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Editorial

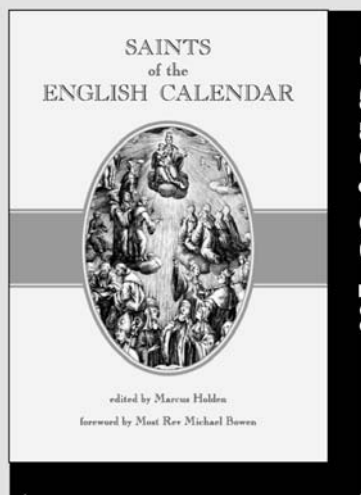
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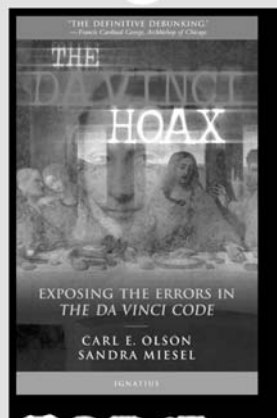
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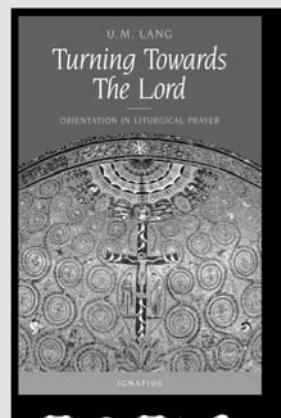
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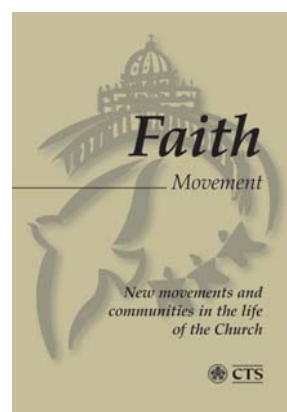
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JESUS CHRIST IS THE MASTER KEY TO THE MEANING OF THE UNIVERSE

Regaining A Sense Of The Parish

"These remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the communion, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers"

(Acts 2:42).

"If we follow the progress of the Church after Pentecost, we begin to appreciate how it grew from the first parish, since the apostolic mission not only entailed preaching Christ but also setting up other parishes to replicate the original parish."

Origins of the Parish in the Plan of God

As the number of active priests in Britain continues to wane, the debate on the structuring and restructuring of our parishes rages on. And with the, sometimes necessary, closure and amalgamation of parishes one senses increasingly a tendency to belittle the role of the priest which, for many, is no longer considered an imperative component of a viable parish. Indeed, across the country, recruitment of lay parish workers appears to be more of a priority than ensuring the availability of priests.

Amid the confusion that exists among laity and clergy alike, and the endless series of studies relating to the sociological nature of parishes, we suggest that a look at the theological perspective on the meaning of the parish might shed some necessary light on the subject - after all, without this theological dimension, the parish is meaningless in any case.

Immediately after Peter's address at Pentecost we read: "They were convinced by his arguments, and they accepted what he said and were baptised. That very day about three thousand were added to their number" (Acts 2:41). Perhaps we sometimes forget that the Church started as a parish in Jerusalem, that only about fifty days after Our Lord's Ascension into heaven and following the crucial event of Pentecost, the newly baptised were incorporated into the first parish, which Luke goes on to describe in more detail: "These [the newly baptised] remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the 'communion' [Koinonia], to the breaking of bread and to the prayers" (Acts 2:42). Although there are several points of note here, what strikes us most about this text is surely its description of the Eucharistic Assembly and the fact that, from the very beginning, the Eucharist was absolutely central to the embryonic Church.

"The Teaching of the Apostles"

Bearing in mind that the Gospels as such had not been written down at this stage, we may speculate that the kind of teaching involved would have been similar to that of Peter's address after Pentecost (Acts 2:12-26), in which he spoke of the Death and Resurrection of Christ and referred to the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning Him. At various times a narrative of Christ's teaching and miracles would probably have been added, which would later be edited and evolve into the four Gospels or reappear in letters from Peter, James, John and Jude, thus forming part of the New Testament. In other words, we have something very like our Liturgy of the Word and Homily. This "teaching of the apostles" was the seed of the Magisterium of the Church of Christ that, guided by the Holy Spirit, would be normative for the whole Church throughout history.

"The Communion"

The Jerusalem Bible translates the second element in the first parish as "Brotherhood", the Revised Standard Version as "Fellowship", but both of these are poor translations of the Greek word Koinonia. The word does indeed mean

"solidarity", "communion" or "fellowship" with each other but its more profound meaning refers to the mutual "Communion" that comes from the Eucharist. It is expressed in a key text from St Paul:

"The blessing-cup that we bless is a communion (Koinonia) with the blood of Christ, and the bread that we break is a communion (Koinonia) with the body of Christ. The fact that there is only one loaf means that, though there are many of us, we form a single body because we all have a share in this one loaf" (1 Cor. 10:16-17).

In other words, it is through Eucharistic communion with the Body of the Lord that our unity as a community comes about and the Church is built up - "the Eucharist makes the Church"

"The Breaking of Bread"

To confirm this Eucharistic perspective, the expression "the Breaking of Bread" is used. It is an early Christian expression for the Holy Eucharist, which is familiar to us from the episode of the two disciples who encounter the Risen Christ on the road to Emmaus. He starts to teach them by giving them His own "Liturgy of the Word" - "Starting with Moses and going through all the prophets he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself" (Lk. 24:27) - and then, in the inn, there follows the "Liturgy of the Eucharist", when Jesus "took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them" (Lk. 24:30). We are told that the disciples "had recognised Him at the breaking of bread" and immediately we see the truth of the statement that the Eucharist makes the Church.

Further confirmation of the use of this expression is seen in the short passage in Acts 20:7 about the early Christians at Troas during St Paul's first missionary journey there, where we are also reminded of the custom, even at this very early stage, of "Sunday Mass", of celebrating the Eucharist on the "first day of the week". (Actually it appears to have been a Vigil Mass on this occasion, since it began in the evening and went on till the middle of the night - testimony to Paul's lengthy preaching as well!)

"The Prayers"

Although we are not given any details concerning the prayers said by the early Christians, we can nevertheless speculate that the "Lord's Prayer", the Our Father, which we today always recite at Mass, would almost certainly have been included. There would have been Psalms, with which all Jews were familiar, especially

as they saw in them the prophecy of the Messiah, the Christ; and there would have been something akin to the "Prayers of the Faithful" that we have at Mass today. Paul would later remind the disciples: "With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God" (Col. 3:16). We can be left in no doubt that the first parish was essentially a praying community.

The obvious conclusion in all of this, and the point which today cannot be reiterated enough, is that, of its very nature, the first parish was profoundly Eucharistic. What we now call "the Mass" was at its very heart. Pope John Paul in his recent Encyclical on the Church and the Eucharist has referred to Acts 2:42:

"The Church was born of the paschal mystery. For this very reason the Eucharist, which is, in an outstanding way, the sacrament of the paschal mystery, stands at the centre of the Church's life. This is already clear from the earliest images of the Church found in the Acts of the Apostles ... The 'breaking of the bread' refers to the Eucharist. Two thousand years later, we continue to relive that primordial image of the Church." (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 3)

Jesus the New Temple Among Us in All Our Parishes

The episode of Jesus cleansing the Temple in Jerusalem is followed by the Lord saying: "Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up" and St John comments: "He was speaking of the Temple that was his Body" (Jn 2:19, 22). The word for Body here is *soma* in Greek, the same word used at the Last Supper by Jesus for his Eucharistic Body - "This is my Body (*soma*) which is given up for you." Gradually, therefore, as Christians began to comprehend Jesus as the New Temple, the daily practice recorded in Acts of going to the (Jewish) Temple began to decline.

Today, after many centuries of development, we can understand that the practice of placing the Tabernacle in our churches is a genuine development of doctrine and liturgy - the Tabernacle contains Jesus the New Temple among us, not just in Jerusalem either, but in every Catholic church throughout the world. In parishes up and down the country people go "to the Temple every day" to visit the Lord Jesus, the centre of parish life, truly present among us in our churches, as Pope John Paul reminds us:

"A Christian community desirous of contemplating the face of Christ ... cannot fail also to develop this aspect of Eucharistic worship, which prolongs and increases the fruits of our communion in the body and blood of the Lord. 'In the course of the day the faithful should not omit visiting the Blessed Sacrament, which in

accordance with liturgical law must be reserved in churches with great reverence in a prominent place. Such visits are a sign of gratitude, an expression of love and an acknowledgment of the Lord's presence" (Paul VI), (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 25).

If Jesus really is the New Temple among us, it is difficult to see how He could ever be placed anywhere other than the centre of the church. Can we imagine a 'reform' of the Temple in Jerusalem such that the Holy of Holies would be relegated to the side? There would have been riots in the Holy City. Yet we have known young priests who have been positively discouraged and even forbidden by authority to relocate the Lord to his rightful place in their churches.

New Temple - New Priesthood

If Jesus claimed to be the New Temple then we should expect a New Priesthood, and this He gave us at the Last Supper - in giving us his Body, the New Temple, in the Eucharist, He also simultaneously gave us his new priests, his apostles.

The priestly vocation and ministry is therefore, by its very nature, fully centred on the Person of Jesus in the Eucharist - in the Mass and in the Tabernacle. The heart of a priest's life is the celebration of the Priestly Prayer of Jesus every day in the Holy Eucharist, in which he offers himself with Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit. And when priests pray the Divine Office with Jesus in the Tabernacle, they offer it through Him, with Him and in Him for the parish, and in union and communion with the whole Church and with all its parishes.

But it is Jesus Christ in Person in the Tabernacle who continues His Priestly Prayer day and night at the heart of our parish life. We need to restore the sense of the priest's life and vocation as essentially a love of Jesus but a love of Jesus incarnated in His living Presence in the Eucharist. This is where the priest will find his true fulfilment: in communion and prayer with the Eucharistic Jesus, not in endless sociological and psychological analyses, although these may indeed have value of a secondary nature.

The Synagogue Also Prepared for the Parish

It was not only the Temple and its liturgy that prepared for the first parish, but also the synagogues, as we see from the episode of Jesus returning to the little synagogue in Nazareth where he had been brought up (Lk. 4:16-30). We are told that he went there every Sabbath Day as was his custom and, on this occasion, He gets up and reads from the prophet Isaiah. In fact the synagogue service was very similar to the Liturgy of the

Word as we have it at Mass today with prayers, blessings and readings from the Scriptures and an address from the Rabbi. The synagogue as well as the Temple foreshadowed the parish, so much so that Alfred Edersheim the great Jewish Christian convert could write:

The synagogue became the cradle of the Church. Without it, as indeed without Israel's dispersion, the Church Universal would humanly speaking, have been impossible, and the conversion of the Gentiles have required a succession of millennial miracles. (*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Hendrickson 1993, p. 298).

Edersheim also points out that the festal Sabbath Lamp was lit in the synagogue to remind the Jewish people of the perpetual light in the Temple of Jerusalem, the light which symbolised the presence of God Himself within the Holy of Holies. Do not the sanctuary lamp and the lighted candles at Mass in our parishes represent a continuous tradition and link with both the synagogue and the Temple now fulfilled in the Eucharistic presence of Christ? It is recorded that around the year 230 AD in Alexandria in Egypt, the great preacher Origen, in his sermon at Sunday Mass, addressed this same event in the life of Christ (Lk. 4:21):

"Here too in this present Assembly you can at this very moment fix your eyes upon your Saviour if you wish. Whenever you direct your inward gaze toward wisdom and truth and the contemplation of God's only Son, your eyes are fixed upon Jesus. Blessed was that congregation of which the Gospel says, 'All eyes in the synagogue were fixed upon him.' When you look at Jesus your own faces will become radiant with his reflected glory, and you will be able to say - 'The light of your face has shed its brightness upon us, O Lord.'" To Jesus be power and glory forever (*On Luke's Gospel* 32, 2-6: SC87, 386-392).

Every Parish Is of Apostolic Origin

If we follow the progress of the Church after Pentecost, we now begin to appreciate how it grew from the first parish, since the apostolic mission not only entailed preaching Christ but also setting up other parishes to replicate the original parish. At first these were located in cities which they oversaw as "Bishop" but after a while the workload became too great and further true "Eucharistic Ministers", or "presbyters" were appointed, priests who would bring the fullness of the life of Christ in the Eucharist to the growing communion - thus new parishes replicated the first parish, and continue to do so until today, now within a canonical legal framework.

We can truly say therefore that each parish is of apostolic origin and is an extension and imitation of that first parish in Jerusalem where Jesus Christ continues to be with his people, his Body: the norm for all teaching in our parishes remains the "teaching of the apostles", the Magisterium of the Church and, in every Eucharistic Prayer, in order to show our universal "Communion" through "the Breaking of Bread" and "the Prayers", we manifest our communion with the apostles by reference to "N. our Pope and N. our bishop and for all who hold and teach the Catholic faith that comes to us from the apostles" (Eucharistic Prayer I).

"The Eucharist Makes the Parish"

If "the Eucharist makes the Church", we can therefore truly say that "the Eucharist makes the parish", always in union and communion with its bishop and with the one who holds the office of Peter in the Church. Cardinal Ratzinger has written:

"The parish community, in receiving the Eucharistic presence of the Lord, receives the entire gift of salvation and shows, even in its lasting visible particular form, that it is the image and true presence of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church" (*Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion*, Sacred Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, 28th May 1992, Para. 11).

And Pope John Paul has recently echoed this teaching in his Encyclical Letter on the Church and the Eucharist:

"If the Eucharist builds the Church and the Church makes the Eucharist, it follows that there is a profound relationship between the two, so much so that we can apply to the Eucharistic mystery the very words with which, in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, we profess the Church to be 'one, holy, catholic and apostolic' (*Ecclesia et Eucharistia*, 26).

Therefore we may affirm that, although the Church is greater than her priests, the principle that was there from the beginning remains today - "no Priests - no Eucharist - no Church".

Sometimes one hears discussion among priests about what sort of parish they have. Some parishes are "juicy plums"; others are "dreadful", the "Siberia of the diocese" etc ... Let us not forget the basic truth in all this, that Jesus Christ, the living and true God, Creator of the universe and Saviour of the world, is with us every day in Mass and present next door to us. Perhaps some of us priests need a reality check, and who better to give it to us than St John Vianney, who could rightly claim to be sent to the "worst" parish in the diocese.

Forgetting the injustice of his placement and the treatment meted out to him by the diocesan authorities, he immediately focused his whole life and ministry where

ON CREATION

"My Son, I wish to give you
a bride who will love you.
Because of you she will deserve
to share our company,
and eat at our table,
the same bread I eat,
that she may know the good
I have in such a Son;
and rejoice with me
in your grace and fullness."

"I am very grateful",
the Son answered;
"I will show my brightness
to the bride you give me,
so that by it she may see
how great my Father is,
and how I have received
my being from your being.
I will hold her in my arms
and she will burn with your love,
and with eternal delight
she will exalt your goodness."

*St. John of the Cross,
Romance III*

it should be - on Jesus in the Eucharist. He stayed in that poor remote parish, carried out a remarkable ministry and is now the patron saint of parish priests. John Paul has recently emphasised the point that Christ is present through the Eucharist in all our churches:

"When I think of the Eucharist, and look at my life as a priest, as a Bishop and as the Successor of Peter, I naturally recall the many times and places in which I was able to celebrate it. I have been able to celebrate Holy Mass in chapels built along mountain paths, on lakeshores and seacoasts; I have celebrated it on altars built in stadiums and in city squares.

"This varied scenario of celebrations of the Eucharist has given me a powerful experience of its universal and, so to speak, cosmic character. Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world. It unites heaven and earth. It embraces and permeates all creation.

"The Son of God became man in order to restore all creation, in one supreme act of praise, to the One who made it from nothing. He, the Eternal High Priest who by the blood of his Cross entered the eternal sanctuary, thus gives back to the Creator and Father all creation redeemed. He does so through the priestly ministry of the Church, to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity" (*Ecclesia et Eucharistia*, 8).

Mary our Companion in Parish Life

Just as the Acts of the Apostles assures us that the Mother of Jesus was also present in that first parish in Jerusalem (1:14), so her memory, example and prayers should be present in all our parishes, and not only through the permanent reference to her in every Eucharistic Prayer. In all our churches there should be a prominent image of the Mother of Jesus, in recognition of the integral role she played and continues to play in God's plan of salvation. As Pope John Paul reminds us, Mary and the Eucharist are inextricably linked:

"Certainly Mary must have been present at the Eucharistic celebrations of the first generation of Christians, who were devoted to "the breaking of bread" (Ac. 2:42). But in addition to her sharing in the Eucharistic banquet, an indirect picture of Mary's relationship with the Eucharist can be had, beginning with her interior disposition. Mary is "a woman of the Eucharist" in her whole life. The Church, which looks to Mary as a model, is also called to imitate her in her relationship with this most holy mystery" (*Ecclesia et Eucharistia*, 53).

Jesus at the Heart of Every Parish

Our parishes then are centred on Jesus in His Sacraments, giving new life to us in Baptism, forgiving our sins in Penance and Reconciliation, sealing us with the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, anointing us when we are sick and, above all, being with us and feeding us with Himself in the Holy Eucharist. Here Jesus calls his priests to pray and to build up communion with Him, with his Mother and with all the saints, and with each other.

The parish is not a closed communion but an open one, designed to bring all to Jesus Christ and to communion with his praying Church. Every parish, therefore, no matter how humble, is the place where the Church in its fullness is present because Jesus, our Master, Lord, God and personal Friend is present, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. The vocation of priests is to know and to love Christ personally in his Eucharistic Body and in the Body of His People, the Family of God. It is in the parish that the Lord Jesus calls all of us to Him - to share His Life, His Teaching, His Truth and His Love in its fullness and in each other. Without priests in our parishes, we will not have parishes at all, for their very essence is Eucharistic.

Loving Our Parishes

Sometimes our churches are not in the most salubrious places - often in poor and deprived areas, spiritually and materially - but then we are reminded that this is where Jesus, through his priests, wishes to be. We would do well to remember that Jesus the Bread of Life was born in Bethlehem (the "City of Bread"), not in a "top parish" or in a palace, and He died the most bitter and painful death outside the Holy City in the most humiliating circumstances. However, in Bethlehem and on Calvary the Redemption of the world was taking place. So too in our parishes. Whether they be large or small, rich or poor, country churches or magnificent basilicas, Jesus is there in Person in the Eucharist.

So let us love our parish churches as the place where God, in His providence, has chosen to remain in our midst, and let us thank God for them. They are part of God's Unity-Law of Control and Direction, working through history to provide for us as individuals and as a People. They have a divine pedigree in the synagogue and in the temple, which, we must remember, had its roots in the Tent of Meeting in the desert, and ultimately on Mount Sinai. As long as we continue on the path of priestless parishes, no amount of restructuring of parishes will ever bear fruit, either in the holiness of her members or in vocations to priesthood and religious life. Without the Eucharist, it will not, properly understood, be a parish at all.

The Centrality of Christ In The Plan Creation of Creation

Stephen Boyle

In this excellent essay, Fr Stephen Boyle of the Archdiocese of Southwark in England, considers the ancient argument about the fundamental purpose of the Incarnation and finds evidence for the Scotist position in the writings of John Paul II.

"In the Divine plan of creation, it was the Incarnation that came first, and it was only for the sake of this that there was creation at all. Christ is at the centre of the universe as the very reason for its existence. The emphasis on the coming of Christ is not as an assuager of the universe's guilt, but as the supreme manifestation of his love for creation."

A Long Standing Question

Would Jesus have come if there had been no sin? This question has taxed the minds of the greatest theologians of the Church. Two renowned theologians immediately come to mind in this debate: the Dominican St. Thomas Aquinas and the Franciscan Blessed John Duns Scotus. The Thomistic position is that Jesus came due to sin, in contrast, the opinion that the Incarnation was in the plan of God from the beginning of creation, is the Scotist position. It is the intention of this article to examine the reasons why these two theologians held their opposing views, and also to indicate the Holy Father's position in this matter, in specific relation to the Mass.

"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). It is this quote which St. Thomas uses to sum up his position. He sees no reason to believe that Jesus Christ would have come without the advent of sin as, in his opinion, the sin of the first man is assigned as the reason for the Incarnation everywhere in the Sacred Scripture. Therefore, for St. Thomas the work of the Incarnation was ordained by God as a remedy for sin. Had sin not existed, the Incarnation would not have happened.

St. Thomas is open to the idea that the Incarnation could have happened without sin, indicating that there is a logic to such a view, and admitting that it is possible in theory. However, he finds no evidence for it in the scriptures and the writings of the Fathers. St. Thomas could conceive that without sin man could have a totally natural fulfillment, as opposed to one in union with God. He recognised that the redemption won by Christ's death was greater than the original state of innocence, for it brought humanity to an intimacy with God that they had not known in Eden. In the person of Christ, humanity was brought into union with God. "For God allows evils to happen in order to bring a greater good therefrom; hence it is written (Romans 5:20) 'Where sin abounded, grace did more abound.' Hence, too, in the blessing of the Paschal candle, we say: 'O happy fault, that merited such and so great a Redeemer.'"¹

The Greatest Work Of God

It seems fair to summarise St Thomas' view by saying that he relied on the direct testimony of two sources, the Scriptures and the Church Fathers, rather than on the arguments of human logic, and since he found no evidence for the Scotist position in either source, he did not entertain it. In the end, for St. Thomas, Christ alone knows the right answer to this question: "The truth of the matter only He can know, Who was born and Who was offered up, because He so willed."²

For Scotus, the Incarnation of the Son of God is not to be seen as a contingency plan when the original creative process of God goes awry because of sin. It was the very reason for creation. In his view it surely demeans the great work of God in making us his sons and daughters to see the Incarnation as just accidental or occasional. "Again, if the Fall were the cause of the predestination of Christ, it

would follow that God's greatest work was only occasional, for the glory of all will not be so intense as that of Christ, and it seems unreasonable to think that God would have foregone such a work because of Adam's good deed, if he had not sinned."³

The Greatest Good In The Universe

Duns Scotus saw it as inconceivable that the Incarnation, the 'greatest good in the universe', could be determined by some lesser good, i.e. man's redemption. In the Divine plan of creation, it was the Incarnation that came first, and it was only for the sake of this that there was creation at all.

Christ is at the centre of the universe as the very reason for its existence. The emphasis on the coming of Christ is not as an assuager of the universe's guilt, but as the supreme manifestation of his love for creation. Due to this Scotist position, Franciscans would credit their theology of the Incarnation as being based on love rather than sin.

The view that God created out of love is key to Scotus' understanding of creation. Creation is called to love, as it is infused with the love of God, and it is fitting that the highest object of creation's love should be God himself, for nothing within creation could be a more fitting object of love than the God who lovingly created. So God created in such a way that it should love, and above all love Him. Now for creation to be able to love to the highest extent, there must be at least one creature capable of the highest love.

That creature is Christ, for only a human nature united to the divine nature in one person could love to the highest extent, the extent to which God loves. Since the whole of creation is made for Christ, then for Incarnation to come about there had to be within creation a nature capable of understanding and freely responding to God's love. Humanity is free to love and has the capacity to understand God, precisely because such a nature is desired by God to be united in Christ to the divine nature of the Son.

Christ Reveals Man To Himself

Thus in a wonderful unity we see the centrality of Christ in creation, and also that the dignity of Man is bound up in the Incarnation. As the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes* puts it: Christ "fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear"(n.22).

It would seem reasonable to suggest that if the Incarnation has a cosmological significance, then it must have been in the mind of God from the beginning and, from this, the view of St. Thomas that there is no

scriptural basis to the Scotist position would seem to be incorrect. That Christ has a cosmic meaning and is head of creation is clearly the doctrine of St. Paul in his letters to the Ephesians and Colossians. And Pope John Paul also sees evidence for this cosmic aspect in St. John's Gospel: "In Christ creation itself acquires its full meaning since, as John recalls in the Prologue to his Gospel, 'all things were made through him (Jn 1:3)'" (*Dies Domine*, 2).

The Witness Of The Fathers

It is also incorrect to say that the early Fathers had nothing to say on the subject of the place of the Incarnation in the plan of God for creation. St Methodius of Olympus (martyred 311) and Ephraem of Syria (Died 345) indicate Scotist positions in their writings. St. Irenaeus had a clear understanding that the world was made for the Church.

He also understood that man was not perfect from the beginning, and that Christ came to perfect man. Man is made to the image and likeness of God but the perfect likeness is given by Christ through the Incarnation. Irenaeus did not consider this perfection to be brought about by a "happy fault" but to be part of God's plan from the beginning:

"For there is the one Son, who accomplished His Father's will; and one human race also in which the mysteries of God are wrought, 'which the angels desire to look into'; and they are not able to search out the wisdom of God, by means of which His handiwork, confirmed and incorporated with His Son, is brought to perfection; that His offspring, the First-begotten Word, should descend to the creature (facturam), that is, to what had been moulded (plasma), and that it should be contained by Him; and, on the other hand, the creature should contain the Word, and ascend to Him, passing beyond the angels, and be made after the image and likeness of God."⁴

It is true to say that the reason for the Incarnation was never formally raised in the Patristic age. St. Maximus the Confessor (580- 662) seems to be the only one of the Fathers who was directly concerned with the issue, and he gives a powerful pointer to the Scotist position. In the following quote, commenting on the first letter of St Peter, one of the things St. Maximus states plainly is that the Incarnation should be regarded

"as an absolute and primary purpose of God in the act of Creation ... [Christ was] like a blameless and spotless lamb, who was foreordained from the foundation of the world...This is the blessed end, on

account of which everything was created. This is the Divine purpose, which was thought of before the beginning of Creation, and which we call an intended fulfillment. All creation exists on account of this fulfillment and yet the fulfillment itself exists because of nothing that was created. Since God had this end in full view, he produced the natures of things. This is truly the fulfillment of Providence and of planning. Through this there is a recapitulation to God of those created by Him.

"This is the mystery circumscribing all ages, the awesome plan of God, super-infinite and infinitely pre-existing the ages. The Messenger, who is in essence Himself the Word of God, became man on account of this fulfillment. And it may be said that it was He Himself Who restored the manifest innermost depths of the goodness handed down by the Father; and He revealed the fulfillment in Himself, by which creation has won the beginning of true existence. For on account of Christ, that is to say the mystery concerning Christ, all time and that which is in time have found the beginning and the end of their existence in Christ.

"For before time there was secretly purposed a union of the ages, of the determined and the Indeterminate, of the measurable and the Immeasurable, of the finite and Infinity, of the creation and the Creator, of motion and rest-a union which was made manifest in Christ during these last times."⁵

Pope John Paul II's Development Of Doctrine

One of Cardinal Newman's 'tests' of a true development of doctrine was early anticipation. As I have indicated in a far from exhaustive study, there is clear evidence that the 'Scotist' understanding of the Incarnation is part of the thinking of some of the Fathers of the Church. Two quotes from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* indicate how the debate has still not been formally resolved. First of all in the Catechism we find:

"The work of creation culminates in the greater work of redemption. The first creation finds its meaning and summit in Christ, the splendour of which surpasses that of the first creation" (CCC 349).

Later on, however, we find:

"The desire to embrace his Father's plan of redeeming love inspired Jesus' whole life, for his redemptive passion was the very reason for His Incarnation"(CCC 607).

We can now examine the present Pope's position on this issue. Considering just a few of his writings and concentrating on his teachings on the cosmological significance of the Mass, it will hopefully become evident that the Pope also holds the Scotist position on the incarnation. The opening sentence of the Pope's first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*, immediately refers to the cosmological significance of Christ: "The Redeemer of man, Jesus Christ, is the centre of the universe and of history" (n.1).

Fifteen years later, in the apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* written in preparation for the Jubilee year of 2000, the centrality of the Incarnation in the plan of God and creation is made abundantly clear "Christ is the one who reveals God's plan for all creation and man in particular...Christ, true God and true Man, the Lord of the Cosmos, is also the Lord of History, ... In him the Father has spoken the definitive word about mankind and its history" (n. 4,5).

The Cosmic Meaning Of The Incarnation

This cosmological approach to the Incarnation is summed up in a quote from the encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem*:

"The Incarnation of God the Son signifies the taking up into unity with God not only of human nature, but in this human nature, in a sense, of everything that is 'flesh': the whole of humanity, the entire visible and material world. The incarnation, then, also has a cosmic significance, a cosmic dimension. The 'first born of all creation', becoming incarnate in the individual humanity of Christ, unites himself in some way with the entire reality of man, which is also 'flesh' - and in this reality with all 'flesh', with the whole of creation." (n.50)

There are many other occasions when the Pope makes clear his vision of the cosmological dimension to the Incarnation, and it would follow that once Christ is seen as the fulfillment of all of creation, then one must envisage the Incarnation as part of the plan of God from the beginning and not dependent on the sin of Adam.

The 'Eucharistic Potential' Of Creation

It is, however, when the Pope speaks on the Mass that we see his thoughts on the cosmological significance of the Incarnation most clearly. At the general Audience on the 27th September 2000, he spoke of the world destined to be assumed in the Eucharist of the Lord:

"As St Paul recalls, we must also glorify God in our bodies, that is, in our whole existence, because our

bodies are temples of the Spirit who is within us (cf. 1 Cor 6:19, 20). In this light one can also speak of a cosmic celebration of divine glory. The world created, "so often disfigured by selfishness and greed", has in itself a "Eucharistic potential": it is "destined to be assumed" in the Eucharist of the Lord, in his Passover, present in the sacrifice of the altar." (*Oriente lumen*, n.11)

On the 2nd May 2001 at the Wednesday audience the Pope, commenting on the canticle of Daniel refers to Christ as "the culmination of God's plan for the cosmos and for history."

"Bless the Lord, all works of the Lord' (Dn 3:57). A cosmic dimension imbues this Canticle taken from the Book of Daniel, which the Liturgy of the Hours proposes for Sunday Lauds in the first and third weeks. This marvellous litany-like prayer is well-suited to the *Dies Domini*, the Day of the Lord, that lets us contemplate in the risen Christ the culmination of God's plan for the cosmos and for history. Indeed, in him, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end of history (cf. Rev 22:13), creation itself acquires its full meaning since, as John recalls in the Prologue to his Gospel, 'all things were made through him'." (Jn 1:3)

Cosmological Dimensions Of The Eucharist

In the Angelus address on 17th June of the same year he refers to the cosmic relevance of the Eucharist: "It is a feast in which we rejoice over the extraordinary gift of the Bread of life which, as Christ promised, guarantees eternal life - the Bread that is really his flesh, his humanity, through which God sanctifies hearts, people, communities, nations and the whole cosmos."

Or again in the encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*:

"This varied scenario of celebrations of the Eucharist has given me a powerful experience of its universal and, so to speak cosmic character. Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world. It unites heaven and earth. It embraces and permeates all creation." (n.8)

It is, however, in the Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* that we see the full sweep of the Pope's theology on the cosmological nature of the Mass. At the beginning of the letter he indicates that Sunday Mass is the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ, a unique event "which lies at the very heart of the mystery of time," and is "the true

fulcrum of history to which the mystery of the world's origin and its final destiny leads"(n.2). It is the festival of the "new creation".

But it is the Pope's wish to go further back in time, and to consider the Mass in relation to the first days of creation. To understand the full meaning of Sunday he turns to the beginning of creation and the rest on the seventh day. "In order to grasp fully the meaning of Sunday, therefore, we must re-read the great story of creation and deepen our understanding of the theology of the 'Sabbath'"(n.8).

A Plan From The Dawn Of Creation

One cannot get much clearer evidence of the Pope's Christocentric perspective, which embraces all of time and history, than when he writes: "Already at the dawn of creation, therefore, the plan of God implied Christ's 'cosmic mission'" (n.8).

The Pope sees the sweep of the Incarnation embracing all time past, present and future. He quotes from the prayer at the Easter Vigil, when the priest addresses the Easter Candle and refers to Christ as "the beginning and the end, 'the Alpha and the Omega'... These words clearly attest that 'Christ is the Lord of time; he is its beginning and its end: every year, every day and every moment are embraced by his Incarnation and Resurrection, and thus become part of the Fullness of time'."(n 74)

And again, he notes that when the priest says the doxology at the end of every Eucharistic prayer, "the Christian community thus comes to a renewed awareness of the fact that all things were created through Christ" (n.42). Christ reveals the fullness of God's plan for creation, with or without sin.

An Old Debate Coming To A Head

The Thomist/Scotist debate has serious consequences for theology. It fundamentally affects how we understand the Incarnation, and whether we see it as just a result of sin, or as the fulfillment of a plan from the very beginnings of creation. And it also has serious consequences for present day science if Christ is to be seen as the fundamental answer as to why the universe is here at all.

It is understandable that many of us are accustomed to consider the works of Saint Thomas and Thomism, as the predominant and favourable points of orientation to the Church. This article clearly indicates a view that is contrary to that held by St. Thomas. However there exists the possibility of a number of orthodox ways of expressing the mysteries of our faith, and the Pope himself refers to Blessed Duns Scotus as a "pillar of

Catholic Theology.”⁶ Countless other great minds honoured by the Church, like St. Francis de Sales, held the same position as Scotus.

Exalting The Role Of Mary

Recognising that the Incarnation is part of the original plan of God has consequences also for our understanding of Mary. In November 1998 the Pope referred to Blessed Duns Scotus as the “poet of the Immaculate Conception”, in reference to his contribution of providing a theological explanation for that doctrine. It is apt that we end with a quote from the Holy Father concerning the fundamental role of Our Lady in the history of salvation. In his letter on the occasion for the 12th World Day of the Sick in 2004, he taught that due to Mary the original plan of creation was restored, with the Immaculate Conception being the keystone of history.

“The Immaculate Conception introduces the harmonious interlacing between the ‘yes’ of God and the ‘yes’ that Mary pronounced without reserve when the angel brought the heavenly announcement (cf. Lk

1:38). Her ‘yes’ in the name of humanity re-opened the doors of Heaven to the world, thanks to the Incarnation of the Word of God in her womb by the work of the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk 1:35). In this way, the original project of creation was restored and strengthened in Christ; the virgin Mother also shares in this project. The keystone of history lies here: with the Immaculate Conception of Mary began the great work of Redemption that was brought to fulfillment in the precious blood of Christ. In him, every person is called to achieve the perfection of holiness (cf. Col 1:28).

1. St Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theol., 3a, qu. 1, art. 3 Reply to objection 3.
2. St. Thomas Aquinas, 3 Sentent., dist. 1, qu. 1, art. 3
3. Blessed Duns Scotus, Opus Oxoniense, 3, dist. 19, ed. Wadding, t. 7, p. 415.
4. Adversus Haereses 5.36.3,
5. St Maximus the Confessor, 60th questio ad Thalassium.
6. L'Osservatore Romano, 13th March 2002, p.6.

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THE CENTRALITY OF CHRIST

Marriage: The True Environment for Sexual Loving

Luke Gormally

Luke Gormally is a Senior Research Fellow of The Linacre Centre for Healthcare Ethics, London, England (of which he was Director 1981-2000), and a Research Professor of Ave Maria School of Law, Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A. This is the text of the excellent talk he gave at this year's Faith Summer Session.

"The attraction which draws us to another person of the opposite sex needs the structure of marriage if it is to blossom into authentic sexual love."

In What Sense 'Environment'

My first reaction on being given the title of this talk was to think that the notion of 'environment' was not all that helpful in explaining the meaning of marriage. I resisted the temptation unilaterally to change the subtitle, and decided to seek assistance from the Concise Oxford English Dictionary. The Dictionary identifies five meanings of the word 'environment':

1. the physical surroundings in which a person lives.
2. the area surrounding a place.
3. external conditions as affecting plant and animal life.
4. [From the field of computing]: the overall structure within which a user, computer or programme operates.
5. a structure designed to be experienced from inside as a work of art.

Evidently marriages are not physical surroundings of persons or places. Of the five senses of 'environment' the dictionary gives, the one that appeared to me to be the most illuminating for our purposes is the one taken from the field of computing: 'the overall structure within which a user, computer or program works'. This notion of 'environment' applied to marriage suggests that what we should be exploring is the idea of marriage as the overall structure within which a sexual relationship in some sense works.

Multiple Effects With Unity of Purpose

We are familiar with the idea of explaining structure in terms of function, both in the natural world and with human artefacts. The extraordinary structures of plants or animals are to be understood by reference to the ways in which they make possible the distinctive kinds of life of those plants or animals. The structure of a house is understood by the way it functions to accommodate the needs of a household; the structure of a church by the way it functions to facilitate the celebration of the liturgy.

A good house or a good church will be so structured as to make possible a number of effects. A church for example should be so designed that the acoustics are suitable for liturgical music, natural light is focused to emphasise the centrality of the liturgical action, while also serving to create an atmosphere conducive to prayer. So a structure will often make possible a number of effects, but those effects are (if the structure is appropriately designed) held together in a unity by the coherent way in which the multiple effects serve the central purpose of the structure.

These analogies are intended to give us some direction in exploring the idea of marriage as an 'environment', which I am taking to mean 'marriage as the overall structure within which a sexual relationship works'. A structure, we have just noted, may make possible the realisation of a number of effects, but it will be a successful structure just in so far as those effects help realise the central purpose of the structure.

Distinctive Character Of Human Reproduction

Marriage as a structure for sexual relationships is best understood in terms of the central purpose or role of sex in human life. The role of sex in human life, as in other forms of animal life, is to produce offspring. Sexual organs are reproductive organs, part of what any biology textbook will tell you is the reproductive system.

Human offspring, however, are in fundamental ways different from the offspring of other animals. It is what is distinctive of the nature of children which explains the distinctive structure that marriage gives to a human sexual relationship.

Marriage exists for the good of children. Because children are such a fundamental good of human society – a good without which societies could not survive – we have the fundamental institution of marriage. Man is a political animal, Aristotle said – the kind of being who needs a civic community in order to flourish. Man is even more fundamentally a conjugal animal, St Thomas Aquinas added, since what he called “the domestic society of husband and wife” is ordered to meeting the most basic needs without which civil society would not exist – namely the begetting and rearing of children. You cannot make sense of marriage as an institution, as a structured relationship in society, unless you appreciate that its point and purpose is the begetting and rearing of children.

If what I am saying is true then we should be able to get at an understanding of marriage by reflecting on what type of relationship should exist between a man and a woman for the purpose of begetting and rearing children. That purpose itself should not be understood in minimalist terms. It is nothing less, in St Augustine’s words, than the task of “receiving [children] lovingly, nourishing them humanely, and educating them religiously” [De Genesi ad litt. 9.7]

Marriage: A Relationship For Family And For Heaven

The first thing to be said about the marriage relationship is that it needs to be appropriate to the nature of the child. In thinking in this context about the nature of the child we should reflect in particular on two truths emphasised in Christian teaching. The first is the truth that each human soul is directly created by God in his own image. Our very existence is a gift of God in a quite distinctive sense. In the normal use of the term, a gift implies a recipient of the gift.

If we think of the child himself then the gift of human existence has no prior recipient, for the gift of human life is what brings the child into existence. Each of us is radically dependent on God. But God’s creative activity in

bringing each of us into existence is an activity in collaboration, so to speak, with our parents. So a child is entrusted to his or her parents as a gift which surpasses in its nature anything they are capable of producing by the mastery of materials. The second truth about the child is that God’s intention for each of us is that our fulfilment as human beings should be in union with the Persons of the Blessed Trinity.

These two truths mean that each child possesses a connatural dignity – that is a dignity which belongs to us simply in virtue of our existence as human beings – that is equal in significance to the connatural dignity of his or her parents. This equality is evidently not the equality in utility value of replaceable utility goods – as one Ford Fiesta or one Hotpoint Washing Machine is as valuable for your purposes as another. Human beings are not replaceable because each of us is created by God precisely as the individual each of us is for fulfilment in union with Him. All of us are equal in having that kind of awesome dignity, a dignity in virtue of which we are irreplaceable.

Exclusive And Lifelong Faithfulness

All this means that the relationship between a man and a woman in marriage should be conducive to treating the child as an irreplaceable gift of God equal in dignity to themselves. The relationship between a man and a woman which securely grounds that kind of relationship to their child is one which has two indispensable features (at this point I am beginning to define the distinctive ‘structure’ of marriage). The first is that the man and the woman are committed to treating each other as irreplaceable in the sexual relationship in which the child is begotten, in other words, they are committed to marriage as a lifelong commitment which, negatively, excludes other sexual relationships, and, positively, commits them to a shared life of mutual support.

The commitment of husband and wife to an exclusive sexual relationship in which each seeks the good of the other realises that good of marriage which Catholic tradition calls ‘fides’ – the faithful commitment to be united in mind and body with one’s spouse in that distinctive form of friendship which marriage is. This friendship can be realised only through a self-giving love on the part of each spouse. A marriage relationship shaped by that kind of commitment provides what one might call the ‘moral ecology’ the child needs.

A couple who treat each other in their sexual relationship as irreplaceable and to be accepted and loved for just the persons they are convey to the child a sense of his own

dignity as an irreplaceable human being who is cherished for just the person he is.

Intercourse That Is Truly Marital Is Open To Life

The second key feature – structural feature – of marriage, dictated by what is needed for the good of children, is that the sexual activity of the man and the woman should be consistent with their relationship being a *marital* relationship in which they are open to children for what they are – gifts of God. What is required if the sexual expression of a relationship is to be truly marital in this sense? What is required is that sexual intercourse should be normal marital intercourse which is both unitive and procreative in its significance.

Pope Paul VI in his Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* taught: “there is an unbreakable connection between the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning [of the conjugal act] and both are inherent in the conjugal act”. What the Church teaches is that intercourse does not unite a couple in an authentic way – does not truly unite them – if it does not retain its procreative significance. Let me first explain what is required for it to be the case that an act of intercourse has a procreative significance or meaning. Then I shall explain why that is important for the good of children and why it is essential to the good of the couple.

The Idea That Actions Have Inherent Meaning

You may be unfamiliar with the idea of acts having meaning, or you may be inclined to think that if they do have meaning they will have a distinctive meaning on each occasion they are performed, depending on the individual’s motives and intentions. Well, motives and intentions clearly do determine the full significance of what we choose to do. But there are types of act which have a built-in significance independent of our motives and intentions. Take eating, for example. You can eat because you are hungry, you can eat because you are greedy, you can eat to be polite to your hostess, you can eat to please your Jewish Momma (“What’s wrong with my cooking, Moshe?”). But eating has a significance independent of any of these motives because of the role eating plays in human life – it nourishes the body.

So we can say that as a type of act eating has nutritive significance – it is a nutritive type of act. It has this significance because of our physiology – because of biological facts about what standardly happens when we ingest food. Eating would not cease to be a nutritive type of act if on any given occasion it failed to nourish the body. My eating remains a nutritive type of act even if my duodenum is in such a dysfunctional condition that I fail to absorb nourishment. It would only cease to be a

nutritive type of act if I did something to negate its nutritive significance, as the ancient Romans are reported to have done when they took emetics to provoke vomiting so that they could continue to enjoy the gustatory pleasures of eating.

Having grasped the idea of types of act which possess a generic significance because of the role they play in human life we are better placed to understand what is meant by talking of the procreative significance of sexual intercourse. Normal intercourse is a generative or procreative type of act. It has that meaning because the fundamental role intercourse plays in human life is that of generating new human life. It does not have to result in generation on each occasion of intercourse to qualify as a generative type of act. And it remains a generative or procreative kind of act as long as those who engage in it do not do anything with the purpose of rendering it sterile when it might otherwise be fertile.

Why is it important that intercourse retain its significance as a generative type of act? I have already suggested that the explanation refers both to the good of the child and the good of the couple.

We Are What We Do

To appreciate the explanation it is important to grasp a quite general truth that our chosen actions shape our dispositions and attitudes – in other words, our characters. The dominant ethic of our culture – utilitarianism – obscures this truth. For utilitarianism characteristically evaluates chosen courses of action by reference to the external outcomes or results produced by the action. But my chosen actions do not merely bring about effects external to me – they shape my moral dispositions, that is, the dispositions I acquire that incline me to make one kind of choice rather than another. I become more disposed to lie by lying, more disposed to carry out abortions by carrying out an abortion, more disposed to prayer by praying, more disposed to generosity to the poor by acts of generosity to the poor.

Now if I choose to make my intercourse sterile when it might otherwise be fertile in order to enjoy a non-generative act of intercourse I am in effect saying that it makes good sense to engage in intercourse to the exclusion of its significance as generative activity. If people are disposed to think that is true then there is no reason why they should think that sexual activity should be confined to marriage. In breaking the link between sex and marriage contraception has destroyed in many the disposition to be open to the gift of a child precisely in and through their sexual activity. To preserve in oneself the sense that sexual activity is essentially generative

activity is to preserve in oneself a sense that it belongs only in marriage, for it is only the marriage relationship that is adequate to fostering the good of the child.

Contraception Undermines Marital Unity

Contraception is not merely hostile to the good of children in being deliberately non-generative but for the very same reason is destructive of the unity proper to marriage. There is no true marital unity which does not involve bodily unity. Our Lord in responding to the question of the Pharisees about the permissibility of divorce, recalled the text of Genesis (2: 24) which states God's primordial plan for marriage:

"Some Pharisees approached him and to test him they said, 'Is it against the Law for a man to divorce his wife on any pretext whatever?' He answered, 'Have you not read that the Creator from the beginning made them male and female, and that he said: This is why a man must leave father and mother, and cling to his wife and the two become one body? They are no longer two therefore but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide.'" (Mt 19: 3-6)

In what sense does sexual intercourse make a couple 'one body'? A sexual act which remains generative brings into being a unique kind of oneness. We exercise most of our natural capacities individually even if we depend on others to develop those capacities. I see by myself, think by myself, speak by myself. But a human individual's capacity to reproduce is, you might say, only half a capacity; it is radically incomplete: each needs the complementary capacity and activity of someone of the opposite sex in order to reproduce.

It is in acting together in a way that is *apt for reproduction* that husband and wife form a quasi-organic unity – become in a sense 'one body'. It is not under their control that they actually conceive a child or that they are fertile. What is under their control is that they act in a way which, if they are fertile, leaves open the possibility that their conjoined powers of reproduction cooperate in the conception of a child.

More Than A Biological Union

Unity at this level is absolutely necessary but not sufficient for marital unity. After all, as St Paul observed, "a man who goes with a prostitute is one body with her" (1 Cor 6: 16). Unity at the biological level must be the expression of marital commitment, of that self-giving love on the part of husband and wife which is open to the gift of children and bears fruit in a community of life through which each may transcend the confining egoisms to which we are prone. In this way the structure of marriage in working for the good of children

simultaneously works for the good of the spouses in drawing them into an ever more generous love for each other and for the children God gives them.

The attraction which draws us to another person of the opposite sex needs the structure of marriage if it is to blossom into authentic sexual love. And the essential features of that structure as I have delineated them are:

- the commitment of each to treat the other as irreplaceable in their marital relationship;
- the requirement that their sexual intercourse should remain of the generative or procreative kind if their unity is to be a unity in body, mind and spirit. There is an intrinsic connection between union in love and openness to procreation.

Marriage As Sacrament: More Than A Human Love

I began this talk from the idea of marriage as an environment, understanding by that a 'structure' within which sexual love works. The life that allows itself to be shaped by this structure is a life rooted in love. But human love is fragile, resistant to the demands of self-giving, apt to retreat from its challenges and to take refuge in various forms of self-gratification.

The indispensable solution to our wounded condition as husbands and wives lies in the sacramental reality of marriage in the economy of our salvation. The fact that marriage is a sacrament means that the commitment of the spouses to living out their marriage vows itself signifies the reality of grace in their lives. Though Baptism brings to us in germ Christ's victory over death and sin, liberating us from the state of alienation from God consequent on original sin, we are nonetheless left wounded in our natural powers: often finding it hard to come by the understanding we need and prone to be suckers for the ideological claptrap of our age, weak of will, disordered in our sensuous desires, and inclined to excesses of either timidity or aggressivity. Any such weaknesses can make difficult a wholehearted living of the marriage vows.

But spouses who are united to Christ through Baptism and the Eucharist and who have a lively faith in His power to heal them and overcome the deadly power of sin in their lives (more particularly through the Sacrament of Penance), will experience that transforming power in and through the difficulties and vicissitudes of marriage. For the power of the Resurrection comes precisely in and through the Cross. It is absolutely essential to marriage to have a sure-footed and down-to-earth faith in the power of the Cross. By that I mean the power of the Cross as it

presents itself concretely in your life. For every marriage presents husband and wife with real crosses, uncongenial features of each other's temperament, sins against each other, the recalcitrance of children, the sins of children against one, tragic accidents, grave illness. All these involve suffering. We should not retreat into self-defence of our egos in face of such suffering. For the power of the Resurrection is available in and through our suffering to make possible acceptance of our suffering, forgiveness of those who wrong us, reconciliation and peace.

Marriage which makes a man and a woman 'one body' is a 'mysterion' St Paul says, a 'sacramentum' pointing to its own fulfilment in the union of Christ and the Church. For the mystery of marriage receives its fulfilment precisely through husband and wife entering into and participating in the union of Christ and the Church.

In this way their relationship becomes a mode of realising the community created by the self-sacrificing and life-giving love of Jesus. The fruitfulness of marriage in children is a fruitfulness for the Kingdom. So the natural gestation of a child demands its mystical gestation in the waters of Baptism. The motherhood of the Church is the essential complement to natural motherhood.

Openness To The Father Of Life And Of Love

The institution of marriage belongs to the primordial plan of God in creation. God willed a family which would recognise his loving Fatherhood, live by the wisdom of divine truth and enjoy his friendship. Our first parents swallowed the lie that God was the enemy of their freedom. The work of redemption has restored to us the possibility of discovering God as a loving Father in experiencing the Church as a mother.

This discovery and experience are the basis on which chaste Christian marriages are founded for they make possible that living faith and trust in God's providence which sustains that self-giving love which welcomes the gift of the child. In having hearts that are essentially open and trusting in this way husband and wife will flourish as God meant them to flourish.

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How To Improve Music in The Liturgy

Jeremy de Satgé

Jeremy de Satgé, a professional singer and composer, offers some constructive suggestions about how to improve the quality of music in the Liturgy. He runs a small liturgical music publishing company, The Music Makers, which publishes original works of liturgical music and provides resources to encourage the singing of settings of the Mass, including several highly acclaimed CDs that help priests and congregations sing the Mass more effectively. Details of The Music Makers may be found on line at www.themusicmakers.org

"The music should both inspire and aspire rather than be mundane. Music should help worshippers raise their hearts and minds to Almighty God."

It is often said that it is impossible to get Catholics (particularly in Britain) to sing! Although there may be some shining exceptions, to whom I apologise profusely, I think it is fair to say that this statement is truer than it is false. Certainly, if as Catholics we compare ourselves with Anglicans, Methodists and other Reformed churches, our congregational singing lags far behind, as do our choirs. It is worth taking a look at some of the reasons why this is the case and to offer some thoughts on how best to improve the musical output of our liturgical celebrations.

In the first instance it could be said that in Britain at least there has not been enough of a tradition of quality music making for the liturgy. With the break in authorised worship between the Reformation and the Restoration of the Hierarchy in 1850, the development of English Catholic music suffered a severe blow. When it comes to music, the Roman Catholic Church in Britain is at a considerable disadvantage compared with the Church of England.

Many Anglican cathedrals and abbeys have royal charters, schools and sums of money to invest in choirs to produce daily sung liturgy. Over the centuries, composers (frequently cathedral organists) have added to the repertoire of church music, much of which has lasted the test of time; and cathedral worship has been a source of inspiration and encouragement to parish choirs. Westminster Cathedral can be said to be the only Catholic cathedral able to match the splendour of Anglican church music. The archives of St. George's Cathedral, Southwark, for example, give constant reference to the indifference of singing throughout the latter part of the 19th Century and early 20th Century.

Secondly, it can be argued that since Vatican II, there has not been a sufficient amount of time for church music to develop its identity in settling into the new liturgy. It is worth examining the document concerned with the sacred liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* for guidance. Of course this document, as with other documents of the Council, is open to interpretation, which arguably can be said to be part of the problem. My own view is that the document is remarkably specific in the area of sacred music and I would recommend all church musicians to read Articles 112-121 in full (for ease, this can be found on the Internet at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/v2litur.htm>).

To give you an example, the document states that although the vernacular may be allowed, the heritage of the Latin liturgy and music was not to be forgotten and "pride of place" should still be given to the Gregorian heritage - in other words music which arises from the spirituality of plainsong. It could be argued that in many places the baby has gone out with the bathwater in an over-speedy desire to modernise. The document also invites composers to write quality new music suitable for parish choirs and challenges cathedral churches to take the lead in producing good music, thereby encouraging parishes to follow suit. The Bishops of

England and Wales have followed this with their own Guide for Composers, which is still in draft form, awaiting the publication in English of the new Roman Missal.

For the past two years I have had the privilege of working as Music Director of a large (and indeed expanding!) parish in South London - Holy Ghost Church, Balham - where I have an enthusiastic choir of amateur singers, most of whom cannot read music, to train. I have been lucky to have received tremendous support from the two priests of the parish and from members of the choir and congregation, eager to sing better.

Hands On Experience

As someone who writes choral music particularly with the amateur choir in mind, this hands-on experience has been invaluable for me as my ideas concerning liturgical music develop. With this experience behind me, I feel it is a good moment to share some reflections in making some detailed suggestions as how to improve parish music. I hope the following proves useful - please excuse me if much of it sounds obvious! In the first instance, it should be stressed that music should be appropriate, reflecting the liturgical season and helping to amplify the "theme" of the Sunday in question.

This requires consulting the readings and antiphons for the Sunday in question, before selecting which music to perform. The music should both *inspire* and *aspire* rather than be mundane. Music should help worshippers raise their hearts and minds to Almighty God.

The Introit

In most parishes a hymn suffices at the beginning of Mass. It is, however, worth looking at the Introit verse set for each Sunday. The introit sets the theme or "flavour" for the Sunday in question and can be very effectively sung on a monotone or simple 3-note chant, making a dignified entrance to the Mass and also giving pause to the faithful as they meditate and consider the words of the Introit. It is particularly effective if the Introit is first sung in Latin and then in English - as this makes an obvious connection with our Latin heritage and emphasises the "Catholic" (world-wide) nature of the Church. I would recommend this particularly during the penitential seasons (Lent & Advent) but also during Ordinary Time, although perhaps not each week.

Hymns

I have to admit to not being particularly keen on hymns and I suspect that this is partly because they are so often tediously and badly sung and played! Over the last two years, I have been pleasantly surprised at our hymn singing and I think that the secret is mainly a question of

getting the right speed. There is a "natural speed" for most hymns, which is largely based on speech rhythm. In general, slow hymns should be played faster than one might suppose (Soul of my Saviour is a good example, which is often played excruciatingly slowly!); and faster, particularly syncopated hymns (at best avoided) should usually be played more slowly, especially if there is to be any chance of the congregation singing at the same time as the organist and choir. It is also important to use the punctuation correctly, the effect of which is to make greater sense of the words. The other difficulty arises in the vocal range of hymn tunes. Tunes which go lower than Middle C and higher than D of the octave above are not that easy for most congregations to sing and can sound quite strangled as a result! Do not be afraid to transpose hymns if it makes singing easier.

Psalms

I have always had a problem with Responsorial Psalms, finding them not particularly effective. Part of the problem lies with the modern translation, which is less than poetic and, frequently, difficult to set to music. Psalms are most effective when sung by a choir as a whole (better still with the congregation). Anglicans have centuries' experience of singing psalms in the vernacular; and I soon started experimenting with adapting Anglican chant to fit the Catholic translation. On the whole, this works well - you need to take care when pointing the psalm verses (setting syllables to notes) but the result is generally worthwhile. The second half or last quarter of the chant may be used as the response, depending on the length of the response. The advantage of using this method is that the response is easy to sing by the congregation and the verses may be sung by a cantor or by a choir in unison or full harmony, depending on the resources available.

Mass Settings

Finding appropriate Mass settings is more difficult than one might suppose. Many modern English settings designed for congregational singing are rather trite and monotonous, particularly when sung week after week. I find this particularly the case with the Gloria, that great song of praise and jubilation, which is also a surprisingly difficult text to set to music. I was saddened to learn that in France this has frequently been reduced to being sung as a strophic hymn, which does nothing to enhance the words - rather the opposite. There is, of course, a rich resource of Mass settings within the reach of most choirs, namely the Plainsong or Gregorian Chant settings and, with the risk of being accused of being reactionary, I would recommend these highly, perhaps alternating plainsong settings with English settings of the Mass. It is perhaps surprising but nevertheless gratifying that most

congregations will remember and sing the Missa de Angelis (Mass XIII) with confidence, especially when given a copy to follow. There are other Mass settings as well, so why not alternate? Orbis Factor (Mass XI) is appropriate for Sundays of Ordinary Time as well; and Lent and Advent have their own Mass setting (Mass XVII). Then there is the debate as to whether or not the Plainsong setting should be accompanied by an organ. As a purist, my own inclination is that the settings should be unaccompanied, but I have to confess that realistically an organ accompaniment can be very effective, particularly if there are no strong voices to lead the choir and congregation. As a choir's confidence increases you could try other polyphonic settings for Feast Days and gradually increase the choir's repertoire of Mass settings.

Motets

A Communion motet or something sung at the Offertory is highly appropriate and gives the choir a chance to perform on its own. It is good to keep introducing new pieces in order to increase a choir's repertoire - pieces can then be performed in rotation. Unaccompanied motets are best avoided (sadly), especially if there is not a strong voice per part to lead. Organists may choose to play a quiet accompaniment if appropriate. However, there is still a great deal to choose from. Please remember that something simple sung well is infinitely better than something difficult sung badly!

Happy music making and remember the words of St. Augustine: "He who sings, prays twice".

ON EARTH AS IN HEAVEN

"No man has ascended into heaven save He who came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, who is in heaven." (John 3,13). When He truly terms Himself the 'Son of Man', it refers to His human birth, while the fact that He never departs from heaven refers to the Infinite

character of His Divine nature. And so the Apostle also says, in concord with these sacred words, "He that descended is the same that ascended" (Phil. 2,6-8). Thus the Word of God descended from heaven, but the Son of Man ascended. But he is saying that the same Person ascended and descended. Thus you see that the Son of Man is the same Person as the Word of God.

from St. John Cassian, Seven Books on the Incarnation of the Lord, Against Nestorius. Book 4 Chapter 6



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THE EVOLUTION DEBATE

Dear Fr Editor

Many congratulations on your excellent editorial about evolution and the doctrine of creation. For Catholics to get themselves so wound up trying to prove that evolution is some terrible conspiracy against the Faith is a such a waste of energy. We should be concentrating on answering the likes of Richard Dawkins on his own ground as you do so well. It is his philosophical presumptions and conclusions that are so false. We can actually cut the ground from under his feet by using the very facts of science against him. It is an impressive and significant fact that so many of the priests who have found their vocations through contact with the Faith Movement hold qualifications in the sciences, some of the very highest.

yours sincerely

Paul Butcher
16a off Coniston Way
Reigate, Surrey

Dear Fr Editor,

It strikes me, as a linguist, that the problem with acceptance among Catholics of some form of evolutionary theory is caused by a problem with the word 'evolution' itself. Deriving from the intransitive verb, 'to evolve', it naturally implies an autonomous, self-motivating process, a notion which to many

seems unconvincing - witness the several 'design theory' arguments neatly summarised by Roger Peck in the May/June issue. By its very linguistic nature, the phrase 'God evolved me' sounds far more awkward than 'God created me'.

Perhaps some alternative word to 'evolution' is required, which allows for a development of life in all its splendour through the gradual divergence and multiplication of species, yet at the same time does not suggest the atheist or deist attitude to the existence of life which 'evolution' does, but rather the truth that God not only created the universe but maintains it with loving care in existence.

What such a word would be, I do not know: perhaps other readers could make suggestions. A few unsatisfactory ideas to set the ball rolling: cultivation of life, tropism, education (Lat. educare: okay, I know this latinism already has other uses!) - find suitable words derived from Latin or Greek, and you are halfway there!

Yours faithfully

Richard Brown
King St,
Oxford

Dear Fr Editor,

Let me reply to the critics of the letters by others and myself on the evolution debate by first thanking you for allowing debate (since your editorial policy precludes scepticism on the subject).

Let me begin my correcting Fr Roger Nesbitt (for whom I, too, have the highest regard) in his assumption that I am "anti-evolution". I am not. I am merely sceptical of the current theories - a very different thing. No more do I rule out direct, special creation. I think all will agree that scepticism in science is essential to scientific

progress. Slavish adherence to dogma in science is anathema to progress. Certain theories of macro-evolution are fast turning into highly unwarranted dogma for which, I think it fair to say, there is no place in science.

Condescending to detail, the first point to note is that neither the learned editorial nor any of the letters writers address the actual points that I made in my earlier letter. To be sure they dismiss them but they do not actually answer them.

There is plainly a difficulty with the statistical probability of macro-evolution. That argument is not going to go away by being ignored.

Fr Chris Findlay-Wilson's letter purports to find evidence for evolutionism in the Catechism but even assuming that a Catechism is a proper tool for supporting or refuting a theory which is scientific in origin, the quotations he cites simply do not repudiate special creation.

Mr Martin Hussingtree again does not address the objections and overlooks the fact that C S Lewis was himself a sceptic on evolution and the quote from him, far from detracting therefrom, rather underscores it.

The more serious analyses are those of Fr Nesbitt and the learned editorialiser. The principally emerging thesis of each is that "all entities in the universe are interdependent and that they operate according to a law not according to chance" and that "all living things are substantially interrelated and have arrived at their contemporary forms by a process of interactive development and diversification".

I need hardly point out that this thesis is not incompatible with micro-evolutionary development and therefore with special creation, either. The central "core" of the theory is not, therefore, conclusive either way. It is also argued that "no one can seriously suggest that God

created each atomic element by a separate act" as if such were somehow inevitable in special creation. It is not. It is self-evident that creation, since its beginning, has been constantly changing, developing, waxing and waning in its parts, since that is the essence of living in time and space. To say as much is not to have said a great deal. It certainly does not prove the case for a theory of macro-evolution.

Michael Behe's challenge remains, for all that some dismiss it without debate. He places before us a biochemical challenge to macro-evolution and yet we are elsewhere assured that biochemistry has removed the issue beyond any practical doubt. It plainly has not. What has still to be demonstrated convincingly is that micro-biological changes are more than micro-evolution. The fact that we share 90% of our DNA with the great apes does not prove we share a common ancestor with them, however much that may be one tenable position.

And yet the editorialist goes on to assert – boldly – that such insights make the case against macroevolution "untenable" (and he adds for good measure "unnecessary"). On the contrary, it does no such thing. It merely makes the case for macro-evolution arguable – a very different thing.

The editorialist – who, by the way, does not answer the objections based upon probability which I raised in correspondence – then takes to task a creationist website for asserting the possibility that the Creator may have "mixed and matched" elements of His creation when designing. He deprecates this as a "subconscious image of God that has done a disservice to catechesis", a perhaps unusual statement to make given that such an image of the Creator was the one presented to catechumens and

students for most of the Church's history.

The reality is that each side in the debate begins with their own subconscious image of the creating Deity and then applies that image to the debate. That is not to say that arguments cannot be addressed at a purely scientific level. They can and must – but one must be aware that participants will bring their own purely metaphysical pre-suppositions to the debate.

Let us then consider some of the theological issues since these have now been raised. In *Humani Generis*, Pope Pius XII taught definitively that: "When, however, there is question of another conjectural opinion, namely polygenism, the children of the Church by no means enjoy such liberty. For the faithful cannot embrace that opinion which maintains either that after Adam there existed on this earth true men who did not take their origin through natural generation from him as from the first parent of all or that Adam represents a certain number of first parents. Now it is in no way apparent how such an opinion can be reconciled with that which the sources of revealed truth and the documents of the Teaching Authority of the Church propose with regard to original sin, which proceeds from a sin actually committed by an individual Adam and which through generation is passed on to all and is in everyone as his own."

This is no more than the Ordinary Universal and Infallible Magisterium of the Catholic Church has taught for 2,000 years. Monogenism is therefore mandatory.

Pope Leo XIII affirmed the same in *Arcanum* writing: "We record what is to all known, and cannot be doubted by any, that God, on the sixth day of creation, having made man from the slime of the earth, and having breathed into his face the breath of life, gave him a companion, whom He miraculously

took from the side of Adam when he was locked in sleep. God thus, in His most far-reaching foresight, decreed that this husband and wife should be the natural beginning of the human race, from whom it might be propagated and preserved by an unending fruitfulness throughout all futurity of time."

Modern mainstream theories of macro-evolution tend to disdain the human race beginning with but one couple (though this may change with further discoveries and theories regarding the so-called "mitochondrial Eve").

To get around the stipulation regarding monogenism, some Catholic evolutionists have even suggested that the sons of Adam may have had sexual relations with different hominid species who were not yet homo sapiens. This unusual theory that the propagation of the human race was achieved through coition with non-humans (i.e. bestiality) is an idea unlikely to find much theological support, I venture to suggest.

Lastly, it has been suggested that too close attention to the words of Scripture should be eschewed. Perhaps so, but adherents of that view must also reckon with the authoritative words of Pope Benedict XV in his *Spiritus Paraclitus* on the proper interpretation of Scripture. He wrote: "Those, too, who hold that the historical portions of Scripture do not rest on the absolute truth of the facts but merely upon what they are pleased to term their relative truth, namely, what people then commonly thought, are - no less than are the aforementioned critics - out of harmony with the Church's teaching, which is endorsed by the testimony of Jerome and other Fathers."

He goes on to apply the same principle to physics. That science and religion are but two sides of the same coin is a truism and the Catholic religion has contributed

more to science than probably any other religion. That, however, is not the issue before us.

Those who think that modern theories of evolution are beyond criticism and that those who oppose them have only a defective or even "primary school" level of understanding perhaps ought to admit that the objections stand on a rather stronger footing – not only scientifically but also theologically. It remains to be seen whether the objections will be satisfactorily met.

Yours faithfully,

*James Bogle
The Inner Temple
London*

Dear Fr Editor,

Your creationist correspondents seem to have varying degrees of openness to the theory of evolution. They might accept some sort of 'micro-evolution', for example, which is readily assumed to have happened as a result of purely 'natural causation', but they pull back from accepting complete macro-evolution, because this is then felt to shut out God's special causative role in creation. But in adopting this position, they actually share an important emphasis with the materialists who have done so much harm to our civilisation. In common with the atheist reductionists, the theistic creationists are, one might say, basically agnostic about the nature and meaning of matter. For them the interactions of the physical world are *not*, generally speaking, direct evidence for a Creator. In effect they deny that physical causation, and by extension all matter, is immediately dependent upon a Transcendent Mind.

Thus these creationists assiduously search to find a gap in the natural interactions which might be direct evidence for God's creative

design. They are looking for a realm which God can call his own, a realm which it can be shown God has directly created. They are on a crusade to claim for God areas where boring 'natural causation' cannot be seen to encroach - the wondrous realm of the 'irreducibly complex'.

For special creationist thinkers the realm of natural causation is effectively ceded to the materialist mind-set. The Intelligent Design School claims to have proved a priori that it is impossible for natural causation to offer any intelligible explanation of what they define as the 'irreducibly complex'. The somewhat more fundamentalist school uses a quasi-Popperian philosophy of science to claim that scientific theory can never produce definite facts in any case. So it is that some of your recent correspondents attempt to deny that we are anywhere near such 'factuality' concerning things that encroach upon their particular realms of special creation, the main example being evolution.

But a priori denial concerning the patterns of matter is a dangerous game to play in an advancing scientific culture. All that needs to happen for Special Creationism to be shaken is for one of their gaps-for-God to be threatened with closure by an unforeseen theory of natural causation which successfully explains something irreducibly complex.

This vulnerability is compounded by the fact that creationism has already conceded that where natural causation is applicable, immediate dependence upon God does not apply. Special creationism plays the game on an agnostic field with regard to ordinary material causality, yet claims certain cases of extraordinary or amazing design to argue for God's intervention.

Rightly materialists will not let creationists get away with playing

fast and loose with scientific methodology like this. Creationists may also fall foul of the charge of reductionism with regard to natural causation and of undermining orthodox theology with regard to the immediate dependence of all creation upon the absolutely simple God.

Across the whole special creationist spectrum there seems to be an inability to examine these philosophical presuppositions. This allows the materialists to claim powerfully that they are the reasonable ones and those believing in a Creator are merely fideistic. Being reductionist about the nature of material causation is not just bad philosophy, it is an agnostic Trojan Horse.

The special creationist's philosophical mistake with regard to the material world actually goes much deeper than a simple inferiority complex in the face of the Enlightenment denigration of observation and causality. Their position is really a somewhat qualified version of Plato's (Eastern-inspired) relegation of material change to the lowest degree of significance, namely illusion. Numerous early Greek Fathers definitively rejected this view as incompatible with the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation and the revelation of the absolute sovereignty over the whole cosmos of the Creator God. Modern science has confirmed their insight. Special creationists are also incidentally in tune with some modern existentialists and metaphysicians, descendents of this Platonic Greek tradition, who think of the "existential" and "ontological" as somehow beyond the reach of, and separate from, that which we can access with our senses. So for them "metaphysics" remains for ever hermetically sealed from the scientific enterprise. This means that, as far as theists are concerned,

science can be safely shut up in an agnostic box where it never encroaches upon talk about God. But this unconscious materialist-creationist-existentialist alliance is in fact alien to the Catholic vision of a universe centred upon the Logos through whom all things were made. The Catechism says that God "at every moment upholds and sustains (his creatures) in being, enabl(ing) them to act and bring(ing) them to their final end ...", that all exist in "utter dependence with respect to the Creator" (CCC 306) and that it is in this way that God "operates in and through secondary causes" (308).

There is an alternative philosophy and theology which is in keeping with this teaching. There is a vision which claims that explaining the universe through natural causality is not a reason for pushing God out but for bringing Him in.

There is a vision which sees the order involved in even a leaf falling as sufficient evidence of Transcendent Mind. What we in FAITH call the Unity Law of Control and Direction affirms that matter is that which is controlled and directed by Divine Mind in one simple, direct all-encompassing unity.

This vision sees all and any natural order as inherently pointing to God as Creator/Sustainer. It is just as impressed by an electron being attracted to a proton or an apple falling as by the walls of a baby's heart or whatever else Special Creationists find impressive as examples of 'irreducible complexity', which therefore require God's creative intervention instead of mere, mundane 'natural causality'.

Our vision will vindicate all and every aspect of the physical realm as directly dependent upon the Mind of God. We know now that matter can in fact be expressed as a single, magnificent mathematical equation across the whole of the temporal-

spatial cosmos. In our approach the cosmos can be seen as a vast hierarchy of interlocking unities. And the whole is immediately, and in all aspects, dependent upon the Logos or Mind of God - who is, after all, outside of time and space.

It will be a vision which encourages us to discover further layers of meaning to the universe - interlocking layers like Russian Dolls. It will thus respect the scientific enterprise of experimental observation and discovery, but place it within a much bigger context of meaning. Our approach will not arbitrarily tell scientists that there are some areas of material interaction where they will not find natural causation any more. But neither it will not cede anything to an agnostic neo-Platonic philosophy of matter. It will not seal off science from metaphysics and therefore from ultimate reality.

In affirming the Christian doctrine about the simplicity of God and His direct role in sustaining every aspect of Creation, it will affirm that the Divine Logos, through whom all things are made, is simply One, undivided Thought, with no arbitrariness. FAITH movement offers this vision as a service to the Church - and this vision is the movement's *raison d'être*. Even if it is not this candidate which is accepted in the end, there can be no doubt that the need some such new vision is desperate.

Yours faithfully,

*Fr. Hugh MacKenzie
St Mary Magdalen
Willesdon Green, London*

Dear Fr Editor,

Regrettably, Fr Nesbitt's letter (Faith Sept/Oct 2004) confirms that the "protagonists on both sides of the evolution argument are all too frequently... knocking down

positions which the other side doesn't really hold." For instance, I am not one of the "anti-evolutionists paranoid about evolution out of fear that it threatens the whole of Christian religion." The creationists have made some valid points, which I felt it was fair to support - that is all. They might be naïve in their understanding of the Creation Narrative, but so seems Fr Nesbitt too: "Evolution actually supports the biblical view," he says. It does not: the Creation Narrative is not a record of events.

It is also true that "the secularists and the creationists are mistaken and incoherent in their philosophy and theology," but so is Fr Nesbitt, and - I have to say - the author of the editorial. I am not convinced that the two have a clear idea of a distinction between philosophy, theology, science, and, with regard to science, between the facts and theories.

Evolution is not a scientifically established fact, but only a theory based on some facts. I think it is essential to make this explicitly clear, otherwise the debate might end without anyone putting it on record. The Editorial does refer to it, *passim*, as a "theory," but the whole thrust of the article, as well as the spirited reaction of other pro-evolutionists, make it clear that the evolution as a (supposed) fact is the *idée fixe* of the faith movement. We are told: "The creationist case against evolution is... untenable"; "it is self evident that there has been real progress in nature... from worms to apes, from amoeba to people"; "creationists seem to forget that modern physics and chemistry are inherently evolutionary"; it is "the basic truth" and thus "a beautiful opportunity to present God again to the world"; "the argument... for evolution from the very nature of the universe is revealed by modern science." A theory is an unsound basis for

evangelisation, and this is why I suggested that the Faith movement would be better off without it (emphasis for the benefit of Fr Findlay-Wilson). And there is more to it. In our effort to evangelise we must not cheat "modern man" by offering him the theory of evolution as if it were a scientifically proven fact, "practically indisputable" as we read in the editorial. Such an approach is evil, it brings the Faith movement into disrepute and makes a bad service to the Catholic Church.

Authorities are everything in theology but of little value in science. It is irrelevant whether Hoyle was or was not "against evolution". What matters is that he has shown that, left to natural mechanisms, even if one calls them "secondary" causes, evolution is statistically impossible; while if the latter are understood as causes under divine control, I do not see why it should be more reasonable to believe in a sort of "standing by" Creator, watching over all individual "secondary" causes to ensure that each produces a species exactly as He wants to, than to believe in a Creator of "each one directly". Are we to believe that He created the primordial "matter" with coded-in potential for evolution and went to sleep?

Nor is DNA a valid escape. Already the priests of the Babylonian temple biting ridiculed by the Second Isaiah, surely knew that we were more similar to apes than to potatoes; and the detail, now known to priests of the temple in Cromwell Road ie. that this extends to DNA, is neither here nor there. The basic premise: a percentage of "shared" DNA reflects a common origin through evolution, should be proved and not taken for granted, for the conclusion to be true.

To see behind this "evolution" a "Law" in the ontological sense, and to conclude that "this Law is

impossible without a Supreme Mind" is within the competence of a philosopher, not of a statistician, chemist, physicist or theologian. A scientist with his methods can posit a "law", but even if he could prove it definitely, that would only be the "law" in the order of phenomena. A scientist cannot answer the question whether the reality of this "law" is ontological or merely the product of his own interpretation of the observed phenomena, real only in his own mind. And obviously if it is only his mind, the "Supreme Mind" is also in his mind.

But even if that "law" is ontologically real, the modern man is unlikely to accept a dogmatic kind of talk like: "This Law is impossible without God". Why impossible? The Faith Movement would do a better service to the Church if it addressed these epistemological and logical issues instead of wasting energy on evolution.

Pius XII assures us that the theory of evolution is not incompatible with Faith. This however does not permit evolution to be used as a tool of evangelisation. It should also be noted that Pius XII refers to supposed biological evolution only; not to the "evolutionism" which he explicitly rejects.

Yours faithfully,

*M Skarpa,
Hawes Rd
Bromley, Kent*

Dear Fr Editor,

The debate on "evolution" is bedevilled by shoddy argument. Terms are used with different meanings, appeals are made to authority in the absence of evidence, the motives of opponents are impugned and doubt cast upon their mental health. Catholic apologists

are no better behaved in this matter than Dawkins's disciples. Fr. Nesbitt questions the mental stability of correspondents asking if we are "paranoid about evolution" (Faith, Sept/Oct 2004). The caricature in your editorial of "creationists" as people seeing God as a "granddad in the potting shed" is crude and unwarranted even in the light of their stance.

Fr Nesbitt presumes that because I chose to outline the serious questions raised by biochemists and microbiologists about theories of evolution, particularly the propositions of Darwin and the neo-Darwinians, that I am "anti-evolutionary". He assumes that "six-day creationism" is the only alternative stance. In *Evolution a Theory in Crisis* Michael Denton makes clear that it is not, as does Stephen Barr in *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith* and Michael Behe in *Darwin's Black Box*.

Neither Fr Nesbitt nor your editorial dispose of the objections I raised. Evidence of design is not evidence of evolution for which there is no empirical evidence; nor could there be in the very nature of things. Professor Lipson may well have said "We have no option but to accept evolution; all the fossil evidence points to it." He was wrong; we do have an option which is to keep an open mind where empirical evidence is lacking. Neither speciation nor the most trivial type of evolution have been observed directly in nature. There is no direct empirical evidence that any of the major divisions of nature have crossed gradually through a sequence of transitional forms. That we share some percentage of DNA with apes and bananas does not dispose of these problems for evolutionists.

You say: "However the core of any theory of evolution is not the idea of chance or of random mutation and blind natural selection

by an aggressive environment..."

That is precisely the core for Dawkins's disciples. On that they will not and dare not budge an inch, for to do so would loosen their hold on atheism and materialism. Some disciples of the Faith school of evolution hold with equal zeal to their concept of evolution by design, brushing aside the difficulties which exist for evolutionism whether random or guided.

There is not much difference between your image of God as "granddad in the potting shed" and the image of God as the whiz-kid working out his developmental blue print. There is no empirical evidence for either. It would be wiser to say that the creation of the universe and its beings is a mystery. We may infer certain things rightly or wrongly from what we see around but that is not scientific proof. The evolutionist theories of the Faith Movement are no more scientific than those of Neo-Darwinian inference.

Yours faithfully,

*K H Kavanagh
Byron Crescent
Bedford*

EDITORIAL COMMENT

The current editor of FAITH has generally refrained from making editorial comments on the letters pages. However, he feels that on this occasion a somewhat weighty intervention is called for.

On the question of evolution and the various 'creationist' positions, first let us be clear that FAITH movement does not teach "evolutionism", if by this is meant a philosophy which regards the whole course of history as fluid and open ended and therefore that moral and doctrinal truth can and should change from age to age. Such a philosophy is the very antithesis of what Faith stands for. Fr. Edward

Holloway spent his life crying out against this loss of Divinity in the life and thinking of Catholics today. Above all, he proposed and expounded a synthetic philosophy and theology which could re-vindicate the transcendent Mind of Christ over the whole of creation and throughout all history, especially in a time when humanity has become newly aware of the developmental relativity of matter - 'evolution' for want of a better word (and there may be better words to avoid endless confusion with Darwinism). In our view he was remarkably successful in this. Almost as an aside, it is also worth pointing out that monogenism is not at all incompatible with evolution. Faith Movement has always argued this way in accordance with Catholic orthodoxy and with the best evidence of modern science.

There are those who deal with modernity by vehemently rejecting the inter-relative view of matter and life as a whole. They regard our whole enterprise as unnecessary and ill founded. Needless to say, we do not. In fact we, in turn, regard the 'creationist' reaction as ill founded and unnecessary.

We could let it rest there, but when our approach is called 'evil' (see Mr. Skarpa's letter) we must respond. FAITH movement does not have an "*idée fixe* about evolution" nor do we "use evolution as a tool of evangelisation". We do have an *idée fixe* about Jesus Christ as Lord of the Cosmos, of history and of the individual mind and heart. The core of this vision is very ably laid out in this issue by Fr. Stephen Boyle.

We also have an extensively developed school of theology and philosophy that backs this up, which we offer within the Church in all humility and under the correction of the highest Magisterium. We use nothing other than the Catholic faith as a tool of evangelisation. We do indeed present the truth of Jesus

Christ taught by the Church as something that makes profound sense of the modern scientific view of the world, even correcting the errors of atheist philosophers of science like Richard Dawkins and others. We make no apology for this. But in truth, the vision of the Unity Law of Creation in Christ does not rely on evolution. If anything it is rather the other way around.

Nothing in the 'creationist' objections convinces us that affirming the unity of matter in development across all existent forms is anything other than credible. In any case it is certainly not harmful to divine faith to think, in common with most of the modern world, that it is so.

The dismissal of the evidence of the periodic table of elements and of modern genetics by our correspondents is interesting and quite revealing. It confirms our suspicion that it is the whole edifice of modern science that is being rejected. But what lies at the heart of the furore is really an attack on our idea of the 'Unity Law of Control and Direction'. Mr Kavanagh's portrayal of our theology as "the image of God as a whiz-kid working out his developmental blue print", although meant facetiously, is in fact close to what the Greek fathers knew as "Logos" - the sheer power of transcendent Mind of a genius far exceeding any mortal scientist or philosopher. Logos, the Mind or Word of God, is the source of all truth and of every wisdom that frames creation. To be strictly accurate, we do not actually conceive of the Unity Law as a kind of cosmic "blueprint". It is, rather, the actual fabric of created things in their mutual contingency, causality and relativity.

Everything is framed within a shared finality of being which does indeed mean that the laws of physics (which are aspects of a single mathematical expression) build into the laws of chemistry (as the Periodic

Table, with its cumulative patterns of protons, electrons and neutrons, does indeed show), which in turn build into the laws of biology (which the genetic code, with its chemical language, also clearly evidences). This much is known to science with surety and can be demonstrated experimentally as well as in principle.

It is true, as we are always keen to point out to atheist materialists, that Sir Fred Hoyle and others have shown that 'evolution' cannot happen statistically under *random* factors, but this does not mean that they have shown that it does not happen under *natural* mechanisms. The right conclusion is simply that the laws of nature are actually highly specific in their operation. It is this fact that points so powerfully to the Supreme Mind of the Creator. Similarly, the fact of shared DNA cannot be dismissed as a "detail", as if DNA were merely some form of biological decoration or incidental property. DNA is the master code for material life and for animal body plans in their forms. How it achieves this on a biochemical basis is now known in some considerable detail. This has also confirmed the family tree of life on earth, revealed in developmental patterns of DNA, not just "shared features", which exactly matches the evolutionary picture. Clearly, like the Periodic Table, DNA is not at all random but highly specific and finely tuned in its operation. Do these natural laws exclude God from his creation? Far from it.

Of course we do not think that God created matter "with evolutionary potential and then went to sleep"! God is not in time. He is simultaneously present to every aspect of matter at all times. Time is simply a dimension and manifestation of material beings in their mutual contingency and causality in a cumulative series, and of their communal finality. But neither does God need to "watch anxiously" over each new mutation in case matter

disobeyed his creative will. His Word spoke and Creation came into being, "and that which contains all things, has knowledge of His voice" (Wisdom 1:7). The cosmos unfolds in his presence according to the law of its being as he commanded it. This means that the laws of matter are *both* natural mechanisms *and* the work of the Creator.

There really does seem to be a profound confusion over "natural" and "supernatural" causality in the minds of special creationists as Fr Hugh MacKenzie explores in his letter. The crucial point is that the more coherently natural things are, the more, not the less do they point to a supernatural Mind as Creator of it all. And as he also points out, we are up against a very deep and foundational philosophical divide in this discussion. Our adversaries seem to be trapped in enlightenment philosophies with regard to the nature of matter and our knowledge of reality at all. For to deny that science can grasp any of the true laws of being, as Mr Skarpa does, is actually to accept Hume's agnostic objection that we can never validly connect observation with causality. And then to dismiss scientific laws as belonging only "to the order of phenomena" such that they are "real only in the mind", is the anti-realist philosophy of Immanuel Kant.

In point of fact both Fr Holloway and FAITH movement have addressed the "epistemological and logical foundations" of these questions. (Perhaps we will publish more on these themes soon). And we do spell out exactly how we can arrive at certainty about the existence of a Supreme Mind from the ontological meaning and finality which is inherent in material being. (Cf. Fr Edward Holloway's *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, and his *Philosophical Perspectives* vol.3, also *Evolution and The Existence of God* and *Can We Be Sure God Exists?* from **Faith Pamphlets**).

Scientists do not regard the laws of matter as existing purely within their own minds. However imperfect their current grasp of the universe, they do know that their knowledge of the laws of atomic physics, for example, are quite real, because they *work* when they apply them in atomic technology, including - tragically but dramatically - the atomic bomb!

To close then, before we trigger a further atomic explosion of words, which will not result in either side changing their position in any case, let us simply agree to disagree. We all strive to be loyal sons and daughters of the Church. Our antagonists are sincere men too, but they are in reality a handful of tenacious correspondents who have debated this point with us for many years. Therefore, on the point of "evolution" as such, this correspondence is now closed. We may take up some of the important philosophical questions raised here in the near future.

OTHER MATTERS...

Dear Fr Editor,

While the various articles in Faith recently regarding the liturgy and retranslations have been very interesting and revealing there has been no mention, that I have noted, about the words of consecration: the moving of the words "mysterium fidei" and the substitution of the words "for all" for "for many".

While there is talk of the new liturgical translations for the Novus Ordo to return to "I Believe" etc, no mention is made of a return to the words of consecration, which Trent and Pope St Pius V stated were vital if the sacrament was not to be invalidated. Now this claim by Trent was made within the covers of every Missal of every Roman Catholic altar through out the world, prior to Vatican II, as a matter of faith to be held by every Catholic for all time, sounding for all the world ex

cathedra; as a matter of faith stated by the successor of St Peter to be held by the whole Church for all time. I have yet to see similar a pronouncement from Pope and Magisterium, to validate the alterations made by Bugnini and the ICEL translators, a fact that leaves doubt in the minds of many "traditionalists" as to the validity of the *Novus Ordo* consecrations.

Yours faithfully,

*P G Allen
North Devon Road
Fishponds, Bristol*

Dear Fr Editor,

Further to Philip Audley-Charles, it strikes me as obvious, both that any diocese in this country which has previously had a mission in what is now a thriving diocese from a vocations point of view ought now to invite the latter to establish a mission over here, and that the service of a parish or other apostolate in the hands of a religious order or congregation ought to be enough to bring over from abroad members thereof if none can be found at home. Priests in developing-world seminaries might even be ordained specifically for our dioceses, and Aid to the Church in Need would no doubt know how to make the necessary contacts. Unlike me, some FAITH readers will be old enough to remember Irish priests like this: how is my suggestion different?

Meanwhile, I suggest, first, a Crusade of Eucharistic Adoration, aimed primarily (though not exclusively) at boys and men from the beginning of secondary school until about the age of 25. It would have seven Objects: the conversion of the whole world to the Catholic Faith, including the reunion of all Christians with the Petrine See of Rome; the continual increase of

vocations of men to the Priesthood and Diaconate, and of both sexes to the Religious Life; due reverence and solemnity in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy, and above all in the celebration of the Holy Mass, including in respect of the reception of Holy Communion; the defence of the sanctity of each individual human life from the point of fertilisation to the point of natural death; the eradication of all sins of unchastity as defined by the Roman Magisterium; justice and peace through the ever-wider and ever-deeper appreciation and implementation of the Church's Teaching; and the Holy Father's intentions.

Participants would commit themselves to morning and evening prayer, weekly Communion, weekly Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament for the above intentions, monthly Confession, and annual retreat. At least one Holy Hour per month would be collective (with the Objects providing a ready-made Litany of Intercession), and possibly followed, first by a visiting speaker pertinent to one or more of the Objects, and then by some sort of 'social'. There need be little or no central organisation, and thus little or no cost. However, a Eucharistic Congress might be held every two years, with Cardinals, television cameras, and so forth.

Second, I suggest a Rosary Crusade aimed primarily (though not exclusively) at girls and women in the above age bracket. The first Object would be unchanged, the second changed simply to "the continual increase of vocations to the Religious Life", the third omitted, the fourth and fifth amalgamated, and the sixth and seventh left. This would give one Object per Mystery of each Chaplet. All else would be as above, except that the weekly Holy Hour would become a weekly Rosary, and there would be a Rosary Rally in every

year when there was no Eucharistic Congress.

And third, I suggest that each diocesan bishop with responsibility for any part of the United Kingdom or the British Overseas Territories become an Episcopal Patron of a new apostolate, designating two good causes (one in that Kingdom or those Territories, the other anywhere else in the world) in each of the six fields of prayer and spirituality, evangelisation, education and scholarship, pro-life work, social work, and work for justice and peace. He would also name a practising Catholic as a Lay Patron, who would designate in the same way. These good causes would comprise a Cycle of Prayer, with participants praying for the field of prayer and spirituality on Mondays, of evangelisation on Tuesdays, and so forth, praying for the British cause in the morning and for the other cause in the evening. On Sundays, they would receive Holy Communion with intention for all the causes of the previous and subsequent six days. And one would very much hope that at least one weekly Catholic newspaper would devote a page per edition to the coming week's causes.

Furthermore, and in addition to other fund-raising, each participant would give five per cent of his or her income after tax, and parishes and others would be asked to give at least one Sunday collection per quarter. At the end of each financial year, all monies raised, excluding such administrative costs as there might be, would be divided equally among all the good causes.

Yours faithfully,

*David Lindsay
Foxhills Crescent,
Lanchester, Durham*

sunday

by sunday

Year C until Advent when
Year A begins

32ND IN ORDINARY TIME: C
07.11.04, Lk 20, 27-38

1, "They are the same as angels" (Lk 20, 36). St Luke points out clearly that the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead (Lk 20, 27). Our Lord's reply here also challenges their lack of belief in angelic reality. He compares the immortal state of those human beings who gain heaven with the immortality of the heavenly host. Marriage is for this world - to raise up children for God - so is not relevant to the joy of heavenly bliss. The resurrection in the body to paradise is thus made of an entirely different order from earthly things. The supernatural is real.

2. The Sadducees dominated Temple worship in Jerusalem, controlling all religious activities and cultic sacrifices. An urban elite, they would have despised the poor preacher from Galilee who challenged their doctrines and overturned their moneychangers' tables right in the heart of their Temple stronghold (cf. Lk 19, 45-48). Our Lord is famous for his clash with the Pharisee party throughout his public ministry (cf. Mt 15, 1-9), but it is the Sadducees who bring him down in the end. The Temple Guard was controlled by the Sadducees, and it was they who did the dirty work in the garden of Gethsemane (Lk 22, 52). The Pharisees approved, but the Sadducees acted.

3. Jerusalem holds a vital place of importance in Luke's gospel. It is the focus and final destination of all Jesus' saving activity during his

public ministry. It is toward Jerusalem that Our Lord sets his face like flint (Lk 9, 51), knowing that his greatest work will be achieved there on the cross. Jerusalem also links Luke's gospel with the Acts of the Apostles, his second work, since the Holy City of the Passion and Resurrection becomes the springboard for the spread of the gospel to all nations. The clash of Jesus with the Sadducees is thus key to Luke's record of the Passion.

33RD IN ORDINARY TIME: C
14.11.04, Lk 21, 5-19

1, "Your endurance will win you your lives" (Lk 21, 19). Such words must have been a constant source of inspiration to the Church for whom Luke wrote his gospel. Gentile converts, like Luke himself, faced bitter persecution in the early days of Christianity, when they were considered atheist by their Roman overlords because of their refusal to sacrifice to pagan gods. Our Lord's words reported to them would have been medicine that seared before it healed. In Jesus' teaching there is every assurance that persecution will continue, but also the firm encouragement that "not a hair on your head will be lost" (Lk 21, 18).

2. Wars and revolutions still scar the landscape of our world, with man's inhumanity to man a lasting problem in the minds and hearts of all who strive to bring in the Kingdom of God. Why does Our Lord say that this is something that must happen? If the good God is in charge, could he not prevent the innocent from such suffering? Original Sin has deeply wounded human nature, so that the good that we would do we do not do, and the evil we would avoid we end up doing. Jesus prepares to die to heal this wound.

3. Freewill means that that God respects our choices, disastrous though they often may be. Our autonomy as human beings can only

be exercised properly and freely when our actions draw us towards God, who is our first beginning and our final end. Our autonomy is thus relative and not absolute. We are not to be afraid (Lk 21, 9), and the Holy Spirit guarantees the freedom of the children of God before the rage of men. We are to be witnesses docile before the influence of the One who gives us wisdom and courage (Lk 21, 14).

CHRIST THE KING: C
21.11.04, Lk 23, 35-43

"Indeed I promise you, today you will be with me in paradise" (Lk 23, 43). Few words in the bible can be as consoling as these, uttered in the agony of the Passion to give hope to fallen humanity. There is nowhere that the Lord cannot reach us, no sin or crime that he cannot forgive and make work for us in the beauty of his grace. Mocking, derision, hatred, appalling cruelty, darkness of soul and Satan at his most malicious are all overcome by Jesus' generous self offering on the cross. Words of forgiveness resonate with us.

2. The cross of Christ is relevant to us because Jesus was like us in every way except sin (cf. Fourth Eucharistic Prayer). Being without sin made him more human than us, not less. Thus his total gift of self to the Father on our behalf was as altruistic and complete an action as has ever been achieved by any human being. It heals us from within at our most broken point. This supreme sacrifice is effective for us because Our Lord was truly divine - the One through whom each of us was made. In healing humanity, our God reigns.

3. This reign of Jesus is a universal kingship of Christ crucified. It effects every human being that ever existed or ever will exist. The action of the Passion is complete, and the victory in the resurrection assured. All we need do now is unite ourselves heart and soul to our living and loving Lord.

He must reign in our hearts through the life of grace and the sacraments made available to us in the Church. Most intimately at Holy Mass, we unite ourselves with the sacrifice of our King crucified, and are fed by his fullness in Holy Communion.

FIRST OF ADVENT: A 28.11.04, Mt 24, 37-44

1. "The Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Mt 24, 44). The Master comes when the master wills, and none of us knows the day or the hour of our death. Life is God's gift to us - both natural and supernatural life. If it is his gift, then it is his domain, and not to be usurped by proud man. This is why taking innocent human life is absolutely wrong. We cannot restore life cruelly taken because that power is beyond us. Such action turns us away from God as our rightful life-law.

2. Murder in all its forms, even when legalized by an aggressively secular society, submits us to the destructive influence of Satan, who was a murderer and a liar from the start (cf. Jn 8, 44). Irrational behaviour, dishonest rationalizing, bare-faced lying and obsessive selfishness in the face of the truth are all marks of the Father of Lies and the marks of his influence in the world. In Christ he can have no power over us, but should we misuse our freewill to let him in, then we will become the plaything of spiritual forces stronger than we are.

3. Standing ready for the coming of Christ (cf. Mt 24, 44), whether that be our own death or his advent at the end of time, means opposing the influence of spiritual forces of darkness in our own personal lives and in our society. It means keeping the Commandments, frequent confession, personal conversion in the joy of coming home to the House of the Father, amending our lives by cleansing away all dead actions

through the power of God, and trusting in God like Mary, especially when unexpected hardship strikes.

SECOND OF ADVENT: A 05.12.04, Mt 3, 1-12

1. It is easy to see how the religious authorities in Jerusalem came to loathe John the Baptist: "Brood of Vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming?" (Mt 3, 8). Traditionally, those Israelites who found fault with Temple worship as it was carried out in Jerusalem took themselves and their followers off into the Judean desert to seek a purer form of worship more in accordance with the Law. Such were the Essenes of Qumran, who meditated on the Scriptures and held their leader, the Teacher of Righteousness, to be the Messiah.

2. There would have been nothing unusual, then, about John's ascetic lifestyle and desert wanderings. What is unusual is that some of the Pharisees and Sadducees from Jerusalem would have sought the cleansing of his baptism. But John is ready for them. There can be nothing superficial about the gaze and scrutiny that the Baptist would have employed against such people. Either they bear the fruits of righteousness demanded of all John's followers or they run off home to their spy-masters no doubt with tales about his unreasonableness and insanity. Perhaps John knew who would eventually set Herod against him.

3. The baptism of John is only a dim prefiguring of the baptism of Jesus. The difference is not external - what could be more dramatic than the Baptist's plunging into the Jordan? Rather, it is internal - the very nature of the act itself. Reality and new life dawns when water in the Jordan gives way to the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit. John's intention was heavenly, but his action only natural. Only the Holy Spirit whom Jesus receives at his own baptism

guarantees the inner cleansing effected by the outward sign of water. All is made new in Christ.

THIRD OF ADVENT: A 12.12.04, Mt 11, 2-11

1. These words of Our Lord are celebrated in the architecture of the St John Lateran basilica in Rome, where the imposing figure of Christ has the ascetic figure of John the Baptist right beside him: "Of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen" (Mt 11, 11). Yet John's life was one of unmitigated privation. The vessel of the greatest of the prophets was prepared by suffering to make the sweetest of sounds in the heralding of the Messiah. Jesus places his public ministry firmly in the tradition of his holy cousin.

2. Anyone who has seen the great fortress of Herod in the hills near Jerusalem is immediately confronted with impregnable walls and military engineering of the highest order. This was the palace of a man consumed by fear of his enemies. Herod makes himself so secure that none may enter or depart from his presence except by order of the king. The dungeons are deep, cruel, dank and dark. Not without reason does Jesus exhort his cousin: "Happy is the man who does not lose faith in me" (Mt 11, 6). The gospel is Good News to prisoners.

3. Preparing the way for the Lord cost John every fibre of his being. Yet his joy at the message Jesus sends him must have known no bounds. All Jesus' words fulfil the prophecies spoken out by Isaiah some eight centuries before John the Baptist. As a devout Jew, John would immediately have known that Jesus was telling him that the scriptures were being fulfilled: "the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life" (Mt 11, 4-5; cf. Is 26, 19; 29, 19f; 35, 5f; 61, 1).

FOURTH OF ADVENT: A
19.12.04, Mt 1, 18-24

1. If Luke's account of the birth of Jesus has Mary as its focus, then Matthew's is very much an infancy narrative according to Joseph. This is because Jesus receives his lineage from David through Joseph's line, and Matthew is anxious to reveal Jesus as the true Messiah to his Jewish audience. In any Jewish community family is key to the identity and Jewishness of any brother or sister. Jesus' provenance as the Son of David would be important for his acceptance among Jewish converts to Christianity. God prepares a place for his Son in a family among a people.

2. Joseph is a magnificent patron for anyone struggling to live the Christian life. Details about him are sparse, though it is clear from Matthew's brief sketches that he was a responsible man who kept his head amidst great personal anguish (cf. Mt 1, 19ff). His steadiness, devotion to Mary and the child she had conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit, and, most of all, his refusal ever to distrust God and withdraw the eyes of his soul from a heavenward gaze, make him a fitting patron for the Church and all who strive as he did.

3. The first coming of Jesus in humility and lowliness into the household of Joseph from Nazareth shows in how hidden a fashion the grace of God can progress in our world. St John of the Cross wrote a short poem: "The Virgin made pregnant down the road comes walking, if you'll grant her a room in your abode". Just as Joseph took his wife to his home (Mt 1, 24), so must we all offer our own hearts and souls as fitting havens for Mary to give birth to her Son in us. Like Joseph we need courage.

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY: A
26.12.04, Mt 2, 13-15.19-23

1. At every stage of the appalling traumas that surrounded the early years of the earthly life of Jesus, his family became that protective environment necessary to preserve and nurture so fragile a human life. Joseph and Mary are true models of family life because they remained constantly centred on God, taking their duties as parents not just as a duty, but rather as a gift and blessing from God. Joseph is staggering in his faith and fortitude, as anyone who has spent any time travelling across the inhospitable, sweltering desert from Israel to Egypt can testify.

2. Mary too must have supported and encouraged Joseph through her own love and determination. She had given her flesh to God for the great work of the Incarnation. In the birth of Jesus, her great role in God's plan had only just begun. Model of faith and comfort of the afflicted, Mary's love of humanity and intercession for us from heaven are based on a tough formation and many trials throughout her earthly life. She gave herself heart and soul for the well being of her Son, and in this she learns to care for the health of all believers.

3. Families today are under attack as never before. Promiscuity cruelly promoted as sexual liberation, the fruitfulness of marriage denigrated and deliberately frustrated so as to shatter the grace of marriage from within, and many other factors all constitute a massive attack on this bedrock institution of human society. Mary and Joseph help us in every circumstance not to lose sight of God and endanger our life-giving relationship with him. They loved and nurtured the Truth in person. May they constantly intercede from heaven for all families.

Christmas Day
Feast of the Nativity

Jn 1, 1-18

1. Who is Jesus, that I might know him? John gives a majestic meditation on the person of the Word made flesh (Jn 1,14). Our Lord exists for time and eternity in the bosom of the Father, whom he took flesh to reveal. There never was a time when the Son was not. The evangelist stresses, "the Word was with God and the Word was God" (Jn 1, 1). Jesus is God seeking relationship with his creatures so that his Divine life might be in us (cf. Jn 1, 4-5).

2. The wonder of the Incarnation is that God should deign to become a vulnerable child in the manger at Bethlehem. He is a king, but it will be the kingship of Christ crucified, not one of this world with all its vanity and corrupting power. And yet it is true that "to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God" (Jn 1, 12).

3. Christ is encountered in the life of the Church: in her teaching and tradition, in her Scriptures and in her sacraments - especially Holy Communion. It is the same Lord who lived and died for us two thousand years ago. His presence among us in the Eucharist is as physical and real now as it was then, but under the appearance of sacramental signs. And his love is as real now as it was then. He calls us to know him and to receive his life, now.

VERBUM CARO FACTUS EST

book

reviews

ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN SPECIES
by Dennis Bonnette, Sapientia Press
(distributed by St Austin Press),
244pp, £13.95

This is a second edition of a book originally published two years previously, taking up the important challenge about the origin of the human species. The author claims that he writes primarily as a philosopher, and indeed his writing is replete with philosophical references. However, it becomes clear on reading this book that his main target audience is those with a particular religious faith, and Roman Catholic traditionalists in particular. He wants to arrive at a version of evolutionary theory that is compatible with what he believes are 'basic' elements of the Christian faith, including the historicity of Adam and Eve and the reality of Original Sin, in dialogue with creationists who have challenged the basis of evolutionary theory as such.

It is entirely understandable that as an author who writes in an American context the theories of creationist science will be taken with great seriousness. I am less convinced that these elements of the book will find hearing outside this context. In adjudicating between creationism and evolutionary theory he probes the philosophical assumptions behind each view, and asks some challenging questions about the presuppositions inherent in both viewpoints. These are important questions to consider for all those entering into debates about human origins. Nonetheless, his religious position seems to be an adjudicating factor alongside philosophical coherence. He is correct, in my view, to probe more deeply into

evolutionary science than has commonly been the case, and he is also right to suggest that any challenge proposed is not necessarily pseudo-science. However, drawing, as he does, on creationist analysis may make many biologists at least feel uncomfortable with his analysis.

There are, of course, serious questions that remain in evolutionary biology that are not necessarily answered adequately by Darwin's theory of natural selection. One important question is exactly how new species could come into existence. Another concerns the evolution of human beings as such, from their purported ape-like origins. He also seems to support the idea that given these unexplained phenomena, we are forced into consideration of the possibility of an 'Intelligent Designer'. While he agrees this does not necessarily evoke a 'God of the gaps' idea, it seems that this is subtly the way he is moving, as suggested by his attention to the somewhat outdated ideas of Austin Woodbury, who argued that species were produced by special creation (but in a non-miraculous way) and that divine will is required for life to emerge from non life. His other major partner in dialogue is Raymond Nogar, who argues for evolutionary theory to be extended beyond living things to a more universal reference. Both authors would reject the multiple acts of sequential creationism that is proffered by creationist science. His point is well made that a repeated call for miraculous intervention is actually detraction from divine power. He rejects the assumption by evolutionists that rules out of court any influence of the supernatural.

His discussion of what constitutes a species is interesting, especially in the light of more traditionalist notions of unchanging essences. He also argues that what is considered a species, or nature, from a biological perspective will be different from that

arrived at through philosophical analysis. He suggests, for example, that biologists rely on "perinoetic" knowledge of an organism's measurable characteristics or "common accidents". Philosophy, by contrast, draws on an organism's essential characteristics or "proper accidents", examined through their activity. In this he allows himself to distance philosophy from biology. Unfortunately he does not address the post modern question as to the extent to which it is possible to speak about human nature as such from a philosophical point of view, in other words philosophical debates about the validity of the essentialist positions he proposes.

He also makes some startling statements about human nature, given the current debates on the issue, such as 'virtually universal belief affirms that we possess a spiritual soul and consequently immortality' (p.69). There are a number of assumptions in such a statement, the first are dualistic assumptions about the separation of the soul from the body, which is implied. The second is the current scientific and theological debates about ensoulment and consciousness, and the third is debates about immortality as such. While from the perspective of faith it is important to affirm immortality, to assume this is universally accepted is strange. His language about animals as 'brute beasts' also jars unfavourably with current understanding on the intelligence and social behaviour of some of the higher forms of mammals and birds.

It is somewhat surprising, given the author's critical appreciation of evolutionary theory, that he is prepared to endorse technology apparently uncritically as inevitably reflecting 'advances' in evolution, and amounting to human progress. While I would agree that humans have capacities that are more advanced compared to those of

animals, he does not seem to be in tune with the more recent writings on primate behaviour, and sadly the references do not appear to have been updated in the second edition. It is also somewhat surprising that he holds so closely to the more literalistic interpretation of the Genesis text, for example, the notion that Adam and Eve had the gift of immortality before the Fall. He argues that there could be 'no scandal' if our parents did have these characteristic 'preternatural' gifts which are beyond human nature. But if this was the case, what kind of real continuity would we have with Adam and Eve? A more likely explanation is that the authors of Genesis were not intending the story to be a literal explanation of human origins, but a way of reinforcing the importance of human relationships with each other and with God, in the context of human obedience and frailty encountered with the gift of freedom.

In spite of these difficulties, this book will prove an interesting, if dense, read for those who wish to explore the debates about human origins in the light of evolutionary theory. It is an important counterweight to anyone who may be tempted by creationist science, and in this sense we owe the author a debt of gratitude for his detailed analysis.

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FAITH OF OUR FATHERS:
REFLECTIONS ON CATHOLIC
TRADITION

*by Eamon Duffy, Continuum, 200pp,
£9.99*

Raised in the 1950s, in the town of Dundalk just south of the Irish border, Eamon Duffy received the faith from the De La Salle Brothers, "raw-boned, stubble-chinned celibates in shiny

black cassocks", who drummed the responses to the Irish catechism into the young boys at the grammar school: "I know them still," he writes, "ultimate reality named and tagged, the moral structure of the universe set out for us in the pages of a soft-backed school book: sorted." As with James Joyce, this formation proved impossible to escape, but unlike Joyce it left a positive impression on young Duffy. As vivid as De La Salle rigour are recollections of his grandmother, who evaded Mass for her last twenty years on the grounds of infirmity (still managing the shopping, though), but "sleepless with old age... prayed the rosary all night long, and kept a luminous statue of Our Lady of Lourdes on the mantelpiece of her bedroom". The "sickly phosphorescent glow" of the statue seems to say it all, and like the catechism, haunts him to this day. All this was set against the folk religion of the local land: the holy well at the shrine of Foughart. Catholicism pressed in from all sides.

These recollections from England's foremost Catholic historian introduce this volume of topical essays. Faith of Our Fathers is short, quick to read, and often provocative, made up of nineteen brief essays that stand individually and cover central topics such as Our Lady and the devotions, the liturgy and the Eucharist, the papacy and authority, all in the context of a broader discussion of tradition.

Despite fond childhood reminiscences of popular religion in the 1950s, Professor Duffy gives a quite different account of the institutional Church. Time and again he argues that Rome has too often failed to be the handmaid of the Catholic tradition. He loves to quote Pius IX's notorious claim "I am the tradition", as an outrageous instance of papal illusion. By Vatican I "Tradition had shrunk from being a cathedral of the Spirit to a storeroom in the cellars of the Holy Office." And

when the Second Vatican Council arrived, the first (rejected) draft declaration of faith contained no scriptural quotations, no citation to anything before Trent, and was mainly propped-up by writings of Pius XII.

In letting some fresh air in, the Church let a lot of bad air in too. But rather than side with either the trads or the trendies in the Vatican II debate, Prof Duffy examines the work of writers like Congar, De Lubac, and especially Bouyer, who recommended paths of renewal which he holds were not really pursued. As regards liturgy, Bouyer's invitation had been "to repristinate rather than to reject the devotional tradition." The idea was to dust-off the tradition, escape the "straightjacket of debased nineteenth century neo-scholasticism," and discover anew a Catholicism rooted in Scripture, the Fathers, and the liturgy.

But it proved inherently dangerous to push for a form of renewal which began with a hostile critique of Catholic devotion, even if it ended with a kind of synthesis. Writers like Bouyer believed that, after an age of patristic purity, the devotional world of the Middle Ages and the Baroque period developed as compensation for the alienation of the laity from the liturgy. They asserted what many would dispute, that at Mass the laity "became spectators at a show which they barely understood." As such, Bouyer quite saw how "the emotional piety of the Middle Ages... prepared the way for Protestantism," by sentimentalising religion and displacing what Bouyer called "the sober mysticism, completely grounded in faith, of the great Christian tradition."

Like a sage, Prof Duffy sits above the petty conflicts of the Church, and judges sternly extreme parties of left or right according to how they deviate from his definition of "the tradition". Short shrift is given to those who carried out post-Conciliar

change "hastily, insensitively and without real understanding of or sympathy for what was constitutive of rather than optional in the Catholic past." But far shorter is he with the twenty-first century descendents of the nineteenth century Ultramontane party - George Weigel especially. Those who "collapse the plurality and choric character of tradition into the single voice of the pope" are masterminding a project which will achieve "the effective abolition of tradition."

Prof Duffy conceives of the Catholic tradition as being analogous to the church of San Clemente in Rome, "a near-perfect expression of Catholic tradition, layer upon layer of shared prayer, thought, sufferings - and sin". He chooses this Church because of its hidden riches, which have been gradually unearthed to remind the Church that it is built on foundations that it does not fully apprehend. Until the nineteenth century, it was thought that San Clemente was only what stood above the ground, but repair work revealed below an entire sixth century basilica; and deeper still a house-church, perhaps once that of the third successor to St. Peter, St. Clement.

Though the idea of tradition anchors and unifies these occasional writings, Prof Duffy ranges widely, and this book would be a good one for a young Catholic to read, as one soon gets up to speed with the key talking points in the contemporary Church. Though his piece on Our Lady disappoints, an essay on the Eucharist 'Discerning the Body' is quite superb, and 'An Apology for Grief, Fear and Anger,' a critique of the new liturgy for the dead, is utterly damning, and passionately written. His historical piece 'Rome of the Pilgrims' is a delight. Traditional rather than traditionalist, Prof Duffy has produced a book of ideas which, forty years on from the Second Vatican Council, concludes that "the

Church is usually more reliable on its knees than at the lecture podium." Few, surely, would now disagree.

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WOMEN, CELIBACY AND THE CHURCH: TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF THE SINGLE LIFE

by Annemarie S Kidder, Crossroad Publishing Co (distributed by Alban Books) £21.99

As the title of this book indicates, the author is attempting to develop a theology of the single, and specifically female, celibate life. It is an interesting read for a Catholic since the author is Presbyterian, and although she intends this work to include a Catholic readership and acknowledges the Catholic tradition of the practice of celibacy, she is equally clear in her own stance as a non-Catholic Christian.

In the introduction, Kidder describes this work as the fruit of her personal experience and 'journey' as a single and celibate Christian woman. This is, I think both a strength and a weakness of the book as a whole. It is a strength in that she does not talk from 'outside' the subject, but is rigorous in her exploration (albeit a feminist one) of the subject, referring to sources in the fields of sociology and psychology as well as Scripture and Church Fathers. In fact, over two hundred pages are devoted to the research of both these sources, and to tracing the historical developments of both the Catholic and Protestant understanding of celibacy from the Reformation to the present.

The author also rightly contextualises celibacy within the wider scope of sexuality in general. It is here that she explores the development of individuation that will later underpin her advocacy of celibacy as an empowering and

freeing state for women. This thesis is used in the interpretation of her scriptural and historical sources. Such a contemporary re-reading is not without its problems, and presents a distinct bias.

A significant weakness of the book is that the vocabulary and theological framework are not as well rooted in the Christian tradition they take as their object, as they are in the recent conventions of the author's particular communion. Thus, in the introduction she writes, "The word 'chastity' should be abandoned in the context of Protestant discussions on sexual abstinence of single people, and the word 'celibacy' adopted." The reason for this is the apparent lack of clarity of the word 'chastity'. It can mean one thing for marrieds and another for singles, ie it does not necessarily mean total sexual abstinence. Also, the word has negative connotations as describing a restraint, rather than a positive expression. True enough, but this decision of the author's reveals a more serious issue; without reference to chastity, there is an absence of the very virtue that gives a Christian meaning to celibacy.

This point, I think, marks where our paths as Catholics or Protestants part company. A correct understanding of chastity as a virtue, and as a gift from God, presupposes a theology of grace which we do not share. Thus, rather than beginning with chastity as the virtue for all persons that moderates and regulates the sexual passions, and which, in diverse contexts (marriage or the single state), manifests itself differently, Kidder begins with the phenomenon of celibacy as gift and then searches for its significance in a Christian context in order to describe it in terms of a virtue. Thus an effect (celibacy) is considered in terms which belong properly to its cause (chastity). Perhaps equally puzzling for a Catholic is her description of celibacy as a 'gift' that can be either

temporary or permanent.

Despite this, Kidder's conclusions are surprisingly Catholic. For example, she refers to the spousal dimension of the relationship between the celibate/chaste and Christ. That the celibate state bespeaks both a freedom and lack of possession of another (person) that reflects a rootedness in, and 'possession' of, the person of Christ. That this union is both fulfilling and yet leaves the celibate available to minister to the needs of others. That this state of life is a sign that is both eschatological and prophetic. While the above descriptions combine elements that we Catholics would usually separate when comparing the state of perfect chastity of a professed religious to that of a celibate priest, it is a very positive view that may be breaking new ground for Protestant theology, and is even used by Kidder in defence of a celibate clergy.

Although (somewhat predictably) Kidder's positive interpretation of celibacy for women is used by the author to appeal for female (celibate) ministers in the Catholic Church, as a whole the book is encouraging in its promotion of celibacy. This in itself should recommend it, especially in interdenominational dialogue.

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SAINTS OF THE ENGLISH CALENDAR
*edited by Marcus Holden, Foreword by
Most Rev Michael Bowen, Family
Publications 149pp, £12.95*

This is a timely book. Mgr Ronald Knox in his hymn, 'O English Hearts', has the line: "the paths you tread in lane and street long since were trodden by the feet of saints who went before you". This book brings to mind that fact that we are the heirs of a great spiritual heritage. Not only does it give a succinct

biography of each saint mentioned but also a few lines about places connected with their lives. There is also a biography of each of the saints who have been named as Patrons of Europe.

How many English people know how important were the contributions of the Devonman Boniface and the Yorkshireman Willibrod to the evangelisation of northern Europe? They have no excuse for ignorance now! As the general public become more and more interested in history, books like this one should help them rediscover that people of faith were not at the margins of society. These were the very men and women who were instrumental in forming all that was worthwhile in the development of both our nation and continent.

The priest will find this work useful, especially for his introduction to the Mass on the feastdays of these saints. All Catholics (and others) will find it a very helpful supplement to their spiritual reading. Hopefully, teachers too will be able to use the information provided by this book as a basis for imaginative assemblies.

This book deserves to be a bestseller; but it is unable to explain why the feast day of St Thomas of Canterbury, the Patron of the English pastoral clergy, is now only an optional memoria!

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notes from across the

Atlantic

by Richard John Neuhaus

VIRTUAL MOTHERS: VIRTUAL REALITY

This is a true story. At least the *Seattle Times* says so. Two lesbians living together decide they want a baby, so one gets pregnant with the help of sperm from a gay friend and a daughter is born. The two women break up and, after a while, the mother marries the gay friend. Now, with the help of the ACLU and gay activist lawyers who know that a gay man cannot go straight, the other woman goes to court to claim parental rights on the grounds that she was living with the mother when the mother became a mother and is, therefore, also a mother. As of this writing, she and her attorneys expect to prevail. Andrew Sullivan would no doubt point out that such confusion and heartbreak would be avoided if we had same-sex marriage. Then the two lesbians could simply have obtained a divorce before the one remarried, and well-established rules would apply regarding visitation rights and other claims on the child. In short, this situation would be, in Mr. Sullivan's favoured phrase, virtually normal—it being assumed that virtual normality is about as much normality as our society can manage.

POPULATION WAR CONTINUED

Many, many years ago I wrote *In Defense of People* (1971), the first book-length critique of environmental extremism. It was provoked, in significant part, by Paul Ehrlich, he of the "population bomb", who predicted in 1968: "The battle to feed all of humanity is over. In the 1970s, the world will undergo famines—hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death." In subsequent books, Ehrlich

predicted that by the 1980s "mankind will enter a genuine age of scarcity" in which "accessible supplies of many key minerals will be facing depletion". In fact, the world's food supply has tripled and key minerals are available in greater abundance than ever. Reviewing Ehrlich's latest book, *One with Nineveh*, Ronald Bailey writes, "Naturally, Mr. Ehrlich has won a MacArthur Foundation genius award and a Heinz Award for the environment." (Teresa Heinz Kerry, chairman.) "So why pay him any notice?" asks Bailey. In Greek mythology "the prophetess Cassandra makes true predictions and no one believes her; Mr. Ehrlich makes false predictions and they are widely believed. The gloomier he is and the faultier he proves to be as a prophet, the more honoured he becomes, even in his own country." That puts it very nicely.

What provoked me about Ehrlich, and also suggested the title of my book, is that he sees people, and especially poor people, as the enemy. Way back when Jesse Jackson was pro-life, he spoke about LBJ's war on poverty being replaced by a war on poor people. Paul Ehrlich was and is among the chief propagandists for that war. The chilling thing is that he and those who lionize him seem to want his predictions to come true. It is a disposition that is at the heart of the darkness of what is aptly called the culture of death.

THE 'NEW AND CHALLENGING' UNDER THREAT?

A good many conservatives think that the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is a good example of the kind of thing government has no business doing. It may not have changed minds but it blunted complaints when President Bush appointed Dana Gioia the chairman of the NEA. Gioia is a distinguished poet and has a way of winsomely engaging those who disagree with

him, as many do. With Gioia in charge, the administration has even increased, modestly, the NEA's \$139 million budget, which is about the budget line for paper clips in government agencies thought to matter in Washington. But of course the NEA matters greatly to many people in the arts. John Rockwell, a critic at the *New York Times*, is deeply ambivalent about the new management at the NEA.

He doesn't exactly call for a return to the tumultuous times of Andres Serrano's "Piss Christ", Chris Ofili's "Blessed Virgin of the Elephant Dung" or the late Robert Mapplethorpe's "X Portfolio", which celebrated the nuances of anal intercourse, but Mr. Rockwell does seem to miss the good old days. Rockwell's reflection is titled, "Help for the Old and Safe, Neglect for the New and Challenging". He notes that Gioia is promoting travelling Shakespeare companies to do live theatre in small cities, schools and military bases, along with touring groups performing jazz and other American masterpieces.

Rockwell writes, "This is all well and good. Really it is. But it does provoke some questions." When he has to assure the reader that he "really" thinks this is all well and good, the reader may suspect he doesn't really mean it, and it turns out he doesn't. Gioia says his programme is a "win-win" approach to the arts, to which Rockwell protests: "But what happened to multicultural disdain for dead white European males? If touring Shakespeare is such a win-win deal, just how does transgressive, transsexual, multiracial, confrontational performance art 'win'?" How indeed!

Thus, according to Rockwell, does Gioia neglect "the new and challenging". One might respond that Macbeth is a great deal more challenging than Mapplethorpe and, as for the latter being new,

pornography goes way back. Rockwell complains, "Rich people support major arts institutions disproportionately, and rich people are mostly conservative." It is true that a disproportionate amount of financial support for the arts comes from rich people.

It probably has something to do with the fact that rich people, generally speaking, have more money than poor people. As for rich people being "mostly conservative," however, one has to wonder whose patronage made the likes of Serrano, Ofili, and Mapplethorpe rich. Adolescents of all ages who would prove they are artists by behaving badly and shocking the grown ups also want to be rich. They understandably complain that not enough money goes to support the "transgressive, transsexual, multiracial, confrontational performance art," but such bad behaviour would not abound without a lot of people paying for them.

CESAR CHAVEZ, A HEROIC AND SAINTLY SOUL

On 23rd April, 1993, after having fasted for several days, which was a regular part of his spiritual discipline, Cesar Chavez died in his sleep. Rees Lloyd, who served as an attorney for Chavez for twenty years, writes to tell me about his personal experience of Chavez' deep and vibrant faith. At his funeral in Delano, California, fifty thousand people joined in processing along the hot and dusty roads, and a message from Pope John Paul II was read at the service.

Chavez was, of course, a hero of monumental proportions to the Mexican-American farm workers he organized. But he was also much celebrated by others. California, for instance, has a *Cesar Chavez Day*. Mr. Lloyd includes the poignantly telling observation that this is a paid holiday for government workers, but for the farm workers of California it is just another day in the fields.

LIVING WITH LIBERAL DOGMA

I have from time to time been critical of Alan Wolfe, Boston College's man on religion and public life and contributing editor at the *New Republic*. So I'm not surprised when, in a recent article, he refers to my own journal, *First Things*, as "small and sectarian".

One might, very delicately, observe that the *New Republic* is almost as small and is a great deal more sectarian, if sectarian means narrowly preoccupied with partisan politics. Although I expect that by "sectarian" he means religious. Wolfe is reviewing books on atheism in America and, as a self-described non-believer, wishes that some of the authors were less fervently religious in their atheism. He is more sympathetic to *Doubt: A History* by Jennifer Hecht because "Hecht is the rare doubter who can simultaneously disagree with people of faith while granting them respect and taking their ideas seriously." That is obviously how Mr. Wolfe would like to think of himself. And in his books, such as *One Nation, After All* and *The Transformation of American Religion*, it is how he claims most Americans think. Religion and non-religion, he writes, "raise first questions about the world that deserve heated exchange".

But such questions must be kept safely distanced from our public life, and he indulges himself by whacking the Bush administration for violating that liberal dogma. "Whatever our differences over faith", Wolfe writes, "Americans belong to a common political community in which, assuming that we will continue to live together, we must find ways of talking to each other not just past each other." I am resigned to living together with Alan Wolfe but confess that it would be a great deal easier if he followed the example he says is set by Ms. Hecht in granting others respect and taking their ideas seriously—notably the ideas of those who disagree with Mr. Wolfe's belief

that liberalism trumps truth and that, therefore, "first questions" must be banished from public life. Contra Mr. Wolfe, first questions—as in "We hold these truths to be self-evident"—are the foundation and not the enemy of the continuing American experiment. He says we must find ways of talking to each other and not just past each other. I am talking to you, Alan.

KERRY AND BUSH

I have a measure of respect for people who remain aloof from politics, and I have a number of friends who never vote because, they say, "It only encourages them." There are more important—much more important—things in life than politics. That being said, I get a mite impatient with people who seem to think it a mark of political sophistication to say that our political system only gives us a choice between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. There are even purists in the pro-life movement who say there's not a dime's worth of difference between Kerry and Bush: "Neither of them is going to repeal Roe v. Wade." That's true, of course, but there are things to be done on the way to the hoped-for repeal of that odious decision and the lethal logic behind it. And it is arrogantly obtuse to ignore the fact that President Bush has done some of those things and will likely do others. This past April he signed the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, making it clear that an attack on a pregnant woman is an attack on two people.

Last year he signed the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act that outlaws one of the most manifestly brutal forms of child killing. Yes, its implementation is being blocked by some courts, but that only underscores the importance of Bush's efforts to get federal judges who understand themselves to be servants and not masters of the law. In 2002, Bush signed the Born Alive Infants Protection Act, which ensures that every infant born alive—

including those surviving an abortion procedure—is considered a person under federal law. Has that saved many lives? Probably not, but it is crucially important because it establishes in law that whether or not a baby is a person does not depend on whether the baby is "wanted" by a woman and her abortionist. And anyone who thinks that establishing that is not important has not read the reasoning of *Roe v. Wade*. President Bush has also strongly supported a ban on human cloning, arguing that life is not a commodity but a creation. Babies must not be manufactured for research or body parts, nor "designed" to customer specification. In one of his first acts in office, he restored the Mexico City Policy that had been put in place by Ronald Reagan and then rescinded by President Clinton. That policy means no federal money for organizations promoting or performing abortions in other nations.

One could list other initiatives of this president in strengthening families, encouraging adoptions, supporting abstinence for young people and other issues closely related to the moral vitality of our society. To pretend there are no substantive differences between the candidates in this presidential election is simply dumb. (NB: the above is not an endorsement of President Bush. I readily recognize that people may, for reasons they deem sufficient, vote for his opponent.)



cutting/edge

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

PHYSICS' OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS

In the August edition of *Scientific American*, the physicist Lawrence Krauss of Case Western Reserve University gave his opinions on the difficult questions still bedevilling physics. An expert on dark matter — the barely visible component of the universe's mass whose existence is inferred but as yet unidentified — he expresses scepticism about string theory and about parallel universes, both hypotheses which have been well-researched in recent years and proposed as models of understanding the quantum universe. Large parallel universes in extra dimensions, unobservable directly by ourselves, are sometimes appealed to as a way of bypassing the seeming improbability of the ascent of intelligent life in the universe by mere chance or by God's design. But Krauss is far from happy with these ideas. He says, "it's an exciting area, and it's wonderful for graduate students. One of my former Ph.D. students is largely responsible for the recent surge of interest in this idea. But I think these extra dimensions smell wrong. What we are learning from elementary particle physics about the unification of all the forces in nature tends to point in a direction that is not the direction these large parallel universe models suggest." The extended interview with Lawrence Krauss can be located on the *Scientific American* website

FAITH & SCIENCE MASTER'S

Moving to put into practice the dialogue and interrelation urged by the Pope in his 1998 encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, the Regina Apostolorum University of the Legionaries of Christ has introduced a new Master's programme in Science and Faith.

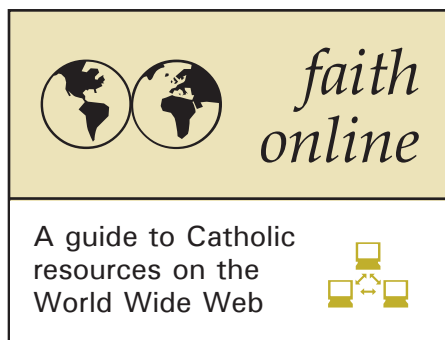
Insisting that the worlds of science and faith are not separate, and that neither Church nor science should fear the other, the programme's director, Fr Rafael Pascual, hopes that the new initiative will be a factual demonstration that there can be "a harmonious relationship between the man of science and the man of faith." Many believing scientists have demonstrated this in their lives, uniting the two orders of knowledge without incoherence, but with the understanding that neither science nor faith in and of themselves can alone provide a sufficient world-view. The Master's students will have a chance to look not only at contentious issues such as the origin of the universe and biological evolution, but also at the important role of philosophy which is the intermediary in the faith-science dialogue. The course programme, which runs for a year, may be viewed in English on the university's website at .

THE BAPTIST'S CAVE

A British archaeologist has recently published his findings from a major excavation in the Holy Land, believed to reveal the environs of St John the Baptist's ministry. Dr Shimon Gibson of the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem has been pursuing archaeological research in Israel over many years, and has made a number of startling discoveries in recent years including that of the remains of a leper in Gehenna dating from the time of Christ. This finding of the Baptist's cave, however, has prompted him to superlatives — the subtitle of his book, published in August, is *The Stunning Archaeological Discovery that has Redefined Christian History*. The newly unearthed site is a cave situated within the orchards of the Kibbutz Tzuba, just two and a half miles from the village of Ein Karem, west of Jerusalem, traditionally believed to be the birthplace of St John the Baptist. When first asked

by the local kibbutz to view the cave, the entrance was barely accessible, but immediately upon entering, back in 1999, Dr Gibson was greeted with sights of outstanding carvings, rock portraits quite clearly depicting the Baptist with his wild uncut hair. It became clear that these drawings — one of St John in a posture of blessing, with a staff in his left hand, and another of his decapitated head — were of Byzantine style, and therefore of 4th or 5th-century origin, made by monks who may at that time have occupied this holy site, perhaps as a shrine to John the Baptist. But the quantities of artefacts unearthed in the cave showed that the site had a far earlier origin. Nearly a quarter of a million fragments of pottery, coins, bones, ritual fires and pieces of cloth have allowed a scientific dating of this location's use to the time of the Gospels. The actual cave itself could be even older, dug in the Iron Age, many centuries before Christ, but was clearly in use for baptismal rituals in the time of Our Lord. The key section of the 24-metre-long cave is the largest ritual bathing pool in the Jerusalem area, large enough for baptizing thirty people. Twenty-eight stone steps descend to the pool, with a niche for the setting aside of clothing, and an indentation where the one to be baptized would stand, so that oil from an adjoining depression would anoint the neophyte's foot. Dr Gibson is sufficiently sure that the evidence points towards this cave as being the place from where John himself carried out a good part of his baptismal ministry. Maybe even it was where he first sought the solitude in the wilderness that the Gospels recount. It could well become again a shrine to the forerunner of the Lord.

Dr Gibson's findings are detailed in his book, *The Cave of John the Baptist* (Doubleday, 2004).



The links to all the websites mentioned in Faith Online are included in the Faith Website at www.faith.org.uk

INSPIRED BY THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

The late Cardinal Winning launched the Pro-life Initiative on Mother's day, 9th March 1997, in order to provide a caring, Christian response to anyone faced with a crisis pregnancy, from whatever background or faith. Since then, many hundreds of women have been given new hope - and babies' lives been saved. Given that Faith's own Sisters of the Gospel of Life have starring roles, we should really have reviewed this website long ago. There is much inspirational material here, not least the photos of where it all happens, complete with 'Pooh Room' and eager volunteers! The Sisters and their supporters are looking forward to celebrating the 10th anniversary of the encyclical on 25th March 2005.

www.prolifeinitiative.org

Founded in June by Faith's Fr Tim Finigan, The Association of Priests for the Gospel of Life exists to unite priests in the UK in their pro-life witness. In particular, members are asked to offer prayer and sacrifices, with at least one Mass each year for the protection of the unborn. The Association aims to support, encourage and advise lay people; keep priests informed and provide a network for them, and offer help for those in crisis situations. Over 1000 catholic priests have now signed Fr Tim's recent letter to the Times on the Mental Capacity Bill - surely an unprecedented display of priestly pro-life witness in these isles.

www.apgl.org.uk

YEAR OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

The Our Sunday Visitor site gives a comprehensive range of apologetic resources ranging through the Didache, Fathers and Saints to a rap song for young people by Fr Stan Fortuna.

www.osv.com/eucharist/index.asp

The national Liturgy Office also has some resources online and has announced the publication of the translation of the new General Instruction in early 2005. It is a little disappointing that the old discouragement of the rosary before the Blessed Sacrament seems still in place, given that the Congregation for Divine Worship has cleared the score on that front (1998). Also, one wonders how many parishes will follow the singular guidance on candles for Exposition!

www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources

E-HELP FOR THE CHURCH SUFFERING

Here are two of the many sites from different countries:

Prayer Warriors of the Holy Souls is a highly organised apostolate of the Montfort Foundation Inc, based in the Philippines. It exists to create and spread awareness of the plight of the Holy Souls.

You can pledge online to make holy hours for those in purgatory!

www.pwhs-mfi.org

PRAYING FOR THE HOLY SOULS

Aidan Bond started this initiative in Galway in 2002. It has since spread from Ireland. It specialises in day-retreats, especially during November. Again, one can commit oneself through the website to praying for the Holy Souls.

www.holysoulsrusade.org

CONVENT CHEMISTRY

It is widely known now that communion hosts must be low-gluten rather than gluten-free if they are to be valid matter. There are now companies from Australia to Italy and Germany manufacturing the new Vatican-approved hosts acceptable to most coeliacs. But here is an amusing story of how some young Benedictine nuns in the States also discovered their own winning formula.

<http://catholickey.org>

- and type clyde in the search engine to find the relevant link.

To order:

altarbread@benedictinesisters.org

news

r o u n d u p

HELP FOR IRAQI PRIESTS

Italian Catholics have devised a new scheme to help Chaldean Catholic priests struggling to rebuild their churches and communities in the wake of recent bombings. Turin archdiocese's 'adopt a priest plan' seeks to divert funds to priests in need in Iraq. The project, entitled 'I Have a New Friend: An Iraqi Chaldean Priest' is trying to sponsor 10 young priests in Baghdad.

BBC BACKS DOWN

The BBC has scrapped a controversial cartoon BBC series mocking the Pope after a huge petition by Catholics. Over 35,000 signed the 'Ban Popetown' petition, including James Mawdsley, the Catholic pro-Burmese democracy campaigner. He stated that he was prepared to risk jail for non-payment of his licence fee if plans to screen Popetown went ahead. "So many people were prepared to stop paying their TV licence if the BBC broadcast Popetown," said Kathy Goble, organiser of the Ban Popetown campaign. "We started the campaign off mailing 150 people and it just grew from there. It wasn't just Catholics who got involved, many people were just incensed by the whole thing." The series, which cost £2 million and features the voice of comedienne Ruby Wax, is said to show the Pope as 'infantile' and the Catholic Church as 'corrupt' and 'sinister'. One episode shows the Pope on a pogostick.

"Despite all of the creative energy that has gone into this project and the best efforts of everyone involved, the comic impact of the delivered series does not outweigh the potential offence it will cause," said BBC3 Controller, Stuart Murphy. "I knew when we developed the series

that there was risk involved but unfortunately, once we saw the finished series, it became clear that the programme fell on the wrong side of that line." Could this mark a sea-change at the BBC? Its new controller, Mark Thompson is a practising Catholic and recently said that many people in Britain may be hungry to know more about Christ. Let's see if this translates into decent programmes on Christianity on TV, moving away from the Popetown variety.

JAMMING IN THE NAME OF THE LORD

Annoyed by mobile phones ringing in Mass? Here's a suggestion for priests with funds. In Mexico, churches have begun installing signal-jamming equipment developed by Israeli warfare experts to silence mobiles during Mass. It works when placed in two boxes, the size of small hi-fi s, one is placed at the church entrance and another by the altar. When switched on at the start of Mass, a 'no signal' message will appear on mass-goer's phones. "Before we had the system, it was very uncomfortable hearing calls coming in during the celebration of mass, now it's 95 per cent quiet," said the curator of the Sacred Heart church, Monterrey, the first Mexican church to use the equipment.

THE PASSION BREAKS ALL RECORDS

The Passion of the Christ, Mel Gibson's epic version of the sufferings of the Lord, has proved an instant best-seller the moment it was released on DVD/Video. On the first day of sales alone four million DVD's and videos were sold, and nine million within a week. That's more than the *Lord of the Rings* series put together. You can even choose to see without subtitles, opting instead for an all-American audiotape commentary, explaining the action, blow by blow: e.g. 'pudgy roman whacks Jesus with rod'!

THE NEXT CATHOLIC CINEMA HIT

Next year's Catholic screen sensation is 'Thérèse', a film about the life-story of Thérèse of Lisieux, the 'little flower'. As Faith News went to press, it was just opening across the United States. The film's director, the wonderfully named Leonardo Defillipis, also plays Louis Martin, Thérèse's father and has funded his film out of donations from American Catholics. He said: "It's a miracle that we've made and distributed this movie after working on it for so many years." Defillipis has dedicated his film to the Pope as he made it in response to the Holy Father's call for a new evangelisation. "I took his invocation seriously and decided that we needed to give the Church a voice," he said. "I'm hoping that this film, the implementation of that voice, will be a work of holiness to touch people's hearts and souls, drawing and attracting people to God's presence. St Thérèse is played by Lindsay Younce, a former Quaker who is now a Catholic.

POPE'S MARRIAGE DRAMA

And this Autumn English theatre-goers were treated to an updated version of the Pope's play *The Jeweller's Shop*, written in the late 1950's when he was Archbishop of Krakow. Catholic actor Martin O'Brien (catch him playing a reporter in the new film Wimbledon) has adapted the play, calling it *The Jeweller*. It is staged by ACTS, (the Association of Catholics in Theatre and Screen, part of the Catholic Stage guild). O'Brien explains: "The play focuses on three couples at different stages in their relationships. There is a couple who are getting married, a couple getting divorced, and a third couple who are the son and daughter of the first couple.

We see how the parents have affected their children's attitude towards love and marriage. As the play's themes very much plug into the Pope's work in Love and

Responsibility and Theology of the Body, it is especially useful to parish groups, conferences, and one-off events which look at married life, relationships, love and maturity." As well as performing in November at Westminster Cathedral Hall, ACTS were offering to stage the play in parishes around Britain, and participate in optional discussion workshops afterwards. If this appeals, contact

info@thejeweller.org.uk

LIKE SHEEP FOR THE SLAUGHTER

On the pro-life front, the creator of Dolly the cloned sheep is applying for a licence to clone human beings, supposedly for research. Professor Ian Wilmut of Scotland's Roslin institute has asked the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) for a licence to create human embryos with motor neurone disease through cloning. "Human beings must never be used as a means to an end," says Patrick Cusworth, Life's Catholic PR officer. "To create a tiny new individual human being solely for the purposes of his or her own destruction is not something which we, living in a society which refers to itself as civilized, can justify."

SIGNING ONE'S LIFE AWAY

Despite assiduously 'consulting' with religious leaders, including Archbishop Smith of Cardiff, Lord Filkin, architect of the disputed Mental Incapacity Bill, has failed to allay widespread fears that the proposed law will, inevitably, lead to Euthanasia. Even Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, is alarmed, co-writing a letter to Parliament protesting the bill with Cardinal Murphy O'Connor. They warn that the bill will endanger the vulnerable - an obvious point as it gives those in early stages of terminal diseases the right to sign over decision-making powers to others. "It is deeply misguided to propose a law by which

it would be legal for terminally ill people to be killed or assisted in suicide by those caring for them, even if there are safeguards to ensure it is only the terminally ill who would qualify" wrote Williams and Murphy-O'Connor.

FASTING FOR LIFE

A new pro-life initiative in London is to fast and pray for mothers considering having an abortion. Fasting for Life will bring together teams of people who will fast for a particular mother considering an abortion. The teams will fast on rotation until the mother makes a decision. A group of Catholics including Sir Roy Strong, a former director of the V & A museum, are fighting plans to turn a stately home associated with Catholic martyrs into a luxury hotel. Strong, together with Archbishop Couve de Murville, the former archbishop of Birmingham, Fr Antony Symondson SJ and Jack Scarisbrick, Professor of History at Warwick University, are campaigning for funds to preserve Sawston Hall in Cambridgeshire and make it a Catholic heritage centre.

Mary Tudor rebuilt the Hall, property of the Huddleston family, after it was burnt down by the Duke of Northumberland's troops the night after she sought refuge there during the Duke's campaign to put Lady Jane Grey on the throne. But by the time re-building was finished in 1584, Elizabeth was on the throne and Sawston was subsequently linked to two Elizabethan martyrs: St John Rigby and St Nicholas Owen. Rigby, a steward to the Huddleston family was martyred after being sent to London as a representative of Lady Huddleston to explain why she did not attend Protestant services. Under cross-questioning, it emerged that he was Catholic and he died at Tyburn in 1600. By then the Hall was riddled with 'priest's holes', including one built by St Nicholas Owen, a Jesuit and carpenter. In 1606 Owen was

tortured to death in the Tower of London. In 1990 the Huddlestons sold the house and it became a language centre that has since gone bankrupt. Now it has been bought by the Sawston Hotel Group who are applying to South Cambridgeshire District Council for planning permission. According to Professor Scarisbrick, the hotelier's plans include turning a gallery into an ensuite family-sized bedroom, despite promises to preserve Sawston's 'special character'.

MUCH ADO ABOUT THE LITURGY

Debate over the translation of the liturgy into English was already heated and then came 'The Mass is a Mess', a diatribe against the 1973 translation by MP Ann Widdecombe, and writer Martin Kochanski. Not only did they dub the vernacular translation "racist" and its translators "misguided fools", but Widdecombe and Kochanski published their 12-page booklet in the name of the Catholic Writers Guild, also known as The Keys. All well and good, apart from one detail - no one in The Keys had been consulted beforehand. The novelist Piers Paul Reid, a former Guild master and now the vice-president accused them of dwelling on "an old battle that everyone is tired of" claiming the language used in the booklet was overly strong. "It should not have been published by anybody" he said "let alone the Keys. It makes the organisation seem like a lot of extremists, which is an image they have been trying to avoid".

Rumour has it that the draft was even more strongly worded and that Miss Widdecombe exercised a restraining influence on Mr Kochanski. Interestingly, in a radio interview Bishop Jabale of Menevia, who chairs the Bishops' Department of Christian life and Worship, said that whilst he too deplored some of the language of the pamphlet, some of Miss W's points were valid. Which ones we do not know.

THE YEAR OF THE EUCHARIST

*These extracts from Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter for the Year of the Eucharist - **Mane Nobiscum Domine** - were published after the drafting of our Editorial on the Parish. They very much support the theme.*

The image of the disciples on the way to Emmaus can serve as a fitting guide for a Year when the Church will be particularly engaged in living out the mystery of the Holy Eucharist. Amid our questions and difficulties, and even our bitter disappointments, the divine Wayfarer continues to walk at our side, opening to us the Scriptures and leading us to a deeper understanding of the mysteries of God. When we meet him fully, we will pass from the light of the Word to the light streaming from the "Bread of life", the supreme fulfilment of his promise to "be with us always, to the end of the age" (cf. Mt 28:20).

The "breaking of bread"-as the Eucharist was called in earliest times-has always been at the centre of the Church's life. Through it Christ makes present within time the mystery of his death and resurrection. In it he is received in person as the "living bread come down from heaven" (Jn 6:51), and with him we receive the pledge of eternal life and a foretaste of the eternal banquet of the heavenly Jerusalem. Following the teaching of the Fathers, the Ecumenical Councils and my own Predecessors, I have frequently urged the Church to reflect upon the Eucharist, most recently in the Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. Here I do not intend to repeat this teaching, which I trust will be more deeply studied and understood. At the same time I thought it helpful for this purpose to dedicate an entire Year to this wonderful sacrament.

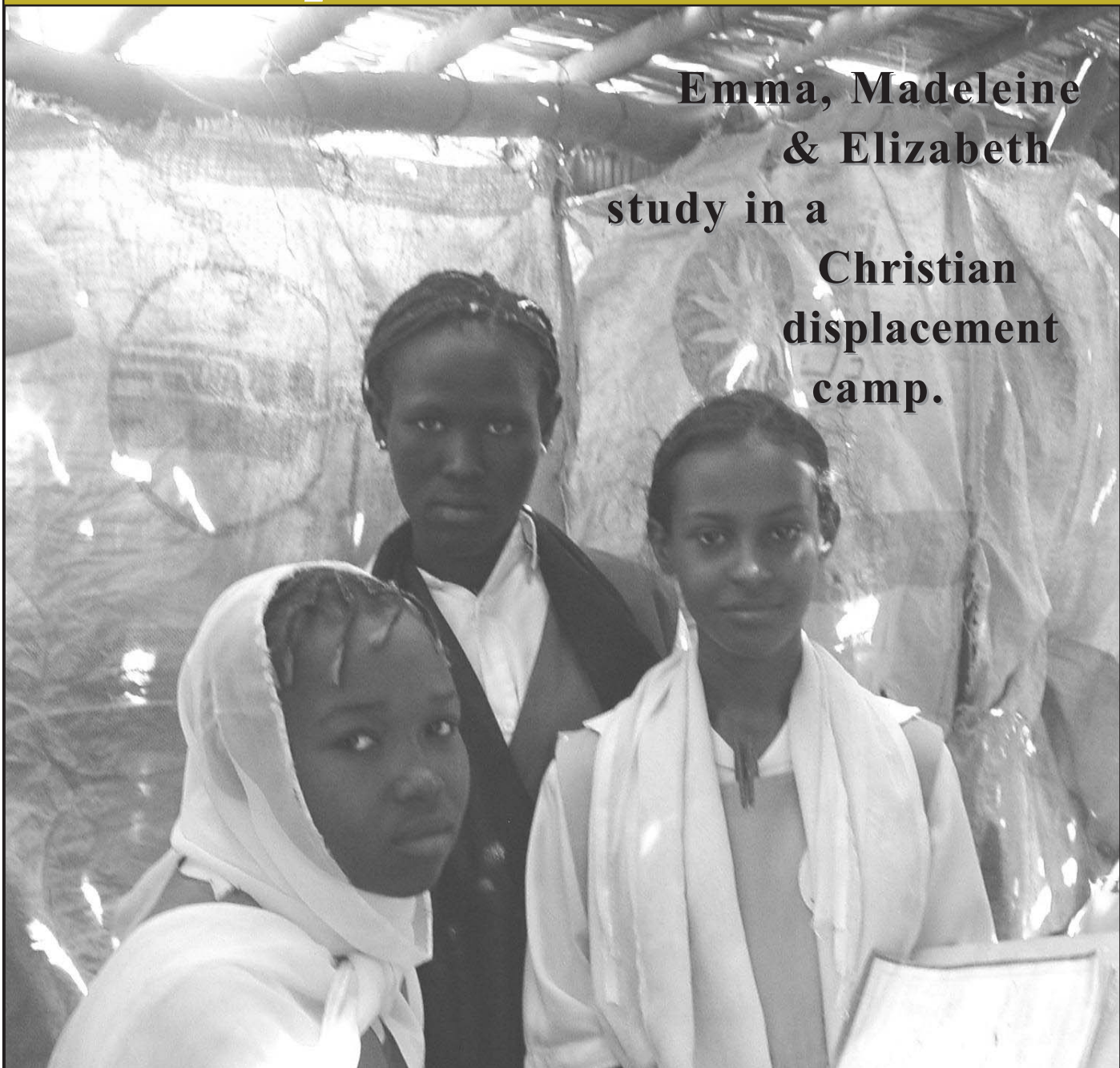
There is a particular need to cultivate a lively awareness of Christ's real presence, both in the celebration of Mass and in the worship of the Eucharist outside Mass. Care should be taken to show that awareness through tone of voice, gestures, posture and bearing. In this regard, liturgical law recalls-and I myself have recently reaffirmed⁽¹⁵⁾-the importance of moments of silence both in the celebration of Mass and in Eucharistic adoration. The way that the ministers and the faithful treat the Eucharist should be marked by profound respect.⁽¹⁶⁾ The presence of Jesus in the tabernacle must be a kind of magnetic pole attracting an ever greater number of souls enamoured of him, ready to wait patiently to hear his voice and, as it were, to sense the beating of his heart. "O taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Ps 34:8).

During this year Eucharistic adoration outside Mass should become a particular commitment for individual parish and religious communities. Let us take the time to kneel before Jesus present in the Eucharist, in order to make reparation by our faith and love for the acts of carelessness and neglect, and even the insults which our Saviour must endure in many parts of the world. Let us deepen through adoration our personal and communal contemplation, drawing upon aids to prayer inspired by the word of God and the experience of so many mystics, old and new.

This special closeness which comes about in Eucharistic "communion" cannot be adequately understood or fully experienced apart from ecclesial communion. I emphasized this repeatedly in my Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. The Church is the Body of Christ: we walk "with Christ" to the extent that we are in relationship "with his body". Christ provided for the creation and growth of this unity by the outpouring of his Holy Spirit. And he himself constantly builds it up by his Eucharistic presence. It is the one Eucharistic bread which makes us one body. As the Apostle Paul states: "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1Cor 10:17). In the mystery of the Eucharist Jesus builds up the Church as a communion, in accordance with the supreme model evoked in his priestly prayer: "Even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they may also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (Jn 17:21).

Hope in Sudan

Emma, Madeleine
& Elizabeth
study in a
Christian
displacement
camp.



Thanks to your prayers and kindness, youngsters like these have hope for the future. Thousands of other children in displaced camps are waiting to learn the love of God.

Please help, please pray



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