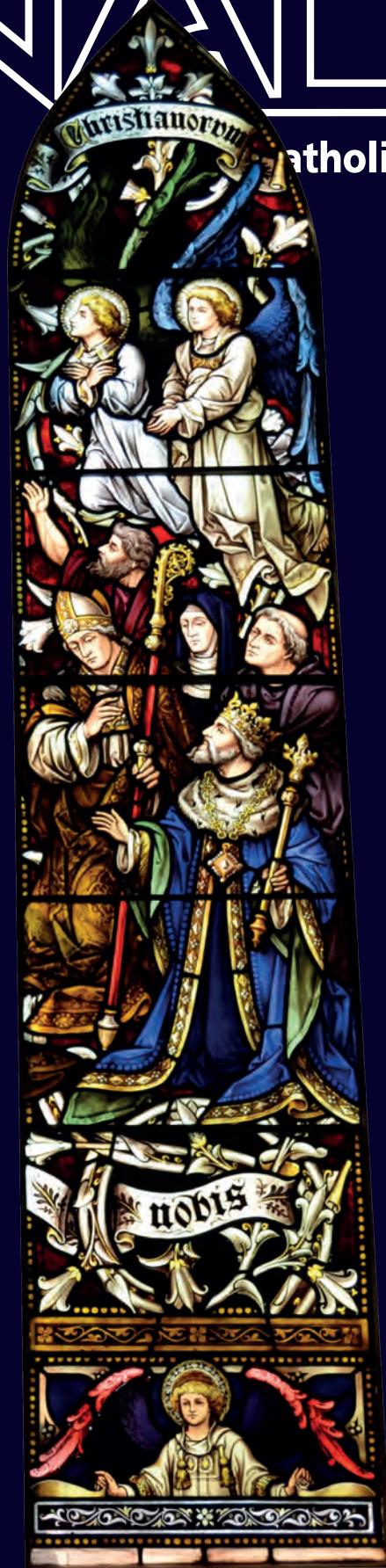
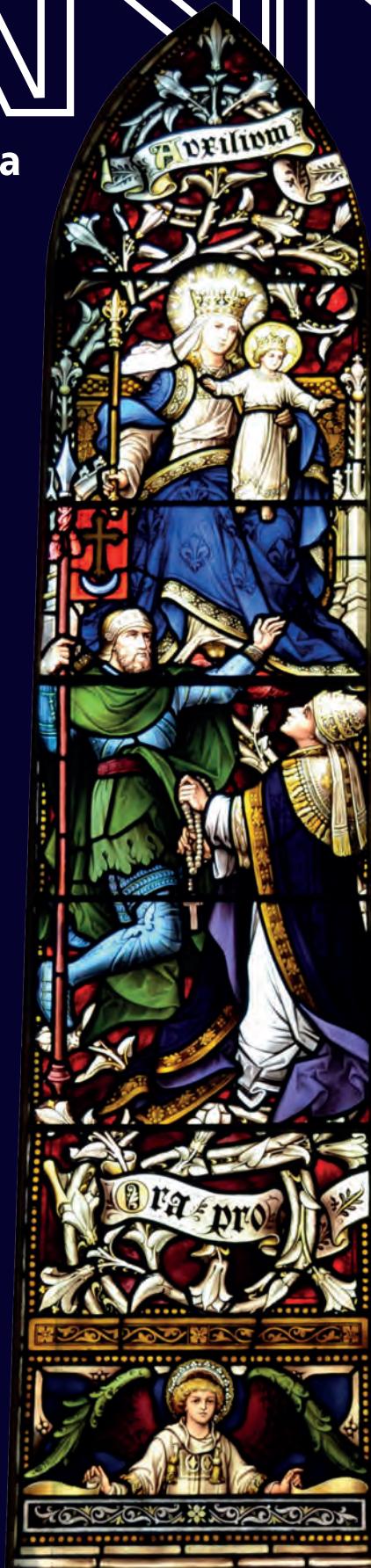


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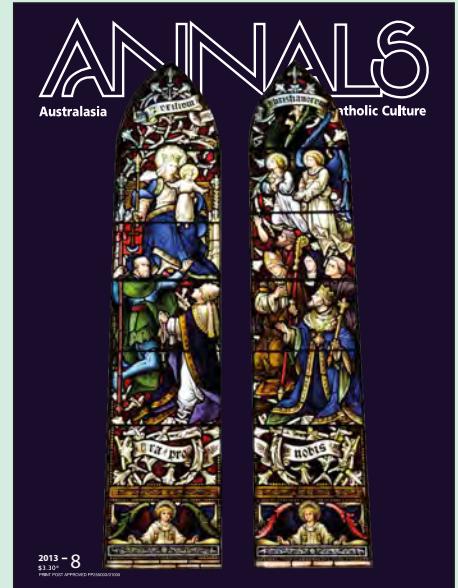
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[Sunday Readings at Mass: Year C/weekday readings: Year I]

Australia's Oldest Catholic Magazine

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Front Cover: Two stained glass windows in the stately and beautiful Catholic Cathedral of Rockhampton, Queensland, dedicated to St Joseph. The windows represent the Patroness of Australia, St Mary, mother of our Saviour, under the title 'Help of Christians' [Auxilium Christianorum]. The windows were designed and made in England by John Hardiman Studios. The title 'Help of Christians' seems first to have been used in a homily preached in 345 by St John Chrysostom. It occurs in a different guise in one of the oldest and most popular prayers to our Lady, the Sub tuum praesidium: 'We take refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God'. This is found in an Egyptian papyrus dating from around 250 AD. After the battle of Lepanto, when Catholic naval forces led by Don John of Austria defeated the entire Ottoman fleet in 1571, the victory was attributed to Our Lady under the title 'Help of Christians'. In this decisive battle, the Catholic forces, which had fewer ships, sailors and soldiers than the Ottoman Turks, captured 137 Turkish ships, sank 50 and freed 12,000 Christian galley slaves. Pope Pius V instituted the Feast of our Lady of Victory in thanksgiving for the victory.

Cover Photo: Paul Stenhouse

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

- St Gaudentius of Brescia,
died c.410 AD, Treatise 2,
Roman Breviary, Reading
for Thursday of Week 5 in
Eastertide.



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

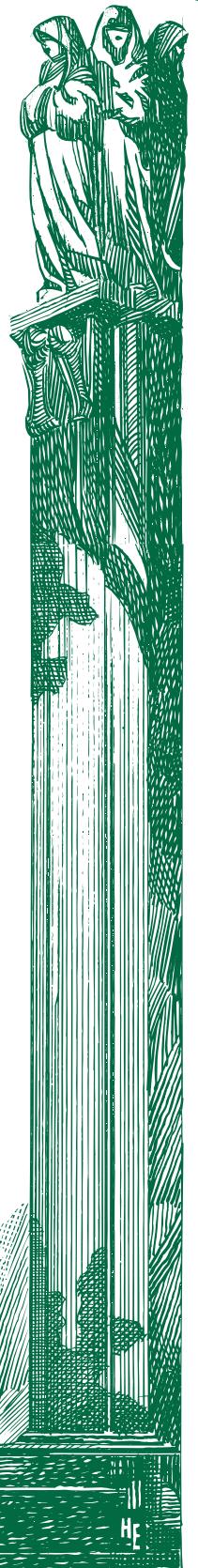
QUENCH THE FIRES OF HATE AND STRIFE



God, who cannot change nor fail,
Guiding the hours as they roll by;
Brightening with beams the morning pale,
And burning in the midday sky.

Quench Thou the fires of hate and strife,
The wasting fever of the heart;
From perils guard our feeble life,
And to our souls Thy peace impart.

St Ambrose [340-397 A.D.] Hymn for Sext, the sixth hour [12.00
noon] in the Roman Breviary.



POPE FRANCIS IS RATINGS KING IN ITALY

VATICAN CITY – Italian television has seen its viewership ratings of papal events skyrocket since Pope Francis' election. The number of people tuning in to watch the pope celebrate major liturgical events and his Sunday Angelus has soared, according to the Italian daily, *Il Fatto Quotidiano*. The Italian state television channel, RAI 1, reported a jump of almost three-quarters of a million people watching its coverage of the noon *Angelus*. Viewership of the weekly pre-pranzo prayer went from 1.56 million people in 2012 to 2.27 million people this year, *Il Fatto* reported. Not bad for a country of 60.9 million people with just 30.3 million televisions sets. Audience share of RAI 1's papal Mass broadcasts saw an even bigger boost going from 15.82 percent during Benedict XVI's pontificate to 22.35 percent today. That translates, the paper said, into nearly one in three households tuning in to Pope Francis to watch him celebrate Mass. Pope Francis' first *Angelus* address in March grabbed a 45 percent audience share and the *Via Crucis* a few weeks later nabbed 36 percent – numbers that are usually the norm during live coverage of Italians' other 'religion': national soccer playoffs. In a play on words, the Italian paper said when it comes to audience draw, 'a Mass (Messa) is worth Messi,' the champion Argentine soccer star. TV 2000, the television station of the Italian Bishops' Conference, had its day of fame when it broadcast live Pope Francis' visit to Assisi earlier this month, making the tiny station the 5th-most watched channel that day, ahead of some major commercial channels. The Italian all-news channel, SkyTG24 is giving more airtime than ever before to the pope's Sunday *Angelus*, the paper said, because 'when Francis is on air, people don't change the channel.'



Pic: Roland Liang

THE PITILESS 'ARAB WINTER'

Claims that demonising the Assad regime and fomenting bloody war in Syria were intended to provide a pretext for luring the U.S.'s bête noir Iran into a wider conflict, appear increasingly rock solid. And media involvement in this deadly warmongering and manipulation is undeniable.

SYRIA: TRUTH, HALF-TRUTHS AND LIES

By Paul Stenhouse

IT IS OCTOBER 20, 2013. Bushfires, some of them deliberately lighted, have devoured more than 330,000 hectares of Australian bushland, and hundreds of our people's homes.

Another tragic inferno, the so-called 'civil war' in Syria, cannot be ignored; nor can media complicity in the on-going bloodbath that has engulfed this once prosperous and, for an Islamic society still emerging from many centuries of isolation and xenophobia, relatively *free* country.

Middle East Imploding

Five overseas news items – along with the disastrous New South Wales fires – dominate the early morning news bulletins this fateful Monday. All the overseas stories involve brutal murder, and the perpetrators are all Islamic militants.

In northern Nigeria, Boko Haram Islamists randomly shot or hacked to death 19 innocent motorists.¹

In Syria, at least 16 Syrian soldiers died in a suicide bombing close to the mainly Christian area of Jaramana, in Damascus.²

In Syria again, more than 30 people, mainly civilians, died when a suicide bomber detonated a truck laden with 1.5 tonnes of explosives on a busy road in Hama, in Syria's central west.³

In Iraq, at least 38 people died in a suicide bombing attack on a café in the mainly Shi'a district of Baghdad.⁴

In Egypt, three people, including a girl aged eight, died when gunmen on motorcycles opened fire on a wedding party outside a Coptic Christian church in Cairo. At least nine others were wounded in the attack in Giza.⁵

While gangs of fanatics throughout the Islamic world often target minorities, especially Christians and

Jews,⁶ it should be noted that most victims of Islamic violence and killing are Muslims. And usually, though not always, Shi'a.

Over the last 18 months, 203 incidents of sectarian violence in Pakistan resulted in 1800 casualties. Of this number 635 of the killed, and 834 of the injured, were Shi'a. Sectarian and religious violence in Pakistan is on the rise, and between January 2012 and June 2013, the Shi'a community has been the principal victim.⁷

This worsening of the sectarian and religious violence and bloodshed was predictable. In 'Unleashing the Dogs of War' [*Annals* 2012/1], after visiting Syria in late October 2011, I wrote:

'By February 4, 2011, a week before the fall of Hosni Mubarak, and almost six weeks *before* the events at Dara'a, a new *facebook* page – only a week old – called 'The Syrian Revolution 2011,' already had 15,000 fans. This was taken by some as a sign that Assad's regime would be the next to fall.⁸

'When the Saudi King condemned Syria in August⁹ last year, Syrian parliamentarian Shehade Kamel was quoted by the semi-official Iranian *Fars* News Agency as saying: 'This conspiracy



St Mary's Syrian Orthodox Church in Deir Azzour



Pic: www.tempi.it

The ancient Christian town of Maaloula has been overrun by al-Qaeda rebels. 'Where is President Obama to see what has befallen us?' a resident cried. Another witness stated, 'I saw the militants grabbing five villagers and threatening them and saying, 'Either you convert to Islam, or you will be beheaded.'''

against Syria is the beginning of a conspiracy against Iran.¹⁰

'However one may wish to rephrase his statement, it is difficult not to agree with its substance.'

Two years after writing these words I can find no reason for changing anything. In fact, claims¹¹ that demonising the Assad regime and fomenting bloody war in Syria were intended to provide a pretext for luring the U.S.'s *bête noire* Iran into a wider conflict, appear increasingly rock solid. And media involvement in this deadly warmongering and manipulation – reminiscent of the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 – is undeniable.

'Almost twelve months after that facebook page opened, and the 'revolution' began – on March 15, 2011 – and after TV news, frantic social networking and twittering from Syria has been beamed nightly into the living rooms, computers and mobile phones of many hundreds of millions of people around the world, one would have expected that a lively debate would be going on about the rights and wrongs of the conflict.'¹²

Far from it. Two years on, there still appears to be little doubt in many people's minds, despite evidence to the contrary, that the Syrian regime under Bashar al-Assad is 'brutal,' 'monstrous,' 'murdering its own people,' and 'guilty of crimes against humanity,' to

say nothing of having used chemical weapons against its own citizens.

The opposition, on the other hand, is still held to be the voice of the masses – leading a popular revolution against a hated and feared Police State. And this despite the fact that even the most intransigent deniers of any foreign presence among the anti-Assad fighters, admit now that there are 'as many as 1,000 armed opposition groups in Syria, commanding an estimated 100,000 fighters.'¹³ Those of us who suggested this to be the case in early 2011 were pilloried as 'agents provocateurs' for the Assad regime.

Anti-Shi'a and anti-Iranian propaganda

The shameful record of Western media goes beyond warmongering and bias. Their indifference to the murder of Christians in Islamic countries is paralleled by their indifference to the random slaughter of innocent Shi'a civilians.

Pope Francis and the Church Suffering

THE CHALDEAN and Syriac Catholic Churches of Iraq and Syria, while differing in rite and tradition from the Latin West, are integral members of the universal Catholic Church, in full communion with the bishop of Rome. The persecution they and other Middle Eastern Christians now suffer—so severe it threatens their continued existence in their ancient homelands—is a bitter wound for the Church and an unavoidable concern for the Holy Father.

Of the million or so Christians living in Iraq a decade ago, fewer than half likely remain. During this period, seventy Iraqi Christian churches were attacked. Christian laity and clergy have faced relentless violence. Between 2003 and May 2012, some nine hundred Christians were killed. Another two hundred were kidnapped, tortured, and released for ransom, according to the Iraq-based Hammurabi Organization for Human Rights.

In his past ministries of service, Pope Francis has consistently reached out to the poor with tenderness and personal humility. So did his namesake, the great Francis of Assisi. But we'd be wise to remember that the real man of Assisi, the flesh and blood person who became a saint, lived in a violent age much like our own. And he was far more unsettling in the demands he placed on himself and his brothers than the rosy legends that have grown up around him suggest.

The real St. Francis was a 'radical' in the original sense of the word: committed down to his roots in his love for Jesus Christ and God's people; radical in his self-denial; and radical in his solidarity with the suffering—whoever and wherever they might be. The lesson is simply this: the world might ignore the bitter suffering of Christians in the Middle East, but the real Francis of Assisi would not. And the pope who took his name is unlikely to do otherwise.

— 'Pope Francis and the Christians of the Middle East' by Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, *First Things*, March 22, 2013.

Such callousness seems inexplicable, unless you see it *firstly* as a by-product of the incessant anti-Christian content of much of the Western print media, radio, internet and television; and *secondly* as a by-product of the barrage of anti-Shi'a and anti-Iranian propaganda emanating from Israel, the US and her western allies, and the oil-rich Sunni states in the Gulf.

Apropos of the latter, it should be noted that more than 60% of the Gulf population is Shi'a. There are over eighty-one million Shi'a in Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and much of the oil is on Shi'a tribal land, even though in most of the countries except Iran the oil-fields are managed and controlled by Sunni who also derive all the financial and other benefits.

Indigenous Peoples

In Syria, Christians have been especially targeted. Radical foreign Islamist groups like the so-called 'Islamic Power in Iraq and Syria' [*Dawlat al-Islamiyya fi al-Iraq wa ash-Sham*] an off-shoot of al-Qaeda, are determined to drive Syria's Christians from their homes.

Along with the Copts in Egypt, and the Christians of Iraq, many of Syria's Christians are indigenous to their region. They were there for 600 years before Islam appeared.

If we in modern-day Australia, or in the USA or any country – other than one with Islamic structures – treated our indigenous peoples with such overt barbarism we would become pariahs among civilised nations. International Cultural bodies with political clout would be outraged, and lobbying would be intense. World media packs would be baying at the heels of state and federal governments, and the coverage would be 24/7.

Why do the UN, Australia and the USA and the other nations of the so-called free and 'developed' world remain silent in the face of such blatant disregard for the Geneva Convention and the Declaration of Human Rights?

Biased, Compromised or Frightened

The short answer is that they – and our western media – are either biased,

The West has lost its Soul

THE WEST has blood on its hands, the blood of millions of human beings, because it has betrayed its values, and sacrificed its principles for the sake of purely material, political or economic benefit. Twenty years ago I wrote an article entitled 'Europe – be careful not to lose your soul'. Well today it is a fact. The West has lost the soul that once made it a vehicle for the transmission of culture and civilisation, of humanism and spiritual realities; that once made it a guiding light. What produced humanism, the Renaissance and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is dying before our very eyes. What produced Michelangelo, Pascal, Einstein, Beethoven and so many other geniuses of arts and science is dying out. The West has betrayed itself – sold itself for money, for petrol, for gas, for dollars, for euros. Jesus warned us: 'what good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and to lose his soul?' ... This is what is happening before our very eyes today. Human beings have no value: a hundred dead, a thousand dead, ten-thousand dead – it doesn't seem to matter. What is important is conquering territory, or getting control of a gas or oil field. One hundred thousand dead in Syria today, one million dead in Iraq yesterday, two million dead in the Sudan the day before yesterday. This seems to mean nothing. ... Where is man in all this? ... The most urgent task today is to rediscover a sense of humanity ... to rethink our politics, our economics, our strategies – in the light of our humanity. It is high time that we unmask the hypocrisy of the media, and of those who manipulate the media ... Our world is sick. Wake up. Time is running out. - Alexandria, Egypt, August 31, 2013.

— Extract from a letter written by Father Henri Boulad SJ who was born in Alexandria in 1931. His father was from a Syrian Melkite Catholic family originally from Damascus that moved to Egypt in the 1860s. In 1950 he entered the Jesuit novitiate in Bikfaya, Lebanon. Ordained priest according to the Melkite Rite in 1963 he has worked tirelessly to help the poor, both Christian and Muslim. Translation from the French: Paul Stenhouse

or compromised or frightened; or all three. I can almost certainly hear someone suggesting defensively: 'Well, maybe they just didn't know what to do'. I hope I'm not alone in thinking that it's too late in this fateful 'civil war' in which more than 115,000 people have died so far,¹⁴ and millions have been rendered homeless, for the instigators of the violence to plead ignorance of the stakes, or confusion over the goals and the identity of the players.

There are 54 Muslim countries among the 192 countries that make up the United Nations. Most Muslim countries *except Saudi Arabia* – a major player in the Syria debacle – voted to ratify the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR] in the UN General Assembly in 1948.

'The Saudi representative condemned the UDHR on the grounds that it reflected Western culture and was "at variance with the patterns of culture of Eastern

States" and on the ground that the provisions on religious liberty violated Islamic Law.¹⁵

Muslim countries have since sought to distance themselves from the UDHR.¹⁶ In particular Islamic reservations were expressed against the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).¹⁷ The majority of Muslim countries are not signatories to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.¹⁸

In August 1990 representatives of the 54 Islamic nations met in Cairo and signed the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam. This is not the place to discuss how this Declaration differs from the UDHR but it should be noted that Religion is not mentioned in the UDHR. Article 25 of the Cairo Declaration reads: "The Islamic Shari'ah [sic!] is



The anti-government forces brought destruction upon the ancient city, and destroyed the industries that kept Aleppo alive, burning and looting

the only source of reference for the explanation or clarification of any of the articles of this Declaration.¹⁹

Pity Minorities in the Middle East

Last month *Annals* carried an article by Peter Day entitled *Media and Jihad*.²⁰ In it he discussed a phenomenon that surely escaped no one: almost blanket media-coverage of the cold-blooded murder by Somali Islamic terrorists in a Kenyan Mall of 60 innocent shoppers – singled out, as emerged later, because they *were not* Muslims – and the almost blanket media *silence* over the suicide bombing murder of more than 80 equally innocent Pakistani Christians whose only crime was that they were worshipping in a Church.

History, much neglected these days, still has lessons for those willing to be taught.

In 1917 about 40,000 Assyrian Christians, who had been living for centuries in what is today southern Turkey, fled to then British-controlled Iraq to avoid persecution at the hands of the Turks.

The then British Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon assured them ‘of our friendly interest and protection.’²¹

Some time after the Iraqi king – the former Emir Faisal – died of cancer in a Swiss Clinic in 1933, Iraqi soldiers massacred 400 unarmed Assyrian Christians, and Arab and Kurdish tribesmen sacked Assyrian Christian villages. All this despite Iraqi promises when admitted to the League of Nations in October 1932, that religious minorities would be protected.



With Iraqi Independence a *fait accompli*, the British were anxious to pull out of Iraq – the US should have enquired *why*, before invading on spurious grounds 70 years later in 2003 – and Arnold Wilson, the then Civil Administrator for Mesopotamia, noted that the religious minorities would be vulnerable to attack.

He described the official British attitude as one of ‘If the position of the minorities will suffer thereby, so much the worse for the minorities.’ He found this attitude ‘cynical’ and said ‘it is bound to lead to grave difficulties in the future, culminating, I fear, in the case of the Christians, in their virtual extermination.’²²

Whitehall was as impervious to Wilson’s pleas as Washington was to Pope John Paul II’s pleas in the case of ‘Operation Iraqi Freedom,’ in 2003. The Holy See described the invasion of Iraq as ‘a defeat for reason and for the Gospel’ and Cardinal Robert Tucci described it as ‘beyond all legality and all international legitimacy.’²³

Criticism of Washington’s condoning and supporting the presence of foreign Islamic

mercenaries [including al-Qaeda] in Libya and Syria fell on equally deaf ears.

Arnold Wilson who spoke up for the Assyrian Christians abandoned in Iraq by the British after the death of Faisal in 1933, became an RAF tail gunner when war broke out in 1939. His Wellington was shot down near Dunkirk on May 31, 1940. His remains lie buried there.

Before he enlisted he had told his constituents [he had become an MP on his return to England] that he 'did not want to live behind the rampart of the bodies of a million corpses'.²⁴

Unless they have a dramatic change of heart, the so-called Power Brokers in the US, Europe and the Middle East and their media accomplices who have engineered this phony war in Syria will have to live out their lives behind such a ghastly rampart.

1. *BBC News*, Middle East, October 20, 2013.
2. *Japan Times.co.jp*, October 19, 2013
3. *Reuters*, Erika Solomon, October 19, 2013
4. *BBC News* Middle East, October 20, 2013.
5. *BBC News*, Middle East, October 21, 2013.
6. See, e.g. *Nigeria News*, August 10, 2013.
7. The Pakistan *Daily Times*, July 19, 2013. See also the detailed Fact Sheet issued on July 18 by US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF).
8. Aryn Baker, 'Syria is not Egypt, but might it one day be Tunisia?' *Time world*, February 4, 2011
9. i.e. 2011.
10. *The Lebanization of Syria*, Centre International de Recherches et d'Etudes sur le Terrorisme et l'Aide aux victimes du Terrorisme [=CIRET-AVT], Paris, January 2012, p.36.
11. See George Friedman, *Stratfor Global Intelligence*, Tuesday October 9, 2012. Also: Paul Stenhouse, 'Why is Syria Burning,' *Annals Australasia* 4/2013, pp.3-6.
12. 'What is really going on in Syria?,' *Quadrant*, April 2012, pp.15-16.
13. 'Syria Crisis: Guide to armed and political opposition,' *BBC News*, Middle East, October 17, 2013.
14. *Reuters*, October 1, 2013. Quoted *Huffington Post*, October 23, 2013.
15. Ann Elizabeth Mayer, *Islam and Human Rights*, Westview Press, 1991, p.13.
16. Jeffrey Donovan, 'Islam's Challenges to Universal Human Rights,' December 9, 2008: http://www.rferl.org/content/Islems_Challenges_To_Universal_Human_Rights/1357912.html
17. See *Islamic Reservations To Human Rights Conventions: A critical assessment* by Ann Elizabeth Mayer Introduction. www.verenigingrimo.nl/wp/wp-content/uploads/recht15_mayer.pdf
18. http://www.reunite.org/pages/islamic_information_resource.asp
19. See: *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam*, August 5, 1990, *Human Rights Library*, University of Minnesota. <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/cairodeclaration.html>
20. *Annals* 7/2013, pp. 22-23.
21. Quoted Karl E. Meyer and Shareen Blair Brysac, *Kingmakers, The invention of the Modern Middle East*, New York, W.W.Norton & Co., p.190.
22. *ibid*, p.191.
23. See Alex Kinsbury, 'A Rift over Iraq between President and Pope,' *US News*, April 16, 2008.
24. Quoted Karl E. Meyer and Shareen Blair Brysac, *op.cit*, pp.155-156.

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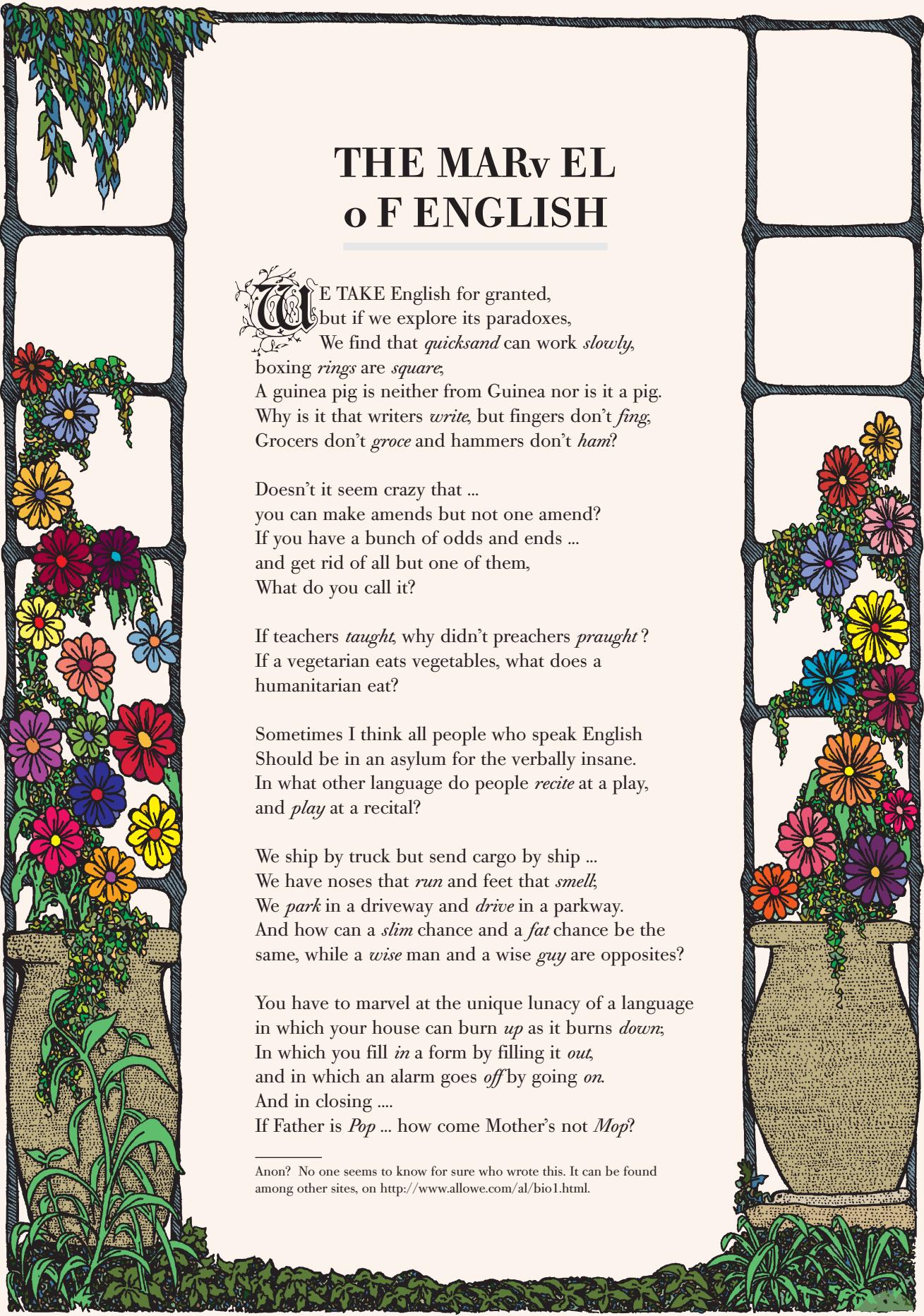
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– Editor, *Annals*

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THE MARVEL OF ENGLISH

WE TAKE English for granted,
but if we explore its paradoxes,
We find that *quicksand* can work *slowly*,
boxing *rings* are *square*,
A guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.
Why is it that writers *write*, but fingers don't *ring*,
Grocers don't *groce* and hammers don't *ham*?

Doesn't it seem crazy that ...
you can make amends but not one amend?
If you have a bunch of odds and ends ...
and get rid of all but one of them,
What do you call it?

If teachers *taught*, why didn't preachers *praught*?
If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a
humanitarian eat?

Sometimes I think all people who speak English
Should be in an asylum for the verbally insane.
In what other language do people *recite* at a play,
and *play* at a recital?

We ship by truck but send cargo by ship ...
We have noses that *run* and feet that *smell*,
We *park* in a driveway and *drive* in a parkway.
And how can a *slim* chance and a *fat* chance be the
same, while a *wise* man and a *wise guy* are opposites?

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language
in which your house can burn *up* as it burns *down*,
In which you fill *in* a form by filling it *out*,
and in which an alarm goes *off* by going *on*.
And in closing
If Father is *Pop* ... how come Mother's not *Mop*?

Anon? No one seems to know for sure who wrote this. It can be found
among other sites, on <http://www.allowe.com/al/bio1.html>.

The role of Beauty in the Rediscovery of Catholic Culture

BEAUTY EVER ANCIENT, EVER NEW

by James D. Conley



WHEN I BEGAN my seminary studies, I had only been a Catholic for a few years. I had converted to the Catholic Church during my undergraduate years at the University of Kansas through a course of studies in the Great Books called the Integrated Humanities Program.

When I started seminary, I was still learning the ropes of Catholicism.

In my first semester, I discovered that new seminarians needed to find a spiritual director. A number of my brother seminarians recommended Fr. Anton Morganroth, one of our professors.

Fr. Morganroth was a Jewish convert to the Catholic faith who fled Nazi Germany with his family in 1938. He was a tall, imposing figure. He was both loved and feared by the seminarians.

One day I mustered up the courage to introduce myself to Fr. Morganroth and I asked him if he would take me on for spiritual direction. He gazed down at me in silence, sizing me up, and then simply said “report to my quarters next Tuesday at 7pm.”

After dinner in the refectory, Fr. Morganroth would return to his room to play his piano—he played brilliantly. If you had an appointment with him he would leave the door ajar. You were to simply push the

door open and take a seat in a chair next to the piano.

I remember making my way down the hallway toward Fr. Morganroth’s rooms for the first time, hearing beautiful classical piano music coming from his room. The door was ajar. I stood outside the door for a moment and just listened to the music. Eventually I pushed the door open,

entered the room and took a seat. He looked over at me from the piano and nodded in approval.

I sat there, listening to the music. There was a musical score on the piano—a Mozart sonata—but Fr. Morganroth had his eyes closed the whole time. He was not reading the music. A few minutes went by. Then five minutes. Then seven minutes.

Finally ten minutes went by. He completed the piece and there was silence.

I’ll never forget that silence.

We were both caught up in the beauty of the moment. It was probably the first time I had ever really heard classical music at such close range. It was something like perfection.

After a few moments of silence, eager to get started, I broke the silence and said “so, Father, are we going to have spiritual direction?”

Fr. Morganroth turned. He stared right through me and said “son, zat was your spiritual direction, you can go now.”

I returned the next week and we began our regular sessions, which were wonderful. But it was the beauty of that music that led the way; that opened my heart and mind to the realities of the spiritual life.

Most of us love the truth and beauty of our Catholic faith, and we want to share it with others. Most of us also know that our culture is headed in an alarming direction—toward a crisis that cannot be averted without Jesus Christ and his Church.



Michelangelo's Moses, in the Church of St Peter in Chains, Rome



Detail of one of the capitals on the columns of the Church of St Agnes in the Piazza Navona – where the twelve-year-old saint was executed in the time of the emperor Diocletian on January 21, 304.

In fact, those two concerns—salvation and culture—are deeply related. The Gospel involves more than our individual salvation: it is also a universal mandate to, as Pope St. Pius X said, “restore *all* things in Christ.” Such a mandate extends beyond our own personal sanctification.

When we speak of evangelization, we mean not only the conversion of individuals, but also the transformation of culture. Christ is Lord of the public square, and our common life, just as he is the Lord of our homes and hearts. Thus, the Church’s evangelistic mission is also a mandate for cultural conversion.

The Second Vatican Council confirmed this cultural mandate, in its decree on the lay apostolate. Chapter II of *Apostolicam Actuositatem* taught that “Christ’s redemptive work, while essentially concerned with the salvation of men, includes also the renewal of the whole temporal order.”

“Hence,” the council said, “the mission of the Church is not only to bring the message and grace of Christ to men but also to penetrate and perfect the temporal order with the spirit of the Gospel.”

Cultural renewal is essential, because the Catholic faith is not just a private conviction. The mystery of

the Incarnation changes everything. Our faith is meant to be the basis of a culture—a shared way of life that uses the things of this world to glorify God.

The great theologians teach us that grace does not abolish the good things of this world. Christ brings them, rather, to their fulfillment. Our faith is incarnational. All truth, all beauty, and all goodness, are “through him” and “for him.” These things are part of God’s redemptive plan. Truth, beauty, and goodness are integral to our salvation.

Faithful Catholics care about truth: like our Lord, we want all people “to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” We care, too, about goodness—especially moral goodness, the life of virtue so often spurned by contemporary culture.



But what about beauty? Where is the place for beauty in our evangelization of the culture?

This is an important question, and one we sometimes overlook or misunderstand. It is this question, the role of beauty in evangelization and cultural renewal that I want to consider.

The title of this essay is *Ever Ancient, Ever New: The Role of Beauty in the Restoration of Catholic Culture*. The title is taken from a passage in Book X of the *Confessions of Saint Augustine*. In Chapter X, Saint Augustine laments the fact that it has taken him 33 years to discover the beauty of the divine. In those immortal lines he cries out: “Late have I loved thee, O beauty ever ancient, ever new.”

Beauty is both ancient and new: we are at once surprised and comforted by its presence. Beauty exists in a sphere beyond time. And so beautiful things expose us to the timelessness of eternity.

This is why beauty matters, in an eternal sense. Beauty was part of God’s creative plan in the beginning, and it is just as much a part of his redemptive plan now. God has placed the desire for beauty within our hearts, and he uses that desire to lead us back to himself.

Truth and beauty are both gifts from God. So our New Evangelization must work to make truth beautiful. By means both ancient and new, we must make use of beauty—to infuse Western culture, once more, with the spirit of the Gospel.

By means of earthly beauty, we can help our contemporaries discover the truth of the Gospel. Then, they may come to know the eternal beauty of God—that beauty Saint Augustine described as “ever ancient, ever new.”

Encountering the Beauty of Catholic Culture: as I mentioned, I am a convert to the Catholic faith. I entered the Church in 1975, under the guidance of one of the 20th century’s great teachers—the late John Senior, co-founder of the Integrated Humanities Program at the University of Kansas. John Senior was my godfather, and his ideas about faith and culture are a continuing inspiration to me.

My godfather loved beauty—not for its own sake, but for the sake of Jesus Christ, the creator and redeemer of beauty. Senior saw the beauty of this world in the light of eternity, and he helped others to acquire the same transcendent vision.

John Senior was not an evangelist, in the traditional sense of the word: he did not preach from a pulpit, or write works of apologetics. His goal in the classroom was not to convert us, but to open our minds to truth, wherever it might be found. And he did that primarily through the imagination.

In his own unusual way, Senior was a remarkably gifted evangelist. He had a deep love for the Church, and for the beauty of historic Christian culture. And that love was infectious.

There were literally hundreds of converts to the Catholic Church at the University of Kansas in the 1970's.

The Integrated Humanities program ran from 1970 to 1979, a decade that, with the exception of some really great rock and roll, was a cultural wasteland.

When I began the program, there was little of Christendom's rich history in my cultural formation. At the University of Kansas, my fellow students and I had very little sense of our own cultural inheritance. We were ignorant of Western civilization's founding truths, and we had only a passing acquaintance with the beauty they had inspired.

Our lives had largely been shaped by the crass appeals of the mass media, and the passing fads of popular culture. There was a lack of truth in our lives, certainly; but there was also a profound lack of beauty. Our souls were starving for both, and we did not even know it.

But John Senior knew what we were lacking. His fellow professors, Dennis Quinn and Frank Nelick, also knew. They knew that students had to encounter beauty, and have their hearts and imaginations captured first by beauty, before they could pursue truth and goodness in a serious and worthy manner.

Truth was the ultimate goal. But the search for truth involved certain habits of mind, and habits of life, which we—



View of the fountain designed by Gianlorenzo Bernini for Pope Innocent X in 1651. Known as the four rivers, it supports an Egyptian obelisk, and faces the church of St Agnes in the Piazza Navona.

as students—did not have. Our pursuit of truth required an initiation into beauty: the beauty of music, visual art and architecture, nature, poetry, dance, calligraphy, and many other things.

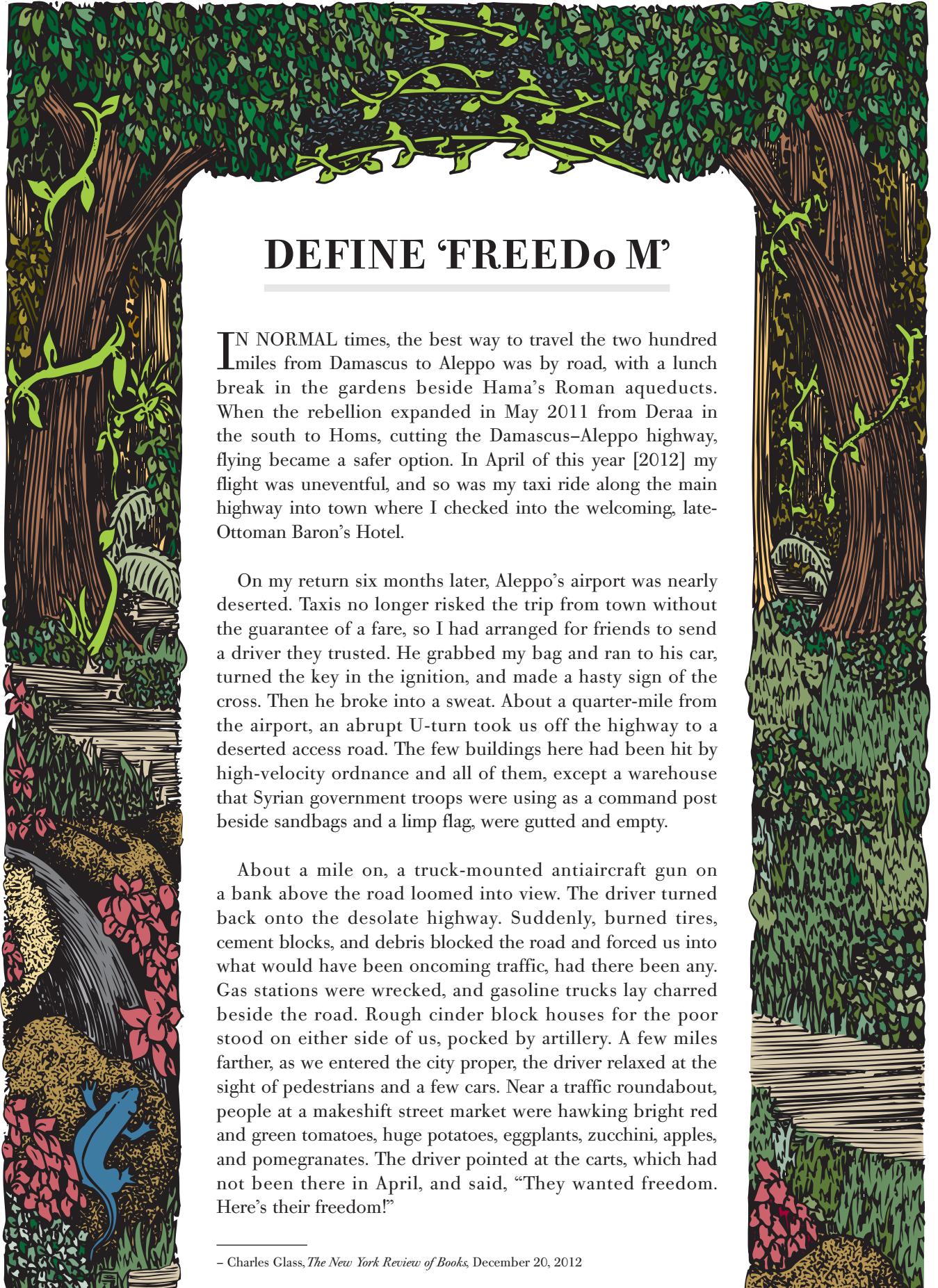
Through these experiences of beauty, we gained a sense of wonder; and that sense of wonder gave us a passion for truth. The motto of the IHP was a famous little Latin phrase: *Nascantur in Admirazione* (“let them be born in wonder”).

The experience of beauty changed us. When we studied the great philosophers and theologians, we were open to their words. We no longer assumed that truth was found in the dictates of popular culture—just as we no longer saw modern fads and fashions as the pinnacle of beauty.

Truth is perennial and beauty is timeless.

As I mentioned, a large number of students became Catholic through the Integrated Humanities Program. But this was not the result of proselytism in the classroom nor was it engaging in apologetics. It occurred because we became lovers of beauty, and thus, seekers of truth. Beauty gave us “eyes to see” and “ears to hear,” when we encountered the Gospel and the Christian tradition. [Next Month: Wounded by the arrow of Beauty]

JAMES D. CONLEY, STL, is bishop of Lincoln, Nebraska. Before his appointment by Pope Benedict XVI to the see of Lincoln he was auxiliary bishop in the Archdiocese of Denver under Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap. This article first appeared in Crisis Magazine. www.crisismagazine.com. Reprinted with permission.



DEFINE 'FREEDOM'

IN NORMAL times, the best way to travel the two hundred miles from Damascus to Aleppo was by road, with a lunch break in the gardens beside Hama's Roman aqueducts. When the rebellion expanded in May 2011 from Deraa in the south to Homs, cutting the Damascus–Aleppo highway, flying became a safer option. In April of this year [2012] my flight was uneventful, and so was my taxi ride along the main highway into town where I checked into the welcoming, late-Ottoman Baron's Hotel.

On my return six months later, Aleppo's airport was nearly deserted. Taxis no longer risked the trip from town without the guarantee of a fare, so I had arranged for friends to send a driver they trusted. He grabbed my bag and ran to his car, turned the key in the ignition, and made a hasty sign of the cross. Then he broke into a sweat. About a quarter-mile from the airport, an abrupt U-turn took us off the highway to a deserted access road. The few buildings here had been hit by high-velocity ordnance and all of them, except a warehouse that Syrian government troops were using as a command post beside sandbags and a limp flag, were gutted and empty.

About a mile on, a truck-mounted anti-aircraft gun on a bank above the road loomed into view. The driver turned back onto the desolate highway. Suddenly, burned tires, cement blocks, and debris blocked the road and forced us into what would have been oncoming traffic, had there been any. Gas stations were wrecked, and gasoline trucks lay charred beside the road. Rough cinder block houses for the poor stood on either side of us, pocked by artillery. A few miles farther, as we entered the city proper, the driver relaxed at the sight of pedestrians and a few cars. Near a traffic roundabout, people at a makeshift street market were hawking bright red and green tomatoes, huge potatoes, eggplants, zucchini, apples, and pomegranates. The driver pointed at the carts, which had not been there in April, and said, "They wanted freedom. Here's their freedom!"

— Charles Glass, *The New York Review of Books*, December 20, 2012

'The Greens' belief in their ecological nirvana manifests itself in a new coercive utopianism'

FIRES, FLOODS AND THE FLIGHT FROM REASON

by Giles Auty



URING THE past thirty years I have divided my time more or less equally between two contrasting locations.

From 1980 to 1995 I lived in England close beside the river Thames – which was formerly prone to flooding – whereas in Australia I managed somehow to choose a fire-prone area instead: the Upper Blue Mountains of New South Wales.

Both areas are truly beautiful and both have the advantage of easy access to the largest cities of their respective nations: in other words to London and Sydney.

At one time East Molesey, the precise location of my present and former abodes in England, was extremely liable to flood. As proof of this many of the older houses and shops still carry plaques which remind onlookers of the considerable heights reached by floods at various earlier moments in their histories.

The last major local flood occurred in 1968 however, and I remember the occasion well because my parents had moved to the area some years earlier. After weeks of heavy rain, a vast deluge of water disgorged itself into the Thames

uncomfortably close to their house. This torrent of muddy water had travelled cross-country from another river, inundating a busy shopping street on its way.

The basic problem was that the entire area was low-lying and was served by not just one river but three – the Thames, the Mole and the Ember – all of which converge rather inconveniently at a point noted for venerable buildings such as Hampton Court Palace.

In 1963 the Thames had frozen over at that precise point, for the first

weather and cannot help wondering whether; if that trio of events had happened today, they might not all be attributed to that universal, meteorological scapegoat of our times known as 'global warming'.

Back in 1963, 1968 and 1987, however, nobody dreamt of offering such a lame excuse for the inconveniences that nature sometimes provides.

What was realised instead, after the floods of 1968, was that a major flood prevention scheme was needed to protect the householders

of a flood-prone residential area. In the ensuing years the sound of pile-drivers became if not music to local residents' ears then at least indications of relief to come as the unruly waters of the Mole and the Ember were slowly contained and disciplined by strategically placed weirs.

At the seaward end of the Thames, in the meantime, a truly massive project had been

undertaken, known today as the Thames Barrier. Its basic aim was to protect the residents of Britain's capital from incoming surges by the sea – an aim that it has subsequently delivered with great success.

Both projects were completed and officially opened for service in 1982. What was thus recognised in England, at least, was that



Australia's worst ever recorded natural disaster was the Victorian Black Saturday Bushfires in 2009, where 173 people lost their lives.

time in bush over a century, whereas in 1987 the river carried white-tipped breakers instead which were whipped up by the infamous hurricane of that year which went on to flatten some 15 million trees – the worst such great gale in England since the distant days of 1703.

I was present in person on each of these three occasions of 'extreme'

householders deserve some degree of protection against the elements via the authorities of the state.

I take the slight liberty here of contrasting such a state of affairs with the one which continues to prevail in the Blue Mountains where my wife and I still retain a home.

At the moment of writing both of us have had little sleep as we monitor events each night regarding daytime happenings in the Blue Mountains where exceptional bushfires have been raging, more or less out of control, for a week or more.

Nobody disputes the vast power of natural forces, especially in Australia, but neither should we underestimate the powers of human ingenuity when these are harnessed to genuine determination and purpose.

The first thing that needs saying here is that the magnitude of the fires in the Blue Mountains has nothing whatsoever to do with ‘global warming’ – even if such a phenomenon could legitimately be said to exist.

What they reflect, in fact, is that for too many years the local bush has not been properly maintained: fire-breaks and fire-trails have become overgrown, insufficient back-burning and clearing have taken place and – amazingly on the face of it – residents have often been actively discouraged by those in authority from properly maintaining their blocks.

In a fire-prone country such as Australia it is also sheer madness, of course, to allow fuel loads to escalate to dangerous levels.

Has part of the human race therefore suddenly conceived a death wish? Or does some other, equally bizarre explanation exist which may account for such suicidal-seeming behaviour?

When communism collapsed in Eastern Europe nearly a quarter of a century ago now that event might have seemed to leave many radical Western intellectuals with egg on their faces and without any obvious new radical cause to espouse.

What possible polemical issue could they embrace which would enable them to keep telling the rest of us that we were ‘doing it all wrong?’

In short, how on earth were they

Political Power

NATURALLY THE common people don’t want war; neither in Russia, nor in England, nor in America, nor in Germany. That is understood. But after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine policy, and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. ... Voice or no voice the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is to tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country.

– Hermann Goering. Source: interview with Gustave Gilbert during the Easter Recess of the Nuremberg Trials, April 18, 1946, quoted in Gilbert’s *Nuremberg Diary*.

going to carry on appearing more publicly righteous than the rest of us?

Some years ago I wrote a piece called “Ecological Marxism and Other Delights” for the pages of this journal.

In it I cited an article by the Hon. Kevin Andrews called *Revolutionary Ambitions of the Greens*. Andrews quoted former leader of the Builders Labourers Federation Jack Munday, who was instrumental in the development of Green politics in Australia, as seeing Green politics as ‘ecological Marxism’. That was not just because considerations of the environment or ecology must be placed before all else according to him but because such ideological causes should be pursued where necessary by totalitarian means.

Andrews goes on “The Greens’ belief in their ecological nirvana manifests itself in a new coercive utopianism: unless we understand the ideological foundations of the Greens, we will fail effectively to address the challenge of their revolution.”

What Andrews is at least hinting at here is that Greens who are

often ‘rebadged’ Marxists are no great respecters of the processes of democracy. Their influence is correspondingly much greater than their levels of public support might suggest – especially perhaps on local councils.

A major backlash is overdue now against the excesses of Green policies of the immediate past. Contrary to their beliefs they are not the sole people who love the environment. Many others of us do so but would prefer to conduct our lives with sensible degrees of safety. On at least five occasions since living in the mountains our property has come under imminent and – in the long run – quite unnecessary threats from fire.

Local, state and federal governments are not fulfilling their duties to their citizens by allowing this to continue to happen.

A friend who lives near us in the mountains owns a pre-war street guide which indicates that a local road known now as Cliff Drive was known formerly as Scenic View Drive. At one time, in other words, the road was properly maintained since the magnificent views from it were formerly uninterrupted. Today this same road, which runs along the top of the escarpment, has no views at all because straggly gum trees grow right over one edge of the road where they interface with the tall trees growing on the other side – thus providing a perfect conduit for fire in a built-up residential area.

Such slackness is to be found almost anywhere today in the Blue Mountains and indicates local government which has – often in the face of Green pressures – largely lost the plot.

Local schoolchildren have been told that the Blue Mountains ‘megafire’ is entirely due to ‘global warming’.

However, as this article possibly suggests, the rest of us are not short of reasons to hold rather a different view.

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*.

*Navies are accustomed to doing at sea what policemen do on land.
Their role exists regardless of any state of war or peace.*

HIGHWAY PATROL

by Michael O'Connor



ONE OF my abiding memories is the news photograph of a burly Australian sailor gently hoisting a Vietnamese baby aboard an Australian warship back in the late 1970s. Apart from the love and compassion displayed by the sailor, the photograph served to trigger reflections about the role of the navy in peace and war.

Despite the recent enthusiasm for the Royal Australian Navy's centenary (at least in Sydney; Melbourne typically all but ignored the International Fleet Review), the operational tasks of the navy are performed in peace and war, every day throughout the year and not only in Australian waters but increasingly in remote parts of the world.

The International Fleet Review attracted warships from 17 countries ranging from the United States to Micronesia and Tonga. None was what would be regarded as a *big* ship, the biggest being the American guided missile cruiser USS Chosin. Many were the small ships that police their own waters, seeking out the illegal fisherman poaching their maritime zones, intercepting the smugglers or searching for and rescuing shipwrecked sailors.

As we all know, many of Australia's smaller ships, including Customs vessels, are engaged in intercepting illegal immigrants and, in many cases, rescuing them

from that most unforgiving of environments, the sea. For many of our sailors, too, is the distressing task of recovering bodies and giving them a decent burial.

The navies of many maritime nations are committed to joint efforts to combat piracy. The northwestern quadrant of the Indian Ocean is a hotbed of piracy mostly emanating from Somalia. Australia is committed to the 29-nation Combined Maritime Task Force that patrols the region, seeking out and intercepting the



small, fast but heavily armed pirate vessels that prey upon the flood of merchant ships transiting the region.

Closer to home, the navies of Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia are all committed to dealing with piracy in the narrow seas that carry immense wealth, especially oil from the Persian Gulf to East Asia's booming economies. Modern pirates are not much interested in the cargos of merchant ships but they are intensely interested in the large sums of money routinely carried on board

to pay crews or for services in the various ports of call.

Somali pirates are also interested in the ransoms that might be extracted from shipowners or their insurers for the ships, cargos and even the crews.

The world's oceans are its highways. According to the United Nations, the world's merchant fleet comprises some 87,000 ships that carry more than eight billion metric tonnes of cargo each year. Australia's merchant fleet is small, ranking 63rd in the world with a mere 54

ships, 26 of which are registered under other flags. Nevertheless, those ships, and others trading with Australia, carry cargoes of almost one billion tonnes weight and worth more than \$500 billion accounting directly for 33 per cent of Australia's Gross Domestic Product with some 12,000 port calls in Australia each year. A further

100 million tonnes of freight are carried in coastal voyages around Australia.

These values represent a significant national interest, one that obviously we share with our trading partners. Australia has been a trading nation since 1788. Recent years, the era of globalisation and the communications revolution, have seen an ever greater engagement with the rest of the world and with that a greater need for security.

While the communications revolution has focussed popular

attention upon air travel and electronics, merchant ships today are bigger and faster than ever. They carry much of Australia's wealth. More significantly, they carry the goods that we look for in our shops and the exports that pay for them.

In the era of the so-called *Pax Britannica* in the latter half of the 19th century and to 1914, Britain's Royal Navy guaranteed the freedom of the seas for all users. Two world wars saw concentrated and almost successful efforts by Germany to disrupt that freedom. Australia developed its own small navy precisely because successive governments immediately after Federation feared that Britain's withdrawal from our Pacific region increased the risk to shipping trading with Australia.

Despite our historical and popular preoccupation with land warfare in both world wars, Australia's strategy was primarily driven – perhaps unconsciously – by the need to secure our sea communications.

Our first military effort in World War I was to capture the German naval communications station in New Guinea and to neutralise the German Pacific fleet. The Palestine campaign of 1917-18 was more important to us than those of Gallipoli or France because it secured the Suez Canal. The same strategic considerations drove our commitment to the Middle East in 1940-42.

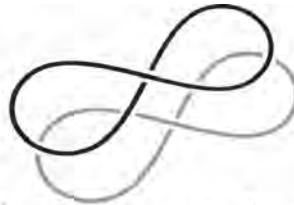
The Royal Navy has been replaced by the United States Navy as the pre-eminent naval power in the world. Significantly, American security policy

places high priority upon maintaining the principle of freedom of the seas. This interest that we share with the United States is perhaps the rock

upon which the ANZUS alliance depends. We can – and do – argue about whether the United States is committed to Australia's defence in any given situation but the language of the ANZUS Treaty is clear.

There is no commitment beyond a commitment to consultations. As always, international relations are based upon interests rather than friendships or enmities. Our shared interest with our trading partners and especially the United States should be the bedrock of Australia's security.

In an article published in *The Australian* shortly after being appointed Defence minister in the new government, Senator David Johnston made a radical commitment to a future strategy based upon the defence of Australia's trade routes. This represents a radical new approach to defence strategy with a priority for shipping



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Nothing to do with the Real Business of Life

THIS SECULARIZATION of culture is seen in its most striking form in the Communist State, where alone as yet the elimination of religion has been carried to its logical conclusion. Nevertheless, the same tendency exists elsewhere; in fact, it permeates the whole outlook of modern civilization. The average man lives more totally in the State than in the past, and even when he is not consciously hostile to religion, he no longer conceives it as a vital activity which must hold its central place in human life and society. He regards it as a moral and emotional stimulus which is all very well for those who like that sort of thing, but which has nothing to do with the real business of life.

— Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1935, pp.148-149

1,500 Christian families were held hostage and 45 were killed, including two teenage boys, their mother and three of their grandparents who were thrown down a well in Syria.

Atrocities in a Christian town

By John Pontifex

INHABITANTS of Sadad, near Homs, who fled the largely Syrian Orthodox town when rebels attacked last month, are now returning home to discover the scale of atrocities in what is being seen as the worst act of anti-Christian persecution since the war in Syria began. The reports, sent by Church leaders to Catholic charity *Aid to the Church in Need*, describe how, in this ancient Christian town mentioned in the Bible (Ezekiel), vulnerable people unable to escape – including the elderly, disabled, women and children – were subjected to torture, such as strangulation. Church sources say 30 bodies were found in two separate mass graves.

Discovered dead in a well in Sadad were the remains of six members of one family including Matanios El Sheikh, 85, his wife, Habsah, 75, their daughter, Njala, 45, and grandsons Ranim, aged 18, a first-year university student, and his 16-year-old brother Fadi, in class XI at school. Reports state they were thrown down a well on 26th October along with the boys' paternal grandmother, 90-year-old Mariam. Their funerals, which took place on Monday, 4th November, came as a community, whose town dates back to 2000 BC, begins to grieve the loss of those being described as 'martyrs' by Church leaders. The atrocities took place during a week-long occupation of Sadad by the Al-Nusra Front and Daash, rebel forces who, according to Church leaders, held 1,500 families as 'human shields' in a bid to stop Government troops retaking the village.

The tragedy in Sadad began on 21st October when rebel forces invaded the town and carried out what Syrian Orthodox Archbishop Selwanos Boutros Alnemeh, Syriac Orthodox Metropolitan of Homs and Hama, called the 'most serious and biggest massacre of Christians' since the conflict began in Syria in March 2011 (Fides – 31/10/13).

At least 2,500 families fled with no more than the clothes they were wearing to the likes of Homs, 60 km away, and further afield to Damascus, Al-Fhayle, Maskane, Fayrouza, Zzaydal and elsewhere. Some who escaped travelled 8km by foot to find shelter. Those unable to flee Sadad were quickly rounded up by the rebels as part of a bid to fend off counter-attack by forces loyal to Syria's President Bashar Al Assad.

In the days that followed at least 30 were wounded and 10 are reported still missing. Accounts from Archbishop Alnemeh and other Church leaders described widespread looting and destruction of shops, homes and government buildings as well as the state hospital, clinic, post office and schools. According to reports, youngsters described receiving taunts and insults against their Christian faith and obscene words were written on church artefacts. Sadad, where Aramaic, the language of Jesus Christ is spoken, has up to 14 churches, one of which, the Syriac Orthodox Church of St. Theodore, which was used by the rebels, who desecrated it.

In an interview on Monday, 4th November with *Aid to the Church in Need*, Melkite Catholic Patriarch Gregorios III of Damascus described the atrocities in Sadad as 'bestial'.

— For more information or to make a donation to help the work of *Aid to the Church in Need*, please contact the Australian office of ACN on (02) 9679-1929. e-mail: info@aidtochurch.org or write to *Aid to the Church in Need* PO Box 7246 Baulkham Hills NSW 2153. On Line donations can be made at www.aidtochurch.org

protection. Putting that strategy into effect, however, will demand substantial fleshing out to achieve the objective. With the best will in the world, Australia cannot do the job on its own, even with American support; our navy is simply too small and is unlikely to get much bigger.

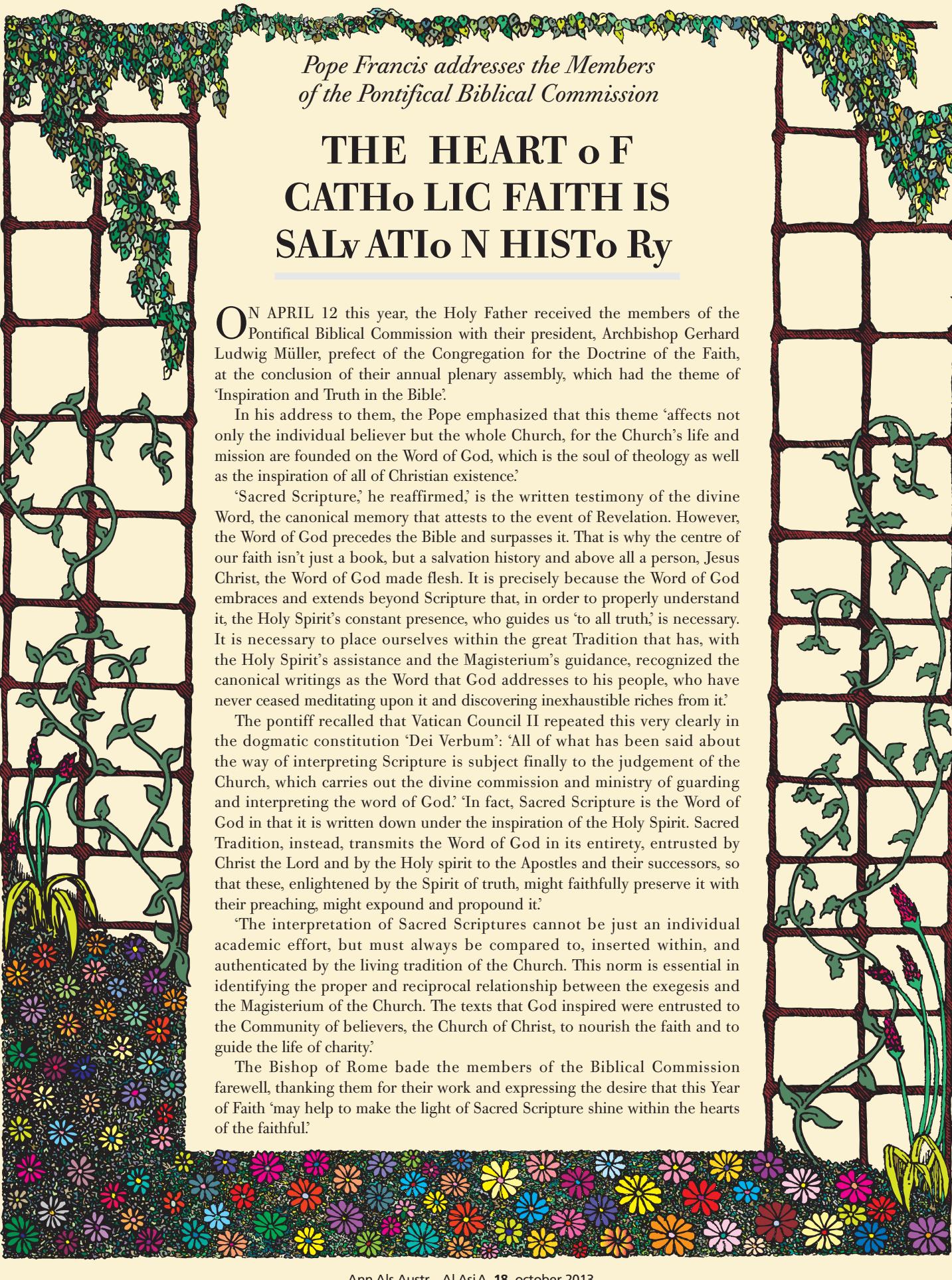
Our principal trading partners in Asia, Japan, China, South Korea and Taiwan, similarly could not do the job themselves even if they could overcome the mutual suspicions that bedevil China's relations with Japan and Taiwan. On the other hand, the manifest benefits that would arise from a system of co-operation in shipping defence could help to ameliorate current tensions. Japan's approach to maritime security recognises its dependence upon secure trade and its navy is bolstered by a substantial coastguard force. Japan has close defence relations with the United States and, increasingly, with Australia.

Between all these trading partners geographically lie Indonesia and The Philippines, both with weak maritime forces and intensely jealous of their archipelagic sovereignty. Both but especially Indonesia, need to be drawn into co-operative maritime security relations if only because the trade passes through and cannot avoid the archipelagos.

If the world learned anything from the 20th century of total war, it is that in such wars there are only losers. Generally speaking, the world has learned the benefits of peaceful trade in growing and spreading prosperity. At the same time, it has been slow to learn that such prosperity attracts predators and that the international laws that govern the rules of maritime commerce need an enforcement system.

Navies are pre-eminently such a system; they are accustomed to doing at sea what policemen do on land. Their role exists regardless of any state of war or peace. The challenge to policymakers is to recognise the mutual interest trading nations have in secure passage at sea and to direct policy towards cooperation in the enforcement of maritime law.

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



*Pope Francis addresses the Members
of the Pontifical Biblical Commission*

THE HEART OF CATHOLIC FAITH IS SALVATION HISTORY

ON APRIL 12 this year, the Holy Father received the members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission with their president, Archbishop Gerhard Ludwig Müller, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, at the conclusion of their annual plenary assembly, which had the theme of 'Inspiration and Truth in the Bible.'

In his address to them, the Pope emphasized that this theme 'affects not only the individual believer but the whole Church, for the Church's life and mission are founded on the Word of God, which is the soul of theology as well as the inspiration of all of Christian existence.'

'Sacred Scripture,' he reaffirmed, 'is the written testimony of the divine Word, the canonical memory that attests to the event of Revelation. However, the Word of God precedes the Bible and surpasses it. That is why the centre of our faith isn't just a book, but a salvation history and above all a person, Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh. It is precisely because the Word of God embraces and extends beyond Scripture that, in order to properly understand it, the Holy Spirit's constant presence, who guides us 'to all truth,' is necessary. It is necessary to place ourselves within the great Tradition that has, with the Holy Spirit's assistance and the Magisterium's guidance, recognized the canonical writings as the Word that God addresses to his people, who have never ceased meditating upon it and discovering inexhaustible riches from it.'

The pontiff recalled that Vatican Council II repeated this very clearly in the dogmatic constitution 'Dei Verbum': 'All of what has been said about the way of interpreting Scripture is subject finally to the judgement of the Church, which carries out the divine commission and ministry of guarding and interpreting the word of God.' 'In fact, Sacred Scripture is the Word of God in that it is written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Sacred Tradition, instead, transmits the Word of God in its entirety, entrusted by Christ the Lord and by the Holy spirit to the Apostles and their successors, so that these, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, might faithfully preserve it with their preaching, might expound and propound it.'

'The interpretation of Sacred Scriptures cannot be just an individual academic effort, but must always be compared to, inserted within, and authenticated by the living tradition of the Church. This norm is essential in identifying the proper and reciprocal relationship between the exegesis and the Magisterium of the Church. The texts that God inspired were entrusted to the Community of believers, the Church of Christ, to nourish the faith and to guide the life of charity.'

The Bishop of Rome bade the members of the Biblical Commission farewell, thanking them for their work and expressing the desire that this Year of Faith 'may help to make the light of Sacred Scripture shine within the hearts of the faithful.'

The Church has had such influence because of what the author calls a 'psychic revolution' that it helped bring about: it gave preeminent stress to reason and to the pursuit of truth.

WHY CATHOLICISM MATTERS

By Stephen M. Krason



BILL DONOHUE is the well-known president of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, a former sociology professor,

and recipient of both the Society of Catholic Social Scientists' *Pope Pius XI* and *Blessed Frederic Ozanam* Awards. His latest book is an important contribution for those of us who believe that the Church must be at the center of any serious effort to renew American and Western life in our times.

Donohue's unique analysis holds that the Church's teaching about the four cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance – which, of course, were originally discussed by the great classical philosophers but given a fuller, deeper meaning by Christianity – is the basis for addressing and beginning to solve the crucial issues confronting contemporary society.

In the book's Introduction, he quickly summarizes the major areas in society that the Church has profoundly shaped or influenced over the centuries: learning, art, architecture, music, economics, science and technology. He perhaps does this to draw in the reader who is sceptical about the Church's ability to influence culture – either because of suspicion about the Church or ignorance of her contributions – to get him to follow his ensuing argument.

The reason the Church has had such influence is because of what he calls a 'psychic revolution' that it helped bring about: It gave a preeminent stress to reason and to the pursuit of truth.

Bill Donohue, *Why Catholicism Matters: How Catholic Virtues Can Reshape Society in the 21st Century*. New York: Image, 2012. 293 pages.

In other words, the Church has stood for the complementarity of faith and reason. He also provides a sociological rationale for an institutional Church; this stands in sharp contrast to people one all too frequently meets who claim that 'institutional religion' is not needed. For the Church's teachings to retain their practical viability and vitality, they needed to be 'institutionally anchored.' It is the existence of the institutional Church that makes

possible her attempt to help fashion 'the good society' by her social teachings and apostolates.

The Church, of course, has a hierarchical structure to insure the authenticity of her teaching but also, sociologically speaking, to make possible her global reach. At the same time, Donohue in effect tells us that she embodies in her operation the principle of subsidiarity – which is, of course, a central part of her social teaching – when she combines the hierarchical with the communal by means of the hundreds of thousands of parishes she has around the world. This is the level at which most Catholics interact with the Church. He says, 'There is no other institution on the face of the earth that can match the Catholic Church's unique blend of hierarchical and communal attributes.'

It is not, of course, just her institutional attributes that enable the Church to help men forge the good society. It is also because she understands human nature: 'man is inherently flawed and in need of redemption.' Thus, her social teaching works with man as he is, 'offering a realistic approach to the attainment of the good society.'

Donohue says that it follows that she will not be swayed by utopian schemes, the claim that all can be made right if we just forge good institutions, or by the reigning intellectually fashionable cultural relativism.

The heart of Donohue's book is the cardinal virtues as a basis for approaching and addressing social problems. He explains how **prudence** is seen in the Church's age-old teaching that human



Pick the real friends of the US and her allies

THE SERMONS [in Saudi mosques] that call the youth to jihad in Iraq reek of anti-Americanism, but just as important, if not more so, they echo the old Wahhabi hatred of the Shia. War on America is now war on Shiism, and war on Shiism is war on America. Wahhabi *fatwas* continue to declare Shiism a heresy, but also portray Shiism as a 'fifth column for the enemies of true Islam ... The danger of the Shi'ite heretics to the region ... is not less than the danger of the Jews and Christians' The war in Iraq has been viewed as the proof of 'the strength of the bond between America and the Shi'ite heretics.' ... On March 2, 2004, when a series of bombs in Baghdad and Karbala killed some 143 Shias who were commemorating Ashoura, a Kuwaiti Wahhabi cleric used his website to condemn this cherished Shia holy day as 'the biggest display of idolatry' and accused Shias of forming an 'axis of evil linking Washington, Tel Aviv, and the Shia holy city of Najaf to grab Persian Gulf oil and disenfranchise Sunnis.' These sentiments were echoed by the Saudi Wahhabi cleric Nasir al-Umar, who accused Iraqi Shias of close ties to the United States and argued that both were enemies of Muslims everywhere. The language of Wahhabi *ulama* in Saudi Arabia echoes the anti-Shia vitriol of the Taliban in Afghanistan and extremist Sunni forces in Pakistan.

A grassroots outpouring of sympathy for the victims of September 11 occurred on the streets in only two places in the Muslim world, both within days of the collapse of the twin towers and both among the Shia. The first was in Iran, where tens of thousands snubbed their government to go into the streets of Tehran and hold a candlelight vigil in solidarity with victims of the attacks. The second was in Karachi, where a local party that is closely associated with the city's Shia broke with the public mood in Pakistan to gather in thousands to denounce terrorism. What followed September 11 in Afghanistan and Iraq has only strengthened these feelings. The Shia in Afghanistan, between 20 and 25 percent of the population, were brutalized by the Taliban. ... The violent face of Sunni militancy in Iraq underscores the divergent paths that Sunni and Shia politics are taking.

— Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 2006, pp. 246, 251.

He quotes Philadelphia Archbishop Charles Chaput, an SCSS Bishops Board member: 'Government cannot love' because it 'has no soul or heart.' This, again, makes one think of *Centesimus Annus*, which speaks of how the welfare or 'social assistance' state becomes less concerned with serving the needy than with 'bureaucratic ways.' Donohue emphasizes how for the Church economic justice rejects greed, materialism, and gross inequality on the one hand and equal results, egalitarianism, suppression of personal initiative, and a socialist or liberation-theology perspective on the other.

As with all things, Catholic teaching provides a splendid balance based on human nature as it is. Donohue also provides an excellent summary of the highlights of Catholic efforts over the decades in the U.S. in social service, charitable work, education, and work to help immigrant and minority groups.

Donohue's chapter on **fortitude** is mostly a historical discussion of how the Church has stood up to the forces of modernity that have assaulted human dignity and the good society – and more fundamentally faith and reason – especially Nazism, communism, and more recently radical Islam. What he essentially says is that the Church exemplifies fortitude in standing consistently and courageously for justice, while always acting with prudence. He talks at considerable length in this chapter about the truly heroic stance of Pope Plus XII against Nazism, which has been so scurrilously distorted by anti-Catholic commentators. He also discusses John Paul II's role in bringing down communism, and takes time to set the historical record straight about the Crusades and the Inquisition (since the historical realities are distorted about each, respectively, by the Church's two present-day adversaries: Islamists and secularists).

What the Church *defends* in her fortitude in opposing such corrosive forces is the very 'stuff' needed for the good society: natural law, natural rights, and the inherent dignity of the human person.

freedom is a great good, but it must be coupled with morality. This, of course, was emphasized strongly by Blessed Pope John Paul II in *Centesimus Annus* when he said that a democracy (i.e., a democratic republic) that discards truth becomes a 'thinly disguised totalitarianism.' Donohue commendably observes that this same conviction of the need for 'ordered liberty' characterized America's Founding Fathers.

Another way that Donohue explains the connection between prudence, freedom, and morality is by his emphasizing that, 'if freedom is meant to enhance the individual, and society, it must be prudently exercised.' It involves, among other things, a coupling of rights and responsibilities. He discusses a few of the important

issues of our day where it is *not* being prudently exercised: abortion, embryonic stem cell research, euthanasia, and animal 'rights.'

In his chapter on the cardinal virtue of **justice**, he sharply contrasts the secular approach with that of the Church. The former, he points out, is seen abundantly in government programs for the poor and dispossessed which have become distinguished for their lack of success – while the latter is seen in the sustained effort of so many Catholic religious orders, charitable institutions, and parishes over the centuries.

The problem with the secular approach is that it does not stress personal responsibility, family integrity, or 'empowering' the poor.

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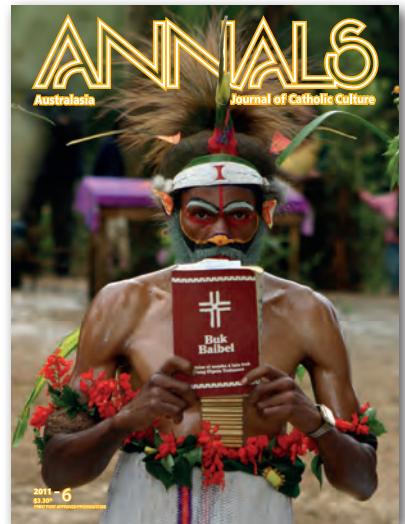
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Today's atheism is aggressive, advanced by a partisan media that allows no opposition.

THE SECULAR LEVIATHAN

By Jude P. Dougherty



CHRISTOPHER DAWSON used the term “The secular leviathan” three-quarters of a century ago to designate the political and cultural left of his day. He was convinced that the secular leviathan is vulnerable only at its brain. Few would deny that, but from what vessel is the harpoon to be thrown?

Change will not come from the universities or from their acolytes in the media. The academic sector speaks with one voice, and global media amplifies that sound with incalculable effects. To the near exclusion of all other voices, the secular anti-Christian spirit has come to pervade the academic world. Those who dissent from the liberal *Zeitgeist*, with a few notable exceptions, find no quarter in major private and state universities in North America, although the situation may be somewhat better in Europe.

There was a time when the secular spirit was less aggressive and discourse was possible between defenders of the tradition and radical intellectuals such as Bernard Shaw and Bertrand Russell. An example is provided by the 1948 BBC Radio debate between Fr. Frederick Copleston, S.J., and Bertrand Russell on the existence of God. In that debate the moral implications of the denial of God's existence are clear. Russell acknowledges the implications of his own position. He may have been a practical atheist, but philosophically he admits only to being an agnostic.

This debate is noteworthy because it is an exchange that is not likely to be duplicated on any major radio or television network today. For one

thing, there would not likely be an audience. For another, today's atheism is aggressive, advanced by a partisan media that allows no opposition.

Some of the most widely followed BBC television mystery series gratuitously have their protagonists declare their atheism, as if that were a normal attitude in the populace with which the fictional character needs to identify.

Universities who hire militant atheists do so in the name of diversity and are lauded for their openness. But one is not likely to find a representative of an Aristotelian realism or a disciple of Aquinas on those same faculties.

The lopsided hiring practices of major universities was recently brought to the attention of the public

by Mitch Daniels, president of Purdue University, who pledged to promote academic freedom upon taking office in January of 2013.

E-mails obtained by the Associated Press and reported by the *Washington Times* show that Mr. Daniels, the former governor of the state of Indiana, worked during his second term as governor to eliminate what he considered liberal breeding grounds at the state's public universities. Those e-mail messages show that he tried to effect a cleanup of college courses that he judged to be nothing more than “propaganda,” proposing also an examination of what is “credit worthy” within a university curriculum.

Free-speech advocates were quick to call Mr. Daniels's efforts ‘shocking.’ Members of the faculty were reported to be to be “horrified” and “appalled” by his proposals.¹

Catholic colleges and universities are not exempt from the secular *Zeitgeist*. Fr. Wilson Miscomb, a Member of the Holy Cross Community at the University of Notre Dame, in an interview given to the Cardinal Newman Society, speaks of the difficulty of controlling the curriculum in the light of the declared mission of the university. In that interview and in his recent book, *For Notre Dame: Battling for the Heart and Soul of a Catholic University*,² he attributes the loss of the university's Catholic identity to the careless hiring practices of the 1970s and 80s, hiring practices that took place without regard for the university's *raison d'être*.

As a result. “Some faculty hired at Notre Dame have no interest in Notre Dame as a Catholic institution and some dislike its being a Catholic university. They have no enthusiasm for hiring Catholic scholars.” Fr. Miscomb goes on to say, “We require students to take philosophy and

Interesting

A GREAT writer had, so it appears, all unconsciously prepared the way for this Neo-Catholicism. Dr. Newman has never forgotten to pay tribute to Sir Walter Scott. Sir Walter's work has proved to be of so permanent a character, his insight into all things Scotch so deep and true, and his human worth and excellence so rare and noble, that it has hardly been worth-while to remember the froth and effervescence he at first occasioned; but that he did create a movement in the Oxford direction is certain. He made the old Catholic times interesting.

— Augustine Birrell, *Collected Essays*, vol. II, London, Elliot Stock, [undated] ‘Cardinal Newman’ pp.97 ff.

In defence of Latin

TO HAVE EXISTED for three hundred years, as things go, is remarkable [for a school]; much more remarkable to have been constant, through those three hundred years, to one purpose and function. . . . In spite of all revolutions and all the pressure of business and all the powerful influences inclining America to live in contemptuous ignorance of the rest of the world, and especially of the past, the Latin School, supported by the people of Boston, has kept the embers of traditional learning alive, at which the humblest rush-light might always be lighted; has kept the highway clear for every boy to the professions of theology, law medicine, and teaching, and a window open to his mind from these times to all other times and from this place to all other places. This fidelity to tradition, I am confident, has and will have its reward . . . New ideas in their violence and new needs in their urgency pass like a storm; and then the old earth, scarred and enriched by those trials, finds itself still under the same sky, unscarred and pure as before. The Latin language and the study of classic antiquity are the chief bond for western nations with the humanities, with the normalities of human nature . . . giving us a sound sense of the moral forces and the moral issues that now concern us. The merely modern man never knows what he is about. A Latin education, far from alienating us from our own world, teaches us to discern the amiable traits in it, and the genuine achievements; helping us, amid so many distracting problems, to preserve a certain balance and dignity of mind, together with a sane confidence in the future

— from “Boston Latin School, 1635 - 1935” by George Santayana, Class of 1882.

theology, but we have no sense that what they take in those courses is what could be described as a Catholic education.”

Is it possible, given the dominance of the secular, liberal, anti-Christian spirit that pervades the academy and a left-oriented and manipulative global media, to force a debate about some of the larger issues that confront Western culture?

Vaclav Klaus, former President of the Czech Republic, surveying the current European situation writes, “There are many indications that the entire civilization of the West is in a political, economic, and social crisis.” He does not hesitate to place the blame on the eclipse of classical learning.³ Klaus quotes in support Professor Petr Fiala, then Rector of the University of Mesaryk, Brno, who in an essay entitled, “Europe and the Weakening of the Occident,” fears the broad consequences of an Occident in decline.⁴

How the secular Zeitgeist came to dominate the ruling elite is a story in itself, but this is not the place to provide even a cursory account. The question for those who view matters from the broad perspective of a Christopher Dawson or a Vaclav Klaus is this: how can the culture be revitalized to reflect the neglected Hellenic and Christian sources of Western culture? Can it be done without a radical return to classical learning and a dispassionate examination of the historic role that Christianity has played in the shaping of Western culture?

A generation ago, Mark Van Doren of Columbia University and Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer Adler of the University of Chicago promoted the value of a liberal education as an alternative to the progressive educational philosophy of John Dewey.

Mortimer Adler produced a list of one hundred “Great Books of the Western World,” a list that began

with Homer and proceeded through Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Augustine, Aquinas, Dante, and Shakespeare to selected contemporary authors. A handful of colleges adopted a “great books” curriculum, and there are many institutions that call themselves liberal arts colleges, but the great books and liberal arts colleges are no match for the universities that train the elite ruling class and their compliant jurists. There is a direct line between the liberal Zeitgeist of the university and public policy.

Daily we read of judges’ overruling referenda or staying laws duly passed by legislatures. The common-sense choices of the electorate are easily voided by an activist judiciary ruling in the light of some abstract philosophical principle.

Couple that fact to a monolithic media with an agenda and we find imposed on society such outcomes as same-sex marriage, late-term abortions, assisted suicide, and questionable immigration and voting policies, all unknown a generation ago.

On both sides of the Atlantic we hear the refrain, “This is not the country I was born into.” This is cause for pessimism to be sure, but there are faint signs that even the secular, anti-Christian intellect is beginning to see the consequences of ill-conceived liberal policy. This is especial true when authorities are faced with the integration of Islam within Western societies.⁵ It is now widely conceded that leftist social engineering at both the federal and local levels is responsible for the fiscal collapse of Detroit.

If these reflections lead to any conclusion, it is this: without fairness on the part of big media, the secular leviathan is invulnerable.

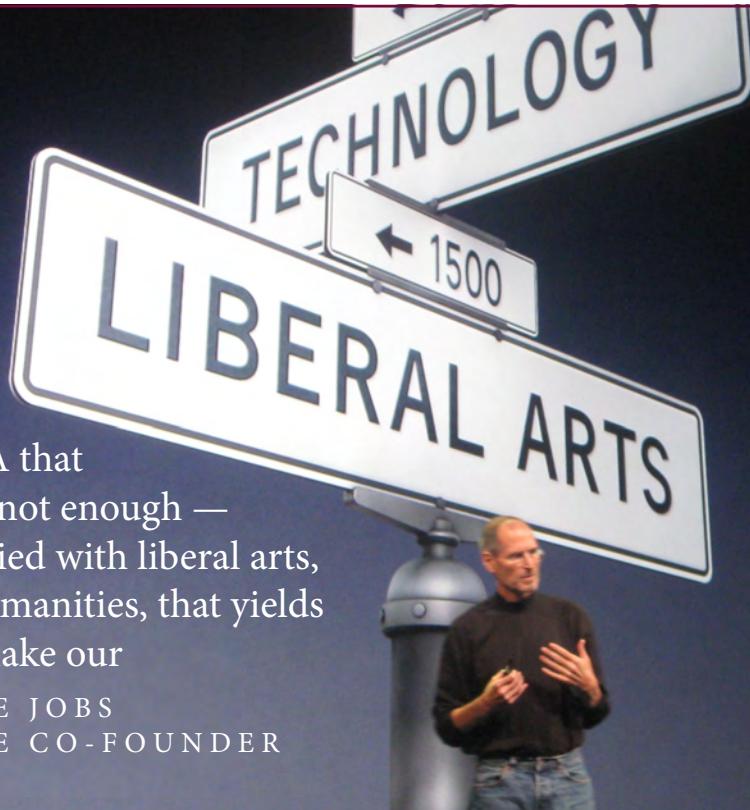
PROFESSOR JUDE DOUGHERTY is Dean Emeritus of the Philosophy Faculty, Catholic University of America, Editor, *The Review of Metaphysics*, and General Editor, *Series Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy*, Washington, D.C.

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1. *Washington Times*, July 17, 2013, p. A-8.
 2. Wilson McComb, *For Notre Dame: Battling for the Heart and Soul of a Catholic University* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine Press, 2013).
 3. Vaclav Klaus, *Europe: The Shattering of an Illusion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), p. 157.
 4. Petr Fiala, “Europe and the Weakening of the Occident,” *Kontexty*, No. 4, 2011, p. 6.
 5. Cf. Christian Joppa and John Torpey, *Legal Integration of Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).



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Celebrating our Lady's Birthday in in the Wuling mountains of Guizhou

DRUMS, CYMBALS AND ANGELS To Ho No UR MARY

By Greg McCann, MSC



HALFWAY through last year I was invited back to China by Bishop Paul Xiao Zejiang of Guizhou Diocese to live at the Cathedral in Guizhou and to teach English to him, to his priests and sisters and to some of the youth. The Prefecture Apostolic of Shihtsien in the care of German MSC priests and brothers until 1951 was part of what is now the Guizhou Diocese.

It has been the custom here for a hundred years that parishoners meet at the Cathedral with the Bishop and process up the mountain where all priests of the Diocese offer Mass to celebrate Mary's Birthday on her Feastday, September 9. This year I was fortunate to be there for the celebration ... and what a celebration it was.

Typical of China, I was quietly informed that there would be a celebration for Mary's Birthday in the Cathedral on the Saturday. There was a High Mass and a fifty minute sermon in the morning and a concert in the evening from 7 to 11. I was pretty tired by midnight but some of the thousand or so people who attended partied on until about 2 a.m.

At eight in the morning I was ready to get into the Bishop's car and go up the mountain with him. I'm not walking up too many mountains these days. Sister Agnes, a local sister who studied English in Australia last year, accompanied me, as she has ever since I've been here.

As we drove up the hill we passed hundreds of people and dozens of police, and as we got closer to the top, hundreds turned into thousands and we found ourselves caught in a traffic jam. Having the Bishop in the car was a plus.

The police soon cleared the traffic for us and we were there ... or were we?

I was asked to get out of the car and the bishop and the sister and I walked up a side road. After passing hundreds of people with banners and wearing local costumes, and an unknown number of angels, we met the twenty priests and twenty or so sisters of the Diocese – they were getting ready for the procession. Sister Agnes suggested we go first to get a good vantage point. I wasn't sure what she was saying at the time, and just followed her, but in

retrospect I can see the wisdom of her decision.

We rushed ahead further up the mountain and passed groups of people making the stations of the cross – others singing hymns and, of course, people selling food. Our Lord [Matt. 18:20] once said, 'Where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.' In China, I think 'Where two or three have gathered together' – someone will be there trying to sell them something.

Eventually we reached what I thought was the top of the mountain and there – in all its dilapidated glory – was what appeared to be an old monastery! It was a mess, with broken windows and smashed walls and ceilings,



The Statue of Our Lady and the procession led by angels arrive at the old Seminary at the top of the mountain.

and overgrown with weeds. This was, in fact, the former seminary, built 100 years ago, and converted to an asylum for mentally challenged people from 1950 to 1980 when it was handed back to the Church. Since then it has been abandoned because it is unsafe and funds are unavailable to restore it. Mass is said there about three times a year.

I was a little concerned about the police presence, especially when I saw the SWAT team arrive but I was told later that last year there had been a riot over a land dispute and it got a bit out of hand! I'm glad I found out about that later, and not at the time. Well,



Father Joseph Li, one of the concelebrants at the Mass, stayed at the Sacred Heart Monastery Kensington to study English in 2011.



Placing Our Lady's Statue in front of the old Seminary building. Pictured is part of the large congregation that accompanied the procession to the mountain for the Mass.

everything was just fine, and with the thousand or so people there a tangible atmosphere of anticipation was building up.

I could hear drummers and some cymbals and singing in the distance. Sister Agnes pushed me up onto a verandah and got me a stool. People were everywhere and God alone knows how she found the stool.

The noise increased and the whispering became louder and then we saw coming up the road all the different parishes of Guizhou Diocese and the youth – each with their own banner and special feature.

Some carried flags – with Mary's name on them – some carried fans with similar praises to Mary inscribed on them and some featured people dressed in traditional garb. It was very impressive. And then came the angels. Some of them were carrying our Lady's statue; some were lifting their little heads to heaven, and some were waving to mum and dad!

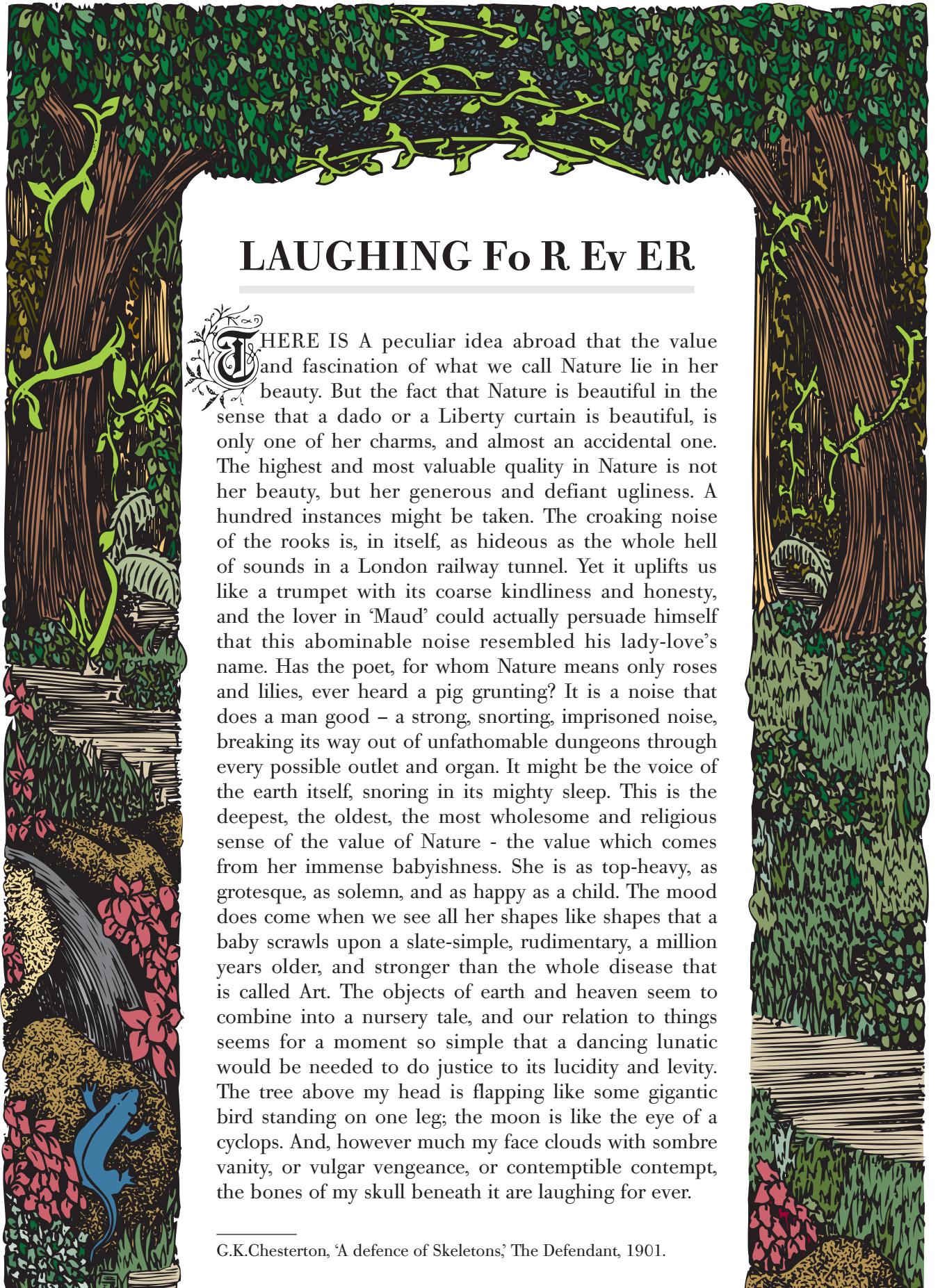
Bringing up the rear were the sisters and the priests and the bishop... and about another thousand people. I couldn't believe it! I didn't think this

would ever happen in present day China. There were about three-and-a-half-thousand people there. I ended up with a pretty good vantage point thanks to Sister Agnes but I still couldn't get a good glimpse of the hundreds more at the back and at the sides. I was surprised that there were not more people trying to sell things.

The Mass that followed was a very moving ceremony in spite of the fact that the Bishop spoke for forty-five minutes. Thankfully it was overcast and not too hot. The Mass took two hours and the distribution of communion took twenty-five minutes from five vantage points. Thank goodness for Sister Agnes's stool.

At the conclusion of Mass many people stayed behind and had a picnic. I was fortunate to join a family. I arrived back at the Cathedral in the Vicar-General's car at about three-thirty and went straight to bed and slept. What an experience – and in China, too! What an outpouring of Catholic solidarity. It was a day I'll never forget.

BROTHER GREG McCANN MSC spent fourteen years in China teaching English.



LAUGHING Fo R Ev ER

THERE IS A peculiar idea abroad that the value and fascination of what we call Nature lie in her beauty. But the fact that Nature is beautiful in the sense that a dado or a Liberty curtain is beautiful, is only one of her charms, and almost an accidental one. The highest and most valuable quality in Nature is not her beauty, but her generous and defiant ugliness. A hundred instances might be taken. The croaking noise of the rooks is, in itself, as hideous as the whole hell of sounds in a London railway tunnel. Yet it uplifts us like a trumpet with its coarse kindliness and honesty, and the lover in 'Maud' could actually persuade himself that this abominable noise resembled his lady-love's name. Has the poet, for whom Nature means only roses and lilies, ever heard a pig grunting? It is a noise that does a man good – a strong, snorting, imprisoned noise, breaking its way out of unfathomable dungeons through every possible outlet and organ. It might be the voice of the earth itself, snoring in its mighty sleep. This is the deepest, the oldest, the most wholesome and religious sense of the value of Nature - the value which comes from her immense babyishness. She is as top-heavy, as grotesque, as solemn, and as happy as a child. The mood does come when we see all her shapes like shapes that a baby scrawls upon a slate-simple, rudimentary, a million years older, and stronger than the whole disease that is called Art. The objects of earth and heaven seem to combine into a nursery tale, and our relation to things seems for a moment so simple that a dancing lunatic would be needed to do justice to its lucidity and levity. The tree above my head is flapping like some gigantic bird standing on one leg; the moon is like the eye of a cyclops. And, however much my face clouds with sombre vanity, or vulgar vengeance, or contemptible contempt, the bones of my skull beneath it are laughing for ever.

G.K.Chesterton, 'A defence of Skeletons,' *The Defendant*, 1901.

Mercier... was the first to recognize scientific psychology as a new, independent science which, he thought, should be accepted and developed by Catholics.

CARDINAL DESIRÉ MERCIER

By Wanda Skowronska

IT IS NO doubt foolhardy to attempt to describe a great man in a few words, one about whom many volumes have been written. However, such is the forgetfulness of our age as regards many of the early Christian pioneers in psychology that there are people who do not know that Cardinal Desiré-Félicien-François-Joseph Mercier (1851-1926) – as well as being an outstanding philosopher and theologian – was also a great catalyst in the development of modern psychology.

Cardinal Desiré Mercier was born in Belgium in Braine L'Alleud, a village not far from Waterloo. He was one of eight children of whom two died in childhood and of whom three became nuns. His father died early and Mercier's mother, Madame Barbe struggled to provide for her children. She was greatly assisted by a local priest Father Oliviers who organised for the intelligent young Desiré to enter the *Petit Séminaire* in Malines and then the *Grand Séminaire* in the same city.

He was ordained on April 4, 1874 and after ordination continued his studies in philosophy and theology obtaining doctorates in both these areas. Mercier's first position was the chair of philosophy at the Diocesan Seminary at Malines

At this time Pope Leo XIII was encouraging the revival of Thomistic philosophy through his encyclical *Aeterni Patris* and the Roman Academy of St Thomas was founded to undertake the teaching advocated by the encyclical. Pope Leo XIII then encouraged the bishops of Belgium to found a chair of Thomistic philosophy in 1880 at the Catholic University of Louvain and Mercier was appointed to this post.

This renowned centre of learning in Louvain had been founded in 1425, then closed during the period

of the French revolution when the Low countries were occupied by the revolutionaries. It was re-established in 1834 becoming a haven for Catholic scholars. With the guidance of the Pope, Mercier formulated the curriculum for his courses and on his return to Louvain in 1882, he began to teach the philosophy of St Thomas. These lectures were not immediately popular but as time went on Mercier's personal qualities, his intellectual zeal and clarity in his given tasks attracted increasing numbers of students.¹

Mercier then conceived a plan to establish a special centre for Thomistic studies which would also include the natural sciences. He submitted

his project to Pope Leo XIII who encouraged the establishment of the Institut Supérieur de Philosophie ou L'Ecole Saint Thomas d'Aquin and Mercier was its first president. Clerical and lay students were admitted to the Institute and Mercier's aim was to develop the Centre into an international centre which would bring Thomistic philosophy to laymen and scientists and thus demonstrate the harmony between philosophy and science.

The Institute succeeded and gained an international reputation as the most active centre of Thomism among contemporary centres of learning, a model for other Catholic universities to follow.

She is as young and as much an obstacle to all worldly politicians, as much an offense to all who seek another ideal than hers, as she was when Nero ruled or Elizabeth tyrannized

THE HOLY SEE

BUT IS it possible to meet the phenomenon of the Church's age long Resurrection by any explanation that will not break down — to account, on secular or social principles, for the fact that while she has met reverses which no other religion or empire or society has ever been called upon to meet, yet she is more vital than them all? That she is as young and as active as she was a thousand years ago, as much an obstacle to all worldly politicians, as much an offence to all who seek another ideal than hers, as much a scandal and a stumbling-block to her critics, as she was when Nero ruled or Elizabeth tyrannized or Arius or Voltaire sneered. For I see through her eyes the Eyes of God to shine, and through her lips I hear his words. In each of her hands as she raises them to bless, I see the wounds that dripped on Calvary, and her feet upon her altar steps are signed with the same marks as those which the Magdalene kissed. As she comforts me in the confessional I hear the voice that bade the sinner go and sin no more; and as she rebukes or pierces me with blame I shrink aside trembling with those who went out one by one, beginning with the eldest, till Jesus and the penitent were left alone. As she cries her invitation through the world I hear the same ringing claim as that which called, "Come unto me and find rest to your souls."

— Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson, *Christ in the Church*, B. Herder, St Louis Mo., 1913, Part iv, *Failure and Triumph*, iii, *The Resurrection*.

It was in this context of openness to all science that. Mercier turned to the new psychology with great interest, showing an avowed respect for the scientific approach to studying the human mind. In fact he undertook his own studies in psychology as soon as he was delegated by Pope Leo XIII to revive Thomistic philosophy for he saw psychology as integrally related to this revival. Mercier was familiar with the work of the pioneer of modern psychology Wilhelm Wundt. He also studied (as later did Freud) at the psychiatric hospital called the Salpêtrière in Paris.

France's most renowned psychiatrist of the day- Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893) – was the principal instructor at this extraordinary hospital which drew people from all over Europe to watch those afflicted with mental illness 'display' their symptoms.

In 1882, Charcot had established a neurology clinic at Salpêtrière, which was the first of its kind in Europe and during the 1880s Cardinal Mercier familiarised himself with Charcot's discoveries about the human mind – in particular the focus on that mystery illness of the age -'hysteria'.² The focus on hysteria was to be superseded by more accurate biochemical knowledge of many of the mental disorders but for the time being it fascinated many as a possible explanation of myriad mental afflictions.

Many came to Charcot's lectures in which those suffering from mental disorders gave live demonstrations of their symptoms, as if in a theatre, in front of packed lecture halls. Without doubt some patients hammed up their symptoms to elicit ever more dramatic reactions from those observing them.

Ever open to research, Mercier also became immersed in the work of other famous psychologists of the day such as Alfred Binet and William James. Mercier established his own course in experimental psychology in 1891. He then set up the first laboratory in psychology in Louvain which was the first outside Germany. Mercier prepared his close collaborator Armand Thiéry (1868-1955) to be the first professor of psychology in his new venture by sending him to Germany to study physiological psychology with Wundt and other contemporary psychologists.

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Thiéry began to lecture from 1894 onwards and taught many who were to become future renowned psychologists.

Mercier wrote three major works on psychology – *Psychologie* (1892), *Les Origines de la Psychologie Contemporaine*, (1897) and *La Psychologie Expérimentale et la Philosophie Spiritualiste* (1900). The first work *Psychologie* is a textbook of philosophical psychology used as the basis of his lectures at Louvain. It states as its first sentence that psychology



is 'that part of philosophy which deals with the human soul' and that object of psychology is 'the whole man, that is man studied in all the manifestations of his life'.³

Noting the organic, the sensory and the intellectual aspects of life, Mercier then discusses the vital principal of the person – the spiritual soul which is substantially united with the material body, created by God and whose destiny is to be with God.

In his revolutionary new course, Mercier insisted that psychology must be a living science open to all the new developments in histology, animal psychology, child psychology and abnormal psychology. Thus he saw the tradition of Thomistic philosophy as inviting consideration of new fields of thought and as capable of calibrating the balance between continuity and change.

The second of his works mentioned above – *Les Origines de la Psychologie Contemporaine* – is also a compilation of his lectures given to his students at Louvain. It was subsequently published in Italian, Polish, Portuguese and Spanish and in English in 1918. This work on psychology was also a critique of various previous ideas harmful to psychology, in particular the dualism of Cartesian psychology which set up an opposition between the soul and the body, detracting from the traditional understanding of the union of the two. Mercier pointed to the coherence of the church's theological anthropology and never saw the new experimental psychology as opposed to it.

He did not agree with those critics who viewed metaphysics and experimental psychology as incompatible. He pointed out that each science has its implicit metaphysics – prophetic of future studies of this subject in the century to come. He saw clearly the 'boundary' issues which were to plague psychology during the next century (is it a science, a philosophy or both?) and expended much effort in encouraging an integration of scholastic philosophy and experimental psychology.

Mercier himself was open to all the recent discoveries in psychology. Historians of psychology Misiak and Staudt comment on the up to date scientific illustrations in his work saying:

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... he [Mercier] had four plates in the first volume of *Psychologie*, representing the cell, the human nervous system, sensory receptors, different kinds of body tissue, and blood circulation. This was the first time that a textbook of philosophical psychology by a Catholic author contained such illustrations. In general *Psychologie* was a great improvement over all previous Catholic works of this kind not only because it was attentive to the data of modern science, but mainly because it was friendly toward experimental psychology and incorporated the finding or theories offered by the new psychology.⁴

In another work exhorting a positive approach to the new science, Mercier states that 'experimental psychology widens the road of progress for true philosophy and furnishes it with valuable information'.⁵ As Misiak and Staudt further observed:

Mercier ... was the first to recognize scientific psychology as a new, independent science which, he thought, should be accepted and developed by Catholics. He toiled to effect its acceptance in his writings, in his speeches and through his various activities. He helped to clarify the critical problem of the relation between philosophy and the new psychology. He was the first president of a Catholic institute of learning to incorporate scientific psychology into its curriculum and to open and experimental laboratory.

Mercier saw a bright future for experimental psychology and he accepted it, and wished it well. He decried the tendency for psychologists to spurn philosophy. One such was Alfred Binet (1857-1911), the French psychologist who formulated the first generally accessible IQ tests and who considered that experimental psychology had nothing to do with metaphysics.

Mercier observed that the reason some contemporary psychologists had abandoned philosophy was precisely to revolt against Cartesian dualism which had created intellectual *impasses* in understanding the wholeness and unity of the person. He insisted that there was another way out of the *impasse* through the anthropology of Aristotle and St Thomas which coherently and reasonably restored the unity of the human person.

He believed that the time was ripe for a fresh reformulation of Thomistic

concepts in the context of the times. Though he could not have foreseen the future brutal ideological battles fought over definitions of 'the person' in the name of race and class, Mercier was astutely alert to the issue.

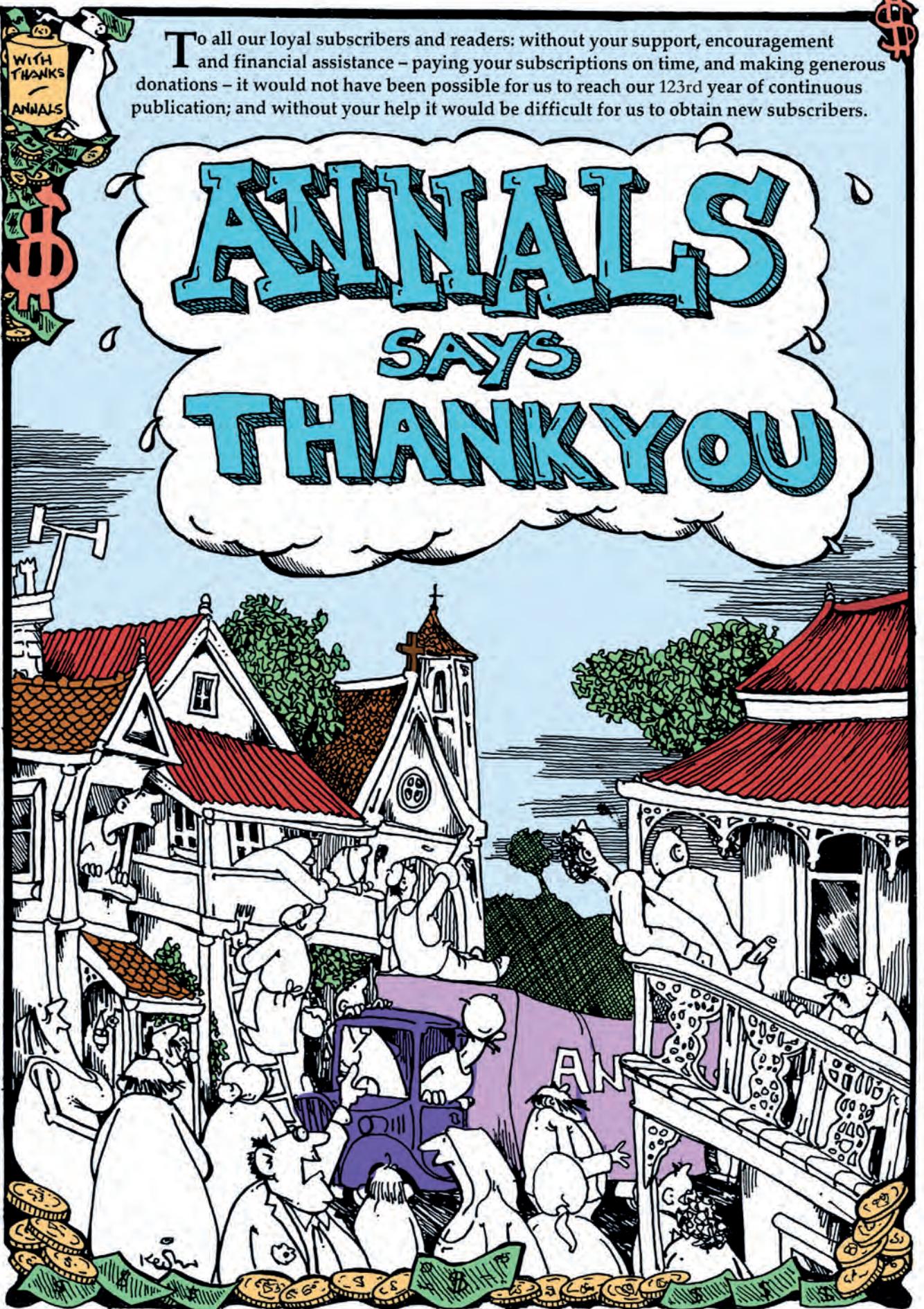
As if sensing the monumental dangers ahead, he saw prophetically that the theological anthropology of the Catholic church had an integral role to play in psychology and in the entire world's troubled understanding of 'the human person' in the century to come.

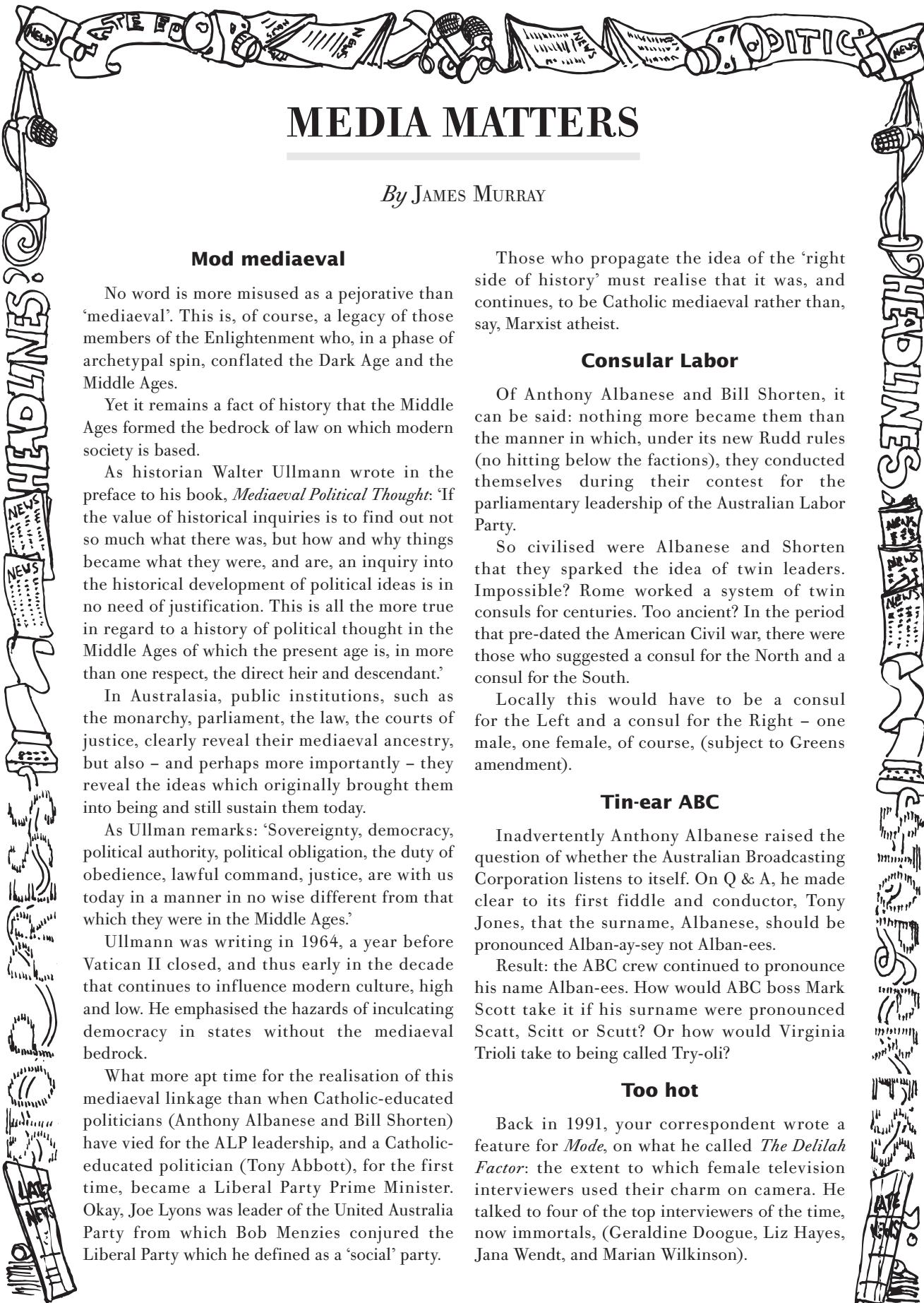
1. A brief biographical account of Mercier's life can be found in *Catholics in Psychology: A Historical Survey* (NY: McGraw-Hill, 1954), 34 ff. (henceforth *CIP*)
2. Some descriptions of Charcot's work at this hospital is given in Richard Webster, *Why Freud Was Wrong* (Britain: HarperCollins, 1995), 52-6; 82-3.
3. Quoted in *CIP*, 44-45.
4. A detailed account of this is given in *CIP*, 44-45.
5. Quoted in *CIP*, 48.

WANDA SKOWRONKA 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*.

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ANIMALS SAYS THANK YOU





MEDIA MATTERS

By JAMES MURRAY

Mod mediaeval

No word is more misused as a pejorative than 'mediaeval'. This is, of course, a legacy of those members of the Enlightenment who, in a phase of archetypal spin, conflated the Dark Age and the Middle Ages.

Yet it remains a fact of history that the Middle Ages formed the bedrock of law on which modern society is based.

As historian Walter Ullmann wrote in the preface to his book, *Mediaeval Political Thought*: 'If the value of historical inquiries is to find out not so much what there was, but how and why things became what they were, and are, an inquiry into the historical development of political ideas is in no need of justification. This is all the more true in regard to a history of political thought in the Middle Ages of which the present age is, in more than one respect, the direct heir and descendant.'

In Australasia, public institutions, such as the monarchy, parliament, the law, the courts of justice, clearly reveal their mediaeval ancestry, but also – and perhaps more importantly – they reveal the ideas which originally brought them into being and still sustain them today.

As Ullman remarks: 'Sovereignty, democracy, political authority, political obligation, the duty of obedience, lawful command, justice, are with us today in a manner in no wise different from that which they were in the Middle Ages.'

Ullmann was writing in 1964, a year before Vatican II closed, and thus early in the decade that continues to influence modern culture, high and low. He emphasised the hazards of inculcating democracy in states without the mediaeval bedrock.

What more apt time for the realisation of this mediaeval linkage than when Catholic-educated politicians (Anthony Albanese and Bill Shorten) have vied for the ALP leadership, and a Catholic-educated politician (Tony Abbott), for the first time, became a Liberal Party Prime Minister. Okay, Joe Lyons was leader of the United Australia Party from which Bob Menzies conjured the Liberal Party which he defined as a 'social' party.

Those who propagate the idea of the 'right side of history' must realise that it was, and continues, to be Catholic mediaeval rather than, say, Marxist atheist.

Consular Labor

Of Anthony Albanese and Bill Shorten, it can be said: nothing more became them than the manner in which, under its new Rudd rules (no hitting below the factions), they conducted themselves during their contest for the parliamentary leadership of the Australian Labor Party.

So civilised were Albanese and Shorten that they sparked the idea of twin leaders. Impossible? Rome worked a system of twin consuls for centuries. Too ancient? In the period that pre-dated the American Civil war, there were those who suggested a consul for the North and a consul for the South.

Locally this would have to be a consul for the Left and a consul for the Right – one male, one female, of course, (subject to Greens amendment).

Tin-ear ABC

Inadvertently Anthony Albanese raised the question of whether the Australian Broadcasting Corporation listens to itself. On Q & A, he made clear to its first fiddle and conductor, Tony Jones, that the surname, Albanese, should be pronounced Alban-ay-sey not Alban-ees.

Result: the ABC crew continued to pronounce his name Alban-ees. How would ABC boss Mark Scott take it if his surname were pronounced Scatt, Scitt or Scutt? Or how would Virginia Trioli take to being called Try-oli?

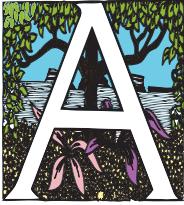
Too hot

Back in 1991, your correspondent wrote a feature for *Mode*, on what he called *The Delilah Factor*: the extent to which female television interviewers used their charm on camera. He talked to four of the top interviewers of the time, now immortals, (Geraldine Doogue, Liz Hayes, Jana Wendt, and Marian Wilkinson).

It is brave to portray a Catholic priest at all, and as every other TV detective is a weary, dreary atheist who does not like his job very much, a priest actually interested in right and wrong makes a refreshing change

WHO KILLED FATHER BROWN?

By Ann Farmer



NEW BBC television adaptation of G. K. Chesterton's clerical detective, Father Brown, would, I hoped, respect the original stories. In some minor aspects – and in the fact that the stories still centre on a priest named Father Brown – it did. Despite this, a shocking crime must be reported: the real Father Brown has been murdered.

Like every other actor who has played the part, Mark Williams was hampered by Father Brown's 'Norfolk dumpling' of a face-but his absent-mindedness and vacant stare disguise a razor-sharp mind. Like the elderly spinster Miss Marple, regarded with irritation and vague contempt by the professionals, Father Brown knows a surprising amount about human nature, gleaned from his priestly ministry and based on the wisdom of the Church.

Kenneth More played the part with mild hesitance masking a deadly intellect – the dagger concealed in a velvet glove. Williams, a good comic actor, is a little too sharp-looking. Still, it would take more than an off-key performance to kill Father Brown.

Despite following the original to a surprising degree the new series is guilty of embarrassingly basic errors: Father Brown is set in the 1950s Cotswolds, all honey-coloured stone cottages but not notorious for crime, and in addition to murderers his parish seems unusually overrun with Irish and Poles.

There were Poles still living in displaced persons camps in

the 1950s, but Irish people, like immigrant populations generally, were typically concentrated in urban areas. His village church, St. Mary's (dangerously ablaze with candles) is pre-Reformation, with a venerable old graveyard.

Father Brown would be much more likely to have a post-Reformation church dedicated to Our Lady in an old city location or a new suburban estate of council houses erected by public authorities to re-house bomb-damaged denizens of the big cities.

Moreover, Father Brown, fully vested, greets parishioners before

Mass, suggesting that the writers (there are eight) think Catholics are simply another version of those church-type characters you see on *Poirot*.

Generally speaking, Father Brown is portrayed as modern and go-ahead; if anyone has a problem with inappropriate behavior (a.k.a., sin) it is the archaic, unbending Church. However, the old Hollywood theme of priests concealing vital information gleaned in the confessional resurfaces, and 'can be filed under Crimes of Catholicism, Sarge.'

Minor inaccuracies include the lavish application of bright red lipstick; an upper-class young woman calling her parents 'Mum' and 'Dad' rather than 'Mummy' and 'Daddy,' and expressions like 'no way,' 'up front,' 'checked him out.' There should not be any sexual references at all unless cloaked in euphemism-certainly not 'having sex,' and certainly not uttered by Father Brown. In the 1950s sex still meant what we now call gender; the sexual act was not regarded as the equivalent of wolfing down a hamburger. However, it would take more than careless or even tasteless anachronisms to kill off Father Brown.

The original Father Brown wandered about as an (apparent) innocent abroad, dropping parcels, umbrellas and priestly wisdom with comforting regularity, but instead of Flambeau, the new series has a gaggle of female characters following him around the parish, including an unfeasibly young Polish housekeeper, a bossy Irish parish secretary and an over-sexed 'posh' parishioner, helping him solve crimes. But

Father Brown — detective

WHEN YOU take to writing detective stories, the measure of your success depends on the amount of personality you can build up round your favourite detective. Why this should be so, is not immediately obvious. But, whether because Sherlock Holmes has set the standard for all time, or because the public does not like to see plots unravelled by a mere thinking-machine, it is personality that counts. You are not bound to make your public like the Great Detective. I have even heard of people who were unable to appreciate the flavours of *Poirot*. But he must be real.

- Monsignor Ronald Knox, 'Introduction,'
to *Father Brown Selected Stories*,
Hamlyn, 1987, p. viii.

although the female posse does something that Flambeau, Father Brown's reformed jewel thief turned detective, never did – steals some of his lines – if the lines are worth stealing that should not matter either.

However, some errors are more fundamental: Chesterton's stories do not revolve around technical details like the absence of fingerprints on a murder weapon, but are based on Father Brown's amazing reasoning powers and insight into the human spirit.

The dénouements are astounding because they are so blindingly simple you wonder why you did not see them coming. Compared to that, such mechanical re-workings appear humdrum.

Chesterton's belief in free will was crucial to Father Brown's method of solving crime. In *The Secret of Father Brown* he reveals

'I really did see myself, my real self, committing the murders. I did not actually kill the men by material means; but that's not the point. Any brick or bit of machinery might have killed them by material means. I mean that I thought and thought about how a man might come to be like that, until I realized that I really was like that, in everything except actual final consent to the action. It was once suggested to me by a friend of mine, as a sort of religious exercise. I believe he got it from Pope Leo XIII, who was always rather a hero of mine.'
Father Brown would 'think

The Mark of the True Faith

THESE ARE the general considerations which govern any personal study of conversion to the Catholic faith. The Church has defended tradition in a time which stupidly denied and despised tradition. But that is simply because the Church is always the only thing defending whatever is at the moment stupidly despised. It is already beginning to appear as the only champion of reason in the twentieth century, as it was the only champion of tradition in the nineteenth. We know that the higher mathematics is trying to deny that two and two make four and the higher mysticism to imagine something that is beyond good and evil. Amid all these anti-rational philosophies, ours will remain the only rational philosophy. In the same spirit the Church did indeed point out the value of tradition to a time which treated it as quite valueless. The nineteenth-century neglect of tradition and mania for mere documents were altogether nonsensical. They amounted to saying that men always tell lies to children but men never make mistakes in books. But though our sympathies are traditional because they are human, it is not that part of the thing which stamps it as divine. The mark of the Faith is not tradition; it is conversion. It is the miracle by which men find truth in spite of tradition and often with the rending of all the roots of humanity.

— G. K. Chesterton, *The Catholic Church and Conversion*, MacMillan Company, New York, 1926, chapter I: A New Religion.

himself' into the murderer, 'thinking his thoughts, wrestling with his passions,' bending himself 'into the posture of his hunched and peering hatred,' until he could 'see the world with his bloodshot and squinting eyes, looking between the blinkers of his half-witted concentration; looking up the short and sharp perspective of a straight road to a pool of blood. Till I am really a murderer.'

While it is understandable that a TV adaptation might want to change Father Brown's time-frame – the stories span thirty-five years and the static setting

might be justified for financial reasons, Father Brown popping up where you least expect him not only widens the plot potential but symbolises the view that nowhere is outside the (moral) jurisdiction of the universal Church. Neither are the stories too cerebral – people certainly understood them in the past.

The problem now is with another kind of illiteracy – spiritual illiteracy. True, the new Father Brown's emphasis is still on saving souls – and did not Alec Guinness convert partly as a result of playing Father Brown in



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the 1954 film? However, Father Brown's zeal for saving individual criminals resonates with the modern progressive notion that if you are nice to criminals (whose deprived existences, it is believed, lead them to deprive others of their possessions) they will respond in kind.

However, Golden Age crime writers had to contend with the fact of capital punishment, thus in solving a murder the amateur detective might well be sending the criminal to certain death. Thus Father Brown's emphasis on the criminal's spiritual welfare is excusable, whereas in modern Britain a life sentence for murder is practically certain to be halved at the very least – providing the criminal shows signs of reformation, i.e., does not murder again while in prison.

Apart from Father Brown's 'right-on' compassion for criminals, however, the stories have been spiritually dumbed down, and there is no need for special powers to detect that while viewers are as spiritual as ever, the adaptors see spirituality as some exotic add-on that can spice up a story and provide criminal motivation, even though in real life criminal activity is not usually a sign of religiosity; but chiefly, one suspects, as an excuse for blazing candles.

But if a materialist philosophy excludes spiritual insights into crime, Father Brown's best political and social points are also eviscerated, decapitated, dismembered and robbed of their original meaning, as when a wealthy young woman, aptly named Ruby, tells radical journalist John Crook: 'You have only talked like that since you became a horrid what's-his-name. You know what I mean. What do you call a man who wants to embrace the chimney-sweep?' 'A saint,' said Father Brown. 'I think,' said Sir Leopold, with a supercilious smile, 'that Ruby means a Socialist.'

Crook explains: 'A Socialist means a man who wants all the chimneys swept and all the chimney-sweeps paid for it.' 'But who won't allow you,' put in the priest in a low voice, 'to own your own soot.'

Neither is poor Father Brown allowed to own his lines, but there is no mystery in his method and no madness either: indeed, logic united to faith confronts the madness of sin, which is simply ego egged on by logic. Without faith, reason can reason itself into madness, and Father Brown embodies Chesterton's belief in faith and reason. He saw reason as based on organised religion, and although religion must be reasonable, reason was itself a matter of faith.

There were deeply personal reasons, too: Chesterton saw his journey of conversion springing from his period of youthful depression -- what he called his 'period of madness' not that he was 'mad, in any medical or physical sense,' but 'simply carrying the scepticism' of the age 'as far as it would go. . . .' By itself, as he had found in countless internal arguments, pure reason could lead to madness. The 'madman' was relentlessly logical and would 'read

a conspiratorial significance' in aimless activity because he saw 'too much cause in everything;' indeed, anyone who had had 'the misfortune to talk with people in the heart or on the edge of mental disorder,' knew that 'their most sinister quality' was a 'horrible clarity of detail; a connecting of one thing with another in a map more elaborate than a maze. . . .'

It might seem a hopeful sign, therefore, that the present generation has put its faith in reason – but the official religion is post-Modernism, meaning religious indifferentism. Chesterton argued that despite its relentless self-belief, rationalism's failure to explain the non-material world and to cure every problem, had given birth to post-Modernism, the 'new humility' that refused to have an opinion on anything.'

Since then, orthodox faith, along with objective truth, has been blamed by post-War generations for leading to the horrors of the Holocaust; however, if modern multiculturalism emerged from concerns about racism, inextricably linked to the Holocaust, post-Modernism has been embraced in reaction to the perceived totalitarian connotations of 'imposing truths,' a perverse and dangerous by-product has been antagonism to the idea of objective truth and those who believe in objective truth.

Father Brown relies on objective truth to solve crime, but objective truth is fast becoming as exotic as a soustained priest in the 1950s Cotswolds, and if people see religion solely as a matter of externals, they won't see the point of a priest – or the point that the priest is trying to make.

And the Father Brown stories are 'just stories' only up to a point. They are firmly based on the reality of objective truth. Thus to see right and wrong as simply minor ingredients in a *mélange* of constantly changing realities is a far more serious problem than Father Brown just happening to be on the scene of countless murders. We suspend the faculty of disbelief at the point when we realise that if he were not, there would be no stories.

A daniel come to Judgement

IF POSSIBLE [a fictional detective] must appeal to us through weakness; when he appears on the scene of the tragedy, the general reaction must be 'A man like that will never be able to get at the truth.' It is because he drops his parcels and cannot roll his umbrella, because he blinks at us and has fits of absent-mindedness, that Father Brown is such a good publisher's detective. He is a 'Daniel come to judgement'. He was 'based', as we say, on Monsignor John O'Connor of Bradford, whose gracious memory is still fresh among us; it was he who later received Chesterton into the Church.

— Monsignor Ronald Knox, 'Introduction,'
to *Father Brown Selected Stories*,
Hamlyn, 1987, p. viii.

Neither is religion itself the problem, but the imposition of new religious values on the past. Like so many old favourites, Father Brown has fallen victim to Political Correctness, and with all the tedious moral didacticism that post-Modernists condemn, he preaches their tenets: diversity, equality, and (mainly sexual) liberty.

Minorities pop up everywhere; women are self-righteous conservatives or victims; rich people are evil or stupid; the sound of box-ticking is deafening. Infidelity is the norm, and – relatively speaking – murder is not the worst thing that can happen. It is prejudice that provokes the gasp of horror. In fact, the only prejudice exempt from condemnation is the prejudice against prejudice.

Where Chesterton lightly sketches society's less salubrious aspects, more concerned with the spiritual price of such 'freedoms,' post-Modernism magnifies and glamourises them: a squire conducting an affair with the blacksmith's wife in the new adaptation becomes a bisexual blackmailing a 'devout' Catholic woman into sleeping with him because of her husband's debts.

Chesterton's allusion to erotic poetry is energetically articulated by a live-in mistress, specially created to create the non-existent motive of jealousy – all while much better plots are jettisoned. However, it gives the new, improved Father Brown the opportunity to show how 'comfortable' he is with post-Modernity by sternly intoning that 'the world becomes a dangerous place when we interpret Holy Scripture too literally.'

The old Father Brown believed that the world is a much more dangerous place when Holy Scripture is misinterpreted under the dictatorship of relativism; but if such quaint post-Modernisms give him the opportunity of a further series, perhaps he will address that other outdated prejudice, anti-Christianity – especially stereotypes of Christian women as busy-bodies, sexually repressed colourless drudges, or prostitutes; all devout, ergo all hypocrites, like the

dealing with Infidelity

A SEMINARY is the only true guarantee for the creation of the ecclesiastical spirit. And this is the primary and true weapon for meeting the age, not controversy. Of course every Catholic should have an intelligent appreciation of his religion, as St. Peter says, but still controversy is not the instrument by which the world is to be resisted and overcome. And this we shall see if we study that epistle, which comes with an authority of its own, as being put by the Holy Spirit into the mouth of him who was the chief of the Apostles. What he addresses to all Christians, is especially suitable for priests. Indeed he wrote it at a time when the duties of one and the other, as against the heathen world, were the same. In the first place he reminds them of what they really were as Christians, and surely we should take these words as belonging especially to us ecclesiastics. "You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people ..." (1 Pet. ii. 9).

In this ecclesiastical spirit, I will but mention a spirit of seriousness or recollection. We must gain the habit of feeling that we are in God's presence, that He sees what we are doing; and a liking that He does so, a love of knowing it, a delight in the reflection, "Thou, God, seest me." A priest who feels this deeply will never misbehave himself in mixed society. It will keep him from over-familiarity with any of his people; it will keep him from too many words, from imprudent or unwise speaking; it will teach him to rule his thoughts. It will be a principle of detachment between him and even his own people; for he who is accustomed to lean on the Unseen God, will never be able really to attach himself to any of His creatures. And thus an elevation of mind will be created, which is the true weapon which he must use against the infidelity of the world. (Hence, what St. Peter says: 1, ii, 12, 15; iii, 16.) Now this I consider to be the true weapon by which the infidelity of the world is to be met.

— Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman, Sermon 9, The Infidelity of the Future, delivered on the occasion of the opening of St. Bernard's Seminary, 2nd October 1873

seemingly respectable men of the parish, the village prostitute's most loyal customers.

Of course, post-Modernists could pen their own stories, but real stories spring from characters based on real people, not 'issues.' They write themselves – with a little help from the author – because the story is the story of Man, and God is the author.



Admittedly, it is brave to portray a Catholic priest at all, and as every other TV detective is a weary, dreary atheist who does not like his job very much, a priest actually interested in right and wrong makes a refreshing change – especially when he tells a criminal 'You have free will – you are responsible for your actions.' A slip-up by the producers? Possibly – but the Holy Spirit has slipped through narrower cracks in Man's spiritual defences.

ANN FARMER, is author of *The Language of Life: Christians Facing the Abortion Challenge* (St. Paul's: Middlegreen, Slough, Berks., 1994); *Prophets and Priests: The Hidden Face of the Birth Control Movement* (St. Austin Press: London, 2002); *By Their Fruits: Eugenics, Population Control and the Abortion Campaign* (Catholic University of America Press: Washington DC, 2008); *The Five Wounds: Sanctuary for the Sick, Balm for the Wounded Spirit* (Gracewing: Leominster [UK], 2012); *Chesterton and the Jews* (Angelico Press: Tacoma [WA], 2013). This is a condensed version of an article that appeared in *The Chesterton Review*, vol. xxxix, Nos. 1 & 2, pp.77 ff. Reprinted with permission.

IN MEMORIAM

CHRISTOPHER KOCH

[1931-2013]

CHRISTOPHER KOCH – regarded as one of Australia’s finest novelists – died on September 23rd in Hobart. He was 81.

Even though two of his books – *The Doubleman*, 1985 and *Highways to War*, 1996 – won the coveted Miles Franklin Award, his best-known book is probably ‘The Year of Living Dangerously,’ 1978, which described violent events that led to the fall of the Sukarno regime in Indonesia in 1967.

In 1982 Peter Weir directed a film version of the book which starred Mel Gibson [Cuy Hamilton] and Linda Hunt who portrayed Hamilton’s cameraman Billy Kwan. Hunt won an Academy Award for her performance.

I first met Christopher in 2000. Frank Devine, the distinguished New Zealand born Australian journalist and newspaper editor, who was an old friend and Chairman of the Editorial Board of *Annals* at the time, suggested that we invite Christopher to join the Board.

Christopher agreed, and remained a Board member until his death. After Frank’s untimely death on July 3, 2009, he succeeded him as Chairman. He dedicated his last book *Lost Voices*, to Frank.

The last time I saw Christopher was at Frank’s bedside a couple of days before his death. Christopher had flown from Tasmania to spend time with his old friend. He brought with him a poem by the 17th Century Welsh poet Henry Vaughan ‘They are all gone into the world of Light,’ which he read to Frank who took comfort from it. It speaks equally strongly to us of Christopher’s own faith. It concludes:

O Father of eternal life, and all
Created glories under thee!
Resume thy spirit from this world of
thrall
Into true liberty.

Either disperse these mists, which blot
and fill
My perspective still as they pass,
Or else remove me hence unto that hill,
Where I shall need no glass.

Christopher told *The Australian* after his own illness was diagnosed, ‘Basically it comes down to this: do you believe in God or don’t you believe in God. I do believe in God.’

He will be much missed. May God welcome him into His Kingdom, and may he rest in Peace.

– [Father] Paul Stenhouse MSC

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Bethlehem

This is not the Bethlehem of peace on earth to men of good will; it is Bethlehem as the cockpit where Israeli intelligence agents seek by 'conflict management' to anticipate the violent response of Palestinians seeking independence.

The period is the 2001 Intifada; the storyline concerns Shin Bet agent Raza (Tsahi Halevy) and his teenage Palestinian informer Sanfur (Shadi Mar'i) whose loyalty is two edged: he agreed to inform on the promise of freedom for his father; his brother is a leader of an Al Aksa terrorist group.

Director Yuval Adler and his co-writer Ali Wakad are unflinching in their bloody etching of how this Gordian-knot situation is fated to end.

As with other films made under Israel's freedom of expression, Bethlehem depicts a murkier and more desperate situation than anything in print reports.

MA15+★★★★NFFV

About time

Tempting to turn this neat title on its head and say it's about time writer/director Richard Curtis left the idyllic, witty England he created in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. Curtis is a New Zealand-born Anglophile besotted with nostalgia for an English class that no longer really exists: upper-middle with pretension to the artistic, and a prosperity seemingly based on whistling for a wind.

But this sour temptation vanishes with the appearance of Bill Nighy playing a droll *pater* whose extended family includes a droll uncle (Richard Cordery) and an angry old playwright (Tom Hollander).

Curtis stalwart Hugh Grant being unavailable or too old, he casts Domhnall Gleeson (son of the mighty Brendan Gleeson) as Tim to whom the *pater* imparts a secret: the males of the family can travel back in time.

So Tim heads back to Dublin's fair city where the girls are so pretty. This is a Curtis romance. Tim must remain in England and use the gift to aid his love-life which eventually focuses on an American, namee Mary, played by Rachel McAdams with timeless charm.

M★★★★NFFV

MOVIES

By James Murray

Blancanieves

Writer/director Pablo Berger elected to shoot his version of the Snow White story in black and white not Disney pastels. And with tremendous effect he made it according to silent movie conventions and set it within the world of 1920s bullfighting.

His storyline follows a celebrated matador Antonio Villalta (Daniel Gimenez Cacho) whose pregnant wife Carmen (Macarena Garcia) witnessing him being gored goes into labour and dies after delivering their child, Carmencita, who goes to live with her grandmother (Angela Molina).

Villalta marries his nurse Encarna (a most hissable performance by Maribel Verdu) who prevents Villalta seeing Carmencita (Macarena Garcia, doubling parts).

Under threat Carmencita finds refuge with a troupe of bullfighting dwarfs. And finds her prince? Again Berger's take is darker than Disney's.

Comparisons with that other silent movie hit, *The Artist*, are inevitable. Enough to say that *The Artist* had a loveable pooch and *Blancanieves* has fierce bulls.

M★★★★NFFV

Mystery Road

Writer/director/editor/director of cinematography/composer Ivan Sen confirms his multiple talents. Add to them his ability to elicit high-definition performances from actors.

This is eminently true of Aaron Pedersen who plays Jay Swan, an Aboriginal detective returned to his home town after years working in the city. It is a home town changed as Jay finds when he is assigned to investigate the murder of an Aboriginal girl found murdered in a storm culvert; a girl with a link to Swan's estranged daughter.

Tony Barry's turn as the town's senior cop should have raised him up the credit list. Others in the cast include Hugo Weaving, Ryan

Kwanten, Tasma Walton and the indestructible Jack Thompson playing a character called simply Mr Murray.

John Ford's signature landscape was Monument Valley and its buttes. Sens signature lies in outback skylines and the swift rumble of road-trains, loaded with livestock and secrets.

Masterpiece? Not quite. The final shoot-out verges on the ludicrous. Do guys armed with high-powered telescopic rifles usually fire at each other from positions that are without cover? Free advice: like other *auteurs* Ivan Sen should find a script-editor he trusts and work with her or him.

M★★★★NFFV.

The Butler

Historical drama rich with nuggets of American presidential history from Eisenhower to Obama, assayed by Cecil Gaines, a long-time African-American servitor at the White House.

As Gaines, Forrest Whitaker gives a performance that combines service to the great and good with steadfast strength of character that eventually wins him wages parity with white servitors (clue, from the president with trade union experience).

Oprah Winfrey as Gaines's wife Gloria acts with such sterling fineness that it raises the question whether her celebrated television show appearances are also a performance, a question that also applies to all television anchors.

Robin Williams as Eisenhower does not get to repeat the latter's most important warning: against the power of the military-industrial complex. But Alan Rickman does get something of Ronald Reagan's shrewd benignity and Jane Fonda does a marvellous turn as his First Lady, Nancy.

Director Lee Daniels working from Danny Strong's script intercuts powerfully between White House pomp and circumstance and the civil rights violence. New Zealand readers may be pleased to know that Gaines's shoe-cleaning kit includes the indispensable polish: Kiwi.

Not an iota of praise is taken from the performance by the view that the tag 'Based on a true story' should be changed to, 'A free interpretation of

a *Washington Post* piece about Eugene Allen, White House butler for many years?

M★★★★SFFV

Ender's Game

The plot of this futuristic, space-age thriller is ingenious but not as ingenious as its marketing elements. For older nostalgics, it has Harrison Ford, Hans Solo of *Star Wars*, for teenagers it has Asa Butterfield as a space cadet promoted to high command. Director Gavin Hood opens with a sequence vividly reminiscent of *Star Wars* and frames the whole movie as computer game.

The unintended consequence is that Harrison Ford's grim characterisation does not always conceal a sense that he is wondering why he has gone back to the future, especially when Ben Kingsley makes a latish entrance to steal the movie as a commander with the full facial tattoo of a Maori warrior.

Boys Own Paper goes interglactic.

M★★★★SFFV

Philomena

The title character is designed to epitomise the young Irish women who surrendered their infants for adoption in the past as described in Martin Sixsmith's book: *The Lost Child of Philomena Lee: A Mother, Her Son and a Fifty Year Search*.

Judi Dench tinctures her performance with enough wry asperity to save it from mawkishness. Steve Coogan plays Martin Sixsmith in a world-weary style that makes him first pick to play the late David Frost.

Coogan also produced and co-wrote the script. With director Stephen Frears he ensured prominent product placement for Ireland's second best stout (the best being Murphy's of Cork).

He could have done better. After the fate of the adopted child is established, instead of giving us a mean climactic rant from one of the nuns involved, he might have had her, or better, Philomena, deliver the line: 'It was hard, very hard but I suppose it beats today's solution: ending up in a surgical bucket like thousands of others.'

M★★★★NFFV

After May

The May of the title is the May of 1968 when French students took to the streets in the cause of revolution. Writer/director Olivier Assayas's take, based on personal experience, does nothing to enhance the legends that have adhered to the episode.

He shows that his cadre of students who include Gilles (Clement Metayer), Christine (Lola Creton), Jean-Pierre (Hugo Conzelmann) and Leslie (India Salvor Menuez) were as interested in revolutionary bed-hopping as in making Molotov cocktails or spray-canning slogans on school walls. In other words more hedonism than Marxism.

MA15+★★★★NFFV

Adoration

Nobel Laureate Doris Lessing's novella, *The Grandmothers*, provided the basis for this romance. French director Anne Fontaine, making her English-language debut, does not maintain an equivalent length to Lessing's nor indeed to her great compatriot La Fontaine whose fables are marvels of brevity. She stretches the novella like pink bubblegum to 111 minutes of running time.

Lil (Naomi Watts) and Roz (Robin Wright) are childhood friends who have grown to motherhood of respective sons Ian and Tom (Xavier

Samuel and James Frecheville).

Fontaine, cinematographer Christophe Beaucarne and editor Luc Barnier provide Watts and Wright with transitions that leaves them virtually unchanged as they grow from motherhood to grandmotherhood.

The Christopher Hampton screenplay includes an exchange between Lil and Roz about their respective sons: 'They look like young gods.' Bathetic. They look like a couple of surfies mucking about, an impression strengthened by the main location, Seal Rocks, NSW.

About two-thirds of the way through, after Lil and Roz have got involved with each other's son, Hampton also supplies Robin Wright with the line, 'This has got to stop.' If only

Gary Sweet and Ben Mendelsohn wander in and out of frame looking distraught at the underdone nature of their roles as Saul and Harold, the forsaken blokes in the lives of the glamorous grans.

As for the other women, Hannah (Sophie Lowe) and Mary (Jessica Tovey the stand-out) they are each left holding Ian and Tom's babies.

In the end, however, despite all the talent involved, before and behind the camera and Doris Lessing's Nobel pedigree, the romance is akin to the peepshow flickers, once available on British seaside piers at Brighton, Bournemouth and Bognor Regis along with naughty postcards.

TBA★★NFFV

A Hijacking

As its matter-of-fact title indicates, director Tobias Lindholm's version of a piratical boarding is a more modest effort than the Tom Hanks movie, *Captain Phillips*, based on the book, *A Captain's Duty: Somali Pirates, Navy SEALs and Dangerous Days at Sea*.

Modest but not without tension in its focus on the protracted ransom negotiations conducted by a Danish shipping executive played with forceful sangfroid by Roland Moller while day by day the ship's cook (Pilou Asbaek) has to kill and cook the goats the Somali pirates have brought aboard as provender.

M★★★★NFFV

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Among the one million passengers was Joe Meagher.

THE 8.05 FAMILY GROWS

By Max Barrett



TWO REGULARS on the 8.05 were accountants, bachelor friends, Richard Gleason and John Cash. Both were in their late twenties; both good-natured and good-living. They worked together at a bank in Edgecliff. Even though they were competent at their job and on their way to becoming actuaries, they had already discovered that nicely balanced columns of figures didn't send them home at night with their blood pounding. It had become a conscious effort to face up to the 8.05 each morning.

However, the daily round had lost something of its numbing edge since the advent of the 8.05-er. Richard had spoken to Joe Meagher on one occasion only and at that, very briefly; but, unbeknown to the latter, Richard was the Oracle's most fervent admirer.

He and John tried to commandeer a two-seater diagonally across from Joe, and Richard – quite unscrupulously – began to assume the role of *agent provocateur*. Maybe Joe did not need to be stimulated, but Richard was taking no risks.

FATHER MAX BARRETT is a Redemptorist priest now resident in Sydney. This piece was the seventh 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.

“Did you watch that documentary on Cambodia last night, John?” (in a louder-than-necessary voice). “All those maimed young men ... and women ... limbless, courtesy of a

land mine ... land mines, along with whole arsenals of other destructive stuff, introduced from other countries. Downright immoral. Wouldn't you think there would be a total ban on trade in weapons of destruction? ... However, I suppose people in the manufacturing countries have to live. At least we can take comfort in the fact that Australia is not an exporter of arms.”

Richard did his stuff well. It would be wrong to say that the hackles rose visibly on Joe Meagher's neck; but involuntarily he stiffened; then relaxed; then gave tongue.

“That documentary you saw,” (this, with a glance in the direction of the Edgecliff-bound bankers) “was probably a re-run of the TV coverage first released a few years back. A scene from that presentation is lodged indelibly in my mind: a 10-year-old boy with a crude-looking hand-whittled stump as a substitute leg; and the youngster was careering around with his companions, playing soccer. Just inspirational. The indomitable something of the human spirit. Yet woe to those by whom scandals come. Better a millstone be tied around their necks ...”

“As you say, it's hard to eliminate the sale of killing devices; people



have to live.” Joe leant his head back a moment, as though he had first to work out what he would say next. “I sometimes imagine the bread-winner of the family coming back from work and his kid asking, ‘Daddy, what did you do today?’ And Daddy takes his youngster on his knee and informs him: ‘Today, son, I was part of the grid making cluster bombs. Beautiful devices. Immense power of destruction.’

“Or a boy asks his grandfather, ‘Gramps, what kind of work did you do?’ Gramps glows as she recalls his halcyon days. ‘In my time, laddie, I made contraceptives. The kind that back up as abortifacients if they fail to do their job the first time round.’ Or he might say: ‘I sold drugs. Heroin and stuff.’ And if the youngster asks, ‘Didn’t the drugs hurt people?’ Gramps pushes the kid off his knee and asks: ‘How the hell do you think your father got to be educated at a private school?’”

Joe shook himself. “Where were we? Oh, yes: the manufacture and selling of destructive weapons. So I haven’t really got off the point. Is Australia squeaky-clean in this regard? For instance, over the years we have exported quite a load of high-grade uranium oxide.”

Strictly speaking there was no need to stir the pot; but Richard decided that it wouldn’t do any harm. “Hold it. Uranium is not *per se* a destructive commodity. It doesn’t have to end up as an atomic bomb. It serves a variety of industrial, scientific purposes, you know.”



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“That’s a fine touch: ‘not *per se* destructive’. Mmmm. Well, it leaves an enormous residue of atomic waste which is not *per se* life-giving. And,” Joe added dryly, “the purchaser may have innocuous ends in mind. He might need it to manufacture marshmallows.”

Richard rubbed his hands; they were really cooking with gas. “Hey, fair go, Mr. Meagher. It’s in Hansard that the export of uranium from our country, or the sale of arms, is rigidly, scrupulously controlled at top government level. Stringent security procedures. The purchaser has to sign a document. Then, a follow-up of rigorous inspection routines and meticulous scrutiny.”

At this point, Joe Meagher’s mind started to race. Where had he heard this gobbledegook before? The penny dropped! The English TV series featuring Paul Eddington. Nigel Hawthorne and Deryk Fowlds. He looked directly at Richard and uttered an obsequious:

“Yes, Prime Minister.”

It was time for song. Joe started to hum theme music from the very anti-war film, Gallipoli. The two accountants came in almost immediately. Within a bar there was a sprinkling of sound from other commuters. Non-singers looked mystified but pleased. Behind vibrating lips, Joe mused: “Madam Butterfly, are your choristers in this class?”

The Computer said so

I BOUGHT A watch at WalMart for \$4.98, and it had a lifetime guarantee. I saved the paperwork, and, two years later, the watch stopped working. When I returned it to WalMart, the sales girl instructed me to go to the shelf and pick out a new one just like the old one. I did so, but the same watch was now priced at \$6.98. She entered the transaction into the computer/cash register and gave me the watch plus \$2.11. I asked her why she was giving me \$2.11, and she said it was the price difference plus tax. I explained that instead I owed her \$2.11, but she insisted I was wrong “because the computer said so.” I told her I could not accept the money and told her to put it in the drawer. She said she couldn’t do that because it would throw her totals off for the day. I then told her to keep it and buy herself a Coke at break. She said, “We can’t accept tips.” I told her that I was leaving the money sitting on the counter for her next customer to put towards his purchase, and I walked away shaking my head.

— This first appeared in 2012 in an *Idiot Sightings* Blog which no longer exists. Readers may well be able to relate to the situation in which the writer found himself.

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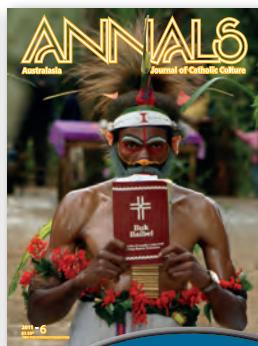
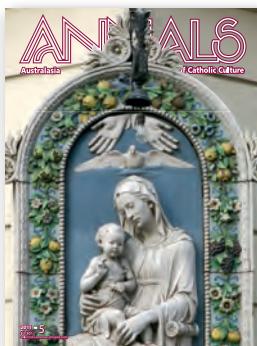
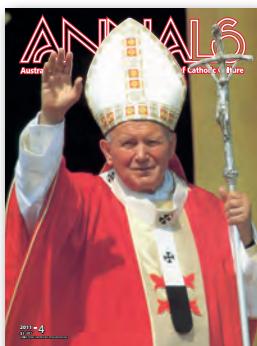
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