

# faith

July/August • Volume 39 • Number 4

**Sex Education in Catholic Schools:  
The Deeper Questions**  
Editorial

**The Economics of Teenage Pregnancy**  
David Paton

**Ecclesial and Civil Norms for Sex Education**  
Eric Hester

**Aquinas, Dawkins and the Existence of God**  
Thomas Crean

**A Guide to Lancaster's Self-Examination**  
William Peck

**ALSO:**

Our new Faith and Reason column:  
**The Road from Regensburg**

William Oddie on rumours of **Blair's Catholicism**

Richard Whinder on an **Apostle of Chastity**

Cyprian Blamires reflects on **abuse of the Holocaust**

Peter Hodgson on **the future of scientific progress**

James Tolhurst puts **Limbo** in context

**And all our regular features**

PROMOTING A NEW  
SYNTHESIS OF FAITH  
AND REASON



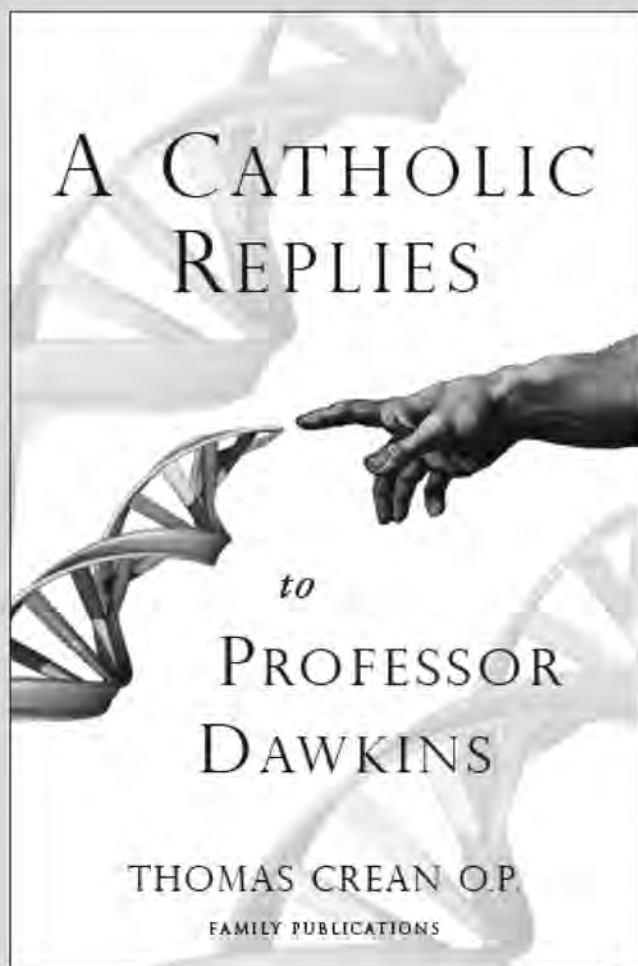
Price: £3.50

[www.faith.org.uk](http://www.faith.org.uk)



*New book from Family Publications*

# A CATHOLIC REPLIES to PROFESSOR DAWKINS



*by Thomas Crean OP*

The best-selling biologist Richard Dawkins has written that belief in God is not only a delusion, but also that religion actually has a harmful influence on society.

Thomas Crean OP tackles Dawkins head on, explaining the straightforward rational arguments which lead Christians to believe in God, in miracles, and in the authority of Scripture. He also explains why religion really is necessary if morality is to be regarded as more than merely what seems right in the opinion of each individual.

The arguments offered by the author are profound, and rooted in the tradition of the Catholic Church, but are expounded clearly and lucidly for the ordinary reader. By showing that Dawkins' criticisms are founded on misunderstandings, superficial readings,

a lack of historical awareness, and not a little prejudice, Crean reveals the Professor to be a writer well out of his philosophical depth.

Fr Thomas Crean is a Dominican friar of the Priory of St Michael the Archangel, Cambridge.

Paperback 160 pages **£8.50**

To order your copy of *A Catholic Replies to Professor Dawkins*, please send cheque to

**Family Publications, 6a King Street, Oxford OX2 6DF**

or phone 0845 0500 879, or email [sales@familypublications.co.uk](mailto:sales@familypublications.co.uk)

or online at [www.familypublications.co.uk](http://www.familypublications.co.uk)

Credit cards accepted (except Amex)

Postage: add £1.50 per book; 3 or more books, postage free



# faith

July/August • Volume 39 • Number 4

## CONTENTS

<b>Sex Education in Catholic Schools: The Deeper Questions</b>	2
<i>Editorial</i>	
<b>The Economics of Teenage Pregnancy and Emergency Birth Control</b>	8
<i>Professor David Paton</i>	
<b>Sex Education and Chastity Education: Church Teaching and Civil Law</b>	16
<i>Eric Hester</i>	
<b>Richard Dawkins and St Thomas Aquinas' First Way to God</b>	22
<i>Fr Thomas Crean O.P.</i>	
<b>Fit for Mission?: A Guide to the Guide</b>	26
<i>William Peck</i>	
<b>Meditation: Sacrifice and Slavery</b>	29
<i>Pelegrino</i>	
<b>Pastoral Forum: The Truth Will Set You Free</b>	30
<i>Supporting parents as primary chastity educators Fr John Boyle</i>	
<b>Letters</b>	32
<i>To the Editor</i>	
<b>Comment on the Comments</b>	34
<i>Dr William Oddie on Blair's "Catholicism".</i>	
<b>The Road from Regensburg</b>	36
<i>Our new column reporting Faith and Reason beyond Catholicism</i>	
<b>Cutting Edge</b>	38
<i>The Templeton Foundation's search for a better philosophy of science</i>	
<b>Sunday by Sunday</b>	39
<i>Our sermon suggestions</i>	
<b>Book Reviews</b>	42
<i>Edmund Nash enjoys a contribution to the science-religion debate which truly seeks to understand the wisdom of our universe; Cyprian Blamires delights in a beautiful study of the Church's defence of the Jews in the 20th century and earlier; Richard Marsden on a vademecum which should help Catholics make the transition from sixth form to university and Stephen Morgan enthuses over a timely new edition of the autobiography of the recusant priest, John Gerard.</i>	
<b>Notes from across the Atlantic</b>	46
<i>A survey of religious and public life in America by Richard Neuhaus</i>	
<b>Faith Online</b>	48
<i>Our regular guide to the web</i>	
<b>Other Angles</b>	
<i>Dr. Peter Hodgson dissects the dynamic of scientific development</i>	15
<i>Fr. Richard Whinder on St Philip Neri and formation in chastity</i>	20
<i>Fr. James Tolhurst lets Limbo slip</i>	25

### Editor

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

### Editorial Board

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

### Book Reviews

William Massie,  
187 Pickering Road,  
Baxtergate,  
Hull, HU4 6TD  
reviews@faith.org.uk

### Advertising Manager

Scott Deeley  
St Paul's, 16 Birdston Rd,  
Milton of Campsie  
Stirlingshire G66 8BU  
advertising@faith.org.uk

### Subscriptions and Faith-Keyway Trust Publications Office

Paul Butcher  
16a off Coniston Way,  
Reigate RH2 0LN  
Tel 01737 770016  
Fax 01737 770016  
subscriptions@faith.org.uk

UK £19/year,  
Europe (inc.Eire) £22/year  
Surface Mail overseas £21/year  
Air Mail overseas £26/year  
Single copies £4 inc. p&p,  
Bulk orders £2.75 plus p&p  
Student rate £15/year

Published by the Faith-Keyway  
Trust registered charity No. 278314

Printed by Tudor Printing  
01253 794110 ISSN 1356-126X

# Sex education in Catholic schools

## The deeper questions

*"And they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it he was indignant, and said to them, 'Let the children come to me, do not hinder them.'"*  
(Mark 10:13-14)

*"The reinvention of sexual union as a means of loving separated from its inbuilt procreative meaning inevitably leads... to the loss of modesty and self-control. If sex is just about 'loving', there can be no cogent reason not to talk to children about it explicitly."*

### A visceral shock

The appalling *Channel 4* "Living and Growing" sex education material has caused something of a visceral shock to parents who have perhaps previously not enquired too closely what their school is teaching in sex education. Among other outrages, the programme shows cartoon animations of young people masturbating in order to teach children about the function of their sexual organs. At a state school in Dagenham some parents burst into tears when the school showed them the material that was to be taught to their children and several other state schools have had to fend off angry parents who have seen it<sup>1</sup>.

A case recently came to light of a Catholic school using the same programme<sup>2</sup>. Incredibly, the school insisted on continuing with the programme despite sustained complaints by parents. We understand that the Diocese concerned originally responded by saying that the *Channel 4* programme should not be used "as a basis" for Sex and Relationships Education in its schools but has now revised its policy to delete the "as a basis" clause, leaving a simple prohibition of the material. Nevertheless, it is astonishing that any Catholic school could have imagined that such a programme would be remotely suitable for the children in their care.

Although this is an extreme case, Catholic parents have become increasingly concerned at the content of sex education in many of our schools. We need to understand the underlying problem over moral teaching in Catholic institutions.

### "A difficult silence to break"

The problem goes back to the policy of the hierarchy in response to the publication of *Humanae Vitae*. The history of this period has been documented in chapter 8 of Clifford Longley's "The Worlock Archive"<sup>3</sup>. Longley sketches the history of the question of artificial contraception through the 1960s and the widespread expectation that there would be a change in the Church's teaching concerning the immorality of its use. This expectation was fuelled particularly by the 1964 book "Contraception and Holiness" by Archbishop Roberts, a book which consisted of articles by married couples and others promoting the use of contraception; and by such statements as that of Archbishop Beck to the clergy of Liverpool in 1967. In this he said, that in an individual case, a couple might judge that they were excused from observing the "concrete directive" (viz. not to use contraception) if they judged that by following the Church's teaching there would be a danger to the essential value of the "community of love." Beck was asked by Cardinal Cicognani to instruct the faithful that whilst awaiting a statement of the supreme magisterium, the "norm hitherto taught by the Church" should be faithfully observed.

The expectation of change that had been built up caused tremendous difficulties once *Humanae Vitae* was published in 1968. Just before the publication of the encyclical, Cicognani sent a letter to the bishops of the world in which he said that the Pope was aware of the “bitterness that his reply may cause many married persons who were expecting a different solution.” In England, the encyclical was the occasion for a change of direction at the *Tablet* which attacked the encyclical as soon as it was issued and has continued to oppose it ever since<sup>4</sup>.

Throughout the country there were priests who publicly dissented from the teaching of the encyclical. Initially, some Bishops reacted strongly, suspending such priests or removing them from parishes. Relatively soon, however, the hierarchy adopted what Longley refers to as the “English solution” (something he regards as good). He describes the effect of a carefully worded statement from the hierarchy to the clergy. The statement supported the teaching of the encyclical but proposed a measure of leniency to priests who dissented from it. As Longley observes, the statement had consequences reaching far beyond the pastoral care of dissident theologians:

“It was a tacit acknowledgement, at least for the time being, that there was nothing to be gained by an aggressive policy of promoting the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* in the parishes. This was where the statement was most eloquently silent. A bishop issued his carefully worded pastoral letter, and in many cases also a private letter to his priests, and then left the subject alone. After a while this silence became a difficult silence to break”<sup>5</sup>.

Nearly forty years on, it is still difficult to break the silence. The 2004 document of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales “Cherishing Life” has two brief statements about contraception: the first says that it undermines the full human meaning of sexuality and the second highlights the “important distinction” between contraception and abortion, going on to speak of the moral problem of abortifacient methods of birth control. Welcome as these indications are, there is still no real enthusiasm for promoting the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* in parishes.

### A wide and easy road

Many might ask what advantage there would be in promoting this teaching today. As is well known, many Catholics use artificial contraception without considering it to be wrong. Among priests there is a fear that preaching the doctrine of the Church in this matter would meet with responses ranging from indifference to outright hostility. Unfortunately, the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* is not the only teaching that will meet with such responses today. When meeting parents who wish to arrange the Baptism of their child, priests nowadays find that

a large proportion are not married but cohabiting. It is a delicate task to encourage such couples to marry.

In *Humanae Vitae*, Pope Paul VI said:

“Upright men can even better convince themselves of the solid grounds on which the teaching of the Church in this field is based, if they care to reflect upon the consequences of methods of artificial birth control. Let them consider, first of all, how wide and easy a road would thus be opened up towards conjugal infidelity and the general lowering of morality”<sup>6</sup>.

The widespread breakdown of marriage, which Pope Paul VI correctly predicted as a consequence of artificial birth control, led in turn to a fear of marriage among the young, resulting in the routine practice of cohabitation for several years at least before marriage if indeed that is ever considered. It is unlikely that Pope Paul VI or any of the bishops in 1968 would have imagined that within a few decades a substantial proportion of Catholic parents in some Western countries would be living together outside of marriage or that the Church in those countries would be defending her rights against those who claim that homosexual partnerships must be treated as being of equal value with marriage. Had anyone suggested in 1968 that such consequences would ensue, it is likely that they would have been regarded as scaremongering prophets of doom.

The reason that legitimising artificial birth control led to a “general lowering of morality” is that a fundamental principle was overturned, the principle that sex is for the procreation of children within the stable state of loving which is marriage. There were a few voices in the late sixties and early seventies who spoke of the importance of this cardinal principle (*Faith Magazine*, for example) and the consequences of overturning it but for very many laity and clergy it was the “hard case” argument that won. Stories abounded of hard-pressed couples for whom the “rhythm method” had failed, and Pope John XXIII’s vision of openness to the world had become for many Catholics a desperate desire not to be seen as “old fashioned.”

The silence over the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* amounted in practice to consent. The grandparents of today who accepted this consent with relief became in some cases the “condoning generation” with regard to abortion in difficult cases with the result that many mothers today, even within our own community, carry the burden of a decision that was sold to them as a solution to their problem pregnancy. If the teaching of the Church could be rejected as old fashioned in one area of morality, hard cases could justify its rejection in others.



## Rediscovery of *Humanae Vitae*

In recent years, however, there has been a wealth of literature, disseminated all the more effectively by means of the internet, which bears witness to the rediscovery of Church teaching concerning contraception by many young couples. Fortunately, the converse of Pope Paul VI's prediction holds good: those who reject artificial contraception and live according to the teaching of the Church contribute to a general raising of morality, and very often have the actual experience of a better relationship of mutual love and life. The "bottom line" figure is the very low incidence of divorce among those who live by the teaching of *Humanae Vitae*, only regulating their family by the use of natural fertility awareness<sup>7</sup>.

The work of Janet Smith<sup>8</sup> examines the reasons why we should expect such positive consequences of following the Church's teaching. Significantly, the case studies are not limited to those who have always followed the Church's teaching but include many couples who have used artificial contraception in the past but have since ceased to do so and found that the happiness of their marriage was greatly enhanced as a result. She also examines the "therapeutic" character of Natural Family Planning in healing the wounds many couples have carried for years through being used and abused sexually.

She points out that although sexual union obviously means "I wish to have a deeper bond with you" it means something more:

"Sexual intercourse also means, 'I am prepared to have a baby with you,' (not, 'I intend to have a baby with you'). A sexual act open to the possibility of procreation ideally represents the kind of bond to which spouses have committed themselves; it is an act ordained to lifetime commitments, for a child is a lifetime commitment. Contraceptives, however, convey the message that while sexual intercourse is desired, there is no desire for a permanent bond with the other person. The possibility of an everlasting bond has been wilfully removed from the very act designed to best express the desire for such a relationship. Contraceptive sex does not express the full meaning of sexual intercourse – it attempts to thwart and deny the life-giving meaning of the sexual act<sup>9</sup>."

The work of Janet Smith and others in promoting this Catholic teaching and the widespread interest in the teaching of Pope John Paul on love and marriage should stir the conscience of those who promoted the "follow your conscience" line on contraception. If the formal teaching of *Humanae Vitae* is indeed of Christ (as it itself claims, cf. para.s 4 & 6) and that, as we might expect, living in accord with it deepens the quality of married love, strengthens fidelity, brings male sexuality under control, significantly lessens the likelihood of marital breakdown

and fosters a generally pro-life attitude then we have done a great disservice to generations of Catholics by failing to break the silence on it.

## The link with sex education

Sex and relationships education given in accord with the "silence difficult to break" regarding *Humanae Vitae*, has a number of inevitable characteristics. First of all, it becomes assumed, tacitly, that the Church's moral teaching is somewhat unrealistic and therefore needs to be presented as an ideal – in the sense of something that we know most people won't follow even if, in ideal circumstances, it might be a good thing. This way of thinking is similar to the acceptance in the secular sphere that most young people will have sex even though we might prefer them ideally to wait for a while.

Artificial contraception attempts to remove the procreative end of sexual union. A tacit acceptance of this will also mean a tacit acceptance that the only essential thing about sexual union is pleasure and the deepening of a relationship. Again, marriage may be thought the ideal but there will be a strong motivation to ensure that young people have all the necessary information about contraception because they may end up, fairly naturally, doing the "loving" bit first before they are ready to have children.

Such an understanding of sexual union inexorably fosters an increase in its use, especially given the reality of concupiscence. Such acts will tend gradually to spread as far as the bounds of love itself, which is a "many splendid thing" with many types and degrees. This broadening of the cultural appropriateness of sex is inexorable because the ideology that sex is primarily for loving, which is its root cause, has become unquestionable, even inside the Church. Its dire consequences, from family breakdown through sexually transmitted infections (STIs) even to abortion itself, can, in such a mind-set, only be responded to by measures that do not address the deeper issue, the core anti-life ideology itself.

From this brave new moral philosophy follows the paradox of the failure of and the relentlessness of the government's policy of attempting to reduce teenage pregnancy and STIs by the widespread promotion of contraception, 'emergency' or otherwise. The propaganda for sex education usually takes the line that children need to have information about sex in order to avoid pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections. Professor Paton carefully shows the falseness of this shibboleth later in this issue.

It is sometimes alleged also that explicit information assists children in resisting abuse. In fact, much sex education could be considered abusive in itself, exposing children to explicit information in the classroom – animated scenes of masturbation or sexual intercourse, being a very real, if more extreme, example.

The reinvention of sexual union as a means of loving separated from its inbuilt procreative meaning inevitably leads also to the loss of modesty and self-control. If sex is just about “loving”, there can be no cogent reason not to talk to children about it explicitly. The “therapeutic”, man-centred mentality which has infected much moral thinking since the 1940s has become a dogmatic insistence that the only really harmful thing is “repression” and that children will be more healthy, the more “open” they are about sex and sexual activity.

### Education for chastity

If Church teaching were to be wholeheartedly accepted by the Church as something that should be promoted with enthusiasm, if *Humanae Vitae* becomes seen as teaching that will make people’s lives holier and happier, several consequences follow for education concerning sex and relationships. The first of these is that such courses will not be primarily about sex but about chastity. The greatest misfortune will be seen correctly to be mortal sin rather than “repression” and there will be a renewed focus on the importance of developing modesty and self-control as a basis for future married love.

At the same time, it will be seen as important to encourage the young in that Christian optimism which is part of the virtue of hope. Such optimism conveys the message that it is possible to keep the commandments. Sometimes it can be difficult; Catholic doctrine can account for this difficulty with reference to the doctrine of original sin and concupiscence. The doctrine of grace gives us grounds to hope that we may in fact keep the commandments fully if we call upon God for help and co-operate with his assistance by exercising modesty, by keeping custody of the eyes, by avoiding impure conversations and by using all the other means traditionally employed in support of chastity. (See Richard Whinder’s outline of St Philip Neri’s approach later in this issue.)

Such an approach has a far more realistic understanding of male sexuality which is particularly violated by explicit sex education. Presenting boys with graphic information about body parts, menstruation, and masturbation will not help them to avoid impure thoughts, to put it mildly. It is unrealistic to expect boys to go from such a lesson free from the temptation to put the theory into practice. Distressing cases of little girls being molested after school by the boys are surely not unrelated.

Education for chastity, on the other hand, can teach boys to grow to be “real men”, offer them a noble understanding of their own masculine sexual identity, and give them a chance to avoid falling into the cycle of sexual addiction offered by pornography on their camera phones and computers. If they fall, they have the hope of returning once again to a state of grace without the assumption that a life of impurity is an inevitable part of their manhood.

### Reconciling schools and parents

An approach that enthusiastically accepts Church teaching in this area will also find it much easier to manage the related relationship between school and parents. If we are engaged in chastity education rather than giving information about sex, it is easy to show that such education, is part of the character building for children that finds its natural place in the home. The role of the school will be to support this loving parental authority by reinforcing the cultivation of virtue both in the classroom and in the playground.

Unsure parents will also be relieved to know that their own responsibility is not focussed on giving information about sex but rather on teaching their children to be chaste, self-controlled and prudent. The embarrassment of parents is sometimes put forward as a reason for school sex education: “the parents won’t do it so we have to.” Sometimes parents themselves, bombarded with nannying advice about how they should teach their children to be “safe”, feel that they are letting their children down if they don’t give their ten year old explicit sex instruction. Many parents need to be reassured that their embarrassment is not a dereliction of duty but a natural concomitant of modesty and itself conveys to their children a certain respect for the body and for the generation of new life.

Once parents are relieved of any understandable fears about having to teach their young children how to have sex, it will be easier to convince them of the importance of exercising their God-given role as educators in chastity. No parent wants their son to grow up as the class pervert or their daughter to be thought an “easy lay”. It is not difficult to help parents to see that their most heartfelt desire for their children is that they should grow up to be good people who are respected by others. There may be some resistance to the idea that their own contraceptive practice is a significant problem but being a parent can bring about a remarkable capacity for conversion.

### Reclaiming love, life and family

As Eric Hester explains later in this issue *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*<sup>1</sup> teaches that formation in chastity and any information imparted about sexuality should be given in the broadest context of information about love. The document stresses the importance of the spiritual formation of children so that as they grow up, their awareness of their own sexuality occurs in the context of their vocation to love. Specifically, it is not sufficient, therefore, to provide information about sex together with objective moral principles. (n.70).

As we have insisted, the “broadest context of information about love” must include an honest commitment to the teaching of *Humanae Vitae*. Unless that teaching, accepted with conviction, underlies our approach to love and family, any attempt at “Catholic sex-ed” will necessarily be fatally flawed.

It is time for a new confidence in the teaching of the Church. The utter moral bankruptcy of the therapeutic mentality regarding sex, and the promotion of “safer sex” is evident in the breakdown of the family, the epidemic of pornography, and the mainstreaming of the homosexual lifestyle. Dissent from *Humanae Vitae* has done much to ensure that Catholic society has failed to remain adequately distinct from these societal trends. Now, more than ever, we have the opportunity to provide a real, life-giving alternative vision of love and the family. Confident and committed education in chastity for the young will give them a chance to live the standards of Christ with joy and hope in the face of a corrupt society.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>*Daily Mail* 26 April 2006

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Article “Watch out for classroom violation” *Pro-Life Times* (34) September 2006 p1 reporting on St William of York Primary School, Forest Hill.

<sup>3</sup>Longley, Clifford. *The Worlock Archive*. London: G. Chapman, 2000. Chapter 8 ‘The Greatest Shock’

<sup>4</sup>Cf. ‘Crisis in the Church’ (Leader article) *The Tablet* 3 August 1968.

<sup>5</sup>Longley op cit p254

<sup>6</sup>*Humanae Vitae* n.17

<sup>7</sup>To date, the evidence for this claim is limited to small scale studies and non-random surveys. However the effect shown by these is dramatic enough. See <http://ccli.org/nfp/marriage/maritalduration.php> (Accessed 23/5/07). Priests who have been involved in integrally Catholic formation of married and engaged couples often have their own confirmatory anecdotes. This for instance is the experience of numerous priests involved in *Faith* movement.

<sup>8</sup>See for example Smith, Janet *Humanae Vitae: A Generation Later* (1991)

<sup>9</sup>Janet Smith “*Humanae Vitae*. The Church’s Best Kept Secret?” *Eutopia* Sep-Oct 1998 available online at <http://eutopia.cua.edu/article.cfm?ID=88> (Accessed 23/5/07)

<sup>10</sup>For online references, see <http://the-hermeneutic-of-continuity.blogspot.com/2006/05/england-stats-on-stis.html>

<sup>11</sup>Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality. Guidelines for Education within the Family* (1995)

**PRICE INCREASE:** After more than two years without a price increase it is now proving necessary to revisit our pricing structure due to rising production and delivery costs, particularly postage. As from the September/ October issue the cover price of Faith will be £4. From 1 September 2007 a year’s UK subscription will be £22. The annual cost of overseas subscriptions will increase to £25 for Europe, £24 for overseas surface mail and £29 for overseas airmail. Single copies will be £4.50 inc p&p. The student rate will remain at £15 per annum. Bulk orders will be £3 a copy plus p&p. We hope you agree that this still represents good value for a packed and lively magazine. Many thanks for you continued support of our apostolate.



Confession: why we go  
Christ our Eucharist  
Sexual order and holy order  
Christian marriage: covenant in Christ  
The path from science to Jesus Christ  
The path from science to God  
Evolution and the existence of God  
Evolution and original sin  
Christian Formation  
The priest and his loving  
Mary, model of the Church  
The gospels, historical and true  
Christ and his church: why infallible?  
Jesus: did he know who he was?  
The grace of God  
Nuclear war: the deeper issues  
Can we be sure God exists?  
What makes Man Unique?  
Jesus Christ our Saviour  
Jesus Christ our Redeemer  
The Disaster of Sin

James Tolhurst  
Edward Holloway  
Edward Holloway  
Andrew and Dora Nash  
Edward Holloway  
Roger Nesbitt  
Roger Nesbitt  
Roger Nesbitt  
Edward Holloway  
Edward Holloway  
Roger Nesbitt  
Domenico Grasso SJ  
Edward Holloway  
Edward Holloway  
Edward Holloway  
Edward Holloway  
Reasons for believing series  
Reasons for believing series  
Reasons for believing series  
Reasons for believing series  
Reasons for believing series

Name
Address

TOTAL (£1 each)  
P&P (+10p each)  
DONATION  
**FINAL TOTAL**

[illegible]

A special series of pamphlets from **Faith Movement**

Straightforward, up to date and well argued pamphlets on basic issues of Catholic belief, this new series will build into a single, coherent apologetic vision of the Christian Mystery. They bring out the inner coherence of Christian doctrine and show how God's revelation makes sense of our own nature and of our world. Five excellent pamphlets in the series are now in print.

Can we be sure God exists?  
What makes Man unique?  
The Disaster of Sin  
Jesus Christ Our Saviour  
Jesus Christ Our Redeemer

**All publications are also available from our website: [www.faith.org.uk](http://www.faith.org.uk)**

# The economics of secret abortions and emergency birth control

**Professor David Paton**

*David Paton, Chair of Industrial Economics at Nottingham University's Business School thoroughly illustrates the failure on its own terms of recent Government policy in the area of teenage pregnancy. This piece is a development upon a paper he gave at the Annual Conference of The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children last year.*

*"No research has found that cuts in confidential access to family planning lead to a significant increase in either abortion or pregnancy rates".*

Economics has had something of a bad name among pro-lifers recently. This is largely due to the efforts of the American economist Steven D. Levitt, who claimed, in *Freakonomics*<sup>1</sup>, that the legalisation of abortion has led to a reduction in American crime rates. The reader might be surprised to discover that I believe his research was excellent and deserves to be welcomed by the pro-life movement – and this is why.

Most economists are trained at an early stage to have a professional disregard for what is right or wrong, and focus, rather, on the facts. Levitt's hypothesis was not concerned with the moral issues surrounding crime and abortion but with whether in fact there is a link between them, and this is where the pro-life movement should keep an open mind. Their openness will be amply rewarded since research of this kind – from the viewpoint of social science – tends to support the pro-life cause. On that basis, my intention is not to discuss the rights or wrongs of abortion, but to examine the research evidence on issues such as secret abortions for teenagers, schools offering the morning-after pill, etc.

## Confidentiality

Let us begin with the ubiquitous word *confidentiality*. Whether it be used in clinics, pharmacies, youth groups, by GPs or school nurses, there is no avoiding it. The policies that are routinely sold to our children rest on the contention that all people have the right to confidentiality and therefore we must have confidential access to sexual health services, to abortion and so on. One might associate the word with another – *secret* – but 'confidential' is a far easier word to sell, to patients, to parents and to children. Yet when we think about what it really means, that we are providing these services without parental knowledge to children as young as twelve, then perhaps the word *secret* is more appropriate. And the question is, Why? Why are we being besieged by policies that provide abortion free of charge without parental knowledge or the morning-after pill at pharmacies and schools?

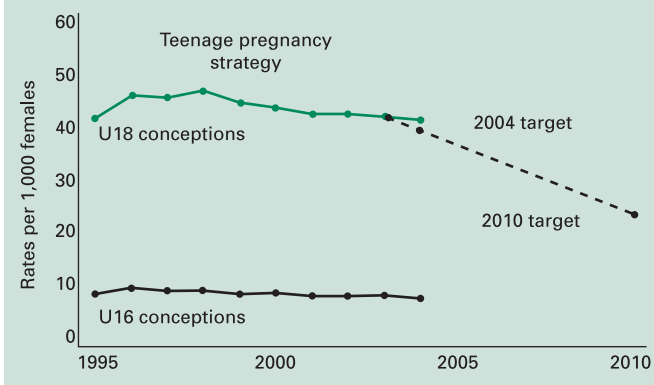
The argument is perfectly simple and very easy to sell. The Government has said it wants to cut teenage pregnancies, and aims to do so by fifty per cent by the year 2010. Obviously, so the argument goes, if we want to cut teenage pregnancies and abortions we must have access to sexual health services – in other words, teenagers are less likely to get pregnant if they are using contraception; failing contraception, then we should give them access to the morning-after pill, which may be seen as preferable to a twelve-year-old getting pregnant. Whether we like it or not, this argument is very attractive to parents, even to those who are instinctively against abortion and the morning-after pill.

The next stage of the argument is that, in order to maximize the use of these services, confidentiality must be guaranteed. A twelve-year-old will naturally be afraid of parental backlash, so while we would rather encourage her to tell her parents she has got the morning-after pill, the decision is ultimately hers and she has the right to keep it a secret. Likewise with abortion. Without that guarantee, youngsters are less likely to access "services" and it is argued that this will result in more pregnancies at an early age.



For a lot of people, this argument is compelling. Many parents are genuinely worried: certainly they would rather know when their young people are involved in sexual activity and accessing the morning-after pill but, if this is what it takes to avoid their thirteen year-old daughter getting pregnant, then so be it. I believe this attitude is why many parents go against their instincts and accept this sort of policy. The question that now lies before us is: do these policies actually work?

**Figure 1: Teenage pregnancy England and Wales, 1995-2004**



Let us step back a little and look at the question in context. Figure 1 shows a summary of the teenage pregnancy strategy introduced in England and Wales in 1999. It shows what needs to happen for the Government to meet its interim target of reducing pregnancy rates by fifteen per cent by the year 2004 and the final target of reducing rates by fifty per cent by 2010. There is no specific target for under sixteens.

As the graph illustrates, the Government has already failed to achieve its interim target for 2004. Teenage pregnancy rates have in fact fallen by ten per cent from the Government's base year of 1998. However, 1998 was a peak year for teenage pregnancies and, as the graph shows, pregnancy rates had started to fall before the Government announced its Teenage Pregnancy Strategy during 1999 (indicated by the vertical line on the graph). Most of the funding only started to filter through to the local authorities from about 2000 onwards. If the Strategy was working, we would expect to find the downward trend in pregnancy rates (which started before the Strategy begun) accelerating in recent years. What we actually find, however, is that the graph flattens out, and, over the past few years, there has been very little change in the under-eighteen pregnancy rate. Hence, despite spending well over £100 million since 1999, there is very little evidence that the Government's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy has caused any reduction in pregnancy rates at all.

As things stand, even the Government admits there is no hope of achieving its desired target for 2010 (indicated by the dotted line in Figure 1, which is why Hazel Blears, the Minister responsible for this at the time, announced in 2005 that the Government had done enough and that it was now up to parents to bring pregnancy rates down.

**Figure 2: Teenage pregnancy and STIs, 1995-2004**

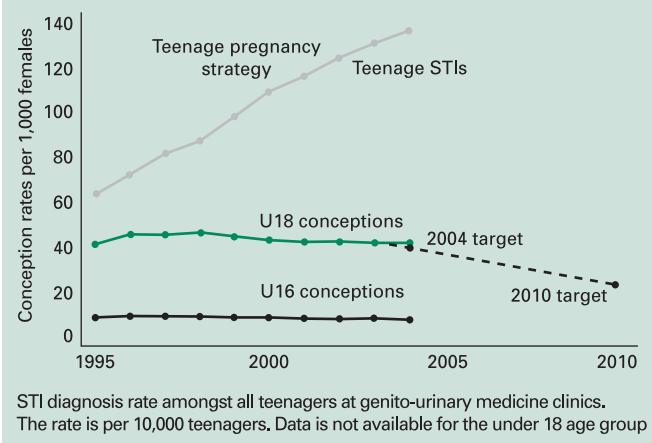


Figure 2 highlights the progress of sexually transmitted diseases among teenagers over the same period of time – an issue which is seldom mentioned by the Teenage Pregnancy Unit in all its talk of pregnancy rates. Notice that only recorded infections are represented here, and not, for example, cases of Chlamydia where there are no symptoms. Nevertheless, there is general agreement among those who work in the sexual health area that, even taking on board changes in recording and greater knowledge of the likes of Chlamydia, there has been an explosion of sexually transmitted infections, particularly among young people.

### The economists' approach

Economists approach these issues of sex, abortion and family planning as they would everything else. We build up a simplified model of reality by making assumptions about how the world works, and then we try to assume everything away apart from that specific issue we are focusing on. Some may object to this approach, but in fact we all use simplified models of reality in every day life. For example, a road map is an extremely simplified version of reality, dependent on many assumptions. It ignores schools, pubs and trees; all it has is the key roads. What is important is that the map helps you get you from A to B. Whether or not the simplification from reality is justified depends on whether or not it succeeds in this goal. The same goes for an economic model. You make all the assumptions necessary in order to make it simple, to highlight more clearly the area of interest.

Let us examine, then, the economic approach to the issue of secret abortion. What happens when you introduce a policy of confidential access to abortion services for minors or, alternatively, you introduce a policy asserting parents' right to know? This is very important because, although the remit of the Teenage Pregnancy Unit is to cut pregnancy rates, one of its main policy recommendations that it emphasises year after year is to provide youngsters with easier and better access to confidential abortion.



An economist would typically model this issue just as he might model insurance problems. We can think of abortion acting as a type of insurance policy for teenage sexual activity in the same way that a car insurance policy covers theft etc. Consider a youngster deciding whether or not to start engaging in sexual activity with a boyfriend or girlfriend. Some of the factors in this decision-making process will be: What if I get pregnant? What if my mum finds out? How will it affect me going to university or to college, getting a job?

Now economists know that people don't just respond passively to changes in policy. Rather, we tend to change our behaviour in response to the incentives with which we are faced. When we have an insurance policy that protects us against the risks of, for example, our car being stolen, we tend to be a little less careful about preventing the risks from happening. This phenomenon has been the subject of endless studies and is termed 'moral hazard' by economists. Insurance companies are well aware of the problem and that is why they try to take steps to force us to be careful. If you take out a higher excess on your insurance, you will generally get a lower rate.

Now how does this relate to abortion and confidentiality? If abortion is easily accessed, then it acts to alleviate some of the risks of having sex. For those youngsters who are not opposed in principle to abortion, it provides a way in which, if pregnancy occurs, birth can be avoided, i.e. if pregnancy occurs either through failed or non-use of contraception, there is a possible let out clause. This does not mean that all youngsters would start taking more sexual risks when abortion is easily available. Some youngsters would never dream of having an abortion in any case and would not be affected by any policy change. Others actively want to have a baby and will similarly be unaffected. But, *at the margin*, there are likely to be some youngsters who perceive abortion as alleviating some of the risks of having sex and/or having sex without contraception. When abortion is made easier to access, e.g. by assuring youngsters that their parents need never know, we would predict more youngsters to engage in risky sexual activity. Some of these youngsters will get pregnant when they would not have done otherwise and the overall teenage pregnancy (births and abortions combined) rate is likely to increase. It may be that, within the higher pregnancy rate, the proportion of abortions will increase and proportion of births decrease. However, economic models show that when abortion is easier, it is *possible* that even births may either not change or could even increase. This is because some youngsters who think they will opt for an abortion if they get pregnant, may not do so when they are faced with the actual decision.

A key plank of the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy – indeed its main aim – is to cut teenage pregnancy rates. Yet if the economists are right then this aspect of the policy should lead to an increase in pregnancy rates.

## Putting it into practice

Ideally, of course, we would hold up this economic theory against the data. The best way of testing this (putting aside ethical concerns for a moment) would be to conduct an experiment in which one group did not have access to confidential abortion and another did, and then we could monitor the differences between them. Better still would be to offer confidential abortion to two similar groups of people, then remove confidentiality from one of those groups and then assess the relative change in pregnancy rates in the between the two groups.

Quite rightly, ethical demands prohibit such experimentation; but we may turn to the US which has run exactly that experiment for us. Over the past twenty years, individual States in America have been allowed to introduce Parental Notification or Parental Consent laws before minors are allowed abortions. Some States have taken up this option, whilst others have continued to operate a policy of assuring confidentiality. From the point of view of testing the economic theory, it has been a first-class experiment, since it has allowed researchers to control for pretty much every other factor, from nationwide trends in abortion to socio-economic effects.

The results are very clear. Many States in the US have introduced some sort of parental-involvement law since 1984. Some of these laws have not been enforced, but over thirty States have had these laws in place for an appreciable period of time.

To date, over sixteen studies have looked at this issue and the impact on abortion, birth or pregnancy rates, the best of which is probably a study by economist Philip Levine<sup>2</sup>. His conclusion is very clear: that in those states with a parental-involvement law, abortion rates decreased on average by between fifteen to twenty per cent. At the same time birth rates remained fairly unchanged. Clearly, then, it was not simply a question of people declining abortion and opting for giving birth instead; rather, fewer people were getting pregnant. He estimated that parental involvement laws caused pregnancy rates amongst minors to go down by between four and nine per cent.

Virtually all of the other research papers back up this finding. They have used a range of research methods, some better than others, but none has found an increase in pregnancy rates. A couple of research papers indicated only a decrease in abortion rates that is statistically insignificant (i.e. it could have been due to chance rather than the change in the law), but these have tended to analyse data on abortion rates for all ages, not specifically teenage abortion rates. The research evidence on this question is hard to deny and right in line with the predictions of the economic models: prohibition of secret abortions cuts both teenage abortion rates and teenage pregnancy rates.

Perhaps the most effective measure that British Government could use to help achieve its target of cutting teenage pregnancy rates is to introduce a rule giving prohibiting confidential abortions for minors, such that parents would have to be informed or, better still, would have to consent to their youngsters having an abortion. Yet, for some reason, the Government has chosen to do the exact opposite.

### Parallels with contraception

We might also look at the parallels with contraception – how does the availability of contraception at school without the requirement of parental consent impact on teenage abortion and pregnancy rates?

Following a similar argument to the above, we might expect two contrasting effects. Firstly, sexually active youngsters who were not using contraception would now be more likely to use contraception, and fewer would get pregnant. Although contraceptives have a very high failure rate amongst teenagers, on average, contraceptive sex is less likely to result in pregnancy than sex with no contraception at all.

Nevertheless it is also true that the ‘insurance policy’ argument of before still holds. Since sex is now less likely to result in a pregnancy, those who previously avoided sexual activity due to concerns about getting pregnant are now more likely to engage in sexual activity. Some of this group would still get pregnant, despite using contraceptives. Whether or not confidential family planning leads to lower teenage pregnancy rates depends on whether the first effect (which lowers pregnancy rates) is larger than the second effect (which increases pregnancy rates). The Government’s approach has been just to ignore the second effect and claims repeatedly that introducing contraception in schools will increase the use of contraception without increasing sexual activity and that pregnancy rates will certainly fall.

Given that the economic theory is inconclusive as to what the overall outcome will be, it is important to look at the empirical evidence. There has been far less research on confidential family planning than on secret abortions. To date, only two research papers in refereed academic journals have investigated the impact of confidentiality/no confidentiality on abortion or pregnancy rates. One paper, published by myself<sup>3</sup> focused on the Gillick ruling in the UK and found very clearly that when, in 1985, Victoria Gillick managed to get a temporary ban imposed on confidential family planning for minors, pregnancy rates did not increase. In fact, closer examination of the evidence reveals that, if anything, pregnancy rates decreased in 1985 relative to where they were and relative to Scotland where that policy was not introduced. The difference is not large enough to exclude chance, but we can fairly safely conclude that removing confidentiality from family planning services for minors did not lead to an increase in teenage pregnancy rates.

The second piece of research is from the US – the so-called ‘McHenry county’ experiment. The original paper, published in the *American Journal of Public Health* in 2004, suggested that the introduction of a parental consent for contraception ruling in McHenry County, Illinois led to more teenage births, fewer abortions and to a significant increase in pregnancies overall. In fact, an error in the data later came to light and, once this had been corrected (published in an *erratum* in a later issue of the Journal), it became clear that there was actually no significant change in teenage pregnancy rates.

Subsequent work carried out jointly by myself and Dr Zavodny examining a longer time period suggests that there was actually no significant impact either on abortions or births<sup>4</sup>.

In short, to date, no research has found that cuts in confidential access to family planning lead to a significant increase in either abortion or pregnancy rates. Parents who support confidential access on the belief that their daughters will be less likely to get pregnant are simply being misled.

### Emergency birth control

What about emergency birth control (the morning-after pill)? Apart from the fact that it may cause a very early abortion (which of course would not get picked up in the official teenage pregnancy figures), it differs from common methods of family planning in several ways. Most importantly, it can be used either after ‘unprotected’ sexual activity has taken place or after contraception has failed. For this reason, when the morning-after pill was introduced, it was hailed as a medical advance that would virtually end the problem of unwanted pregnancies. There are published papers in academic journals claiming that greater access to the morning-after pill would cut unwanted pregnancies by fifty per cent. I will now go on to explain what the actual impact of greater access to emergency birth control (EBC) upon teenage pregnancy has been.

The UK provides a very good case study. Since the end of 2000, EBC in England and Wales has been available over the counter at pharmacies, but only to people over the age of eighteen and at a fee. However, since the start of 2000, some local authorities have introduced schemes to provide EBC free of charge and confidentially to young people *including those under the age of 16* at pharmacies. Other authorities have decided not to spend money on these schemes.

When these schemes were introduced there was virtually no research evidence demonstrating whether or not they were likely to work. The Government simply did not know what the outcome would be. In other words, it has been nothing less than a social experiment carried out on your children. What has been the result of this experiment?

## Analysing the data

Dr Sourafel Girma of Nottingham University and myself<sup>5</sup> have carried out an extensive analysis of the impact of these schemes on teenage pregnancy rates. The results were published recently in *Health Economics*, a highly rated peer reviewed journal. We looked at every local authority in England, using what is called matching difference-in-difference estimation. This is useful technique that allows the researcher to isolate the impact of the EBC scheme from other possible confounding factors.

Let us assume we want to compare teenage pregnancy rates in those areas that have introduced the policy and those that have not. There are a whole range of other factors that may affect pregnancy rates, including unemployment, poverty, family stability and so on. For this reason, we examine changes in pregnancy rates before and after the policy was introduced relative to changes in areas that did not introduce the scheme. This comparison is called *difference-in-differences*.

For example, assume that the EBC scheme was introduced in Nottinghamshire in 2001 but was not introduced in, say, Warwickshire. What we want to know is not whether pregnancy rates are lower in Nottinghamshire, but whether they went down in Nottinghamshire more or less than they went down in Warwickshire.

The strength of this difference-in-difference approach is that, with enough areas in both categories, we can get a very powerful test of the average impact of the scheme. However, in the past, this type of test has been criticised on the grounds that those areas introducing the EBC pharmacy schemes may be fundamentally different to those areas that do not. For example, areas with the scheme might be those in with high levels of deprivation and where teenage pregnancy rates were increasing. We might not observe a decrease in pregnancy rates when the pharmacy scheme is introduced, but rates might still be lower than had the scheme not been introduced. To get around this problem, Dr Girma and I used the *matched difference in difference estimator*. This involves making sure that the areas in groups with and without the schemes are similar in other respects unemployment, educational levels, ethnic mix, starting teenage pregnancy rates and so on. Once we do this, we have a very robust test indeed.

The paper concludes: 'Irrespective of either the matching or the adjustment procedure, we are unable to find evidence that schemes allowing emergency birth control leads to reductions in teenage pregnancy rates' – in other words, whichever way we looked at the data, there was no evidence that confidential pharmacy EBC schemes lead to reductions in teenage pregnancy rates. The experiment on your children has failed.

Our research is backed up by all the other academic papers which examine the impact of easier access to EBC on unwanted pregnancy or abortion rates. Many articles have been published on this topic, using a variety of methodologies and different data. Some are what we call randomised control trials in which two groups of people are selected: one group is given advance supplies of the morning-after pill, while the other is not. Others are observational studies which examine data in the whole population. Each article (published in reputable journals such as *New England Journal of Medicine*, *the Journal of the American Medical Association*, *Contraception*, *Sex Education*) comes to the same conclusion: easier access to EBC seems to have no significant impact on teenage or unwanted pregnancy or abortion rates.

The journal *Sex Education* published an earlier article of mine in which I found some evidence (though not conclusive since the data on STIs available to us is far inferior to that on pregnancy rates) that STI rates amongst teenagers have increased fastest in those areas promoting the EBC the most. Again, this would appear to be common sense. We know that pregnancy rates increase because availability of the morning-after pill makes people take greater risks in terms of riskier sexual activity; and we also know that the morning-after pill does not offer protection against STIs. Research on this point is by no means conclusive yet, but there some evidence which complements my findings. Two economists, Jon Klick and Thomas Stratmann found conclusive evidence (again published in a peer reviewed journal) that legalisation of abortion in the US contributed directly to an increase in sexually transmitted infections.

## Using the facts

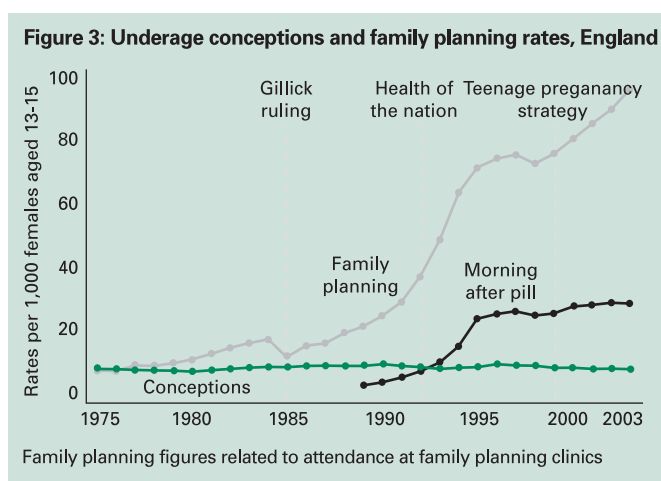
Even Anna Glazier, a health expert and a strong proponent of greater access to the morning-after pill, stated in early 2006 in an editorial in the *British Medical Journal* that greater access to emergency birth control has failed to cut pregnancy and abortion rates. Despite this, she along with many other advisers to the Government, continue to advocate still wider access to emergency birth control. At this point you may ask "Do the facts matter?" In one sense evidently they do not! One interpretation of what has happened in the UK over the past few years is that certain groups were determined that the policies I have talked about here would be introduced irrespective of the facts. The Government tells us that we need to introduce confidential access to EBC to cut teenage pregnancy rates; they introduce the policy; we now discover that this policy does not work, yet there is no sign at all of the policy being withdrawn as a result. In fact, we continue to be bombarded by the same old slogans about young people's rights to access confidential services. There is a retreat from the facts, but not from pushing the policy.



However, this is not good enough. Too many ordinary people on the street, who are frankly worried and concerned to do the best for their children, would not support these policies if they were aware of the evidence. It is absolutely crucial that people of good will examine the scientific evidence and disseminate the facts through to schools, local authorities and health trusts. Those groups trying to further this social experiment on your children must be challenged at every stage. If a health trust or local authority tries to use your tax money (money that could be spent elsewhere) on one of these policies, then demand to see the evidence that it will result in lower unwanted pregnancy rates. If they introduce the policy anyway, then don't let up. As time goes on, demand to see the evidence on whether or not it has actually worked.

By way of summary, the graph in Figure 3 shows what has happened to family planning clinic attendance and take-up of EBC at these clinics for under sixteens in England since the early 1970s. The bottom of the graph indicates what has happened to conception (abortion and birth) rates to under 16s over this time.

Clearly family planning attendance has increased dramatically over this time, but we have to be careful in interpreting this. There have clearly been significant social changes, independent of Government policy, that have contributed to this rise. The thing to focus on is what happens to the under 16 conception rate when there is some sort of policy change that affects the supply of family planning. Some of these are marked on the graph. Take the Gillick ruling: the Government was forced to allow parents to know when their young people got access to family planning clinics, and we saw a decrease in family planning attendance for under sixteens. What happens to the under 16 conception rate at this point? Pretty much nothing at all.



In 1992, the Conservative Government introduced the Health of the Nation Report in 1992. The goal was to cut teenage pregnancies by fifty per cent by the year 2000 through greater access to family planning clinics, better access to sex education and earlier sex education in schools. What happened to the

conception rate? Nothing much. What about when emergency birth control was first made available to under 16s at family planning clinics in the early 1990s? Again no obvious change in the conception rate. In 1999, the new Labour government introduced its own teenage pregnancy strategy – a brand new policy aimed at cutting teenage pregnancy rates by fifty per cent by the year 2010, through more access to family planning clinics, family planning in schools, better and earlier sex education. What has happened to the conception rate? Again not much at all. Perhaps everything is about to change between now and 2010 and when teenage pregnancy rates will suddenly plummet. History tells us that we should not be too optimistic.

On a more positive note, I have noticed recently that groups like the Teenage Pregnancy Unit are complaining about financial cuts. Generally speaking, local family planning clinics and morning-after pill-type schemes are among the first casualties in any financial cuts carried out by health authorities. Of course the special interest groups, represented by the Teenage Pregnancy Unit object. But money matters, particularly to health trusts and local authorities. When money gets tight, policymakers in a local area naturally look for the areas of expenditure that are proving to be least effective. So even when the political situation of changing hearts and minds in Government is very difficult, as the evidence becomes clearer that policies are not having an impact, money can be the deciding factor. Every local authority has a teenage pregnancy advisor – ask them what money has been spent, how it has been spent, what evidence is there that these policies work and what is the progress in your area. All of us can and should be active in holding our local health trusts, PCTs and local authorities to account every year on how they are spending our money.

In conclusion, you may object to Steven Levitt's suggestion that abortion leads to lower crime, but I hope the reader is convinced that there is some worth in the research carried out by economists. If you are prepared to examine evidence on these type of questions fairly and without favour, the answers you get are simply invaluable in holding your local representatives to account and, ultimately, getting policy changed.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>This paper, written in 2001, features in Steven D Levitt and Stephen J Dubner, *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*. Ref?, William Morrow.

<sup>2</sup>Levine, Phillip B (2003), 'Parental involvement laws and fertility behavior', *Journal of Health Economics*, 22 (5, Sept), 861-78.

<sup>3</sup>Paton, David (2002), 'The Economics of Abortion, Family Planning and Underage Conceptions', *Journal of Health Economics*, 21 (2 March):27-45.

<sup>4</sup>Madeline Zavodny & David Paton (2006), 'Teenage Pregnancy Risk: the impact of parental involvement for contraception', Occasional Papers 18, Industrial Economics Division., available at [www.nottingham.ac.uk/~lizecon/RePEc/pdf/18.pdf](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/~lizecon/RePEc/pdf/18.pdf).

<sup>5</sup>Girma, Sourafel and David Paton (2006), 'Matching Estimates of the Impact of Over-the-Counter Emergency Birth Control on Teenage Pregnancy', *Health Economics*, 15 (Sept): 1021- 32.

# POPE BENEDICT ON PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

MEETING WITH THE YOUTH OF ROME AND THE LAZIO REGION

IN PREPARATION FOR THE XXI WORLD YOUTH DAY

*Saint Peter's Square – Thursday, 6 April 2006*

**Holy Father, I am Giovanni, I am 17 years old, I am studying at "Giovanni Giorgi" technological and scientific secondary school in Rome, and I belong to Holy Mary Mother of Mercy Parish.**

**I ask you to help us to understand better how biblical revelation and scientific theory can converge in the search for truth. We are often led to believe that knowledge and faith are each other's enemies; that knowledge and technology are the same thing; that it was through mathematical logic that everything was discovered; that the world is the result of an accident, and that if mathematics did not discover the theorem-God, it is because God simply does not exist.**

**In short, especially when we are studying, it is not always easy to trace everything back to a divine plan inherent in the nature and history of human beings. Thus, faith at times vacillates or is reduced to a simple sentimental act. Holy Father, like all young people, I too am thirsting for the truth: but what can I do to harmonize knowledge and faith?**

**Pope Benedict:** The great Galileo said that God wrote the book of nature in the form of the language of mathematics. He was convinced that God has given us two books: the book of Sacred Scripture and the book of nature. And the language of nature – this was his conviction – is mathematics, so it is a language of God, a language of the Creator.

Let us now reflect on what mathematics is: in itself, it is an abstract system, an invention of the human spirit which as such in its purity does not exist. It is always approximated, but as such is an intellectual system, a great, ingenious invention of the human spirit.

The surprising thing is that this invention of our human intellect is truly the key to understanding nature, that nature is truly structured in a mathematical way, and that our mathematics, invented by our human mind, is truly the instrument for working with nature, to put it at our service, to use it through technology.

It seems to me almost incredible that an invention of the human mind and the structure of the universe coincide. Mathematics, which we invented, really gives us access to the nature of the universe and makes it possible for us to use it. Therefore, the intellectual structure of the human subject and the objective structure of reality coincide: the subjective reason and the objective reason of nature are identical. I think that this coincidence between what we thought up and how nature is fulfilled and behaves is a great enigma and a great challenge,

for we see that, in the end, it is "one" reason that links them both. Our reason could not discover this other reason were there not an identical antecedent reason for both.

In this sense it really seems to me that mathematics – in which as such God cannot appear – shows us the intelligent structure of the universe. Now, there are also theories of chaos, but they are limited because if chaos had the upper hand, all technology would become impossible. Only because our mathematics is reliable, is technology reliable.

Our knowledge, which is at last making it possible to work with the energies of nature, supposes the reliable and intelligent structure of matter. Thus, we see that there is a subjective rationality and an objectified rationality in matter which coincide.

Of course, no one can now prove – as is proven in an experiment, in technical laws – that they both really originated in a single intelligence, but it seems to me that this unity of intelligence, behind the two intelligences, really appears in our world. And the more we can delve into the world with our intelligence, the more clearly the plan of Creation appears.

In the end, to reach the definitive question I would say: God exists or he does not exist. There are only two options. Either one recognises the priority of reason, of creative Reason that is at the beginning of all things and is the principle of all things – the priority of reason is also the priority of freedom –, or one holds the priority of the irrational, inasmuch as everything that functions on our earth and in our lives would be only accidental, marginal, an irrational result – reason would be a product of irrationality.

One cannot ultimately "prove" either project, but the great option of Christianity is the option for rationality and for the priority of reason. This seems to me to be an excellent option, which shows us that behind everything is a great Intelligence to which we can entrust ourselves.

However, the true problem challenging faith today seems to me to be the evil in the world: we ask ourselves how it can be compatible with the Creator's rationality. And here we truly need God, who was made flesh and shows us that he is not only a mathematical reason but that this original Reason is also Love. If we look at the great options, the Christian option today is the one that is the most rational and the most human.

Therefore, we can confidently work out a philosophy, a vision of the world based on this priority of reason, on this trust that the creating Reason is love and that this love is God.

© Copyright 2006 – Libreria Editrice Vaticana

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRISTIAN REVELATION AND SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

By Peter Hodgson

Science is our knowledge of the natural world obtained by observation, experiment and theoretical analysis. It may conveniently be divided into the empirical knowledge obtained by observation and experience and the much more detailed knowledge that we have today. The former, which may be called primitive science, describes the knowledge of the properties of materials gained by craftsmen working with wood, stone and metals, and that of plants and animals obtained by experience. It includes also the observational knowledge of the planets and stars. This primitive science is found in all human societies, particularly in the great civilisations of the past.

Our own civilisation is unique in that it has a knowledge of the natural world and goes far beyond primitive science. Modern science is able to describe the behaviour of matter in a precise quantitative way by differential equations. Once the initial conditions are specified, solution of the equations gives all the subsequent behaviour of the system. Thus Newton's laws, together with his theory of gravitation, enables the motions on the earth and of the planets and other celestial bodies to be calculated to high accuracy. Maxwell's equations similarly describe electromagnetic phenomena and Schrodinger's equation the phenomena of the atomic and nuclear realms. This understanding of nature is the unique achievement of our own Western European Catholic civilisation.

The most important interaction between theology and science is that theology confirms the essential beliefs about the natural world on which modern science is based. Thus Catholic theology, based on the Old and New Testaments, teaches us that the world is good, rational, contingent and open to the human mind. This all follows from the belief that God created the world and gave each particle its properties which determine its movements and its interactions with other particles until the end of time. Without these beliefs modern science could not exist, and that is why it never achieved a viable birth in any of the civilisations of antiquity. Belief in the creation of the world in time, contrary to Aristotle's belief in an eternal universe, led Buridan to the concept of inertia, which is basic to the understanding of local motion, itself the starting point of physics and hence of all modern science.

In all these discussions, philosophy carries out its perennial task of critically analysing and assessing the validity of the arguments used. As we have seen, the philosophical beliefs about the world, which are derived from Catholic theology, provide the basic presuppositions that make science possible. Can this process be reversed? From looking at scientific results and theories can we discern definite metaphysics?

Certainly not in a strictly deductive sense, because scientific theories are subject to change and revision. Nevertheless it is possible to find the philosophy behind physics by examining the consequences of the denial of any of certain basic tenets. Furthermore, examination of the way science is actually done shows that scientists, often unconsciously, make certain assumptions about the natural world and to the extent that science based on them is successful they are retrospectively justified.

From time to time philosophies have been developed that claim to provide the basis of science. Thus it was maintained in the Soviet Union that science is to be founded on the iron rock of Marxist dialectical materialism. However the result of this was to put science into a straitjacket that stifled all progress. This suffices to disprove Marxism as providing an acceptable basis of science. Similar remarks can be made about the much cruder theories espoused by the Nazis. By their fruits you shall know them.

It is essential for the development of science that the Catholic beliefs about the material world mentioned above are firmly held, even though it is at a deep psychological level where they are implicit rather than explicit. This explains why it is so difficult to convey science to non-Christian countries. This difficulty is not immediately evident because technology is easy to convey, and this is frequently confused or considered similar to science. It is easy to teach people in other countries how to set up and run manufacturing industries that provide them with their daily needs. But it is exceedingly difficult to convey science so as to enable the establishment of flourishing and fruitful research communities in such countries. It is of course easy to build and equip scientific laboratories but it is almost impossible to fill them with really innovative indigenous scientists. It is not generally realised, but the level of research in most non-Christian countries is very low. The few exceptions are those that have been for many centuries in contact with Western Europe. Here many generations have been taught in Westernised schools and so have absorbed the Christian presuppositions of science.

Since Western education is now often politically unacceptable in non-western nations the situation is likely to worsen. Indeed, the decline in Christian belief in Western countries is likely to result in a slow decline of science. Already the falling numbers of aspiring students of physics is a sign of this decline. The only way to reverse this trend is by a return to Catholic beliefs. The motive for such a return is not of course that they may be expected to support the further development of science, but simply the recognition that they are true.





# Sex education or chastity education: Church teaching and civil law

**Eric Hester**

*Eric Hester, a retired Catholic headmaster and schools inspector, draws out the heart of the Catholic approach to education concerning sexuality, and calls for its application.*

Our Blessed Lord radiated forgiveness and mercy to all who turned to Him. One could consider the case of the woman taken in adultery. Rarely did He condemn and even more rarely did He couple condemnation with a threat of dire punishment. This He did about those who threatened the consciences of the young: "Anyone who is an obstacle to bring down one of these little ones who have faith in me would be better drowned in the depths of the sea with a great millstone round his neck. Alas for the world that there should be such obstacles! Obstacles indeed there must be, but alas for the man who provides them!" (Matthew 18: 6-7). Teaching the young about the marital act in a culture which has moved away from the Christian vision is surely an area which might, lest care be taken, fall under these sanctions. It is not a trivial matter.

In this article I will argue that the Church teaches that 'sex education' must be given primarily by parents and always be under their "attentive guidance whether at home or in educational centres chosen and controlled by them." (Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*). It should primarily be about and ordered to chastity. Further, I will demonstrate that no one should give any child any sex education at all in the stage of latency (until about eleven or twelve years old), except when correction of misunderstanding is clearly needed. I will show that the laws of education in England and Wales, say that Catholic schools need not give any sex education at all in primary schools and in secondary schools are required to give sex education only about AIDS and venereal diseases.

From the perspective of classical Christianity the young are being corrupted by modern sex education. Even from a purely secular perspective it is not working. Britain has the highest rates in Europe of teenage pregnancy, venereal diseases among the young, and abortions of the young. This has touched Catholic schools. In the opinion of this writer this is, in part, so many have gone against Catholic teaching with sex education programmes that, unwittingly, lead our young people astray.

## Catholic teaching

The teaching of the Church has always been consistent on the absolute primacy of chastity education within this delicate arena. There is a long tradition of Papal teaching, especially from the Nineteenth Century onwards, though it was only the advent of secular education for all (from 1870 in England) that produced the need to fight explicitly against what was happening in schools. As long ago as 1929, Pope Pius XI in his encyclical *Christian Education of Youth* warned of the dangers of so-called sex education programmes given away from the home and without proper moral and spiritual formation.

His words are still relevant today:

*"Every method of education if founded, wholly or in part, on the denial or forgetfulness of original sin and of grace, and relying on the sole powers of*

*"The teaching of the church about the duty and right to give sex education is clear: only parents have this duty and right by nature. Furthermore it should be seen as chastity education."*

*human nature, is unsound... there are many who advocate and promote a method called by the unpleasant name of 'sex education'. They are under a false impression that it is possible by merely natural arts and without any of the safeguards against unchastity and sensuality.*

The Second Vatican Council gave the required context for any education concerning our sexual nature. In *Gaudium et Spes* it stated:

*"Especially in the heart of their own families, young people should be aptly and reasonably instructed in the dignity and duty and work of married love. Trained thus in the cultivation of chastity they will be able at a suitable age to enter a marriage of their own after an honourable courtship... Above all, let them (teachers) perform their services as partners of the parents."*

Pope John Paul II reaffirmed all this in *Familiaris Consortio*:

*"... any educative activity, related to education for love and carried out by persons outside the family, must be subject to the parents' acceptance of it and must not be seen not as a substitute but as a support for their work. In fact, sex education, which is a basic right and duty of parents, must always be carried out under their attentive guidance whether at home or in educational centres chosen and controlled by them..."*

The last sentence is in the *Charter of the Rights of the Family* published by the Holy See in 1983, Article 5 (c). In 1994, the so-called "Year of the Family", Pope John Paul II re-emphasised parents' rights in his Letter to Families.

By the 1990s, the situation in different parts of the world was becoming ever increasingly worrying for Catholic parents. In 1996 the document *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality – Guidelines for education within the family* was published by The Pontifical Council for the Family.

It is a worthy document. It beautifully brings out the importance of a "personalized dialogue" with parents (n.66), of the importance of imbuing modesty (n. 69), and of teaching the complementarity of the sexes (n. 80) and the effects of original sin (n.122). Paragraph 78 states: "During 'the years of innocence' (up to puberty)... this period of tranquillity must never be disturbed by any unnecessary information about sex." Before puberty no such necessity can arise except to correct serious misunderstandings.

## Parental rights

It is worth reflecting on the document's recommendations for parents:

*"... in the face of a State or a school that tends to take up the initiative in the area of sex education." (n. 41).*

*"Parents must politely but firmly exclude any attempts to violate children's innocence because such attempts compromise the spiritual, moral and educational development of growing persons who have a right to their innocence." (n. 83).*

*"Frequently parents are... quite alone... They need understanding, but also support and help by groups, associations and institutions." (n. 113).*

*"Parents must reject secularised and anti-natalist sex education which puts God at the margin of life and regards the birth of a child as a threat. This sex education is spread by large organisations and international associations that promote abortion, sterilization and contraception. Furthermore, some anti-natalist organizations maintain those clinics which, violating the rights of parents, promote promiscuity and consequently an increase in teenage pregnancies." (n. 136).*

The document quotes this from the Church's statement *The Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*.

*"Homosexuality should not be discussed before adolescence unless a specific serious problem has arisen in a particular situation. This subject must be presented only in terms of chastity, health and the truth about human sexuality in its relationship to the family as taught by the Church." (n. 125)*

The teaching of the church about the duty and right to give sex education is clear: only parents have this duty and right by nature. Furthermore it should be seen as chastity education.

## Parental ability

This writer has heard it suggested by diocesan officials, and even sometimes by teachers, that the vast majority of parents are incapable of giving sex education to their own children, or are embarrassed, unwilling or too lazy to give it. This is condescending and untrue. Parents know at least enough about sex to conceive a child and to feed the child at the breast. The mother of a child may not know too much science (and how little science is needed to understand the nature of sexual union!) but she is the world expert on the development of her

own children. It is a truism of education that it must take account of a child's prior knowledge. And who will know this better than the child's mother or father? The Church insists that sex education must take account of the state of development of the child. The child's teachers are not likely to know this better than the parents. When parents give sex education, they will probably find, as we found with our four children, that the age for this differs according to the individual child.

Let us compare what happens with the comparable area of learning the skills of speaking. Parents, without the benefits of philology, psychology, sociology and the other 'ologies' of education, manage successfully to teach their children a reasonable command of their native language by the age of five, often younger. One can imagine the comparative results of an experiment where a group of children were removed from their parents and taught the language only by teachers. A mother, instinctively, knows how to respond to a baby, what words to use, and how to "teach" the language without lessons or pedagogy. English is my university discipline, and I was an English teacher for years, but I have to agree with the statement by one teacher: "If we had to teach them to speak, they'd never learn." If parents can give a child the gift of a complicated and subtle language, they can be trusted to pass on the relatively little biological information that children need to know about sex, and in a manner that, most likely of all methods, will place it in the context of the language of love and life. It is through such familial interaction that sex education can truly be chastity education. No doubt some parents will need support and encouragement in aspects of this, especially in our secularized country and Church.

## The law

The argument is often advanced, "Of course, we would like to keep to what the Church teaches, but, alas, in England and Wales, the law requires us to teach a modern sex education policy." This position has sometimes grown out of a misunderstanding of the requirements concerning the science curriculum.

First of all it should be noted that one should never harm the consciences of children in going against Church teaching merely to obey the law: "Our fathers chained in prisons dark were still in heart and conscience free" and better to be thus than to be applauded by the Local Authority advisers and teach what is wrong. This argument – we have to obey the law – would not be accepted on matters such as race, asylum seekers, green issues or others considered important by the politically correct.

But actually and happily there is no need for such a clash. No primary school need have any formal sex education at all and secondary schools need only teach about AIDS and venereal diseases, something they could do quite easily. In fact Catholic chastity education can confirm that those who follow the

teaching of the Church will find it almost impossible to catch AIDS or any other venereal disease.

Both primary and secondary schools in science and biology will need to teach some relevant items but none of these have any moral consequences and need trouble no conscience. For those readers who are interested in the detail with regard to English and Welsh schools I will now explain before concluding.

The relevant act is the 1996 Education Act concerning what it calls SRE (sex and relationship education). The best place to find the full statement is via the DfES website and all my quotations are taken from there as it was in November 2006. This, then is the government's own summary of the requirements for schools:

The 1996 Education Act consolidated all relevant previous legislation.

In summary:

- The SRE elements in the National Curriculum Science Order across all key stages are mandatory for all pupils of primary and secondary age. (See later)
- All schools must have an up to date policy that describes the content and organisation of SRE provided outside the National Curriculum Science Order. It is the school governors' responsibility to ensure that the policy is developed and made available to parents for inspection.
- Primary schools should either have a policy statement that describes the SRE provided or give a statement of the decision not to provide SRE other than that provided within the National Curriculum Science Order
- Secondary schools are required to provide SRE which includes (as a minimum) information about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS.

The SRE Guidance (DfEE 2000) is supported in legislation by the Learning and Skills Act (2000) which requires that:

- young people learn about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children
- young people are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate, having regard to the age and the religious and cultural background of the pupils concerned
- governing bodies have regard to the SRE Guidance.

The SRE Guidance (DfEE, 0116/2000) builds on these legal requirements and states that all schools must have an up to date SRE policy which:



- defines SRE
- describes how SRE is provided and who is responsible for providing it
- says how SRE is monitored and evaluated
- includes information about parents' right to withdrawal
- is reviewed regularly
- is available for inspection and to parents.

A perusal of this shows that far from the government requiring detailed sex education, primary schools may opt to do none at all and secondary schools can opt for the minimum – only information concerning AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. The government (*currently*) actually requires schools to ensure that children “learn about marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children” and ensure that “young people are protected from teaching and materials which are inappropriate, having regard to the age and the religious and cultural background of the pupils concerned.” So there is no problem.

The raising of the matter of the requirement to follow the National Curriculum in science is a red herring. First, it does not follow that since the government requires schools to follow the National Curriculum then schools should voluntarily do lots of other things in sex education. But, again, there is no harm in what the government requires: all that is required is basic biological information (see box).

There is nothing here to which Catholic parents should object. There is nothing about contraception, abortion, being “gay”, “lifestyle choices”, “alternative families” and all the jargon of “sex ed”. So what ever reasons Catholic schools advance for doing “sex education” it cannot be that the law forces schools' hands.

To defend our children we must hope that governors, parish priests, teachers and parents will enter into the necessary battle with those who insist that the government requires a full ‘sex education’ programme. Church teaching gives us our manifesto, and it is not formally opposed by civil law.

## Relevant legal requirements for teaching science

At Key Stage 2 (Age 7+ to 11, Years 4 to 6) schools have to teach the following: Growth and reproduction; the main stages of the human life cycle; reproduction; the parts of the flower [for example, stigma, stamen, petal, sepal] and their role in the life cycle of flowering plants, including pollination, seed formation, seed dispersal and germination.”

At Key Stage 3 (age 11 to 13+, Years 7 to 9) schools have to teach: that fertilisation in humans and flowering plants is the fusion of a male and a female cell; about the physical and emotional changes that take place during adolescence; about the human reproductive system, including the menstrual cycle and fertilization; how the foetus develops in the uterus, including the role of the placenta. With proper teaching by actual Catholic teachers, or teachers instructed on Catholic doctrine, none of this presents a problem. Indeed, the knowledge of the development of the “foetus” is a tremendous counter to the arguments of the abortionists.

At the final level, Key Stage 4 (Age 14 to 16, Years 10 and 11), the requirements are for schools to teach: “Hormones the way in which hormonal control occurs, including the effects of insulin and sex hormones; how variation arises from genetic causes, environmental causes, and a combination of both; that sexual reproduction is a source of genetic variation, while asexual reproduction produces clones; that mutation is a source of genetic variation and has a number of causes; how sex is determined in humans; the mechanism of monohybrid inheritance where there are dominant and recessive alleles; about mechanisms by which some diseases are inherited; that the gene is a section of DNA; the basic principles of cloning, selective breeding and genetic engineering.”

# St Philip Neri: A guide to chastity

Fr Richard Whinder

St Philip Neri, (1515-1595) founder of the Congregation of the Oratory, and often called the 'Second Apostle of Rome', has many titles attributed to him. Two of these – 'Flower of Purity' and 'Gentle Guide of Youth' – are especially relevant to our current theme.

In the Novena he composed in preparation for the Feast of St Philip, Cardinal Newman wrote: 'Philip, well knowing the pleasure God takes in cleanness of heart, had no sooner come to years of discretion, and to the power of distinguishing between good and evil, than he set himself to wage war against the evils and suggestions of his enemy, and never rested till he had gained the victory. Thus, notwithstanding he lived in the world when young, and met with all kinds of persons, he preserved his virginity spotless in those dangerous years of his life'. What was Philip's secret – and how did he encourage the young disciples who flocked to him in Rome to follow a similar path of life?

Firstly, there can be no doubt that Philip gained mastery over himself by prayer. Although in his story there is no 'moment' of conversion, as in the lives of some saints, we know that as a young man he gave a lot of time to prayer – notably at the remote and rocky shrine of Gaeta, between Rome and Naples. Later, while still a layman in his early years in Rome, he spent whole nights in prayer, often in the catacombs. It was here, on the eve of Pentecost 1544, that a famous miracle took place – Philip saw the Holy Spirit enter him in the form of a ball of fire, and come to rest in his heart (after his death, an autopsy showed that the heart had actually been enlarged by this event, and the ribs forced outward). While this, obviously, was an extraordinary grace, it shows the power and importance of prayer to Philip's whole existence.

Prayer, then, was the indispensable foundation of Philip's method for training his young followers in virtue – nothing will bear fruit without prayer. His disciples became known as 'Oratorians' (which means 'men of prayer'), his first meetings were known simply as 'the Oratory', and Philip himself was tireless in encouraging his friends to pray, and devising new ways to make this easier for them. 'A man without prayer is like a beast without reason', he once said. The forms of prayer he used were various, and well-adapted to the needs of his ever-expanding band of followers. Sometimes he encouraged them in very direct and intimate prayer – the early meetings of the Oratory were characterised by informal sermons, delivered sitting, the reading of scripture and saints' lives, and reflection upon them. But Philip could also use magnificence and

outward splendour to impress young minds with the truth and beauty of God – his followers were among the first to introduce the 'Forty Hours' devotion into Rome, and he used the talents of the great composers Palestrina and Anerio (among others) to enrich the liturgies held in his church. Moreover, it is worth noting that although an innovator in some ways, using methods unique at the time, Philip always drew on the oldest sources of Christian devotion – indeed, Newman dubbed him 'Man of primitive times', who would have been at home among the earliest Christians or the Church Fathers. At a time when heresy was raging throughout Christendom, the exercises of the Oratory were always faultlessly orthodox. This was confirmed by an event which took place in the year 1570. At that time, some mischievous persons had spread a rumour that heterodox doctrine was being preached at the Oratory. This came to the ears of Pope St Pius V, always very zealous for true doctrine, who appointed two learned Dominican priests to go and investigate. St Philip's disciple, Antonio Gallonio, records what happened:

'The Dominican fathers accordingly went to the Oratory several times a week, and applied themselves to investigating and recording everything that was going on... They observed what Philip's spirit was, what sort of doctrine he taught, what was his way of life. Along with the crowds they listened to the discourses, and took careful note of the manner of the delivery and the purport of what was said. They found themselves lost in admiration for Philip's facility in speaking, his earnestness and his amazing confidence... in every question that was put to him he replied so appositely that he never failed to hit the target, which absolutely astounded the Dominicans.

'Impressed by this, they gave the Pope a better report of the Oratory and of Philip's learning and devotion than had ever been delivered before, and assured him that they found everything in order'.

We should also note that when at one time, due to some confusion, Philip was ordered to cease some of his spiritual exercises, he did so obediently.

Along with prayer Philip taught his disciples to have frequent recourse to the sacraments – a counsel which seems obvious today but was less so in the Sixteenth Century, when many Catholics only Confessed and Communicated once a year. Philip encouraged frequent Communion among his followers, but, crucially, also insisted on frequent Confession – not least because Confession is a means to humility, and Philip, like

many of the saints, taught that humility and purity almost always go hand in hand. Many of his disciples confessed to him daily, far more frequently than they went to Communion. Indeed, along with saints such as the Curé d'Ars and Padre Pio, St Philip deserves to be recognized as a true hero of the Confessional. Newman says of him: 'he gave himself up entirely to hearing confessions, exclusive of every other employment. Before sunrise he had generally confessed a good number of penitents in his own room. He went down to into the church at daybreak, and never left it till noon, except to say Mass. If no penitents came, he remained near his confessional, reading, saying office or telling his beads. If he was at prayer, if at his meals, he at once broke off when his penitents came.' This, surely, was one of his key tools in encouraging purity and chastity among his followers. They had ready, immediate access to a confessor who was kindly, wise and gentle, and having made a good Confession could benefit fully from all the graces offered in Holy Communion. It was a simple, but powerful, formula, novel in its day, but widely imitated in the centuries to follow.

'Prayer and the sacraments – these, it should really go without saying, were the foundation of St Philip's 'youth work'. But his concern for souls took him further. Philip was particularly known for his cheerfulness, and for his ability to instill that virtue in others. To quote Newman again: 'He could not bear any one to be downcast or pensive, because spirituality is always injured by it: but when he saw anyone grave or gloomy he used to say "Be merry". He had a particular and marked leaning to cheerful persons'. Philip realized that excessive introspection and anxiety (especially among the young) can often lead to despondency and depression and, very quickly, to vice of all sorts. He was determined that his followers should be joyful. Thus when one of his disciples, the future Cardinal, Baronius, proved incapable of preaching on any subject other than the pains of hell, Philip refused to allow him to preach on spiritual subjects at all, and made him teach Church History instead (Baronius went on to become one of the greatest Catholic historians ever, as well as a candidate for Beatification). Allied to this very human concern for cheerfulness in his followers was a healthy stock of common sense. Just as worry and anxiety can easily lead a young person to seek an outlet in forbidden pleasures, so boredom and idleness are often the conditions which make virtue more difficult. To this end St Philip worked hard to invent diversions which would keep his charges occupied, especially at what he considered the most dangerous times – the long sultry Roman afternoons, and the period of the pre-Lenten carnival, when Renaissance society gave itself up to a distinctly un-Christian preparation for Lent (and if anyone doubts that Sixteenth Century Rome could be fully as immoral as our own times, let him read the Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini, a great artist, but far from a good man). The particular diversion which Philip

devised for use during the Carnival was a pilgrimage on foot to the 'Seven Churches', the seven most ancient and important basilicas of Rome, a tour which lasted an evening and a day. This pilgrimage was an ancient devotion, into which Philip and his followers breathed new life. The pilgrims sang and prayed as they walked between the churches, and recreated themselves half-way along with a picnic lunch accompanied by light music. The devotion of the Seven Churches, in fact, brings together various of the themes we have already discerned in looking at St Philip's methods: it was distinctively Christian and prayerful, allowed for healthy exercise and good spirits alongside its primary purpose of pilgrimage, and was a practical way of getting ordinary young men out of danger's way at a time of potential spiritual hazards.

So what conclusions can we draw about St Philip's way of encouraging purity and chastity? Firstly, he made proper use of the supernatural weapons given us in faith – prayer and the sacraments. He was scrupulously orthodox, whether in matters of faith or morals – never flinching from demanding the highest standards in his young disciples and certainly never compromising on the content of Catholic morality. At the same time, he was compassion and gentleness itself in dealing with sinners, and made some of his greatest converts through the Confessional. 'Not to have pity for another' he said 'was a forerunner of a speedy fall in ourselves'. Secondly, he took a well-rounded, thoroughly holistic view of the Christian life. Purity and chastity were not to be seen, nor sought for, in isolation from the other virtues. Through his own joyful spirit, and by encouraging that virtue in others, through healthy friendships and innocent diversions, Philip laid the groundwork for souls to advance in virtues of every kind. He did all this in a society which, while far less secular than our own, was almost equally corrupt, and there is no reason why his methods cannot be applied in a similar way today. Indeed, we should ask the prayers of St Philip that the young people of our own time (and those who guide them) may have the courage, grace and humility to follow the same path of discipleship that he taught. We may end our article where we began it, by quoting from the Novena of Cardinal Newman:

'Philip, my holy Patron, who wast so careful for the souls of thy brethren, and especially of thy own people, when on earth, slack not thy care of them now, when thou art in heaven... Be to us a good father; make our priests blameless and beyond reproach or scandal; make our children obedient, our youth prudent and chaste, our heads of families wise and gentle, our old people cheerful and fervent, and build us up, by thy powerful intercession, in faith, hope, charity and all virtues'.





# Richard Dawkins and St Thomas Aquinas' First Way to God

Fr Thomas Crean O.P.

*Fr Crean clearly and cleverly takes on Professor Richard Dawkins' attack upon Aquinas's first way to God in the latter's recent book The God Delusion. This is an extract from the Cambridge Dominican's book A Catholic replies to Professor Dawkins just published by Family Publications.*

*"We do not deny the possibility of an infinite series of causes stretching back in time. What is impossible is an infinite series of causes at work here-and-now, in such a way that every cause, in its very action, would be dependent on another cause."*

RICHARD DAWKINS AND ST THOMAS AQUINAS' FIRST WAY TO GOD

## Two paths to God

We can distinguish two paths by which one comes to know that God exists, one ordinary, the other extraordinary. The ordinary path starts from the natural course of events and rises to the knowledge of an unchanging, intelligent cause of the world around us. This path can be pursued philosophically, using learned language, as it was, for example, by Aristotle and St Thomas Aquinas. Far more often, however, people pass along this path quite spontaneously. They simply say, in these or similar words, 'there must be something behind it all'. It is not necessary to be a student of philosophy to reach God by this path. It is enough to have an intellect unhampered by sophistry or prejudice.

The extraordinary path starts with a miracle. An event occurs that could not have been performed by any of the natural agents at work in the world: for example, a man at the point of death is restored in a moment to perfect health. Such an event witnesses to the existence of a supreme being with power over this visible world. This path is called extraordinary in that only a minority of people witness miracles directly. Still, it can lead many people to God. On the testimony of a few trustworthy witnesses, many people may reasonably believe that a miracle has occurred.

Professor Dawkins wishes to close off both these paths to God; or rather, he claims that neither path is worth following. Let us see what his own claims are worth.

## The 'five ways'

As many people know, St Thomas Aquinas stated that one could demonstrate the existence of God in five different ways, starting from five different features of the ordinary world around us. Professor Dawkins examines these ways rather briefly (pp. 77-9). The first three, he tells us, are just three different ways of saying the same thing. While this is not quite true, since they begin from different features of the world, they do have much in common. For the sake of brevity, then, I shall not examine all three separately, but only the first way, as representative of the others. Nor shall I consider the fourth way. This argument has baffled readers of St Thomas far more sympathetic than Professor Dawkins, and to attempt its elucidation would take us more deeply into metaphysics than is suitable here. Instead, we shall pass from the first to the fifth way, showing in each case how the existence of God can be known with certainty by reflecting on ordinary human experience. We shall also show that none of Professor Dawkins' objections to these arguments is valid.

## How can there be change?

St Thomas' 'first way' begins with the fact of *change*. It is obvious, he writes, that many different kinds of change take place in the world. Things change their place, or their colour, or their size, or their relations with other things, and so on. Any kind of change would do as the starting-point of the first way, but I shall consider just one, namely *intellectual change*. A man begins to think of something, for example, Shakespeare. The moment before, he was not thinking about anything. Now a thought has come into his mind.

In other words, the man has changed. This change, like any change, must have a cause, or otherwise it couldn't have occurred. So what caused this change?

Whatever it was that caused this change, it must either have changed itself in doing so, or not. Let's assume that the change in the man's mind is caused by something within him, for example, his will. He thought about Shakespeare because he willed to. But in that case, his will itself changed in order to cause the thought to arise in his mind. The man had not previously been choosing to think about Shakespeare. He had not been thinking about Shakespeare from the moment of his birth. But at a certain moment he does choose to do this: his will changes and causes the thought to come into existence in his mind.

Now, this change in the man's will, like the change in his thoughts, requires a cause. No event can occur without a cause, whether the cause can be known by us or not. And once again, the thing that causes the change in the man's will must either have changed in so doing, or not. If it did change when it caused the will to change, then it in turn requires some cause to explain the change that takes place within it.

But this process cannot go on indefinitely. If the man's intellect was changed by his will and his will by something else and that something else by something further and so on *ad infinitum*, there would be no sufficient explanation of the fact that the man has started to think about Shakespeare. There cannot be an indefinite line of intermediary causes with no first cause, just as a nail cannot be knocked into a wall by an unending series of hammers, each knocking against the next. There must be a first hammer wielded by some free agent. There must be a man at the beginning of the line.

Likewise, there has to be a first cause of the man's thought. This first cause must be something that causes change without changing in itself. If it changed, it would need some cause outside itself, and so it would no longer be first. That's why the man himself can't be the first cause of his thought: neither his intellect, nor his will, nor his brain is unchanging. The same is true of all the material things that we see around us. All the things that we see, from acids to ant-eaters, change when they cause other things to change. The first cause cannot be like this: it must be beyond change.

What's more, the first cause of a thought must itself be something intellectual. Nothing can give what it doesn't have. A flame that boils water cannot be less than one hundred degrees hot. No teacher can instruct a class of children in maths unless he knows maths himself. A cause and its effect do not always appear very similar: if a man writes a book, the book needn't look like the man. But there must always be as much reality in the cause as in the effect. No one can write a book, assuming it is his unaided work, unless the knowledge that appears in the

pages of the book first existed in his mind. A cause must be at least as perfect as its effect, or else it wouldn't be able to cause it. That's why we can say that the first cause of the man's thought must be something intellectual: it must have at least the same 'intellectuality' as the thought itself.

In other words, the first cause must itself be a thought. But it must not be a thought that comes into existence at a certain moment. If it did, it would need a cause, and so would no longer be first. The first cause must be a thought that is always in existence, always 'actual'. Unlike our thoughts, it must not exist in a mind distinct from itself. If it did, something must have caused it to exist in that mind, and so, again, it would no longer be first. The first cause must be a subsistent thought. It must be a thought that exists of itself, eternally.

Such is St Thomas' 'first way'. Fifteen centuries before him, Aristotle had followed it to the same conclusion. It doesn't reach an absentee 'god', who is supposed to have given an initial fillip to the universe, and then left things to take their own course. It reaches the First Cause on whom everything now depends. Without such an unchanging First Cause, nothing could happen.

### Professor Dawkins' objections

Although our author subjects St Thomas' first way to a critical scrutiny, I cannot be confident that he has understood it. His remark that a 'big bang singularity' (p.8) would be more likely as a first cause for the universe than God suggests that he is thinking of a cause that is first in time. This is not the first cause of which Aristotle and St Thomas speak. While it is a point of Catholic faith that the universe had a beginning in time, this cannot be proved by philosophy. The first way would still be valid if the universe had always existed, as the following example shows.

Consider someone who is peeling potatoes. It's not self-contradictory to suppose that he has been peeling potatoes forever, and has by now amassed an infinitely large heap of them. From time to time, his potato peeler becomes rusty, and so he throws it aside and takes up a new one. It's not self-contradictory to suppose that he has by now amassed an infinitely large pile of rusty potato peelers. What would be impossible is that, to peel any given potato, an infinite multitude of implements should have to be used together, each one acting on the next. If, in order to peel any given potato, the potato peeler in contact with it had to be turned by another peeler, and this other by a third and so on without end, then one would never reach the man himself. If each instrument had to be put into action by another instrument, one would never reach the principal cause. But in that case, the potato would never be peeled.

In the same way, it's not obviously absurd to imagine, as Aristotle did, that the universe has existed forever in much the same way as it exists now. In that case, no cause would be first in time.

Whatever man you chose, he would always have a father and a grandfather. Yet each individual change within that universe, for example, each new act of begetting, would still need a first cause. It would depend on something that didn't change when it caused other things to change. Without such an unchanging cause, it could not happen.

In other words, we do not deny the possibility of an infinite series of causes stretching back in time. What is impossible is an infinite series of causes at work here-and-now, in such a way that every cause, in its very action, would be dependent on another cause. Just as no potato could be peeled if every peeler had to turn another one, no change could take place unless something can cause changes without being changed. And this, St Thomas remarks, is what all men call God.

Yet this last point is precisely what Professor Dawkins is disposed to deny. Even though he seems willing to concede, rather grudgingly, that there may in some sense be a first cause of the universe, he remarks:

*"There is absolutely no reason to endow that terminator [i.e. of the first way] with any of the properties normally ascribed to God: omnipotence, omniscience, goodness, creativity of design, to say nothing of such human attributes as listening to prayers, forgiving sins and reading innermost thoughts." (pp. 77-8)*

This list of attributes is somewhat puzzling. Why is goodness not a human quality when the power to read other people's innermost thoughts apparently is? Surely this cannot be a reflection of Oxford academic life? More seriously, the first cause of a human thought, as we have just seen, must itself be something intellectual. It must be a subsistent thought, that is, an intellect 'in action' of itself. But such an intellect could have

no limits, for, being the first cause, from where could it have received them? Nothing limited can be the first cause, because everything that has limits must have received them from somewhere. The first cause is an unlimited intellect. That is why omniscience is indeed a necessary attribute of the first cause.

In the same way, it is because God's nature is unlimited that philosophy must ascribe goodness to Him. Evil is not a positive reality, but a lack of some good quality that should be present, rather as blindness is not something positive, but the privation of the power of sight. Since God's being is unlimited, it can have no lack. There can therefore be no evil in God, but only in finite creatures.

We can also note that it is because God's nature is unlimited that there can be only one God. 'Another' god would have to lack something or other, for else he would not be distinct from the first God. But then, lacking something, his nature would be limited and he would not be God. Hence, there cannot be a great number of unchanging first causes, each responsible for different events in the universe. There can be only one First Cause because there can be only one being who is unlimited.

As for omnipotence, a being that is the first cause of any change that takes place in the universe, and which causes such a change effortlessly because without changing in itself, can hardly be denied this attribute.

The other attributes that Professor Dawkins mentions in his list are all consequences of the divine intelligence; though we can add that God's readiness to forgive sins is not something that can be deduced with certainty by philosophy alone. It is made known to us by revelation and remains in this life an object of faith.

*Fr Crean goes on to discuss the "argument from design", and, in the following chapter, Miracles.*

## ST PHILIP'S BOOKS

Rare and secondhand Catholic books bought and sold. Distributor for Newman's Letters and Diaries.

**Proprietor: Christopher Zealley**

82 St. Aldgates, Oxford OX1 1RA  
Tel: 01865 202 182 • Fax: 01865 202 184

[sales@stphilipsbooks.co.uk](mailto:sales@stphilipsbooks.co.uk)

Quarterly catalogues free on request.  
We travel to buy collections of Catholic books.

[www.stphilipsbooks.co.uk](http://www.stphilipsbooks.co.uk)

Shop in central Oxford, near Catholic Chaplaincy.  
Over 9,000 books on view, new and secondhand.

**Visitors welcome**

Monday-Saturday 10am-5pm.  
15 minutes walk from railway station or 5 minutes from Westgate car park



## OTHER ANGLES

## REFLECTIONS ON LIMBO

By James Tolhurst

In a 41 page report issued this April, the International Theological Commission says that there are “serious theological and liturgical grounds for hope that unbaptised infants who die will be saved and brought into eternal happiness.”

Although the report is very cautious – ‘grounds for hope’ – it does move the argument on in the matter of unbaptised babies. For the pastoral priest funerals of unbaptised babies are the most traumatic; made more so by not being able to inform the parents that the babies are in heaven. One would be inclined to say that they are in God’s hands, and leave it at that. Officially, the Church did not teach that they were in heaven as that would be seen to undermine the importance of baptism for salvation.

It is precisely this dilemma which was immediately highlighted by Kenneth Wolfe, a columnist for *The Remnant*. He remarks, “It makes baptism a formality, a party, instead of a necessity. There would be no reason for infant baptisms.” But he also adds, “It would also deprive Catholic leaders of a tool in their fight against abortion. Priests have long told women that their aborted fetuses cannot go to heaven, which in theory was another argument against ending pregnancy. Without limbo, those fetuses presumably would no longer be denied communion with God.” Here is one priest who was not aware of that particular argument, which seems to have a distinctly Jansenist flavour with a subtle touch of blackmail thrown in. Fr Richard McBrien, on the opposite wing, concludes that, if we’re not going to revert to St. Augustine’s teaching that unbaptised infants go to hell, we’re left with only one option, namely, that everyone is born in the state of grace. Baptism does not exist to wipe away the ‘stain’ of original sin, but to initiate one into the Church.”

The Professor of Theology at Notre Dame does not perhaps realize that he has combined the errors of Pelagianism (against which Augustine was fighting, and therefore stressing the importance of baptism forgiving sin and granting entry into heaven) with Modernism. The Church has always taught that baptism not only conferred grace but also remitted sin. The Second Council of Orange in 529 decreed, “If anyone says that it was not the whole man, that is both body and soul, that was ‘changed for the worse’ through the offence of Adam’s sin, but believes that the freedom of the soul remained untouched and that only the body was made subject to corruption, he is deceived by the error of Pelagius.” Later, in 1439, the Council of Florence was to add, “By Baptism all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin.” The Decree *Lamentabili* (now in its centenary year) directed against Modernism condemns the opinion that, “The Christian community brought about the necessity of baptism by adopting it as a necessary rite and joining to it the obligations of the profession of a Christian.” Pius XI added, in *Casti Conubii* (1930), “Even though Christian parents are in the state of grace themselves, they cannot transmit this grace to their children; in fact, natural generation of life has become a way of death, the way by which original sin passes to children.” It seems a

liberating (and liberal) stance to say that we are all born in grace, but it contradicts both Scripture and Tradition.

The Church has always believed that the forgiving grace of God can be given without the waters of baptism. The Holy Innocents have been honoured as the first example of those who were welcomed into heaven because of the gift of their lives for God. Catechumens who die before baptism are said to receive the grace of the sacrament because of “their desire to receive it, together with repentance of their sins and charity” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* in 1259). This does not in any way undermine or denigrate the importance of baptism. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that “God has bound salvation to the sacrament of baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments” (n.1257).

The use of Limbo (from the Latin ‘limbus’, for hem of edge) refers to a state of natural happiness outside heaven for babies and certain virtuous people, such as the faithful Jews who lived before Christ. But it has always been considered a theological construct. Can it be said that humanity has ever been destined for a natural happiness? Some theologians, among them, Augustine, and following him the poet Dante, had to conclude that if babies could not go to heaven then they had to go to hell. Augustine tempered this judgement by having recourse to a ‘mitissima poena’ – the mildest condemnation. Limbo was a later fudge invented to avoid putting innocent infants in hell, while being unwilling to put them in heaven, because it would seem to go against John 3:5 and Tradition. But at the final resurrection we know that there will only be heaven and hell. The International Commission now says, “Limbo reflects an unduly restrictive view of salvation.

The Commission will not totally commit itself (leaving this up to the Supreme Authority of the Church) to the view that unbaptised babies go to heaven and says this is not “sure knowledge”. But it states that this is in the context of a loving and just God who “wants all human beings to be saved” (cf. I Timothy 2:4). It goes so far as to say that there are “serious theological and liturgical grounds” for this hope.

It would now seem entirely reasonable that we can tell grieving parents – especially those who are practicing members of the Church – that in God’s mercy, their unbaptised children are now in heaven. For those who have had an abortion and confess their sin, it would surely be adding insult to injury if we have to inform them that in addition to their crime, they have condemned their unborn child to even the mildest of punishments. Instead we can now ask them to believe that God in his goodness has received their innocent victim and they should have a Mass said as a sign of their repentance and in thanksgiving for God’s mercy.

In no way does this undermine the importance of baptism, rather, reducing limbo to a theological hypothesis, it would seem to enhance it. Heaven and Hell stand in more stark relief.



# Fit for mission? A guide to the guide

William Peck

*William Peck, a Catholic teacher of Mathematics and Religion from Cumbria applauds Bishop Patrick O'Donoghue's unfashionable discernment of a certain crisis within the Church of England and Wales. The document Fit for Mission: A Guide can be seen at [www.lancasterdiocese.org.uk](http://www.lancasterdiocese.org.uk), under "Mission Review".*

*"What makes Bishop Patrick's comments particularly incisive is his preparedness to state the truth that the challenges we Catholics face in England today arise, at least in part, from the damage that exists within our Church."*

Having just moved into the Diocese of Lancaster I wanted to attend this Holy Week's Chrism Mass, presided over by Bishop Patrick O'Donoghue. The Bishop's homily contained an exhortation for renewal, during which he made reference to his review document *Fit for Mission? A Guide*, which had been distributed throughout the Diocese during Lent 2007. As a consequence I participated in a number of meetings organised by our Parish Priest to discuss and respond to the document and was struck by the Bishop's realistic and refreshing analysis of current trends within the Catholic Church in England. I believe that all who love the Catholic Church in England and Wales can benefit from this analysis; hence this article.

This is not a review. I do not presume to *review* teaching from my Bishop. Instead I will share portions of it that seem to me to deserve particular attention beyond the confines of Lancaster Diocese alone. This also allows the document to speak for itself.

The Document is refreshing, not because of any gushing positivity, but rather its 'face-the-facts' attitude. Bishop Patrick asks "When Jesus comes will He find faith in our diocese?... in just three years the Catholic Church in the UK lost at least 100,000 regular Mass goers!" (p.5) Later he provides a list of statistics illustrating 'The shape of the Church to come'. These include the following:

- "... in approximately 5 years time there will be around 75 active and available priests ready to serve our present 108 Parishes, Mass centres, prisons, and hospitals. We estimate that by 2020 there may be between 50-60 under the age of 75 active in the diocese.
- Many parishes have a Mass attendance of less than one-third and some with less than one-quarter of the number attending in the mid-twentieth century.
- Many baptised Catholics lead lives almost 'entirely divorced from Christianity' (General Directory for Catechesis 25). And it is an inescapable fact that 85% of children attending our primary and secondary schools come from non-practising families." (p.22)

There may well be other documents from our Bishops in England and Wales that have described so succinctly and starkly the *Sitz im Leben* that we face here at home, but if so I have missed them.

How about this for reading the signs of the times:

*"It has been predicted from a study of the pattern of church attendance over the past 100 years that if trends continue there will be virtually no Christian institutional presence in Britain by the year 2050 (David Hay, the Biology of the Human Spirit). In 1994 Mass attendance in the diocese was 38,000, falling to 23,900 by 2006. We must wake up to the fact that the forces of dissolution are at work again in this country, resulting in a 'silent apostasy' (Ecclesia in Europa, 9) as many Catholics walk away from the Church." (p.7)*

The Bishop follows this with what appears to be a spiritual call to arms, in a manner rather reminiscent of St Paul in Romans, who also had the job of leading a little flock in a powerful, increasingly secularised, State.

*"Once before in history a ruling elite imposed dissolution on the Catholic Church, this time widespread social and cultural forces of dissolution are being disseminated by some in the political establishment, the media, and education, seen in their one-sided promotion of secular humanism against religion." (p.7)*

In the Guide itself the last three paragraphs quoted are used to frame a marginal illustration of the sun, (or more precisely half the sun's disk) balanced on the horizon, causing an empty Golgotha Cross to cast a long shadow. Apart from the welcome return to the hallowed practice of illuminating ecclesial texts, (the Guide is full of such) there is an ambiguity here that is of interest. Does this show the rising sun on Easter morning with the Cross relieved of its salvific burden? Or does it show the setting sun of Good Friday, the Temple Veil lying tattered and torn in the Sanctuary. Perhaps Bishop Patrick's choice of scripture to introduce this section "Strengthening what remains!" will help the reader decide: "Awake, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death. Rev 3:2" (p.7)

From the extracts selected so far one may be forgiven for wondering whether the Guide falls into the trap of limiting itself to an analysis in which the chief ills and remedies of our situation are to be found in purely structural considerations. This is not so. From the very beginning Bishop Patrick adopts a Christocentric approach in which the choices and responsibilities of the individual figure prominently. The overall plan of the Guide is worth noting here. It is:

1. How do I change and become the person God wants me to be?
2. How do we change our parishes so that we become the people God calls us to be?
3. How do we change our Diocese including our buildings and structures, so that we become the communion that God calls us to be?

The starting point for the Guide is most welcome; a movement from the Self outwards to God and others. We are asked to consider whether or not we still believe in the power of prayer, the implication being that perhaps we do not. And the Guide goes further. Prayer is linked immediately with a challenge to live morally. St Paul's idea that we must *Do the Truth* is not mentioned explicitly, but I am sure he approves of this intimate linking of Prayer with the Good Life:

*"We live in a culture that honours and seeks power above all else! It taps into our natural and good desire for pleasure, recognition, and personal fulfilment. Hence the attractiveness of the power of money, sex, celebrity, violence, the power of social position and influence. In the face of such power it is easy to slip into a way of thinking and making decisions 'as if Christ did not really exist!' (Ecclesia in Europa, 26) But as Christians we can only have one true source of power, that is the power of prayer. Jesus calls us to renounce the misuse of money, sex, celebrity, violence, social position, and influence, so we can depend totally on the Father through the Holy Spirit" (p.5)*

At the heart of the problem Bishop Patrick uncontroversially identifies our materialistic society. But uniquely, for this document's genre I think, he identifies aspects of its influence within the Church in England and Wales. He uses a phrase that I recall the present Pope using 20 years ago during his visit to Cambridge University. Cardinal Ratzinger gave a lecture entitled 'The Existential Void at the Heart of Consumer Capitalism'. The Guide uses the same idea:

*"We live in a culture that uses promises to excite our desire for things, keep us distracted, and leave us dissatisfied, so that we want more! We are beings orientated to Promise – our future fulfilment in the vision of God. The drama of salvation is the unfolding of God's promises to Israel and each one of us. Our very experience is transformed by God's promises. Excesses of consumer capitalism exploit our orientation to the future. How many of us Christians live lives dedicated to attaining these material promises, forgetting the spiritual promises of Christ? As a result, the spirit of rage and discontent has even invaded our Church, upsetting the peace and unity that are the signs of true Christian love. No level of the church has remained untouched by this vexatious spirit, and it is poisoning our communion!" (p.5-6)*

Strong words indeed. The resolve required in today's secularised environment, outside and inside the Church, is characterised as a need for what the Guide terms "Hard Talk!".

*"I want to invite you all to join me in considering a number of disputed questions that we urgently need to answer for the well being and vitality of our local church. The longer we continue to repress these questions, the more we will lose our strength and our ability to proclaim the Gospel. Have we accepted the widespread attitude that religion is a private matter? Are we embarrassed to live differently because of the standards and values of our faith? Are we embarrassed to talk about our faith to others, even members of our own families? Are we embarrassed to talk about God's love for us and our love for God?" (p.12)*



The *Shema* (used in prayer on the Jewish sabbath and in Night Prayer of the Church for the Sunday vigil) commands that we talk about the things of Faith and ‘teach them diligently to your children... when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise’. Bishop Patrick goes on to describe another ten ‘Hard Talk’ questions to be considered by parishioners by this summer. I am going to quote from just two, chosen because they are so seldom expressed with such clarity in the English Church today.

*“Have we remained obedient to the truth safeguarded by the teaching office of the Church? Loyalty and obedience to the Pope was a particular charism of the English Church, that saw us through the penal times, exemplified by our Lancashire and Cumbrian martyrs. I am sure that ‘obedience to the truth’ is vital for the well being and harmony of our diocese. At all levels of the church, have we remained faithful to the Petrine office? Do we actively study and disseminate the teachings of the Church? Do we promote the Church’s teaching on life issues, such as birth control, IVF, and euthanasia? Do we base our catechesis on the Catechism of the Catholic Church? Do we actively engage with the Church’s social teaching, commonly known as the ‘best kept secret’?” (p.13)*

*“Are we acquiescing to the killing of the unborn child in our country? Since the Abortion Act of 1967, over 5 million children have been killed in the womb. Even to raise the question of the morality of this gravest of injustices is enough to incur the anger and condemnation of powerful sections of our society. As a consequence, have we become too passive and silent to effectively protest this injustice that cries to heaven? Do we support politicians and others who want to reform the abortion laws of this*

*country, irrespective of our party allegiance? As long as our country allows the killing of the unborn child, we will continue to witness the collapse of moral life, particularly among families.” (p.15)*

Blessed Mother Teresa’s Nobel Prize acceptance speech contained the same penetrating yet prophetic conclusions concerning what we today term the Gospel of Life. What makes Bishop Patrick’s comments particularly incisive is his preparedness to state the truth that the challenges we Catholics face in England today arise, at least in part, from the damage that exists within our Church. Consequently there lies here a profound reason for hope, because the manner in which each one of us lives out our vocation within the Body of Christ is something we can address *immediately*, in both senses of that word. I will therefore conclude with the Bishop’s diagnosis of what afflicts the Catholic communion, because it contains an implicit call for each one of us to reflect upon and purify our behaviour and disposition towards the Church.

*“I think we have allowed ourselves at times to be divided by an adversarial attitude! How can we who truly love the Church founded by Christ be divided into factions-traditional and liberal, conservative and progressive, loyal and dissenting! We are not Parliament! We are the People of God, the Body of Christ – the Catholic Church sharing unity in diversity!”*

I am convinced that this fragmented state of affairs has arisen among us because we have forgotten or lack faith in the promises of Christ! Instead of Christ being at the centre of our lives, we are all in danger of putting ego in His place!” (p.6)

Bravo! Encore.

## TOP SCIENTISTS FIND BELIEF IN GOD INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT

Larson and Witham’s 1997 survey of US scientists found that the percentage which believe in a personal God has remained approximately constant (40%) since Leuba’s similar survey in 1914, this having dropped a little in a similar 1933 survey (Edward J. Larson and Larry Witham: “Scientists are Still Keeping the Faith”. *Nature* 1997; 386, 435 – 436).

The respective surveys of “Greater Scientists” (basically those in the National Academy of Scientists) at these three dates show a marked decrease. (Edward J. Larson and Larry Witham; “Leading Scientists Still Reject God.” *Nature*, 1998; 394, 313).

Comparison of survey answers among “greater scientists” (figures in %)

<b>BELIEF IN PERSONAL GOD</b>	<b>1914</b>	<b>1933</b>	<b>1998</b>
Personal belief	27.7	15	7.0
Personal disbelief	52.7	68	72.2
Doubt or agnosticism	20.9	17	20.8
<b>BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY</b>	<b>1914</b>	<b>1933</b>	<b>1998</b>
Personal belief	35.2	18	7.9
Personal disbelief	25.4	53	76.7
Doubt or agnosticism	43.7	29	23.3

**Note:** The 1998 immortality figures add up to more than 100%. The misprint is in the original. The 76.7% is likely too high. The study found the lowest levels of belief among biologists, with physicists and astronomers close. Mathematicians had the highest levels of belief at about 15%.

# MEDITATION

## *Fighting Slavery through the Sacrifice of Christ*



Henriette Delille was a coloured/creole or “quadroon” girl born in New Orleans in 1812. Although her family was prosperous, as a descendent of slaves she was expected to make her way in society by becoming available as a “mistress” to rich white men. Special dances were organised in a ballroom in the city where quadroon girls were chosen by

their corrupt patrons. Henriette refused to co-operate. Already at the age of fourteen she had formed a deep spiritual life and had begun to teach local slaves about the love of God and train them for baptism and ministering to the sick and elderly among them. Needless to say she got into a lot of trouble for all this. But she became a woman of immense courage and determination.

She gathered a group of like minded women around her and formed a religious community to defend the human rights and cater for the spiritual needs of slave and coloured girls. During the American civil war she walked into the army camps of both sides to denounce the abuse of black girls as “camp followers”. Eventually, after much opposition, she managed to buy the actual ballroom where she was once going to be sold into high class prostitution. She turned the building into a convent, a house of prayer and care for the socially excluded women of the southern United States. Her community still exists and flourishes as the Sisters of The Holy Family.

Every new generation hopes that they can make the world a better place. We see so many things that are wrong with our world and we want to change them. But how do we achieve that? How do we turn our dreams of a better world into reality? Talk is easy, but making a lasting difference takes courage and integrity, willingness to stick your neck out, accepting loneliness and misunderstanding. It needs perseverance and involves many setbacks. It often means letting others take the glory, even being misunderstood by those you are trying to help. It means putting aside personal ambitions and the desire for a comfortable life. This is why the saints are the real heroes and heroines of humanity.

They are the true revolutionaries who change the world through the power of self-sacrificing love, which is the way of Jesus Christ.

Henriette Delille wrote “I believe in God. I hope in God. I love and I want to live and die for God”. She was a woman of faith as well as courage. She drew the energy and love she needed to change the world around her directly from the heart of Jesus. That is the only way to do anything truly worthwhile and make changes to our world without distorting the work through our own subconscious faults and ambitions. The way of sacrifice and charity is learned from the crucified Christ and turned into reality through the power of the risen Lord.

*Pelegrino*

### SPUC'S INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME 2007



We have places for four university students to experience our Internship Programme this summer.

Applicants should above all be committed to the pro-life cause. SPUC is a campaigning pro-life organisation whose work includes political campaigning, work at the UN, educational activities, pro-life news reporting, the media, research, branch development, special interest groups, conference organisation, work with volunteers, the work of British Victims of Abortion, plus general administration. Our programme will give interns a broad understanding of as many aspects of the Society's work as possible. We pay a subsistence allowance to cover living expenses.

For more information or to register your interest, please apply by email to: [johnsmeaton@spuc.org.uk](mailto:johnsmeaton@spuc.org.uk) or by post to John Smeaton, National Director, The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, 5/6 St Matthew Street, London, SW1P 2JT. Tel: (020) 7222 5845

The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children  
5/6 St Matthew Street, London, SW1P 2JT

# THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

## Communicating a Threat to the family

Fr John Boyle

*Finding ways of helping parents to take on board their role as primary 'educators in chastity', and to be aware of the practical ways in which this role is being undermined, is an important task today. It is another of those areas where the subtle and not so subtle cultural tide is coming in the opposite direction. It is another of those areas where priests need to be clear as well as sensitive, and they need support in this. The following is a development upon a piece Fr John Boyle made available to his parishioners in South Ashford, Kent.*

It is not often a Parish Priest issues a 'Pastoral Letter' to his parishioners. I feel moved to write about what I perceive to be a critical cultural situation. Powerful well-funded agencies, often promoted by the State (I avoid the word 'Government' as I do not want to speak in party-political terms), are mounting a relentless onslaught upon the family and especially the moral sense of our young people.

Almost every organisation that has anything to do with the family, health, education is targeted by these agencies. Perhaps most pernicious is the targeting of the very young in ways that bypass parents. This culture was recently further supported by the defeat of a ten-minute rule bill in the House of Commons which envisaged greater rights of parents to know what about their children's medical treatment.

Our local Primary Care Trust operates a clinic for young people which "provides a wide range of information and advice on issues regarding sexual health such as; fertility, unplanned pregnancy and contraception. There is also a full contraception service offering condoms, pills, emergency contraception and pregnancy testing. This service is aimed at people under 25, with no lower age range" (see their website, my emphasis).

Whenever the phrase 'emergency contraception' is used, what is meant is the 'morning-after pill' which works to ensure that – should conception have occurred – the newly conceived embryo does not implant in the mother's womb and a miscarriage is provoked. When you read 'emergency contraception' you should understand 'pharmaceutical abortion'.

Much more widely known and accessible to the young is the Brook Advisory Centre, which provides 'free, confidential sex advice and contraception to all young people.' A visit to their website, which has as its motto 'putting young people first,' lists having sex, receiving confidential advice, receiving contraceptive treatment and buying condoms among the rights of "young people".

There are links to other 'helpful' websites such as the BPAS (British Pregnancy Advisory Service – which describes itself as 'the leading provider of abortion services in the UK'), Childline (which advises a girl named Chantelle, aged 14, that if she is afraid that she might be pregnant she can still prevent pregnancy by using emergency contraception up to three days after intercourse), [http://www.childline.org.uk/pdfs/info-pregnancyandcontraception.pdf] Like It Is [www.likeitis.org] which is run by Marie Stopes International (MSI) and is described as a website for 11-15 year olds, providing advice on issues such as contraception, periods, teenage pregnancy, sex and sexuality. MSI runs many of the abortion 'clinics' throughout the country and provides services such as abortion, contraception, 'emergency contraception', female sterilisation, screening, vasectomy and so on. I would advise every parent to view this website, directed as it is at 11-15 year olds. Parents should note that this website brazenly drives a wedge between parents and children by including a 'Hide this page' icon, a feature which enables a child to press it quickly if he/she is unexpectedly disturbed by a parent.

A local pharmacist at a major supermarket was recently featured in our local newspaper holding cards produced by



For Young People. Again, every parent should visit its website.[[www.foryoungpeople.co.uk](http://www.foryoungpeople.co.uk)] which, along with its Sex Education pack, is heavily reliant upon links to the Brook Advisory site. Every headteacher in Kent (including primary heads) has been sent a manual of sexual health education produced by the Kent Education Service in conjunction with For Young People. The 'Speakeasy' programme in use in many organizations such as Sure Start also promote 'family planning' according to the philosophy of Brook and fpa ([www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk) – formerly known as the Family Planning Association).

I know that many parents are very worried about the physical and moral welfare of their children, and quite rightly so. We should also be concerned about the social consequences of the State-promotion of increased availability of contraception and sex education to ever younger age groups.

The policy followed to date has not resulted in reduced teenage pregnancies. It has not resulted in the reduction of sexually transmitted infections. People are getting infected at younger ages and in greater proportions of the population than ever before. Why? Because in the absence of any clear-cut and/or coherent approbation by adult mentors they are having sex at ever younger ages.

As Catholics, we believe that sex is for having children within a state of love which is marriage. In virtually all the State-sponsored programs sex is reduced to an activity which can be engaged in whenever it feels right. As the For Young People website puts it, 'Sex should be fun, don't make it a problem.'

Every parent has a right and a duty to ensure that their primary role as educators of their children is not sub-contracted out to schools. The Church teaches that parents must be involved in teaching their children about chastity and – in a way appropriate to their ages – the purpose and nature of sex. The school and, of course, the State may be called upon by parents to assist them in their task but cannot take over that right and responsibility.

Lip service is often paid to the importance of parental involvement, while the role of parents is everywhere undermined, as you will see if you check out the websites I have mentioned. Moreover on the matter of giving contraception to children and referring them for abortions the basic rights of parents to know have been trampled upon again and again in the courts.

We ought to seek a fuller understanding of the Church's teaching on sex and marriage, particularly why practices such as contraception, abortion and IVF go against the dignity of the human being and are therefore morally and intrinsically evil. Cf. the March 2006 version of this column ([faith.org.uk](http://faith.org.uk)).

A climate of prayer in the home is essential. If you do not pray as a family, begin to do so, even if one of the parents is not a Catholic. Those times of prayer with children before they go to bed can be graced opportunities to have that quiet intimate chat with your child. I remember many such moments, particularly with my mother, before I went to sleep, as she educated me in the ways of love and purity in a manner appropriate to my stage of development.

Not every child develops at the same rate and so a one-size-fits-all sex education policy is fraught with problems. To confront a child with concepts that he/she is not ready for can disturb and cause a premature awakening of sexual drives with consequent psychological and emotional trauma. A parent (so often the mother – but the father has his important role too) who has got to know his/her child is often best placed to judge the appropriate moment to discuss particular issues with that child.

We would all wish to build a civilisation of love. The vision of love that the State is presenting to our youngsters is not the vision of love that Jesus Christ came to share with us. Let us join together in helping to promote this Catholic vision of true love. We need to find practical ways of supporting each other in this process, perhaps talks, discussion and/or support groups.

Can we find some way of making our positive vision more widely known? Can we ensure that our objections to the provision of the death-dealing abortion pill in our supposedly family-friendly supermarket pharmacies is heard?

I would like to take the opportunity of reminding you about the wonderful sacrament of God's mercy: Reconciliation or Confession. If one has fallen in these matters, the road to forgiveness remains open. Should anyone have failed in any of these areas, I urge them to avail themselves of this gift of mercy. No priest will condemn you. Rather, he will administer lovingly and joyfully the forgiveness of Christ, and provide help to avoid falls in the future. All that is needed on our part is sincere sorrow and a purpose of amendment.

It would be very appropriate to entrust our young people to the intercession of St Maria Goretti, the 12 year old martyr for chastity, and ask Mary the Virgin Mother of God and her holy and chaste spouse St Joseph to help us all lead pure and holy lives worthy of our condition as disciples of Christ.

*Fr Boyle's parish website is [www.stsimon.org.uk](http://www.stsimon.org.uk) and he has a blog at <http://south-ashford-priest.blogspot.com/>*

## letters to the editor

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

### AN ATTEMPT AT MODERN CATECHESIS

Dear Father Editor,

Through *Our Lady's School of Evangelisation* we have conducted Youth Outreach to secondary schools and third level colleges. There is a team of 15 evangelisers visiting these schools and colleges in an effort to bring the Gospel message to our teenagers and young adults.

I have found it interesting how often the question of biological evolution arose within the outreach discussion groups in these schools. It was great to be able to articulate the vision promoted by *Faith* movement of Creation through 'The Unity-Law of Control and Direction' and to be able to explain and to answer the questions related to Science and the orthodox Catholic Faith. I have had some good feedback from these encounters.

Yours Faithfully  
David Walshe  
St. Michael's House  
Knock  
Co. Mayo

### THE SPIRITUAL SOUL

Dear Father,

Your March-April issue on the soul and human person is very timely.

In your excellent editorial article, you write:

"There has been a long-tradition within Catholic catechesis for making a *rational case for the immortal nature of men...* She (the Catholic Church) needs to make a *renewed case for her teaching concerning the human soul*. In this regard we need to *return to the essential outlines of the Thomistic tradition* while developing its specific arguments... *in the light of modern science.*" (my emphasis).

I notice that Fr. Dylan James, in his article, says: "the existence of the spiritual soul in man is a truth (we argue) that can be deduced from reason."

The need for clear teaching about the soul becomes ever clearer. For one thing, it is inconsistent to believe that the same person is raised up at the end of time unless his or her soul is immortal. Belief in the resurrection of the body requires the immortality of the soul.

In this regard may I mention my own book *The Soul: An Inquiry* (London, St Paul's Publishing, 2004)? It aims to provide the arguments of reason which support the biblical, and so Church's, view of man, and especially the creation and immortality of the soul. Its underlying approach is based on Aristotle and St. Thomas. It also engages contemporary philosophy and modern science (why we are not just the products of evolution).

Yours Faithfully  
Francis Selman  
Director of Philosophy  
Allen Hall Seminary  
Chelsea

### A CATHOLIC TEXTBOOK?

Dear Father Editor,

The review by James Preece of the book "Catholic Christianity Today" (in the May/June issue of *Faith*) is both disturbing and depressing, especially in view of its being recommended as "the best text book available for teaching Religious Education in Catholic schools."

This appalling ignorance of the Church's teaching in Faith and Morals is surely the root cause of the decline of Catholicism in this country today, and, as many people observe, goes back at least one generation, (presumably that of its authors).

To think that it is being perpetuated, -nay, perpetrated- in this way is shocking to say the least, and I suggest that a copy of this Review should be sent to every Bishop in the British Isles. May we then hope that the offending book be withdrawn from circulation in our schools, and something of real Truth be produced to replace it.

Yours faithfully  
Jane Sampson  
Chelworth  
Malmesbury  
Wilts

### MARY DOUGLAS AND A PRESCRIPTION FOR MODERN BRITAIN

Dear Fr Editor

Some of the more thoughtful parts of the secular media have recently acknowledged the passing of Mary Douglas, who *Commonweal* describes as "one of most influential Catholic intellectuals of the post-war era, and... perhaps the most influential social anthropologist from any background".

Her work is highly relevant to the rebuilding of Catholic culture and to challenging the credentials of our current liberal secular consensus. She may be familiar to some of your readers but I feel it is worth recalling and honouring her great contribution to the sum of scientific wisdom.

Her most famous book, *Grid and Group*, looks at organisations from the point of view of two counterbalancing social forces; "grid" standing for traditions, conventions, hierarchical structures, accepted mores and patterns of behaviour; "group" encompassing the bonds of personal interaction, mutual recognition and communal self identification. Individuals in community define themselves and are shaped by these intersecting parameters, being both limited and/or enabled by the prevailing culture type.

Looking at the varied interplay of these factors makes for a powerful and very successful sociological analysis that can be applied to many situations – businesses, churches, (including dioceses and parishes) as well as clubs, movements and whole nation states. There are several possible broad combinations of grid and group factors, each of which produces fairly predictable types of community.

High grid, high group organisations have clear internal rules of engagement and a strong, shared cultural identity, producing great cohesion and stability for a period, but tending to be immobile and slow to adapt to external changes. One could think of the Edwardian British Empire, or perhaps the pre-Conciliar Church. High grid, low group organisations are typically dictatorships and moribund or ossified religious groups where rigid control mechanism dominate all relationships but with little sense of personal belonging or communal purpose, so internal pressures can eventually be explosive. Pre-revolutionary Russia or China, or present day Zimbabwe would be examples. Low grid, high group entities are characterised by intense interpersonal bonds but with few

controls or boundaries. They can be very internally fluid but highly unstable. Religious cults and radical political movements with charismatic leaders are typically located here.

Finally there is the low grid, low group category. Groups that adopt this style of working believe that they have reached great social maturity but ditching all vestiges of deference and dissolving old fashioned notions of tribal pride. In fact they are usually entering upon their own demise. Does this ring any bells in modern Britain? Many in the post-Conciliar Catholic Church could do well to examine their anthropological consciences in this regard too. To be anti-hierarchical, anti-institutional, anti-ritual and against any clear sense of Catholic cultural identity is not the mark of liberation but a sign of sociological and spiritual senescence! True maturity, one might venture, lies in the middle way where hierarchy, structure, law and ritual, as well as personality, initiative, inspiration and group dynamics are all acknowledged and valued and held in balance.

Grid and Group theory is not Mary Douglas' only significant legacy. Her earliest work on the relationship between ritual purity and holiness, and her later work on the true literary and theological meaning of the Book of Leviticus do much to counter the neo-Freudian view that Judeo-Christianity is based on a primitive, superstitious, patriarchal, taboo ridden ideology. But that would need an article in its own right.

She was not an apologist, but an original and truly objective scholar. As such she did much to clarify the truth of God's Word for the modern world. May she rest in peace.

*Yours Faithfully*  
James Nelson  
Bristol Road  
Birmingham

## TOWARDS APPROPRIATE LITURGY

Dear Father Editor,

How fortunate for Fr Philippe Jobert that he lives where he does and is able to celebrate Mass in the way that he does, with his community. I would ask him to spare a thought for the many millions of Catholics who do not enjoy a comparable blessing. Does that represent an argument in favour of the Old Mass rather than the new? Well, not essentially, but there is a cause and effect factor related to the present liturgical debacle, which he has not perceived. There can be no doubt whatsoever that any crisis which

exists in the the Church today, related to worship and belief, can be traced directly to intrinsic difficulties manifested in the present rite. I am simply repeating – though not verbatim- the sentiments of the present Holy Father, when he was a cardinal. But there is more in Fr Philippe's article with which I would take issue.

He writes in your last edition of *Faith Magazine*, "millions of the faithful throughout the world have spontaneously adhered to the new rite". Indeed? What choice did they have from 1970? I went to Solesmes in the 1970's and I have seen the dignity and the beauty of the liturgy there and I thank God for it. But it is not typical. In fact there is hardly such a thing as a typical Mass. The tragedy is that so many Catholics, in so many places, have to shop around for decent liturgy.

The old Roman rite was often done badly and hastily in many places. It still conveyed precisely what was intended by it. There was no mistaking either its spirit or letter as unambiguously Catholic, even when badly done. The same cannot be said universally, of the present rite. It has –maybe unintentionally- given rise in not a few places to an unwarranted emphasis on the participants over the central action of the priest as *alter Christus*. To use the parable of the Prodigal Son –as Fr Phillipe does- to demonstrate the argument, it is as though the most important part of the story was the people who attended the party for the boy's return and not the generosity of the Father in giving it.

Fr Phillippe does not have to endure the present English translation of the Mass of Paul VI, so bad that it has had to be totally re-done to correct an amazing number of inaccuracies. Can he imagine the effect this strained and diluted nourishment has had on several generations of English-speaking Catholics all over the world? I have seen its results, as a pastor, for the past nearly thirty years, as have many others. The statistics of lapsation, as well as the catechetical ignorance of so many, speak for themselves.

I fear that in his analysis of the crisis, Fr Phillipe is strongly influenced by an understanding of the situation in France which has sharp differences to that elsewhere. There always has been a small though significant and still growing support for the Old Mass in the English-speaking world where liturgy in the English language was always seen as the unmistakable medium of non-Catholic worship. People in these islands died for the Latin Mass

in opposition to Cranmer's parody of it, however beautiful its vernacular, and many of us are not prepared to forget that or jettison irresponsibly those sacred rites for which they died. Very little attention was paid to this fact in Rome in the 1960's, but the late Cardinal Heenan, Archbishop of Westminster, both recognised and understood it when he negotiated the indult for England and Wales in the 1970's.

Another point that I will raise with Fr Phillipe is the question of the widespread abuses of the liturgy that the late Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI have sought to halt. They place another serious question mark over the modern rite because it could be argued that the options and emphasis on interaction that is now an essential aspect of it have contributed to this situation. Again, it can be viewed as a simple question of cause and effect.

Can Fr Phillippe assure me that these abuses will cease immediately? The answer has got to be no. Were there such abuses of the Old Rite? Certainly there were, but they began to be more widespread and outrageous quite soon after 1965, when tinkering and traducing went on, in the imagined expectation of spiritual benefits galore. Where there have been some, I suspect it is in places where the present Mass has been celebrated with as much reference to past forms as to any *avant-garde* agenda. One has only to reflect on what has happened in countries like Brazil to see a measure of the effect of horizontal liturgy and its dependant theological aberrations, leading to a craving for panaceas providing an instantaneous buzz. People in droves are finding the emotional charge is better supplied in travelling the whole journey, from Catholicism into sectarianism.

In a phrase, the modern rite in its present form fails to deliver in quite the same way and with the same immediacy that was conveyed by the old. Its rating is far from totally satisfactory. We need the Old Rite to point the way to why that is so. Perhaps that is why so many have desired to bury it. They have not succeeded and will not succeed because the well-spring of piety and prayer from which it comes is itself the perennial source of nearly two millennia of the Church's living tradition: the *lex orandi*, *lex credendi*.

*Yours Faithfully*  
Fr Antony Conlon  
The Oratory School  
Woodcote



## comment on the comments



by  
William Oddie

### A CHRISTIAN LEGACY?

Now Mr Blair has actually left office, a great event is supposed to take place and perhaps (I write this, of course, still living under the Blairite dispensation) already has happened. Mr Blair – or so Father Michael Seed was alleged (on May 20, by Michael Wroe in *The Sunday Times*) to have claimed – is due to ‘declare himself Roman Catholic’. Did this mean that Mr Blair has himself unilaterally determined that he is an RC, rather like Napoleon seizing the crown from the Pope’s hands and crowning himself? Or perhaps Mr Blair has already been received in the normal way. Fr Seed, according to *The Sunday Times*, ‘is without peer in luring high-profile figures into the Church’. But perhaps it was not Fr Seed who ‘lured’ Mr Blair into the Church at all. As *The Sunday Times* went on to surmise, ‘...another Catholic priest, hundreds of miles away in the German town of Tübingen, may yet have a far more influential role in Blair’s future.’

And who might that be? Why, it is none other than ex-emeritus-Professor Hans Küng, who is ‘widely regarded as the most influential living Christian theologian.’ Certainly, that Kung is exactly Blair’s cup of tea is obvious enough. According to Michael Wroe, it is not just that Kung’s ‘magisterial inquiries into the meaning of God and the nature of religion place him in the pantheon of modern religious thinkers and give him a global audience’ (cor!): ‘Less well known’, says Wroe, ‘is a friendship with Blair, cemented at private meetings at Downing Street’. Wroe continues with the information that ‘It’s Küng’s decade-long quest into what the great religions share that inform plans

for the Blair Foundation, designed to foster understanding between Judaism, Islam and Christianity, the three Abrahamic faiths.’

Likely enough, though it isn’t yet clear what Blair’s foundation is going to achieve that the Three Faiths Forum – founded some years ago by the late Sheikh Zaki Badawi and Sir Sigmund Sternberg – hasn’t, particularly in view of the fact that because of Iraq he is heartily detested by most Muslims (except in Kosovo), for all that he reads the Koran on aeroplanes. The fact is that so far as they are concerned he might just as well share the views of Mr Gladstone (that other great religious Prime Minister) that Muslims ‘were, upon the whole, from the black day when they first entered Europe, the one great anti-human specimen of humanity’, and that ‘Wherever they went, a broad line of blood marked the track behind them...’ Kung himself thinks that, Iraq notwithstanding, Blair ‘is an ethical person with charisma, he could become a worker for peace, maybe not in the Middle East but certainly in Africa.’

It isn’t, of course, just his views on interfaith dialogue that recommends Kung’s ‘global ethic’ to Blair: it is the fact that here is a Catholic, still officially a priest in good standing, who like him believes in indiscriminate intercommunion and rejects practically every doctrine and ethical belief that makes Catholicism different from Anglicanism. Kung’s beliefs on abortion, women priests, married priests, infallibility and the nature of the Church, and much else besides do prompt the question, well, if a Catholic priest can believe all that and remain in good standing, why shouldn’t Blair, or any other Anglican, whatever his beliefs, become a Catholic at any time without any further enquiries.

What Mr Blair believes is now, however, a matter of historical interest rather than current concern. During his time in power his religious beliefs and preachy tone, on the whole, prompted mistrust. His friendship with the openly, almost showily religious George W. Bush prompted

journalists to ask him more than once if they prayed together (a question Blair always refused to answer, but I bet they did). But Blair made a point of repudiating any suggestion of American style political religiosity. ‘I don’t want to end up with an American-style type of politics with us all going out there and beating our chests about our faith,’ he said during the 2005 election campaign. People were defined by their faith, he went on, but it was ‘a bit unhealthy’ if it became used in the political process.

But was Blair’s religion in fact ‘used in the political process’?

Certainly, he always attempted to avoid specific issues, on which he was often vulnerable. Before the last election, his response to a call from Cardinal Cormac Murphy O’Connor, surprisingly perhaps, backed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, to make abortion an election issue was to ignore them both, and to take refuge in windy generalities: those windy generalities, all the same, were not simply evasive tactics, but a pretty clear attempt to attract the support of a particular constituency. Two days later after the Cardinal’s statement on abortion, Blair gave a speech to ‘faith groups’; ‘In his speech’, reported the news agency *Ekklesia*, ‘Mr Blair said a vision of community, with people helping each other, was central to his politics. He said churches made a “visible, tangible difference” for the better in society. “I would like to see you play a bigger, not a lesser, role in the future,” he said. “So many of your organisations have the capacity not only to help, but to inspire and to enthuse, by being unashamed about your beliefs, your commitment and your example.” All of which meant not very much; but it was the kind of thing which tended to get ideological secularists worried.

But was there really ever anything to be worried about? *The Observer* (that steadfastly secularist organ) certainly thought so in 2003 when it unveiled a classic newspaper ‘revelation’, which it ushered in with the time-honoured

formula 'The Observer can reveal'. What the paper revealed was that 'Blair is to allow Christian organisations and other "faith groups" a central role in policy-making in a decisive break with British traditions that religion and government should not mix.' The Prime Minister, said *The Observer*, 'has set up a ministerial working group in the Home Office charged with injecting religious ideas across Whitehall. One expert on the relationship between politics and religion described the move as a "blow to secularism"' (this alleged expert was unnamed). But what did this supposed 'injection' of religious ideas across Whitehall actually amount to? It undoubtedly caused a stir at the time. Keith Wood, executive director of the National Secular Society protested that 'this is a further example of the Government's desire to favour and privilege religious organisations', and wondered 'when the opinions and needs of those who are non-religious will be similarly regarded. The non-religious', he whinged, 'feel alienated and excluded from the political processes that help shape our society.' This supposed blow to secularism was unwisely stressed by some religious supporters of the government at the time. Graham Dale, director of the Christian Socialist Movement, declared that the new group 'raises to a new level the recognition of faith as a factor in government consultation and indicates the Government's willingness to engage with people of faith in every area of public life'; he added 'It therefore also represents a blow to secularism.'

But what did all this actually mean, in practice? The anxiety of the National Secular Society, it turned out in the end, was entirely misplaced: Blair's was in reality a resolutely secularist administration; when it came to defending religious freedom from the secularist juggernaut of the Sexual Orientation Regulations, for instance, all Blair's talk in 2005 of wanting to see faith groups 'play a bigger, not a lesser role in the future' melted away like snow in the sunshine. As I reported in the

last issue of this magazine, when it came to political survival, not only Blair but that prominent Catholic, Ruth Kelly, abandoned the Catholic adoption agencies to their fate, an act for which she was warmly praised by the National Secular Society, which welcomed 'Ms Kelly's statement that there will be no scope for religious groups to discriminate if they are given welfare services to run.'

As Peter Osborne pointed out last year in *The Spectator*, Blair's 'evangelical style is by no means matched by evangelical substance. Indeed some Christians come close to despair when they contemplate Tony Blair's policies. On issue after issue they are baffled by his failure to convert Christian belief into action. Back in 1993 the Prime Minister insisted, 'Christianity is a very tough religion. There is right and wrong. There is good and bad.' Yet on practically every key moral issue of our day – family, abortion, cloning – the Prime Minister falls on the side of the secular, liberal consensus rather than that of robust Christian teaching.'

Nevertheless, despite Blair's practical secularism, and despite his repeated pretence at not 'doing God' for his own party political ends, he has done it repeatedly, often implicitly – by adopting that sing-song evangelical tone ('Vicar of St Albion's') when defending particular policies – but sometimes, too, quite openly as when, the year before he was elected in his first landslide, he declared in *The Sunday Telegraph* that 'My view of Christian values led me to oppose what I perceived to be a narrow view of self-interest that Conservatism – particular its modern, right-wing form – represents.' But what precisely are these 'Christian values'? And how have they informed his policies in government? The answer of history will surely be that this is a government which has presided over a marked retreat of Christian values from the arena of public policy, despite all Tony Blair's fine words. Perhaps the most dangerous retreat of all, from the point of view of social cohesion and

stability, has been in the area of family policy. As Peter Osborne points out in his *Spectator* piece, 'Christian teaching is strong on family values, and Tony Blair has enthusiastically embraced the rhetoric'. And yet, Osborne continues, '... The married-couples allowance has been abolished, funding has been switched from groups backing marriage to those taking a relaxed view of any kind of relationship, the benefits system has been changed to target all money for children regardless of family structure... Far from being morally neutral on the family, the Blair government has actively discriminated against it'.

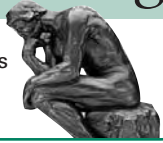
Before Blair became Prime Minister, the Methodist minister, the late Lord Soper, told Osborne that he had 'every reason to think that Mr Blair is a sincere Christian and [that he had] no doubt that in his political life he is largely directed by his religious beliefs'. But Soper was troubled by the fact that 'he talks about his faith and principles, but fails to explain how he would translate his beliefs into action if he were elected.'

It is a question which, during ten years in power, he never did answer, either in word or deed. Now, it is too late.



## The road from Regensburg

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



Following Pope Benedict's reflections on Faith and Reason at Regensburg University last September there seems to be increasing interest in theological discussion between Catholics and followers of Islam. In this column we will briefly survey some of the most relevant of these inter-faith discussions in the context of an increasingly secular academic culture. Our own editorial last January, "Fostering the Regensburg Insight", discussed related issues.

Evangelical Christians have been making an interesting contribution to the science and religion debate for some time. Recently this seems to have involved a clearer call for a modern "apologetic" in defence of Christianity, encouraged, among other things, by the popular success of Richard Dawkins' recent book *The God Delusion*. For example:

- Alister McGrath, who has become more prominent this year, founded in 2004 the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics, in order to aid "the urgent task of the church today to find ways to present the never-changing gospel of Christ in an ever-changing cultural context. There is a pressing need for strong theological and intellectual work...". He is organizing a major conference on Natural Theology at Oxford University in 2008 and is due to present the prestigious Gifford lectures at Aberdeen University in 2009.
- This year the increasingly influential American evangelical scholar William Lane Craig has undertaken a speaking tour in England which was well received. His 1994 book *Reasonable Faith* (Crossway) argues that "Evangelicals have been living on the periphery of responsible intellectual existence... there is an intellectual war going on in the universities and in the professional journals and scholarly societies. Christianity is being attacked from all

sides as irrational... This is a war we cannot afford to lose."

- The website of the impressive British based organization Christians in Science, which among other things rejects the main thrust of Intelligent Design thought, has recently reached 6,500 hits per day.

Therefore in this column we will also report on such developments and events from within the Evangelical tradition and beyond for example discussions funded by the Templeton Foundation, as described in our Cutting Edge column in this issue. All these parallel our own work in promoting a new apologetic for the scientific age.

### OF ISLAMIC INTEREST

- Former Iranian president Mohammad Khatami told Pope Benedict XVI the wounds between Christians and Muslims were still "very deep", following the Pope's linking of the Islamic approach to Faith and Reason with violence in his September Regensburg address. This led to protests including attacks on churches in the Middle East and the killing of a nun in Somalia. The Pope later said he regretted any misunderstanding it caused among Muslims.

Khatami, who is generally classified among the 'moderate' proponents of Shiite Islam, took part in a conference with the pope on the theme: *Intercultural dialogue, a challenge for peace*. He said that Christianity and Islam needed to rediscover their common roots as monotheistic religions in order to improve relations. He added: "No one can use God's name to instigate war or hate or speak ignorantly of crusades. Both religions must enter a sincere and practical dialogue and commitment to achieve peace and eliminate terrorism and war."

*The Scotsman*, 4 May, 2007

- Karim Aga Khan IV, a descendant of the prophet Muhammad and spiritual leader of 20 million Ismaili Muslims told a German news website that he would welcome a debate with Pope Benedict XVI and other religious leaders on faith, reason and violence. Khan disputed the pope's suggestion that Islam has a problem with reason. He said: "Of the Abrahamic faiths, Islam is probably the

one that places the greatest emphasis on knowledge. The purpose is to understand God's creation, and therefore it is a faith which is eminently logical. Islam is a faith of reason."

*Spiegel International*, 12 October 2006

- Last year, Muslim scholar, Ali Nayed and Italian philosopher and theologian, Alessandro Martinetti took part in a scholarly written discussion concerning Pope Benedict's Regensburg affirmation that we should expect God (the Logos) to act profoundly rationally, and hence for there to be a profound harmony of Faith and reason. Martinetti emphasized the Pope's affirmative quotation of the Emperor Manuel that "not acting reasonably is contrary to God's nature".

Nayed accepted that even God could not go against the principle of non-contradiction but that his actions could easily be beyond our rational capacity to grasp ("extra-rational"). He affirmed that "one person's extra-rationality is often another person's irrationality". Martinetti (and Benedict) affirm that Christianity implies *a priori* that any such "extra-rational" revelation will *in fact* have a reason and be in profound harmony with human reason.

Nayed goes on to state that Benedict XVI's just call for an expansion of the notion of reason so as to accommodate revelatory insights is something that both Christians and Muslims can positively respond to. (see our January 2007 editorial for a discussion of these issues).

[www.chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it](http://www.chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it)

- Former Dutch MP Ayaan Hirsi Ali has released her new book, *Infidel*. The book tells the extraordinary story of Ali's life as a Muslim woman who broke away from her family to live in The Netherlands and how she transformed herself into a spokesman for the rights of Muslim women. *Infidel*, the name she found herself being called when she would propose changes to what she considered an oppressive or backward aspect of Islam, is her account of her transformation from 'the world of faith to the world of reason'.

*New York Times*, 14 February 2007

- Young Muslims are calling for the Koran to be interpreted. An Iranian Muslim student told a journalist for Asia News: "We can no longer think of the Koran



as directly dictated by God to Mohammad through the angel Gabriel. It must be interpreted." In today's Islam, ideas are available, especially among reformists and young intellectuals, but many are forbidden from expressing them as freedom in the Islamic world is highly limited.

[www.asianewsnet.net](http://www.asianewsnet.net)

- An article in an Islamic newspaper, the Khaleej Times, has used writings from the Koran to refute allegations that Islam is a demeaning religion for women's rights. It postulates that the Prophet Muhammad, along with the religion of Islam, were the first to transform women's status from being property to someone who is essential and vital for the survival of communities and families. *Islam online 7 April 2007*

- A Muslim man stood as a candidate for the Christian Peoples Alliance in the Scottish parliamentary elections in April. Abdul Dean, regional candidate for Glasgow, rejected overtures to join major secular parties in Scotland to back the Christian Democrats, even though the Alliance honours the rule of Christ at the heart of its' constitution. He said: "A lot of Muslims have asked me why I am standing. My answer is simple: the Christian Peoples Alliance is the only political party that is based on values, rather than ideology." *The Times, April 28, 2007*

- Windsor Castle was the venue of an unusual conference entitled, *Sacred Voices: Convergence and Contrast in the Music of the Abrahamic Faiths*. The Conference examined the way sacred music has evolved in Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions, its different modes of expression, its contribution to deepening religious experience, and its place in wider musical and general culture of the three faith traditions. The Director of *The Institute of Ismaili Studies*, Professor Azim Nanji, who chaired the conference, said: "the purpose of the conference was to explore how music enables a deeper understanding and appreciation of the parallels and exchanges among the three traditions." *The Institute of Ismaili studies, February 2007*

- Imams forced an Oslo inter-faith football match to be cancelled because the Norwegian Christian minister team included women. They felt this was unacceptable because of the possibility of bodily contact between male and female clerics.

*Daily Telegraph May 7th 2007*

*Chief contributor: Lisa Gregoire*

## OF EVANGELICAL INTEREST

- Radio Four's *Sunday* programme on 20th May last hosted a discussion on the government's "U-turn" in favour of the creation of human-animal hybrid embryos for medical research. It was between Dr Peter Saunders, General Secretary of the Christian Medical Fellowship, the largest group of Christian doctors, and Rabbi Julia Neuberger who is on the Lords scrutiny committee for the Bill.

Dr Saunders affirmed that such experimentation was "unethical" because: "... from a Christian perspective human beings... are made in God's image... God became a human being in the person of Christ. Christ died to save human beings, and these things are what we believe give human beings real dignity... Creating human-animal hybrids... will cross the fundamental line that's always separated humans from animals, that many people have very deep feelings and intuitions about."

Rabbi Neuberger asserted that "it's really important that one accepts that... new scientific research has taught us... that the human embryo is not as unique as we thought before... We do have to think differently about the 'unique quality of human embryos' in the way that Peter Saunders is saying... The miracle of creation... may have to be explained somewhat differently... Our human brains are given to us by God... to better the life of other human beings... and if this technology can do it..., and I don't believe that anybody is going to research beyond fourteen days, then so be it, lets do it."

[www.bbc.co.uk/sunday](http://www.bbc.co.uk/sunday) to listen to full discussion.

See our March/April editorial for our discussion of bringing back into the public forum a culturally convincing proof of the human spiritual soul, which has been at

the heart of Christian civilization's rational defence of the difference between humans and animals.

- Alister McGrath, promoting his critique of Dawkins' book *The God Delusion*, writes in the Daily Mail about his own return to Christianity (having been brought up a Protestant in Northern Ireland) whilst studying science at Oxford. He describes being filmed debating with Dawkins as part of his Channel 4 polemic against religion 'The Root of All Evil?' and the subsequent decision not to screen it as part of the programme. He reflects that *The God Delusion*, which is so rabid, patronising and prejudiced as to have caused embarrassment in secular circles, may 'turn out to be a monumental own goal', as it exposes the inherent intolerance of atheism.

*Daily Mail*

- *Christians in Science* are holding a joint conference with the American Scientific Association in August at Edinburgh University. This will include presentations by academics known to Faith Magazine readers such as Simon Conway Morris and Alister McGrath of *The Dawkins Delusion*. Issues such as the relationship between free-will and determinism will be examined from the perspective of neuroscience. The final day looks at cosmology and bioethics, with Professor Nigel Cameron (who is also down to speak at the forthcoming Conference for Families in Poland) speaking on reproductive technologies and human dignity.

*Christians in Science website*

## AND BEYOND

- A book published by Noah J. Efron last year, entitled *Judaism and Science*, traces the history of the relationship between Judaism and science or 'natural knowledge' from the time of the Israelites to the twentieth century. It looks specifically at the impact of Jewish beliefs upon the pursuit of knowledge and the role of natural knowledge in encouraging interaction with other cultures and faiths such as Islam during the Medieval period and Christianity during the Renaissance.

[www.greenwood.com](http://www.greenwood.com)

*Chief contributor: Fiorella Nash*



## cutting edge

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

### THE TEMPLETON FOUNDATION

The Templeton Foundation, [www.templeton.org](http://www.templeton.org), based in Philadelphia in the US, is a private grant-giving body dedicated to promoting the scientific investigation of the spiritual side to man. "Supporting Science – Investing in the Big Questions" is its motto, and it has been supporting such research worldwide since 1987. Founded by Sir John Templeton, an American billionaire financier, now aged 94, it manages funds which allow awards of some \$60m a year to various investigators. It states that its aims are: "to pursue new insights at the boundary between theology and science through a rigorous, open-minded and empirically focused methodology, drawing together talented representatives from a wide spectrum of fields of expertise."

Even before the establishment of the Foundation, Sir John Templeton began awarding the famous 'Templeton Prize,' known more fully as 'The Templeton Prize for Progress Toward Research or Discoveries about Spiritual Realities.' Its first recipient was Mother Teresa of Calcutta, in 1973, and has been granted over the years to scientists, religious leaders, philanthropists, political figures or philosophers, of many religions. Apart from Mother Teresa, Catholic recipients over the years have included Chiara Lubich, Cardinal Suenens, and Fr Stanley Jaki. There have been a number of British recipients of the prize, too, including scientists John Polkinghorne, Paul Davies, Arthur Peacocke, and the hospice-movement pioneer, Dame Cicely Saunders. The prize, one of the largest prizes in the world to date, standing at some £800k, is awarded annually for the

purpose of heightening awareness of the spiritual realm of human life. As Templeton himself has said, "If even one-tenth of world research were focused on spiritual realities, could benefits be even more vast than the benefits in the latest two centuries from research in food, travel, medicine or electronics, and cosmology?" See: [www.templetonprize.org](http://www.templetonprize.org).

### The Cambridge – Templeton Consortium

A particular collaboration has been forged in recent years with the University of Cambridge, UK, with this consortium itself considering applications for grants within fields allied to those of the Templeton Foundation. Under the overarching theme of 'The Emergence of Biological Complexity,' its three specific areas of research are listed as: 'Biochemistry and Fine Tuning,' 'Evolutionary History and Contemporary Life' and 'Becoming Fully Human.' The consortium describes the Templeton Foundation as having "made up to \$3 million available for research grants to stimulate and sponsor new research insights directly pertinent to the 'great debate' over purpose in the context of the emergence of increasing biological complexity, ranging from the biochemical level to the evolution of life and the emergence of society and culture." One of the consortium's panel, Prof. Simon Conway-Morris of the Earth Sciences Dept. of Cambridge University, has written and lectured recently on precisely the question of evolutionary convergence – this was highlighted in the *Cutting Edge* of May/June 2005. Details of the consortium's work can be found at:

[www.cambridge-templeton-consortium.org](http://www.cambridge-templeton-consortium.org)

### The Templeton–Cambridge Journalism Fellowships in Science & Religion

This is another contemporary spin-off of the Templeton Foundation's work. These fellowships were initiated in 2005 to provide, as their website states,

"a small group of print, broadcast, or online journalists and editors annually the opportunity to examine the dynamic and creative interface of science and religion." It enables up to twelve participants a year to benefit from a two-month intensive course of learning about the relationship between science and religion, through university seminars and private study. "The goal is to promote a deeper understanding and more informed public discussion of this complex and rapidly evolving area of inquiry." Certainly much contemporary media debate on this issue is far too superficial to engage with the issues that are truly significant. This new venture will hopefully allow some journalists the opportunity to delve far more deeply into these issues, and allow them then to contribute more constructively to informing the public about the real state of the religion–science debate. [www.templeton-cambridge.org](http://www.templeton-cambridge.org) has details about how to apply for these fellowships, and provides access to articles written by some of the first journalist-fellows of the programme.

The most recent of these articles, by Madeleine Bunting in the online *Guardian* of 7th May 2007, picks up on a highly pertinent theme. Her piece is entitled, "The New Atheists Loathe Religion Far Too Much to Plausibly Challenge It," and analyses the vitriolic style in which recent books such as Dawkins's *The God Delusion* treat their anti-religious subject. She concludes: "Dawkins is an unashamed proselytiser. He says in his preface that he intends his book for religious readers and his aim is that they will be atheists by the time they finish reading it. Yet *The God Delusion* is not a book of persuasion, but of provocation – it may have sold in the thousands but has it won any souls? Anyone who has experienced such a conversion, please email me (with proof). I suspect the New Atheists are in danger of a spectacular failure."

# Sunday by Sunday



## 13th Sunday Year C

1 July Lk 9. 51 – 62

**1.** “Jesus resolutely took the road to Jerusalem,” Jesus has just experienced the moment of the Transfiguration. Strengthened by his time on the mountain top with Moses and Elijah, he now sets his face, with resolution to follow the Father’s will, despite all opposition. His journey leads him now to Jerusalem, the city that shows the continuity of the old and new covenants in God’s plan. In Jerusalem Jesus will complete his exodus to God and from Jerusalem the call to discipleship will reach to the ends of the earth.

**2.** The disciples react badly to opposition: “do you want us to call down fire from heaven?” The disciples lack Jesus’ obedience to the Father’s will and wish to act as Elijah the prophet had done to his enemies. Jesus however refuses to act with violence and lives out his early teaching of non-retaliation. His face is set like flint. This sacrificial approach must then, normally, be the best way to overcome opposition. It will have the ‘best’ results, in the truest sense of the word.

**3.** We have three different responses to the call to discipleship. “I will follow you wherever you go,” Jesus wishes to trick noone into discipleship and shows that there is a cost to being his follower. He seeks for a whole-hearted gift of self. This might be seen as a risky strategy, even though it must be the best one. The costs seems too much for some who are invited to follow. “Let me go and bury my Father first.” Christ’s call is challenging and goes deep. But his sacrifice is making it easy for us, if we will only accept the challenge.

## 14th Sunday Year C

8 July Lk 10.1-12.17-20

**1.** The disciples were sent out in pairs: the servant of the Kingdom cannot work in isolation. God’s Kingdom must be preached not the servant’s. In this case there would never be a disagreement as regards the con-tents, purpose and motivation for their preaching. However, no Christian is self-sufficient. We are members of a Body and cannot cut ourselves away from the Body otherwise we perish. Also, no one servant can presume to be universally acceptable. This is when the servant begins to think he is more important than the Kingdom. It was wisely done to send them in pairs.

**2.** The urgency of their work is communicated in many ways. Harvest time is short and requires immediate action. They carry no baggage and do not stop to chatter on the road so that they will not be slowed down. We have lost this urgency in our work blam-ing our falling numbers and lack of response on the state of our society. We rarely pray specifically for vocations to the priesthood; we act as though we can manage very well without. Meanwhile the harvest is in danger of being lost. If we are to take seriously God’s will to associate us in His work then we should be more concerned and active.

**3.** The seventy-two return rejoicing from their mission. It would not always be so successful and the earlier comment by Jesus about being like lambs among wolves is ominous. They were also instructed to leave behind even the dirt from their feet in those towns which rejected His Kingdom. The Kingdom cannot be compromised and not even a handful of dust would be allowed to enter until it acknowledged Christ as King. Opposition soon arose and continues today. The devils will indeed submit but not without first taking their toll. Sometimes we must rejoice not in success but in the fact we have been chosen for the work and we gave our lives to it.

## 15th Sunday Year C

15 July Lk 10.25-37

**1.** A lawyer will seek the course of action which will prove just sufficient, no more no less. The Law of Moses cannot be treated in this way since it contains the word ‘love’ which does not admit of a course of action which is only ‘sufficient. Seeking still to restrict the prescription, the lawyer wants Jesus to define His terms. Ever since Cain asked God if he was his brother’s keeper (Gen 4.9) we have been trying to restrict God’s definition of neighbour. With this parable and His own death Jesus settled the dispute. He shed His blood for everyone and asks us to do the same.

**2.** We usually use the word ‘neighbour’ to refer to someone who lives nearby. Jesus takes a man from Jerusalem and one from Samaria as part of His parable, two places which hated each other, They meet on the road which indicates neutral territory. The only ‘thing which separates them is the history of hatred from their different places of birth. The Samaritan saw not a Jew but a helpless person. His actions cost him time and money. It must have cost the Jew his prejudice and hatred. They must have finished by seeing each other simply as brothers. If so, then the fulfilment of the Law was within the grasp of both of them. Heaven seems cheaply bought on these terms!

**3.** Christ uses the image of a heretic Northerner to teach the Jews the meaning of the Law. The Jews hated the Samaritans because they abandoned the Law of Moses. The Priest and the Levite were thought to be followers of the Law but on this occasion they ‘chose “the other side” in more ways than one. The Law of God is not like the Highway Code which we bend as far as we can get away with (and curse our luck when we are caught out). It is the expression of God’s will for us and the way to live which is truly human. We inherit eternal life if we live by it, not as a reward, but because through the Law and God’s grace we already begin to share in God’s life.

## 16th Sunday Year C

22 July Lk 10.38-42

**1.** It was Martha who invited Jesus and welcomed Him into her home. Her worries about the preparations for the meal are really only a manifestation of her whole life of fretting "about so many things". It is a good and noble thing to work, but work can sometimes be used as a way to avoid facing more important aspects of life. In this case it becomes an escape from the one thing necessary which is our relationship with God. Perhaps Martha has not got the courage to sit and listen for fear of what she might hear about herself.

**2.** Another aspect of the 'work-filled' lifestyle should be considered – especially by priests. It betrays a lack of trust in God's capacity to work. Activism is not only an escape from deeper realities but an attitude which puts more faith in the endeavours of men than in the movement of the Spirit. It is a statement that prayer cannot really achieve what human effort can. The creation story of Genesis 1 is perhaps the best lesson. God fixed the universe with the simple command of His word. Finally, on the last day He did absolutely nothing!

**3.** Mary's attitude is described by the word 'listening'. This is the human being at the height of its dignity. God made us so that we might know Him, love Him and serve Him in this world. We can only do that if we are open to His self-communication. Human beings were created to listen to the voice of God. Mary, sitting quietly at Jesus' feet, hanging on His every word, sums up what it is to be human.

## 17th Sunday Year C

29 July Lk 11.1-13

**1.** The 'Our Father' only appears in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The version in Matthew is longer and is taught in the context of the Sermon on the Mount. Here in Luke it comes about because the disciples see Jesus praying and want to do the same. Jesus Christ shows what every man could be and in fact should be. It is not surprising that this impulse to imitate occurs when they see

Jesus in prayer. Prayer, communication with our God, is what makes us truly human. As the Old Catechism said. God made us to know Him, love Him and serve Him. This requires that we be in communication with Him. Prayer fulfils the very reason we were created. The disciples sense this: so do we.

**2.** Holding God's name as Holy is the attitude of being a creature towards our creator. It sums up our whole existence. Yet the 'Our Father' focuses in on one particular aspect of our lives: forgiveness of others. This is the only part of the prayer which demands a commitment and pledge from the one praying. When we forgive we are not finding excuses for the one who has wronged us. Nor are we being asked to consider the hurt caused to us as insignificant or petty. No-one can buy or earn forgiveness. Many wrongs can never really be righted. To forgive, then, is to give an absolutely free gift. This makes the forgiver God-like. In prayer we enter communion with God and become more like Him. Forgiveness is an active instance of a deep prayer life.

**3.** From the 'Our Father' we see that prayer is not just asking for things from God. But we should not feel bad that we spend much of our prayer in petition. Behind the selfish motives in petitioner prayer is a deep recognition that God is the source and the only source, of everything which can bring our happiness and well-being. This brings practical consequences. We must persevere, since perseverance proves our trust that only God has the power and wants to make us happy'. Also, only He knows fully what good things we need for our well-being and happiness. Many of our prayers crash on the rocks of our plans and selfish motives. We must have the trust to leave the finer details to 'Our Father'.

## 18th Sunday Year C

5 August Lk 12: 13-21

**1.** A man shouts from the crowd. Whoever he was, he made no attempt to enter into any personal relationship with Jesus yet he wished to use Jesus' authority for his own ends. The man in

the Gospel called on the justice of God, or at least wished to turn the justice of God towards his own desires. Among many today the trend is to call on the love of God or at least to turn the love and mercy of God to their own desires. It is usually called upon to excuse any manner of behaviour and life-style, even that which is clearly in opposition to the words of Jesus in the Gospels. Again, an unwillingness to enter into a personal relationship with God usually accompanies this attitude. When we meet Jesus face to face we usually seek to turn our lives towards His demands not vice versa.

**2.** The rich man in the parable is certainly not lazy. He has worked for a good harvest, reacts swiftly to consolidate and preserve his gains and plans for the future. Who can begrudge a few years rest to a hard-working self-made man? He is not lazy, but he is a fool. There is no gift from God which cannot be used profitably in His service. So often we put these gifts at the service of other gods. usually money and sometimes ourselves. Most of us will give God part. but not the whole, of our lives. This too is foolish. If we put all our gifts at His service then it will be God who says to us. "Eat, drink, have a good time!" Better to hear these words from His lips than the one word in the parable which summed up the rich man's life: "Fool!"

**3.** Much of our daily news and most of our political energy centres upon the economic welfare of the citizens of our land. It is easy to be led into thinking that this is indeed the most important aspect of our lives. Such an attitude can easily take over. We may not reject God outright, but our quiet disregard for Him is just as devastating. The fact that it is quiet and unnoticed makes it all the more dangerous for us. In the end, our financial well-being is no more permanent than castles in the sand, washed away by the ebb and flow of the tide. When faced with death even mighty rulers would readily swap 'their kingdom for a horse'. Let us not leave our reckoning to such a late stage. since eternal happiness can begin here in time when we hoard up treasure with God.

### 19th Sunday Year C 12 August Lk 12.32-48

**1.** In this Gospel we hear instructions on selling possessions, being always vigilant and receiving punishment. These are generally considered in a negative context. But this Gospel passage begins with encouraging words. Christ calls His disciples His "little flock", a term of endearment. He also states that the Father is pleased to give them the Kingdom. In this light we see that renouncing possessions is necessary so that our hands and hearts are free to be able to take hold of the kingdom already offered. If we already have our 'hands full' with the things of this world there will be no room for the things of the next.

**2.** To watch and be vigilant is also a positive thing. When we are excitedly awaiting the arrival of someone or something which will give us joy and pleasure we cannot take our eyes off the road which will bring them. If we really do hold the Kingdom of God as our greatest treasure then a watchful attentiveness is natural. Our God is so ready to invite us to His table that He has offered to serve us Himself. Indeed, in the parable Christ describes how the master will put on an apron, the garment of a servant. He has in fact already done much more than this. He put on the nature of His creatures. And He did it in such a way that He will never put it off as we might take off an apron.

**3.** Even punishment in this context has a positive side. God has freely chosen to associate ordinary human beings in His work. We all of us have some responsibility to respond to God's offer of the Kingdom. Some have been given even more so that they can share in the work of making known God's great gift. When we abuse this responsibility the justice of God punishes. This is not a vindictive punishment but rather a proof that He takes us seriously. Our decisions and actions have consequences which touch eternity itself. No other creature is given such dignity.

### 20th Sunday Year C 19 August Lk 12, 49-53

**1.** Luke's gospel is the gospel of the Holy Spirit, whose inspiration is characterized by joy and a universal message of salvation starting from Jerusalem. (cf. Lk 4, 14; 24,32; 24, 45-47) It is also the gospel with the hardest sayings and most uncompromising attitudes. (Lk 13, 5; 11,37-52). Jesus' fire consumes complacency and shatters natural boundaries with a supernatural call to action for salvation. No revolutionary was half as radical as Christ, no fire-brand more shatteringly eloquent and to the point. The Good News burns hearts and divides families, but it also lights up the way through darkness. Faltering footsteps find no path to Christ. There is no going back.

**2.** But Jesus does not wish us to travel any road that he has not already hallowed by his presence. The baptism of fire that he must undergo upon the Cross smoulders already in anticipation within his soul, not out of some weird craving for the atrocious pain of execution but because of the universal salvation that his Passion will effect in the world. Our Lord's distress and natural revulsion from the agony of Calvary will later be intensified in Gethsemane. (Lk 22,39-46). For now his face is set like flint for Jerusalem (cf. Lk 9, 5-11) the city from which his salvation will ignite the world.

**3.** English history has seen all too literal an application of this hard saying in the sufferings of the Catholic martyrs of the Reformation period. It is true that many of every Christian denomination died for their conscience during this time and all are rightly commemorated in their various churches and ecclesial communions each year. But the preeminence of the Mass and loyalty to the successor of Peter are sublime truths so important for the mission of Christ and the integrity of the Church that those who were willing to give their lives to uphold them are worthy of special veneration.

### 21st Sunday Year C 26 August Lk 13: 22-30

**1.** The key to understanding this strange passage in Luke is the first verse we read (v.22) where we are told that Jesus was "making His way to Jerusalem." In Luke Jerusalem is the place of suffering and death and also the point from which the Gospel of salvation will be spread through the whole world. The person in the crowd asks. "Will only a few be saved?" Jesus with His face looking to Jerusalem concentrates not on numbers but on the means to salvation. Salvation begins in Jerusalem and so it begins with the cross. Where the Saviour has gone those wishing to be saved must follow. Many of us try to avoid the cross but still want salvation, like wanting to go for a swim but not wanting to get wet. This is the narrow door.

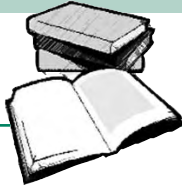
**2.** Because of the reality of sin the cross is an essential part of who Christ is. It must also be an essential part of who a Christian is. In the rite of baptism the sign of the cross is made on the person's forehead at the doors of the Church. before they enter. It is as if the cross is the key to the door which opens the way to the Eucharistic banquet. If we try to avoid the cross we throw away the key. The fact we have to knock on the door and request to be let in betrays that we have denied an essential part of what it is to be Christian. Of course Christ will not recognise us in such a changed state and so different to Him. The Eucharistic banquet itself is founded on the cross and is a sacrificial meal.

**3.** Jerusalem is not just the place of the cross but the beginning of salvation for the whole world. It is from here that all people from east and west, from north and south are called. When Jesus looked to Jerusalem then. He not only saw the cross but also what it would achieve. The arms of the cross stretch out from Jerusalem to embrace the whole world. It is strange that a Gospel passage which began with a question of whether only a few will be saved now embraces every nation and every generation. The narrow door is summed up in the name Jerusalem. It is a door open to everyone, but it is a door opened only by the key of the cross.



# Book

## reviews



### **Wonder and Wisdom:** Conversations in Science, Spirituality and Theology

by Celia Deane-Drummond, DLT,  
191pp, £12.95

The current dialogue between religion and science seems to be dominated by the intelligent design (ID) controversy. Although most mainstream scientists see it as Creationism by any other name, it is entirely possible that ID will soon find its way into school curricula. Schoenborn's famous New York Times article on the subject only served to intensify a debate that already occupied countless inches of column space; even Faith magazine has not been immune. How refreshing, then, to read a book that makes an original contribution to the religion/science debate. The result of a sabbatical grant from the Templeton Foundation to Celia Deane-Drummond, Professor of Theology and Biological Sciences at Chester University, *Wonder and Wisdom* takes several steps back from the rather narrow philosophy of ID to examine the relationship between these two ancient concepts. A major issue in the religion/science debate is that few commentators can boast formal training in both disciplines. Deane-Drummond, however, can do just that, and is thus ideally positioned to author such a commentary.

As an algae biologist I was initially struck by the cover graphic: a stained glass window made of diatoms, the tiny planktonic creatures whose exquisite outer shells are visible only through the electron microscope. There are few better

examples of how man's technology has revealed the wonders of the hidden world. Wonder is perhaps the easier of the two concepts to define, but the less enduring. Medieval writers saw a clear dichotomy of wonder as a humbling realisation of ignorance in the face of God's creation and curiosity as a rather more negative and aimless desire to uncover the secrets of nature. The development of the experimental method during the Enlightenment era meant that curiosity became associated with specific scientific endeavours, justified as seeking knowledge for its own sake. Wonder, on the other hand, slowly became 'the ruling passion of the vulgar mob, rather than that of the philosophical elite'.

In defining the complex notion of wisdom, Deane-Drummond introduces the concept of wisdom as an understanding of different facets of reality, a contemplative 'way of knowing' lost by modern science with its focus on specific discoveries. The concept of natural wisdom – order, complexity and fecundity of the natural world as a reflection of the wisdom of God – has been pondered by theologians since the dawn of Christianity. Contemporary concepts such as convergent evolution also point towards wisdom in nature. Convergent evolution, a concept expounded by Simon Conway-Morris in these pages last year, is the observation that highly similar traits have evolved independently in unrelated lineages. Convergent evolution cannot by definition be explained by genetic heritage, but is a result of the response of evolution to common and unifying physical laws.

Since the early 20th century, sociologists have sometimes tried to explain human behaviour in terms of Darwinian theory. However, such an approach does not adequately take into account human wisdom: although one may argue that an individual of superior wisdom may engender respect and thus attain reproductive success, says Deane-

Drummond, the fact that many of those who were thought to have wisdom were celibate makes this explanation unlikely. True individual human wisdom, then, could be seen a further layer to the natural wisdom of the human race with respect to cultural practices, in modifying practices that are counter-productive to survival.

As I mentioned earlier, reading this book made for a refreshing break from the ID controversy. The last few pages, however, present a new challenge to ID that few commentators seem to have mentioned. In a designed universe, what are we to make of suffering? The destruction of millions of species through extinction – what Deane-Drummond calls 'amoral suffering' – cannot be merely ascribed to the Fall of Man since much of it predates man's existence, and continues to occur independently of man's activity. The implication that suffering is an attribute of creation designed-in by God seems incompatible with the Crucifixion as being brought about by God's desire for reconciliation with Man. Rather, we should see suffering as an attribute of creation itself, rationalised not by a designer God but by Christ as Wisdom whose crucifixion realised the potential of suffering for redemption of humankind.

Since Deane-Drummond writes thematically, it is possible to follow this book even if it is read in a series of short sittings. The only possible downside to this style is that I found I kept forgetting where to find certain discussions in the text, as many concepts get revisited several times in different chapters. But the book is certainly not heavy-going and is very approachable for both the non-biologist and non-theologian.

**Edmund Nash**  
Magdalene College  
Cambridge

## The Myth of Hitler's Pope: How Pius XII rescued Jews from the Nazis

by Rabbi David G Dalin,  
Regnery Publishing, Inc, 209pp,  
available through Amazon

Right now an extraordinary controversy is raging in American academia. *The New York Times* website reported on 12 April 2007 on the public battle between two American Jewish scholars over the Holocaust. Professor Norman Finkelstein is currently seeking tenure at DePaul University in Chicago. Amazingly, his fellow-Jew Alan Dershowitz, a law professor at Harvard and a prominent defender of Israel, has been emailing faculty and administrators at DePaul with accusations of "shoddy scholarship, lying, and anti-semitism". The reason why Dershowitz has got so hot under the collar? Finkelstein's book *The Holocaust Industry. Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish suffering* (London/New York: Verso, 2000). Finkelstein is himself the child of holocaust survivors but is also a strong critic of Israel. According to the publishers' blurb, he claims that "the Holocaust industry has become an outright extortion racket". Having recently edited a collaborative *Encyclopedia of World Fascism*, in which I myself wrote the entry of Antisemitism, I was fascinated to buy Finkelstein's book. It reveals a world that really is unknown to us in the UK. One passage that struck me with particular force was where Finkelstein, with savage irony, describes Elie Wiesel touring around speaking on the Holocaust: "The Holocaust's mystery", Wiesel avows, is "noncommunicable"; "we cannot even talk about it." Thus, for his standard fee of \$25,000 (plus chauffeured limousine), Wiesel lectures that the "secret" of Auschwitz's "truth lies in silence."

The fact that this particular battle can go on publicly speaks volumes about the very different culture of the US. It has still to hit the headlines over here, but then it is

almost unimaginable in our polite, watery, and vacuous public culture. But reading about it immediately rang bells with me because I had just read Rabbi David G Dalin's astonishing and beautiful work *The Myth of Hitler's Pope*. This powerful book is a refutation not just of John Cornwell's suave demolition of the reputation of Pius XII in *Hitler's Pope*, it is a defence of the record of *all of the popes* in regard to their treatment of Jews. One of the most hard-hitting things Rabbi Dalin has to say is that Cornwell's book is actually a part of a culture war in which liberal Catholics are deliberately trying to undermine traditional Catholicism. They too are using the Holocaust, but for another set of purposes entirely. They dislike the modern papacy because it has stood for a set of moral values – many of them held in common with traditional Judaism – which they reject. "Very few of the recent books about Pius XII and the Holocaust (writes Rabbi Dalin) are actually about Pius XII and the Holocaust. The liberal bestselling attacks on the pope and the Catholic Church are really an intra-Catholic argument about the direction of the Church today. The Holocaust is simply the biggest club available for liberal Catholics to use against traditional Catholic teaching – especially on issues relating to sexuality, including abortion, contraception, celibacy, and the role of women in the Church". Dalin notes that some of the most hostile attacks on Pius XII (James Carroll, Garry Wills, as well as John Cornwell himself) have come from vitriolic critics of John Paul II. He contends that the liberalising agenda promoted by such writers is itself part of the wider campaign of "an increasingly left-wing intellectual class" to denigrate Catholicism and indeed Christianity itself.

It is very tiresome to have to refute books like those of Cornwell because, as Rabbi Dalin states right at the beginning of his book, a number of well-documented studies have patiently answered

individually with supporting evidence the slanders of Pius XII's enemies; but of course these books are simply ignored by the media and are usually published by small presses, so that they are not easy to find. At the end of the day it is as well to remember that John Cornwell is not a historian. Dalin quotes *Newsweek* columnist Kenneth L Woodward as stating that Cornwell's book is "a classic example of what happens when an ill-equipped journalist assumes the air of sober scholarship ... Errors of fact and ignorance of context appear on every page". But this itself is a reminder that just a few years after Pius XII had been feted by prominent Jews all over the world at his death in 1958 as a great friend and ally who had been responsible for saving many Jews during the War, an attack was launched on him by an equally unqualified person – a playwright, Hochhuth, author of *The Representative*. This hugely successful play which triggered a tidal wave of controversy now appears to have been a part of a slander campaign originating in the Soviet block against a pope who was a determined enemy of communism in the West.

The Holocaust, then, has been in the thick of the culture wars since the 1960s. But there are positive sides to all this for the Christian believer. First, the astonishing continuing centrality of the Jewish people in world history right down to the present day is a confirmation of the bible story: they are indeed God's chosen people and they continue at the heart of history. But at the same time, when we ask why so much attention has been paid and continues to be paid to the Jews, we must concede that the fundamental reason is their relation to the Christian faith. If the Christian faith had not grown into the global faith of Europe and much of the world beyond, then surely the Jewish people would simply never have attracted so much attention. It is because Christian claims begin with the divine election of

the Jews that the Jews are so important in world history. And if we ask for the real motive why the Jews were targeted by the Nazis with such hatred, it is hard to resist the belief that it was because the Nazis, who hated Christianity in general and the Catholic Church in particular, knew that the Jews were integral to the Christian story – something that many Christians have themselves been all too ready to overlook. The readiness to begin an assault on the Church by rubbishing the Jews goes back at least as far as Voltaire.

The second thing is the beautiful historical truth that Rabbi Dalin brings out: all down history, the popes have been the defenders of the Jews. A final quote from Dalin's truly inspirational work: drawing on the writing of Thomas Madden, he records

"Throughout the Middle Ages, Rome and the papal states were the only places in (western) Europe where the Jews were at all times free from attacks or expulsions. The Jews were expelled from Crimea in 1016, Paris in 1182, England in 1290, France in 1306, Switzerland in 1348, Lithuania in 1495, and Portugal in 1497. In Italy, however, the Jewish community was under papal protection and was never expelled. Indeed, by the beginning of the fifteenth century, "the only safe place in Europe to be a Jew was in the lands of the pope".

**Cyprian Blamires**  
Market Harborough  
Northants

## Catholic Student Guide

*edited by Peter Kahn, Family Publications, 112pp, £4.95*

Arriving at university for the first time is always one of the most daunting moments of a young Catholic's life. Upon being 'dumped' by your parents at your new home, surrounded by strange people, in an alien city in which you don't know

anyone, there is a part of which wants to run after your parents' departing car.

The first week or so can be difficult. You have to adapt to a new way of life and get on with people, even if they intensely irritate you. Within days you become exposed to the secular, amoral culture which, if you are not careful, can suck you in.

For many young Catholics it's imperative that you find the Catholic chaplaincy. There you can meet like minded people, make use of the pastoral services of the chaplain, get useful advice from older students, and above all, be completely at home during the Mass amidst the uncertainty of student life.

Perhaps the most useful element of the *Catholic Student Guide* is the extensive information about Catholic chaplaincies and societies up and down the country as well as details about faith organisations which are of interest to students. But the guide is much more than that. Its target audience actually appears to be 6th Form students who are contemplating their study options.

Fr Jeremy Fairhead, Catholic chaplain at the University of Oxford, provides an extremely useful and sensitive reflection about making decisions, particularly focused on resisting pressures and discerning what is right for the individual. He goes back to basics, reassuring the reader they are under no obligation to jump on the 'teenage- student bandwagon' with friends. He talks about the fruits of a gap year, something which is picked up later by Susan Holloway and several other contributors who provide personal accounts of the development of their faith during year's out.

Fr Fairhead writes: "As Christians, we believe that God has given us the gift of freedom; we have the freedom to make our own choices, good and bad, but we also have the responsibility to make them after adequate thought."

Another useful reflection – this time on study – by Fr Joseph Evans, chaplain to Netherhall House in London, highlights the importance of developing talents and areas of expertise for the betterment of society. He challenges students to offer their study to God, making work a form of prayer. Working well will do much more to re-Christianise society than by "any amount of distributing leaflets or organising meetings", he argues.

Three vitally important aspects to a Catholic student's life apart from their degree are developing their spiritual life, witness to faith and sport/leisure. All are addressed to some extent in the guide. Particularly impressive is an account by Kabron Henry, a postgraduate at the University of Manchester, who tells of the success of pro-life activism in defeating a pro-choice motion in the student's union. Recent graduate James Leatherland writes on how he and a small group of students set up a Catholic Society when realising there was no official Catholic presence at the University of Luton.

Then there is the moving piece by an anonymous student, telling the story of her abortion experience and the emotional trauma it caused after she learnt about the humanity of the unborn child. "Your decision to have sex can affect you for the rest of your life," her powerful conclusion reads.

Despite these excellent contributions, the Guide does go a little over the top with no less than 11 personal accounts from students and recent graduates on top of the eight chapters. Some are quite lengthy and have a repetitive 'this is what I did' feel about them.

It also falls miserably short of exploring the pros and cons of chaplaincies. It fails to address the imbalance and distinct differences of pastoral provision at universities nationwide. Whilst some chaplaincies are strong, orthodox and excellently cater for varying spiritual

appetites, others are less than inclusive, dominated by one form of worship. In several instances, Catholic students quite understandably prefer to attend a local parish rather than be isolated in a sometimes-cliquey chaplaincy environment.

Nevertheless, the Guide is a useful handbook for someone not familiar with Catholic student life. As Joanna Bogle comments on the back cover, it's an ideal leaving present for Catholic schools to give departing Sixth Formers.

**Richard Marsden,**  
Hull

### **John Gerard: The Autobiography of an Elizabethan**

*Translated from the Latin by Fr Philip Caraman SJ and with an introduction by Michael Hodgetts, Family Publications, 296pp, £14.95*

The Catholic community in Britain emerged from the Second World War more self-confident and determined to learn more of its own origins in the period following the Protestant Reformation. The scholarship of men such as Dom David Knowles, Mgr Ronnie Knox and even of laymen such as Evelyn Waugh had whetted the appetite of British Catholics for their history; publishers such as Frank Sheed, at Sheed and Ward, and Count de la Bedoyere at The Catholic Herald saw meeting this demand as their apostolate, a true vocation. It would be fair to say that with their passing and with the growth of ecumenical sensibilities in response to the Second Vatican Council, popular Catholic interest in the story of Catholicism's struggle for survival waned and the output of publishers in this area all but dried up.

In the last ten years or so, it would appear that the soi-disant JP2 Generation have rediscovered an interest in this area and coupled with their demand for books of

theology faithful to the Magisterium, this has enabled a new generation of Catholic publishers to produce each year an increasing number of titles. Family Publications are one such and their list is testament to this movement: without doubt they are deserving of our gratitude, and never more so than for their re-publication of *John Gerard: The Autobiography of an Elizabethan*.

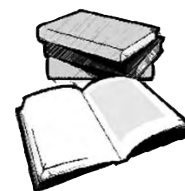
I first encountered this story as a fifteen year old in a long-unborrowed Fontana Paperback on a shelf in a state school library. This was the 1/6 (one shilling and sixpence) popular edition of Fr Philip Caraman SJ's 1951 translation of Gerard's Latin text and it awakened in me a lasting fascination with recusant history. I was asked to review this beautifully produced 2006 edition at precisely the moment that I just finished rereading Caraman's biography of a later English Jesuit, the martyr St Henry Morse. His heroic ministry in the plague ridden London of the 1640s had been inspired by the stories of an earlier generation, Gerard's surely amongst them. It is hardly necessary to say that I leapt at the chance to review Gerard.

Gerard's story, written in 1609 after he had escaped to the continent following the Gunpowder Plot (in which he was not involved), tells the story of an Englishman who was both English and Catholic to his very core. Born in Lancashire in the 1560s Gerard was educated at Oxford, Rheims and Paris before returning to England where he had his first experience of imprisonment for the Faith as a layman. Set at liberty he returned to France, went to Rome to finish his priestly studies and joined the Jesuits. He took the missionary oath (the promise to return to England despite the capital risk) before being ordained priest and returned to England in the same year as the Armada sailed. For nearly two decades, Gerard led a life of extraordinary risk and supernatural fruitfulness. To tell more of the story

would risk spoiling what the eminent Tudor historian, Stanley Bindoff accurately described as, "an adventure story (that) ranks with the best of our own or any other age." Suffice it to say that there are few quotidian moments in Gerard's account of a life and an apostolate lived for nearly twenty years against the background of the real risk of arrest, imprisonment, torture and horrible, but longed for, martyrdom.

This edition of Gerard's autobiography comes with a very useful introduction by Michael Hodgetts, known to many readers of Faith Magazine for his work as an educator at the Maryvale Institute, as historical director at Harvington Hall and as editor of both *Recusant History* and of the Volumes of the Catholic Record Society. Hodgett's own first foray into writing came at the instigation of Caraman and his introduction to this edition shows that he retains that familiarity with the detail and lightness of touch that marks the gentle Jesuit's own work. Detailed notes, ten appendices and a very workmanlike index complete what is not only a great adventure history but also, as the introduction itself concludes, "an inspiring record of heroism and self-sacrifice and an essential source" for those interested in English Catholic History.

**Stephen Morgan**  
Portsmouth





## Notes from across the Atlantic

by Richard John Neuhaus



### BETTER TO COUGH UP

"If we really wanted to, we could..."

Complete the sentence with your favoured cause: end war, eliminate poverty, achieve educational equality, eradicate racial and ethnic prejudice, or whatever. No, we can't. We can often contain evils and sometimes reduce evils, but we cannot abolish evil. Nor is it a Christian virtue to think we can. To think we can is a prideful and thoroughly un-Christian idea that becomes particularly odious when joined to self-flattering but empty gestures. This observation is occasioned by a press release from the government office of the ELCA Lutherans. "More than 1,500 members of the ELCA were among the 110,332 U.S. citizens and 23.5 million people worldwide who stood up during worship on October 15 to fight global poverty. The 'STAND UP' event set a national and global record in the Guinness World Records for the largest number of people to stand up for a cause... Lutherans across the U.S. participated in the event organised as part of 'ONE: The Campaign to Make Poverty History', in cooperation with the United Nations' Millennium Campaign." Better than half of the Lutheran stand-ups were in three congregations. In one Minnesota church, "52 people stood for a moment during worship, 14 of whom participated in a house party later that day" to discuss and act on global hunger and poverty. Were I in the congregation that Sunday, I would not have stood up. Not because I don't care about world poverty but because one should not contribute to the delusion that saying you're against an evil discharges your duty, or even partly discharges your duty, to deal with the evil, and because it is unseemly to trumpet your moral superiority to the people who didn't stand up and therefore are, in this peculiar way of thinking, not as caring as you. (In whispered tones: "Emma, don't just sit there. Don't you want to end poverty?") Now if one were challenged to give, say, a thousand dollars to programs that actually feed the hungry, one might, with the help of friends, try to come up with the money.

But, rather than stand up to be counted among the righteous, one might also follow Our Lord's counsel not to let the left hand know what the right is doing. And one certainly would not tie one's effort to a United Nations program with the pretentious title ONE: The Campaign to Make Poverty History. There are numerous programs, most of them church-related, in which thousands of people are selflessly working to help the poor around the world. It's steady work, and will be until Our Lord returns in glory. They are deserving of our constant prayers and generous support. Better cough up than STAND UP. I'm all for a little guilt-mongering in a good cause. Moral preening, however, is always in bad taste, and it is damaging to the soul. The editor of *Forum Letter*, who brought the ELCA release to my attention, adds a wry observation on the claim of Guinness World Records: How many people, do you suppose, stood up that Sunday to profess the Creed in the cause of the faith?

### AD MULTOS ANNOS

Here's a pleasant change of pace. It's a long editorial in the *New York Daily News*, "Keeping Faith with New York", celebrating the bicentennial of the Archdiocese of New York. (The archdiocese includes 2.5 million Catholics in Manhattan, the Bronx, Staten Island and seven northern counties. Brooklyn and Long Island have their own dioceses.) The editors write: "With the exception, perhaps, of municipal government, no institution has been as enduringly influential in knitting the fabric of the city as the archdiocese. Under its aegis, countless millions of births, marriages and deaths have been marked, as generation after generation was raised in a life-affirming faith. And far many more benefited as the Church aided the poor, treated the sick and helped assimilate wave upon wave of immigrants... Neighborhoods were anchored by parish churches, and by parochial schools that still serve as models of education." It's a handsome tribute and well deserved. In the comparison with city government, the "perhaps" is a nice touch. If the subject is knitting the social fabric, I expect the Church has done a great deal more than city government. Former mayor Ed Koch uses a different metaphor. He is given to saying that the Catholic Church is the "glue" that holds the city together. Gluing, knitting or whatever, while there are many institutions without which New York

would not be New York, there is no denying the indispensability of the Church. I am a self-confessed chauvinist about the city. It is said that, when we arrive at the gates of paradise, there will be a big sign: "From the Wonderful People Who Brought You New York City, THE NEW JERUSALEM." What about those who in this life did not like New York City? The answer is that there will be another place to go. Of course that is only a theological opinion and not church doctrine, but there may be a little something to it. In any event, and very seriously: Ad multos annos to the Archdiocese of New York on its first two hundred years!

### YOUR POINT, CALLER?

The *New York Times* thinks you should know. There is a big study by the University of Arkansas, and another by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, and yet another by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. They all lead to the conclusion that birth defects account for more than \$2.5 billion in hospital costs. The studies involve not only the cost of caring for newborn babies but also of adults suffering from birth defects. I don't know why these studies were undertaken. Maybe it was no more than an interest in medical bookkeeping. But the results are ~reported as revealing a problem. A problem calls for a solution, and, for the life of me, I can think of only one practical solution implicit in these findings.

### IT'S NOT ALL BAD

Sam Roberts of the *New York Times* has been studying the 2007 Statistical Abstract of the United States. Among his findings, there is this: "Americans spent more of their lives than ever – about eight and a half hours a day – watching television, using computers, listening to the radio, going to the movies or reading." This is presumably a problem. I'm not so sure. How many are "watching television" when the television set is on? And I expect most people are doing something else when listening to radio. As for "using computers", that is extremely vague. They might be trolling through pornography, writing the great American novel or trying to balance the family budget. And then he tosses in reading. We are to be concerned that people spend hours a day reading? Maybe if they're reading the Statistical Abstract of the United States. People with better judgment will read on with untroubled conscience.

## Extracts from Pope Benedict's book Jesus of Nazareth

*Published by Bloomsbury, 2007*

### THE TEMPTATION OF SECULARISM

At the heart of all temptations, as we see here, is the act of pushing God aside because we perceive him as secondary, if not actually superfluous and annoying, in comparison with all the apparently far more urgent matters that fill our lives. Constructing a world by our own lights, without reference to God, building on our own foundation; refusing to acknowledge the reality of anything beyond the political and material, while setting God aside as an illusion – that is the temptation that threatens us in many varied forms. (p.28)

### NO JUSTICE FOR THE POOR WITHOUT OPENNESS TO GOD

*Having posed the challenge of world hunger and how people would expect a loving God to feed the world the Pope states:*

(The) miracle of the loaves has three aspects, then. It is preceded by the search for God, for his word, for the teaching that sets the whole of life on the right path. Furthermore, God is asked to supply the bread. Finally, readiness to share with one another is an essential element of the miracle. Listening to God becomes living with God, and leads from faith to love, to the discovery of the other. Jesus is not indifferent towards men's hunger, their bodily needs, but he places these things in the proper context and the proper order. (p.32)

When this ordering of goods is no longer respected, but turned on its head, the result is not justice or concern for human suffering. The result is rather ruin and destruction even of material goods themselves. When God is regarded as a secondary matter that can be set aside temporarily or permanently on account of more important things, it is precisely these supposedly more important things that come to nothing. It is not just the negative outcome of the Marxist experience that proves this... (p.33)

### COUNTER PRODUCTIVE "AID"

The aid offered by the West to developing countries has been purely technically and materially based, and not only has left God out of the picture, but has driven men away from God. And this aid, proudly claiming to 'know better', is itself what first turned the "third world" into what we mean today by that term... The issue is the primacy of God. The issue is acknowledging that he is a reality, that he is the reality without which nothing else can be good. History cannot be detached from God and then run smoothly on purely material lines. If man's heart is not good, then nothing else can turn out good, either. And the goodness of the human heart can ultimately come only from the one who is goodness, who is the Good itself. (p.33)

### SALVATION OUTSIDE THE CHURCH?

The prevailing view today is that everyone should live by the religion – or perhaps by the atheism – in which he happens to find himself already. This, it is said, is the path of salvation for him. Such a view presupposes a strange picture of God and a strange idea of man and of the right way for man to live. Let us try to clarify this by asking a few practical questions. Does someone achieve blessedness and justification in God's eyes because he has conscientiously fulfilled the duties of blood vengeance? Because he has vigorously fought for and in "holy war"? Or because he has performed certain animal sacrifices? Or because he has practiced ritual ablutions and other observances? Because he has declared his opinions and wishes them to be norms of conscience and so made himself the criterion? No, God demands the opposite: that we become inwardly attentive to his quiet exhortation, which is present in us and which tears us away from what is merely habitual and puts us on the road to truth. To "hunger and thirst for righteousness" – that is the path that lies open to everyone; that is the way that finds its destination in Jesus Christ. (p.92)

# 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](http://www.faith.org.uk)

## Spiritual direction for the twenty-first century

Families of Nazareth is a new Polish-born movement in the Church. It was officially recognised in 1985 but has swiftly spread throughout the world. The main charism is one of spiritual direction. There are weekly meetings and annual retreats, but the unique forte lies in a series of writings by a Polish priest, Fr. Tadeusz Dajczer and a layman in the movement, Slawomir Biela. These provide a sort of new synthesis of the church's tradition of spiritual direction, drawing mainly upon Carmelite spirituality, but with insights from other, often quite modern saints. The thrust is one of entrustment to God. Again the movement is intensely Marian, Eucharistic and Papal. The best websites seem to be in the States and Canada, so information in English about activity this side of the Atlantic is limited.

[www.familiesofnazareth.us](http://www.familiesofnazareth.us)

<http://www.familiesofnazarethmovement.com/>

## Catholics for the Common Good

United by faith and loyalty to the Magisterium in a non-partisan effort for the common good, this group recognises there are often legitimate areas of disagreement on how to act as Catholics. "However, there are some social teachings that are so clear in their meaning and application that informed Catholics are unlikely to disagree. Since concerns in these areas are the only ones where united Catholic Action is possible, these kinds of issues become our sole focus." The impressive line-up of leaders ranges from William May and to Raymond Flynn, the former Ambassador to the Vatican. The American legal battles headlined may vary to those in Europe, but the moral ones are the same; there are many nuggets of practical wisdom here, in speeches quoted by heroic laypeople not willing to remain 'Spectator Catholics.'

[www.ccgaction.org](http://www.ccgaction.org)

## Vatican Museums Online

Make yourself comfortable with a good mug of tea or something stronger and settle down for an online tour. If you're about to visit Rome, you can do a recce of the Sistine chapel ceiling, although it's great to catch up on all those things you kicked yourself for missing after your trip.

[http://mv.vatican.va/3\\_EN/pages/MV\\_Home.html](http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/MV_Home.html)

## St Charles of St Andrew

A freshly minted saint; Pope Benedict canonised this Dutch passionist on 3rd June. John Andrew Houben was born in 1821 and died 1893, moved to England in 1853, but spent most of his life in Dublin. He was renowned during his lifetime for his humility and simplicity and seems to have been the instrument of many physical healings. It is said that people came to his funeral from every corner of Ireland. There is a fairly full biography here.

<http://charlesofmountargus.org/>

## The nuns of East Hendred

These cheerful Benedictine nuns of the Holy Trinity, originally from Stanbrook Abbey, were established by Bishop Hollis in 2004. They run 'The Veil Press' and 'St Cecilia's Guild' – a talking book service. Follow a day in their life.

<http://www.benedictinenuns.org.uk/>

## Remembering 1982

Retrace the itinerary of the first Papal visit to England. There are photos and audio memoirs. As with so many of Pope John Paul II's words, his speeches to the English people still have a clarity and power today.

<http://www.popejohnpaulii.org.uk/>

## The Dream of Gerontius

Celebrations commemorating Elgar's birth have pointed out his loss of faith. Yet his greatest work has proved to be a means of grace.

<http://www.elgar.org/3geront.htm>



# FOR 11-15 YEAR OLDS

## Summer 2007

Fun, educational, and prayerful weeks for Catholic Youth aged 11-15. cf. [www.faith.org.uk](http://www.faith.org.uk)

### Southern Summer Break

Woldingham School, Surrey.  
Monday 6 August-Thursday 9 August

Price: **£120**

Contact: Fr Gregory Hogan, Parish Priest,  
Our Lady of Lourdes, Uxbridge St.,  
Hednesford, Staffs, WS12 1DB  
Tel: 01543.422576

### Northern Summertime

Ampleforth Abbey  
Monday 23rd July-Thursday 26th

Price: **£70**

Contact: [reviews@faith.org.uk](mailto:reviews@faith.org.uk) or 0141 422 2634

## annual faith summer session



**30th July – 3rd August 2007**

Four days of lectures, discussion  
and seminars around a particular theme,  
in a relaxed holiday environment,  
with daily Mass and prayer.

**contact:** Ann McCallion Tel: 0141 945 0393  
**email:** [mccallionfaith@aol.com](mailto:mccallionfaith@aol.com)  
fuller details on [www.faith.org.uk](http://www.faith.org.uk)

## Catholicism

### *a new synthesis*

by Edward Holloway

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

# £5

**503 pages  
FREEPOST  
Faith Magazine  
REIGATE RH2 0BR**

no need for a stamp if posted in the UK



## PERSPECTIVES IN THEOLOGY:

**VOL. ONE  
CHRIST THE SACRAMENT  
OF CREATION**

*Edward Holloway*

The first volume of collected writings by Fr Edward Holloway seeks to present his contributions to Faith magazine to a wider readership. A champion of Catholic orthodoxy, Fr Holloway sought to bring about a new reconciliation between science and religion. In this way he anticipated and also participated in Pope John Paul II's programme of intellectual renewal in the Church. In this volume you will find stimulating writing on the key themes of his synthetic perspective, including the existence of God; the development of Scripture; Christ as Son of Man; Mary Immaculate; the nature of the Church, and much more.

160 pages **£8.95** ISBN 1-871217-50-4

Available from: **Family Publications**  
6a King Street, Oxford OX2 6DF  
Tel: 0845 0500 879 • [sales@familypublications.co.uk](mailto:sales@familypublications.co.uk)  
Credit cards accepted (not Amex)  
Postage: add 10% for 1 or 2 books; 3 or more, postage free



# 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](http://www.faith.org.uk)*