

faith

January and February 2015
Volume 47 Number 1
Price £4.50

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OF FAITH AND REASON

St Joseph, Model of Heroic Fatherhood

Editorial

The Synod on the Family: A Mother's Perspective

Jacqueline Stewart

"Do Not Be Afraid of Christ": Our Lady and Freedom in the Teaching of Benedict XVI

Donncha Ó hAodha

What Does the General Instruction Actually Say About Chant?

Joseph Estorninho

A Match Made in Heaven: The Doctrine of the Eucharist and Aristotelian Metaphysics

Dr William Newton

Also

Ray Blake on Pius X's reforms and frequent reception of the Eucharist

Michael Nazir-Ali on the recent interfaith colloquium on the family

Gregory Farrelly on why the Rosetta comet mission matters

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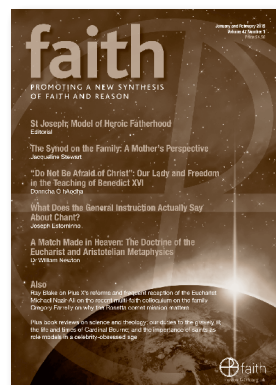


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Subscriptions and Faith-Keyway Trust Publications Office Sr Roseann Reddy, 104 Albert Road, Glasgow G42 8DR, subscriptions@faith.org.uk

UK £25/year, Europe (inc Eire) £29/€37/year.

Surface Mail overseas £28/\$56/€36/year.

Air Mail overseas £33/\$66/€42/year.

Student rate £17/\$34/€22/year.

Single copies £5 inc. p&p. Bulk orders £3.50 plus p&p.

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

Printed by Tudor Printing 01772 633098, ISSN 1356-126X.

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St Joseph, Model of Heroic Fatherhood

Editorial

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.” *Gospel of Matthew 2:13*

The non-saccharine nature of the Gospel stories is a constant reminder of their veracity. Arguably, it is only their regular retelling from childhood that empties them, for some, of their shock value. No author of a fictitious hagiography would consider the raw facts of Jesus's life to be in any way decorous for a deity-made-man.

Yet there they are. The facts. Incredible. Inconvenient. Immovable. Christ did spend his first New Year on this earth fleeing into exile in Egypt. Unlike much of the preceding story of the Incarnation, this dramatic episode temporarily draws our attention away from the maternal nature of Mary and towards the paternal nature of Joseph.

In doing so, it highlights another fact that is incredible, immovable yet also inconvenient for many moderns: all men are called to fatherhood.

“All of us, to exist, to become complete, in order to be mature, we need to feel the joy of fatherhood: even those of us who are celibate,” said Pope Francis in his daily homily 26 June 2013.

“Fatherhood is giving life to others, giving life...for us, it is pastoral paternity, spiritual fatherhood, but this is still giving life, this is still becoming fathers.”

The reality, however, is that fewer and fewer men are living out fatherhood than ever before, and fewer and fewer children are experiencing paternity.

A recent report by the Centre for Social Justice think-tank revealed that three million children in the United Kingdom are now growing up predominantly with their mothers. This is often due to unavoidable circumstances deserving of understanding, care and compassion. Such legitimate mitigation, though, cannot diminish the inherent need of a child to have a mum and a dad.

The absence of fathers in families is clearly linked to higher rates of poverty, youth crime and teenage pregnancy, says the think-tank report. It warns that the UK is experiencing a “tsunami” of family breakdown. In one neighbourhood in the Riverside area of Liverpool, there is no father present in 65 per cent of homes with dependent children.

While the natural fall-out from fatherless families is demonstratively deleterious, the supernatural fall-out is equally baleful.

“For those who have had the experience of an overly authoritarian and inflexible father, or an indifferent, uncaring, or even absent one, it is not easy to calmly think of God as a

father or to confidently surrender themselves to him,” observed Pope Benedict XVI during a General Audience in January 2012.

He pointed out that “it isn’t always easy today to speak about fatherhood and, not having adequate role models, it even becomes problematic to imagine God as a father.”

In a recent book entitled *Faith of the Fatherless*, the American psychologist Paul Vitz attempts to draw a definite link between fatherlessness and atheism. He profiles dozens of prominent atheists, from Dawkins to Nietzsche to Robespierre, finding a clear common denominator as he goes: “In no case do we find a strong, beloved father with a close relationship with his son.”

So what is to be done? As with the sons of Jacob in the Old Testament and, subsequently, the Son of Man in the New Testament, the answer is clear: *Ite ad Joseph* – Go to Joseph.

It is in Saint Joseph that we find a model of manhood that embodies a heroic paternalism applicable both to those who live out their fatherhood generatively and also to those who pursue their paternity through the priesthood or other forms of apostolic celibacy. Indeed, Joseph himself falls into the latter category.

Joseph is prayerful, noble, loving, hard-working and always docile to the will of God. He adores Our Lady. He sacrifices everything for Christ.

In contemporary society, the generative father who doesn’t imitate Joseph can lapse into a range of behavioural patterns from demitting spiritual leadership in the family to neglecting the well-being of his wife. As the old aphorism recommends, the best gift a father can give his children is to love their mother.

Meanwhile, the spiritual father who does not imitate Joseph’s generosity can easily lapse into self-absorption and self-gratification. The result is an elimination of the fruitful paternalism to which all priests are called by Christ. The clerical state should never become a brotherhood of bachelors, still less a redoubt for those content with a comfortable, middle-class lifestyle.

The Catholic evangelist Matthew James Christoff states that “there will not be a New Evangelisation without the evangelisation of men”. If the forthcoming 2015 Synod on the Family can begin to grapple with that issue it will be doing the Church and wider society a great service indeed. Let us pray to Saint Joseph that it does. 🕊

The Synod on the Family – A Mother's Perspective *By Jacqueline Stewart*

When the synod entitled “Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the context of Evangelisation” was announced by Pope Francis back in 2013, I thought it sounded like a very good idea. The rich truths of the teachings of the Church on marriage and the family are now comprehensively supported by a wealth of sociological evidence. Indeed, if we read the website of the Family Education Trust (which does not make its appeal to any text or creed) we find, under the heading “The Importance of the Family”, the following:

There is no area in social science in which the evidence stacks up so completely on one side: marriage and traditional family life are associated with good outcomes in terms of health, wealth, and other indicators of well-being. A community of stable families has fewer problems with crime, antisocial behaviour and isolation than a community in which short-lived relationships are the norm.

We simply cannot afford to formulate public policy on the assumption that all living relationships are of equal value to society. Rather, we need to allow public policy to be shaped by the facts and promote marriage and responsible parenthood. (www.famoyouth.org.uk)

The academic research exists in the secular arena and I could only see that Holy Mother Church would seek gently but firmly to re-propose the beauty of her teachings to our society, so confused about the truths of the human vocation to a married or celibate life. Surely the pursuit of the Common Good, and more importantly the salvation of souls, would demand such.

A Shock for Catholic parents

Fast forward to the apparently rather hurried and somewhat awkwardly constructed “Relatio post disceptationem” of 13 October 2014, issued as the interim report from the synod fathers, and the headlines around the world caused many faithful Catholic parents much anguish: “Could the Catholic Church be liberalising on divorce, contraception and homosexuality?” (Christian Today); “Welcome gays, non-marital unions” (Catholic News Service).

Indeed, a few of the headings in the Relatio itself were none too comforting vis-à-vis “positive aspects of civil unions and cohabitation” and the extensive discussion on making the Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist available to the divorced and remarried. It was a confused and confusing document, which the secular media lapped up.

Why would the Church want to be seen to be liberalising its approach to cohabitation and other irregular situations? There are swathes of evidence to support the increased risks to children, both born and unborn, within cohabiting situations. What length of time would make cohabitation valuable in the eyes of the Church? What about serial cohabitantes and the damage left behind? Surely we must find ways of leading couples gently and lovingly towards the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony, and never shy away from why marriage matters.

Equally, the teachings on divorce and remarriage are clear and unambiguous. As a lay Catholic wife and mother, I simply do not understand why this is such a preoccupation. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: “Divorce does injury to the covenant of salvation, of which sacramental marriage is the sign. Contracting a new union, even if it is recognised by civil law, adds to the gravity of the rupture: the remarried spouse is then in a situation of public and permanent adultery.” Indeed, the former Tory MP Louise Mensch wrote on this subject: “I’m a divorced (and remarried) Catholic and I’m sure it would be a mortal sin for me to take communion...nobody in a state of serious sin...is able to receive Christ worthily. To receive Him unworthily is to commit a further mortal sin.”

The teachings on homosexuality are equally unambiguous. Why the gross doctrinal confusion? And what of sin, mortal or otherwise, the Sacrament of Confession and a firm purpose of amendment? Christ’s teachings on sexual purity and the indissolubility of marriage? The sixth and ninth Commandments? Are these impolite observations? Judgmental even?

What message was the Church offering my teenage children as they reach such a crucial stage of their formation as young Catholics considering their vocation? The simplicity of “chastity before marriage and fidelity within” almost takes the breath away of parents with teenage children when they realise how easy it can be to explain what the Church teaches to young minds. The mass media never promote such thinking and parents need the Church to shake off any reluctance or bashfulness in proclaiming these very clear teachings of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Familiaris Consortio: Clarity with Compassion

I did not encourage my children to read anything of the Relatio post disceptationem – how strange! And I found myself agreeing with Archbishop Chaput of Philadelphia when he said: “I think confusion is of the devil and I think the public image that came across was one of confusion.” For these teachings of Holy Mother Church come from the words of Christ himself. They cannot be changed. And the Pope of the Family, Saint John Paul II had already offered his apostolic exhortation on the pastoral challenges facing the family in his 1981 apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*. I would urge all readers to seek out this document, which is written with great clarity, depth of discernment, insight, love, compassion and integrity.

Familiaris Consortio presents a wholly compassionate yet objectively truthful account of the Magisterium of the Church’s teachings on marriage and the family and in its introductory paragraph states: “In a particular way the Church addresses the young, who are beginning their journey towards marriage and family life, for the purpose of presenting them with new horizons, helping them to discover the beauty and grandeur of the vocation to love and the service of life.” Amen. Amen. And

The Synod on the Family – A Mother's Perspective continued

later in the same document: “The Church reaffirms her practice, which is based upon Sacred Scripture, of not admitting to Eucharistic Communion divorced persons who have remarried. They are unable to be admitted thereto from the fact that their state and condition of life objectively contradict that union of love between Christ and the Church which is signified and effected by the Eucharist. Besides this, there is another special pastoral reason: if these people were admitted to the Eucharist, the faithful would be led into error and confusion regarding the Church’s teaching about the indissolubility of marriage.”

Fast forward to the final synod document – the “Relatio Synodi” of 18 October 2014. This is much less controversial in its content and more authentically, if not perfectly, aligned to the Truth (although it has yet to be officially translated out of Italian by the Vatican). The re-alignment was very much the result of the work of the 10 smaller working groups who feverishly drafted their amendments to the Interim Relatio, which many participants suggested did not reflect the tone or content of the synod at all. Deo gratias.

The Challenges Facing Young People

And yet my overriding impression of the 2014 synod was that it failed to demonstrate an understanding of many of the issues that Catholic young people, parents and families struggle with in their daily lives (a view similarly expressed by Catherine Pakaluk in an article for *Aleteia*, 24 October 2014). Many of these are a result of Church teaching not being taught clearly in the first place. The Church should be honest and truly repentant about this – if people do not hear the Word then they cannot live by the Word.

Chastity and fidelity Our young people deserve to be taught the importance of chastity before marriage and fidelity within for the good of their souls and their life in Christ. We must teach and encourage them to discern whether they are being called to marriage or celibacy and that nothing in between can serve their call to holiness. Dating is for discernment, yet parents are very confused and fearful of being seen to judge “irregular situations”.

Marriage deferral and infertility Society is facing a retreat from marriage as young people are encouraged to defer marriage and family until economics and security are just right. The cost of this deferral of marriage and childbearing is greatest for young women. The demands on a woman to obtain the roundest education, the most fulfilled career, the highest promotion, the perfect relationship, and to “squeeze in two children” – all these are set against a backdrop of her diminishing fertility. Female fertility is a precious gift, taken so much for granted by a deceitful society which cares little about the demographics of plummeting fertility levels and the ultimate cost to human happiness.

At a time when young men are increasingly reluctant to commit to marriage and family, the Church must engage in this dialogue between the sexes. Diminished fertility, or

indeed infertility, is a deeply painful suffering, as is the constant fear of not being able to meet someone open to marriage and children.

Cultural resistance to marriage In certain sections of society, marriage has been almost eliminated from the culture; increasingly it has become the privilege of the middle classes. How does the Church re-propose Christ’s teachings on marriage and human sexuality in such situations for the good of individuals and society? The Church cannot passively accept that “simply to live together is often a choice based on an overall attitude opposed to anything institutional and definitive” (*Relatio post disceptationem*). It is the Church’s job to make the voice of Our Lord Jesus Christ loud and clear, otherwise she compounds the pain of young Catholics struggling to find like-minded potential spouses, even within the Catholic community.

Secular sterility The Church’s vision of marriage and family is so hard for young Catholics to encounter, yet it offers them the key to true human happiness and fulfilment. Witness is crucially important, but so is the pulpit – especially where there are no longer any witnesses! Marriage and children and grandchildren are deeply longed for by most and have been taken for granted by previous generations. We are now bombarded by the language of secular sterility and seem reluctant as a Catholic community to counter such attitudes. “Be fruitful and multiply,” God told us, and yet Catholics seem unable to discern the truth of their calling. The Church teaches responsible parenthood, of course, but what about generous discernment as co-operators with the love of God the Creator – keeping Christ at the centre of marriage and the deep joy this brings?

Contraception The meaning of “openness to life” is not taught and is therefore poorly understood. There are amazing apostolates out there to explain these teachings (One More Soul, based in the US, is a fine example), yet few know of these and even fewer talk openly about this issue within the Church. We are wealthier than ever as a society, yet why are we so reluctant to have children?

Artificial contraception is not an option in conscience for a practising Catholic. Indeed many of the challenges facing the family in the modern world are probably symptoms of the mostly uninformed rejection of this beautiful teaching, held as truth by the entire Christian community until the 1930s.

The Church must help the faithful reconnect with *Humanae Vitae*. The science behind natural fertility regulation is now irrefutably reliable (I am most familiar with the Billings Ovulation method) and makes one wonder at the perfection of creation itself. We must teach this to young people and help them encourage one another to live a life of generosity with all of God’s gifts – “...human life and the duty of transmitting it are not limited by the horizons of this life: their true evaluation and full significance can be understood only in reference to man’s eternal destiny” (*Catechism* 2371).

“My overriding impression was that the synod failed to demonstrate an understanding of many of the issues young Catholics face”

Modern healthcare Catholic couples need the Church to equip them to deal with the moral maze of modern healthcare systems. Artificial contraception is promoted (after each birth, when we can feel vulnerable) and sterilisation may be suggested at some point, making it all the more important that the Church's teachings are clearly proclaimed. With marriage and family deferred until later in life, around one in six couples will experience fertility problems. Certain contraceptives can actually damage fertility if used long-term. Catholics need to be aware of the problematic morality of many of the reproductive technologies they will be offered, something that is quite hard when you fear never being able to have children.

And what about prenatal testing? What if all is not well with baby? Abortion is now the first line of defence against babies with “foetal abnormality” – more than 90 per cent of Down's syndrome babies are aborted. Where do Catholic couples get support and advice against what often sounds like a medically informed “opinion” to terminate? The Church must encourage Catholic doctors to help Catholics navigate their way to the moral truth. *Humanae Vitae* asks no less.

Mixed marriages The cultural challenges within mixed marriages, which have steadily increased in number over the last 40 years, are complex. The full weight of responsibility of the Catholic spouse becomes apparent with the gift of a child and it can feel like a lonely and burdensome job. “Each Christian family is called to be a domestic church – it is called to partake of the prayer and sacrifice of Christ. Daily prayer and the reading of the Word of God strengthen it in charity. The Christian family has an evangelising and missionary task” (*Catechism* 2205). Many Catholics now are so poorly catechised themselves that to educate their children and evangelise their spouse can seem overwhelming. The Church must walk closely beside such couples, and families have a responsibility to encourage each other in their life of prayer and sacrifice. Our faith life is spiritually weakened if confined to Sunday Mass. Parents and families need to be re-educated in Catholic family prayer and tradition, and in how to invite Christ into every aspect of their lives through prayer, penance and sacrifice – there is much to do.

Abortion We can never speak too often or too loudly against abortion, this greatest of evils. It is society's answer to an “unplanned” pregnancy (married or otherwise) and we must proclaim the gift of chastity and the gift of life all the more strongly because of that. In the UK 200,000 abortions take place every year; some reports suggest that more than half of these are a consequence of failed contraceptive use. The Culture of Death awaits all of us and especially our young people. A contraceptive mindset leads stealthily to the road to abortion. The Church must understand this ubiquitous danger to our mortal souls and preach loudly against it.

Family breakdown and poverty The breakdown of stable family life, and the consequent rise in single-parent families,

usually run by the mother, is one of the greatest contributors to poverty. The Church cannot disconnect these issues, which affect children's prospects so fundamentally. If the Church were to offer the Eucharist to the divorced and remarried would any investigation be carried out to see whether previous spouses and families were still being supported, materially and spiritually, and not abandoned to poverty of both kinds. How can the Church walk faithfully beside such families, both materially and spiritually, and re-propose the beauty of married fidelity to their next generations? They deserve no less.

Pornography Incredibly, pornography was not mentioned in any of the synod documents. Yet so much research now exists to demonstrate the destructive effects of its ready availability on the internet. Anyone, at any age, can fall prey to its allure at the click of a button. Young people do so in vast numbers and the damage to their future marital happiness has begun. Just as a contraceptive mentality has fractured the link between the unitive and procreative aspects of human sexuality, so pornography is now slowly eliminating the need for even the unitive. Truly this is the work of Satan, and the Church must address the problem.

Family versus the state Finally, *Familiaris Consortio* acknowledges that the “ideal of mutual support and development between the family and society is often very seriously in conflict with the reality of their separation and even opposition....For this reason, the Church openly and strongly defends the rights of the family against the intolerable usurpations of society and the state.” With state authorities making ever increasing attempts to encroach on the primary educational responsibilities of parents, the Church must always proclaim the primary rights of parents and families.

A Longing to Hear the Truth

In discussing homosexuality and Communion for the divorced and remarried, the synod seems not to have touched on what is “arguably the most pressing humanitarian crisis of our day: the epidemic failure to live marriage and family in a manner consistent with authentic human flourishing” (Catherine Pakaluk, *Is the Pope's “Accent on Mercy” the Solution to the Culture Wars?*, *Aleteia*, 24 October 2014).

As Pope Benedict taught in *Caritas in Veritate*: “Each person finds his good by adherence to God's plan for him, in order to realise it fully. In this plan, he finds his truth, and through adherence to this truth he becomes free (cf Jn 8:32). To defend the truth, to articulate it with humility and conviction, and to bear witness to it in life are therefore exacting and indispensable forms of charity. Charity, in fact, ‘rejoices in the truth’ (1 Cor 13:6).” The world is longing to hear the Truth taught gently and with love. ☪

Jacqueline Stewart is a stay-at-home mum to five children whose ages range from 5 to 16.

A Cure for Spiritual Dryness

Many years ago as a first-time mother with a tiny babe in arms, I received sound advice from a mother of adult children, a breastfeeding counsellor who had helped thousands of mothers and babies over decades.

There will be times, she said, when you don't actually feel love for your baby. When you feel nothing at all. Don't let this disturb you: it simply means that you're drained, empty, unable to feel. When this happens mothers often take it as a sign that perhaps they don't love their baby as much as they thought they did, that perhaps they need more time away from their baby, that perhaps somebody else should look after their baby. But this isn't true, she continued. It merely means that you are exhausted, and there is a straightforward remedy. Simply behave tenderly towards your baby. Act as you did at those moments when you felt overwhelmed by maternal love for him. Behave lovingly and you will feel the loving feelings return.

Her words puzzled me at the time but weeks or months later, numbed by lack of sleep and overwhelmed by being the whole world to this one little person, my maternal feelings retreated and I was left feeling confused and empty, with a mewling infant in my arms. I remembered the wise words and I took that mother's advice. More quickly than I imagined possible, the tender feelings towards my baby returned and mother-baby harmony was resumed.

I've used this advice many times. It isn't simply the rigours of the baby stage that can empty a mother of the capacity to feel. Recognising that emotional dryness may come for many reasons I have found that behaving affectionately towards my children at those times when I'm actually feeling nothing of the sort has surprising results. Of course I love them deeply, even when I don't feel as though I do. But by consistently affirming my love for them through my attitude, they feel loved and secure and – importantly – behave like loved and secure children, which in turn makes those genuine loving feelings rise easily to the fore.

Some years ago I started a family blog. My goal was to write briefly about one positive thing that had happened each day. To write it without context. To create a tangible string of positive memories. I did this because I felt bogged down by family life with small children and realised that it was too easy to focus on what had gone wrong each day. Negative feelings are more memorable than positive ones. We remember tragedy before we remember joy. Often the simple beauty of day-to-day life gets swallowed up and forgotten in its minor irritations. Having a record of the happy moments gave me a sense of perspective on my role as a parent.

So I find myself in the first week of Advent about to move house: surrounded by packing boxes, children needing attention, animals needing relocating, and a deadline for *Faith* magazine. The broadband customer services agent hung up on me yesterday and I have to drive my son a hundred miles

to serve at a Mass for the Martyrs of the English College. Waaah! But I know I can reorient my perception of what's going on by deliberately focusing on those things that are wonderful in my life, like a sailboat tacking to correct its course.

My New Year's resolution for 2015 will be to remember what I learned as a first-time mother and to apply it daily to my life – my children, husband, parents, in-laws and neighbours – and particularly to my relationship with God. When I feel alone, when I understand Psalm 22's "My God my God, why have you forsaken me?" better than I remember the promise in Leviticus, "I am your God and you are my people," I will pour my heart into praying.

"Giving rein to doubts about God's presence makes it easy to blunder down a road marked 'agnosticism' towards a dark precipice"

When overwhelmed by life's unwelcome challenges, our prayer life suffers. Like cross children we ignore Our Father because things aren't going as we'd like. Or perhaps we don't pray because we don't "feel" anything. Our relationship with God is a reverse parental relationship. Although in our human frailty we may not perceive His love for us, this bears no relation to the fact of His love for us. As a lapsing Catholic once, paradoxically, said to a mutual friend: "I've stopped believing in God, but he still believes in me."

Dryness of spiritual life is nothing new: many great saints persevered through it, which should give us all hope. However, spiritual dryness can also be a staging post on the way to loss of faith, which is why it alarms us. It is comforting to "feel" that God is near when we need Him. When we don't sense Him near, we can doubt His presence. Giving rein to that way of thinking makes it easy to blunder down a road marked "agnosticism" towards a dark precipice.

Yet, like the maternal love that God has given every mother-baby dyad, our love for Our Lord only needs to be nurtured; a tiny flame in the high winds of spiritual battle. We must pray as though we feel drenched in His love and attention – because we are, whether we realise it or not. Maintaining prayer life with the fervour of one who feels the warmth of God's regard will get us through the dark times. We are knocking a door that will always eventually be opened. ☪

The Most Pastoral of Popes

Sacraments, I am sure, are supposed to be life-changing events, rather than a simple reward for turning up. That was the view from very early on until that old modernist Pope St Pius X changed things – those people who are anxious about Francis would have been apoplectic about Pio.

He not merely changed the Apostolic order of the sacraments, by putting confirmation after Communion; he also wanted to introduce not just frequent but even daily Communion. Communion not just for holy monks and hermits who had proved themselves in ascetical discipline, in long vigils and depth of prayer, but on a regular basis for those who had only recently attained the age of reason and probably hadn't yet learnt to use it. It was madness!

For almost 1,800 years, ever since Paul had written to the Corinthian suggesting that the Holy Eucharist kills, and is dangerous, and indeed can both give salvation but also condemnation and death, Communion was something which most sane people took part in rarely – to the point where the Council of the Lateran made annual reception a precept of the Church. Even then, pastorally minded bishops seemed not to insist too strongly, except in the case of imminent death.

One of the nonsenses spread abroad by those 1970s liturgists is that in that mythical period known as “the early

Church” people were receiving not merely regularly but frequently, in all probability every Sunday. I think the evidence for that is very flimsy.

The point is, of course, that the sacraments – including, and maybe especially, Holy Communion – are life-giving events. Pius's reforms made them mundane and led to the abuses we have today, where just because you are however many years old, or in Miss X's class, or at Mass, you receive Communion, confession or confirmation. Now the sacraments are received frequently they have come to mean very little in the life of the Church, or in the spiritual development of its members. Their power to impart grace or salvation hardly figures in contemporary catechesis; the liturgy has become not so much a mystical meeting with Heaven but “a celebration of the community”.

“For almost 1,800 years, Communion was something most people received rarely”

So many of the ills of today's Church can be laid directly at the door of this most interfering of popes, the most important being that sacraments do not change lives. Of course, in the teeth of all that his predecessors had upheld down the ages, he thought he was being “pastoral” – God preserve us! ☩



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Cardinal Sarah Appointment Signals Decisive Tone for the Pope's Reform of the Curia

Cardinal Robert Sarah of Guinea has been appointed prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments – a decision that sets a decisive tone for Curial reform.

The cardinal's first steps were announced to the heads of the Vatican's departments during their meeting with the Pope.

Until his appointment, Cardinal Sarah had served as president of the pontifical council Cor Unum. He takes over the post of prefect of a congregation whose ranks have been profoundly changed since the previous prefect, Cardinal Antonio Cañizares Llovera, was appointed archbishop of Valencia on 28 August 2014.

Fr Anthony Ward and Msgr Miguel Anguel Ferrer, the two undersecretaries of the congregation, were released with immediate effect on 5 November and replaced by Fr Corrado Maggioni, who was promoted to the post of unique undersecretary on 13 November.

“Cardinal Sarah takes over as prefect of a congregation whose ranks have been profoundly changed since his predecessor was appointed archbishop of Valencia”

This round of appointments came as a surprise, as Fr Ward had been an official of the congregation's English section for more than 15 years. For his part, Msgr Ferrer was a personal choice of Cardinal Cañizares, with whom he shared a

particular sensitivity for the traditional Latin Mass.


Msgr Maggioni, on the other hand, is a disciple of Archbishop Piero Marini, formerly the papal master of ceremonies of John Paul II, who is known for being enthusiastic for innovative forms of the liturgy.

With his taste and experience, Cardinal Sarah is called to rebalance the Congregation for Divine Worship. The cardinal thus leaves the pontifical council Cor Unum, which is likely to be absorbed into a bigger congregation.

Cardinal Sarah went to a private audience with Pope Francis on 13 November. According to Vatican sources, the cardinal was requested to give his perspective on the possible enrolling of his dicastery into a larger structure, and he gave the Pope his suggestions. He was also asked if he was available for this new post.

The placement of Cardinal Sarah is the first of a series of major appointments. The Secretariat of State's new “foreign minister”, Archbishop Paul Gallagher from Britain, was appointed last week.

It is expected that a new substitute for general affairs will also soon be chosen, thus replacing Archbishop Angelo Becciu, who has held the position as third in command since Pope Benedict XVI's papacy.

If the archbishop were to be moved, it would be another signal of Pope Francis's aim to shape the Secretariat of State with people chosen directly by the current secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin. 

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The Scylla and Charybdis of Participation

“The chalice of benediction that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?” (1 Cor 10:16). In this earliest Christian teaching on liturgical participation, the word *koinonia* which St Paul uses can also be translated quite properly as “communion”. Such sharing in Christ’s being and action is at the heart of our participation in the sacred liturgy. It did not require each person to proclaim a reading, hold up a banner or do a dance; active participation in the divine work celebrated at the altar meant something deeper for St Paul, as indeed for the Fathers of the first five centuries of the life of the Church.

The liturgical scholarship of the past hundred years has uncovered some fascinating insights into the rites used in the early Church but these indications are often incidental to the principal concern of the Fathers, which was to affirm that the Eucharist was the perfect sacrifice prophesied by Malachi, to emphasise the awesome mystery of the sacred action, and to exhort the faithful to approach it with a clear conscience.

The attitude of modern liturgists to the Middle Ages has been heavily influenced by Jungmann, who said in his seminal work on the Mass that “scholastic theology produced nothing for the liturgy of the Mass or for a better understanding of it”. One wonders if he was familiar with the explanation of St Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica* of how the parts of the priest and people relate to each other, and how the people should participate in each element of the rite of Mass (3a q.84. art.6). As Eamon Duffy has demonstrated with reference to England, there was considerable, popular, active and devoted participation at many levels in the celebration of the Mass, the office and the sacraments.

The Counter-Reformation and baroque era is also dismissed routinely as though the people were simply an audience at a theatre, yet the spiritual writers of this period were intensely concerned to assist the people in participating in the sacred liturgy. A good example is found in the instructions of St Francis de Sales on how to hear holy Mass.

The focus of such participation did tend to minimise the use of the liturgical texts themselves, just as popular hymns today in most places overlay the texts of the propers of the Mass. The saintly Dom Guéranger with his *L’Année Liturgique*, and subsequent writers such as Pius Parsch, provided a healthy counterpoint to this tendency by instructing the laity on the texts of the liturgy themselves.

It was St Pius X who coined the expression “active participation”. He did so in the Instruction on Sacred Music *Tra le Sollecitudini* of 1903, which was written in Italian. Writers for whom I have the greatest respect are, in my view, mistaken to attempt to translate the expression *actuosa participatio* as “genuine participation” or some similar alternative. *Partecipazione attiva* means active participation.

St Pius X was concerned to restore Gregorian chant to the liturgy and to foster the active participation of the people in the chant. This concern was repeated in the second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC), when the Fathers urged that “steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them” (SC 54).

The notion of *active* participation was widened greatly during the 20th century to the point where Pope Pius XII needed to explain that the offering of the sacrifice by the people in union with the priest was not based on them carrying out a visible liturgical rite. In *Mediator Dei*, he set out the classic description of interior participation as the offering of praise, impetration, expiation and thanksgiving (n.93).

Again the second Vatican Council, after its famous warning that the faithful should not be “silent spectators”, immediately referred to the faithful offering the divine victim through the hands of the priest and with him, so that they might be drawn into more perfect union with God and each other (SC 48).

“The problem comes when the external activity of the faithful in the liturgy is made primary, because then every effort must be made to make it happen”

Nevertheless, the external and visible activity of the faithful continues to be a primary focus of encouragement, while the classic idea of participation as being united with the four ends of the sacrifice is fighting a rearguard action to retain a place in people’s understanding of what to do at the liturgy. Many continental theologians are comfortable with what they might describe as a “creative tension”, and it is true that both external activity and interior spiritual participation can happen at the same time.

The problem comes when the external activity is made primary, because then every effort must be made to make it happen. Much of the current style of liturgical celebration reflects this, from the throat microphone to the widespread allergy against a single word of Latin, from interminable bidding prayers to every child in the class getting to read something or bring up an offertory gift.

Fortunately, Pope Benedict did much to redress the balance in his scholarly and conciliatory approach, particularly in *The Spirit of the Liturgy*. His reflection on the liturgy as the action of Christ the Word made flesh provides a path between the Scylla of the clown Mass and the Charybdis of the operatic performance. 🍷

(To be continued)

The Glasgow Midwives Ruling: An Assault on the Primacy of Conscience

Connie Wood and Mary Doogan recently appeared before the Supreme Court. It was the latest and, they had hoped, the last in the lengthy legal process the two midwives had endured to uphold the right of conscientious objection to participation in abortion. The latest court appearance came after NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde appealed against a previous ruling by the Court of Session in Edinburgh in favour of the health professionals.

The Abortion Act has a clear provision to respect the conscience of staff: “No person shall be under any duty, whether by contract or by any statutory or other legal requirement, to participate in any treatment authorised by this Act to which he has a conscientious objection.” That this provision has now been challenged by a health board is deeply troubling and symptomatic of an aggressive pro-abortion regime; it is also a sign of a weakening in regard for human conscience as the safeguard of human dignity.

That abortion is legal is bad enough but totalitarianism is ushered in if the law no longer protects citizens who do not want to participate in evils which society permits. It is of little surprise that Pope Francis warned European leaders recently that keeping democracy alive included the requirement to avoid the dictatorship of relativism.

“There is a law written on our hearts which must be followed even at the risk of conflict with the laws of a country or the demands of an employer”

Without a recognition of the primacy of conscience our democracy is at threat. Our human rights laws are built on this fact. At the end of the Second World War the Nuremberg trials for those guilty of war crimes highlighted the point that it was not acceptable to justify one's actions by claiming you were following orders or laws. This recognises that governments are not the absolute authority in determining what is right and wrong.

This sense of personal responsibility is found throughout human societies regardless of their different faiths, cultures and degrees of development. There is a law written on people's hearts which must be followed even at the risk of bringing oneself into conflict with the laws of a country or the demands of an employer.

This was the situation the midwives found themselves in and the case is a litmus test for all of us to know how free our democratic society genuinely is. What they had sought in upholding their right to conscientious objection was, in fact, a very low threshold for a free society.

That our laws permit the killing of unborn children is already a sign of the barbarity which arises from radical

individualism, albeit it dressed as virtue in the claim to be ensuring the “right to reproductive health”. Every age in fact finds that people try to rationalise wrongdoing and dress it up as virtue. But that in itself is a back-handed recognition that there is good and evil. Otherwise those in power would simply act without having to worry about convincing society that what they do is right and just.

The continuing attack on the root values of the West is also cloaked as progress. It proclaims freedom and tolerance as a secularist foundation for a good society. But it inevitably creates the situation where the freedoms of individuals are pitted against the freedoms of everyone else. Of course, we can expect that the socially powerful will win. Those who prompted the action of NHS Glasgow and Clyde, in this instance, could bring to bear the might of the organisation they control to crush two midwives who wouldn't toe the line.

The midwives' case is a test of how far we may have come in this struggle of values. If we live in a society where all can choose for themselves what is right and wrong, as the libertarians would have us believe, then why must Connie and Mary have someone else's values imposed on them? In reality their voice, small as it is, testifies to the truth that an injustice is being done, and the supporters of abortion are not eager to permit this voice to be heard.

A society must have laws that harmonise with the notion of the common good as the reference point for deciding on the limits of freedom. In that way we can restrain people from doing what they want when it is harmful to the good of others, but we would not stamp on their personal freedom by compelling them to do something they believed to be grievously wrong. A return to an appreciation of conscience in society will be key to rebuilding one which is civilised and more free.

December's decision by the Supreme Court, against the midwives, served as a crucial indicator of where we stand in relation to upholding the common good. Decisions such as this could give a green light to absolute state power, which is the stuff of tyranny. ☸

Man, Woman and Family: Convergence Among Faiths

Everyone who is anyone was there: Evangelicals and Catholics; Jews and Muslims; Sunni and Shia; the “Dharmic” religions of Asia; and scholars from different disciplines. I am referring, of course, to the colloquium *Humanum*, which was held recently in Rome and was organised by a number of dioceses in the Vatican, led by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Coming after the Extraordinary Synod on Marriage and the Family, and preceding this year’s follow-up, it had a special appeal for many.

Pope Francis inaugurated the colloquium by declaring that the complementarity of man and woman was part of the order of creation and was the foundation for the co-existence of diversity. This was why the Church continued to insist that marriage was between a man and a woman, so that there could be a union of those who were similar and yet also different. This is also the basis for a proper anthropology of family, in which children need both a mother and a father.

This theme was repeated throughout the event. On the excellent DVDs, Peter Kreeft kept pointing out that the complementarity of male and female was a feature of the universe and of our language about our fellow-creatures in it. Tom Wright, also on film, pointed out that the *imago dei* of Genesis 1:26, 27 had, as background, the idea of a god’s image being placed in a temple. According to Genesis 2, Adam bears this image even in solitude but it is most fully expressed in his relationship with the woman, later called Eve. The creation together of man and woman, in God’s image, and their placement in the temple of the world, is Genesis’s response to the surrounding religions of the time.

As might be expected, complementarity was strongly affirmed by the Muslim and Jewish speakers. The former Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, appealed to the insights of science and history. According to him, it is the meeting of opposites that generates diversity. Because of the time it takes for a human child to grow up, pair-bonding seems to have been the norm in pre-agricultural societies. It was the emergence of “added value” in agricultural societies, along with the monopolisation of land and the means of production by the powerful, that made non-monogamous relationships possible. Monogamy reflects monotheism (Christians might say the relational in the Godhead) and also the covenant between God and Israel.

Sr Prudence Allen, a Thomistic philosopher, set out four principles of complementarity: equal dignity, significant difference, synergetic relationships and intergenerational relevance. Scientific discoveries need to be harmonised with revealed truth. She pointed out, in this connection, how the facts of conception, as we now know them, confirm complementarity.

Cardinal Müller, the prefect of the CDF, was not the only one to remind us that the ego struggles against the demand of mutual dependence, which complementarity implies. The Buddhist, the Venerable Nissho Takeuchi, spoke, in this context, of the “hypocrisy of the ego” in recoiling from unconditional love. Professor Wael Farooq, a Muslim, emphasised the importance

of “wise love” rather than the “blind love” of mere passion so prevalent these days. In this, he was supported by a young Argentinian, Ignacio Ibarzabal of *Grupo Solido*. This group is in the vanguard of a “rebellion of sound love” against the ephemeral, experimental and dysfunctional. As Pastor Johann Arnold of the Bruderhof told us, this “sound love” leads to the communion of marriage and of families.

For many faiths, the home is central to our understanding of community, and the wider community derives its strength from the family. Jacqueline Cooke-Rivers showed us how the weakening of marriage and family, among the African-Americans with whom she works, has led to a threadbare social fabric. She told us that those arguing for transient relationships and different forms of family may be doing this as a way of justifying their own preferred sexual culture. As Russell Moore, a Baptist, put it, the so-called sexual revolution is just another form of patriarchy with men still calling the shots. Cooke-Rivers told us that unwed, cohabiting women still aspire to get married. This is why, according to Janne Haaland Matlary, a former Norwegian Secretary of State, contemporary “rights” culture has to be brought into harmony with Natural Law. As Nuremberg had shown, there is a higher law than the positive law of nations and every child has the right to be brought up by his or her parents.

We should affirm the authority of God’s Word, said Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose Driven Life*, and that gender is God-given. Sex was created for the bonding of a pair and for the sake of the family. Such a bonding is life-long. We should not only defend but celebrate these things. People should be given confidence that, even in a broken world, biblical marriage is possible. This can be done through testimony by married people, on appropriate occasions, such as the renewal of marriage vows. We should publicly recognise and reward faithfulness and the nurture of children. Small church groups should be so structured that they support married as well as single people. We should co-operate in a media strategy, especially regarding the new media.

The importance of preparation, for both religious and civil marriage was emphasised. Both Church and State have a responsibility to ensure adequate preparation for those planning to get married. There should be support also for parenting, with mothers and fathers equipped for their complementary roles in bringing up children. Where divorce is easy, thought should be given to how couples are to appreciate the seriousness and solemnity of the step they are taking. The pre-nuptial covenants emerging in parts of the US were given as examples. There was also a call for the state to recognise and support marriage through the tax system, though it was recognised that this could take different forms in different countries.

The Colloquium has laid down an enormous challenge to those who question or deny the importance of the normative family for personal and social flourishing. Will the challenge be taken up, or will we continue to be dished out the tired old nostrums of the permissive society with little to back them up? ☸

“Do not be Afraid of Christ”: Our Lady and Freedom in the Teaching of Benedict XVI *by Donncha Ó hAodha*

1. Highest Honour of our Race

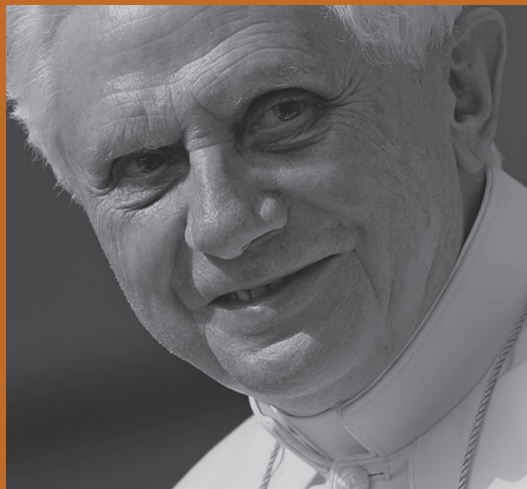
The abundant preaching of Benedict XVI on Our Lady testifies not only to the centrality of the Mother of God in salvation, but also to the Pope Emeritus’s personal devotion to Mary, whom he has evidently contemplated deeply in the light of Scripture. One aspect of his Marian teaching of perennial relevance, but especially in the context of the New Evangelisation, is the nature and scope of human freedom. “Since the beginning and throughout all time but especially in the modern age freedom has been the great dream of humanity.”¹

Mary’s greatness lies above all in her free and unreserved openness to God. She not only hears the word but “keeps” it (cf Lk 11:28). Our Lady conceived Christ in her heart before she enclosed him in her womb. Her greatness resides first in her spiritual maternity, in freely welcoming God’s will, and then also in her physical maternity. She freely renews this commitment time and again. She “ponders” the Word (cf Lk 2:19, 51), while not always understanding it (cf Lk 2:50), and freely embraces it, making it life of her life.

In her choice of the supreme good, namely God himself, by a will unhindered by selfishness, Mary achieves the greatest freedom ever attained by a human creature. She is therefore a model of authentic human freedom. Mary overturns the widespread notion of freedom as “*doing whatever I like, regardless of ... anything*”. By showing the fruitfulness of self-surrender to the divine call, she continually reminds her children of the unlimited horizons of love they may freely embrace, thereby making superlative use of their freedom.

2. Mirror of Justice

The Book of Revelation presents us with the dazzling image of the woman “clothed with the sun” (Rev 12:1).² This lady of stellar radiance has already appeared fleetingly in Psalm 45:13, which refers to the princess “decked in her chamber with gold-woven robes”, while the liturgy places on Mary’s lips the oracle of Isaiah 61:10: “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness.”³



Recent Popes, including the current Holy Father Pope Francis, have shown a deep devotion to Our Lady. Donncha Ó hAodha now attempts to present an aspect of the Marian teaching of Benedict XVI, specifically in relation to the ever-relevant topic of human freedom.

Mary’s incomparable beauty is the fruit of her freedom. In his homily on the feast of the Assumption in 2007, Benedict XVI meditated on the “multidimensional image” of Rev 12:1-6:

“Without any doubt,” the Pope Emeritus taught, “a first meaning is that it is Our Lady, Mary, clothed with the sun, that is, with God, totally; Mary who lives totally in God, surrounded and penetrated by God’s light. Surrounded by the 12 stars, that is, by the 12 tribes of Israel, by the whole People of God, by the whole Communion of Saints; and at her feet, the moon, the image of death and mortality.

“Mary has left death behind her; she is totally clothed in life, she is taken up body and soul into God’s glory and thus, placed in glory after overcoming death, she says to us: Take heart, it is love that wins in the end!

“The message of my life was: I am the handmaid of God; my life has been a gift of myself to God and my neighbour. And this life of service now arrives in real life. May you too have trust and have the courage to live like this, countering all the threats of the dragon.”

Our Lady is clothed with the Sun of Justice, Christ the Lord (cf Mal 4:2). Her beauty consists in her immersion in Christ. Thus she defeats death (the moon) and enjoys an unheard-of intimacy with the entire Communion of the Saints (the crown of 12 stars).

Christ does not rob us of our freedom. On the contrary, only by a free and complete self-abandonment to the only One who truly knows what is in man (cf Jn 2:25) does our freedom achieve its fullest potential. Indeed, “it is only by conforming our own will to the divine one that human beings attain their true height, that they become ‘divine’”.⁴

3. Virgin most Prudent

By freely embracing God in Christ, with her *fiat* (“Let it be to me”; Lk 1:38) Our Lady gives us an unsurpassed lesson in freedom. Freedom is the capacity to choose the good, and the greater the good chosen the greater the freedom achieved. Our Lady’s decisions remind us that human freedom is made for unlimited greatness, for the vast expanses of love, by the choice of the Supreme Good, God himself.

“Let us show others by our lives that we are free and how beautiful it is to be truly free with the true freedom of God’s children” (Benedict XVI)

As the then-Holy Father put it at the Vigil of Pentecost in 2006: “We want the true, great freedom, the freedom of heirs, the freedom of children of God. In this world, so full of fictitious forms of freedom that destroy the environment and the human being, let us learn true freedom by the power of the Holy Spirit; to build the school of freedom; to show others by our lives that we are free and how beautiful it is to be truly free with the true freedom of God’s children.”⁵

4. Mother most Admirable

Our Lady’s person is bathed in Christ, the splendour of the Father (cf Heb 1:3), because she has freely espoused the Holy Spirit. Similarly, to the extent to which the human person “clothes” him or herself in Christ (cf Gal 3:27), he or she attains true human and spiritual perfection. Only in giving ourselves do we truly receive.

As Benedict XVI explained in New York in 2008: “The Gospel teaches us that true freedom ... is found only in the self-surrender which is part of the mystery of love ... Real freedom, then, is God’s gracious gift, the fruit of conversion to his truth, the truth which makes us free (cf Jn 8:32). And this freedom in truth brings in its wake a new and liberating way of seeing reality. When we put on “the mind of Christ” (cf Phil 2:5), new horizons open before us!”⁶

There is a paradox here. The freedom of the Gospel, the capacity to entrust oneself to eternal love, far from “cramping our style” or “stunting our humanity” is the only access-route to true fulfilment, by means of a genuine participation in the divine life.

In much contemporary discourse, freedom is seen as emancipation from God. “But”, Benedict XVI pointed out, “when God disappears, men and women do not become greater; indeed, they lose the divine dignity, their faces lose God’s splendour. In the end, they turn out to be merely products of a blind evolution and, as such, can be used and abused ... Only if God is great is humankind also great. With Mary, we must begin to understand that this is so.”⁷

By her free self-entrustment to God, Mary “magnifies” the Lord (cf Lk 1:46) and in so doing supremely develops her own personality. Our Lady shows that it is not an “either/or” dilemma, a choice between God and man, between His happiness and ours. In this sense, Mary’s person proclaims Christianity as the true humanism.

Mary wanted God to be great in the world, great in her life and present among us all. She was not afraid that God might be a ‘rival’ in our life, that with his greatness he might encroach on our freedom, our vital space. She knew that if God is great, we too are great. Our life is not oppressed but raised and expanded: it is precisely then that it becomes great in the splendour of God.”⁸

5. Mother of Sorrows

The “glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom 8:21) is the fruit of redemption. By his sacrifice, Christ turns Adam’s “No” into a resounding and definitive “Yes” (cf 2 Cor 1:19-20). In a meditation on Christ’s agony in the garden, Benedict XVI reflected:

Man of himself is tempted to oppose God’s will, to seek to do his own will, to feel free only if he is autonomous; he sets his own autonomy against the heteronomy of obeying God’s will. This is the whole drama of humanity. But in truth, this autonomy is mistaken and entry into God’s will is not opposition to the self, it is not a form of slavery that violates my will, but rather means entering into truth and love, into goodness.

“Mary, as the Fathers of the Church explain, is the New Eve, the true mother of the living, of those who have freely chosen life”

And Jesus draws our will – which opposes God’s will, which seeks autonomy – upwards, towards God’s will. This is the drama of our redemption, that Jesus should uplift our will, our total aversion to God’s will and our aversion to death and sin and unite it with the Father’s will: ‘Not my will but yours.’ In this transformation of ‘no’ into ‘yes’, in this insertion of the creatural will into the will of the Father, he transforms humanity and redeems us. And he invites us to be part of his movement: to emerge from our ‘no’ and to enter into the ‘yes’ of the Son. My will exists, but the will of the Father is crucial because it is truth and love.”⁹

Freedom matters a great deal. Its abuse heralded the trauma of death. Its wise use heals man and restores his dignity as a beloved child of God. “As by one man’s disobedience, many were made sinners, so, by one man’s obedience many will be made righteous” (Rom 5:19). Christ is the New Adam, reversing Adam’s failure to fully accept the Creator’s love. Mary, as the Fathers of the Church explain, is therefore the New Eve, the true mother of the living, of those who have freely chosen life.

As Co-redemptrix, Mary speaks of the saving power of freedom. She consciously makes her Son’s oblation her own. As a merciful Mother, Mary is the anticipated figure and everlasting portrait of the Son. Thus, we see that the image of the Sorrowful Virgin, of the Mother who shares her suffering and her love, is also a true image of the Immaculate Conception. Her heart was enlarged by being and feeling together with God. In her, God’s goodness came very close to us.”¹⁰

6. Our Refuge and our Strength

The entire history of salvation can be seen as the dialogue between divine grace and human freedom. This dialogue

“Do not be Afraid of Christ”: Our Lady and Freedom in the Teaching of Benedict XVI continued

continues today in the life of each individual. “Man is the one creature free to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to eternity, that is, to God.”¹¹

Mary shows us the solution to the dilemma we all tend to experience: “*I really want to ... but I just don’t feel like it right now.*” Her life proclaims the value of our smaller or greater conversions to truth. She beckons encouragingly to those who hesitate in giving themselves fully to their vocation in life. “She turns to us saying: ‘Have the courage to dare with God! Try it! Do not be afraid of him! ... Commit yourself to God, and then you will see that it is precisely by doing so that your life will become broad and light, not boring but filled with infinite surprises, for God’s infinite goodness is never depleted’.”¹²

“In her person and life Our Lady challenges the imploded freedom of much of contemporary culture”

The Mother of God teaches us that “the person who abandons himself totally in God’s hands does not become God’s puppet, a boring ‘yes man’; he does not lose his freedom. Only the person who entrusts himself totally to God finds true freedom, the great, creative immensity of the freedom of good.”¹³

As the then-Holy Father declared in the evocative setting of Revolution Square in Havana, Cuba, “the truth which stands above humanity is an unavoidable condition for attaining freedom, since in it we discover the foundation of an ethics on which all can converge and which contains clear and precise indications concerning life and death, duties and rights, marriage, family and society – in short, regarding the inviolable dignity of the human person”.¹⁴

In her person and life Our Lady challenges the imploded freedom of much of contemporary culture. She calms our insecurity by pointing to the human capacity to embrace the eternal. “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour” (Lk 1:46-47). The precariousness of human commitment is in fact capable of definitive fidelity if it builds on the faithfulness of God. “He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts; he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree” (Lk 1:51-52).

7. Queen of Peace

After evoking the momentous inauguration homily of St John Paul II, Benedict XVI inaugurated his own pontificate with words which are like a charter of true freedom and a clarion-call of the New Evangelisation:

*Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ – and you will find true life.*¹⁵

Mary embodies this fundamental truth. Because she has chosen the supreme Good with a will untrammelled by sin, she is the freest of all human beings. For this reason she is the most beautiful human creature to have ever graced this earth and is indeed the Highest Honour of our Race (cf Jud 15:9). ☩

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Notes

¹Benedict XVI, Discourse [Roman Major Seminary], 20 February 2009.

²For a rich survey of the patristic exegesis on the Woman of Revelation, cf H Rahner SJ, *Our Lady and the Church* (Maryland: Zacchaeus Press, 2004), Chapter 10 (pp 110-122).

³Cf Roman Missal, Mass of the Immaculate Conception, Entrance Antiphon.

⁴Benedict XVI, Audience, 1 February 2012.

⁵Benedict XVI, Homily, 3 June 2006.

⁶Benedict XVI, Homily [New York], 20 April 2008.

⁷Benedict XVI, Homily, 15 August 2005.

⁸Benedict XVI, Homily, 15 August 2005.

⁹Benedict XVI, Audience, 20 April 2011. Cf also Benedict XVI’s meditation on the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane in his Audience, 1 February 2012.

¹⁰Benedict XVI, Homily, 8 December 2005.

¹¹Benedict XVI, Homily, 1 December 2007.

¹²Benedict XVI, Homily, 8 December 2005.

¹³Benedict XVI, Homily, 8 December 2005.

¹⁴Benedict XVI, Homily [Havana, Cuba], 28 March 2012.

¹⁵Benedict XVI, Homily [Inauguration of the Pontificate], 24 April 2005.

“At a time when some scientists are reviving the old idea that science and faith are incompatible – and some Christians seem to be playing into their hands – this programme is a sign of hope and new possibilities. We need to bring these vital areas of life into a creative and constructive dialogue, and here we have resources to do just that. I commend this whole programme with enthusiasm.”

Bishop Tom Wright, DD, Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity, University of St Andrews



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Scientists in Congregations Scotland

What Does the General Instruction Actually Say about Chant? *By Joseph Estorninho*

“An authentic updating of sacred music can take place only in the lineage of the great tradition of the past, of Gregorian chant and sacred polyphony.”¹ The Church has a treasure trove of music, a deep well from which we can draw, yet since the Second Vatican Council that music has for the most part been ignored in most parishes. Perhaps it was a noble attempt to fulfil the council’s request for full and active participation that found us singing hymns at the Mass. After all, hymns were a ready resource for music directors and congregations needed very little training to participate. However noble the intention, this approach took us on an perilous detour leading ever further from our traditions.

The time has come to remove the distraction of a group gathered around a microphone and to rediscover our inheritance, to revive the ancient musical traditions of the Mass, which are inextricably linked to the liturgy. Praiseworthy efforts are being made to improve the music at Mass, and several free publications of the Propers of the Mass are available to download.²

The introduction of the third translation of the Roman Missal came with a revised General Instruction (GIRM), which has restored chant to its rightful place in the liturgy. However, this seems to have met with some resistance. Since its introduction I have read several articles (both online and in print) about the music of the Mass. Many have lauded the long-awaited clarification on music in the liturgy, but many others have argued for a continuation of hymn singing at Mass, favouring the so-called “hymn sandwich”.

Without fail they quote GIRM 47, which concerns the Entrance: “When the people are gathered, and as the Priest enters with the Deacon and ministers, the Entrance Chant begins. Its purpose is to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical time or festivity, and accompany the procession of the Priest and ministers.”

They then, helpfully, go on to interpret the word chant for us. Interpretations usually go something like this: “Chant is from the Latin *cantus*, which can also be translated as song.” This may well be the case; however, one then should consider why, if that is what they meant, the translators did not use the word song, or some other form of words showing that a song was permissible, such as *chant or song*, *chant and/or hymn* or perhaps *liturgical song*. The fact remains that the rubrics only mention chant.

In the search for a definitive answer there are several places one might look. First, one might look at the subsequent text of the General Instruction. GIRM 48, which is never quoted, sheds light on why the word chant is used and what it actually means. It reads: “This chant is sung alternately by the choir and the people or similarly by a cantor and the people, or entirely by the people, or by the choir alone. In the

dioceses of England Wales the Entrance Chant may be chosen from among the following: the antiphon with its Psalm from the *Graduale Romanum* or the *Graduale Simplex*, or another chant that is suited to the sacred action, the day, or the time of year, and whose text has been approved by the Conference of Bishops of England and Wales.” The word chant is used here because it means a chant taken from one of the books of chant. It is not to be mistaken with any other form of song, not even a hymn.

Secondly, GIRM 88 (concerning singing at Communion) states: “When the distribution of Communion is over, if appropriate, the Priest and faithful pray quietly for some time. If desired, a Psalm or other canticle of praise or a hymn may also be sung by the whole congregation.” Note the use of other words to describe the different types of song permissible – Psalm, canticle or hymn. If the contention is that in the Entrance and at the Offertory³ these songs were also permitted, the question arises: Why were they not mentioned by name in reference to the Entrance and at the Offertory, as they are in GIRM 88 with respect to Communion?

“The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as being especially suited to the Roman liturgy; therefore it should be given pride of place in liturgical services”

Thirdly, one could compare this paragraph with its former incarnation, GIRM 48 of 2003, in which one will immediately note a fourth option, “a suitable liturgical song similarly approved by the Conference of Bishops or the diocesan Bishop”. This option is missing from the current General Instruction. The question immediately arises: Why was it removed?

If this evidence is not enough one might consider another clue as to why the word chant is used. It is found in the first document to be issued by the Second Vatican Council and is reiterated in GIRM 41: “The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as being especially suited to the Roman liturgy; therefore, all things being equal, it should be given pride of place in liturgical services.”

We can draw only one conclusion from the above evidence and it is crystal clear: the chant that the Church wishes us to use in the sacred celebration is Gregorian chant. This chant should be given pride of place as it is a part of the rich inheritance of our traditions. We should, therefore, accept that chant is the right and proper music for the celebration of the sacred liturgy.

There may be some who, even after all this evidence, would still argue the case for hymn singing. The arguments might run along the lines that liturgical law is “more about principles

What Does the General Instruction Actually Say About Chant?

continued

than hard and fast rules". They might even add that, with that in mind, it is better for the congregation to sing something than nothing at all. Let us then investigate the second part of GIRM 48. This qualifies the first half of that particular section, which calls for singing to come from one of the books of chant: "If there is no singing at the Entrance, the antiphon given in the Missal is recited either by the faithful, or by some of them, or by a reader; otherwise, it is recited by the Priest himself, who may even adapt it as an introductory explanation."

Having already established that the chants are to come from a book of chant it goes on to say that if this chant is not sung the text should be recited. There is no alternative to the Entrance antiphon – it is either sung as prescribed or it is recited. A replacement hymn is not given as an option.

"One needn't be a trained musician to sing chant. It can be sung unaccompanied, so there is no need to hire an organist. And it can be sung with minimal initial training"

Why, then, is there such resistance to chant, the only form of music mentioned by name in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. By continuing to disregard or place arbitrary interpretations on the rubrics or, worse still, to speculate on them to suit our own ends, we ignore what is asked of us in the celebration of the Eucharist. In particular, we risk lowering the dignity of the celebration and breaking that "uninterrupted tradition" which the document goes to great lengths to highlight.

We should therefore ask ourselves three questions:

- Are we being asked to do something heretical?
- Are we being asked to do something theologically unsound?
- Are we being asked to do something illegal?

If the answer to these is negative then we may ask ourselves a fourth question: "Why resist?" Fear of the unknown quite often prevents us from trying something new. In this case we should recall the words spoken to Mary by the angel, "Be not afraid,"⁴ and again to Joseph, "Do not be afraid,"⁵ and again by Our Lord, who constantly exhorted Peter and the apostles, especially after the resurrection, to have no fear.

Training may be one common obstacle, but this is not insurmountable and the efforts will be richly rewarded. There may be parishes where not even one person can play an instrument or read music, but this is certainly not a problem when it comes to chant. Chant "democratises" (for want of a better word) the music of the liturgy. One needn't be a trained musician to sing chant. It can be sung unaccompanied, so

there is no need to hire an organist. And it can be sung with minimal initial training, which is not to say that we should not strive to better our efforts through continued instruction.

I am sure that, despite all this, there will be some who will continue to argue for the status quo and who, despite what Mother Church is asking of us through her bishops, will disregard the General Instruction. Undoubtedly, they will be able to come up with very convincing counter-arguments to justify their position. After some reflection on whether this opposition is really about singing or about some other deep-seated issue, we may still all arrive at the same place: that we belong to the Church and that this same Church, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, leads us towards God through (among other things) the full and undiluted celebration of the liturgy.

One final note from GIRM 397: "The Roman Rite constitutes a notable and precious part of the liturgical treasure and patrimony of the Catholic Church; its riches are conducive to the good of the universal Church, so that their loss would gravely harm her." ☩

Joseph Estorninho is the director of music at St James's Catholic Primary School in Twickenham and the director of the Gregorian chant choir at the parish of St Margaret of Scotland in East Twickenham. He studied composition at the University of Melbourne. Among his compositions is the work "Requiem for the Innocents", written to commemorate the loss of unborn babies through abortion or miscarriage. He has written several musicals and cantatas for schools.

Appendix: online resources for Gregorian chant

The Lalemant Propers published by C C Watershed:
www.ccwatershed.org/lalemant

The Graduale Parvum jointly published by the Church Music Association of America and The Blessed John Henry Newman Institute of Liturgical Music:
media.musicasacra.com/books/parvum.pdf

The Simple Choral Gradual, also published by the Church Music Association of America:
media.musicasacra.com/books/simplechoralgradual.pdf

Notes

¹Pope Benedict XVI June 24, 2006.

²See appendix.

³The chant for the Offertory is treated in the same way as that of the Entrance GIRM 74.

⁴Luke 1:30.

⁵Matthew 1:20.



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A Match Made in Heaven: The Doctrine of the Eucharist and Aristotelian Metaphysics *By Dr William Newton*

At first sight, the doctrine of the Eucharist and Aristotelian metaphysics seem worlds apart. The doctrine of the Eucharist is among the most sublime of the mysteries of faith whereas metaphysics holds the foundational place in the realm of pure reason. Yet, in St Thomas Aquinas's exploration of the doctrine of the Eucharist, the two worlds come together with such exquisite harmony that it appears as if they were made for each other.

In this essay, I wish to briefly survey this harmonious relationship as perhaps the supreme example of reason at the service of revelation, or of philosophy as the handmaid to theology. Such a survey will also demonstrate the need for at least a basic grounding in philosophy, if we are to better understand and communicate the mysteries of our faith.

What You See is Not What You Get

At the heart of the doctrine of the Eucharist is the assertion that while the appearance before us is one of bread (or wine), the substance present after the conversion is Christ's Body (or His Blood). As Aquinas puts it in his hymn "Lauda Sion":

*Sub diversis speciëbus,
Signis tantum, et non rebus,
Latent res eximiae.*

*[Here beneath these signs are hidden,
Priceless things, to sense forbidden,
Signs, not things, are all we see.]*

On the one hand, we assent to the presence of the substance of Christ's Body because we accept the truth of Christ's own words that "this is My Body" (Lk 22:19). On the other hand, we assent to the continued presence of the accidents of bread from the fact that we trust our senses.

That something can be different in appearance from what it is essentially can easily be catered for within Aquinas's Aristotelian philosophical system because one of the most basic distinctions is between substance and accident. Substance points to what a thing is, whereas accident points to some lesser characteristic of the thing. That these two realities are distinct can be seen from the fact that Peter can change shape (pudge out), colour (get a sun tan), gain new relationships (become a father), acquire a new habit (learn Latin), and so on without changing what he is: he remains a human being throughout. If substance is distinct from accident (and so accidents can change without the substance changing) then, while it is amazing that what appears to be bread is actually the Body of Christ, this is not a contradiction, because in this case, the substance has changed without the accidents changing.

A Unique Conversion

*Dogma datur christianis,
Quod in carnem transit panis,
Et vinum in sanguinem.*

*[Hear, what holy Church maintaineth,
That the bread its substance changeth,
Into Flesh, the wine to Blood.]*

The conversion of the bread into the Body of Christ (and the wine into the Blood of Christ) must be a conversion of a unique kind. It cannot be categorised as a normal type of substantial change, what is called a transformation. When something is transformed – when, for example, grass is eaten and digested by a sheep – one substance is converted into another substance, since the grass is taken up (at least in part) into the body of the sheep. In such cases, the accidents of grass (such as its colour and texture) pass away with the change in substance. This is, quite evidently, not the case in the conversion of the bread into the Body of Christ: the accidents of bread remain; we clearly see them before us.

Moreover, in a transformation the matter of the thing being converted passes over into the terminus of the conversion. When the sheep eats the grass, the matter of the grass passes over into the sheep. This cannot be true in the case of the Eucharist because, if it were, then each confection of the Eucharist would add to the matter of Christ's body! Yet, Christ has his own discreet quantity of bodily matter. So, on account of the accidents remaining and on account that this conversion does not add to the matter of Christ's body, this conversion simply cannot be a transformation.

The Church has given this conversion the name transubstantiation.¹ To see why this word is apt, we need to delve a little more deeply into the difference between transubstantiation and transformation. The idea of transformation rests upon what is called the hylomorphic theory, another stalwart principle of Aristotelian philosophy. This is the idea that all material things are the composite of a material and formal principle. The formal principle (the form) configures the matter to be a certain type of matter: a human body if the form is human, an oak tree if the form is that of an oak tree, and so on.

In a transformation, when substance A (eg grass) becomes substance B (eg sheep flesh), the matter of substance A endures throughout the conversion and continues on as the matter of substance B, yet the form of substance A becomes the form of B. The matter remains but there is a change in form, hence the word transformation. In transubstantiation, however, *the whole substance* (the form-matter composite) of substance A (bread) is converted into substance B (the Body of Christ): hence the word *transubstantiation*. Precisely how this happens we cannot say, but it is certainly within the power

“‘This is my Body’ implies a connection between the bread and the Body, such that the substance of Christ’s Body comes *out of* the bread”

of God to do this. Every created agent is limited to bringing about a change in form only (a sheep can transform grass into its own body matter by digestion), but God – as the ultimate cause of all being – can surely bring about changes at the level of being: converting one entire substance into another.

To explain this unique conversion further, some theologians have proposed the theory of adduction. This says that the conversion is a two-step process: first, the annihilation of the substance of the bread; second, the coming to be of the Body of Christ where the bread once was. Aquinas opposes this on two grounds. First, if the Body of Christ does not come *out of* the bread, then the Body must *move* from where it was prior to the consecration to where the bread was occupying space: but we do not see that happening. Second, the sense of Christ’s own words, “*this is my Body*,” implies that what was bread is now His Body. If there were no real connection between the bread and the Body, Christ ought to have said “*that is my Body*.” The pronoun “*this*” implies a connection between the bread and the Body, such that the substance of Christ’s Body comes *out of* the bread.² Finally, there is a powerful argument of fittingness. If the bread is just replaced, it is not clear how what is offered in the Mass is really our offering. Only when what we offer – bread and wine – is connected with what the priest offers to the Father after the consecration, namely the Body and Blood of Christ, can we truly say that this is *our* offering to God.³

Self-Subsisting Accidents

As I have already intimated, the doctrine of the Real Presence relies upon us believing Christ when he says “*this is My Body*” and believing our senses when we see before us the appearance of bread. From these two points of reference, we must conclude that the accidents of bread (that clearly do remain after the consecration) are self-subsisting, which is to say that they do not exist, as accidents normally do, in a substance. They cannot exist in the substance of bread since the bread is no longer present and they cannot have their existence in the substance of Christ’s body because the substance of a human body is not the proper substance for the accidents of bread: human bodies simply do not have the texture, colour, and so on, of bread. By deduction, then, the accidents of bread must exist independently of any substance.

At first sight, this would seem to be a contradiction even from within Aristotle’s own philosophical system. The very definition of a substance is that which exists in itself and not in another thing, whereas accidents are defined precisely in contra-distinction to this: they exist in something else, namely in a substance.

The way out of this seeming contradiction is to mount another distinction within Aristotle’s philosophical system, this time the distinction between primary and secondary causality. For Aristotle and Aquinas, the universe is full of secondary causes. These are beings that have quasi-autonomous causal power. For example, apple trees have inherent power to produce

apples: apple trees are the secondary cause of apples. However, I was careful to say *quasi*-autonomous because, among other things, given that secondary causes (like apple trees) do not account for their own existence, they must receive both their existence and their causal power from a primary agent (aka God). Hence, if the primary cause wants to bypass or leap-frog the secondary cause and produce the effect directly ... he certainly may.

“Every created agent is limited to bringing about a change in form only, but God can bring about changes at the level of being”

The point here is that substances are the secondary cause of the existence of accidents. Substances really have the power to give existence to their accidents (eg the substance of bread really does cause the existence of the colour and texture of bread). However, this causal power is ultimately from the primary agent. Hence, if God wants to hold the accidents of bread in existence without the proximate causal activity of the substance of bread ... he certainly may.

The Totality of Presence

The doctrine of the real presence includes the assertion that Christ is fully present under both species (under the appearance of bread and under the appearance of wine) as well as fully present under each particle of each species. The latter means that when a consecrated host is fractured into two, Christ is fully present in each half.

Of the first totality, the poet Aquinas writes:

*Caro cibus, sanguis potus:
Manet tamen Christus totus,
Sub utrâque specie.*

*[Flesh from bread, and Blood from wine,
Yet is Christ in either sign,
All entire, confessed to be.]*

Of the second, he says:

*Fracto demum Sacraménto,
Ne vacilles, sed memento,
Tantum esse sub fragménto,
Quantum toto tégitur.*

*[Nor a single doubt retain,
When they break the Host in twain,
But that in each part remains,
What was in the whole before.]*

The explanation of how Christ is fully present under each species requires us to consider how Christ is made present in the first place. An important principle of sacramental theology

A Match Made in Heaven: The Doctrine of the Eucharist and Aristotelian Metaphysics continued

is that Sacraments cause by signifying. They are not just signs and causes of grace but, rather, signs *that* cause grace. Now, we should note that the priest confects the Eucharist by saying over the bread, “This is My Body,” and over the wine, “This is My Blood.” From the words alone, only the Body of Christ is made present out of the bread and only the Blood of Christ is made present out of the wine.

If this were all there was to it, Christ *would* not be wholly present under each species: under the bread there would be only his Body and not his Blood, or his Soul or His Divinity. So we need to add that something can be made present not only on account of *the force of the words* uttered by the priest but on account of what is called *natural concomitance*.⁴ This means that whatever is actually connected with the Body of Christ (or the Blood of Christ) is made present when the Body (or the Blood) is made present.

Now, Christ is made present in the Eucharist as He really is – it is not *another* Christ that is made present. Hence, since (after the Resurrection) the Body of Christ is united to his Blood and his Soul and all these, in turn, are hypostatically united to the Word of God, when the Body is made present so also are the Blood, Soul, and Divinity. Likewise, when – by the force of the words spoken by the priest – the Blood is made present under the continued appearance of wine, the Body, Soul and Divinity of Christ are made present by natural concomitance.

This, then, explains the total presence under each species: what about the total presence under each part of each species? Here we must go back to what we said about transubstantiation. We saw that this was a unique type of conversion because, while the substance changes, the accidents of bread remain. And, since the accidents of the bread remain, this means that the accidents of Christ’s own body are not expressed. They are present (because Christ’s body is present) but they are quite evidently not expressed. I say “quite evidently” because if the accidents of Christ’s body were expressed, we would observe startling changes in a consecrated host: for one thing it would grow to the size of a man (the man Jesus) and take on the shape of a man: since quantity and shape are accidents.

That quantity with its associated dimensions is an accident is clear from the fact that I can change my quantity and dimensions without becoming other than *what* I am – a human being. Quantity under given dimensions is also what extends a thing in space so as to make one part of that thing separate from the other parts. It is because I, the author, am extended in space that one part of me, let’s say my right arm, could be got hold of separately from the rest of my body and broken off from the whole. But since in the Eucharist, the accident of quantity proper to Christ’s body is not expressed, the parts of Christ’s body are not spread out into different parts of space; hence breaking off a piece of the host does not entail breaking off one part of Christ’s body from another part.⁵

Beyond Physical Presence

The fact that the quantity and dimensions of Christ’s body are not expressed also explains how Christ’s presence in the Eucharist surpasses the limitations of physical presence, this limitation being that a body can only be in one place at one time. Obviously, Christ’s Eucharistic presence is not limited in this way because He is truly and substantially present in every consecrated host in every tabernacle of the world.

It is on account of the quantity of a material substance (like a human body) under certain dimensions that it is located in a place. It is because a body fills up a certain amount of space that it is located in that place and, thereby, not in another place. But when a thing is not present with its quantity or dimensions, it is not limited in this way. Another way of saying this is that Christ’s Body is not located by its Eucharistic presence and so not fixed to a single location.⁶

Conclusion

It is important to be clear as to what we have been up to here. We have not mounted philosophical arguments that prove Christ is really present in the Eucharist despite appearances, or that He is wholly present in each part of each consecrated host; nor have we proved, from reason alone, that He is really present in a consecrated host in the Cathedral of Tokyo and Paris at the same time. These things we assent to by the virtue of faith. However, what we have done, with the help of Aristotle, is show how these amazing assertions are not contradictions – they are not impossibilities.

I like to picture Virgil returning to his own circle in hell (which is actually more like limbo and which he shares with Aristotle) after finishing his tour of the after-life with Dante. During his visit to the fourth sphere of paradise, he bumps into a certain resident there, Thomas from Aquino. Thomas gives to Virgil a copy of his poetic hymns *Lauda Sion* and *Pange Lingua*. He also gives something to Virgil to pass on to Aristotle: a copy of the eleven questions on the Eucharist from his *Summa Theologiae*. Just imagine the astonishment and great satisfaction that Aristotle might experience in seeing how dextrously his philosophy expounds and defends the truth of the doctrine of the Eucharist. Turning to the inside cover of the book he sees inscribed in free-hand the dedication: “To the Philosopher with thanks: I couldn’t have done it without you!” Anyhow, that’s how I like to think of it. ☪

Dr. William Newton is the associate professor of theology at Franciscan University of Steubenville and is based in Gaming, Austria.

Notes

¹Decree of the Council of Trent on the Eucharist, Canon 2, *Denzinger* 884.

²St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III 75.2.

³Cf. Matthias Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity* (London: B. Herder Book Co, 1946), 500-501.

⁴Decree of the Council of Trent on the Eucharist, *Denzinger* 876.

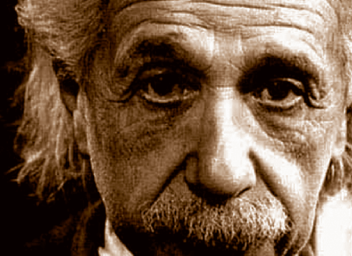
⁵St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III 76.3.

⁶St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III 76.5.



Cutting Edge

Science and Religion News



By Dr Gregory Farrelly

Space Physics and Intelligence

The *Physics World* “2014 Breakthrough of the Year” went to the European Space Agency’s Rosetta mission¹ for being the first to land a spacecraft (*Philae*) on a comet (67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko), on 12 November. A comet is essentially a big lump of icy space rock. Radiation from the Sun (the “solar wind”) can cause comets to have their famous tails.

This comet is a staggering 511 million kilometres (317 million miles) from Earth and travelling at nearly 55,000kph (34,000mph). It took 10 years for the Rosetta spacecraft to reach a position near the comet so that its robot module, *Philae*, could then separate and make the seven-hour journey to the comet’s surface.

The surface of the comet, unlike that of the Moon or Earth is highly irregular and rocky. Nothing can travel faster than the speed of light, so communication between Rosetta and its controllers on Earth took 28 minutes each way. Therefore, it was only after nearly an hour that the controllers realised that *Philae* had bounced hundreds of metres from the landing area. It then landed again a few hours later, bouncing a smaller distance the second time before finally landing about a kilometre from the original landing area (the comet is rotating as well as moving fast).

This meant that *Philae* landed on its side near shadow areas, so its solar panels did not receive the light required to charge its batteries. Nevertheless, it was able to carry out some experiments and drill into the hard surface. The surface is now known to have a layer of dust about 10 to 20 cm thick on top of an unexpectedly hard material thought to be water ice.

Preliminary data analysis indicates that there are carbon-based organic

molecules on the comet. Since the Earth is believed to have been regularly bombarded by comets, this information may provide clues to how life was able to emerge on Earth.

However, the Rosina mass spectrometer aboard Rosetta found that the ratio of deuterium to hydrogen in the comet is far greater than that found on Earth, adding to the growing body of evidence that the water on Earth was delivered not by comets, as previously thought, but by asteroids.

By August 2015 the comet (and Rosetta, which is tracking it) should have reached its perihelion, its closest position to the Sun. The icy materials in 67P will vaporise, emitting gas and dust in a tail that will trail for thousands of kilometres and be observed by Rosetta.

Cynics will argue that at €1.4bn (£1.1bn), the cost is exorbitant. I am not one of those. The incredible achievement of tracking, then landing on, a comet is itself like a work of art, a celebration of our humanity. It is our free, human intelligence that is part of our spiritual nature. There is no biological advantage to humans in carrying out this mission, so why do we do it?

Simply because we are curious and intelligent. We seek to understand the world around us, even in space, to make inductions and deductions, to theorise. The same applies to our Christian faith: *credo ut intelligam*, the maxim of St Anselm of Canterbury, means “I believe in order to understand” (note the order of the verbs).

The *Faith* movement has this principle at the heart of its approach to the formation of young Catholics, seeking to foster an inquisitive approach to the faith, just as in the natural sciences, and to develop such intellectual curiosity within a theological framework that is faithful to Christ’s Magisterium and to our understanding of the created universe.

Electric Bacteria

Research biologists have found that there are many more electrical bacteria than originally thought. Experiments growing bacteria on battery electrodes confirm that they are eating and excreting electricity, so to speak. Kenneth Nealson, at the University of Southern California, states that “...life, when you boil it right down, is a flow of electrons”.

The sugars we consume have excess electrons. Our cells break down the sugars, and the electrons flow through them in a complex set of chemical reactions until they are passed on to electron-hungry oxygen. The cells make ATP, a molecule like a biochemical battery.

The discovery of electric bacteria shows that some very basic forms of life can process energy in a very simple form, electrical energy, harvested from the surface of minerals. These bacteria may help to answer fundamental questions about biological life, such as what is the bare minimum of energy needed to maintain life.

Nasa is interested in these organisms because they survive on very little energy, suggesting the exciting prospect of modes of life in other parts of the solar system. Electric bacteria could have practical uses here on Earth, however, such as creating self-powered biomachines that do useful things like cleaning up sewage or contaminated groundwater while drawing their own power from their surroundings. ☯

Dr Gregory Farrelly is a physics teacher at Cambridge Tutors College, Croydon.

Notes

¹http://www.esa.int/Our_Activities/Space_Science/Rosetta;
<http://physicsworld.com/cws/article/news/2014/dec/12/comet-landing-named-physics-world-2014-breakthrough-of-the-year>

²<http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn25894-meet-the-electric-life-forms-that-live-on-pure-energy.htm>



Book Reviews

Exploring Science and Religion

Creator God Evolving World by Cynthia Crysdale and Neil Ormerod, Fortress Press, 168pp, £11.99, available via Amazon

Creator God Evolving World differs from your average “science vs religion” book in much the same way as a buffalo differs from a bison (as the joke goes, you can’t wash your hands in a buffalo). It’s a very different kind of animal. Many books have been written in defence of religious belief in the face of scientific challenges, but this is not one of them. It doesn’t set out to prove that God exists or to reconcile Scripture with Darwin. In contrast, this is a work of theology in which a unity of purpose between scientific understanding and religious truth is assumed. This is not to say that difficulties are ignored, far from it, but they are viewed more as opportunities to deepen and explore our theological understanding than as problems to be solved. The result is far more interesting, insightful and unified than the tired old “I will show you how this thing called science is not a problem for this thing called religion”.

For example, the book examines the problems encountered when one tries to reconcile statistical sciences, emergent probability and random chance with a God who is all-knowing. If God knows the outcome, is it random? If the universe changes, does God change? These questions lead on to interesting discussions about whether the universe has a built in “directionality” or is guided step by step by a God who is forever interfering to put things back on course; and about the meaning of time and the role



of special relativity. In the absence of a need to “prove it” to sceptics, the authors are free to touch on many areas of interest that are normally excluded in books that seek to answer rather than explore. Another example is the paragraph on the role of free will in God’s plan. Human freedom is surely the antithesis of an all-powerful God, and yet God created us with free will.

There are parallels here with the role of evolution, which also appears to take creative power out of God’s hands and yet is a part of God’s creation. Just as evolution is oriented towards the creation of humanity, even when it created poisonous spiders that kill us, is free will oriented towards good even when it includes bad choices? These are not questions with fixed answers, and while I don’t agree with (or necessarily understand) all of the authors’ conclusions, it is a welcome chance to step outside the paths that have been well trodden by a multitude of “science vs religion” books.

Something I did find irritating, particularly in the earlier chapters, is the effort to make the text more accessible. The authors are clearly aware that the subject matter is complex and have tried to make this a book for “the ordinary person in the pew”, with simplified explanations and summaries at the end of each chapter. Unfortunately, I think the effort fails to make things easy enough for anybody

not already familiar with the concepts and in some cases actually adds to the confusion. The result is a book that feels dragged out, that reads in slow motion. One gets the sense that the authors wanted to write an advanced book on cutting-edge theology but were leaned on by a publisher in need of a wider audience. In conclusion, it’s an interesting book, but it could have been better done.

James Preece

Solidarity with the Unresponsive

John Paul II and the Apparently ‘Non-Acting’ Person by Pia Matthews, Gracewing, paperback, 286pp, £12.99p

This is a most useful and interesting book. It tackles the important question of how we should care for people who are gravely handicapped or ill, including those who are in a deep coma and apparently unresponsive to any ordinary form of stimulus. They are unable to feed themselves or give themselves water. Should they, then, be left to die of thirst and starvation?

Archbishop Karol Wojtyła, some years ago, published a philosophical work which was published in English with the rather awkward title *The Acting Person*. The book was not well known, and even after he became Pope it remained a somewhat obscure work. When mentioning the title of this present work to potential readers I have found that a typical reaction has been “How dare they say that John Paul was a non-acting person! He was a wonderful teacher and missionary – think of World Youth Day and all those great missionary journeys...”

Once this hurdle is over, the reader will find this an excellent book which explores, with great sensitivity and understanding, the question of what it means to be human, why each human person has great value and importance, and why the frail and gravely ill matter just as much as the rest of us.

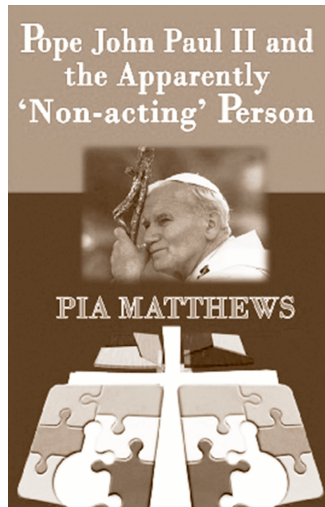
“John Paul called us to see a sick and suffering person as ‘an active and responsible participant in the work of evangelisation and salvation’. This is crucial ”

Saint John Paul II taught the world about frailty and suffering, especially by his witness in the last years of his life, and through the teaching given in his encyclicals and preaching. The idea of suffering as a part of human reality, and of compassion – of “suffering *with*” – is explored in depth. The mystery of suffering, linked to the mystery of Christ’s passion, engages us: it is part of the mystery that is every human person. There are so many millions of us, but God’s love for each of us is personal, deep, and enduring. And, as Dr Matthews points out, “as a consequence of the transcendent vocation of every human being, this call to friendship with God, no human being can be considered redundant, inconvenient or unproductive”.

When John Paul spoke of vocation, of God’s call, he never assumed that a “call” meant a call to be busy with what the world sees as useful and productive things. Often, a great deal of busy-ness – meetings, conference calls, media hype, anger and frustration at airport delays or missed taxis – is unproductive, in the everyday sense anyway. And often, something that appears unproductive – a loving vigil at a bedside, a visit to a confused elderly person who seems not to recognise us – has a value which even the bleakest cynic can somehow perceive and honour.

Dr Matthews draws all this, and much more, together in a readable and indeed at times engrossing work which challenges the clichés of much of what passes for current medical ethics, and points us to a better way. To give water and food, if necessary by tube, to someone in a coma is an act of human solidarity that binds us together as human beings and recognises the true values without which civilisation must perish. The cruel decision to enforce suffering, by an insistence on a person’s ability to show some response, carries a viciousness within it which is fearsome.

This is a well-researched and important book and is a must-read for all involved with caring for the sick – which means



most of us, at some stage in our lives. Decisions about whether “life has meaning” are presented all the time in our country’s hospitals and in residences for the elderly, the mentally impaired, and the gravely handicapped. We cannot duck this topic; and if we try to do so, we will in any case find that it forces itself on us one way or another, and probably in a way that impinges on our own lives.

John Paul called us to see a sick and suffering person as “an active and responsible participant in the work of evangelisation and salvation”. This is crucial. Together, at the foot of the Cross and in union with our suffering Lord, we can work for the good of souls.

I am grateful to Dr Pia Matthews for this book, and you will be too.

Joanna Bogle

A Forgotten Cardinal

By the Thames Divided – Cardinal Bourne in Southwark and Westminster by Mark Vickers, Gracwing, 614pp, £25.00.

In this biography, Fr Mark Vickers – whose name will be familiar to readers of this journal – provides a study of a little-known yet important figure, and at

the same time a glimpse of a little-known but important period in English Catholic history.

Francis Cardinal Bourne was Archbishop of Westminster from 1903 to 1935, his reign being the longest of any holder of that office. His priesthood and episcopacy coincided with perhaps the zenith of British imperial expansion and self-confidence, which was similarly a period of self-confidence for the English Catholic Church. No longer the persecuted remnant of recusant days, nor confined to caring for the huddled masses emigrating from famine in Ireland, the Church of this period had taken a settled place in society.

It was not, of course, as prominent as the Established Church of England, yet it was a respected force of which political leaders were obliged to take notice. New churches, schools and Catholic institutions were constantly being opened, and the Catholic community was a vibrant one, the small nucleus of “Old Catholics” having been augmented by Anglican converts and Irish emigrants – from which groups came Francis Bourne’s own family.

After a “very Victorian childhood”, the young Bourne discerned a priestly vocation and was formed at the famous seminary of St Sulpice in Paris, an experience which, as Fr Vickers notes, had a “profound impact on his intellectual development and theological outlook”.

Devout, zealous and academically able, Bourne spent only a short time as a curate, before taking charge of the Southwark diocesan seminary, at Wonersh near Guildford. St John’s Seminary became one of the great causes of his life, and his devotion to the institution and its students was reciprocated: “I don’t suppose that anywhere in England was there such hero-worship and such filial respect as we had for the rector,” wrote one of his students.

Bourne wished to live and die as rector of Wonersh (his heart is buried there),



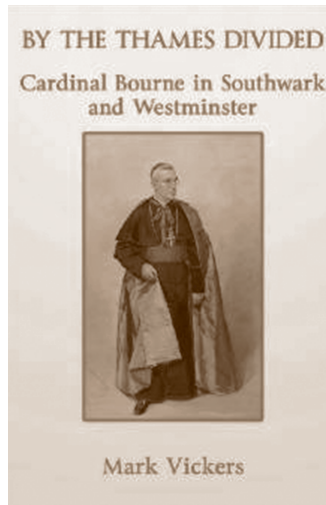
Book Reviews continued

but higher office called him. He was first consecrated Bishop of Southwark, and then transferred to Westminster – his episcopacy being thus “by the Thames divided”, as this book’s title has it.

Bourne’s love for education, shown in his efforts at Wonersh, was soon put to wider application in defence of Catholic schools. In 1906 the newly elected Liberal government proposed an Education Bill which sought a dramatic reform of English schooling. Although chiefly aimed at reducing undue Anglican influence, the effects on Catholic schools would have been devastating. Bourne responded both with public rallies – a mass meeting at the Albert Hall attracted 12,000 ticketholders, with 40,000 other participants in overflow venues – and more subtle, backstage diplomacy. His efforts were successful. In Fr Vickers’ words, “the continued existence of Catholic schools today owes much to Bourne’s leadership”.

The education issue showed the important place Catholics now played in British society. When the First World War broke out, the Catholic community played its part in defending British interests. In the context of the current commemorations of that war, this book’s description of Bourne’s role during the conflict will be of interest to many readers. Fr Vickers demonstrates that Bourne was no jingoist, but he was a patriotic Briton and wanted his Catholic people to play an active part in what he perceived as a just war. He had little sympathy for pacifists – a rather splendid photograph in the book shows the Cardinal in full pontificals and a beaver hat on the foredeck of a battleship.

Pope Benedict XV’s “Peace Note” of 1917, calling for an immediate laying down of arms, was not welcome either. Though expressing loyalty to the Holy Father, Bourne made it clear that he did not see peace, as such, as the most desirable outcome: “No! We demand the triumph of right over wrong!” With the benefit of hindsight, we can only regret that the Pope’s call was not



better heeded, that the war was not brought to an end without the bitterness and recrimination of 1918, and in particular that the Hapsburg Empire (which alone of the major powers welcomed the “Peace Note”) was not allowed to continue in some form its mission of keeping the peace among the fractured nations of middle Europe. But if Bourne’s martial fervour was in some respects regrettable, it certainly reflected the feelings of most of his fellow countrymen, Catholic or not.

Bourne supported the war effort, in part, because he wanted English Catholics to be seen as loyal and faithful subjects of the Crown. For similar reasons he was unsympathetic towards the General Strike of 1926 and to Irish Republicanism, particularly when it turned to violence – and so earned the sobriquet of “the Black and Tan Cardinal”. This was unfair, as this book shows. Indeed, Bourne was far from being a reactionary, either politically or in doctrinal matters. He supported the right of Catholics to be active in the newly founded Labour Party and was perhaps over-sympathetic towards the English Modernists – although Fr Vickers is clear that he remained personally orthodox throughout his life.

Above all, Francis Bourne always sought to be a loyal servant of Christ and his Church. He was initially favourable to the “Malines Conversations” – which sought to draw

together Catholics and High Anglicans – but turned against them when he realised they were likely to undermine Catholic doctrine on papal infallibility and other teachings.

Do his achievements make the Cardinal a truly great man? In the end, one would have to answer no. Highly capable and devout, he was nevertheless fatally flawed in some respects, not least in his dealings with other people. Sometimes he seems to have come close to paranoia and allowed trifling upsets to rankle. His famous falling-out with Archbishop Amigo of Southwark – his handpicked successor – is just one instance of this. Throughout this unhappy episode, there were undoubtedly faults on both sides; but as Fr Vickers remarks, “Bourne must bear the greater and original part of the blame”. Yet for all his flaws, Bourne remains an admirable character, of simple faith and unwavering toil, and the period during which he dominated Church affairs is a fascinating one. In rescuing the Cardinal and his times from their relative obscurity, Fr Vickers has performed a great service to Catholic readers.

Richard Whinder

Robust Alternative Celebs

A Book of Saints and Heroes, by Joanna Bogle, Gracewing, 131pp, £9.99

A Book of Saints and Heroines, by Joanna Bogle, Gracewing, 100pp, £9.99

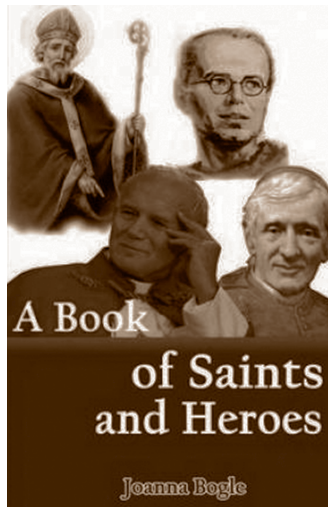
Standing in the supermarket checkout I never fail to be amazed by the number of magazines dedicated to gossip about the famous and infamous. Why are so many people interested in the lives of people they have never met and are never likely to, and what good does it do them to read about the private lives of celebrities? The occasional article may reveal a hidden depth or strength of personality to be admired, but headlines along the lines of “Is X seeing someone else? Y gives furious reaction” are hardly

“When looking for people to admire and emulate we have lost our way. We need saints not stars. Joanna Bogle’s two books are an excellent way of addressing this need”

edifying. When looking for people to admire and emulate we have lost our way. We need saints not stars.

Joanna Bogle’s two books, *A Book of Saints and Heroes* and *A Book of Saints and Heroines*, are an excellent way of addressing this need. Both books have the same structure: a clear index and friendly introduction followed by 25 chapters dedicated to Christians who showed heroic virtue. There are only a few pages on each person or group, but that is sufficient to introduce us to these heroes and heroines of our Faith. The books are arranged more or less chronologically, starting with the beginnings of the Church and ending in modern times. This means that each book can be read through from the beginning or dipped into at will.

Many of the men and women are well known. *Saints and Heroes* begins with St Peter and ends with St John Paul II; and *Saints and Heroines* begins with Our Lady and ends with Mother Teresa, but others are far less famous outside their own communities. Not all are canonised, but all led lives of courage and devotion. I enjoyed revisiting the traditional stories: George, Andrew, David and Patrick, for example, from the men’s book; and Mary Magdalene, Clare and Joan of Arc from the women’s. And I was particularly interested to discover the stories behind some of the names I had heard mentioned but had never followed up,



for example Emperor Karl von Habsburg and Bishop Count von Galen from the heroes and Kateri Tekakwitha and Josephine Bakhita from the heroines. For me, however, the best parts of the books were the chapters covering the new heroes and heroines, whose lives were an inspiration to all who knew them but whose stories are only just beginning to be told.

The stories of these men and women cover many different vocations and areas of witness. Mother Mary McKillop in the 19th century and Father John Hawes in the 20th worked to serve the Church in the Australian Outback. Fr Willie Doyle ministered to the troops in the trenches of the First World War; Natalia Tulasiewicz and Marcel Callo were victims of the Nazis in the Second. Marco was arrested for being

“too Catholic”, and Natalia volunteered to go with a group of women rounded up for forced labour; both died in concentration camps. We are given an introduction to the Martyrs of Russia, Mexico and Drina (near Sarajevo). In the latter half of the 20th century Fr Christian de Chergé, Fr Jerzy Popieluszko and Fr Giuseppe “Pino” Puglisi all worked for justice and were all murdered, Fr Christian by anti-Christian extremists in Algeria, Fr Jerzy by the Communist secret police in Poland and Fr Pino by the Mafia in Italy.

Both books are written in a clear, easy-to-read style and would be particularly good presents for a young person preparing for confirmation and trying to choose a patron saint. The shortness of the chapters makes them an easy way in to the lives of the saints for those who are short on time or unused to reading religious material. If I had to make one small criticism of the books it would be that I would have liked some end-of-chapter notes with recommended reading to follow up some of the stories, although I suppose there is always Google!

In writing these books Joanna Bogle has provided an entertaining and robust alternative to reading about celebrity culture. She has presented us with a vision of faith and courage and examples of true heroism.

Sue Butcher

Got a comment? Get in touch.

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HEADING

Dear Editor,

Reading Peter Kahn's article he mentions the Law of Graduality as having been mentioned at the recent synod. However, I was rather disappointed that he did not discuss

how it had been used or misused at the synod. Would it be possible to have something to explain this Law and what exactly it states. I can see that one can gradually improve one's spiritual state – two steps forward, one step back, with failings followed by confession. But would I be right in thinking that you do have to have the intention to improve, however long it takes, and to acknowledge that certain actions and states are sinful?

Further, I can see from the Old Testament that God was gradually introducing his chosen people to improvement and that the New Testament was a further step in this

process – one example being the question of marriage and divorce.

But does this entitle anyone to say: "This is where I am", in other words to say I am back in the time of Abraham and I can ignore what Christ said for the moment, and at the same time claim redemption and presume communion in the Mass?

Yours faithfully,

Nicolas Bellord, Horsted Keynes,
West Sussex

PS I am not a theologian so please excuse any errors!

Catholicism: a New Synthesis

by Edward Holloway

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

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The Last Word

By William Oddie

One of the most disturbing developments in the Church recently has been the growth of a tendency among Catholics who a year or two ago would have been considered papal loyalists to be so confused by the public statements of the present Holy Father that they have become either tacitly or even openly critical of the way he is conducting his teaching ministry.

I was myself recently upbraided by one of my readers for my “constant sniping” at Pope Francis. This I found disconcerting, since faithfulness to papal teaching has always been one of my guiding objectives when writing about the faith. In my defence, another reader rejoined that the real problem was “trying to explain to someone who has not yet got it how and why some of the things that Pope Francis has said, done or left unsaid and undone have disturbed and brought disquiet in the minds and hearts of loyal, practising Catholics.”

Some months ago, in his widely read blog, Father Ray Blake contrasted Pope Francis with his predecessor. “There was a solidity and certainty in Benedict’s teaching”, he wrote, “which made discussion possible and stimulated intellectual honesty; one knew where the Church and the Pope stood. Today we are in less certain times; the intellectual life of the Church is thwart with uncertainty. Most Catholics, but especially clergy, want to be loyal to the Pope in order to maintain the unity of the Church; today that loyalty is perhaps best expressed through silence.”

I have a feeling that what the Holy Father actually wants is what we now have: a period in which even the Pope himself can be questioned by loyal Catholics. Whether in the long run that will be good for the Church may certainly be questioned: but it’s what we now have. The problem is the uncertainty that has emerged (disquietingly reminiscent of pre-Ratzingerian times) about the objective content of the Catholic religion: that’s what some faithful Catholics would like to be, shall we say, “clarified”.

Consider the example of Cardinal Francis George (described by the commentator John L Allen Jr recently as “America’s Ratzinger”), who is the archetypal papal loyalist. Cardinal George told Allen that he’d like to ask Pope Francis a few questions: to begin with, whether he fully grasps “that in some quarters, he’s created the impression that Catholic doctrine is up for grabs”. Whether he realises, for example, “what has happened just [as a result of using] that phrase, ‘Who am I to judge?’”. Francis’s signature soundbite, the cardinal said, “has been very misused ... because he was talking about someone who has already asked for mercy and been given absolution, whom he knows well”. (Pope Francis uttered the line in 2013, in response to a question about a Vatican cleric accused of gay relationships earlier in his career.) “That’s entirely different than talking to somebody who demands acceptance rather than asking for forgiveness,” Cardinal George said.

“The question is,” the cardinal went on, “why ... doesn’t he clarify” these ambiguous statements. “Why is it necessary that

apologists have to bear the burden of trying to put the best possible face on it?”

I have a feeling that a lot of the present confusion was stirred up by the synod on the family. But it also seems clear to me that the Pope said more than enough in the synod’s closing address at this year’s sessions to answer many of the uncertainties which many, most notably perhaps Cardinal Raymond Burke, had articulated as the first phase of the synod came to an end.

A little noticed, certainly little reported, section of the Pope’s address spoke of “the temptation to a destructive tendency to goodness [Italian *buonismo*: ‘self-righteousness’, maybe?], that in the name of a deceptive mercy binds the wounds without first curing them and treating them; that treats the symptoms and not the causes and the roots. It is the temptation of the ‘do-gooders’, of the fearful, and also of the so-called ‘progressives and liberals’. The temptation to transform stones into bread to break the long, heavy, and painful fast (cf Lk 4:1-4). The temptation to come down off the Cross, to please the people, and not stay there in order to fulfil the will of the Father; to bow down to a worldly spirit instead of purifying it and bending it to the Spirit of God. The temptation to neglect the ‘depositum fidei’ [the deposit of faith], not thinking of themselves as guardians but as owners or masters [of it].”

“The general belief after the 2014 synod was that the Church is gearing up, not for some change in pastoral strategy, but for fundamental changes in its teachings”

This Pope isn’t a “liberal”. But he has given the liberals their head; and it remains to be seen whether that particular genie can be got back into the bottle. The trouble is that not only within the Church, but also in the secular media, the assumption has been that doctrine is indeed “up for grabs” – an assumption that will certainly remain for the foreseeable future, despite anything the Pope now says.

The general belief after the 2014 synod, both inside and particularly outside the Church, was that the Catholic Church is now gearing up, not for some kind of change in pastoral strategy, but for fundamental changes in its teachings (hitherto immutable) on important questions to do with marriage and with sexual morality. These impressions were based on the first draft of the “mid-term report”, which was the only version to which the press paid any attention.

Consider the following from the Mail Online. The headline read as follows: “Massive Vatican shift on gay sex: Summit on ‘family life’ says unmarried couples living together can be ‘positive’, gays and divorcees must be welcomed and contraception ‘respected’.” Beneath that was a four-part standfirst:

- Catholic Church adopts rare progressive tone during talks of family issues.
- Two-week summit reached midway point today with the release of a document summarising the extent of the closed-door debate so far.
- Meeting is the first time Catholic Church has held a family “synod” since 1987.
- The summit has been described as a “step in the right direction” by activists.

That this “progressive tone” reflected the unanimous views of all the synod fathers was taken for granted by the *Mail*’s writer, John Hall, who went on to say that “Catholic bishops meeting to discuss ‘family issues’ at a two-week summit have said unmarried couples living together can be ‘positive’, and gay relationships and divorces must be welcomed. Displaying remarkably liberal attitudes for a Church famed for its conservatism, bishops meeting in the Vatican today also said that a couples’ decision on the use of contraception should be respected. The summit, which reached its midway point today, has been described as a ‘step in the right direction’ by activists and boasts all the hallmarks of the notably progressive attitudes the Catholic Church has adopted since the ascension of Pope Francis last year.”

“The clique that seized power over the way the synod was at first presented to the faithful have to be definitively repudiated”

The fact that there was considerable resistance to these views at the synod was in no way reflected in the first version of the “mid-term report” (entitled *relatio post disceptationem*), an effusion which bore all the hallmarks of an attempted PR coup (the word “coup” isn’t over the top here: spin, in our time, is one pathway to the seizure of effective power). Many Catholics might assume that of course the *Mail* must have been misreporting the document: but the *Mail*, as it often does, was reporting the “report” accurately and fairly.

What was inaccurate was the synod document itself. And that was precisely what the bishops who produced it intended. Consider the following: “Homosexuals have gifts and qualities to offer to the Christian community: are we capable of welcoming these people, guaranteeing to them a fraternal space in our communities? Often they wish to encounter a Church that offers them a welcoming home. Are our communities capable of providing that, accepting and *valuing their sexual orientation* [my emphasis] without compromising Catholic doctrine on the family and matrimony? [the answer is ‘no’, but we are supposed to say ‘yes’]. The question of homosexuality leads to a serious reflection on how to elaborate

realistic paths of affective growth and human and evangelical maturity integrating the sexual dimension....”

In other words, it’s time to junk everything the Church has ever said on the matter, clearly spelt out in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (article 2357): “....Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that ‘homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered’. They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.” (Of course, the CCC goes on to make it clear that homosexuals themselves “must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity”.)

Cardinal Raymond Burke was outspoken on the way the synod was being reported in the *relatio post disceptationem*: its reporting was, he said, being “manipulated.... The interventions of the individual synod fathers are not made available to the public, as has been the case in the past. All of the information regarding the synod is controlled by the General Secretariat of the Synod, which clearly has favoured from the beginning the positions expressed in the *relatio post disceptationem*.... While the individual interventions of the synod fathers are not published, yesterday’s *relatio*, which is merely a discussion document, was published immediately and, I am told, even broadcast live. You do not have to be a rocket scientist to see the approach at work, which is certainly not of the Church...”

The *Catholic World Report* asked Cardinal Burke how important he thought it was that Pope Francis should “make a statement soon in order to address the growing sense – among many in the media and in the pews – that the Church is on the cusp of changing her teaching on various essential points regarding marriage, ‘remarriage’, reception of Communion, and even the place of ‘unions’ among homosexuals”.

Cardinal Burke replied that, in his judgement, “such a statement is long overdue. The debate on these questions has been going forward now for almost nine months, especially in the secular media but also through the speeches and interviews of Cardinal Walter Kasper and others who support his position. The faithful and their good shepherds are looking to the Vicar of Christ for the confirmation of the Catholic faith and practice regarding marriage, which is the first cell of the life of the Church.”

Pope Francis’s defence of the depositum fidei may well have been a response to Cardinal Burke’s plea. But was it enough? The trouble was, nobody noticed it: certainly it wasn’t adequately (if at all) reported, even in the Catholic media. Should someone close to the Holy Father now respectfully suggest that he continue in the same vein? The clique that seized power over the way the synod was at first presented to the faithful have to be definitively repudiated: if they’re not (and they’re not going to withdraw quietly and voluntarily) we could be on our way back to the most destructive period of the post-conciliar years. ☩

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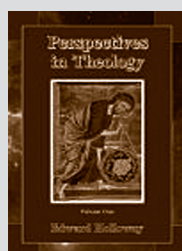
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From the Aims and Ideals of Faith Movement

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

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

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