

# ANIMALS

Australasia

Journal of Catholic Culture



2013 – 4

\$3.30\*

PRINT POST APPROVED PP255003/01005

# ANNALS AUSTRALASIA

*Journal of Catholic Culture*

Volume 124, Number 4, June 2013

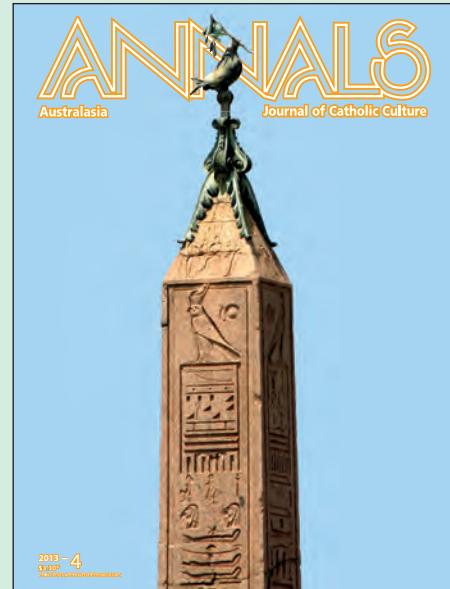
[Sunday Readings at Mass: Year C/weekday readings: Year I]

*Australia's Oldest Catholic Magazine*

Published by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) since 1889.

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Cover Photo: Paul Stenhouse



*Front Cover:* There are eight ancient Egyptian obelisks, and five ancient Roman obelisks in Rome. The obelisk on our cover this month was erected over the Fountain of the Four Rivers in the Piazza Navona by Bernini in 1651. It is a copy of an Egyptian obelisk that was commissioned by the emperor Domitian [81-96 AD] who built the *Stadium Flavianum* – the littlest amphitheatre in Rome – whose open space the Piazza Navona occupies. The Obelisk originally stood in the Circus of Maxentius. It is 98 feet in height, and at its peak stands a dove of peace, with an olive branch in its beak [Genesis 8,10]. It seemed a happy symbol of the search for reconciliation in the Middle East – the Dove of Peace with its little olive sprig resting on a symbol of the might of Pharaonic Egypt and Imperial Rome. See 'Why is Syria Burning' pp.3-6 this issue.

**Executive Editor** Chevalier Press; **Editor** *Annals Australasia*: Paul Stenhouse, MSC Ph.D; **Layout and Design**: Paul Stenhouse MSC. **Administration**: Peter Macinante. **Subscription**: Visa/Master Cards accepted. Please make cheques, money orders payable to The Manager, *Annals Australasia*, 1 Roma Avenue (P.O. Box 13), Kensington, NSW Australia 2033. **Correspondence**: The Editor, P.O. Box 13, Kensington NSW Australia 2033. **Phones**: (02) 9662 7894/9662 7188 ext. 252. **Fax**: (02) 9662 1910, **Email**: [Annals editorial] editorannals@gmail.com; [Annals subscriptions] annalsaustralasia@gmail.com; [Chevalier Press]chevalierpress@gmail.com. **Unsolicited material**: We regret that unsolicited material cannot be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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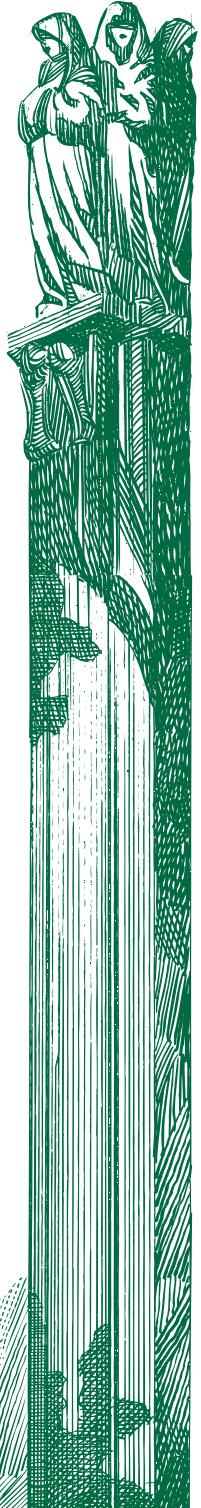
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**J**ESUS SAID:  
*"This Is My Body;  
This Is My Blood.  
We Believe In Him;  
Let Us Also Believe  
His Words.*

- St Gaudentius of Brescia,  
died c410 AD , Treatise 2,  
Roman Breviary, Reading  
for Thursday of Week 5 in  
Easteride.

**In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and  
of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.**

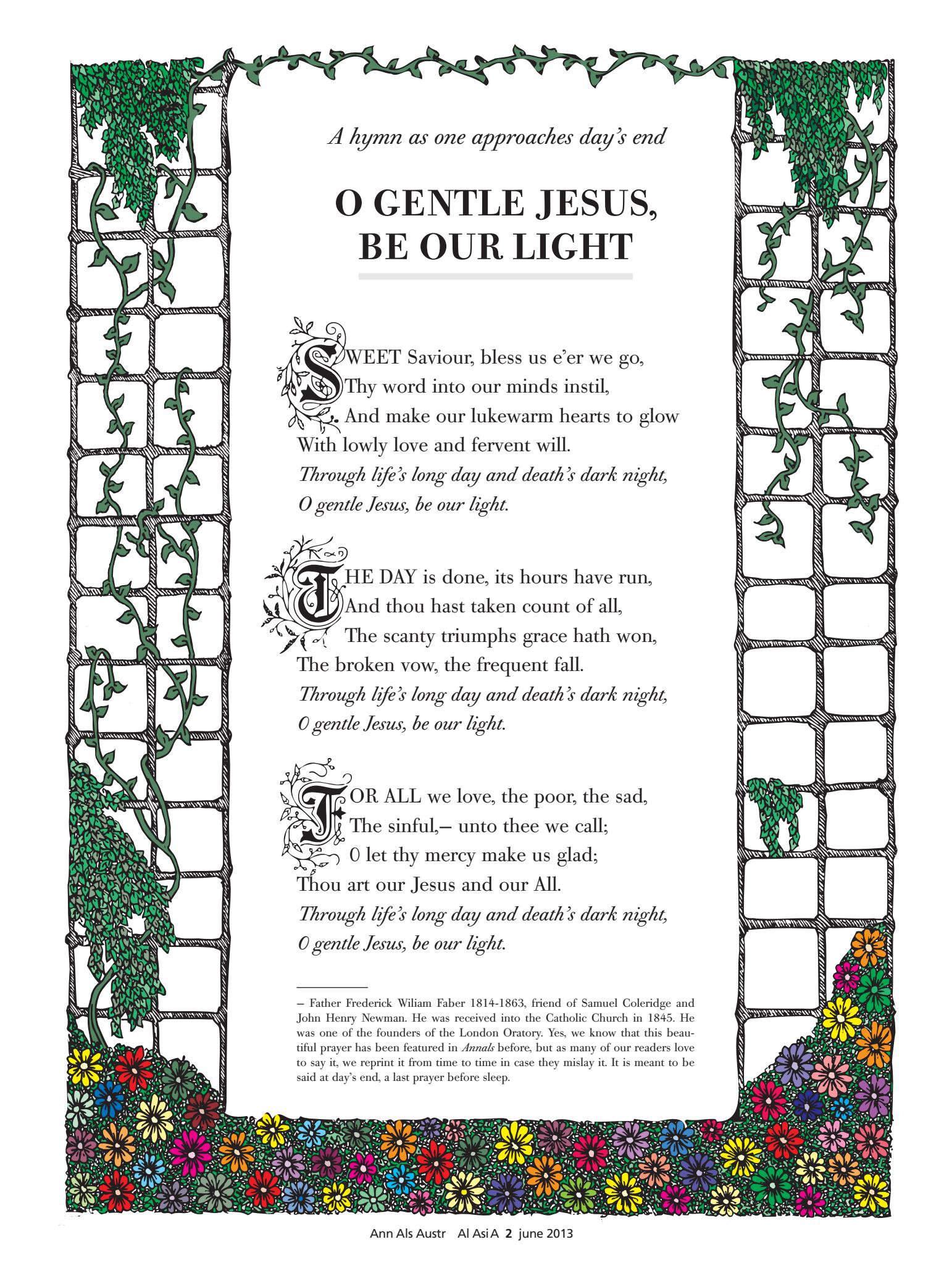


## GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD

**D**EVOTION to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the essence of the Christian faith; it is the outline and substantial summary of the whole of religion. The Christian religion is a work of love in its beginning, in its development and in its end. The history of the Christian religion is found wholly and entirely in the sublime statement: *God so loved the world*. Its whole creed is reduced to these words of the beloved disciple: *We believe in God's love for us*. That is, we believe that in God's work the Heart has done everything. Christian morality is contained in the single word *Diliges* (You shall love). That is, 'You will render love for love, you will give me your heart in exchange for all that mine has done for you'. The Christian religion, we can say, could not be identified so completely with any other devotion as with devotion to the Sacred Heart.

— Jules Chevalier, MSC *Le Sacré Coeur de Jésus*, Librairie de Vic et Amat, Paris 1900, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, p.149.  
Translated: Dennis Murphy, MSC.





*A hymn as one approaches day's end*

## O GENTLE JESUS, BE OUR LIGHT

**S**WEET Saviour, bless us e'er we go,  
Thy word into our minds instil,  
. And make our lukewarm hearts to glow  
With lowly love and fervent will.  
*Through life's long day and death's dark night,  
O gentle Jesus, be our light.*

**T**HE DAY is done, its hours have run,  
And thou hast taken count of all,  
The scanty triumphs grace hath won,  
The broken vow, the frequent fall.  
*Through life's long day and death's dark night,  
O gentle Jesus, be our light.*

**F**OR ALL we love, the poor, the sad,  
The sinful,— unto thee we call;  
O let thy mercy make us glad;  
Thou art our Jesus and our All.  
*Through life's long day and death's dark night,  
O gentle Jesus, be our light.*

---

— Father Frederick William Faber 1814-1863, friend of Samuel Coleridge and John Henry Newman. He was received into the Catholic Church in 1845. He was one of the founders of the London Oratory. Yes, we know that this beautiful prayer has been featured in *Annals* before, but as many of our readers love to say it, we reprint it from time to time in case they mislay it. It is meant to be said at day's end, a last prayer before sleep.

*Western media would have us believe that this bloodbath is Syria's long-awaited Arab Spring that will put an end to rule by Bashar al-Assad and his Alawite clan in this Sunni-majority country.*

## WHY IS SYRIA BURNING?

By Paul Stenhouse



THE CONFLICT in Syria is daily in the news; *is* the news. Myriad articles in newspapers and journals, TV or radio news items or 'in-depth' analyses on Syria appear on millions of networks, blogs and social communications media around the globe.

Most of these reveal more about bias and unchallenged assumptions on the part of their authors and their networks than about the unpalatable truth behind the bloody and internecine war that has systematically been devastating Syria for almost two-and-a-half-years.

Especially troubling is the Western media's apparent mastery of *doublethink* when discussing any of the key players involving Syria in her nightmarish *dance macabre*. Western

media would have us believe that this bloodbath is Syria's long-awaited *Arab Spring* that will put an end to rule by Bashar al-Assad and his Alawite clan in this Sunni-majority country.

According to George Orwell who coined the term, *doublethink* is an ability to claim to be truthful while telling or repeating carefully constructed lies; to hold two opinions, and believe both of them even though they contradict one another.

Such naivety or ingenuousness is inexcusable when modern media have arrogated to themselves powers that dictators and despots would envy. It is also, I suggest, tantamount to criminal complicity on the part of the media, in the disaster that is overwhelming Syria and her immediate neighbours.

The bloody sectarian war that this doubletalk has unleashed aims at ending Syria's secular status which was unique in the Middle East. In the process, her very existence as an independent and viable state has been

assorted other Islamist sub-groups [for the rebels] and Iran and now *Hizballah* [for the government] have joined in.

China, with her Islamist and separatist Uyghur on her NW border, and Russia with her own Islamist headaches in Chechnya and throughout her former Central Asiatic Soviet empire, are, for the present, sitting out this dance.

Syria is the venue. Bashar al-Assad, his fellow Alawites and the moderate Syrian Sunnis and most of Syria's ethnic and religious minorities – Armenians,

A s s y r i a n s , Circassians, Kurds, Turks and Druze, Ishmailis, Orthodox [Chalcedonian, Syrian, Armenian] Catholic [Melkite, Assyrian, Armenian, Syriac, Maronite, Chaldaean and Latin] – who are their allies, are in the cross-hairs.

From the war's outset informed critics made the point that one did not need to support the regime of President

Bashar al-Assad to be sceptical of the motivation behind the relentless anti-Assad/Alawite/Iranian propaganda emanating from U.S., U.K., French and western media generally.<sup>3</sup>

Some may attempt to explain this prejudicial media coverage in terms of a jaundiced western *reaction* to Assad's championing militant Arab causes and allying herself with Hamas in Gaza, Hizballah in Lebanon, and Iran, and subsequently being perceived as hostile



jeopardised, and a hair trigger has been provided for a much wider and bloodier conflict on a global scale.

Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Israel, the U.K., the U.S. and France stubbornly persist in leading, financing, arming or encouraging this ghoulish dance. Some of the 'reasons' for their doing so have been discussed at length in previous editions of *Annals*<sup>1</sup> and elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

Turkey, *al-Qaeda*, *Jabhat an-Nusra*, the Muslim Brothers, the *Salafiyun* and

to Israel, the U.S. and the West. This explanation is, I suggest, simplistic.

It takes no account of *realpolitik* in the region. It ignores the persistent unwillingness of many western media to confront the highly politicised nature of Islam, and the deeply entrenched anti-western and indeed, anti-Christian bias of much of the so-called ‘western’ media.

It also seems oblivious of the power exerted in the US and the West by Wahhabi dominated Saudi Arabia and most of the other Sunni Gulf States – bloated with money, weapons and fair-weather friends; chafing over the ‘loss’ of Sunni-dominated Iraq to the majority Iraqi Shi'a population [and, *de facto*, to Iran] in the wake of the ill-advised U.S. invasion in 2003 and the subsequent destabilising of the region; and watching with disbelief and trepidation as the American Administration – ignoring pleas for help – abandons one of its closest friends in the Middle East, President Hosni Mubarak, to those baying for his blood.

The calls for democracy, electoral reform, liberty of conscience, and equality for minorities and women resounding through Tahrir Square in those heady days – and being repeated in Taksim Square Istanbul as I write – would, with good reason, have sent shivers down the spines of all six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] – Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates.

Some of these states, and others in the region, have been described as ‘sitting on foundations of sticks, bound to fail us, bound to collapse’,<sup>4</sup> by Robert Baer, former CIA operative and author of *Sleeping with the Devil*, about the Saudi Royal Family and its relationship with the U.S.

His candid assessment of some of these regional powers is as follows:

Pakistan is on its way to collapsing,  
Saudi Arabia teeters on the edge,  
Emirates are little more than a giant,  
high-end shopping mall, Qatar has  
the population of a large hotel,  
Algeria is still in the middle of a  
vicious, no-quarter-given civil war –  
yet another failed Sunni state. Iran is  
the only stable, enduring state in the  
Gulf.<sup>5</sup>

One doubts that any of the six Sunni Gulf states suspected, as they watched Egypt unravel, that the fall of Mubarak



was already a done deal between the U.S. and the Muslim Brothers.<sup>6</sup>

Mubarak’s eventual fall and imprisonment set alarm bells ringing throughout and beyond the Middle East, and the GCC states closed ranks. When Bahrain’s turn came for the tumbrils to roll, the Saudis sent troops to the king of Bahrain to stifle the winds of change before they swept through the Gulf as they had swept through the Maghreb, Egypt, Yemen and Libya.

Most of the tens of thousands of Bahraini demonstrators were Shia who represent 80% of the island country’s citizens. The repression of them and their demands by the combined Bahrain/Saudi security forces, was

brutal. Thirty-two of their places of worship, including 16 mosques, were demolished on the grounds that they had been erected without permits.

One of these mosques was 400 years old; built long before the Sunni ‘royal family’ came from Qatar and took over Shi'a territory in 1797. Al-Jazeera [the Qatari TV network] and al-Arabiyya [the Saudi TV network] were both criticised for their less than enthusiastic or adequate coverage of the short-lived Bahraini Spring.

Syria is burning, and this time al-Jazeera and al-Arabiyya are most enthusiastically covering every blaze and reporting every rumour.

But nothing is as it appears.

Bashar al-Assad and his government have long given up hope of fair reporting by Western media, because the media war being waged in and against Syria and the Alawites, is actually aimed somewhere else.

In his article ‘The Emerging Doctrine of the United States’ published late last year, George Friedman, founder and chairman of the geopolitical weekly *Stratfor*, revealed what everybody knew and nobody wanted to be said:

‘The United States wanted Iran blocked and that meant the displacement of the Assad regime.’<sup>7</sup>

## Far Chimes that knell a Dying Day

ONE OF the comparative Literature courses I took consisted in reading the *Commedia Divina* of Dante along with parts of the *Summa Theologica*. One day, as we were considering the *Purgatorio*, he [Dr John Senior] came to these lines in Canto VIII:

...the new made pilgrim on his way  
Feels a sweet pang go through him if he hears  
Far chimes that seem to knell the dying day--  
(*Purgatorio*, VIII, 4-6, trans. Dorothy Sayers)

He paused, then recited, from memory, the whole of Thomas Gray’s *Elegy Written in A Country Churchyard*. I was astonished and deeply moved, and remain so to this day. I was one of Dr. Senior’s students at KU [University of Kansas], though I graduated before the formal inauguration of the *Integrated Humanities Programme* [IHP]. In addition, he and Mrs. Senior were my sponsors when I was received into the Church on April 26, 1970. I can only confirm the characterization of his teaching offered by M. Maxence. His teaching (and that of Professors Quinn and Nelick) had the ring of truth, and thus unequalled power. I owe them all, but especially John Senior, an eternal debt of gratitude.

— Bob Harper, commenting on ‘John Senior: In Piam Memoriam,’ *Crisis Magazine*, April 5, 2012; see *Annals* No.3 April-May, 2012 pp.30-31.

Friedman's frank admission was followed by a statutory disclaimer that this 'did not mean Washington wanted to intervene militarily, except possibly through aid and training, potentially delivered by U.S. special operations forces – a lighter intervention than others advocated'.<sup>8</sup>

'A Lighter intervention'? And who are these unnamed 'others' advocating heavier 'intervention'? How heavier can the intervention get?

Estimates of numbers killed since March 15, 2011 in this 'phoney' war, in an effort to 'displace' Assad and his Alawite regime, range from 60,000 to 120,000.<sup>9</sup> As I write,<sup>10</sup> a UN estimate puts the numbers of killed at 93,000. And much of resource-poor, but historically- and culturally-rich Syria, lies in ruins.

Is this deplorable loss of human life, wholesale destruction of homes and businesses, places of worship, vital infrastructure and irreplaceable historical treasures, a fair price to be paid for 'displacing Assad' in order to 'block' Iran?

And, in any case, why do the U.S. and its allies want to 'block' Iran at so high a cost in human life?

If it is because Iran allegedly wants to build a nuclear bomb, then where's the evidence for that? The answer seems to be that 'we just don't know enough to say definitively'.<sup>11</sup> In fact Israeli officials and U.S. intelligence agree, according to Reuters, that 'Tehran does not have a bomb, has not decided to build one, and is probably years away from having a deliverable nuclear warhead'.<sup>12</sup>

If it's because of former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's emotional rantings against Israel, then

1. He was never the real ruler of Iran, the Ayatollah Khamenei is; and Khamenei is on record as denouncing nuclear weapons.<sup>13</sup> And Ahmadinejad has now been replaced as President by 64-year-old reform candidate Hasan Rouhani, a former nuclear negotiator, and a moderate who received more than 50% of the votes in the June 15 election in which 72% of the electorate voted.

2. Ahmadinejad did not speak for all Iranians, or even for many of them. He was unpopular with Iranians<sup>14</sup> and his main weapon – bombast and populist



Pic: Paul Stenhouse

Ahmad Badr ad-Din Hassoun, Grand Mufti of Syria, whom I interviewed in late September 2011.

He has been a consistent opponent of armed force being used to bring about change in Syria.

His 22-year-old son Sariya was assassinated on October 2, 2011 in an ambush on the road between Idlib and Aleppo, a week or so after this photo was taken.

rhetoric – seems to have impressed only the West and Israel. He also denied the Holocaust. If threats by Kim Jung Un to hit U.S. cities, and his neighbours' cities, with ballistic missiles and nuclear strikes are dismissed airily as rhetoric by President Obama,<sup>15</sup> what logic lies behind destroying Syria because of Ahmadinejad's mad rhetoric?

If Iran is being accused of being the *Eminence grise* behind Syria's support of Hizballah and Hamas, and Syria of being Iran's *proxy* in the region, then irrefutable evidence of this should be produced. And all the circumstances leading to the formation of Hizballah and Hamas should be made public.

As the U.S. still has not restored

diplomatic relations with Iran since the seizure of its embassy in November 1979, it should reserve judgement on where the truth lies in all of the above, until the air has cleared and diplomatic relations have been restored. It is to the advantage of all for the world's greatest superpower, and the Persian Gulf's 'only stable, enduring state' to be on speaking terms.

All totals of Syrian killed supposedly include armed insurgents, Syrian government forces and civilians. However, many of the civilian deaths reported by anti-government forces were, in fact, armed insurgents.<sup>16</sup> Civilians who carried weapons are also described by the rebels as 'civilians'.

And rebel fighters who were not deserters are routinely called ‘civilians’ by the British-based anti-government *Syrian Observatory of Human Rights*.<sup>17</sup>

The euphemism ‘Armed insurgents’ is code for the proxy Islamist *mujahidun* or *jihadi* mercenaries financed and armed by Saudi Arabia and Qatar respectively.

The kingdom of Saudi Arabia, unlike neighbouring Bahrain, has a minority Shi'a population of around fifteen per cent. The Saudi Shia are mainly centred on the oases of al-Hasa and Qatif in the oil-fields of the Eastern Province. Since Wahhabi domination of the region in the early 1920s these Shi'a have faced religious and economic persecution.

They have been denounced as ‘non-Muslims’ by Saudi Arabia’s leading Imam Abdul Aziz ibn Baz. Sheikh Abdullah ibn Abdul Rahman ibn Jibrin a member of the Saudi Higher Council of the Ulama, has sanctioned their being killed. This latter fatwa was repeated in Saudi Wahhabi religious literature as recently as 2002.<sup>18</sup>

Qatar’s emir, like the Saudi king is an absolute monarch, and there are, allegedly, no Shi'a in his emirate.<sup>19</sup> With fewer than 230,000 citizens,<sup>20</sup> Qatar was nonetheless the richest country in the world in 2011, according to Forbes Magazine.<sup>21</sup> It may have the population ‘of a large hotel,’ but its size belies its immense wealth, though it also highlights its insecurity and fear, underscored by the deference Qatar has to pay to its big-brother and protector Saudi Arabia.

Most of the West’s media and governments are equally deferential. And will be held equally responsible for the outcome of the Syrian/Iranian adventure upon which they are embarked.

\*\*\*\*

A large American military force disembarked only a few days ago – early Wednesday, June 5 – at the southern Jordanian port of Aqaba – ready for deployment with US Patriot missile interceptors and F-16 fighters, on the kingdom’s Syrian border. The 1,000-strong 26<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Force unit, the largest the US has deployed in Jordan, was carried there aboard the *USS Kearsage* amphibious assault ship.<sup>22</sup>



*The courtyard and part of the minaret of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. In October 2012 Damascus was named as one of the 12 cultural heritage sites most ‘on the verge of irreparable loss and destruction.’*

*The devastation of the past twenty-five months has been incalculable.*

Pic: Paul Stenhouse

1. ‘Creative Chaos’ and the fate of Minorities in Syria’ 9/2011; ‘Unleashing the Dogs of War,’ 1/2012; ‘Inching one’s way through the Syrian Maze,’ 4/2012.
2. See for example, Quadrant: ‘What is really going on in Syria,’ April, 2012.
3. See, e.g. Roland Hureaux, ‘Syrie: certitudes et incertitudes de la guerre médiatique.’ <http://www.marianne.net>
4. *The Devil we know. Dealing with the new Iranian Superpower*, Crown Publishers New York, 2008, p.253.
5. ibid.
6. Yoici Shimatsu, ‘US secretly backed the Brotherhood’s Soft Power Strategy in Egypt,’ in *New American Media*, February 6.2011. Aaron Klein, ‘US held Secret Meeting with Muslim Brotherhood,’ February 1, 2011. See also Wikileaks, released by [www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk), January 28, 2011.
7. *Stratfor Global Intelligence*, Tuesday October 9, 2012.
8. ibid.
9. Khaled Yacoub Oweis, ‘Syrian war death toll rises to 82,000: opposition group,’ Reuters May 12, 2013: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/12/us-syria-crisis-toll-idUSBRE94B0AD20130512>. Retrieved: June 11, 2013.
10. June 14, 2013.
11. Cheryl Rofer, ‘Is Iran building a bomb? A nuclear scientists says we need to look closer,’ *The Globe and Mail*, February 27, 2013. Reviewed June 15, 2013.
12. Friends Committee on National Legislation: US and Israeli officials: Iran is NOT building Nuclear weapons. [fcnl.org/issues/iran/us\\_israeli\\_intelligenceOfficials\\_iran\\_is\\_not\\_pursuing\\_nuclear\\_weapons/](http://fcnl.org/issues/iran/us_israeli_intelligenceOfficials_iran_is_not_pursuing_nuclear_weapons/) Retrieved June 15.
13. ‘Inside Irans’s Presidential election and beyond,’ AP, June 14, 2013. <http://www.goerie.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20130614/APA/1306140701>
14. The Independent, June 14, 2013 Alistair Dawber, ‘Iran chooses replacement for Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.’
15. ‘North Korea has ‘failed again’ to get global respect using threats, Obama says,’ AP, National Post, May 7, 2013.
16. Rosen, Nir (21 February 2012). ‘Q&A: Nir Rosen on Syria’s armed opposition.’ *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved June 11, 2013.
17. Agence France Presse. ‘Syria violence kills 12 as revolt toll tops 14,100.’ [Abs-cbnnews.com](http://www.abs-cbnnews.com). Retrieved June 11, 2013.
18. Toby Jones, ‘The Iraq effect in Saudi Arabia,’ *Middle East Report* 237 [Winter] 2005, p.24 quoted Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival*, W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 2006, p.236.
19. Bassam Tayara, *Le Printemps Arab Décodé*, Éditions Al-Bouraq, 2011, p.174.
20. *Human Rights Watch*, World Report 2012, Qatar.
21. *Al Arabiya News*, February 25, 2012: ‘Forbes ranks Qatar as the world’s wealthiest country’.
22. *Debka Newsletter*, June 7, 2013; see also *idem*, June 14, 2013.

*Orthodoxy details Chesterton's personal journey from enthusiastic youthful agnosticism to a full belief in Christianity as professed in the Apostles Creed.*

# STUMBLING UPON ORTHODOXY

By Peter Fisher



EXCERPTS from GK Chesterton's writings published in *Annals Australasia* re-awoke my interest in this author. I had a basic notion of his importance as a writer, commentator and Catholic apologist and lately noted his place of honour in Clive James' compendium, 'Cultural Amnesia'. One of my contemporaries remembers studying his writings at school but I missed out on that privilege.

My interest having been stimulated, I downloaded several of his works onto my iPad, one of which was *Orthodoxy*. I confess to it's not being an easy book to fully comprehend on first or even second reading but found sections of it so fascinating that I was inspired to persevere with it. I was rewarded finally with a reasonable, if not fully flowered, appreciation of his message. I probably will continue to go back to it for further enlightenment.

This rather potted review is a layman's attempt to interest others in reading *Orthodoxy* because of its innate artistry and strong relevance to today's environment.

Written in 1908 *Orthodoxy* is astoundingly apposite in the light of the trend running today of increasingly overt and at times aggressive atheism. One thinks of the recent attacks on religion by atheists such as Dawkins, Hitchens and others and of the anti-Catholic cynicism of many modern so-called 'liberal' writers and journalists.

A previous book by Chesterton, 'Heretics' very effectively lambasted, without personal attack the then modern and anti-religious philosophies being promulgated by George Bernard Shaw, HG Wells, Rudyard Kipling, Ibsen, Tolstoy, Nietzsche and other

popular writers. He then obligingly and with some relish wrote *Orthodoxy* at the invitation of a critic who dared him to expound his own philosophy.

*Orthodoxy* details Chesterton's personal journey from enthusiastic youthful agnosticism to a full belief in Christianity as professed in the Apostles Creed. He describes his journey as that of someone who sets out to discover the new and fundamental truth of being, only to find at the end of his arduous inquiry that it had already been discovered and that it had been in existence for almost two thousand years, in the form of Christianity.

*Orthodoxy* therefore is not a theological work, or a work of Catholic apologetics but is more a philosophical rebuttal of modern rationalism, materialism, secularism and other 'liberal' notions, all of which strongly sought to deny the spiritual nature of man's being. It was essentially through this very thorough examination and final rebuttal that he came to his conviction.

Early in his journey Chesterton enthusiastically sought out the more

sophisticated arguments of the agnostics and atheists of the day with whom he was already very much inclined to agree. Being a man of independent intellect and inquiry however, the closer he examined all the arguments against Christianity and the Church the more he found they were self-contradictory and irrational. He began to enquire about the nature of this strange institution that could seemingly simultaneously meet all the self-contradictory accusations being hurled against it.

Travelling with Chesterton on his journey of discovery is not always a comfortable ride. He probes the rationality of the madman and likens it to that of the materialist. He invokes the ethics of the fairy tale and contrasts its sense of wonder, mystery, adventure, danger and chivalry with the dull and deadening certainty of the materialist who himself may be prone to insanity.

He discusses the magic of nature, surely created by a Magician, and contends that it is not our mother but our beautiful sister. He examines the secular view of suicide as akin to martyrdom and comes independently to the Church's view that they are in fact at opposite ends of the spectrum. He traverses democracy, aristocracy, paganism, pantheism, evolution, optimism and pessimism and more, all with his particular brand of unpredictable insight.

Chesterton convincingly counters many of the accusations levelled at the Church and its doctrines. Two striking examples of his craft are shown below.

In refutation of the accusation that in teaching Catholic doctrine 'priests darken and embitter the world':

'Catholic doctrine and disciplines may be walls; but they are walls of a playground. Christianity is the

## A Bad Mixture

CHESTERTON wrote of '... the violent and un-expected reactions we shall produce if we thrust our own unrealities amid the red-hot realities of the near East; it is like pushing a snow man into a furnace ... I know what a cataract it could feed'.

— See G.K.Chesterton, *The New Jerusalem*, [our ed. undated] p.117.

only frame which has preserved the pleasures of Paganism. We might fancy some children playing on the flat grassy top of some small island in the sea. So long as there was a wall around the cliff's edge they could fling themselves into every frantic game and make the place the noisiest of nurseries. But the walls were knocked down, leaving the naked peril of the precipice. They did not fall over; but when their friends returned to them they were all huddled in terror in the centre of the island; and their song had ceased.

And in refutation of the argument 'that Christianity belongs to The Dark Ages':

'Here I did not satisfy myself with reading modern generalisations; I read a little history. And in history I found that Christianity, so far from belonging to the Dark Ages, was the one path across the Dark Ages that was not dark. It was a shiny bridge connecting two shining civilizations. If anyone says that the faith arose in ignorance and savagery the answer is simple; it didn't. It arose in the full summer of the Roman Empire. The world was swarming with sceptics, and pantheism was as plain as the sun, when Constantine nailed the cross to the mast. It is perfectly true that afterwards the ship sank; but it is far more extraordinary that the ship came up again: repainted and glittering with the cross still at the top. The ark lived under the load of waters; after being buried under the load of dynasties and clans, we arose and remembered Rome. If our faith had been the mere fad of a fading empire, fad would have followed fad in the twilight, and if the civilisation ever emerged (and many such have never re-emerged) it would have been under some new barbaric flag. But the Christian Church was the last life of the old society and also the first life of the new. .... How can we say that the Church wishes to bring us back into the Dark Ages? The Church was the only thing that brought us out of them.'

These attacks of course arose principally out of the anti-spiritual philosophies of the time, often dressed up in the guise of liberalism. Chesterton convincingly argues that these concepts are self suffocating and indeed in denying natural wonder and spirituality, are most illiberal. He also convincingly argues that 'progress' for its own sake is meaningless, again with great relevance to today's mores.

## Salvation only through Jesus

**I**N HIS WEEKDAY Mass homily on April 5, Pope Francis spoke of devotion to the name of Jesus and emphasized that salvation is found only in him. At times, 'whenever there are problems,' he noted, 'people do not commend themselves to Jesus, but to others,' even turning to 'fortune tellers, that they may resolve matters'; or people 'go to consult tarot cards,' to find out and understand what they should do. Yet it is not by resorting to magicians or to tarot cards that salvation is found: it is 'in the name of Jesus. And we should bear witness to this! He is the one Saviour.' The Pope went on, 'Our Lady always takes us to Jesus. Call upon Our Lady, and she will do what she did at Cana: "Do whatever he tells you!" ... She was the first person to act in the name of Jesus ... I entrust myself to the name of Jesus. I pray, "Jesus, Jesus".'

Several chapters of the book examine these and other questions in wide ranging detail, frequently with the use of brilliant literary acrobatics and seeming paradox, not to mention outstandingly poetic prose, for which the author is famous.

He notes that the Christian teachings of free will and original sin are glaringly self evident and undeniable and are the obvious starting point for any worthwhile examination of our being. He also sees the world as a place of romance, adventure and danger to which the Christian doctrine is perfectly attuned. In finally constructing his Utopian ideal he found that Christianity had been there before him.

He is thus fairly painstakingly building the ground to come to the conclusion that having asked himself all of the difficult questions in life, Christianity is the only creed that provides all the answers.

He describes his experience of discovery, which merits some contemplation, as follows:

'And then followed an experience impossible to describe. It was if I had been blundering around since my birth with two huge and unmanageable machines, of different shapes and without apparent connection - the world and Christian tradition. I had found this hole in the world: the fact that somehow one must find a way of loving the world without trusting it; somehow one must love the world without being worldly. I found this projecting feature of Christian theology, like a sort of hard spike, the dogmatic insistence that God was personal, and had made a world separate from Himself. The spike of dogma fitted exactly into the hole

in the world - it had evidently been meant to go there - and then the strange thing began to happen. When these two parts of the two machines had come together, one after another, all the other parts fitted and fell in with an eerie exactitude. I could hear bolt after bolt of all the machines falling into its place with a kind of click of relief.'

A recurring theme through the book is that Christian doctrine is in effect a finely tuned set of precepts that on the one hand allows freedom for joyful play and exuberance but on the other requires discipline to marshal man's propensity to err. It is not a matter of compromise but rather of allowing competing passions to be fully expressed to an acutely balanced point.

'Christianity was like a huge ragged and romantic rock, which, though it sways on its pedestal at a touch, yet, because its exaggerated excrescences exactly balance each other, is enthroned there for a thousand years.'

'St Francis, in praising all good, could be a more shouting optimist than Walt Whitman. St Jerome, in denouncing all evil, could paint the world blacker than Schopenhauer. Both passions were free because both were kept in their place.'

The following earlier passage is also relevant to the theme:

'The modern world is not evil; in some ways the modern world is far too good. It is full of wild and wasted virtues. When a religious scheme is shattered (as Christianity was shattered at the Reformation), it is not merely the vices that are let loose. The vices are, indeed, let loose, and they wander and do damage. But the virtues are let loose also; and the virtues wander more widely, and the virtues do more

terrible damage. The modern world is full of old Christian virtues gone mad. The virtues have gone mad because they have been isolated from each other and are wandering alone.

And again in discussion of the historical passion regarding small points of theology:

'It was only a matter of an inch; but an inch is everything when you are balancing. The Church could not afford to swerve a hair's breadth if she was to continue her great and daring experiment of the irregular equilibrium. Once let one idea become less powerful and some other idea would become too powerful. It was no flock of sheep that the Christian shepherd was leading, but a herd of bulls and tigers, of terrible ideals and devouring doctrines, each one of them strong enough to turn to a false religion and lay waste the world...'

'It is always easy to let the age have its head; the difficult thing is to keep one's own. It is always easy to be a modernist; as it is easy to be a snob. To have fallen into any of those open traps of error and exaggeration which fashion after fashion and sect after sect along the historic path of Christendom - that would have indeed been simple. ... But to have avoided them all has been one whirling adventure; and in my vision the heavenly chariot flies thundering through the ages, the dull heresies sprawling and prostrate, the wild truth reeling but erect.'

There is a powerful poetry in the above passages. Eloquently and profoundly it distinguishes Christianity from other beliefs and philosophies and yet seems to fortify it with an enhanced credibility.

These of course are only a few of the very many memorable literary gems brilliantly shining through Chesterton's treatise. His discourse is much more wide-ranging and complex than I have attempted to outline here.

In this work Chesterton leaves no doubt that he is convinced of the truth of the Christian doctrine. It is open to question whether he brings every sincere reader entirely along with him.

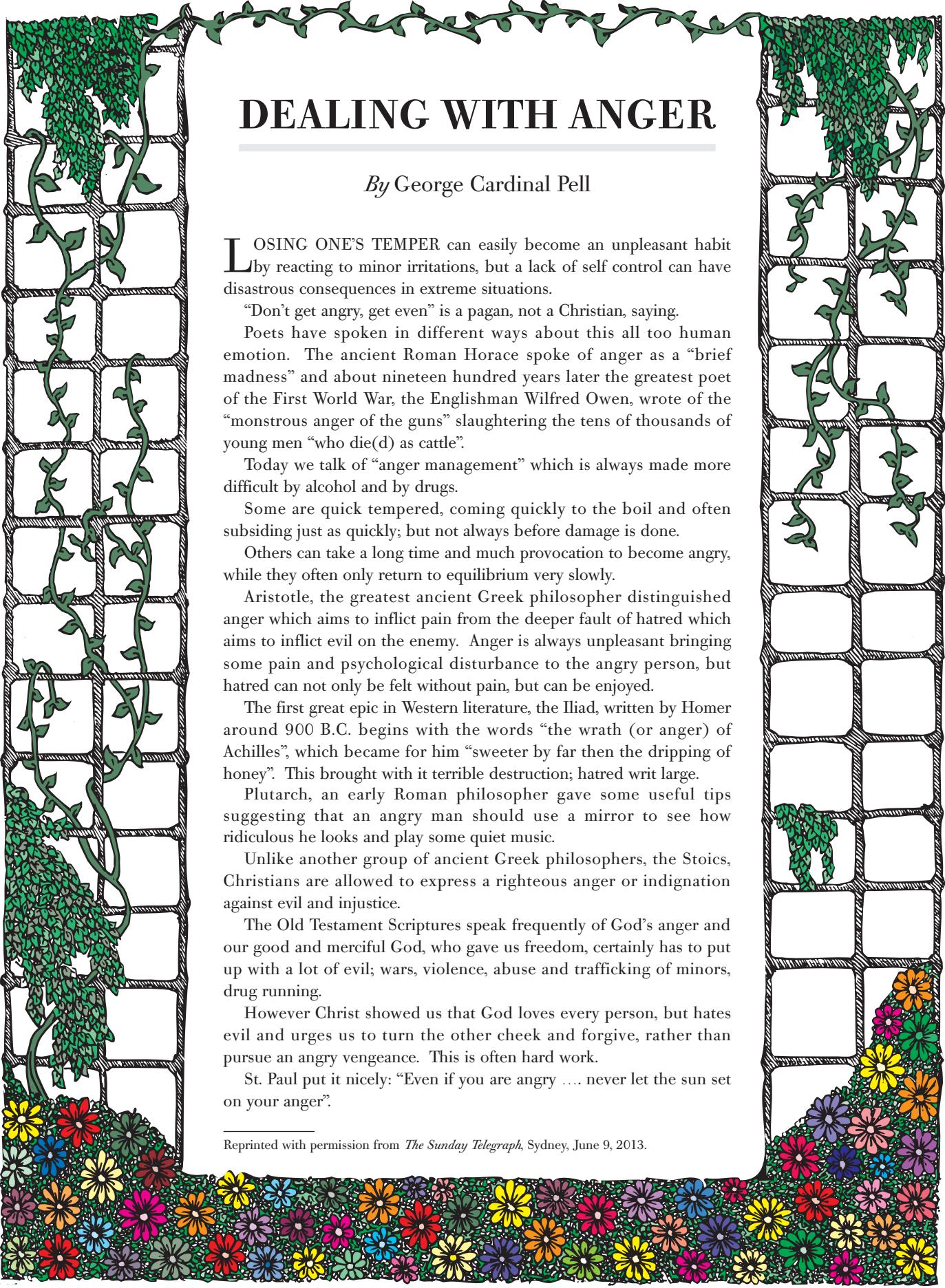
My hope simply was to give to the prospective enquirer a glimpse of Chesterton's genius and of the contemporary relevance of his message.

PETER FISHER is a retired professional forester with over forty years experience in all facets of forest management. He is a former Assistant Commissioner of the Forestry Commission of NSW.



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# DEALING WITH ANGER

By George Cardinal Pell

LOSING ONE'S TEMPER can easily become an unpleasant habit by reacting to minor irritations, but a lack of self control can have disastrous consequences in extreme situations.

"Don't get angry, get even" is a pagan, not a Christian, saying.

Poets have spoken in different ways about this all too human emotion. The ancient Roman Horace spoke of anger as a "brief madness" and about nineteen hundred years later the greatest poet of the First World War, the Englishman Wilfred Owen, wrote of the "monstrous anger of the guns" slaughtering the tens of thousands of young men "who die(d) as cattle".

Today we talk of "anger management" which is always made more difficult by alcohol and by drugs.

Some are quick tempered, coming quickly to the boil and often subsiding just as quickly; but not always before damage is done.

Others can take a long time and much provocation to become angry, while they often only return to equilibrium very slowly.

Aristotle, the greatest ancient Greek philosopher distinguished anger which aims to inflict pain from the deeper fault of hatred which aims to inflict evil on the enemy. Anger is always unpleasant bringing some pain and psychological disturbance to the angry person, but hatred can not only be felt without pain, but can be enjoyed.

The first great epic in Western literature, the Iliad, written by Homer around 900 B.C. begins with the words "the wrath (or anger) of Achilles", which became for him "sweeter by far then the dripping of honey". This brought with it terrible destruction; hatred writ large.

Plutarch, an early Roman philosopher gave some useful tips suggesting that an angry man should use a mirror to see how ridiculous he looks and play some quiet music.

Unlike another group of ancient Greek philosophers, the Stoics, Christians are allowed to express a righteous anger or indignation against evil and injustice.

The Old Testament Scriptures speak frequently of God's anger and our good and merciful God, who gave us freedom, certainly has to put up with a lot of evil; wars, violence, abuse and trafficking of minors, drug running.

However Christ showed us that God loves every person, but hates evil and urges us to turn the other cheek and forgive, rather than pursue an angry vengeance. This is often hard work.

St. Paul put it nicely: "Even if you are angry .... never let the sun set on your anger".

Reprinted with permission from *The Sunday Telegraph*, Sydney, June 9, 2013.

*What we are fed via skilfully-timed 'official' press releases, are stories which invariably quote impressive-sounding sources as though these were still a guarantee of anything at all.*

# AS OF NOW, WHAT SHOULD WE ALL BELIEVE?

By Giles Auty

**I**CERTAINLY INTEND no disrespect to readers of *Annals* by asking what seems on the face of it rather an impudent question.

As Catholics most of us are, of course, reasonably clear about what we believe on Sundays, at least – especially when we join together to recite the Nicene or Apostles' creeds which deal with the more important facts of our present and future existences in simple but lyrical prose. My own preference here is for the Nicene creed sung in Latin because of the sheer beauty of its language.

What really concerns me here, in fact, is not what we believe openly on Sundays but what we are asked to believe on the other days of the week when we are assailed by an avalanche of facts and pseudo-facts more or less continuously via all branches of our media.

Now that our economic worlds, in most Western countries, have been reduced to near chaos through the irresponsible actions of bankers – who seem, for the most part, to have abandoned any pretence of their traditional probity – many of us are reduced to studying the often contradictory advice of financial journalists in the vain hope of restoring our fiscal lives to some semblance of order.

I, for one, had never imagined living in a world in which thrift and saving

are apparently penalised and in which many people's plans for their futures have been not just endangered but effectively wrecked.

However, to look on the bright side for a moment perhaps, shares in Dignity – the UK's only undertakers to be listed on our stock exchange –

hospitals – a subject I touched on in the last issue of *Annals*. Apparently there has been a 'shock rise' of 7 per cent in the UK death rate for the first three months of this year. Why should we not be surprised?

As I also wrote in the last issue of *Annals* many of us in the UK now await each new day's newspaper headlines in fear rather than any expectation of pleasure.

Rushing to catch an early train last week, for example, I had no time to buy my normal morning newspaper but grabbed, instead, a copy of a free newspaper *Metro* which among other things provides those living in the London area with canny financial suggestions. On page 5 of one of last week's issues (13 May) however the following threatening headline caught my eye: WARMING UP FOR A WIPEOUT – temperature rise of 4°C will see significant loss of plants and animals across the globe.

For those of you fortunate enough to be living in Australia, of course, alarmist 'global warming' headlines are a relatively common event. In the not too distant past, for instance, we learned from Tim Flannery that the whole of Antarctica was shortly to be covered in grass owing to 'global warming'. Has this happened yet? No less to my puzzlement, Mr. Flannery was promptly made *Australian of the Year*.

Are we all a trifle touched already by the boiling temperatures so many have forecast? In Britain as we



are apparently doing very well. That seems to be because of what financial journalists here describe as a 'shock rise' in the UK's death rate.

So far I seem to be the only person to make the obvious connection between this 'shock rise' and the admitted shortcomings in care in at least some of Britain's National Health

approach midsummer's day we have just witnessed savage hailstorms and a bottom temperature of 3°C – events also witnessed by your editor as I attempted to introduce him to the beauties of the British countryside in summer.

How long such beauties will continue – whatever the temperature – is also in the lap of the temporal gods now since we are to be blessed, before too long, with the erection of 32,000 massive wind turbines here. Government propaganda can thus never be allowed to die down for too long.

What we are therefore fed via skilfully-timed 'official' press releases, are stories which invariably quote impressive-sounding sources as though these were still a guarantee of anything at all.

To say that I am sceptical by now about anything at all fed into our system from 'official' or 'expert' sources is perhaps just the kind of disillusionment to be expected after years spent in journalism.

During my lifetime I have certainly seen a number of subjects very dear to my heart – such as the visual arts and public education – wrecked, possibly forever, by the interventions of 'experts'. Do we not recall here that world-acclaimed experts could not even agree about so elementary a matter as the teaching of little children to read?

What I now ask you to do, in the interests of the headline with which I started this article, is consider carefully the words which went out under the alarmist headline from Metro which I have quoted already:

'More than two thirds of plant species and half of common land animals could see dramatic losses this century because of climate



change, British scientists predict. The collapse of ecosystems would have a major impact on air and water quality, agriculture and tourism. Global temperatures are due to rise 4°C above pre-industrialised levels by 2100 if nothing is done to stem greenhouse gas emissions. But the damage would be greatly reduced if emissions were scaled down in time, the study shows. Researcher Dr. Rachel Warren, from the University of East Anglia's School of Environmental Science said while lots of research had looked at the effect of climate change on endangered plants and animals, little was known about how an increase in global temperature will affect more common species. She explained "Our research predicts that climate change will greatly reduce the diversity of even very common species found in most parts of the world. This global scale biodiversity would significantly diminish the biosphere and the ecosystem services it provides".

'Losses are reduced by 60 per cent if global warming is cut to 2°C above pre-industrial levels, with emissions peaking in 2016 and then being reduced by five per cent a year. If the emissions peak in 2030, losses are reduced by 40 per cent. Dr. Warren said the team only looked at rising temperatures but she added: "The

symptoms of climate change such as extreme weather events, pests and diseases, mean that our estimates are probably conservative".

The findings come as daily carbon dioxide readings at a US government agency lab topped 400 parts per million for the first time since the prehistoric era.

Pew!

Precisely what percentage of the foregoing do you personally believe?

Its purpose is clearly to frighten us out of whatever wits we manage to retain. Britain's charming countryside must therefore be covered by wind-turbines and solar panels as soon as possible. A single, recent development of the latter in the lovely rural county of Suffolk is due to cover 94 acres – apparently prompting a famous comedian who lives nearby to engage in prolonged, hysterical fits of laughter.

Those with long memories may also reflect here that Britain's University of East Anglia's School of Environmental Science does not enjoy the best of reputations in providing details of its research. With so much at stake here where, if anywhere, may any of us turn for credible scientific advice?

Exactly how reliable, for example, is the confident statement that "Global temperatures are set to rise 4°C above pre-industrialised levels by 2100 if nothing is done to stem greenhouse gas emissions"?

Let me turn for a moment here to Ian Plimer's *Heaven & Earth: Global warming, the Missing Science* (Connor Court 2009) which, since I discovered it not long after publication, has taken pride of place among books to which I regularly refer.

Professor Plimer, who is one of Australia's more eminent scientists, holds a totally different view from what many have been led to believe is 'the received wisdom' about climate change:

"The Roman Warming, the Dark Ages, the Medieval Warming and the Little Ice Age invalidate all arguments supporting human induced global warming. This is because climates far warmer than the Late 20th century Warming existed before industrialisation or human emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>".

Professor Plimer gives no credence whatsoever, in fact, to the theory

## Shall we have a Referendum ?

**I**F IT WERE not grounded in nature there would be no justice, and all virtues would cease to exist. How otherwise can magnanimity, love of one's country, *pietas*, meriting the good opinion of others and honouring obligations, exist? For these arise from the fact that we are *by nature* inclined to love our fellow men. This is the foundation of justice. ... If what is *just* is decided by the will of the people, or by decrees of princes or sentences of judges, then thievery could be *lawful*, as could adultery and perjury – if such were determined by the votes or opinions of the mob. ... It would be madness to think that their reality is determined *by people's opinion* rather than *by their very essence*.

— Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Legibus*, Liber Primus, §§ 44,45. Translated: Paul Stenhouse.

on which an enormous, world-wide industry is now based.

How often has a recent scientific theory with consequences that affect us all been absolutely refuted by someone well qualified to do so?

Professor Plimer certainly does not pussyfoot around. He concludes, among other things, during a hugely interesting book of some 500 pages which cover in great detail the roles also played by the sun, earth, ice, water and air in the forging of the world's climate – with the statement that:

'To argue that modern climate is driven by a trace gas in the atmosphere (CO<sub>2</sub>) requires many non-scientific leaps of faith'.

I suspect he may even be trying to be polite here.

Most of us are not scientists of course yet that does not imply that intelligent, well-meaning people are incapable of understanding the salient points of technical arguments – especially, perhaps, when the futures of us all, whether climatic or economic, are clearly at stake.

I do not doubt for a moment, for example, that you will find the following crucial point perfectly easy to grasp:

'If it is acknowledged that there have been rapid large climate changes before industrialisation, then the human production of CO<sub>2</sub> cannot be the major driver for climate change.'

Of course we should be careful for the welfare of our planet, but that should not lead us into a state of sentimental folly which powerful commercial interests may be only too ready to exploit.

What we believe today matters not just in questions of faith but in the sense of the responsibility and intelligence we bring as citizens to our everyday lives.

For the outstanding good sense of his writing, Professor Plimer undoubtedly deserves the last word here – which is, in fact, the last sentence of his book: 'Human stupidity is only exceeded by God's mercy which is infinite'.

GILES AUTY was born in the UK and trained privately as a painter. He worked professionally as an artist for 20 years. Publication of his *The Art of Self Deception* swung his career towards criticism. He was art critic for *The Spectator* from 1984 to 1995. He continues to devote himself to his original love – painting. He is a regular contributor to *Annals*.



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# THE DAY THE BISHOP CAME TO HELENSBURGH

*By Bede North MSC*

RECENTLY BISHOP PETER INGHAM, of our Diocese of Wollongong, came to our parish of Holy Cross, Helensburgh, on official visitation. He obligingly spent time with the children in each classroom of the primary school. He was asked every question from where he got his funny hat to where was his big stick. This led him to describe to the children how he was the shepherd of the diocese.

In Grade One a six year old boy reacted immediately to his retelling of the parable of the Good Shepherd. He stood up and stated that this story was in their religion book. With that he made off to the back of the room and returned to show the Bishop where it was in the book. When the Bishop moved on to another parable the boy immediately in one fell swoop opened the book at that page also and he could tell the story.

I was not expecting one so young to have a very good grasp of the parables. But we were all full of admiration that at such a young age he had grasped so much of what he had been taught. Obviously, he had been deeply touched by this contact with religion. It made me reflect a little on similar incidents over the years when very young children had made impressive statements that one wouldn't quite expect from the young.

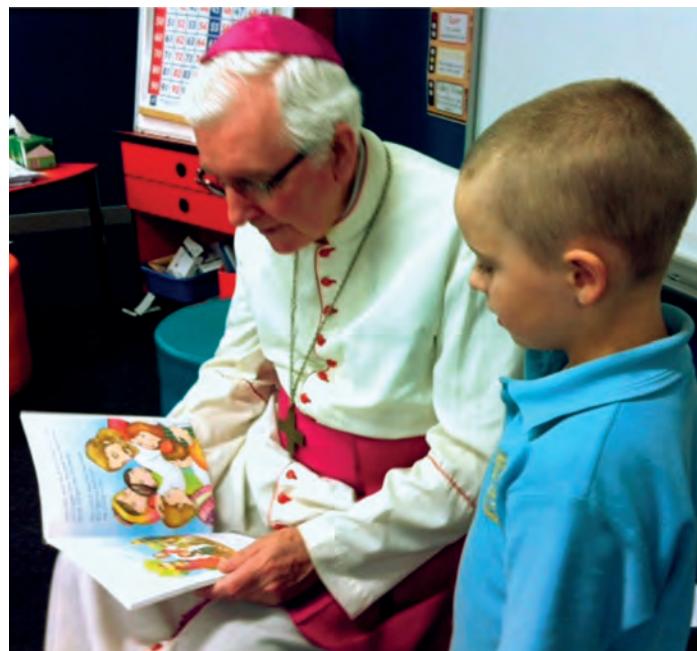
Just lately I read of a nun reflecting back on her childhood. She said that when she was eleven and preparing for her Confirmation the Bishop visited her school. She was asked what was the sixth commandment. And she gave the answer: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." I give just two experiences that I remember very vividly.

The first was the day after the children made their First Reconciliation. I went down to the school to congratulate them on how well they had behaved and so on. In one class I asked how they felt when they made their Reconciliation. One boy gave me an unforgettable answer. He said: "I felt as though I had just had a shower on the inside." I've never known a theologian to say it better.

The other incident involved a young boy who always served the Saturday evening Mass. He arrived a little late on this evening, with a deal of blood on his face and a bit the worse for wear. I asked him what had happened. He said he had told some bigger boys that he was going to Mass, and that they had belted him up. He eventually made a statement to the effect that they would go to hell. I told him that that need not be the case, and that God wanted us all to go to heaven.

His final statement amazed me. He said: "That's right, Father. Everyone wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die." It may have been an old saying, but it was the first time I had heard it, and has lived with me.

The Bible tells us of the wisdom that comes from the mouths of children. So often in life we witness it. Children have a simplicity and directness that touch the heart. We can all learn from them.



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FATHER BEDE NORTH, MSC is administrator of the parish of Helensburgh – a mining community set in picturesque bush within the Royal National Park. It is the northernmost parish of the diocese of Wollongong NSW.

*Christianity itself had to be reformed in a Machiavellian way so that it would support the state rather than continually challenging it.*

# WORSHIPPING THE STATE

By George J. Marlin



THE PRIME objective of secularists in modern times has been to ‘free’ us all from the influence (the *burden*, they’d say) of Christianity. Just how they have gone about destroying that influence on the course of human affairs is ably described in Dr. Benjamin Wiker’s new book *Worshipping the State: How Liberalism Became our State Religion*.

Wiker, who has taught at Franciscan University and Thomas Aquinas College, holds that the *raison d'être* of secular philosophers’ has been to reduce Christianity’s hold on Western culture, and either to subordinate the Church to the state or to establish a rival civic religion that would make the Church irrelevant – or impotent.

In Wiker’s telling, it was Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) who ‘invented the absolute separation of church and state that is the hallmark of liberalism.’ His hope was to deny the Church any moral power and to subordinate it to the secular sovereign.

Machiavelli insisted that for a prince to survive he must ‘learn to be able not to be good; hence he must be free from the moral restraints the Church imposes, even on a head of state.

Machiavelli does argue, however, that the ruthless prince should appear pious and if necessary use the Church to control the unenlightened masses.

Twenty-three years after his death, Machiavelli’s notions on the relationship of state and Church were utilized at the Peace of Augsburg (1555). The European monarchs agreed to a compromise known as *cuius regio, eius religio*, ‘The State’s religion is the religion of its citizens’. Each state was to determine its own established Church.

The English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), author of

Leviathan, built on Machiavelli’s political philosophy to undermine the ‘seditious’ influence of religion. Hobbes, Wiker points out, ‘concluded that the political problem was the existence of any notion of religion independent of the political power. . . . Christianity itself had to be

reformed in a Machiavellian way so that it would support the state rather than continually challenging it.

Hobbes, the first proponent of the totalitarian state, dismissed the Church’s doctrine of sin insisting: ‘there was no sin and no right and wrong until the sovereign declares them to be so.’ Natural rights do not come from God, but from the state. If there is to be a Church, it will be state controlled.

Dr. Wiker persuasively argues that modern liberals adopted Hobbes’ notion of ‘moral relativism, and of an entirely secular materialistic foundation for politics.’ The difference? Instead of the sovereign king determining what is right or wrong, the sovereign individual would define his own values.

The next philosopher to advance the case for the secular state was Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677). The leaders of his Jewish faith excommunicated Spinoza, primarily because he was a pantheist who ‘makes a god of this world and thus completely undermines the entire Judeo-Christian understanding of reality that flows from the creator – creature distinction in Genesis’.

In Spinoza’s view, the secular state is the ‘greatest manifestation of the divine.’ A state-sponsored church would be available merely to promote the agenda of the state to the ‘plebs,’ the dumb common people.

Such a church would be dogma-free and its core belief would be reduced to ‘love of neighbour,’ in other words being nice. By love, Wiker writes, ‘Spinoza meant minding one’s own business, not bothering others but just getting along – in a word, tolerance. . . . Spinoza enshrines doctrinal tolerance as the supreme virtue in the established secular liberal church.’

While Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Spinoza encouraged the sovereign to use the Church to achieve secular goals, it

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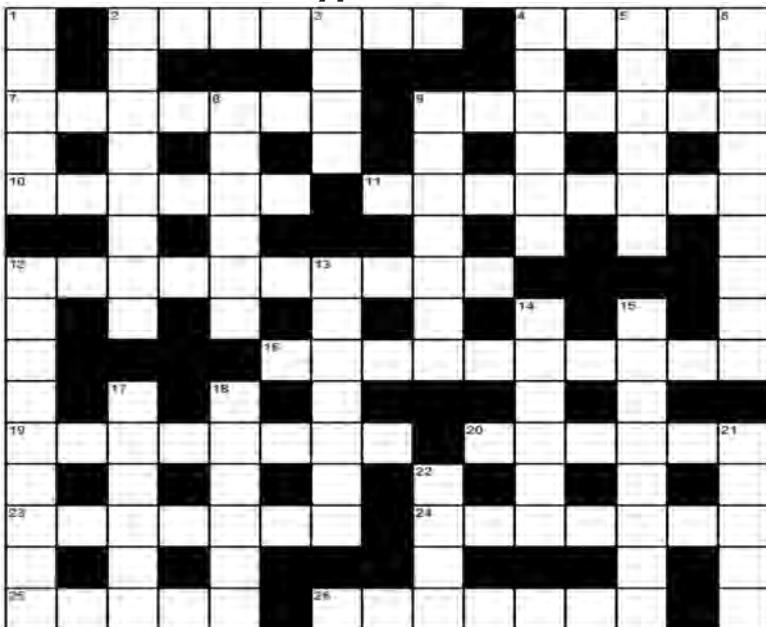
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## ANNALS cr yptic cro SSword 35



### ACROSS CLUES

- 2 Amish Tom is upset without a system of theology, as taught by the Dominicans (7)
- 4 Kind of note held by Miss Harper (5)
- 7 Comedian places chain around hungry pupil (7)
- 9 10 with brain damage in African city (7)
- 10 Leading evangelist, awfully sassy, supplies literary compositions (6)
- 11 European community to change menu in Cologne, initially with regard to unity (8)
- 12 Takes the place of outstanding players in tennis tournaments, say (10)
- 16 Donated damaged chair and table - how very eleemosynary (10)
- 19 Stitch one snooker staff between forefinger and thumb (8)
- 20 My saint, I note, is supernatural (6)
- 23 After an imperfect change, I'm leaving to become a French department head (7)
- 24 A tormenting cross-country runner? (7)
- 25 Tries out religious procedures... (5)
- 26 ...and gives holy orders every second hour to some Vikings we're told (7)

### DOWN CLUES

- 1 Revolutionary retains power in secret place (5)
- 2 Initially Thomas ran pets out of church wing (8)
- 3 North America supports ten where Saint Columba built a monastery (4)
- 4 Rising before noon, soldier Eliot has a mark of social disgrace (6)
- 5 Silly Antigone, for example, leaves to embrocate (6)

6 As a rule of personal conduct, heir to throne takes in one starving pupil (9)

- 8 Tiers of hens? (6)
- 9 Type of bomb found in close proximity around University College London (7)
- 12 Seaside bird to smooth Scottish musician (9)
- 13 Evacuate with cars emission device (7)
- 14 A persistent horse that never leaves? (6)
- 15 Seaman (captain) loses headgear aboard ship; carries on without (8)
- 17 Member of clergy in Capri established a church (6)
- 18 Time Sr. refashioned liturgical hats in America (6)
- 21 Cry uncontrollably over the Spanish patron of ecumenists (5)
- 22 Church notice, with a piece of paper punched out, in African republic (4)

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was Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) who held 'that Christianity is wholly incompatible with the new secular order and . . . must be superseded, replaced by an entirely new religion completely defined by the secular political project.'

For Rousseau, there is no 'Body of Christ' only a 'Body politic.' He called for a pagan civil religion that requires the complete devotion of its citizenry.

The basis of his radical egalitarian religion is tolerance. Sexuality is liberated from Church restraints; marriage is not sanctioned by God but is defined by the state in a civil contract. According to Rousseau, 'whoever dares to say there is no salvation outside the Church should be chased out of the State, unless the State is the Church, and the prince is the pontiff.'

Wiker concludes that these four philosophers laid the groundwork for the liberal secular revolution in the United States. Their joint influence has reduced morality to hedonism, bodily pleasures. Rights have been redefined as desires. Evil is the result of a bad environment, not inherently wrong choices.

Wiker rightly asserts that in the United States, 'secular liberalism has definite moral beliefs, quite different from Christian morality, which liberals are trying to impose by governmental force: contraception, abortion, infanticide, sexual libertinism, easy divorce, the continual redefinition of marriage, euthanasia, and so on.'

The Obama Administration's move to force the Church to provide insurance coverage for contraception and abortion is just the most recent example of the state attempting to impose its views in the name of 'tolerance.'

Dr. Wiker proves that ideas do indeed have consequences. In the secular state, freedom no longer means choosing what is right or just; it now means doing whatever one feels like doing. The act of choosing is all that matters. Choosing in itself becomes the ultimate value. Without absolute truths to measure actions, willingness becomes willfulness. What is an irrational action in Judeo-Christian teaching has now been elevated to a necessary principle.

GEORGE J. MARLIN is an editor of *The Quotable Fulton Sheen* and the author of *The American Catholic Voter*. His most recent book is *Narcissist Nation: Reflections of a Blue-State Conservative*. This review first appeared in *The Catholic Thing* and is reprinted with permission.



*Kepler's analogy does give us an example of how a sphere is, at the same time, essentially, one and three.*

## NATURE REFLECTING ITS CREATOR

*By Dennis J Murphy MSC*

THE well-known mathematician/astronomer, Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), a Lutheran, considered a sphere to be the most perfect physical form. For him, it also reflected in a remarkable way properties found in God, particularly the Trinity.

A sphere (for example, a cricket ball) requires a centre, a surface and a constant distance between the centre and its surface if it is to be really a sphere.

Using this analogy, Kepler saw the Father as the centre of the Godhead, the Son as the surface that perfectly delineates the hidden centre, and the Holy Spirit as the special, constant relationship bonding the Father and the Son.

In a sphere, the centre, the surface and their constant relationship are not independent entities. The centre, for example, is not something that *has* a relationship with the surface. As a centre, it exists only as a relationship that constitutes the particular sphere that it is a centre of.

The same has to be said of the surface and the distance between the centre and the surface. These relationships are not added to a sphere. Together they constitute a particular sphere. Without any one of them the sphere would simply cease to be a sphere.

Thus the Father, Son and Spirit are not relationships added on to the Godhead. They constitute it. Much less does the 'real' Godhead exist somehow beyond these three relationships.

The early Councils of the Church, after long intense reflections and disputes, came to the conclusion that the only way of being faithful to all that the Scriptures and Tradition had to say was to affirm that in the One God we find three internal, distinct relationships that do not simply belong to the one God, but are the essence of the One God.

The relationships which constitute a sphere (a cricket ball) are each distinct from the others, but each has its own special role to perform in the one ball. Each can be a point of focus or a point of contact.

Thus in the Trinity, the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Father, nor is the Holy Spirit the Father or the Son. However, the three together, each in their own way, are essentially involved both in the inner life of God and in God's action on others.

We are still left with a mystery beyond our understanding, but Kepler's analogy does give us an example of how a sphere is at the same time essentially one and three.

We also realize more easily that the Trinity does not make God more remote from us. It is revealed to us by God becoming close to us as Father, indwelling Spirit and incarnate Son.

FATHER DENNIS MURPHY, MSC is a graduate of the *Biblicum* in Rome. He taught Scripture for many years in Australian seminaries. He was for six years Superior of the Australian Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, and for twelve years an Assistant General of the Order, based in Rome. He is now stationed in India.

*The Japanese never intended to invade Australia and lacked the capacity to do so effectively. This was probably well known to Allied intelligence perhaps as early as April 1942 and was eventually confirmed from captured documents and post-war interrogations.*

## WAS INVASION POSSIBLE IN 1942?

by Michael O'Connor

In A PREVIOUS article (Annals 3/2013), I commented as something of an aside that no nation except possibly the United States once upon a time could successfully invade Australia. Your esteemed editor questioned this assertion. Surely, he claimed, Japan could have done so in 1942 and nearly did so. That view is probably supported by most older Australians as well as those who have an interest in Australian history. He then challenged me to back up my assertion. So here goes.

By the end of February 1942, less than three months after Japan went to war against the United States and the British empire, the situation looked desperate for Australia.

The great, allegedly impregnable, bastion of Singapore had fallen, the remnants of Dutch forces were being mopped up in the Netherlands East Indies, Darwin, Broome, Wyndham and Derby on the Australian mainland had been attacked, Rabaul had fallen and the Japanese carrier forces were rampaging across the Western Pacific and Eastern Indian Oceans. The next step was surely to be an invasion and occupation of Australia. The answer seemed obvious and our patently obvious inability to resist suggested an inevitable defeat.

Australia's small navy had already suffered grievous casualties with the loss of the *Sydney*, *Yarra* and *Vampire*. Of our five AIF divisions, the 8th had been captured in Malaya (with detachments in Rabaul, Timor and Ambon defeated by vastly superior forces), the 9th was in the Middle East, and 1st Armoured was still forming.

Prime Minister John Curtin was fighting Britain's Winston Churchill who wanted to send the 6th division

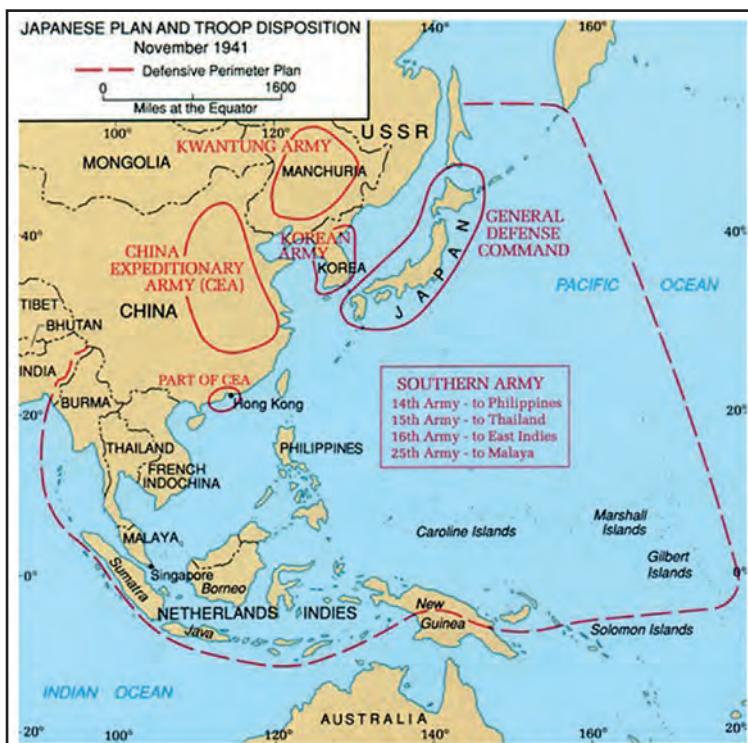
Australia's other army, the conscript Militia, was poorly equipped and even more poorly trained thanks to decades not only of neglect but also of political indecision about defence policy. For its part, the RAAF had not a single modern fighter aircraft and no long-range heavy bombers in Australia.

In late February, a small seaplane launched from one of the large Japanese submarines examined Sydney Harbour, Port Phillip Bay and the approaches to Hobart, all in daylight. This was a pure reconnaissance mission. The aircraft seems to have been undetected except for an anti-aircraft battery at the Williamstown rifle range. The aircraft was identified as Japanese but no action was taken beyond a telephone call to Victoria Barracks requesting permission to open fire! By the time permission was given, of course the aircraft was out of range. It was a good example of the psychological inertia that had gripped Australia.

The Australian government led by John Curtin faced a serious dilemma. On the one hand, it recognised

that the long-held fear of the so-called 'Yellow Peril' of Japan and the speed of the Japanese advance across the Pacific and South-East Asia had generated a degree of panic in the community.

On the other hand, unusually drastic measures were called for to mobilise military and industrial resources, and



to Burma and the 7th to Java where both would have landed just in time to be shipped to Japanese prison camps. Fortunately, Curtin won the fight thanks not only to his own determination but also to the unanimous support of the Australian Chiefs of Staff, two of whom were British officers.

these threatened to intensify the panic.

The arrival of some small elements of American forces, mainly air and naval at that stage, did little to help if only because the Americans were also being defeated everywhere. On the other hand, the government was recalling experienced officers from the Middle East to boost the readiness of the army in Australia. These too were able to hose down some of the wilder assumptions about a possible invasion.

One senior American officer using a small-scale map demonstrated to a group of Australian and American officers how a Japanese force would land near Darwin and sweep across the continent's deserts to capture the Sydney-Canberra-Melbourne triangle. He was somewhat nonplussed when an Australian general asked what the Japanese troops would do for such basic logistic needs as drinking water!

When the Japanese invasion failed to materialise, the panic settled down somewhat although the invasion scare was maintained long after any possibility was removed.

As in Britain, peddling the myth coupled with a rigid press censorship helped to intensify the national war effort with all its attendant community sacrifices such as rationing, restrictions on travel and conscription of labour.

Later in the war, it allowed the army to employ the mass of conscript soldiers who could not be deployed beyond Australian territory (or following legislative changes, beyond the Equator).

As a child in Melbourne, I can recall the searchlights from a battery in the park across the road at a time when no enemy aircraft could possibly have reached Melbourne.

The Coral Sea battle at the beginning of May eased the pressure although the Japanese movement was directed at Port Moresby, not the Australian mainland. Then at the end of May, the midget submarine raid on Sydney Harbour coupled with some light shelling from the mother submarines of Sydney's eastern suburbs and Newcastle raised the temperature somewhat, at least in Sydney.

The real threat if there ever was one disappeared with the shattering defeat of Japan's carrier task force at the Battle of Midway in June.

## tyranny of Fashion and public opinion

HAVE YOU noticed how often nowadays people use the word 'social' as a euphemism for 'moral'? If a new medical technique is said to have 'serious social implications,' what is meant is that its use might be morally wrong... Why do people do this? Surely because the whole business of making moral judgments causes us acute embarrassment... But, in dispensing with religious authority as a basis for moral argument, we have unfortunately been unable to agree upon anything else... The moral norm becomes the majority opinion... Since public opinion is constantly changing, what is 'socially acceptable' today may hope, with the help of good publicity, to become 'socially unacceptable' in the future... People fancied that by shaking off the yoke of religious authority they were liberating themselves. But, in fact, they have fallen under a far worse tyranny, that of fashion and public opinion. The final absurdity is that those who have allowed social convention to become in effect the only criterion of right and wrong are the very same people who denounce what they call conventional morality! After 25 centuries of grounding morality on God and the individual conscience, we may relapse into the tyranny of a tribal morality.

— Douglas Johnson, Feb 12, 2013 Blog on *First Things*. The above was a BBC radio address delivered by Don Cupitt in 1974.

As is now well known to historians at least, the Japanese never intended to invade Australia and lacked the capacity to do so effectively. This was probably well known to Allied intelligence perhaps as early as April 1942 and was eventually confirmed from captured documents and postwar interrogations.

Certainly the Japanese High Command had examined the challenge of invading Australia. The Japanese navy in particular was anxious to do so in order to prevent Australia becoming – as it did – an important base for the defeat of Japan.

On the other hand, the Japanese army commanders were emphatic that Australia could not be successfully invaded. The reasons were simple and compelling. The greater part of their army was tied up in the war in China behind which loomed the old problem of Russia, their conquests in South-East Asia had to be defended and the vast perimeter in the Western Pacific had also to be protected.

The army also insisted that Japan lacked the necessary shipping to sustain an invasion force and that such an invasion would not be a pushover because the Australians would fight and fight hard.

Japanese strategy aimed to protect its conquests for the sake of the raw materials – especially oil and rubber – they made available. The compromise

strategy to be pursued was to use nuisance air raids on Darwin, to capture Port Moresby as base for similar raids on north Queensland facilities and, most significantly, to establish bases at Guadalcanal to permit interdiction of the US-Australia supply route.

That strategy led to the parallel battles in Papua and the Solomons and a further attrition of the Japanese navy as America's massive industrial capacity was brought into play.

In fact, had it not been for General MacArthur's presence in Australia and his ambition to use Australia as a base, this country could well have been sidelined for the rest of the war with perhaps incalculable effects on our postwar history.

The key element that saved Australia and its future was the intense rivalry, similar to that in Japan, between the American army and navy. The US Navy under Admiral King reckoned they could defeat Japan without any help from the army. MacArthur's prestige and influence ensured that the defeat of Japan would come from a two-pronged assault through the Central Pacific and from Australia. The British were no help; Churchill was far more interested in India and would have been content to let Australia go.

MICHAEL O'CONNOR is a former patrol officer in Papua New Guinea. He also served in the Royal Australian Navy as an intelligence officer.

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*The essence of Mother Adele's mysticism centred on the heart of Jesus – Hers was a life and a theology that Catholics and the world are likely to hear more about as her cause for canonization inevitably progresses.*

# NOT A PATH FOR THE FAINT HEARTED

*Reviewed by Tess Livingstone*



YBURN Convent opposite London's Hyde Park and the Sacré-Coeur Basilica atop Montmartre in Paris, are favourite places of pilgrimage for many Australians visiting the old world.

Those two holy sites also share a deep spiritual connection, which is one of the many fascinating insights to emerge from a rich and challenging biography of the French-born foundress of the Tyburn nuns, whose full congregational name, appropriately, is the Adorers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Montmartre.

*The Path of Mother Adele Garnier (1838-1924)* is the work of Don Gianmario Piga, an Italian military chaplain. It has been published by the Vatican Press in four languages – English, French, Italian and Spanish – renewing hopes that the cause for the Canonization of its subject, opened by Cardinal Basil Hume in 1992, will be advanced.

A word of preparation for potential readers. This is not a comfortable, easy-reading volume for the faint-hearted. It delves deep into the spirit of an intensely holy woman, a mystic and a daily communicant (health permitting) from an early age, who was afflicted frequently with suffering and pain as well as being blessed with what she and people of real faith would regard as Divine apparitions.

Such profound and transcendent spirituality, we learn, gave Adele, a special charism ‘to accompany people even in the most difficult moments,’ including their last hours, when she was ‘enabled by faith to support and encourage, with words full of hope, whosoever found himself in extreme suffering.’

*The Path of Mother Adele Garnier (1838-1924)* by Don Gianmario Piga is available now. Send \$25 to the Tyburn Priory, 325 Garfield Road East Riverstone NSW Australia 2765

Strong in her abandonment to God and her personal experience of pain, her spiritual counsel was ‘efficacious in leading the soul to find a Christian identity in suffering, in which the preparation for death became an experience of grace’.

The deathbed conversion of her own father, Nicholas Garnier, was a case in point. In photographs, Adele appears as a placid, intelligent woman with a gentle, approachable demeanour.

In the present secular and highly materialistic age the mystical life of Adele Garnier would strike many people, even



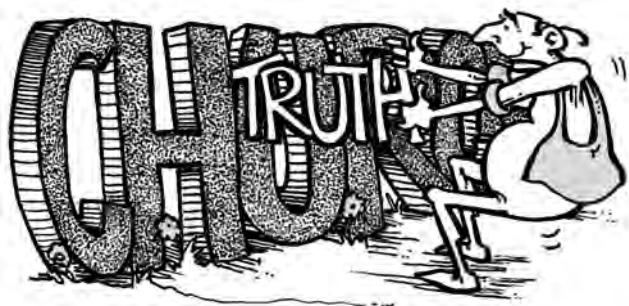
regular Mass-goers, as astounding. On deeper reflection, however, it makes sense given the extraordinary twists and turns of her life.

Was it mere coincidence that this French nun, driven from her base at Montmartre during a religious crackdown in 1901 should find herself a few months later buying a property on London’s Bayswater Road on the site where 105 martyrs – including Saints Oliver Plunkett and Edmund Campion – were put to death for the faith, two to three centuries earlier?

What sets this book apart from other spiritual biographies is that it is based on a largely unpublished collection of 1,500 letters between Mother Adele and her spiritual directors, fellow sisters and friends. One of the book’s recurring themes is the wisdom and comfort she drew from the series of eleven faithful and distinguished priests who served as her spiritual fathers over sixty-three years. They included three Jesuits, three Benedictines, a Dominican, a Sulpician, two Oblates of Mary Immaculate and one diocesan priest.

Among them were Blessed Columba Marmion, an Irish Benedictine monk who was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 2000 and Dom Bede Camm, a former Anglican Minister who converted to Catholicism before becoming a Benedictine monk and serving at Downside Abbey and as a chaplain in World War I. He encountered Adele after she and her community of eleven had moved to London and bought a house at Tyburn because he was an expert scholar of the English Martyrs.

It is obvious throughout this 300-page text that from her earliest years following her birth on August 15 1838, the Feast of the Assumption, Adele Garnier was marked out by Christ as a woman with an important destiny



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sustained by a strong interior spiritual life. Nothing less could account for the inexplicable sufferings, visions, successes, coincidences and providential outcomes that were the hallmarks of her life.

The distinctive white Sacré-Cœur basilica, with its candle-lit interior in which millions pay homage to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, is one striking example. When Adele was still a young laywoman, working as a governess, she read of plans to build a votive church at Monmartre.

As the author relates, while studying the life of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque 'she suddenly understood that the will of God was the perpetual adoration of the Sacred Heart present in the Eucharist at Monmartre, and that she would have to go to the Archbishop of Paris to proclaim this message.'

This she did, and despite the fact that he initially regarded the idea as impossible such adoration was eventually established in August 1885 and has never been interrupted, not even during the bombing of two world wars.

Even more astonishing was Adele's 'dream' in 1873 of how the new Basilica should look – a year before its design was released. As she wrote at the time, the Church of which she dreamed was 'NOT a Gothic one, but Byzantine, with its big dome and its small domes, of an ideal whiteness, an ensemble full of charm, of beauty ... The daylight entered only from one place: from the open air.....' Inside the church was 'like a city of light and splendour' at which Adele, in her dream, gazed 'with an ever increasing feeling of ineffable and inexpressible bliss'.

Later, when she saw the plan adopted for the Basilica she found it 'exactly as it had been in my dream.' And that is exactly how it is today.

Monmartre owes its name to the martyrdom of Saint Denis, Bishop of Paris and France's patron saint, in about 250. It was there that Adele created her fledgling order from 1896. It was another site of martyrdom across the English Channel, where, however, the congregation was to flourish.

Confronted with the likelihood of being disbanded under French government persecution in 1901, Adele looked to England, a Protestant land of genuine religious liberty which had received other religious communities exiled from France.

Disembarking at Folkestone, Mother Agnes, Adele's co-foundress of the Congregation whom she regarded as 'my second self' wrote: 'I wanted to kiss the soil of this dear and hospitable land ... We loved to remember St Augustine and the Benedictine monks who accompanied him, coming to this England to bring it the grace of the Catholic faith.'

Confident of a warm welcome from Cardinal Roger Vaughan, the Archbishop of Westminster, the nuns settled initially at 4 Bassett Road Notting Hill on October 12 1901.

Bolstered by a generous legacy from a young woman who opted to remain anonymous, the sisters were able to stretch their meagre resources to make a down payment on a large house at Tyburn for 15,000 pounds. They moved in on March 3 1903, fulfilling the 1585 prophecy of Tyburn martyr Father Gregory Gunne that one day a sanctuary of prayer, adoration and reparation would be built on the site where the English and Welsh martyrs were tortured and executed.

As well as attracting new recruits, Tyburn emerged as a centre of Catholic prayer and life, and remains so.

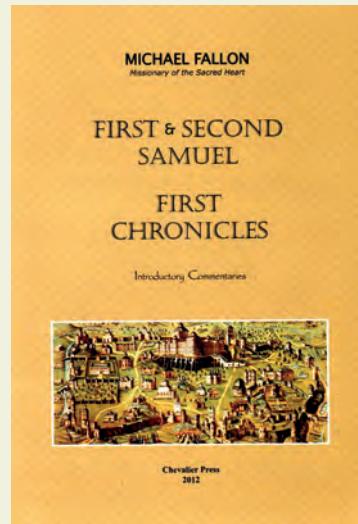
Early in 1914, under Adele's intuition and the guidance of her spiritual directors, the community linked itself to the wider Benedictine order. Within months, their convent was a sanctuary for dozens of priest refugees as well as brothers and nuns from Europe during World War I. By the time of Adele's death on June 17 1924 – the anniversary of her original vows in France – the Tyburn congregation had grown to include a second community at Royston near Cambridge.

Under her successors it has expanded into Ireland, Scotland, Australia, New Zealand, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Rome and this year, Nigeria. The congregation continues to conform to the foundress's vision of perpetual adoration and the habits of its 100 plus members are adorned with a medal depicting an image recalled by Adele's from her first apparition – Jesus surrounded by light, his Sacred Heart welcoming.

While Mother Adele, who is buried at Tyburn, has been dead for 89 years and she has received relatively little attention, interest in her life and spirituality continues to be intense. That interest will undoubtedly increase as a result of

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this book and in the wake of the Tyburn Congregation's video released in 2011.

In a postscript to Father Piga's book, the order's current Superior General, Mother Xavier McMonagle, reveals that since 1924 'myriads of letters have not ceased to come to us, addressed to Mother Adele Garnier from persons who seek to follow her path and to receive her spiritual protection. Each year these letters increase in number and confidence in her powerful intercession with God.'

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Tess Livingstone, a journalist and leader writer for *The Australian* is the author and editor of 13 books.

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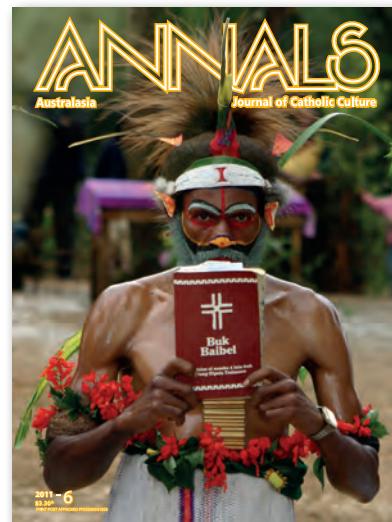
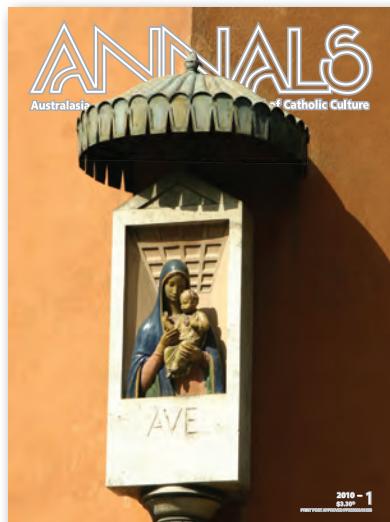
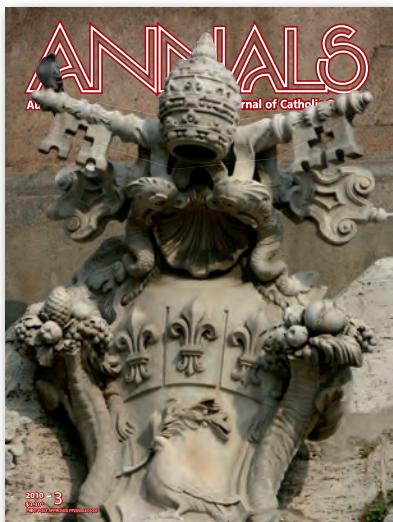
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*A plague on all your houses*

# WIELDING WEIL TO EFFECT

By James Murray.



ETTING THE timing right is difficult. Indeed it is often less achievement than luck. There again, people make their luck, not least journalists in which category Simon Leys (Pierre Ryckmans) can be highly placed.

His timing and/or luck, is to publish Simone Weil's undeservedly forgotten essay, *On the Abolition of All Political Parties* when such parties have become 'brands' to be promoted like beans, sauced up with a mix of values and slogans but never principles and served by party hacks after micro-waving by kitchen hands (otherwise known as spinmeisters).

Weil's essay (some 5,000 words) was written in 1943 after she left the safety of America to join Charles de Gaulle's Free French forces in London. She came via her non-religious Jewish family, distinction at L'Ecole Normale Supérieure, lecturing in Greek and philosophy working as a factory and farm hand and enlisting in an anarchist brigade during the Spanish Civil War.

The year of her essay was also the year of her death, aged 34. Partly, at least, her death was the result of her insistence on eating the same rations as her compatriots in Nazi-occupied France.

Undeniably, her essay was a response to the internecine rivalries among the exiled French. In her introductory paragraph, she makes it clear that she is using the word 'party' in its continental European meaning not its meaning in Anglo-Saxon where the word, she says, designates a different reality.

Nonetheless who would attempt to rebut her general relevance when she writes: 'In conclusion: the institution of political parties appears to be an almost unmixed evil. They are bad in principle, and in practice their impact is noxious.'

---

*On the Abolition of All Political Parties*,  
by Simone Weil. Translated by Simon  
Leys (Black Inc., rrp pp \$16.95)

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The abolition of parties would prove almost wholly beneficial. It would be a highly legitimate initiative in principle, and practice could only have a good effect.

'At elections, candidates would tell voters not, "I wear such and such a label" – which tells the public nearly nothing as regards their actual position on actual issues – but rather, "My views are such and such and such on such and such important problems..."'

Elsewhere, ever rigorous not least on herself, she remarks (and her publishers use it in their promotional material): 'Political parties are a marvellous mechanism... If one were to entrust the organisation of public life to the devil, he could not invent a more clever device.'

Her wrap-up paragraphs should be nailed to mastheads as examples of succinctness: 'Nearly everywhere – often

even when dealing with purely technical problems – instead of thinking, one merely takes sides: for or against. Such a choice replaces the activity of the mind. This is an intellectual leprosy; it originated in the political world and then spread through the land, contaminating all forms of thinking.'

'This leprosy is killing us; it is doubtful where it can be cured without first starting with the abolition of all political parties.'

Reservation? At one point Weil writes: 'We must acknowledge that the mechanism of spiritual and intellectual oppression which characterises political parties was historically introduced by the Catholic Church in its fight against heresy.'

'Must acknowledge' is too rich (*Outre?*) coming from a Greek scholar; Socrates did not sup hemlock voluntarily according to her hero Plato's *Apologia*. Human beings, religious or not, have an innate Cain tendency to succumb to the temptation of oppressing Abel.

Simon Leys is too cool a hand to press the local relevance of the Weil essay. Yet it is fair to ask how practical it is? Consider only the top echelons of the established parties; each of them would have the potential to make a greater individual contribution to free democratic debate and the implementing of policies than they do under party constraints.

Their names? And the list is not definitive nor confined to current incumbents; Lindsay Tanner (now resigned), Peter Coleman (cured politician), Andrew Robb, Tony Abbott, Malcolm Turnbull, Julie Bishop, Craig Emerson and Kevin Rudd are natural independents.

Bob Menzies founded a 'social' party which arguably did not always act in accordance with this ideal; he, too, might have done better pleading his case as an independent.



# Devastating Conclusions on Unimpeachable Grounds

IN ANY DEBATE, you really know that you have won when you find your opponents beginning to appropriate your ideas in the sincere belief that they themselves just invented them. This situation can afford a subtle satisfaction; I think the feeling must be quite familiar to Father Ladany, the Jesuit priest and scholar based in Hong Kong who for many years published the weekly *China News Analysis*. Far away from the crude limelight of the media circus, he has enjoyed three decades of illustrious anonymity. All 'China watchers' used to read his newsletter with avidity; many stole from it – but generally they took great pains never to acknowledge their indebtedness or to mention his name. Father Ladany watched this charade with sardonic detachment. He would probably agree that what Ezra Pound said regarding the writing of poetry should also apply to the recording of history: it is extremely important that it be written, but it is a matter of indifference who writes it.

*China News Analysis* was compulsory reading for all those who wished to be informed of Chinese political developments: scholars, journalists, diplomats. In academe, however, its perusal among many political scientists was akin to what a drinking habit might be for an ayatollah, or an addiction to pornography for a bishop: it was a compulsive need that had to be indulged in secrecy. China experts gnashed their teeth as they read Ladany's incisive comments; they hated his clear-sightedness and cynicism; still, they could not afford to miss one single issue of his newsletter, for, however disturbing and scandalous his conclusions, the factual information he supplied was invaluable and irreplaceable. What made *China News Analysis* so infuriatingly indispensable was the very simple and original principle on which it was run (true originality is usually simple): all the information selected and examined in *China News Analysis* was drawn exclusively from official Chinese sources (press and radio). This austere rule sometimes deprived Ladany's newsletter of the life and colour that could have been provided by less orthodox sources, but it enabled him to build his devastating conclusions on unimpeachable grounds. What inspired his method was the observation that even the most mendacious propaganda must necessarily entertain some sort of relation with the truth; even as it manipulates and distorts the truth, it still needs originally to feed on it. Therefore, the untwisting of official lies, if skilfully effected, should yield a certain amount of straight facts.

— Simon Leys, 'The Art of Interpreting non-existent inscriptions written in invisible ink on a blank page,' Review of Lazlo Ladany: *The Communist Party of China and Marxism 1921-1985: A Self-Portrait* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1988), quoted in Simon Leys, *The Hall of Uselessness*, Black Inc. Collingwood, Victoria, 2011 p. 340-341.

The other Bob – Brown – would've been more effective as an independent than as the founder of a superfluous party of oddballs. And, wait for it, the rough and ready Laborite Mark Latham is at heart another independent.

Possibly the two greatest lost independents are the Kim Beasleys, father and son.

Enough already since Leys's focus is also on the spiritual dimensions of Simone Weil. He enfolds her essay with an appreciation, *The Importance of Simone Weil* by the Nobel Laureate Czeslaw Milosz and with his own summing up, *In the Light of Simone Weil*.

Chiming with Milosz, Leys writes of Weil's influence on the existentialist Albert Camus, an influence so profound

'An atheist may be simply one whose faith and love are concentrated on the impersonal aspects of God.' — Simone Weil, quoted W.H.Auden, *A Certain World, A commonplace Book*, 1970

that when he was awarded the Nobel Prize he took refuge from the media pack at Weil's desk in her family's apartment in Paris – a kind of Catholic altar, for in 1938 Simone Weil, rationalist, atheist of the left was in her own words 'captured by Christ'; she turned to Catholicism though she was never baptised.

Here a child pipes up among the scholars: the child who remembers the Penny Catechism and its listing of three kinds of baptism: baptism of water, baptism of blood and baptism of desire.

In the latter category, it is surely possible to place Simone Weil who professed belief in transcendent grace. Again Penny Catechism memory speaks with a score of other voices in a primary school class: 'Grace is a supernatural gift of God that enables us to believe without doubting what God has revealed.'

Morrie Schwartz at Black Inc is to be congratulated on his decision to publish the Weil essay and the commentaries by Milosz and Leys, having already published the latter's *The Hall of Uselessness: Collected Essays*.

Schwartz should use the Weil essay as the imperial measure for his most influential publication, *The Quarterly Essay*; in Chris Felk he has an editor capable of applying the measure.

JAMES MURRAY is a Glasgow-born Catholic. A Sydney-based writer his career includes ten years in Fleet Street, and contributions to Australia's major publications. He writes *Annals* film reviews, and is the author of our ever-popular *Media Matters*.



# THE WORLD'S mOST PERSECUTED FAITH

*By Andrew E. Harrod*

**S**PEAKING ON NOVEMBER 5, 2012, before a synod of Germany's Lutheran Church (Evangelische Kirche Deutschlands or EKD), German chancellor Angela Merkel recently incited national controversy. Merkel's address in Timmendorfer Strand in the German province of Schleswig-Holstein included the passing comment that "Christianity is the most persecuted religion in the world." The German federal government had thus made the protection of religious freedom, including that of Christians, into a goal of German foreign policy.

Merkel's singling out of Christianity did not find favor with various human rights advocates, as reported by the German news agency dapd.

Human Rights Watch's (HRW) Germany director, Wenzel Michalski, found Merkel's conception "totally senseless" given that all religious persecution is equally wrong, irrespective of faith.

Michalski cited Muslims in Burma, Falun Gong members in China, and Jews worldwide as non-Christian examples of persecution victims. A representative of Amnesty International also found Merkel's reference to Christianity "not sensible."

Jerzy Montag, a German member of parliament from the Green Party (Die Grüne), likewise judged Merkel's estimation to be "misguided", given that any ranking of persecution among religions is "not especially helpful for combating human rights violations."

The United Nations Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, echoed Montag in assessing Merkel's qualification of Christianity as "not especially helpful." Bielefeldt expressed himself as "very reserved" with respect to such quantitative analysis. "Occasionally rumored numbers" indicating a particularly strong persecution of Christians were "not accurately enough demonstrable."

Yet the German branch of the international aid society for persecuted Christians, Open Doors, supported Merkel. A spokesman for the organization expressed its findings that 80% of all religiously persecuted individuals worldwide were Christian, some 100 million people in all. Volker Kauder, chairman of the Christian Democratic (CDU/CSU) members of the German parliament, also found "accurate" Merkel's prioritization of Christians amidst religiously

diverse victims of persecution globally. Merely listing the world's regions in turmoil such as Egypt, Eritrea, Iraq, Nigeria, and Syria justified Merkel's statement for Kauder. Kauder thereby placed particular emphasis on the worsening situation in recent years in Muslim countries for Christians, whose fate would naturally draw the attention of fellow Christians in Germany.

Also supporting Merkel was Alexander Dobrindt, Kauder's parliamentarian colleague and general secretary of the Bavarian Christian Social Union (Christlich-Soziale Union or CSU), the regional sister party to the nationwide Christian Democratic Union (Christlich Demokratische Union or CDU). Dobrindt thereby singled out the Greens for criticism, declaring that Merkel's emphasis on Christians did not accord with the "Multi-Culti-worldview of the Greens" in which all cultures share fundamentally similar norms. For Dobrindt it was tasteless that the Greens wanted to recognize Muslim holidays in Germany, yet were unwilling "to bend a finger" for protecting Christians around the world.

Analysis of religious persecution around the world indicates that Dobrindt is right to reject such cultural equivalencies. The ranking of the world's 50 most religiously repressive regimes compiled by Open Doors' German branch, for example, lists almost exclusively Muslim-majority nations such as Saudi Arabia and Iran or Marxist-legacy regimes such as China and North Korea. Many of these same names recur among the 17 Countries of Particular Concern cited by the United States Commission on Religious Freedom for their repression. Thus the two greatest opponents globally of religious freedom in general and Christianity in particular are various followers of Muhammad and Marx.

Practical political concerns demand that leaders always consider diplomatic sensitivities, yet Dobrindt, Kauder, and others are right to demand that such sensitivity not come at the price of the truth so necessary for proper policy formation. Such truth requires, among other things, accurate naming of victims and perpetrators. In a time of almost universal political correctness, the Lutheran pastor's daughter Merkel deserves praise for her refreshing honesty.

— Source: <http://www.theird.org/issues/religious-liberty/12-11-12-rl-angela-merkel-cites-christianity-as-the-worlds-most-persecuted-faith>.  
Andrew E. Harrod holds Ph.D. and law degrees.

*With Scott Hahn in the Holy Land*

# IN THE STEPS OF THE mASTER

By Wanda Skowronska



Y FIRST glimpse of Israel from the plane was of the shorelines and the modern skyline of Tel Aviv. This is the Holy Land, I repeated to myself in amazement as other pilgrims have done, – where the Messiah was born, lived and taught – where God walked the earth.

I had just been to Ephesus in Turkey and seen the house of the Virgin Mary, enveloped in otherworldly peace atop a small mountain.

I had also seen the nearby church of the Virgin which was the site of the Council of Ephesus in 451 AD, the very council that declared the Virgin Mary to be Mother of God [Theotokos]. Already in a state of topographical and spiritual awe, my heart pounded even more on stepping out of the plane in Tel Aviv as I wondered why the Jews had a bust of Pope John Paul II at the airport – only to realise that it was his look-alike, Ben Gurion.

This was where I was to join the ‘Scott and Kimberley Hahn pilgrimage’ to the Holy Land. Hahn, as many would know, was a Presbyterian minister for several years, teaching at Chesapeake Theological Seminary. In 1986, after intense deliberation, he entered the Catholic Church and his wife Kimberley, initially horrified, followed four years later.

This ‘Hahn’ pilgrimage was planned for January 4-14, 2013. 175 pilgrims (including eight priests), along with pilgrims from the United States, England, Canada, Australia and Dubai filled four buses, travelling all around Israel. No journey can compare with one to the Holy Land and this particular journey with Scott Hahn, currently professor of Biblical Theology at Franciscan University in Steubenville

Ohio, was accompanied by daily lectures deepening our understanding of the holy places.

Along with Professor Hahn, each bus also had its own local tour guide. In my case his name was – wait for it – Usama – a Palestinian Catholic who lived with his family just outside Jerusalem in Bethphage. Usama was finishing a Ph.D on the future of the Christians in the Holy Land – a grim topic and he gave only local knowledge but could psychologically get inside the minds of the people around Jesus, so you felt you were in the middle of a current family drama all along the way.

Sometimes the geography of Israel is called the fifth Gospel for it reveals the psychology and politics of its history. We saw the glowing horizon from Mount Carmel as Elijah would have seen this extraordinary, intense blending of light and water. Going inland we saw the ‘far awyness’ of the little northern town of Nazareth and the church of the Annunciation – and the *actual spot* where the angel Gabriel visited the Virgin, inviting her participation in God’s plans for saving the world. Seeing such places generates thoughts such as ‘What did

Mary do straight after the angelic visit? Did she go and tell someone? If she told someone, what was the reaction? And so on – one is psychologically and spiritually inside this momentous drama.

Nazareth is where Jesus attended the synagogue and grew in wisdom and favour. What a moment it must have been when, in that synagogue, He rolled up the scroll, after reading the passage from Isaiah about the forthcoming Messiah releasing captives from blindness and suffering (Isaiah 61:1:2) and announcing to his fellow Nazarenes that ‘Today this Scripture is being fulfilled in your midst’. (Luke 4:20). If you were there and heard it, what would you think? Here is the carpenter – at Nazareth you can see the remains of a workshop where Jesus learned his trade from St Joseph – saying He is the Messiah.

It is all so very immediate and local, as is Cana, the site of the first public miracle, which is not far away at all. Probably many of Jesus’ relations were at this several days’ long event and acutely felt the embarrassment of not having enough wine, as well as the relief at Jesus’ miracle, though they might



*The beautiful Church built at the top of the Hill of the Beatitudes, where Jesus preached to the multitude, and performed the miracle of the loaves and fishes*

not have understood its pointing to the future ‘marriage of the Lamb’ with his church. It was moving to see how, in our visit to Cana, in a world where marriage is attacked on several fronts, how many couples renewed their wedding vows there.

We stayed on the sea of Galilee, in an old Roman city Tiberias, not far from Capernaum where our Saviour lived in the house of Peter’s mother in law. This was a ‘house built around a courtyard’ through whose ceiling the paralytic was lowered and healed. We were told that in one of these rooms Jesus prayed and slept.

The Capernaum synagogue was ‘across the road’ and the current remains are on the original foundation of the structure. In Capernaum, now just a collection of ruins, occurred the miracles we know nothing of (‘And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day’. Matt 11:23)

Nearby is the Mount of Beatitudes where, as in an ampitheatre, Jesus taught the multitudes and multiplied the loaves and fishes. The place Tabgha marks the spot where the miracle occurred and where He cooked fish for the apostles after the resurrection.

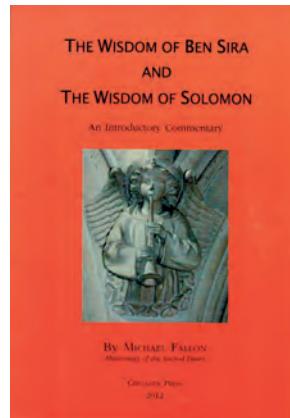
The topography of Israel explains why people were always going ‘up’ to Jerusalem – for it is a journey up to a higher altitude, whether from the north or south. On the way to the holy city, we visited Mount Tabor, the site of the old Canaanite temple, from which blood flowed from sacrifices to the gods, on which now rests a beautiful church in which is the pagan sacrificial stone still visible through a glass panel. Adjacent to Mount Tabor are the plains of Megiddo (or Armageddon, yes *that* Armageddon), we drove on to Jerusalem and on seeing the outline of the holy city the whole bus began singing ‘Jerusalem, Jerusalem, lift up your voice and sing, Hosanna in the highest, hosanna to our King’.

I noted that our hotel address in Jerusalem was off King David’s road, past King Solomon Hotel and before Melchizedek street. What an address! It snowed while we were there and we got to see palm trees covered in

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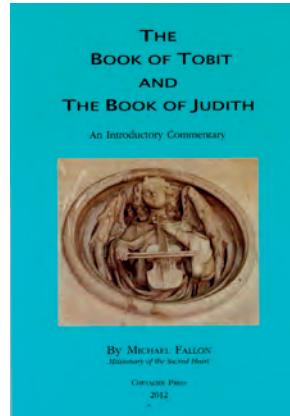


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thick snow while we had friendly snow fights with the Jewish staff at our hotel.

The beauty of such a pilgrimage as many attest, is that one begins to connect the dots – for example realising what a distance Galilee was from Jerusalem and how the travelling caravans going back and forth involved at least 8 hours of walking a day, over hilly terrain. One gets an idea of where Bethlehem is in relation to Jerusalem (only 6 kms away) and gains a renewed understanding of the Virgin Mary, expecting a child, going

in haste to the hill country of Judea from Galilee to get to Saint Elizabeth’s home, as we huffed and puffed as we climbed.

Our group saw the place of the Last Supper on Mount Zion, then saw Gethsemane, the Kidron Valley, the church called *Dominus Flevit* where Jesus wept over Jerusalem, Caiaphas’ house where Jesus, lowered by ropes was imprisoned below (the prisons are still there), where Our Lady’s parents’ lived and the church of the Holy Sepulchre.



*A section of the rock on which Jesus prayed before His passion and crucifixion is inside the Church of all Nations, built at the foot of the Mt of Olives, and within the Garden of Gethsemane.*

We saw how the pool of Bethesda where the paralysed man was cured was right next door to the house of St Anne and St Joachim – so they all knew this place well – and no doubt the paralysed man. Also how close the tomb of Jesus was to Calvary (they are both within the one church now). Calvary was a rubbish dump, where the off cuts of stone were cast away from the nearby quarry, thus making a skull shaped mound ('Golgotha'). Thus the stones rejected by the builders were piled up where the rejected Messiah was crucified.

Being before the Holy Sepulchre itself evokes a reverence outside of time. We walked in total silence, along with Armenians Ethiopians, Russians, Indians and Greeks. Then each person knelt to kiss the spot where Christ rose from the dead in earthly time, and pointed to our future beyond earthly time.

As I stood in awe, I could hear the Byzantine chant of the Greek monks, the Gregorian chant of the Franciscans (who sleep on the cold stone floor each Friday) and the different chant of the Armenian monks nearby. Add to this the sound of the muezzin (Muslim) call to prayer and one grasps the intense belief enveloping Jerusalem at every turn. Indifferentism is not an option here – all are intensely involved in the world of the spirit – as evidenced by the Jews who sit and read the Torah constantly near the Wailing Wall and the old Jewish man I witnessed in anguished prayer

rocking back and forth at its entrance.

As it turned out, Scott Hahn and his wife Kimberley, parents of six children, grandparents of eight, are also Knights of the Holy Sepulchre. Along with other Knights in the group, they were to participate in a ceremony led by Bishop William Shomali, Auxiliary Bishop of Jerusalem. The bishop of Jerusalem, a Patriarch addressed as 'His Beatitude,' came to present the Pilgrim Shells (an honour for the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre) to Msgr. Philip Halface of

Illinois, Msgr. James Swiader of New York, Milanka Lachman (director of the tour company) and to the Hahns who were all dressed in their knightly regalia. It was moving to hear their pledges to continue to defend Christendom.

Indeed Scott Hahn comes across as a modern day Saint Paul, in his comprehensive and insightful exegeses of Scripture. He lectured the group on the connection between the Mass and the book of Revelation saying one cannot be understood without the other, its 'Holy Holy Holy' prayer and 28 references to the 'Lamb of God' all clearly references to the heavenly liturgy. The 'it' in Christ's words on the cross – 'It is consummated' – referred to the New Passover – the transformation of the Passover into the Eucharistic liturgy, the 'cup of consummation', which we participate in on earth. Hahn outlined that the original meaning of 'parousia' was 'presence'. While we look to a future coming of Christ, the actual Kingdom of God came about before His current generation passed away because of the his 'parousia' in the Mass, where God's will is done on earth as it is in Heaven.<sup>1</sup> In fact, Hahn said that realising that the 'key' to the Mass was the book of Revelation, and vice versa, inspired his journey to Catholicism.

Among the pilgrims, there were Catholic converts, a retired military intelligence officer, an American soldier on leave from Afghanistan and students from Franciscan University in Ohio. Hahn's eyes especially lit up when he heard some pilgrims (actually four) were from Australia.

As I learned later, it seems as if Australians may hear more from the lips of Hahn himself. There are plans afoot to bring him to Australia within two years to give public lectures and to show us all, no matter how hostile our society, how to stand our ground, and with a knightly gracious sense of service to spread the everlasting good news.

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WANDA SKOWRONSKA is a registered psychologist who works as a counsellor in inner city schools in Sydney. She has recently been awarded a PhD in Psychology/Theology at Melbourne's John-Paul II Institute. She has done voluntary work for the Catholic pro-life organisation *Family Life International*, and is a regular contributor to Annals.

1. Hahn explains this in his work *The Lamb's Supper: the Mass as Heaven on Earth* (USA: Doubleday, 1999).



# mEDIA mATTERS

By JAMES MURRAY

## Golden calf

Fairfax Media continues its snap, crackle, pop models of *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*; in the latter, a chance was missed to juxtapose two statements of more than passing interest.

On page 10 (Kelsey Munro, *SMH* May 18-19), there was a below the fold report across four columns on the views of Michael Sandel, Harvard University political philosopher, drawn from his latest work, *What Money Can't Buy - The Moral Limits of Markets*. Fortunately, the title sums up his views. Munro interpolated: 'Sandel's is a lonely voice against the reign of economic rationalisms.'

Nice point. Sandel may indeed be a lonely voice but he is not a lone voice. On page 12 of the same issue was a report (Nick Squires, *SMH/Telegraph*, London) in which Pope Francis said among other things: 'While the income of a minority is increasing exponentially that of the majority is crumbling.'

He added: 'The worship of the golden calf of old has found a new and heartless image in the cult of money and the dictatorship of an economy which is faceless and lacking any truly human goal.'

The Vatican-Harvard chime should alert the Liberal-National Coalition as it heads towards Government: any move to increase the people's tax burden (GST increase anyone?) without initial reform of corporate tax evasion and its odd pendant, corporate welfare (\$7 billion to manufacturing in the past financial year), will be rejected as was the ill-timed, bipartisan move to increase electioneering public funding.

The Big End of Town? While its institutions may say one thing, individuals say another: millionaires Geoffrey Cousins and Mark Carnegie are only two who have spoken of higher taxes for the rich.

The ALP? If the Coalition doesn't initiate corporate reform, the ALP will have a fulcrum for a return to power, particularly if it sees Democratic Labor Senator, John Madigan, as a sign of where it got on the wrong side of history.

## River divide

Wrong side of history is at best a nebulous term. Your correspondent goes for Hal Fisher's comment: 'Men wiser and more learned than I have discerned in history a plot, a rhythm, a predetermined pattern. These harmonies are concealed from me. I can see only one emergency following upon another as wave follows upon wave, only one great fact in respect of which, since it is unique, there can be no generalisation, only one safe rule for the historian: that he should recognise in the development of human destinies the play of the contingent and the unforeseen.'

Fisher was, of course, writing in his *History of Europe*, and there are those who have decided Australia is a one-off where the metaphor is sustained by geography: everyone lives on one side or t'other of the River Murray.

Nonetheless Fisher's judgement remains valid so long as it is balanced by the Catholic philosopher-playwright Shakespeare's line: 'There is a divinity that shapes our lives rough hew them how we will.'

## Revvin' Kevin

In the run-up, or more exactly slippery dip, to the federal election Kevin Rudd has been out front. Some commentators see this as an attempt to compel the Prime Minister Julia Gillard to give way to him.

True enough but it is more. Rudd is that relatively rare politician who can think short term and long term simultaneously. Post-election his campaign record will be crucial to his possible restoration. Gillard, defying the kind polls that caused the Rudd ouster, forgetting her Slater & Gordon discretion training, summoned abortion to her aid, re-conjuring the ruthless image of Lady Macbeth: 'We fail! / But screw your courage to the sticking place/And we'll not fail.'

Such classical reference was lost in the antique boof bawdry of a menu and broadcaster Howard Sattler's rushing in to smear the PM with a scoop of gossip from the sewage settling ponds of the Internet.



## School for fame

On the ABC's *Lateline*, electoral funding exchanges between the Attorney General Mark Dreyfus and the National Interrogator General, Tony Jones, went squibbish. No discredit to Jones; mounted on high dudgeon, firing from the hip, he queried the need for more electioneering expenditure and dropped the word spin-doctors into his tirade.

Dreyfus, a barrister not lacking in wit, missed the obvious counterblast: government spin-doctoring is the finishing school for ABC luminaries, not the least of them, Kerry O'Brien, Barry Cassidy and George Negus.

Old examples? True enough. But given an ABC slot, the PM's communications adviser John McTernan would validate the finishing-school thesis as would the Opposition Leader's chief of staff, Peta Credlin.

Come to think of it, they would make splendid reserves for the News Breakfast duo, Michael Roland and Virginia Trioli; their small talk sometimes suggests (and who can blame them?) that they'd rather be at home with their children than dealing with the world's tantrums.

## Short change

He hasn't done so himself. Time, therefore, to protest to the board of News Corp about its treatment of its great veteran, Rupert Murdoch. Okay, he was awarded a recent multi-million dollar pay increase. Nonetheless, there was something niggardly in the board's refraining from a specific payment for his tweets. These contribute significantly to the global conversation.

To be fair, perhaps there was a difficulty in calculating payment. Suggestion: use the datum penny-ha'penny a line (the amount paid to Murdoch's father Keith as a district reporter for *The Age*, Melbourne).

Working on the back of the traditional used envelope (vellum finish) and allowing for inflation, your correspondent calculates that if Rupert Murdoch were paid 1.5 cents per character he should get \$500 per twitter (backdated).

The flow-on from this to other veterans (these days anyone who survives more than a year under media crossfire) would help to close the egregious gap between executive remuneration packages and front-line hack pay (not to mention the heinous practice of unpaid interns).

The above was written before the news that Murdoch was to divorce his wife (third) Wendi

Deng. His twitterverse followers may have been disappointed that he did not tweet the news. Others may see him as setting the benchmark for privacy. There were no reports of News Corp paparazzi-hack packs baying at his door.

Where will it all end? The opera, *Nixon in America* is now part of the international repertoire. Look for *Murdoch: The Musical*, hit song, *Don't cry for me, Australia*.

## watch balance

The focus of controversy about ABC balance is *Media Watch*; the return of Paul Barry as anchorman triggered the perennial suggestion that he, like other anchors, holds leftwing views, a suggestion he rebuts.

There would be no need for rebuttals were the ABC's managing director (and editor-in-chief) Mark Scott to follow the original programme of this kind, Granada Television's, *What the Papers Say*. This relied not on single anchor but on a squad which included Paul Johnson, Bernard Levin, Harold Evans and Tony Howard.

A similar squad could be found here: Jacqueline Maley, Mark Day, Erroll Simper, Elizabeth Farrelly, Paul Sheehan, Gerard Henderson, Paul Howes, Caroline Overington, Julia Baird and Mark Latham (the John Wilkes of our times).

One suggestion for Paul Barry; let viewers see the programme's wheels within wheels: the extent to which production staff, vis-a-vis the anchor, control content. Do production staffers prepare the brief like solicitors and does the anchor plead from that brief like a barrister?

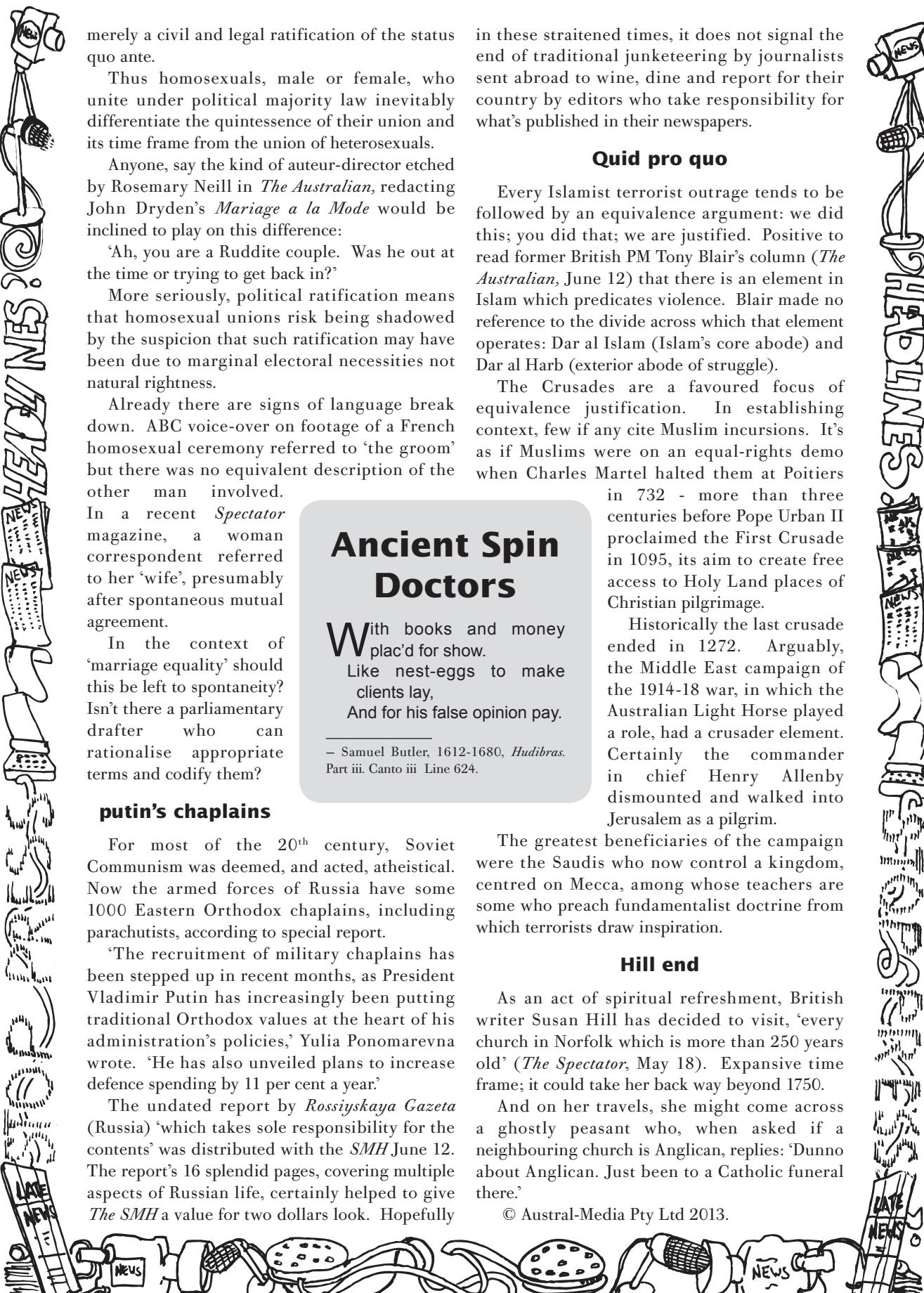
## paradox in omnibus

Cultural shifts don't often travel on the back of a bus. But there it was: an advertisement that the best of BBC productions were available on FoxTel. Who'd have thought it? Tax-payer funded productions for ad-free showing in one global village street sold round the corner where other taxpayers have to pay extra to see them with ads added.

## Nuptial tizz

Proponents of what has now been rebranded 'marriage equality' fail to realise a potential negative outcome: the more successful the push for political ratification, the more the claim of natural right is eroded.

In many, if not most, cultures, the written and traditional record shows that rituals solemnising marriage were innately heterosexual and religious; any subsequent political action was



merely a civil and legal ratification of the status quo ante.

Thus homosexuals, male or female, who unite under political majority law inevitably differentiate the quintessence of their union and its time frame from the union of heterosexuals.

Anyone, say the kind of auteur-director etched by Rosemary Neill in *The Australian*, redacting John Dryden's *Mariage à la Mode* would be inclined to play on this difference:

'Ah, you are a Ruddite couple. Was he out at the time or trying to get back in?'

More seriously, political ratification means that homosexual unions risk being shadowed by the suspicion that such ratification may have been due to marginal electoral necessities not natural rightness.

Already there are signs of language break down. ABC voice-over on footage of a French homosexual ceremony referred to 'the groom' but there was no equivalent description of the other man involved. In a recent *Spectator* magazine, a woman correspondent referred to her 'wife', presumably after spontaneous mutual agreement.

In the context of 'marriage equality' should this be left to spontaneity? Isn't there a parliamentary drafter who can rationalise appropriate terms and codify them?

### **putin's chaplains**

For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Soviet Communism was deemed, and acted, atheistical. Now the armed forces of Russia have some 1000 Eastern Orthodox chaplains, including parachutists, according to special report.

'The recruitment of military chaplains has been stepped up in recent months, as President Vladimir Putin has increasingly been putting traditional Orthodox values at the heart of his administration's policies,' Yulia Ponomarevna wrote. 'He has also unveiled plans to increase defence spending by 11 per cent a year.'

The undated report by *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* (Russia) 'which takes sole responsibility for the contents' was distributed with the *SMH* June 12. The report's 16 splendid pages, covering multiple aspects of Russian life, certainly helped to give *The SMH* a value for two dollars look. Hopefully

in these straitened times, it does not signal the end of traditional junketeering by journalists sent abroad to wine, dine and report for their country by editors who take responsibility for what's published in their newspapers.

### **Quid pro quo**

Every Islamist terrorist outrage tends to be followed by an equivalence argument: we did this; you did that; we are justified. Positive to read former British PM Tony Blair's column (*The Australian*, June 12) that there is an element in Islam which predicates violence. Blair made no reference to the divide across which that element operates: Dar al Islam (Islam's core abode) and Dar al Harb (exterior abode of struggle).

The Crusades are a favoured focus of equivalence justification. In establishing context, few if any cite Muslim incursions. It's as if Muslims were on an equal-rights demo when Charles Martel halted them at Poitiers in 732 - more than three centuries before Pope Urban II proclaimed the First Crusade in 1095, its aim to create free access to Holy Land places of Christian pilgrimage.

Historically the last crusade ended in 1272. Arguably, the Middle East campaign of the 1914-18 war, in which the Australian Light Horse played a role, had a crusader element. Certainly the commander in chief Henry Allenby dismounted and walked into Jerusalem as a pilgrim.

The greatest beneficiaries of the campaign were the Saudis who now control a kingdom, centred on Mecca, among whose teachers are some who preach fundamentalist doctrine from which terrorists draw inspiration.

### **Hill end**

As an act of spiritual refreshment, British writer Susan Hill has decided to visit, 'every church in Norfolk which is more than 250 years old' (*The Spectator*, May 18). Expansive time frame; it could take her back way beyond 1750.

And on her travels, she might come across a ghostly peasant who, when asked if a neighbouring church is Anglican, replies: 'Dunno about Anglican. Just been to a Catholic funeral there.'

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*Islamic immigrants tend not to assimilate ... This sets them apart, and yet they claim a right to be treated equally with other religions.*

# LIBERALISM ON THE ROPES



THE AIM of this study is to determine how four 'liberal democracies' – France, Germany, Canada, and the United States – have responded to Islamic immigration and the demands made by their new immigrant population. As described by Joppke and Torpey, liberal institutions may be ill-suited to deal forthrightly with those demands.

Given that liberal institutions are designed to remain indifferent to creeds and 'comprehensive doctrines,' this complicates matters when it comes to assimilating Muslims. Such institutions are compelled to remain agnostic with respect to what Islam really is and to treat it as just another religion in the Western sense. That Islam may not be commensurate with liberal principles or that it may pose a threat to liberal societies cannot be addressed.

In our era of the procedural, post-national state, governing institutions are required to remain equidistant from majority and minority claims, in fact, even indifferent to the good. Neutrality, the authors claim, is tantamount to liberalism itself.

It remains a fact that the full accommodation of Islam and its practices has yet to be achieved within Western democracies. Islamic immigrants tend not to assimilate but choose to retain their inherited customs and desire to live under their own law. This sets them apart, and yet they claim a right to be treated equally with other religions. Thus the aim of this book is a comparison of the success Muslims have achieved through litigation as contrasted with what they have not been able to achieve through social integration or through legislation.

To illustrate some of the social tensions observed, beginning with France, Nicolas Sarkozy, even before

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Christian Joppke, and John Torpey.  
*Legal Integration of Islam: A Transatlantic Comparison.* Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2013,  
pp 211.

---

he became president, insisted that newcomers from North Africa and the Middle East meet certain language requirements and pledge to adhere to the principles, values, and symbols of French democracy. Under his presidency, legislation was passed requiring candidates for citizenship to be tested on French culture and history and to prove that they could speak French as well as the average native fifteen-year old.

Displaying a limit to its tolerance, the French National Assembly, over opposition from the legal fraternity, passed in July 2010, a law banning the *niqab* – the full facial veil – as well as the *burqa*.



In Germany, from a legal point of view, the final frontier in the accommodation of Islam is the granting to Islamic organizations the status of 'corporations,' which status would allow them to teach, as part of the normal school curriculum and at public expense, the tenets of their religion.

Under German Basic Law, a religious organization must be judged to be a religious community capable and willing to cooperate with the state in fulfilling a public function.

Paul Kirchhoff, a legal scholar, has argued that legal status should be denied if no participation in the culture underlying the Basic Law is to be expected. Kirchhoff explains that only the Christian religion is to be considered 'the humus' of the German constitutional state. 'Only the Christian religion that God has become human in the person of Jesus supports the principle of 'personality,' 'dignity,' and 'equality' on which the German constitutional order rests.'

His argument was rejected outright by the Upper Administrative Court of Berlin when it decreed, against the stern opposition of the Berlin Senate, that a given Muslim organization, the IFBU, fulfilled all requirements of a religious community and was entitled to teach Islam in Berlin schools.

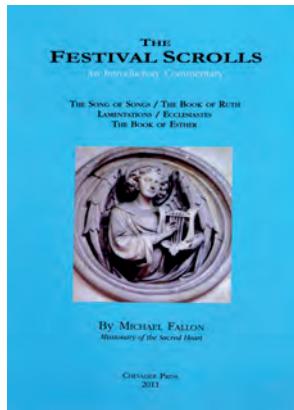
On this side of the Atlantic, Islamic accommodation in Canada is far from settled notwithstanding Canada's liberal immigration policy and the socio-economic well-being of most Muslims.

Demands that Canada accommodate the use of shari'a in adjudicating family law and recognize as lawful certain other illiberal practices have created a backlash. In the words of the present authors, it has 'challenged Canadian multiculturalism to clarify itself and what kinds of cultures it is actually prepared to countenance.'

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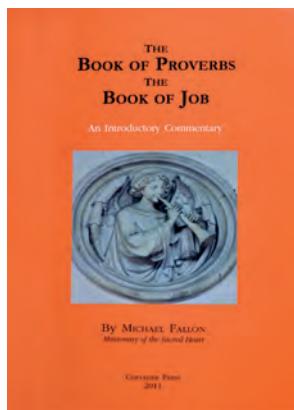
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Muslim demands are widely found to be unreasonable. Even in the courts, the present authors say that it is not easy to distinguish between the integration of Muslims as a social group and Islam as a religion. The political/aggressive aspect of Islam, it is recognized, may eventually be a threat to liberal societies.

Within this country, three United States presidents have affirmed that Islam is an American religion. Consequently, in the authors' view, the prospect of integrating Muslims in the United States is, on the whole, brighter here than in Europe.

Joppke and Torpey acknowledge that the difficulties associated with

the integration of Muslims in Western societies have sharply undermined the legitimacy of multicultural doctrines and policies.

Multiculturalism, they admit, requires a sense of security and shared liberal values. They acknowledge that Muslims are not inclined to liberalism, but, in fact, are called upon to resist the West, given its spiritual impoverishment and material temptations. They note also that Muslims may be able to live as a minority in a religiously neutral or laicist state such as France, but even there cultural difference is being viewed with alarm.

It is difficult to ignore the fact that Islam is not simply a body of private

beliefs but a world-wide creed that mandates the establishment of an independent community with its own system of government, laws, and institutions.

In the company of others, Joppke and Torpey also recognize that the liberal state they espouse depends on a culture which it did not create and which it cannot produce by the typical means at its disposal. They quote Hegel to the effect that even the secularized state depends on inner motivations and coercive powers that religion alone can provide.

The book's authors come to no specific conclusion but affirm that courts

**I**N OUR JUDGEMENT the lack of means [within Islam] interposed between God and his Law on the one hand, and man on the other, makes the practical exercise of democracy as we understand it illusory. ... The possibility of autonomous powers is simply ignored by Islam. This has never been expressly stated in the sources because it was a blind spot in the eyes of the scholars. But once identified we can connect it directly with the theocratic doctrine with which the whole Islamic system is impregnated. The omnipotence of God, passed down on earth to his vicar, cannot tolerate the existence of any power derived from another source. The acknowledgement of other autonomous powers on earth is nothing more than polytheism [Shirk].

— Excerpt from 'Democracy in Islam' [*L'Islam et la Démocratie*] by J.H. Kramers. Translated by Paul Stenhouse. See *Analecta Orientalia, Posthumous Writings and Minor Works of J. H. Kramers*, 2 vols. Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1956, vol 2, pp.169, 170.

should protect those who cannot protect themselves politically, notably minorities in majoritarian democracies. That said, the book can be recommended for the information it provides.

PROFESSOR JUDE DOUGHERTY is Dean Emeritus of the Philosophy Faculty, Catholic University of America, Editor, *The Review of Metaphysics*, and General Editor, *Series Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy*, Washington, D.C.

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# ANNA'S SAYS THANK YOU



*The lessons at the heart of 'The Ballad of the White Horse' are basic. When you are involved in the struggle for life and liberty, and when defending moral principles, even when overwhelmed by forces ranged against you, you must never lose hope — or worse — resort to pessimism.*

## THE SKY GROWS DARKER YET

*By Tony Evans*

**W**HEN LOOKING back over the last few months those resonant and oft quoted words from G. K.Chesterton's 'Ballad of The White Horse' which I have borrowed for my title, seem ever more appropriate to those of us who adhere to traditional Christian — and specifically Catholic — values.

The culture of death continues, and the attack on marriage and the family gathers momentum. The fact that the number of 'official' abortions in Australia registered for 2012 (63,000) was slightly down on the previous year is hardly cause for celebration. The House of Commons in England, led now by a Conservative Prime Minister, voted for sanctioning Gay Marriage, and although a similar bill was defeated in the Lower House in Australia, the vituperative counter-attack by gay activists, and the threat of new private members' bills in State Parliaments, suggests the campaign is far from concluded. The Royal Commission into Child Abuse in institutions has commenced proceedings, and in spite of Government declarations that this is not intended as a Church-centred witch-hunt, there is, nevertheless, a common perception, a tacit understanding amongst the public promoted by the media, that the Catholic Church is the main focus of the enquiry. Further great damage to the Church and loss of status now seems inevitable.

What would the great G. K.Chesterton who died in 1936, have made of all this? Is it possible to say? Even he, given his extraordinary

prescience, could not have imagined the magnitude of the assault on Christian values, together with its attendant rejection of Church teaching even among the faithful of the Western civilised world. That world has been turned on its head since he wrote those above-quoted words in his 'Ballad of the White Horse', words supposedly spoken by the Virgin Mary in a Vision to King Alfred when he was at his lowest point in his battle against the Danish invaders, and at a time when he was dejected and despairing of victory. She gently chides him for his lack of resolve and tells him he has much yet to endure, many battles to fight, blood

### princes of a crucified King

**J**ESUS ENTERED Jerusalem to die on the cross. It was precisely here that his nature as divine king shines out: his throne is the wood of the cross. I reflect upon what Benedict XVI said to the Cardinals: 'You are princes ... but of a crucified king'. The wood of the cross is the throne of Jesus. .... on the cross Jesus feels all the weight of evil and by the power of God's love conquers it, smashes it to pieces by his resurrection. This is the boon that Jesus bestows on us all from the throne of his cross. If embraced with love, the cross of Christ does not cause sadness but joy.

— Pope Francis, Address, March 24, 2013

to shed, before he unites his people and achieves freedom from 'the heathen men' from across the seas.

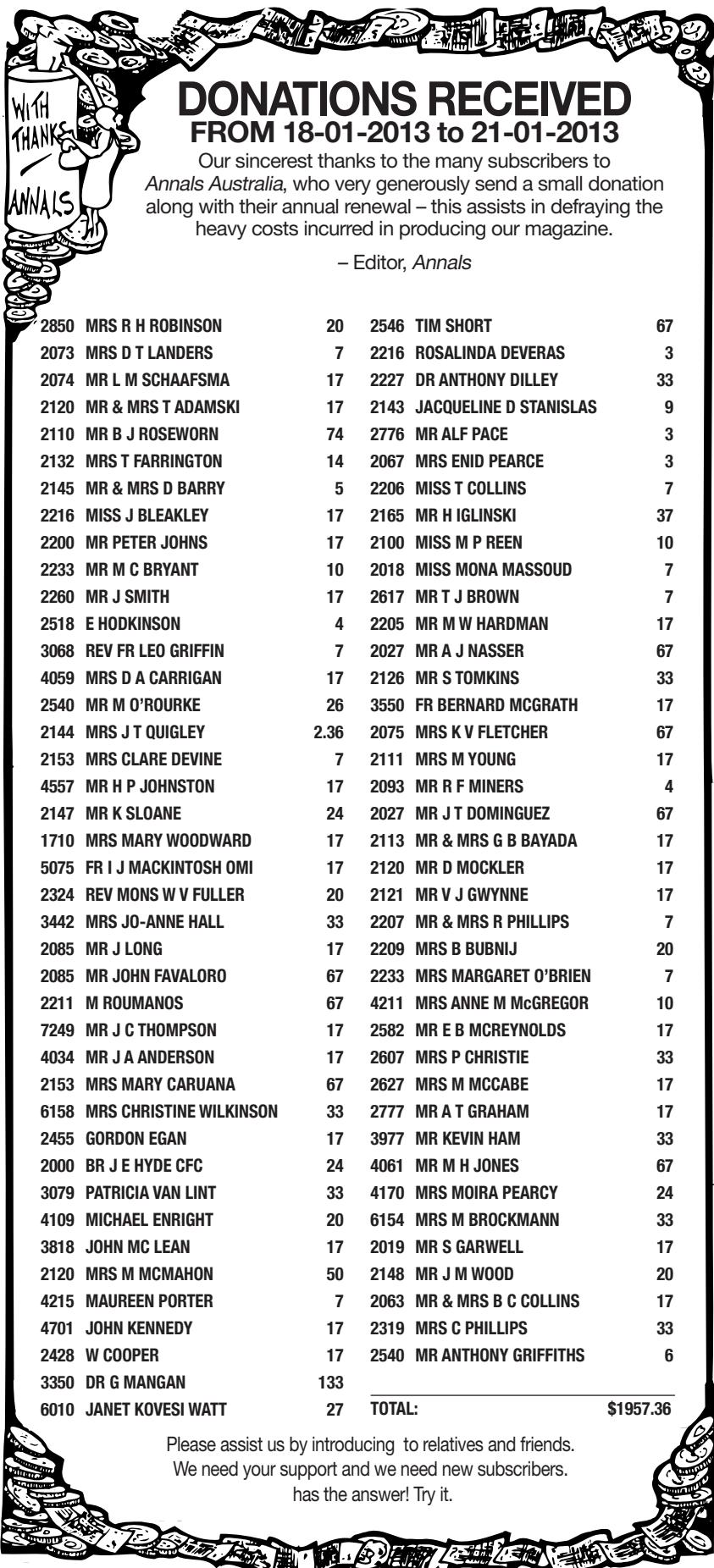
"Night shall be thrice night over  
you,  
And heaven an iron cope.  
Do you have joy without a cause?  
Yea, faith without a hope?  
"I tell you naught for your comfort;  
Yea naught for your desire.  
Save that the sky grows darker yet,  
And the sea rises higher."

Alfred, as we know, was roused from his torpor by these words, and fought on to gain victories against his marauders. Eventually the Danes withdrew, and their Danish king, Guthrum himself, was 'signed with the Cross', and 'they brought him to his Christening, and the end of all his raids.'

*The Ballad of the White Horse*, first published in 1911, has been described as the last great epic written in English in the tradition of *Beowulf* and *Paradise Lost*, and Chesterton appears to have taken more trouble over it, and worked at it for a longer period than he did his other works.

He was inspired to write the poem after seeing the ancient representation of a horse carved in the chalk of the Downs above Uffington, Berkshire, believed to have existed since Alfred's time, possibly to commemorate the battles. There is also a giant statue of King Alfred in the nearby town of Wantage.

Chesterton's story of Alfred's defeat of the Danish invaders and his uniting of the kingdom of Wessex — southern Saxon England — bears some comparison with the Homeric and Virgilian epic accounts of the Trojan wars, great battles, heroic deeds, much death and destruction, and near defeat.



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Like the ancient epics, the Ballad does not attempt an historically accurate account of events, but presents a legend for the edification and instruction of the people for whom it was written. One of those legends, which Chesterton uses, is that Alfred played the harp and sang in the Danish Camp. This allows Chesterton the opportunity of showing the different philosophies of Alfred and his captors. Alfred's are full of hope and goodness and still optimistic; while the Danish songs praise self-centred pleasure and martial pursuits and as a result they are unhappy.

Chesterton explained in his Preface to the Ballad that a popular legend usually starts out by being true, and in the constant retelling over the centuries becomes embroidered and impressionistic. But the essential truths and the lessons from that truth are always there, embodied at the heart of it. He admits that many of the legends 'have been disputed by grave historians who were, I think, too grave to be good judges.'

The lessons at the heart of 'The Ballad of the White Horse' are basic, even commonplace, akin to ex-Prime Minister Fraser's famous dictum that 'Life was not meant to be easy'. That when you are involved in the struggle for life and liberty, and when defending moral principles, even when overwhelmed by forces ranged against you, you must never lose hope – or worse – resort to pessimism.

That is why another Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, quoted in the House of Commons those stirring words of the vision of Mary in 1940, at a time when England was facing its 'darkest hour'.

Read the full poem – or part of it for it is very long, 2,684 lines – when you are feeling depressed and overwhelmed by the attacks on Christianity, and the relentless march of secularism.

It may help!

TONY EVANS was a producer with the ABC for many years and is now a freelance writer living in Western Australia. He has published three historical biographies, the latest being a biography of William Wardell. The beautiful St John's College within the University of Sydney, founded in 1858, is the oldest Catholic University College in Australia, and first Catholic University College to be built in the English speaking world since the reformation; it is also one of the cultural treasures bequeathed to Australian Catholics by William Wardell its architect. Evans founded the *G.K.Chesterton Society* in W.A. Recently it became the national *Australian Chesterton Society*.

*It seems that euthanasia has now been accepted  
as part of normal medical care in Belgium.*

## INCREASE IN EUTHANASIA IN BELGIUM

*By Peter Saunders*

I have previously highlighted the rapid escalation of euthanasia and assisted suicide cases in the Netherlands, Oregon and Switzerland in recent years but Belgium is eclipsing all of these countries in the race to become the ‘world leader’.

In 2012, the number of euthanasia cases in Belgium increased by 25%, from 2011 reaching a record level of 1,432 since the practice was legalized in the country in 2002.

The Federal Control and Evaluation euthanasia (FCEE), in publishing the data, is now considering to extend the right to citizens who suffer from degenerative mental illnesses like Alzheimer’s and also children.

A recent FCEE report on euthanasia in Belgium on 2010 and 2011, unfortunately available only in French, details the longer term trends since legalisation.

The upper line in the graph is the total of euthanasia cases reported to the commission and shows an increase from 24 cases in 2002 to 1,133 in 2011 – a stunning overall increase of 4,620% in just ten years!

The middle line is the number of cases reported in Dutch (so by Dutch speaking medical doctors) and the bottom line is the number of cases reported in French (Walloon part and Brussels). So it seems that euthanasia is performed mostly in the Dutch speaking part of Belgium (Flanders).

It is important to note that only acts which intentionally end life using barbiturates (Article 2 of the law on euthanasia) meet the legal definition of legal euthanasia so these figures do not include people killed by deliberate overdosage with morphine, withdrawal of treatment with explicit aim of ending life or ‘terminal sedation’ with the aim of hastening death.

We know from the Netherlands that these other ways of ending life have also increased dramatically in recent years.

Over the last two years 75% of euthanasia cases in Belgium were for cancer (including all malignancies), 7% were for progressive neuromuscular disorders (multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, etc) and 18% were for ‘other conditions’.

69% of euthanasia were performed in patients aged 40-79 years and 27% in patients older than 79 years.

194 cases over the two years (9%) involved patients whose deaths were ‘not foreseeable in the short term’ and 2% of cases involved unconscious patients who had earlier signed advance directives.

In the vast majority of cases (99%), death was produced by inducing deep unconsciousness first with barbiturates (usually thiopental) followed by an IV injection of a paralyzing muscle relaxant (usually norcuron or tracium).

The Committee in its report emphasized the importance of ‘easy availability of products needed for euthanasia’ and considered that the medical school curriculum and postgraduate education sessions should include training on ‘the proper implementation of euthanasia’.

It seems that euthanasia has now been accepted as part of normal medical care in Belgium.

The lessons are clear. Once euthanasia is legalised steady escalation follows along with a change in the social conscience so that it rapidly becomes accepted as normal.

With new bills about to be debated in the Westminster and Scottish parliaments Britain should take warning.

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PETER SAUNDERS is CEO of Christian Medical Fellowship, a UK-based organisation with 4,500 UK doctors and 1,000 medical students as members. The opinions expressed here are his, and may not necessarily reflect the views of CMF or anyone else associated with him.

## **war of the worlds: the Musical**

If Jules Verne is the grandpa of science fiction, HG Wells is the father. And this ear-drum blowing musical of his classic, shows that he still has the power to move us if only because our seats vibrate to the Dolby Stereo System.

Multi-camera filmed in the O2 Arena, built for the recent London Olympics, the musical stars Liam Neeson as the narrator. But not your actual Neeson: a hologram of Neeson.

Jason Donovan, as a mad preacher, is no hologram. He chews the scenery and spits it out. The begetter of the Sixties vintage piece, Jeff Wayne, cavorts on a podium while conducting a full orchestra with an added array of Fender guitars against wide-screen images and giant machines.

The podium has a safety rail. There are scary moments when it looks as if the rail is not enough and Wayne should also have worn a tether. Apt. The final despairing work of HG Wells, opponent of the ever-hopeful GK Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, was *Mind at the End of its Tether*.

M★★★SFFV

## **Star t rex into Darkness**

The originator of the TV series Gene Roddenberry was one of the heirs to HG Wells. And he retained the Wellsian philosophical approach to sci-fi as did the makers of the cult franchise, starring the greatest Glaswegian actor of his generation Patrick Stewart as Captain Picard.

Unfortunately the makers of this 3D revival prequel have dropped the philosophy in favour of whambamery led by the reformed Kirk, Chris Pine. No sign of the old Kirk, William Shatner.

Leonard Nimoy, the original Dr Spock, does make an appearance. But that is insufficient to save the movie, though the Enterprise franchise will doubtless survive for other galactic box-office voyages.

M★★★NFFV

## **After Earth**

Another sub-Wellsian essay in sci-fi, this one based on a story by Will Smith who co-stars with his son Jaden

## **MOVIES**

*By James Murray*

as father and son astronauts Cypher and Kitai Raige who voyaging from a futuristic high-tech civilisation crash-land on a monster-haunted planet identified as – wait for it – Earth.

Grievously injured the Cypher's only hope of rescue is to send Kitai to a high-point from which he can send not a Telstra call (that would be too hard) but a laser signal to bring in a rescue team.

Does he succeed? The computer generated wild life is bigger and beyond Tasmanian Devils in scale, savagery and 3D. But star power is star power.

Will Smith's admirable purpose appears to be to emphasise the importance of father-son relationships. No once can gainsay that. But did it all have to be so hokey?

M★★★SFFV

## **world war Z**

This sci-fi piece is beyond end of the Wells tether. Creates a world which might have been inspired by the spirit, if not the letter, of TV naturalist David Attenborough's remark about human beings, including presumably himself: 'We are a plague on the planet.'

The world that Brad Pitt, as an intrepid scientist, has to face is enduring a plague of zombies, computer generated millions of them, whose bite is worse than their bark and who don't have enough sense to rob a blood bank or set up as barbers in Fleet Street.

MA15+★★NFFV

## **what Maisie Knew**

Directors David Siegel and Scott McGehee echo a Henry James title but little else in their take on seven-year-old Maisie (Onata Aprile) trapped in a New York custody battle between an ageing rock star mother, Suzanna, (Julianne Moore) and an art dealer father, Beale, (Steve Coogan).

The script is by Carol Cartwright and Nancy Doyne who take an ultimately roseate view of the effect of a custody battle on a child – as long as there is a nanny-stepmother Margo (Joanna

Vanderham) and an amiable barman Lincoln (Alexander Skarsgard) to set up a sunny, beachside substitute family.

TBA★★NFFV

## **Haute Cuisine**

Impossibly hackneyed to use the adjective 'delicious' in describing director Christian Vincent's comedy. So how about *supercalifrigicexpialidocious*?

Vincent bases his comedy on Daniele Mazet-Delpeuch who between 1988 and 1990 cooked in a private kitchen at the Elysee Palace for President Francois Mitterrand. Her domain put her in opposition to the chefs of the Main Kitchen and palace bureaucracy who resent her personal marketing and insouciance about bills.

Catherine Frot rises to the part of Hortense Laborie like an elegant meringue – with a stainless steel spine. Mitterrand, as played by French writer Jean d'Ormesson is perhaps more benign than in life.

Vincent frames his palace sequences between scenes on a French Antarctic base where Hortense is hunted by an Australian television reporter. Her final refuge is said to be New Zealand. Cue for a Franco-Australasian sequel?

M★★★★SFFV

## **t he internship**

Director Shawn Levy re-teams the old, hoot partners, Vince Vaughn and Owen Wilson, as salesmen, past their use-by date trying to bridge the dot-com gap and score an internship at California's Google HQ, less a dark satanic mill than the good ship lollipop.

Rose Byrne makes an appearance as the love interest. Vaughn's script has its moments of deadpan satire. But neither he nor Levy appears to believe in a spoonful of sugar when they can shovel a heap of banal rudery.

M★★★NFFV

## **Mud**

Nobel laureate Ernest Hemingway deemed Mark Twain's novel *Huckleberry Finn* to be the foundation of American literature. You don't have to agree with Hemingway's opinion to see the Twain influence in writer/director Jeff Nichols's comedy thriller.

The Huckleberry and Tom Sawyer of his take are played, and played

superlatively, by Tye Sheridan and Jacob Lofland, and ol' man river, the Mississippi just keeps rolling along. Some might argue that in conformity with Twain, the object of their aid should've been black like the fugitive Jim.

But Matthew McConaughey gets so deep in a molasses drawl that occasionally sub-titles would help. He is the Mud of the title, hiding out on an island in a boat left high and wrecked in a tree.

Can the boys help him escape before he is captured by a bounty hunter (the mighty Joe Don Baker) who has baited a trap for him with his sweetheart Juniper (Reese Witherspoon playing against typecasting). And why is Mud's dead-eye daddy (Sam Shepard) lurking about?

Sequences are shot in rhythm with the river. But when speed is needed in a emergency or the final shoot-out, Nichols directs with the swiftness of a Mississippi's cotton mouth snake.

M★★★SFFV

## **t he Great Gatsby**

Almost as good as the trailer, not quite up to its promotion must be the verdict on Baz Luhrmann's latest show. And show it is; Luhrmann, as he demonstrates in his use of 3D. Sydney locations for Long Island and his logistics in importing Yankee vintage autos, is a showman in the Hollywood tradition of Mike Todd.

Too much? Okay, he is into pastiche: the sticking together of admired elements from other people's work. In this view his chief homage is to director Jack Clayton's 1974 version starring Robert Redford, Mia Farrow and Bruce Dern as Jay Gatsby, Daisy Buchanan and Tom Buchanan, replaced with Leonardo DiCaprio, Carey Mulligan and Joel Edgerton.

All are more than adequate to the grand pastiche. Filmbiz being filmbiz the DVD version should contain some splendid out-takes including some Gatsby funeral lines for Max Cullen who plays The Owl with enough white whiskers for three Santa Clauses.

Luhrmann and his co-writer Craig Pearce give a hint that they could have made a more original movie when they describe the narrator Nick (Tobey McGuire) as depressive and alcoholic.

This hints at an awareness of how close Fitzgerald's fiction was to his personal life. Nick is Fitzgerald, the writer. His lifelong regret at not serving overseas in the Great War inspired the creation of the heroic hardnut, Gatsby. Tom Buchanan? Fitzgerald again but with touches of the nemesis he helped to fame: Hemingway.

There is a third possibility: F Scott Fitzgerald prophesied Baz Luhrmann in *The Last Tycoon*.

M★★★★SFFV

## **Stories we tell**

The never-say-dull Sarah Polley directs and stars in this documentary, based on her personal life. Since her parents were Canadian showbiz personalities, she has a rich archive to mine. Rich and strange, for in her mining, assisted by siblings and step-siblings, she uncovers more than she really wants to know.

Occasionally, she breaks her spell with lingering shots of telephone cords (symbol of communication?). All in all, however, an exercise that will create more fans for her work.

M★★★★SFFV

## **t he Hunt**

Director Thomas Vinterberg and co-writer Tobias Lindholm venture boldly into a social minefield: child abuse. Lucas (Mads Mikkelsen), teacher at a local kindergarten is accused by one of the children. Predictable

## **Official Classifications key**

G: for general exhibition;  
PG: parental guidance recommended for persons under 15 years;  
M 15+: recommended for mature audiences 15 years and over;  
MA 15+: restrictions apply to persons under the age of 15;  
R 18+: Restricted to adults, 18 years and over.

## **Annals supplementary advice**

SFFV: Suitable For Family Viewing;  
NFFV: Not For Family Viewing.

result: the break-up of relationships and death threats, the more real since deer hunting and drinking are the community sports.

Not so predictable is the Vinterberg-Lindholms twist on the allegation. Mikkelsen's performance is a masterpiece of noble ambiguity.

MA15+★★★NFFV

## **Broken**

Skunk (star-dusted neophyte Eloise Laurence) is smart beyond her 11 years. She has to be; she lives in a close which director Rufus Norris and scriptwriter Mark O'Rowe use to symbolise the Disunited Kingdom. Nothing political, you understand, just social-realist family life.

Skunk's widower father Archie (Tim Roth) loves her but her main carer is the *au pair* Kasia (Zana Marjanovic) who is being courted by one of Skunk's teachers Mike (Cillian Murphy).

The inadvertent agent of disorder is Rick (Robert Emms) whose simplicity enrages a violent neighbour. Resolution is reached after Skunk, an insulin dependent diabetic, is kidnapped by Rick. But Rufus Norris cheats to achieve the resolution; it involves a dream sequence in a church, a place in which none of the characters has shown any interest.

Fine acting. Rough script.

M★★★NFFV

## **t he place Beyond the pines**

More a triple episode series than a single movie, director Derek Cianfrance's thriller opens with powerful tracking sequence: Luke (Ryan Gosling) strides through a fair ground, straddles a motorbike and defies death with two others in a steel-lattice sphere.

Afterwards he has a brief encounter with Romina (Eva Mendez) and returns to find he has a son. His attempts to support his offspring involve bank robbery in cahoots with a backwoodsman (played to the sleazy limit by Ben Mendelsohn).

Robbery puts Luke under the gun of a rookie cop (Bradley Cooper) who in turn has to deal with a group of fellow cops (lead by Ray Liotta at his most coffin faced).

Cianfrance interweaves his story lines brilliantly. But in his denouement, he evades their logic. Instead of using his

strongest sequence: the christening of Luke's son as flashback linkage, he uses a cute snapshot.

Too cute considering the power of the triple strand narrative.

MA15+ ★★★NFFV

### t he Call

What could have been a cool thriller involving Halle Berry as police call-centre operator Jordon Turner in computer mind games with a serial killer Michael Foster (Michael Eklund),

But director Brad Anderson and writer Richard D'Ovidio switch genres and the mind games become multiple car smashes and buckets of gore.

MA15+★★NFFV.

### t he Reluctant Fundamentalist

Director Mira Nair derives her story line from Mohsin Hamid's work, Man Booker listed novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Essentially Nair and writer William Wheeler's take is that a fundamentalist may be created by the security restrictions imposed to protect the public from terrorists.

As Bobby Lincoln, Liev Schreiber is superlatively cool as a CIA agent on the trail of a kidnapped academic. Riz Ahmed plays the titular terrorist with subtle ambiguity. Unanswered the conundrum of how a democracy defends itself against those who would use civil rights against it.

★★★NFFV

### Dead Man Down

Actors should be able to play anyone. Nonetheless it is difficult to

take the Irishman Colin Farrell as Victor, a member of a Hungarian mafia-style gang, operating in Philadelphia.

Director Niels Arden Oplev adds the Icelander Noomi Rapace as a mysterious

Frenchwoman involved with Victor in an interdependent revenge.

Bullets fly, blood flows; neither distracts from the flim-flam nature of the plot.

MA15+★★NFFV



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*Every day more than one million passengers travel on 2365 daily services over the 2080 kms of railway tracks around New South Wales.  
Among the one million passengers was Joe Meagher.*

## JOE ROLE mODELS COURTESY

By Max Barrett



HE ASIAN LADY boarded the train at Sutherland. She was very flustered and very pregnant. Her five-year-old son clutched her skirt and looked around in something approaching terror. The standees on the 8.05 must have seemed as big as Brobdingnags and himself 'not half so big as a round little worm'. Joe Meagher quoted Gulliver's Travels under his breath (not Joe's normal way of quoting).

He mused: That wee mother is doubtless heading for one of her last pre-natal check-ups. A pity these appointments have to be scheduled so early in the a.m. A work-force train is not a congenial mode of transport for anyone hosting new life. And this dear lady standing, to boot.

### 'STANDING!'

Joe jumped to his feet as though sucked vertically upwards into a vacuum. With a flowing gesture he ushered the young matron into the vacated seat. There was gratitude in the mother's eyes, but still unabated fear in the boy's.

The challenge presented by the little one's fright was a piece of cake for Joe. He had handled situations like this many times before, mainly

FATHER MAX BARRETT is a Redemptorist priest now resident in Sydney. This piece was the third in a popular series that we ran in *Annals* in 2002, following the career of Joe Meagher over quite a few train rides. A number of readers have asked us to re-run the series. *Annals* is happy to do so and we hope that our new readers will enjoy Joe Meagher as much as we did when first we ran it.

when taking his own children to the dentist or for a needle. Affecting not to notice his audience, the versatile J. Meagher created the maximum possible viewing space between himself and the lad and went into his routine.

His clasped hands became a rabbit's head. Two ears sprang up and wiggled; one ear gave a coy wave in the boy's direction. Next, Joe spread out arms and hands, and two cubic metres of thick City Rail air became limitless heavens in which a plane cavorted recklessly before finally doing a loop. At this stage the contortionist took on a look of agony: he couldn't unloop himself. Up came a knee which cannoned into one arm. The impact released the trapped limbs. Joe gave the 'injured' part the most tender care. The boy burst out laughing.

That problem solved, Joe murmured to himself: next, the didactic part.

In his lovely carrying voice he addressed himself to the mother, now relaxed, now smiling as she listened to a flow of words which, literally, were foreign to her.

'Dear little mother,  
I do apologise that we left you standing for so long a time.' (In point of fact, it had been under a minute.) Joe dropped his voice to a whisper - which carried every bit as far as the speaker intended.)

'The sterling set of people you see in this carriage may appear to be in excellent condition, but appearances often deceive. The one sitting in (mumble, mumble, mumble) has a very bad heart condition; cardiac arrest could occur any tick of the clock. A real time bomb. The passenger



wearing the (mumble, mumble) carries a post-polio weakness. Very sad. I could go on, but it is my practice never to embarrass anyone.' (At that, a few commuters exchanged looks of 'you-could-have-fooled-me').

'Actually' (the tone remained confidential) 'these days you have to be very careful about offering a seat to some ladies. In this egalitarian age, any gesture of deference that might suggest protection of the 'weaker sex' gets right up the collective noses of some *femmes*.

'There was a time,' (the man with the dreamy blue eyes grew lyrical now); 'there was a time ... not all that long ago ... when our womenfolk possessed a beautiful ... softness, and they did not compete with their male counterparts. We all knew of course that, if they did compete, the gents would often be relegated into second place. But the danger was that that victory could come at a price; there lurked the danger that, in proving their equality, womenfolk might lose their superiority as women.

'Now it would appear that the softness (whatever the right word is) has gone and, lamentably, so has that indefinable strength and fascination of femininity. Today, some women don't seem to mind having the smell of stale smoke in their hair or be heard screeching abuse at football matches or using four-letter words as viciously and demeaningly as any man can use them. The ladies can line up at the bar and sink a schooner along with the best of 'em. Is that what Emmeline Pankhurst fought for? Oh well, *chacun son goût* ...

'Now, what led me along that long path? (Usually I'm a man of few words.) That's right! We were discussing courtesy.

Of courtesy it is much less

Than courage of heart or holiness,

Yet in my walks it seems to me

That the grace of God is in courtesy.

The next stop was Hurstville, and the expectant mother indicated this was her destination. She and her son smiled their good-bye. On the platform the boy ran ahead a few paces, caught Joe's eye and gave a quite creditable imitation of the loop and the agonised look.

Among those who boarded the 8.05 at this stop was a middle-aged lady. Now the usual gung-ho attitude these days seems to be: Luv, if you choose to travel on a work-hour train, you cop it sweet.

## Behold, i stand at the door

OFTEN WHEN He comes, He finds the soul occupied. Other guests are there, and He has to turn away. He cannot gain entry, for we love and desire other things; therefore, His gifts, which He is offering to everyone unceasingly, must remain outside.

— Johannes Tauler, Dominican Mystic [1300-1361]

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In the wake of the departed Asian mother, however, twelve passengers leapt up and offered her their seats!

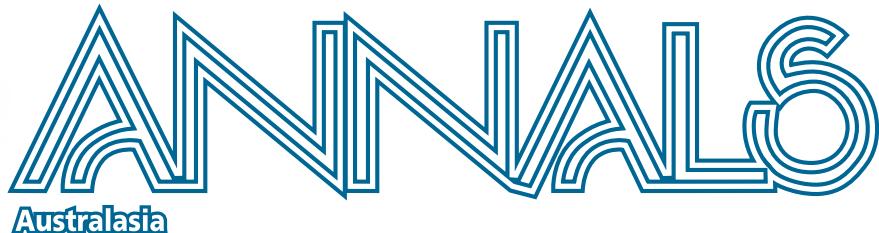
Joe smiled a little prayer to his divine companion. 'Thank you, Lord.'

But ... how many will do the same thing tomorrow? ...'

Next Month: The Meeting of Evangelicals.

# 2013

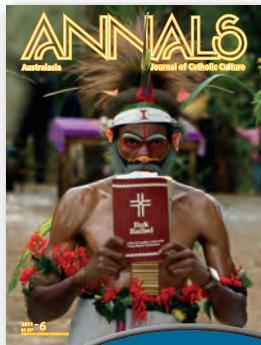
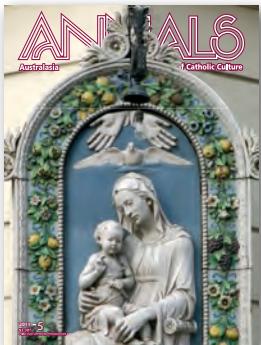
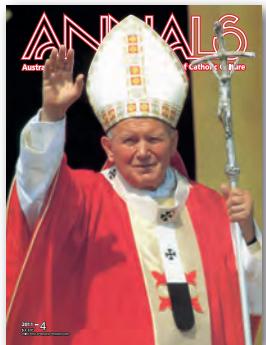
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