracle. For Matter, Earth, Humanity, Israel – and especially the division of the sexes – look up to the womb and personality of Mary. She *alone* can co-operate with the will of God to enwrap his pre-existent Self in human nature.

“...You must name him Jesus because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.” Our Lord’s name tells us he will rescue us from our tragic condition. However, he will do this only insofar as he is God-man, pre-ordained Principle of Life. In this deeper sense, Saviour includes all that He is for us: Teacher, Healer, Good Shepherd, Bread of Life and Holy Eucharist. Because of these things he is also Redeemer.

Sunday 30th December**Feast of the Holy Family**

Mt 2, 13-15, 19-23

God needed the goodness of Joseph as head of the household of Jesus and Mary. He needed his self-sacrificial love of his virgin wife, he needed his tender care for the infant Jesus, and, most of all, he needed his decisiveness and holy fear of God for prompt and courageous action. It was not important that he should understand fully, but it was vital that he should obey. There was not one moment of hesitation in that responsible father, who was thus by God’s grace one of the few men during the long and cruel reign of Herod to outwit that wily politician.

No-one who has travelled the uncomfortable ten hour coach trip from Jerusalem to Cairo across the Sinai desert will ever underestimate the faith and bravery of Joseph in leading Mary and Jesus off into that wasteland by night. Not even Herod thought that anyone would dare such a feat. If the king had had only the slightest shadow of a suspicion that his quarry would attempt such foolishness then there can be little doubt that the infant Jesus would have been taken and murdered by the soldiers of this tyrannical ruler. But it was not so due to the courage of Joseph. We are God’s feet, hands and heart. He needs us to do good, but first we must listen like Joseph.

Now more than ever we need to pray for families. Breakdown is so rife as to be commonplace, and yet there is no such thing as an easy divorce. Some deal with it better than others, but no-one wholly gets over the rejection that they suffer from an estranged husband or wife. God abundantly blesses family life as the proper environment for the nurture of children and the sanctification of spouses. No vocation is without its cross, but we must all pray nevertheless for a return to basic marital fidelity and a renewed and informed return to lifelong commitment.

Book reviews



Jesus of Nazareth

by Pope Benedict XVI, Bloomsbury, 374pp, £14.99

the Kingdom, but "by the way in which he speaks of the Kingdom of God, Jesus leads us to realise the overwhelming fact that in him God himself is present – that he is God's presence."

Many exegetes get enmeshed in the minutiae of the text and fail to realise that the evangelist in particular always "remembers in and with the Church." Pope Benedict tells us that Jesus' "entire preaching is a message about the mystery of his person, precisely because Jesus himself is God – the Son."

Pope Benedict pays particular tribute to Rabbi Jacob Neusner, *A Rabbi talks with Jesus*, and Bishop John Robinson, *A New Quest for the Historical Jesus*. So also does Anne Rice. The author of *The Vampire Lestat* and other novels, she came back to the practice of her faith in 1998. As a result she decided to write about Jesus, conscious of the fact that "sceptical schools seemed so very sure of themselves."

The resulting book begins with Jesus aged seven, leaving Egypt (where he meets Philo) and returning via Jerusalem to Galilee. She borrows from the apocryphal Gospels, the child Jesus bringing clay doves to life and curing various sick and blind people. She also sends John the Baptist off to Qumran, and puts Jesus to work in Sepphoris, painting wall decorations.

The narrative is reverent and well written. It charts the dawning consciousness of a child, "kept hidden" by Mary and Joseph, who witnessed marvellous scenes at his birth and then had to escape Herod's slaughter. It ends with Jesus acknowledging his Father. Anne Rice has in fact reinforced the faith, as a novelist, in the same way that Pope Benedict has done, as a theologian.

James Tolhurst
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Kent

Newman's Approach to Knowledge

by Laurence Richardson, Gracewing, xii + 200pp, £9.99

It is somewhat frustrating to locate the genre to which this short treatise naturally belongs. Turgidity of language and argument belies its usefulness for the general reader, while its essentially descriptive character prevents the manifestation of anything profoundly new in relation to the ever-increasing *corpus* of Newman studies that would require it to be essential reading for the scholar or expert. As a textbook for students in universities or seminaries, it has some grace in that it provides an introduction to the philosophy undergirding Newman's faith processes, vitiated somewhat by lack of reference to the work of Grave on conscience, Verbeke on the Aristotelian roots of the illative sense, Harrold's now somewhat mature critical study of Newman's mind, thought and art, the views of Newsome and Robbins on the nature of *The Grammar* and the robustly critical approach of FitzPatrick. These writings do not feature in the bibliography.

In Richardson's book there are seven chapters ranging from an examination of Newman's early philosophical stance, the influences that formed him and led him to coherence in the development of his approach to knowledge and commitment, to his teaching on apprehension, assent, inference and the illative sense. The study concludes with an analysis of the insights Newman brings to bear upon contemporary philosophical understandings and his status as a latent forerunner of the phenomenological movement. The latter constitutes the essence of Richardson's concluding chapter.

Newman's concern with religious certitude can be traced to his early reading of Butler and to the interaction of Oriel relationships. Along with commonly-held views, Richardson regards *The Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* as Newman's greatest work, more than a theological

text, a work resting upon a firm philosophical and psychological basis which answers the problem of how truth is arrived at without exclusively pursuing a logical process. Richardson uses quotation from Newman liberally, eschewing Gerard Manley Hopkin's criticism of Newman's '*narrow circle of instance and quotation*' which had dissatisfied him on first reading *The Grammar*. To him, it was 'heavy reading'. Richardson is very skillful, however, in the use of selection and evocative quotation, ensuring Newman is allowed to speak for himself in clarifying the process by which the human mind makes it possible to subscribe to an act of religious faith which is seen to be an act of the intellect. Man, thus, is not simply a reasoning being but '*a seeing, feeling, contemplating, acting*' being.

The concept of the illative sense designates what William Robbins called '*the reasoning from cumulative probabilities by which the mind is led to positive and fruitful belief*'. In such a process, conscience plays a significant role. Alison Gray, in a recent doctoral study on the empirical use of material relating to *The Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, in relation to the teaching of Key Stage Three religious education in a Catholic school in England, has shown the inherent capacity of children to reach belief by a proper use and understanding of the illative sense.

There are three issues Richardson would have done well to address thoroughly. The first relates to the point aired by the late David Newsome when he wrote that '*Newman waged a lifelong war against private judgement in matters of doctrine and revelation*' and pointed out that '*the error of Protestantism was to suppose that "religion was based not on argument but on taste and sentiment, that nothing was objective, everything subjective in doctrine"*'. It would have been significant if Fr Richardson had addressed this point vis-à-vis the illative sense. The key, of course, to its resolution lies in the use

of conscience as safeguard from self-will. The second issue that could have been addressed is that raised by Patrick FitzPatrick who saw the '*deprecation of reason in order to make faith more acceptable*' as a difficulty in Newman's approach to his teaching of the illative sense. Finally, Newman was himself aware there is no formal proof of the reliability of the illative sense, a fundamental flaw necessitating discussion.

Professor V Alan McClelland

Leconfield
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Frederick William Faber:

A Great Servant of God

by *Melissa Wilkinson, Gracewing, 322pp, £20*

Most readers probably know Fr Faber as the author of *Faith of our Fathers*. Others will associate him with Cardinal Newman – probably seeing him in some sense as 'Newman's rival'. Indeed, Frederick Faber (somewhat like Cardinal Manning) has frequently been studied only in terms of his relationship with Newman – usually to his own disadvantage. Melissa Wilkinson's new book seeks to place Faber centre stage, portraying him as a key player in the Nineteenth Century Church, and a figure comparable to – or in some respects even more significant than – Newman himself.

Undoubtedly, the subject does deserve a serious modern biography. Dr Wilkinson demonstrates that Faber reflected in his own person many of the great controversies of the Church in the Victorian era. Beginning life as a convinced young Evangelical, he gradually adopted the Tractarian High Churchmanship promoted by Keble and Newman, before embracing, with all possible fervour, the Ultramontane, Italianate Catholicism introduced into England by Cardinal Wiseman. When he died, an obituary in the secular *Morning Post* could claim: 'Of all the

converts to Roman Catholicism from the Anglican Faith, none have been more zealous, more successful, more earnest than Father Faber'. Yet today Faber's reputation languishes in comparison to that of Newman. Why should this be?

Wilkinson's book suggests some of the answer. Firstly, as she concludes: 'Faber was essentially an apologist for his own individual reading of Catholicism'. This reading, as we have noted, was Italianate, Ultramontane, highly emotional and frequently expressed in passages of purple prose, which, as Wilkinson opines, occasionally topple over into 'silliness'. Such a model of Catholicism was well-suited to High Victorian sensibilities, and made Faber a popular figure. Today, however, the style seems dated, whereas Newman's more reserved approach has retained its appeal. Secondly, there is Faber's own character to consider. Apologists for Newman have sometimes portrayed Faber as a hypochondriac neurotic, scheming to undermine Newman's proper authority while frequently at odds with his own community. Here, Wilkinson emphasises Faber's genuine ill-health, which plagued him almost his entire life. She suggests, convincingly, that much of this was due to mercury poisoning, a side-effect of the terrifying array of Victorian drugs and potions Faber was prescribed by his doctors. This must account for much that was erratic or unsatisfactory in his dealings with others. Moreover, as even Newman's fervent admirers would surely admit, the great Cardinal was hardly the easiest man to deal with, and quite as highly-strung as Faber. A merit of Wilkinson's book is that it allows the Faber-Newman relationship to be viewed more impartially than is often the case.

The book makes one particular claim which deserves our attention. It was Faber, more than Newman, Wilkinson

suggests, who was responsible for introducing the Oratorian model of spiritual life into the English Church. Faber had cherished a devotion to St Philip Neri, the original Oratorian, ever since his ordination as an Anglican on St Philip's feast day. Moreover, Wilkinson has studied for the first time Faber's rule for the 'Brothers of the Will of God' (or 'Wilfridians'), the Catholic community he founded shortly after his conversion, and which predated Newman's foundation of the Oratory. St Philip Neri was a major influence on this community, for instance in their insistence on 'playful ways and sweet manners', echoing St Philip's command to be 'cheerful and charitable'. Later, when submitting to the Oratorian rule proper, Faber revealed to Newman that St Philip's picture was 'on every door' of the Wilfridian house. Certainly the book makes a convincing case that Faber possessed an earlier, and perhaps deeper, appreciation of Philippine spirituality than Newman, albeit that Newman (as Cardinal Wiseman recognised) was more capable of providing a sure foundation for the Oratorian life in the English context.

Wilkinson's work, therefore, can be commended for its scholarship, and is an important contribution to our knowledge of the English Church in this period. It is a shame that it still reads very obviously like the doctoral thesis as which it began its life. The research is good, the conclusions solid, but the prose is often dense and the narrative flow poor, while every chapter is burdened with several hundred endnotes, far beyond the needs of the average reader. There still remains room for a genuinely popular biography of this great English Catholic.

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Catholic Social Justice: Theological and Practical Explorations

edited by Philomena Cullen, Bernard Hoose, and Gerard Mannion Continuum, 250 pp, £18.99

Nothing illustrates more clearly the crisis in the Catholic Church in England than this book which attacks the present Pope, his predecessors, Christian marriage, and suggests that the blowing up of the twin towers in America might not be termed "terrorist".

Let us be clear about the status of this book. It is published by a reputable publisher, Continuum, but it is a collection of articles by Caritas-Social action, an official agency of the Catholic Bishops' Conference for England and Wales. It carries a supportive and laudatory Foreword by his lordship Bishop Budd, who starts by giving an account of the history of Caritas-social action. He takes responsibility for the book: "This faith-reflection activity that we called 'social spirituality' has given birth to the present volume." The Introduction of the book is actually called "Caritas in Theory and Practice". It is still advertised as I write this in late September on the Website of the Bishops' Conference.

Among the authors are three who have kept the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) busy. The editors offer an article of Hans Kung which is ten years old: "Ethics, Business and Managers". It is as tendentious as it is boring and predictable. The CDF has declared of Fr Kung that he had "departed from the integral truth of the Catholic Faith."

Then there is Fr Tissa Balasuriya whose article is called "Benedict XVI's *Deus Caritas Est* and Social Action". At one time he was actually excommunicated but had that lifted when he recited *The Credo of the People of God*. But he does not seem cowed. His judgement on the second half of *Deus Caritas Est* is succinct: "The claims in the encyclical in favour of the Church's social action are hardly

credible...". But the present pope is not being singled out for censure. Fr Balasuriya also criticises Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* and John Paul II's *Centesimus Annus*. "One of their deficiencies is the lack of structural analysis in terms of global social justice. They were all written mainly from a European-dominated world view." John Paul II is further taken to task for writing "disparagingly concerning Buddhism as negative." In my judgement he hits a new low by stating: "The twenty-first century was born in violence, with the 'terrorist' air attack on New York on 11 September 2001..." In English one uses inverted commas when quoting someone or when conveying the sense of 'so-called'. The effect is to question whether that act of murder can be regarded as terrorism.

Peter C. Phan is currently being investigated by the CDF. His article *Christian Social Spirituality* promotes Liberation Theology and he cites approvingly Jon Sobrino, just as Gerard Mannion quotes approvingly whom he calls "the esteemed moral theologian, Charles E. Curran." Mannion also, in a method that is typical of the whole book simply asserts, "The Church gradually moved away from its opposition to socialism..." He quotes not one iota of evidence to back up this highly questionable statement.

Ms Philomena Cullen, one of the editors of the book, in her contribution, "Social Justice and the Open Family", a feminist invective, attacks Catholic marriage. She condemns the ideology of what she calls "the nuclear family" (that is a wife and husband who have received the sacrament of matrimony and have children) claiming that it is, in some way, "a defence of capitalism". She says that all dominant ideologies involve the misuse of power: "whether manifested as sexism, racism, disabilism, ageism, heterosexism." She argues for what she calls, "a feminist perspective in family theology". In context this seems to

this writer like arguing for "a vulpine perspective in the keeping of chickens". Ms Cullen also criticises *Deus Caritas Est*.

Not all the other articles are as bad as these, but none redeems the book.

As is not infrequently the case with such patronisation of the Magisterium we are all financing this manifesto, as we are Caritas-social Action itself, via the Bishop's Conference. This book is very far from being an explanation of Catholic Social Justice. It does not carry an *Imprimatur*.

Eric Hester
Bolton

Chaucer's Triumph: Including the case of Cecilia Chaumpaigne, the seduction of Katherine Swynford, the murder of her husband, the interment of John of Gaunt and other offices of the flesh in the year 1399

by Garry O'Connor, Petrak Press,
294 pp, £15.99

To go from reading Chaucer to reading *Chaucer's Triumph* is a sickening descent. It is characteristic of our age – but not Chaucer's contemporaries – to think of him almost entirely in terms of *The Canterbury Tales* and the Wife of Bath's tale in particular.

O'Connor chose an interesting year in which to set his story – 1399 – because John of Gaunt, Duke of Leicester (1340–1399), the third surviving son of King Edward III, was Chaucer's patron. The story amounts to a kind of 'London Pilgrimage' as the Duke's body is taken from Leicester Castle to its resting place in St Paul's Cathedral. It is told in a series of flashbacks by various characters on the 'Pilgrimage', including John of Gaunt himself, Katherine Swynford (his third wife), Geoffrey Chaucer, and Adam Scrivener, Chaucer's scrivener or copyist. There is a *Who's Who* at the beginning of the book which anyone not an historian will certainly need. Much thought went into weaving the various strands of John

of Gaunt's life together with that of Chaucer, and the book contains a valuable Endnote on the author's sources.

What of the story itself? At the mention of *Troilus and Criesyde* early in the book my heart leapt – hoping beyond hope we would have Chaucer's reflections on what I think his greatest work. As O'Connor makes much of Chaucer's Retraction, surely this would have been the place to quote the lines addressed to those 'yonke fresshe folkes, he or she' whom Chaucer urges to 'Repeyreth hoom from worldly vanitee.' It was not to be. In fairness to the author, he probably felt he ought to confine most of his comments to *The Canterbury Tales* because Chaucer was possibly still working on it at this time. Again my heart gave a leap. Would the biographer of Pope John Paul II entertain us with conversation between Chaucer and the Scrivener about The Knight's or The Parson's Tales?

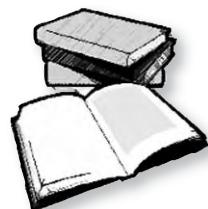
It was not to be. Our noses are held relentlessly and continuously to the grindstone of what is mainly the *imagined* bawdiness of Chaucer both in his life and his poetry. If the reader expects to be entertained, instead, by the story of the delightful Wife of Bath and her tale about 'What women most desire in the world' – even that is denied us.

I've never read a novel in which I felt so many excellent opportunities were lost. It is bad enough that it is told in an extremely circuitous manner. Whatever you make of the lewdness of some of the Canterbury pilgrims, those pilgrims – blissfully unaware of their imbedded Catholicism and goodness – were far more interesting than the gratuitous reflections by Lady Katherine and nearly everyone else – including Chaucer – on fornication. This is a book I can imagine DH Lawrence writing if he were a Catholic. O'Connor puts great emphasis on Chaucer's so-called '*raptus*' of Cecilia Chaumpaigne when it remains unclear whether *raptus* meant rape or possibly

kidnapping. In any event, the issue was not resolved and it left no stain on Chaucer's character. I never had an opinion on the matter, but the 'confession' O'Connor puts into Chaucer's mouth convinces me that there never was a rape, and that the author's straining after one is the main reason why what might have been a good novel is ruined by salaciousness for its own sake.

When the procession stops for the night at St Alban's Abbey and we meet Brother Thomas Walsingham, the Abbot, I thought we might finally learn something about medieval Catholicism. The Abbot's talk reminded me of the tersely-expressed but profound theological ideas we find in Chaucer. But the author ruins it by having the Scrivener being seduced by a young woman in the Abbey. This is followed by the final stage of Chaucer's confession to the Scrivener of his 'rape' of Cecilia Chaumpaigne, which continues right up to the entombment of John of Gaunt. I will not, like the Wife of Bath, say of the author – 'God sende hem soone verray pestilence.' But if the presenter of *Desert Island Discs* allowed me to take 500 books to a desert island this would not be one of them.

Walter Hooper
Oxford



Notes from across the Atlantic

by Richard John Neuhaus



WHAT UNDERMINES THE FAMILY?

A recently received manuscript laid out in tediously precise detail the six social dynamics undermining respect for the family. Not five, mind you, and not seven, but six. The author was insistent about that. There is a type of mind that seems to think nothing is said precisely unless it is numbered. Peter Altenberg, a major figure in Vienna's café society at the beginning of the last century, wrote: "There are only two things that can destroy a healthy man: love trouble, ambition and financial catastrophe. And that's already three things, and there are a lot more." Precisely.

CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Avoiding contact with those with whom you disagree is a "sophomoric strategy". So said Prof. Daniel Finn of St. John's University in Collegeville in his valedictory address as president of the Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA). The CTSA has been somewhat marginalised in recent years. Ten years ago, Bernard Cardinal Law called it a "wasteland", and Avery Cardinal Dulles, a former president of CTSA, said it "constitutes a kind of alternative magisterium for dissatisfied Catholics". Finn said that CTSA's frequent statements criticising the Magisterium of the Church were counterproductive, alienating church leadership and reducing support for changes desired by CTSA members. His theme was power as "part of the software of daily life", and the ways in which academics have distanced themselves from that reality. Closely related to the question of power, he noted that the organisation was losing members because "conservative" theologians

wanted nothing to do with it. On his mind may also have been the awareness that a substantial number of distinguished theologians have been making plans to establish a new theological society for scholars more attuned to the Magisterium. Finn's address received a standing ovation, but what difference it will make for the future of CTSA is very much in question. Finn was careful in not repudiating former statements but suggested that in the future such criticisms of Rome might better come from individual theologians rather than from the CTSA as an organisation.

INCREASING LAY MINISTRY

The number of priests is in decline but "lay ecclesial ministers" (LEMs) are popping up all over. The late Msgr. Philip Murnion, a sociologist who founded the National Pastoral Life Centre, called the phenomenon "a virtual revolution in parish ministry". Many see the revolution as a very good thing, a remedy for a "priest-ridden" Church, to use a favoured locution of classic anti-Catholicism. There are today 31,000 certified lay ecclesial ministers working in American parishes today and 18,000 more are in training. The total number of priests is 43,304. In many cases, LEMs run parishes and are the ministry of the Church for everything except sacramental acts requiring a priest. In such cases the LEM hires, so to speak, a priest for piece work. (With the permission of the bishop, to be sure.) If it is not a revolution, this is certainly a radical change in the understanding and practice of ministry in the Catholic Church. John Allen, writing for the *National Catholic Reporter*, highlights an additional dimension of the phenomenon that is worrying many. Eighty percent of LEMs are women. David DeLambo of the aforementioned pastoral centre says this, too, is a very good thing. Women ministers, he says, "bring sensitivity to lay concerns and to families, as well as to issues related to gender and inclusion". Critics disagree, pointing to the increasing "feminisation" of the Church. In 1999, Leon Podles published *The Church Impotent: The Feminisation of Christianity*.

A *First Things* reviewer (October 1999) thought he got much of his history wrong, but even casual observers know what scholars have documented, namely, that religion is disproportionately a "woman thing". As Podles puts it with a charming bluntness, "Women go to church, men go to football games." Christianity's alienation of males is the theme of a more recent book by David Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*. Murrow, a specialist in media and advertising, says: "It's not too hard to discern the target audience of the modern church. It's middle-aged to elderly women." They have what churches need, time and money. In addition, says Murrow, "If our definition of a 'good Christian' is someone who is nurturing, tender, gentle, receptive and guilt-driven, it's going to be a lot easier to find women who will sign up." Which leads Allen to ask the question, "If the tone in most parishes is being set by female ministers, what will that do to the comfort level of men, given that women are already over-represented?" Some think that women LEMs are a step toward the priestly ordination of women. Others, recognising that that is not going to happen in this millennium or the next, see LEMs as virtual priests without ordination. So why don't bishops recruit more men to be LEMs? In large part, Allen plausibly suggests, because they want to recruit men to the priesthood. Or, in the case of married men, to become permanent deacons, another fast-growing group that is also compensating for the shortage of priests. (Permanent deacons are men ordained into the sacramental ministry of the Church and are to be distinguished from "transitional" deacons who are seminarians on their way to priesthood.) Some dioceses in this country are rich in priestly vocations. More generally, the precipitous decline in vocations has bottomed out, with signs of a reversal underway. Embracing the intended slur, a friend says, "Of course, Catholicism is priest-ridden. Always has been, always will be." He's probably right about that, although, if the reversal doesn't accelerate dramatically, the takeover of the LEMs may be hard to undo.

cutting edge

A special feature keeping us up to date with issues of **science** and **religion**

RATIONAL ATHEISM?

In an 'open letter' in the September issue of *Scientific American*, Michael Shermer has addressed himself to the advocates of the 'new atheism' – Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett, Christopher Hitchens, and Richard Dawkins – with a word of warning. Shermer, editor of the magazine *Skeptic*, and himself an atheist, senses that these other writers are threatening their very cause by adopting styles of rhetoric which are hostile and condescending. If they are, as they claim, promoting a supposed 'rational atheism,' they must apply those same standards of rationality to their own output, he insists. In fact, he suggests a tolerance that some of his fellow atheists would probably not share:

"As long as religion does not threaten science and freedom, we should be respectful and tolerant because our freedom to disbelieve is inextricably bound to the freedom of others to believe."

AN ATTEMPTED SUMMARY OF CATHOLICISM ON EVOLUTION

On October 4th the Council of Europe was scheduled to have debated 'The Dangers of Creationism in Education.' The resolution on the agenda concerns the teaching of creationism in Europe's schools, which should "resist presentation of creationist ideas in any discipline other than religion." Part of the impetus for the debate has been the widespread distribution amongst European schools of the book, *The Atlas of Creation*, published in December 2006

by the Turkish Islamist preacher, Harun Yahya. The summary of the Council's report runs as follows:

"Creationism in any of its forms, such as 'intelligent design,' is not based on facts, does not use any scientific reasoning and its contents are definitely inappropriate for science classes.
...From a scientific view point, there is absolutely no doubt that evolution is a central theory for our understanding of life on Earth."

As part of the resolution's 'explanatory memorandum,' written by Guy Lengagne and amended by its *rapporiteur*, Anne Brasseur, there is a section entitled 'Positions adopted by the religious authorities.' Almost the whole of the Christian part of this section is an analysis of the Catholic Church's position vis-à-vis evolution. Allowing for certain lacks of subtlety the Council of Europe seems to be receiving a reasonable overview:

75. For a long time, the Catholic Church was opposed to transformism and then to evolutionism. However, this opposition has to be understood in the context of the more general mistrust of science prevailing at the time, given the international climate of socialism, which it saw as a consequence of evolutionism. Thus, for a long time there were clashes between the positivist revolutionaries and the Catholics who supported the restoration of the monarchy. The Catholic Church has clearly demonstrated for a very long time that it is creationist. After the Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church was more discreet and almost remained aloof on this issue. This was until 1996, when, on 23 October, Pope John-Paul II recognised that Darwin's theories were "*more than a hypothesis*."
However, the debate on evolution is still taking place within the Catholic Church today. Several movements still defend creationism as a dogma. In July 2005, Christoph Schönborn, the Archbishop of Vienna, published an article in the *New*

York Times stating that the declarations made by Pope John-Paul II could not be interpreted as recognising evolution. At the same time, he repeated arguments put forward by the supporters of the *intelligent design* ideas. However, it is important to note that the majority of contemporary Catholics now accept the neutrality of science.

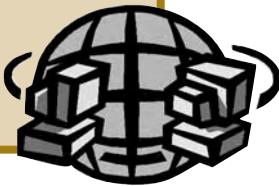
76. In the tradition of his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI now welcomes the role of the sciences in the evolution of humanity:

"Science has opened up large dimensions of reason that have been closed up to now and thus brought us new insights."

In early September 2006, he brought together a group of former students and colleagues at Castel Gandolfo for a seminar on the evolutionism versus creationism debate. He published the conclusions of this seminar in mid-April 2007 in German under the title "Schöpfung und Evolution" (Creation and Evolution). He does not support the ideas of creationism: the creationist position is based on an interpretation of the Bible that the Catholic Church does not share. The Pope rejects both a creationism that categorically excludes science and the theory of evolution, which hides its own weaknesses and does not want to see the questions that arise beyond the methodological capacities of science. The theory of evolution is considered too pervasive by the Catholic Church, which seems above all to be worried about the influence of "social Darwinism" and the evolutionist theories concerning economic matters and medical ethics. (<http://assembly.coe.int>, under Doc. 11375. paras. nn. 75–76):

Faith online

A guide to Catholic resources
on the World Wide Web



The links to all the websites mentioned in Faith online are available on the Faith website at www.faith.org.uk

AirMaria: Defending Jesus the Cornerstone of Creation

Founded on the spirituality of St. Maximilian Kolbe, the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate continue in his steps. Using the latest means of communication, they promote the faith of the Church and make Our Lady known and loved. The technology is a little beyond this reviewer, but it seems they have seized on Vlogs (Video blogs or online TV) as the future for evangelisation.

<http://airmaria.com>

In particular these friars follow their great forebear Blessed Duns Scotus as they preach the centrality of Christ to Creation, which is of course what we do in Faith Movement. Here is a fine online presentation:

<http://airmaria.com/vlog/prim/prim0002.asp>

The Cause for John Paul II The Great

The statistics provided at the end of the short biography alone justify that epithet. The postulator for the Cause is the Polish priest Monsignor Sławomir Oder. You can email the office for a relic holy card *ex indumentis* or order the *Totus Tuus* magazine. Here you can also find the official prayer – in 31 different translations. Sister Marier Simon Pierre gives her own testimony of healing.

www.diocesidiroma.it/Beatificazione/English/HomePage.htm

The Population Research Institute

Founded in 1989, this Institute is dedicated to presenting the truth about population-related issues in three ways:

1. It documents abuses of human rights in the name of population control.
2. It refutes the development paradigm which opposes economic and population growth, articulating the material and social benefits of moderate population growth.
3. It promotes economic development through models which respect the dignity and rights of the individual human person and the family.

The president, Steven W. Mosher, is one of the world's leading authorities on the population question. As the first American social scientist to live in rural China in 1979-80, he came face-to-face with the nightmare of population control. His writings demonstrate that overpopulation is a myth. Read how abstinence and faithfulness programmes are slashing aids rates in Africa and how some progesterone based contraceptives actually make women more vulnerable to infection by AIDS.

www.pop.org

Teach yourself the Extraordinary Form

The newly formed Canons Regular of Saint John Cantius provide this artistic site. It delivers an online tutorial for the 1962 Missal with video clips and the Latin correctly enunciated. There is also an altar-server's guide and a table of rubrics. More information is to be added later.

www.sanctamissa.org/EN/index.html

Families First

"Families First is a family advocacy group, committed to supporting parents and children in the family unit. It supports the rights and responsibilities of parents to protect and guide their children and to bring them up in a reasonable manner, according to their religious and philosophical convictions." In other words the site stands up for parents against the ever encroaching State.

www.families-first.org.uk

The RSV Bible online

Many people still prefer this translation to the New Jerusalem. It's great to be able to use the search engines on the text.

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/r/rsv>

40days for life

The radical nature of this pro-life campaign of fasting engenders a curious sense of hope. The site alludes to the various forty year/day periods in the bible; but beyond this number one thinks also of the Israelites in exile who finally come to realise they must cleave to their Lord.

<http://www.40daysforlife.com>

One cannot live on bread alone

Tom Monaghan, the founder of Domino's Pizza, has fulfilled his dreams of a building a Catholic university and associated town: 'Ave Maria'. The site covers 5,000 acres in Naples, Florida. The university looks set to be firmly faithful to the Church.

www.avemaria.com
www.avemaria.edu

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by Edward Holloway

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From the aims and ideals of FAITH MOVEMENT

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

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

www.faith.org.uk