

ANNALS

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Journal of Catholic Culture



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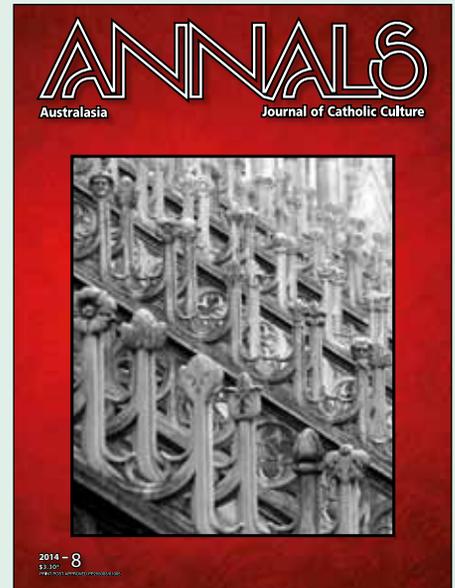
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[Sunday readings at Mass: Year A/Weekday readings: Year II]

Australia's Oldest Catholic Magazine

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Front Cover: Spot the faces. The Duomo or Cathedral of Milan, Italy, is reputedly the third largest church in the world. It is built on the site of a Basilica or Public Building which stood in the centre of old Roman *Mediolanum*. Saint Ambrose's 'New Basilica' built to the Glory of God on this site at the beginning of the 5th century, had an adjoining basilica added in 836. A fire damaged the cathedral and basilica in 1075, but a new Cathedral wasn't started until 1386. The spire on which the statue of our Lady known as *The Madonnina*, or Little Madonna stands, is 108.5 metres high. Our cover shows how Catholic stonemasons – after throwing tons of stone into the air in praise of God the Creator and lover of all beauty – embellished hitherto inaccessible parts of the roof of the Duomo with cherubs, gargoyles and caricatures of one another. *And God* [who according to Psalm 104, 26 made the sea for the whales to play in] *saw that it was good. Ed.*

Cover Photo: The Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo di Milano

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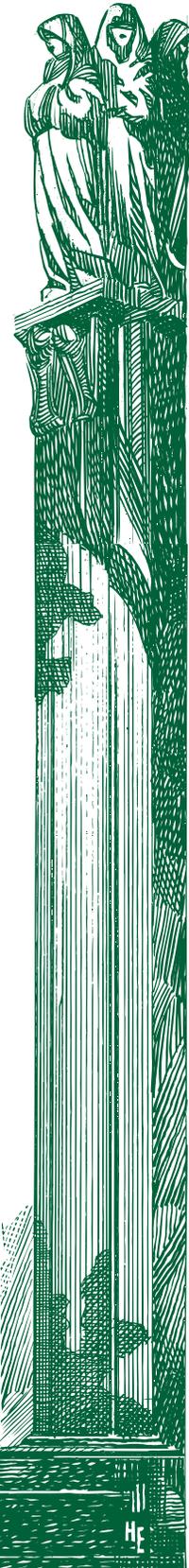
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FOR GOD has said only one thing: only two do I know: that to God alone belongs power and to you, Lord, love; and that you repay each man according to his deeds.
– Psalm 61 [62]



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

DO NOT MAKE GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT SAD



DO NOT use harmful words in talking. Use only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what you say will do good to those who hear you – and do not make God's Holy Spirit sad; for the Spirit is God's mark of ownership on you, a guarantee that the Day will come when God will set you free. Get rid of all bitterness, passion, and anger. No more shouting or insults. No more hateful feelings of any sort. Instead, be kind and tender-hearted to one another, and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you in Christ.

– St Paul of Tarsus, from his Letter to the Christians of Ephesus, 4:29-32

Christ taught love and mercy, but his teaching on the Eucharist and forgiveness, on divorce and adultery, against riches and hypocrisy was clear. He died for his pains.

GEORGE CARDINAL PELL

SYNOD INTERVENTION

IN MANY Western countries the social capital of whole communities is running down. The invention of the contraceptive pill has produced a revolution with social consequences, very different from, but equal to those of the 1917 Communist revolution in Russia. Pope Paul VI was prophetic on these consequences.¹

The most important challenge in this revolution is the decline in the birth rate, the absence of children.

The Catholic tradition brings a message of hope. Children are important. They bring life and happiness to their parents, they strengthen the levels of faith and religious practice.

No country in the Western world has a replacement birth rate. Some large Catholic countries have the lowest birth rates in the world. Already Russia has begun to decline in population. Other countries will follow.

Too many Catholics are silent publicly on this. Why is this so? Why does President Putin of Russia speak more about the demographic crisis than some or many Catholic bishops?

Do we have an unspoken fear that this sexual revolution, this increase in suffering is unstoppable? That it can only get worse? That we can do nothing except make further concessions, even watering down elements in our tradition that have given life for nearly 2000 years?

The progress of the sexual revolution can be slowed and reversed by the prophetic witness of Catholic lives and the full proclamation of the beauty of Christ's call to conversion, sacrificial love, service and forgiveness. We have a message of

hope. Children are essential. Love and fidelity are possible and produce peace and growth.

Christ taught love and mercy, but his teaching on the Eucharist and forgiveness, on divorce and adultery, against riches and hypocrisy was clear. He died for his pains.

The early Christian communities in a hostile Roman Empire continued with this prophetic and dangerous witness.

Pastoral practices and moral codes which are separated from Catholic doctrines are not merciful, but misleading and sometimes damaging in the long term.

In some formerly Catholic countries in Europe and in whole churches, especially in the Protestant tradition, radical concessions to the world brought only decline, sometimes collapse. The evangelical churches have spread because of their strong communities and clear doctrines.

Many are surprised by these facts or do not want to accept them. They propose easy solutions that please agnostic opinion makers, but upset believers, especially those who have made sacrifices to remain faithful.

We need strong, large families. We find growth only in those parishes, religious orders and movements where there is radical fidelity to Christ and the Church.

GEORGE CARDINAL PELL is Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy of the Holy See. Previously he served as eighth Archbishop of Sydney (2001-2014), and seventh Archbishop of Melbourne (1996-2001). The above intervention was delivered on October 8, at the Synod on the Family held in Rome.

1. Cf. Mary Eberstadt, *Adam and Eve after the pill: Paradoxes of the sexual revolution*. San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 2012

AUSTRALIA CONFRONTS HOME GROWN TERROR

By Paul Stenhouse MSC

IN MAY last year off-duty Fusilier Drummer Lee Rigby was hacked to death in Wellington Street London by two radicalised Nigerian converts to Sunni Islam. The perpetrators asked passers-by to video them, and then waited for the police to arrest them. The crime shocked the world.¹ I was in London not far from Wellington Street, that Wednesday, May 22, 2013.

Australians were doubly shocked because of this country's special links with the UK. But they would have reassured themselves that our laid-back, friendly, easy going, sports-loving paradise would be spared such horrors.

On Thursday September 18, 2014, Australia came of age. We learned that fifteen people had been detained after a phone call from an Australian *Islamic State* jihadist to contacts in Australia was intercepted, and resulted in a series of early-morning anti-terrorism raids across Sydney by 800 Australian Federal Police and NSW police officers. Similar raids by 70 Queensland police took place in Brisbane.

Muhammad Baryalei, 33, who made the call, is reportedly fighting with *The Islamic State* in Syria² and is suspected of having recruited many of the Australians who are fighting in Syria and Iraq. According to an ABC report, he called contacts in Australia and asked them to carry out a number of public beheadings. They were to kidnap people randomly in Brisbane and Sydney and have them executed on camera with the film to be sent back to *The Islamic State* to be used as propaganda.³

Omarjan Azari, 22, one of about 15 people detained during the large counter-terrorism operation, has been charged with conspiracy to plan a terrorist act or acts.⁴ A warrant has been issued for the arrest of Baryalei⁵ whose alleged death is attracting news coverage as we go to print.

According to media reports earlier this year, Australian security organisations were concerned that the more than 200 Australians

suspected of being involved in combat-related activities in Syria may attempt to carry out similar acts of terrorism in Australia on their return home.⁶

Jabhat an-Nusra is one of the rebel Islamist groups fighting against the Syrian forces of Bashar al-Assad that was identified as training foreign jihadists to conduct acts of terrorism in their home countries.⁷ As a consequence of this development, numbers of young Australian Sunni Muslims *en route* to Syria have had their passports confiscated.

In the light of the butchery and genocide of *The Islamic State* jihadists the Abbott Liberal Government announced tough new anti-terrorism laws to deal with the perceived threat. Efforts to enlist the support of the various Sunni Muslim community leaders, however, met with a cool, not to say hostile, reception.

A statement signed by more than 60 Sunni organisations and individuals on August 20, alleged that 'the threat about 150 radicalised Muslims returning from Iraq and Syria,' had been 'trumped up'.⁸

This statement, it should be noted, was issued on the same day that the non-Muslim world learned of the barbaric beheading of journalist James Foley. The community leaders insisted, referring to the anti-terrorism laws: 'there is no solid evidence to substantiate this threat'.⁹

The uncompromising Saudis whose extremist Wahhabi ideology begat *The Islamic State*, whose Constitution is the Qur'an and who regard themselves as the model of authentic Sunni Islam, do not agree.

Saudi Arabia and ISIS

THE Islamic State is a creature of the Saudis Wahhabi ideology. Both share the same hatred for Shi'a Islam, for Iran and for all religions 'that do not fall within the realm of Sunni Islam'.

Viewed from a distance, IS and Wahhabis have more in common than Saudi Arabia cares to admit. The extremists of all extremists, IS militants, have merely pushed the envelope further than Saudi Arabia ever dared, or wanted to for that matter.

But if Saudi Arabia was willing to tolerate radicalism in the Middle East in order to rid itself of a few enemies and assert its hegemony over the region by creating a buffer to Iran's political and ideological traction, it did not intend for IS to become the monster we all have learned to fear.

— Catherine Shakdam, Saudi Arabia's U-turn on Islamic radicalism, *Middle East Eye*, September 16, 2014

The Wahhabi kingdom finds itself under threat from the monsters it unleashed on Syria and Iraq. In February 2014, King Abdullah decreed jail terms for up to 20 years for citizens who take part in overseas conflicts. Saudi Arabia's 800 km northern border with Iraq has been closed.¹⁰ It is guarded by a \$US 3.4 billion security system that includes increased border patrols, guards in bullet-proof vests, helicopters, observation towers, cameras, motion detectors, thermal imaging and two 7 metre-high sand barriers, and a huge security fence that runs the length of the border.¹¹

Three days before the early-morning raids in Sydney and Brisbane, a Saudi Court jailed 13 defendants for up to 10 years on charges that included joining an Islamist group, fighting overseas, supporting fighters financially, and helping mislead people travelling to conflict zones.¹²

Doesn't this have a familiar ring to it? Does it sound like 'there is no solid evidence to substantiate this threat'?

On September 8, Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop, speaking in the United States, referred to the 'genocidal activities' of The Islamic State in Iraq.¹³

In an interview on ABC *Radio National* on September 17 with Tanya Plibersek the Australian Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, Waleed Aly a Muslim spokesman – in response to Ms Plibersek's referring to 'genocide' in Iraq – stated: 'there is no genocide happening right now'. 'Right now' Mosul has been emptied of all its Christians – whose spiritual ancestors lived there for almost 700 years before the Arab armies arrived – and of all the Ziadis, and Shi'a, and many other non-Sunni minorities.

Two days before the anti-terrorism raids referred to above, a motorist drove past Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Church, and the Maronite College of the Holy Family in Harris Park in Western Sydney,

Teaching History

WE CANNOT teach history fairly; the thing is intrinsically impossible. It is impossible for this simple reason, that, every human being being unfathomable, no one can really decide how right or how wrong he was. There was more honesty in Titus Oates and more wickedness in Bayard than we can exhaust until the end of time. Let anyone who thinks he can give children a pure, impartial picture of the seventeenth century, try a parallel experiment. Let him give one single child a lesson in the character of his Uncle Joseph; let him establish an Uncle Joseph class of one; then let him see how he can convey all the rich humours and indescribable shades which we all recognise in that particular uncle. Then let him ask himself how he is to convey the final truth about a war two hundred years ago which raged between two armies of the Uncle Josephs; a war in which one Uncle Joseph imprisoned five Uncle Josephs, in which ninety Uncle Josephs mobbed one Uncle Joseph, in which millions of men mingled, every one of them an inexhaustible problem. You cannot be just in history. Have enthusiasm, have pity, have quietude and observation, but do not imagine that you will have what you call truth. Applaud, admire, reverence, denounce, execrate. But judge not, that ye be not judged.

— G.K.Chesterton, *Lunacy and Letters*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1958, pp.48-49.

waving the black flag of The Islamic State, and crying out at one of the Sisters: 'We're going to kill all you Christians'.¹⁴ The Sisters, staff and children were in shock. Police were called and are investigating.

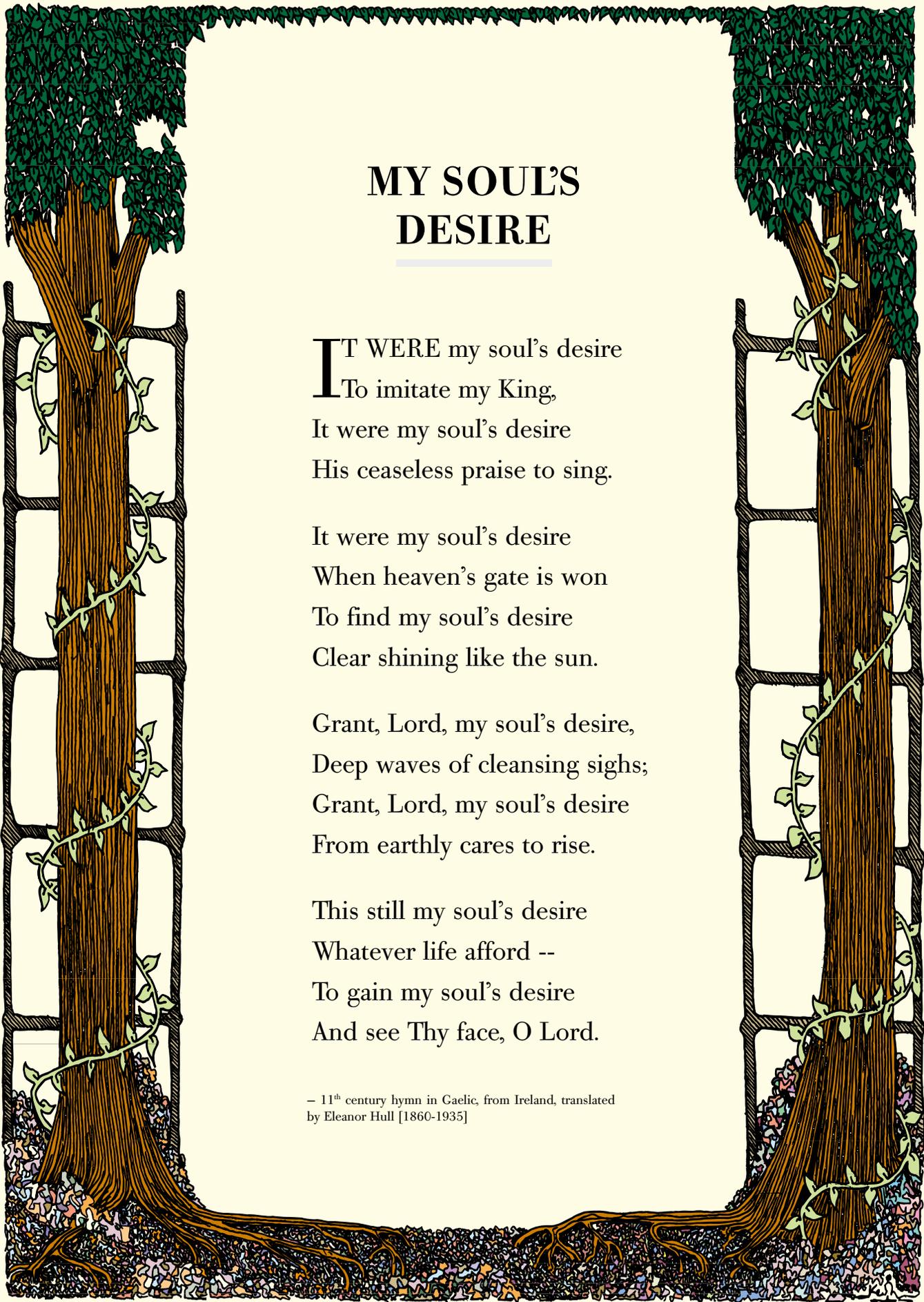
Australia is a country of immigrants. Even our indigenous aborigines did not originate in this country. We understand that they came from Africa thousands of years ago. Since the end of the Second World War we have welcomed millions of migrants – most of them fleeing war or persecution on grounds of religion or race. By 2010, 27% of Australians were born overseas and over 100 languages were spoken. As I write, Muslims represent 2.2% of the population. All religions are welcome in this country. Freedom of religion is guaranteed. Political activity, on the other hand, must conform strictly to Australian law.

Were I to be asked what advice I would give to young men tempted to follow the terrorist path, I would repeat what I wrote recently,

'Stopping the bloodshed in Iraq, Syria, Palestine and throughout the Islamic world, ending religious and ethnic intolerance, suicide bombings, vendettas, kidnappings, rapes and wholesale destruction, and facing a new world with courage and

realism, is a nobler quest for young religious Muslims, than following a spurious self-proclaimed Caliph into totalitarian barbarism and oblivion in the name of Allah, two of whose most mentioned attributes according to Islamic teaching, are, ironically, mercy and compassion. It is the path of mercy and compassion – not the path of intolerance, hatred, racism and bloodshed – that is God's path. And all who walk it, as Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount, will be blessed'.¹⁵

1. 'Muslim Converts who hacked British soldier to death, jailed for life,' *Reuters*, February 26, 2014
2. 'Sydney terror accused planned to "horrify" with public killings, court told' *The Guardian*, September 18.
3. Karl Hoerr, Lucy Carter; Australia's most senior Islamic State member "arranged for random beheadings in Sydney, Brisbane"; Omarjan Azari believed to be involved, faces court, *abc.net.au*, September 18, 2014.
4. Emma Partridge, Paul Bibby, Louise Hall, Anne Davies 'Terror Raids: 800 police and only two men charged,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 18, 2014.
5. 'Sydney terror accused planned to "horrify" with public killings, court told' *The Guardian*, September 18.
6. Anthony Bergin, 'Syrian War lands on our doorstep,' *Canberra Times*, March 19, 2014
7. James Clapper, US Director of National Intelligence, *Homeland Security News Wire*, Feb 4, 2014.
8. Saffron Howden, Rachel Olding, 'Muslim Leaders reject Tony Abbot's proposed new terrorism laws,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 20, 2014.
9. Ibid.
10. *Ash-Sharq al-Awsat*, London, Wednesday July 28, 2014.
11. Glen Carey, 'Saudis on Alert at Iraq border for conflict spillover' *Bloomberg News*, July 16, 2014
12. 'Saudi Arabia jails 13 for 'following the Takfiri doctrine,' fighting overseas,' *Middle East Eye*, September 16, 2014.
13. David Wroe, 'Wiping out Islamic State "impossible": Julie Bishop,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, September 8, 2014.
14. Lillian Saleh, *The Daily Telegraph*, September 18, 2014.
15. 'In Praise of Straight Talking' *Annals Australasia* 7/2014, pp 18-21. See St Matthew's Gospel 5.9.



MY SOUL'S DESIRE

IT WERE my soul's desire
To imitate my King,
It were my soul's desire
His ceaseless praise to sing.

It were my soul's desire
When heaven's gate is won
To find my soul's desire
Clear shining like the sun.

Grant, Lord, my soul's desire,
Deep waves of cleansing sighs;
Grant, Lord, my soul's desire
From earthly cares to rise.

This still my soul's desire
Whatever life afford --
To gain my soul's desire
And see Thy face, O Lord.

– 11th century hymn in Gaelic, from Ireland, translated
by Eleanor Hull [1860-1935]

I have been told that my days are numbered [and] I'm scared by the prospect of actually dying. How will it feel? In my case, will it be short and quick, or long and drawn out?

A TIMELY WARNING

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

I HAVE PRESENTED these thoughts without revealing my name. I speak of my sinfulness and it would be embarrassing for me to have my real name known. I can say that I have been a reader of *Annals* for many years.

I have been told that my days are numbered, but no dates have been suggested. I'm scared by the prospect of actually dying. How will it feel? In my case, will it be short and quick, or long and drawn out? I recalled the words written in one of the poems by the Australian poet, James McAuley, when he was facing the same situation:

The winter may grow dark and cold,
Before the wattle turns to gold.

Worrying about it won't do much good!

In the New Testament, there is the story of a rich man who died and went to hell. He wanted to go back and warn his family about it, but was told that there is no need to because they have Moses and the Prophets to warn them.

I don't want to go back. I want to do my warning before I go.

I was blessed with good parents and given every opportunity to make a success in life. However, as a Catholic, I seemed to lack that very personal friendship with Jesus that I envy in good Catholics. A lifetime sped by and left in its wake a lot to be regretted. However, when I was told that my number was up, my relationship with Jesus seemed to become more real for me. I had a lot of making-up to do.

I began to meditate on the words

of the Act of Contrition. I am sorry because:

'My sins deserve Thy dreadful punishment.'

'Because my sins crucified Thee my loving Saviour.'

'But, most of all, because my sins have offended Thine infinite goodness.'

These are the three motives for contrition. In my case, the first motive is particularly scary. Have I scandalized others? Jesus said it would be better for that man not to have been born. A mill stone should be tied around his neck and thrown into the sea.

But the second motive seems to offer more hope. As He represented the human race, Jesus's death is the triumphant victory over death itself. It restored our human nature to the state where its obedience to God was unquestioned. Jesus did this because of my sins and the sins of the world. He must have loved us infinitely. Human nature in Christ was once again reconciled with God and all of us who adhere to him share in that reconciliation.



The third motive for contrition is the need for realization of how our callous neglect of God and our sinfulness has offended the God whose goodness to us has never waived.

My own life presented for me a bleak picture of how I had always chosen things to my own advantage, undeterred by how good God had always been towards me, even things that were sinful. I frequently substituted 'My will be done' for 'Thy will be done'.

These are the reasons the Church offers us for making this act of contrition, but meditation on these reasons has to be more than surface deep. The Sacrament of Confession didn't have the effect it was expected to have because the contrition I brought to it was shallow. This is what I want to warn about.

As regards the first motive, all I can do is ask for mercy.

In the second motive, I found hope. I was consoled by the thought of how Jesus who died for us, telling about the good shepherd rejoicing to go after one sheep although there were ninety-nine other sheep to make up the flock.

Concerning the third motive, the 'most of all' motive, I tried to realize how much my life must have disappointed my God of infinite goodness. It seemed too late to apologize until I recalled Our Lord's parable on the prodigal son. How the father waited with longing for his son to return to his loving embrace.

While I was thinking about these things, it became obvious

to me that, now that I am old and sick, it is hard for me to, as it were, turn over a new leaf and begin to manifest my conversion in everyday life. I happened to read one of the last verses in St John's Gospel. Jesus had just forgiven Peter for his denial, 'When you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hand and another will gird you, and lead you where you don't wish to go. This He spoke signifying by which death Peter would glorify God.'

It was then that it struck me. Death is the time given to us to make our final reconciliation with God. It is the most important moment in our lives. The obedience with which we accept death glorifies God.

St Paul tells us to 'fill up what is wanting in the suffering of Christ'. What is wanting? Christ saves us by the merits of his death, but the salvation cannot be given where contrition is lacking. Contrition and acceptance of God's will in our regard is what is wanting in Christ's act of redemption. It is up to us to make sure that we fulfill our part.

Death is the final hurdle for all of us. Different circumstances have resulted in different ways of dying. God leaves this to the natural course of events. He doesn't intervene miraculously and our way of dying thus becomes the will of God for each of us. Accepting our death is our last chance to offer the homage of obedience. This is fundamental for salvation.

To aim at this has helped me now in my last days. To die a manly death with Christ as my model is the dream I'd like to share with you all. I don't underestimate the suffering it may involve me in, but I firmly believe that it will be then that the love of God will come flooding in.

ANNALS vouches for the genuineness of the sentiments expressed in this article. We know and respect the author, and we recommend that all who read this ask themselves: when did they last make an Act of Contrition; and when did they last approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

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An Eroding Society

WHEN THE burden of law-abidingness falls on the state and its institutions, when people define right and wrong in terms of externalities - punishments and rewards - then society begins to erode. Like an orchestra without a conductor, they lose the habits that sustain the virtues that create the trust that preserves the institutions that shape and drive a moral order.

— *The Great Partnership* by Britain's Chief Rabbi Jonathon Sacks quoted in 'Anti-Semitism is on the rise' by Mary Wakefield in *The Spectator*, 2 July 2011.

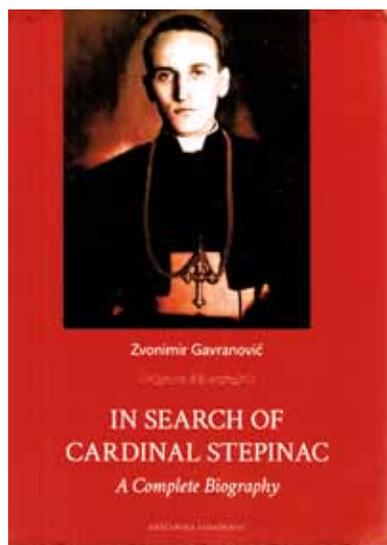
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Blessed Alojzije 'knew well that one cannot waver when it comes to the truth because truth is not a commodity that can be traded. Therefore he preferred to accept suffering rather than to betray his conscience and his promise to Christ and the Church.'

- Pope St John Paul II



This is a book that will bring readers closer to the brilliant figure of Blessed Alojzije Stepinac – born in 1898 and died a martyr on February 10, 1960. He was Cardinal Archbishop of Zagreb from 1937 until 1960. He died while under house arrest, almost certainly as a result of poisoning by the Communists. In 1998 Pope John Paul II declared him a martyr, and beatified him.

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Conversion and Reality

IN PROPORTION as men know less and less of the subject, in that proportion do they conceive that the entrants into the City of God are of one type, and in that proportion do they attempt some simple definition of the mind which ultimately accepts Catholicism. They will call it a desire for security; or an attraction of the senses such as is exercised by music or by verse. Or they will ascribe it to that particular sort of weakness (present in many minds) whereby they are easily dominated and changed in mood by the action of another. A very little experience of typical converts in our time makes nonsense of such theories. Men and women enter by every conceivable gate, after every conceivable process of slow intellectual examination, of shock, of vision, of moral trial and even of merely intellectual process. They enter through the action of expanded experience. Some obtain this through travel, some through a reading of history beyond their fellows, some through personal accidents of life. And not only are the avenues of approach to the Faith infinite in number (though all converging; as must be so, since truth is one and error infinitely divided), but the individual types in whom the process of conversion may be observed differ in every conceivable fashion. When you have predicated of one what emotion or what reasoning process brought him into the fold, and you attempt to apply your predicate exactly to another, you will find a misfit. The cynic enters, and so does the sentimentalist; and the fool enters and so does the wise man; the perpetual questioner and doubter and the man too easily accepting immediate authority – they each enter after his kind. You come across an entry into the Catholic Church undoubtedly due to the spectacle, admiration and imitation of some great character observed. Next day you come across an entry into the Catholic Church out of complete loneliness, and you are astonished to find the convert still ignorant of the great mass of the Catholic effect on character. And yet again, immediately after, you will find a totally different third type, the man who enters not from loneliness, nor from the effect of another mind, but who comes in out of contempt for the insufficiency or the evil by which he has been surrounded. The Church is the natural home of the Human Spirit. The truth is that if you seek for an explanation of the phenomenon of conversion under any system which bases that phenomenon on illusion, you arrive at no answer to your question. If you imagine conversion to proceed from this or that or the other erroneous or particular limited and insufficient cause, you will soon discover it to be inexplicable. There is only one explanation of the phenomenon – a phenomenon always present, but particularly arresting to the educated man outside the Catholic Church in the English-speaking countries – there is only one explanation which will account for the multiplicity of such entries and for the infinitely varied quality of the minds attracted by the great change; and that explanation is that the Catholic Church is reality.

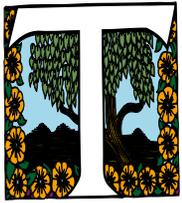
— Hilaire Belloc, Editor's Note, *The Catholic Church and Conversion*, by G. K. Chesterton, London, Burns Oates & Washbourne, Ltd., 1927, pp.6-8.

Werfel's Lourdes is about a cosmic struggle, in which the stakes are for keeps'

FRANZ WERFEL'S TESTIMONY TO LOURDES

And the Remarkable Tale of 4-year-old Francis Pascal

By Paul Glynn



THE NAZI OCCUPATION of Poland, beginning September 1, 1939 evokes, apart from the butchering of millions of Poles, grim images of Auschwitz and genocide against the Jewish people. Franz Werfel was an Austrian Jew high up on the Nazi death list. In his 20s he fought on the German side in World War I. The horror he witnessed and the meaningless slaughter of young and talented friends left him disillusioned and tormented with doubt. He re-discovered the God of Jewish faith in post World War I years and soon established himself as a major poet, playwright and novelist.

His anti-war writing incurred the enmity of Hitler's National Socialists. When they annexed his native Austria in 1938 he fled with his wife Alma to France. The Nazis stormed into France and the couple fled south, hoping to get across the Spanish border and to the U.S. But the borders were sealed and they only got as far as Lourdes where town dwellers gave them hospitality. It was June, 1940.

'We hid for several weeks in Lourdes,' he later wrote. 'It was a time of great dread.

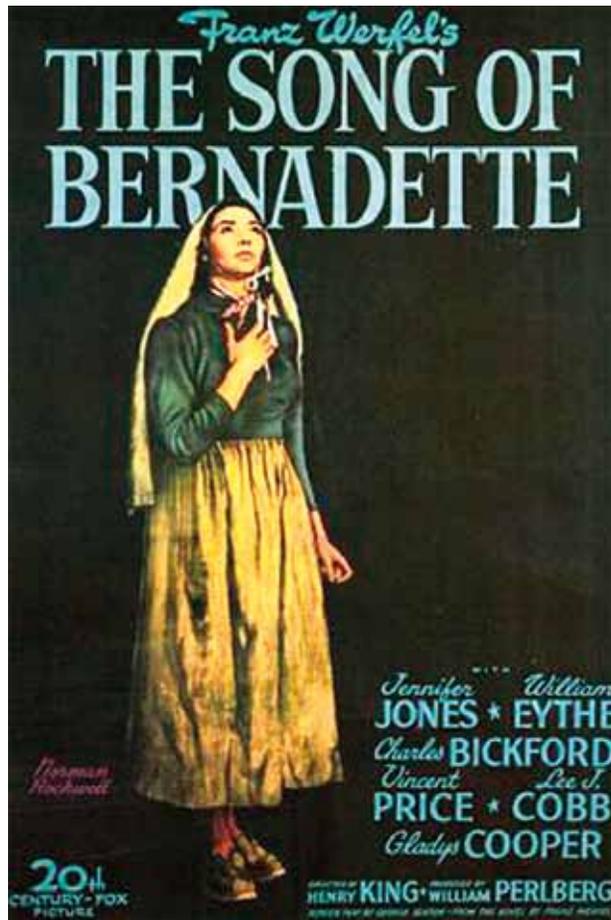
The British radio announced that I had been murdered by the National Socialists ... It was also a time of great significance to me for I became acquainted with the wondrous history of the girl Bernadette Soubirous and also with the wondrous facts concerning the healings of Lourdes. I vowed that if I escaped from this desperate situation and reached the saving shores of America I would put off all other tasks and sing, as best I could, *The Song of Bernadette*.'

He did escape to the U.S. and in 1941 *The Song of Bernadette* burst onto American bookstands as a best seller. It quickly went into seven languages. 20th Century Fox soon turned the book into a box-office movie of the same name. Jennifer Jones played Bernadette and won an Academy Award.

Many read Werfel's book or saw the movie as a powerful story of goodness, silhouetted sharply against the evil horizons of World War II's last battles. All Werfel's later writings had increasingly delineated a struggle of the Good (God and redemption) against ever present and virulent evil.

In the preface of *The Song of Bernadette* Werfel writes: 'All the memorable happenings that constitute the substance of this book took place in the world of reality. Since their beginning dates back no longer than 80 years, there beats upon them the bright light of modern history and their truth has been confirmed by friend and foe and by unbiased observers. The story makes no changes in this body of truth.'

Protestants (e.g. John Oxenham, Margaret Gray Blanton, Ruth Cranston) have researched Lourdes and its miracles and found a corroboration of their belief in the Gospel miracles. Werfel, who lived and died as a believing Jew, rejoiced



The film based on Werfel's novel won four Oscars in the 1943 Acadamey Awards.

that in writing of Lourdes he could 'magnify the divine mystery and the holiness of man' in an age which 'has turned away with scorn and rage and indifference from these ultimate values of our mortal lot.'

His sensitivities as he wrote this book had been refined by hot-in-pursuit Nazi executioners and by his solemn vow to the God of Abraham and Moses. He certainly researched Bernadette and Lourdes with great energy and skill. In 1997 permanent chaplain at Lourdes, Fr. John Poole O.M.I. spoke with me about *The Song of Bernadette*. Werfel's book demonstrated painstaking hands-on research, he said, of the major events surrounding Bernadette and Lourdes. A practising Jew who believed God saved him and his wife from the Nazis and made a vow to Him to write the book as a testimony would hardly change the essential facts he had thoroughly researched. What could be the possible motive of lying in favour of a religious shrine not of his own Faith? Many who have written enthusiastically of Lourdes went there initially without any faith in God or miracles.

One final remark. A fierce and at times bitter struggle took place in Lourdes before Bernadette and the miraculous spring were accepted. Werfel, who had personal encounters with evil in World War I and later with Hitler's Nazis, has long sections in his book on the perfidy of some who tried to destroy Bernadette and her message from 'the Lady'.

He also has a chilling description of what happened at the beginning of the fourth apparition of the Lady. Bernadette spoke afterwards of how a cacophony of harsh yells assaulted her ears, 'colliding with each other like the clamour of a brawling crowd.' Then a voice, more strident than the others dominated the chaotic screams with the menacing, 'belching order' to Bernadette and the Lady: 'Get out

of here ... Get out of here.' The Lady merely looked at the nearby Gave (River) from which the voices came. The shouting mob was reduced to silence – 'Come to heel like a daunted wolf' writes Werfel, adding that the Lady's stern look was of one who 'still has to wage battles and vanquish enemies.'

Werfel had no hesitation in believing that Bernadette had met personalised wickedness, Satan and evil spirits, hellbent on destroying goodness, hope and love whenever they get a 'hoofhold.'

Werfel portrays Bernadette as remarkably level-headed and



'The Song of Bernadette is a novel but not a work of fiction.' - Franz Werfel

full of common sense. This is the Bernadette that scores of fascinated historians and writers have described in their biographies. But this no-nonsense, self-possessed, disciplined-by-hardship Bernadette blanched and was deeply troubled when the Lady showed her the consequences of people 'loving sin'. Werfel's Lourdes is about a cosmic struggle, in which the stakes are 'for keeps'.

Dr. Carla Zawish M.D., a fellow Austrian refugee was in Lourdes at the same time as her old friends Werfel and his wife Alma. She

writes: 'I saw the deep emotion in Werfel (when he was in Lourdes)... Never before had he been so profoundly shaken in all his being. A new world had opened before him and he plunged into it with all his eagerness.' Werfel's ideas about Metaphysical Good (the Biblical God) and the mysterious pull of evil which is sin, came into their sharpest focus in *The Song of Bernadette*.

Bernadette's sufferings and struggles mirrored his own. And for Bernadette and himself they ended in a song of praise for 'the Redeemer', as Werfel came to see God.

Mark's Gospel, 5:22 recounts a touching story of a 12 year old girl who is dying. Her desperate father, Jairus, is a synagogue official who risks the anger of the Establishment by coming openly to Jesus.

Jairus's love for his child is greater than any fear of personal loss. Mark says he 'fell at Jesus' feet and pleaded: Come and lay your hands on her to save her life.' As Jesus sets off with Jairus, servants arrive to say the child has just died. Jesus goes to the home anyhow, takes the small dead hand and says *Talitha Kum*, 'Little girl get up.' She stands up cured and Jesus tells her parents she will be hungry so get her something to eat.

A beautiful and moving story; if it really happened! I remember in my early 20's reading this and other Gospel stories, and agonising! These stories, above all the one about the Resurrection were the answers to my problems about the meaning of life and death, if they are true. But how can we possibly verify events 2000 years old! Maybe, in response to the bittersweet of human life, kindly and imaginative people created the stories as they create fairy stories. Is Jairus' daughter any more real than Sleeping Beauty!

At that time in my life Lourdes miracles began to assume great

importance. I read many books about them, searching for weak links in the evidence. I ended up concluding that miracles essentially the same as the ones we read about in the Gospels, humanly inexplicable, supernatural events are happening to-day at Lourdes. Lourdes brought me back to belief in the Jesus of the Gospels, Jesus who can suspend the laws of nature.

There are well-established cures of very young children at Lourdes. These cases have added importance as answers to people like novelist Zola who puts Lourdes miracles down to auto-suggestion or crowd-induced hysteria. Take, for instance No. 45 in the list of 'Canonical miracles' – cures passed by the Lourdes Medical Bureau and the commission of medical specialists and theologians appointed by the bishop of the place the cured person comes from.

Francis Pascal, born October 3, 1934 to a winegrower family in Beaucaire (about 60 km. west of Marseilles) was a healthy energetic child until December 1937. The three-year old suddenly ran a temperature of 40°. His eyes began to water, his arms and legs to stiffen and his sight to deteriorate. Local Dr. Darde, noting 'flaccid paraplegia' suspected meningitis.

The child was taken to the city of Avignon where Dr. Lesbros performed a lumbar puncture, which confirmed the diagnosis of

meningitis. By June the paralysis of arms and legs was total. Dr. Polger, an oculist in Arles gave his parents the grim verdict that the child was now totally blind. There was absolutely no response to light. They sought other opinions but no hospitals or clinics offered any more hope than local Dr. Darde gave when he 'discontinued treatment as pointless.'

The annual Provence Lourdes Pilgrimage was being organised for August. Francis's parents applied for a place and were told to furnish a medical certificate for their boy. Dr. Darde wrote out Francis's medical certificate on July 19. Dr. Roman, one of the pilgrimage doctors read it as the group set out for Lourdes on August 23 and added several notes: 'The child is travelling lying down and quite blind.'

Upon arrival Francis' mother carried the paralysed child to the Lourdes Grotto 'with strong faith' and begged the Virgin: 'Heal him or let him die!' She took him to the Piscines, the famous baths fed by the spring Bernadette unearthed. The water produced no change.

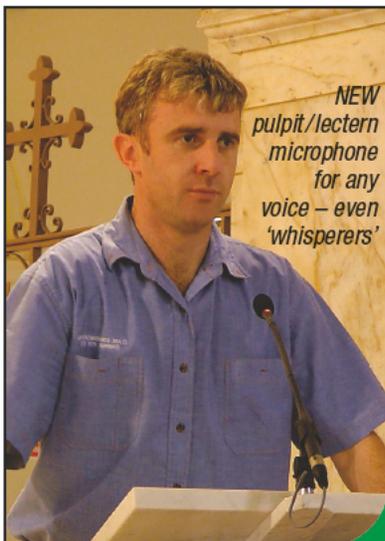
After being bathed the next day Francis was being carried across the esplanade by his mother. Francis suddenly moved his hand pointing to one of the three wheeled carriages they use to ferry the bedbound. 'Mummy, Mummy,' he said excitedly, 'isn't it pretty?' The mother almost fainted. Then,

in great excitement she rushed the child back to his hospital bed. The child was excited too, identifying objects in the ward and moving his limbs.

Dr. Roman was sent for. Four days later they were back home and Francis was taken straight down to Dr. Darde who was stunned. The child walked and saw! Over the succeeding months he kept checking the child. By November 9 he was ready to write a signed statement, which the mother would take when she presented the child for examination in the Lourdes medical Bureau the following August. The essentials of Dr. Darde's testimony are as follows: , .

'I the undersigned declare I had under my care from December 18, 1937 to June 14, 1938 Francis Pascal, aged four. The child, seen in consultation with Drs. Julian of Tarascon, Barre of Avignon, Dufoix Fils of Nimes and Polge of Arles had been suffering from lymphocytic meningitis (analysis of Dr. Lesbros of Avignon). At the end of July the patient was paralysed in all four members. Visual acuity was nil. He did not perceive even light and could not distinguish day from night.

'Before the child was taken to Lourdes I was asked to examine him (for a medical certificate). The condition I recorded previously in June was exactly the same: paralysis of four limbs, vision nil.



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Psychology of Disbelief

WHEN, THEN, controversialists go through the existing accounts of ecclesiastical miracles, and explain one after another on the hypothesis of natural causes; when they resolve a professed vision into a dream, a possession into epilepsy or madness, a prophecy into a sagacious conjecture, a recovery into the force of imagination, they are but expressing their own disbelief in the Grace committed to the Church; and of course they are consistent in denying its outward triumphs, when they have no true apprehension of its inward power. Those, on the other hand, who realize that the bodies of the Saints were in their lifetime the Temples of the Holiest, and are hereafter to rise again, will feel no offence at the report of miracles wrought through them; nor ought those who believe in the existence of evil spirits to have any difficulty at the notion of demoniacal possession and exorcism. And it may be taken as a general truth, that where there is an admission of Catholic doctrines, there no prejudice will exist against the Ecclesiastical Miracles; while those who disbelieve the existence among us of the hidden Power, will eagerly avail themselves of every plea for explaining away its open manifestations. Yet, though not part of the philosophical basis of Christianity, they may be evidence still to those who admit the Divine Presence in the Church, and in proportion as they realize it; they may be evidence in combination with more explicit miracles, or when viewed all together in their cumulative force; they may confirm or remind of the Apostolic miracles.

— *Essays on Miracles*, by Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman, Essay II, chapter 4.

‘Returning from Lourdes (August 28) Madame Pascal brought the child to me, leading him by the hand. He was walking! I recorded the disappearance of paralysis and the return of vision. From that date the improvement has been maintained .. medically speaking one cannot explain such a result.’

(Signed, Dr. Darde, November 9, 1938)

Nazi war clouds were gathering to the East, France began feverish mobilisation and life was disrupted. The German military smashed right through France and the Lourdes Medical Bureau was closed down. It was not until after the war that Francis Pascal’s case could be examined when his mother brought him to Lourdes with the medical dossiers from the local doctors. On October 2, 1946 in the large examination room of the Lourdes Medical Bureau 12 doctors thoroughly probed Francis and the medical papers his mother carried. They noted he was now ‘a sturdy, tall and well-muscled boy who rides a bicycle, and attends a normal school.’ The 1938 illness, they added was definitely ‘organic’ and

not psychological. The spinal fluid analysis and the lesions of the eyes were proof positive that it involved meninges of the spinal cord.

The report concluded: ‘When the development of the illness left no hope of improvement there was an abrupt cessation of symptoms. The cure is confirmed by complete recovery of vision, of the ability to walk and of all other functions ... The cure is now of 10 years duration. There is no medical explanation for the instantaneous disappearance of the malady and its symptoms.’

‘Among the 12 doctors signing this initial statement was famous Dr. Auguste Vallet. Auguste Vallet, as a medical student at Bordeaux in 1898 heard Professor Pitres, Dean of the medical faculty propound: ‘If at any time you hear talk of so-called miraculous cures at Lourdes realise this is nothing more than shameless exploitation of human stupidity.’

Vallet graduated, became a major in the French Army medical corps and was decorated in World War I. He was shocked, however by the horrors modern warfare did to bodies and minds. He became more and more interested in Lourdes and the hope it gave to huge gatherings

of the sick and afflicted. Lourdes moved him deeply and gave him hope. The endless lines of wounded and dying soldiers had scarred his optimism and almost demoralised him during wartime.

In 1927 he became President of the Lourdes Medical Bureau. He quickly set up its international branch with doctor-members from 25 nations. He called in outside specialists in 1928, 1933 and 1938 to analyse the waters that occasioned so many healings. Opponents of Lourdes, unable to deny many remarkable cures were occurring, suggested there were radio-active elements, electric resistivity or even penicillin in the water. The outside professors called in by Vallet could discover no such substances. The water was normal mountain-spring water.

Vallet was President of the Medical Bureau for 20 years during which time he wrote several books on Lourdes miracles, lectured on them in many countries and co-edited a two monthly magazine devoted to discussing the miracles scientifically. He said he was very happy to have become ‘Our Lady’s secretary.’

Ruth Cranston, having researched the documentation on Francis Pascal’s cure went to Beaucaire in 1953 to interview him. It was now 15 years since the cure.

She found the 19 year old youth in the bloom of health with perfect eyesight. He was an outdoors man, very much the son of his winegrower father whose profession he intended to follow. Francis told her he went to Lourdes every year carrying the banner of the Provence Pilgrimage and working as brancardier (stretcher-bearer).

He added that he had often been searchingly interviewed by journalists and had his hands full answering letters from strangers enquiring about the miracle.

FATHER PAUL GLYNN, SM has spent 25 years as a missionary in Japan. Author of *A Song for Nagasaki*, and *Healing Fire From Frozen Earth*, Father Glynn is stationed at Villa Maria, Hunters Hill, NSW.

European Court of Human Rights upholds Catholic Church's Rights

TEACHER FAILED IN 'DUTY OF LOYALTY'

By Zachery Enos



THE GRAND Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), Europe's final arbiter of human rights disputes, decided 9-8 that the autonomy rights of religious institutions—here, the Catholic Church—trump the rights of religion teachers to mount a public attack on church teachings.

In the case of *Fernández Martínez v. Spain*, the Grand Chamber found that a Catholic bishop in Spain could decide not to renew the contract of a teacher of Catholic religion who had joined a public campaign to oppose the Catholic Church's practice of celibacy for priests. The Grand Chamber held that 'the proximity between the [teacher]'s activity and the Church's proclamatory mission' 'is clearly very close.' That meant he 'was voluntarily part of the circle of individuals who were bound, for reasons of credibility, by a duty of loyalty towards the Catholic Church' and he could have his contract not renewed because he failed to live up to that duty.

'If government can dictate who teaches a particular religion, then government can dictate what the content of that religion is,' said Eric Rassbach, Deputy General Counsel at the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty and expert consultant to third-party interveners in this case. 'Today the Grand Chamber recognized that for Churches to be truly autonomous they must be able to require their teachers to show loyalty to Church beliefs.' Rassbach assisted with a third-party brief

submitted by Stanford Law School Professor Michael McConnell.

The origins of this dispute concern the termination of a state high school religion instructor's teaching contract. In Spain, teachers who teach a particular religious community's beliefs to schoolchildren serve at the discretion that community's spiritual leadership to ensure parents and students are receiving instruction from those who share their convictions.



Spanish bishops vindicated by Court

Fernández Martínez, a former priest in the Catholic Church, taught official Church doctrine for nearly six years with the local bishop's approval. In 1997, the bishop declined to renew Fernández Martínez's contract because he publicly opposed the Church's position on priestly celibacy. Fernández Martínez appealed to a local employment tribunal asserting that expulsion for publically sharing personal views violated his right to autonomy in his personal life, since he himself was a former priest who decided to reject personal celibacy. Spain's Constitutional Court, the ECHR's Third Section, and now the Grand Chamber all rejected his claim.

In a remarkable dissent from the Court's decision today, the ECHR

judge appointed by the government of Russia, Dmitry Dedov, directly attacked the Catholic Church and its practice of priestly celibacy, calling the practice 'totalitarianism' and adding his opinion that 'the celibacy rule contradicts the idea of fundamental human rights and freedoms.'

'Whether Catholic priests should be celibate or not is something for the Catholic Church to decide, not government officials, and not judges,' said Rassbach. 'Judge Dedov's chilling dissent shows just how high the stakes are here. The dissent should be condemned by all friends of human rights as a call to gross government interference with religious practice that ought to belong to Europe's past.'

The ECHR's protection of Church autonomy parallels the successful outcome of a similar Becket Fund case, *Hosanna Tabor v. EEOC*. In 2012, the Supreme Court of the United States unanimously ruled that government cannot interfere with religious organizations' ability to select people who communicate their mission, vision, and doctrine. Today's decision also builds on another Becket Fund case at the ECHR, *Sindicatul Pastoral cel bun' v. Romania*, which protected the right of the Romanian Orthodox Church to autonomy in how it governed relationships between bishops and priests.

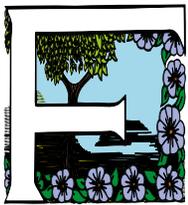
The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty is a non-profit, public-interest law firm dedicated to protecting the free expression of all religious traditions—from Anglicans to Zoroastrians. For 19 years its attorneys have been recognized as experts in the field of church-state law. The Becket Fund recently won a 9-0 Supreme Court victory in *Hosanna-Tabor v. EEOC*, which *The Wall Street Journal* called one of 'the most important religious liberty cases in a half century.' For more information contact Zachary Enos, zenos@becketfund.org, 202.349.7210.

What might have happened to the late Robert Hughes, who was almost worshipped in some quarters in this country, if he had been compelled to write his engaging and erudite columns about art here rather than in America?

HOME OR AWAY

A WRITER'S DILEMMA

By Giles Auty



FOR THE first time in years the ABC's recent two-part television panegyric *Brilliant Creatures*: Germaine, Clive, Barry and Bob prompted me to consider the role of the expatriate writer – perhaps because I seem to be one of those myself.

I am sure you will be able to fill in the missing surnames of the famous Australian quartet listed above all of whom made the major part of their considerable reputations through working overseas.

Yet perhaps I might be forgiven here – if only on the basis of my own experience – for wondering what might have happened to any or all of them if they had been obliged, for some strange reason, to remain in Australia.

Might not the rumoured parochialism of Australian life – including that even of famous national institutions such as the ABC – slowly have stifled and finally have submerged their highly original talents?

Ironically, of course, it was the provincialism of Australian life itself which formed a major part of the subject matter which

propelled two of the famous four – Clive James and Barry Humphries – to international fame.

Barry Humphries may indeed be one of the few genuine artistic geniuses to have emerged from Australia in the past half century or so.

I was reminded especially of the extreme acuity of Barry's ear and eye some years ago when

standing in a long queue at one of the cafeterias at Sydney airport while the cause of the lengthy tailback – an Australian matron clad in a clinging trouser suit of somewhat vivid hue – explained the virtues of Vegemite at length to a bewildered-looking Asian girl at the cash register.

Even the real Dame Edna might have found it hard to compete.

I wonder here also what might have happened to the late Robert Hughes, who was almost worshipped in some quarters in this country, if he had been compelled to write his engaging and erudite columns about art here rather than in America?

Might he have been told by a prominent arts editor here – as I have been – that the whole basis of his critical judgement was of little value if it failed to be based on 'Marxist analysis'? Thankfully I do not think 'Marxist analysis' was around in the days when Robert and I first forged our critical careers. Both of us began as painters, in fact, which provided us with a different but very valuable critical insight.

What writers from overseas can evidently bring to their host countries – providing the latter are willing to accommodate them – is a fresh and entirely different approach.



Dr Daniel Mannix, 1864 to 1963, was an Irish-born Australian Catholic bishop. He was the beloved Archbishop of Melbourne for 46 years and one of the most influential public figures in 20th-century Australia.

Australia, in my view, has consistently underperformed in all of the arts due largely but not entirely to our continent's physical isolation.

Thus I was in Britain nearly a year ago when our massive, home-produced would-be blockbuster AUSTRALIA was voted by many discerning people there to be the worst major British art exhibition of the year. But as I wrote in *Annals* at the time such failure was entirely unnecessary for the show was not lacking in goodwill, a great deal of honest effort or generous financial backing. What it lacked entirely however was an appreciation of the high standards modern international audiences currently expect. As an Australian citizen of fairly recent vintage I was especially sorry and frustrated by this whole affair.

At first sight Australia appears to be a typically modern, prosperous Western country but the reality can often be quite different. Frequently, in fact, Australia fiercely resists precisely the kind of international input this country needs most.

This last applies particularly perhaps to Australian academic as well as to Australian artistic life. In the case of the former modish postmodernist individuals and ideas are often still clutched to the national academic bosom here long after their international sell-by dates have expired.

For example, when I first came to Australia to work fashionable French quasi-philosophers Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault could apparently say or do no wrong here even though the reputations and ideas of both had been effectively demolished by the English philosopher Roger Scruton in Derrida's case and by the American Roger Kimball in that of Foucault.

Both Scruton and Kimball have recently conducted successful lecture tours in Australia.

Kimball personally sent me a copy of his superb anthology *Experiments against Reality* (Ivan R. Dee, Chicago 2000) when it was first published. This was the book

in which his excellent critical essay on Foucault first appeared.

When Jacques Derrida lectured at Sydney Town Hall in the early 2000s all available seats had been block-booked by the University of Sydney and I cannot help wondering now whether any similar enthusiasm was shown by such institutions for the recent talks given locally by Scruton and Kimball even though both are highly respected overseas.

Indeed, if any such enthusiasm were not shown what would you expect the reason to be?

The short answer is that both of these writers are placed by Australia's academic Left in pigeon-holes marked Christian and conservative. Indeed which of the latter epithets is more unacceptable in left-wing academic circles here would be hard to say.

If you were to consult *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, a large volume which purports to be our definitive national handbook, you will find that communism is treated more sympathetically than conservatism in the course of long articles devoted to both subjects.

Might that be because two of the three major editors of that 'invaluable' research document are or were communists themselves?

How, then, did my personal experience of Australia begin and start to take shape?

During the 11 years in which I wrote weekly columns for *The Spectator* in England I filed copy from some twenty foreign countries which included such slightly fraught communist or ex-communist countries as Georgia, Slovenia and the former USSR itself.

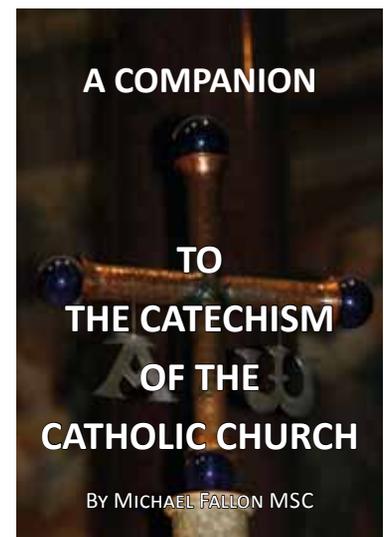
Thus what could I possibly have to fear by accepting an overseas post in Australia where we at least shared a common language?

In the event a chorus of disapproval greeted my arrival here in 1995 in which *The Age* and <our> ABC played prominent roles. *The Age* ran a very hostile

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half-page piece composed entirely of interviews with journalists in the UK known to be opposed to my views while the ABC, by contrast, concocted a lengthy TV feature made up largely from hostile comments by Australians I had yet to meet.

To cap it all perhaps a prominent ABC radio interviewer explained to someone I knew exactly why she could not interview me: 'I can't possibly have people like that on my show'.

At times I felt tempted to wonder whether the plane carrying me from London had not landed in North Korea by mistake.

Was the aim to prove to me that anyone suspected of traditionally-based views on art – or any other subject – was extremely unwelcome here?

It was at that juncture that I received an amiable call from a man

often characterised by the Left as an arch-traditionalist or conservative himself: a former Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne.

The purpose of his call was to enlist my advice regarding possible improvements to St. Patrick's Cathedral. These included a proposed 3 metre bronze of a famous predecessor there: Archbishop Mannix.

The good Archbishop had been reading my articles in *The Spectator* for years and, from what he knew, was confident to place the latter project entirely in my hands. This was perhaps fortunate for both of us since commissioning specialist works of art was an area in which I had long and useful experience.

While working on this project I also had the pleasure of meeting the late B.A. Santamaria. Previously we had known each other only through our published writings.

Several months later when the day of the official unveiling of the bronze created by English sculptor Nigel Boonham finally arrived, I asked not to sit with the official party so that I might be free to gauge the reactions of the gathered crowd.

'Tis the man' an elderly man of Irish extraction – who had probably known Archbishop Mannix quite well – shouted at the precise moment of the unveiling.

In my view no greater compliment could have been paid to the sculptor's diligent research and months of hard and skilful work.

Before the moment of the actual unveiling the last I had seen of the sculpture was when it was no more than two tons of moulded clay on an armature. My wife and I even helped to sheet it up to prevent the clay drying out. This took place at the sculptor's studio in London.

For us it was a great pleasure to encounter this fine work once more in its final imposing form.

I especially salute the recent elevation of the former Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne – known better today as Cardinal Pell – to a vital role at the Vatican not least because he has been much criticised in Australia for his unwavering support for the essential doctrines and traditions of the Catholic Church.

In passing perhaps we should all reflect here that if all the so-called 'progressives' in the history of the Catholic Church had had their way, the Church would by now be totally unrecognisable and thus greatly diminished in its purpose here on earth.

As such, in fact, it would simply echo the historic fates which have befallen most of the major art forms of the civilised world.

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*.

The Catholic Church

SO, TOO, then as now, and as at the beginning, there will be secret gardens where she is known and loved, where she will console the penitent as the sun rises on Easter Day; there will be upper rooms where her weeping friends are gathered, when, the doors being shut, she will come and stand in the midst and give them Peace; on mountains, and roads, and by the sea, she will walk then, as she has walked always, in the secret splendour of her Resurrection. So once more the wheel will turn; there will be ten thousand Bethlehems where she is born again and again; the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honour to lay at her feet, side by side with the shepherds who have no gifts but themselves to offer. Again and again that old and eternal story will be told and retold as each new civilization comes into being and passes away -- that old drama re-enacted wherever the Love of God confronts the needs of men. She has already seen the rise and fall of dynasty after dynasty, of monarchies and republics; she will see in the future, no doubt, Socialism on the one side -- that tyranny of Society over the individual, and Anarchy on the other -- that tyranny of the individual over Society. She has seen so far all the conceivable theories of life rise and die away, and she, the Life, remains the same. She has seen a thousand schools of thought and aspects of Truth; and she, the Truth, remains the same. She has seen all these, and she will see many more; but she will see them all to bed before the end comes -- before that Mystical Body of Christ, which she is, has attained that measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ which is her eternal destiny and her certain hope. For this is her final and supreme appeal -- that sign of the Prophet Jonas -- that miracle of Resurrection to which she has always appealed, and which has never failed her yet.

— Robert Hugh Benson, *Christ in the Church, A Volume of Religious Essays*, Herder, St. Louis, 1913, Part IV, Chapter 3: 'The Resurrection'. Benson was the son of Edward White Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury and his wife, Mary. He was received into the Catholic Church in 1903, Ordained priest, and died aged 43 in 1914.

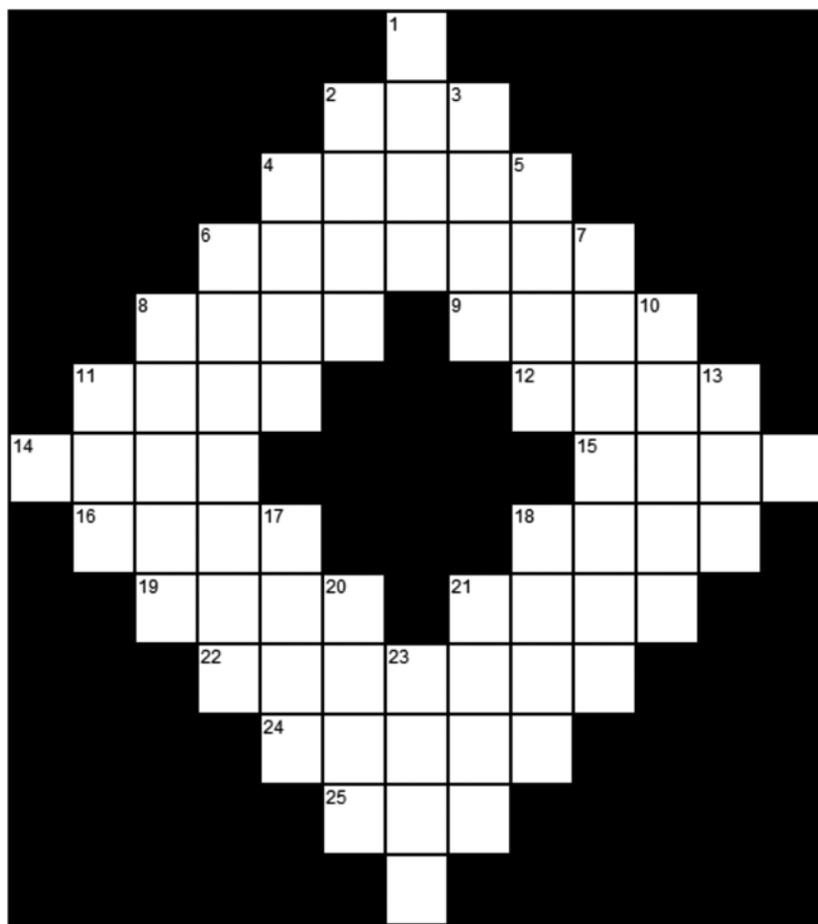
RESTLESS HEARTS

A FINE BOOK came out in French recently, written by journalist Luc Adrian, *Foi Dite en Passant (Faith, called 'En Passant')*. Adrian, like most of us and surely most journalists was sick and tired

of all the bad news in the media. He took a 30 days leave and walked 900 kms from Auray on the Breton coast down to Lourdes on France's border with Spain. His head cleared as he shouldered his backpack

and bedroll along country roads or dirt tracks through vineyards, or raced to woods for shelter from sudden downpours. The further he distanced himself from noisy cities and news bulletins with their strident 'cries of anguish and tales of suicide,' the more he realised that modern culture is conning us. 'They are telling us lies, telling we are meant for this earth and will find our happiness here and now.' But the depths of our nature, he says are trying to tell us that this is false, that we were given body, soul and spirit to journey beyond this temporary world to our birthplace which is in the Heart of God. To spur us on to our true destiny, Adrian adds, the Creator has sown nostalgia deep in our hearts. The restlessness and rebelliousness of spirit in late 20th century man, comments this peripatetic philosopher/journalist, is a healthy response to being hemmed in by the small horizon of transient, material realities. While walking his 900 kms to Lourdes Adrian came to rejoice in a bigger vision - that of the People of God, called to leave the safe imprisonment of Egypt where 'meat, leeks and garlic' were doled out to keep the slaves subservient. Striking out across a mapless wilderness brings pain and demands death to one's [often nasty] ego. But it's worth it, he adds, 'because of the joy and the unforgettable elation that comes'. Five and a half-million travel to Lourdes every year. Many are the sick who have been there before and received no cure. They keep going back because they, too, find Adrian's joy and unforgettable elation. They feel sorrow for and pray for writers like Zola and Philip Adams who have written it all off as the groundless emotions of weak, dependent and even pathological souls.

ANNALS CROSSWORD NO. 83



Across

- 2 Greek goddess of amorality; devoured
- 4 Unlawful act
- 6 Patron Saint of Ireland
- 8 Containers
- 9 Norse god of thunder
- 11 Flatfish
- 12 Spoken or verbal
- 14 A group of workmen
- 15 Type of sword
- 16 Rudely blunt
- 18 An interlude between two acts in a play
- 19 Male parent of a horse
- 21 Situated at the back
- 22 Makes angry
- 24 Promenades built out over water
- 25 Bill

Down

- 1 Awaken
- 2 University degree
- 3 Discharge
- 4 Walking stick
- 5 Resound
- 6 Religious wayfarer
- 7 Former "Chosen" people
- 8 Dividend
- 10 Quick
- 11 Pouch
- 13 Allow
- 17 Two-wheeled carriage
- 18 Succeeds in battle
- 20 Prepare for publication
- 21 Aromatic plant used in cookery
- 23 University head

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John Glynn, SM *Healing Fire from Frozen Earth: Lourdes and the Third Millennium*, Marist Fathers' Books, 2002, pp. 65-66.

Armenians were certainly not the only Christians to suffer genocidal attacks in the Middle East during the first world war era. To the Armenian dead must be added an estimated quarter of a million Assyrian, Chaldean and Syrian Christians who were also murdered at that time.

THE 1915 KILLING FIELDS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

By Peter Day



THE NUMBER of Armenians who were killed in the years 1915 to 1916, estimated by historians as somewhere between one and one and a half million, is probably greater than the total number of people killed in the entire British empire in the course of the first world war.

There is of course a vast documentary literature attesting to the fate of the Armenians. They were deported in their hundreds of thousands from their villages – mostly located in their traditional homelands in the east of today's Turkey – and force-marched for hundreds of kilometres into desert regions to the south.

Only a minority – perhaps 20 per cent or so – survived the orgies of murder, rape and mutilation that

occurred along the way. Most of those who did survive the death marches were abandoned in the deserts to die of thirst, starvation and disease.

It's sometimes argued by Turkish apologists that this catastrophe

was an unintended consequence of defensible population policies, necessary for the survival of the Turkish-Ottoman state in wartime. It's certainly true that threats to the Ottoman empire did arise as a result of the extremely unwise Ottoman decision to enter the global conflict (and to do so on the German side). But very few independent historians now give



Ruins of the Armenian Genocide Memorial Church in Deir ez-Zor, Syria—considered the Auschwitz of the Armenian Genocide. The Church was destroyed by Sunni jihadists fighting for The Islamic State, also known as ISIS. The Church contained the remains of victims of the genocide, as well as a museum commemorating the 1.5 million Armenians who lost their lives during the atrocity.

much credit to such considerations as a defence against the charge of genocide that is levelled against the Ottoman government of the time.

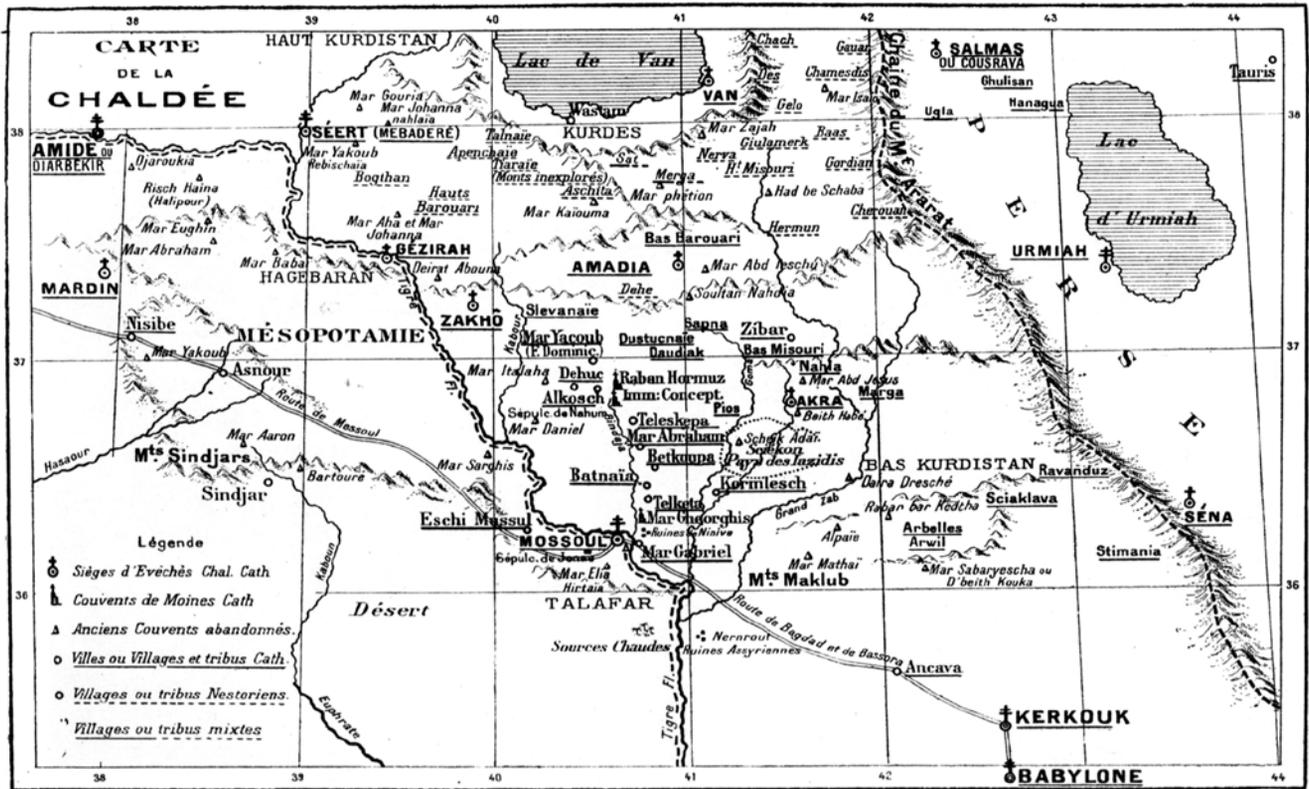
Armenian Christians were certainly being massacred under Ottoman government auspices

long before the first world war. This historical background is well covered by Donald Bloxham, a British historian, whose 2005 volume published by Oxford University Press, titled *The great game of genocide: imperialism, nationalism and the destruction of the Ottoman Armenians*, is probably the most influential of all books on this subject published over the past decade.

Bloxham's is a carefully weighted and painstakingly nuanced argument. He does not accept, for example, that archival evidence of the Ottoman government's organisation of forced marches amounts to a 'smoking gun' proof of intent to commit genocide. But he does say that the government encouraged decision-makers at every level to believe that they had the support of their government in mass killing of Armenians.

And the government helped whip up the necessary hysteria for this to occur.

A key point Bloxham makes is that, as he puts it, the wartime genocide 'differed in scale but not in character from earlier



A nineteenth century map of former Mesopotamia indicating Chaldean Catholic Bishoprics and monasteries, along with Catholic towns, villages and tribes. It is estimated that more than a quarter of a million Assyrian/Chaldean Christians from this region died in genocidal attacks before, during and after the first World War

massacres undertaken by the sultan's regime...'. During the economic depression of the 1890s, for example, when some 100,000 Armenians were murdered under the benign eye of their government, 'many Muslims travelled long distances to involve themselves in the killing and plunder'. While those killed were mainly men, Armenian women were 'raped, kidnapped, enslaved and forcibly converted'. This was a rehearsal for 1915-16.

In a significant book published this year on the broad religious consequences of the first world war, US historian Philip Jenkins also turns his attention to the 1890s episode, highlighting, among other things, the religious motivation of the participants. Western leaders of course now insist that any such motivation could only have been a 'perversion' of Islam. Without commenting directly on such assertions, Jenkins, the author of some 20 books and internationally recognised as a leading historian of religion, makes no bones that the desire among the mass of Sunni

Muslims to plunder the Armenians was 'explicitly religious and Islamic in character'.¹

Jenkins' overall view on the motivations behind the genocide of the Armenians during 1915-16 – that is, the motivations of both the Muslim people and the apparently secular Young Turk government of that time – is that 'the two forces, religious and secular, were... inextricably linked'. He makes depressingly clear, however, that among the mobs and militias that were most directly involved in the massacres, it was the religious element that dominated.



These perpetrators of mass murder, writes Jenkins, 'drew so freely on Islamic slogans and symbols that we are dealing with a popular religious or even apocalyptic movement. Muslim preachers stirred actions against Christians, particularly during Friday prayers, and incensed crowds gathered at mosques. Mobs used the war cry 'Allahu Akbar!' and sought the forced conversions of Armenian Christians...'. Inevitably, the issue of racism also arises in this context. Some historians have suggested that the 1915-16 massacres were more racist than religious in motivation, pointing to the supposedly overarching ambition of the secularised Young Turk regime of that time to establish, under the cover of war, a racially 'purified' Turkish state in place of the old Ottoman diversity.

The ideology of some of the leaders of the Young Turks – army officers whose thinking was influenced by German military instructors – did apparently run along such lines.

Against that is the fact that it was possible for Armenians to escape deportation and death simply by converting to Islam (and by convincing their Muslim interlocutors of the sincerity of the conversion). Most Armenians who utilised this religious exemption – thought to account for some 10 per cent of the total – were either children or women who were taken into Muslim households.

As Bloxham notes, many of the females were there ‘subject to forced marriage and/or sexual slavery...’ Their ‘race’ seems to have been of little account one way or the other – but their previous Armenian Christian identities were obliterated: names as well as religion were changed ‘by way of absorption into the new national community’.

Islamic State precedents

Given the vast number of Armenians who were murdered or culturally annihilated at that time, it is perhaps understandable that the contemporaneous fate of other Christians in the Middle East should often have been overlooked. This is deeply unfortunate however, not least on account of the resulting gaps in western understanding of



Father Jacques Rhétoré OP [1841-1921]. He was an eye-witness to many of the atrocities perpetrated against the Armenian, Assyrian/Chaldaeian and Syriac Christians, murdered or deported by Kurds and Turks in East Anatolia in 1915.

the history of the region: the very region in which Western military forces are now taking the field against the so-called Islamic State organisation.

Those Western leaders who have recently suggested that the

widely publicised atrocities of Islamic State are somehow uniquely barbaric in a way that has ‘nothing to do with Islam’, might do well to sharpen their thinking through a closer acquaintance with some of this history. For Armenians were certainly not the only Christians to suffer genocidal attacks in the Middle East during the first world war era.

To the Armenian dead must be added an estimated quarter of a million Assyrian, Chaldaeian and Syrian Christians who were also murdered at that time. The killing fields in which they died were in the places now known as Iraq and Syria (as well as parts of Iran): that is to say, places encompassing today’s Islamic State areas of operations.

Expressed as proportions of the minorities to which the victims belonged, the numbers killed in these places were comparable to the Armenian case. Jenkins, for instance, estimates that the scale of the killing was such as to eliminate ‘perhaps two-thirds of the Chaldaeian-Assyrian peoples’.

David Gaunt, a professor of history at Södertörn University College in Stockholm, has produced a richly detailed book on those events titled *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I* (Gorgias Press, 2006).²

Gaunt writes that both the extent and the brutality of the massacres in the Iraq-Syria region indicate the presence of an ‘extreme pent-up hatred on the popular level’ for Christians.

Christians of those areas were killed in situations of almost every imaginable kind. In a very short space of time – just several months over 1915-1916 – more than 200,000 were collected for slaughter while ‘at the local town hall, walking in the streets, fleeing on the roads, at harvest, in the villages, in the caves and tunnels, in the caravanserais [inns for travellers], in the prisons... on the river rafts, on road repair gangs ...’



A Pakistani demonstrator burns a cross in the Badami Bagh area of Lahore on March 9 last year during anti-Christian riots. Recently more than 100 Christian homes were destroyed when a Lahore judge sentenced a Christian to death after a Muslim accused him of insulting Muhammad.

and so on. The methods used to murder them were no less various. They included 'shooting, stabbing, stoning, crushing, throat cutting, throwing off of roofs, drowning, decapitation ...'. Thousands of perpetrators were involved. Even considered as an exercise in logistics, the dimensions of the operation are staggering.

The Christians thus murdered were mostly men. At the same time, 'virtually every deportation caravan and village massacre was accompanied by serial mass rape of the women. Young girls were abducted as sex slaves and children as household servants ...'.

Kurdish tribesmen, traditionally known as enthusiastic plunderers of Armenian villages at every opportunity, also operated in this area in close cooperation with the Ottoman state's organisation of massacre. Gaunt records that 'National Assembly deputies ... agitated among the Kurdish tribes and even managed to get notorious outlaws ... to cooperate in return for loot, adventure, and a promise of amnesty.'

But that was then: it should be noted that today, one of the few safe havens for Middle Eastern Christians fleeing the killers of Islamic State is to be found in Kurdish territory. A slim reed, no doubt; but it comes as some relief to be able to conclude on one note of hope, however slight, amid the terrible gloom that again envelops the Middle East, just a century after the horrors of 1915.

PETER DAY is a regular contributor to *The Spectator* magazine and a former New York and Washington correspondent for *The Australian* newspaper. His articles have also appeared in numerous other major publications, including *Quadrant* in Australia and the *National Interest* and *Weekly Standard* in the United States.

- Jenkins' book, titled *The great and holy war. How World War I changed religion for ever*, was published this year by both HarperCollins in New York and Lion Hudson in Oxford.
- Gaunt had previously established a reputation as a scholar of the genocide of Jews in Eastern Europe and the Baltic. He is co-editor of the important 2004 collection, *Collaboration and Resistance during the Holocaust: Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania*. (Pub. P. Lang, Bern; Oxford.)



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[E]uthanasia advocacy is an illness characterised by an unwillingness to take responsibility for one's actions, an inability to empathise with normal people and a morbid desire to help others die?

DR. NITSCHKE, EUTHANASIA AND ONE'S RIGHT TO LIFE

By Brian Pollard



DR. PHILIP NITSCHKE has recently been stripped of his medical registration as a doctor by the Australian Medical

Association, though he says he will appeal. Because he had recently assisted in the death of a man who was not terminally ill and who killed himself while under investigation for a series of criminal offences, the police are considering a case against him.¹

This article attempts to give the reader some idea of the thoughts and motives of Dr Philip Nitschke, as reflected in his own statements.

The preamble to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights reads: 'The recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world and those rights should be protected by the rule of law'. Article 3 states that 'Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.'

The right to the integrity of one's life is equal, inviolable, inherent and inalienable, that is, it can neither be given away nor taken away. Doctors worldwide have historically demonstrated acceptance of their responsibility fully to respect human life by affirming the Hippocratic Oath or a Code of Ethics.

At the opposite end of the ethical spectrum, Dr Nitschke has never publicly associated himself with any code of ethics, holds meetings to instruct random groups in methods of suicide and helps them to obtain the means of committing suicide.

The idea of suicide is presented, not just as acceptable but, as an heroic choice to be applauded.²

When I was a palliative care practitioner in 1982 -1986, I debated with Dr Nitschke several times. At that time, his attention was focused on the legalisation of

euthanasia, though it was evident that he had read none of the published reports of numerous Committees of Inquiry that had all concluded that such law could never be made safe from imperilling the lives of others who did not want to die.

At my request, he promised to provide me with his draft of such a law but it never appeared and he ceased to advocate law change. It may be assumed he had belatedly found it couldn't be done safely.

He doesn't place limits on which individuals might do away with themselves. In 2005, he said 'All people qualify, not just those with the training, knowledge, or resources to find out how to 'give away' their life, but anyone who wants it, including the depressed, the elderly bereaved, the troubled teen.'³

By the end of 2002, four people had killed themselves after attending his workshops, none of whom was terminally ill or suffering pain.

The legacy of this former practitioner, educated to promote the health of the community, is confined to the fact that he has successfully promoted the 'deliverance machine', the coma machine, the suicide tent, the exit bag, the CO (carbon monoxide) generator, the inhalation of nitrogen and the lethal dose of Nembutal.⁴

Following the deaths of six people when euthanasia was legal

No chance to exist

IF THE existence of me is thus tied to the formation of a particular combination of genes, one may enter upon calculations as to the chances that I should ever have existed. What are the chances that the combination which produced me should ever have been made? If we depend on the occurrence of the exact combination of genes that as a matter of fact produced us, the odds are practically infinite against your existence or my existence.

— H. S. Jennings, 'Biology and Selves,' in *The Biological Basis of Human Nature*, quoted - Sir John Eccles, FRS, *The Brain and the Person, The Boyer Lectures for 1965*, The Australian Broadcasting Commission [undated] p.41.

for a short time in the Northern Territory in 1996-67, Dr Nitschke assisted a renowned Professor of Psychiatry to review and publish his expert assessment of the procedures. It found that four of the patients had depression which nobody had diagnosed.⁵

When one considers what extensive research on dying patients has shown, this was no more than may have been expected.

Clinical depression is a condition marked by a persistent, prominent mood of sadness, loss of interest in most activities, feelings of helplessness, hopelessness and worthlessness, in addition to a range of physical symptoms.

Ordinary physicians find it difficult to diagnose depression reliably, let alone to determine whether the depression is impairing judgement.

The most significant predictor for physician-assisted suicide is depression and psychological distress. These patients are up to twenty-five times more likely to pose a risk of successful suicide than the general population.⁶

Nitschke's response to these evidence-based warnings was 'The idea that psychiatrists should be the ultimate arbiters does not sit well with me. It's not that hard to work out whether you are dealing with a person who is able to make rational decisions.'⁷

Against this smug, self-satisfied confidence, more experienced and trained doctors say 'Clearly, psychiatrists and experts in mental health care are best suited to understand and explore the psychological underpinnings of a dying patient's request that death be hastened' and 'Even among patients whose medical prognosis is hopeless, pervasive hopelessness is usually found only among those who are suffering from depressive syndrome.'⁸

When a person flaunts his medical ignorance like this, we know in advance that he will not, or cannot, respond either to logic or reason.

Evolution Inadequate

BUT NOW many biologists are realizing that a kind of pseudo-religion – Darwinism – is being foisted on us; to wit, that we are in and of a cosmic process of evolution that, in principle, gives a complete explanation of our origin and our nature. You will realize that I am attacking Darwinism, not the scientific theory of evolution, which I accept as a partial and limited explanation of my origin; but for me it fails as a complete and satisfactory explanation of my own personal existence. For me there is a profound mystery in existence. We cannot even anticipate any fundamental break-through in understanding; but at least we should have a far-ranging vision of the marvellous adventure we co-jointly find ourselves in – the adventure of life and, in particular, our own personal, conscious life. This gives us all our civilization, our art as well as our science. It also provides the rationale of our devoted struggle for the ideals of individual freedom that is given in the quest for an open Society, where, though we may have boundaries dependent on our attainments and talents, there are no barriers to the development and fulfilment of each one of us. We need today a renewal of faith in the great mystery and dignity of human existence, and to have hope that there will eventually come to each of us a realization of the cosmic meaning of this wonderful gift – our own personal self-consciousness, which in some mysterious way derives in part from the evolutionary development of life.

— Sir John Eccles, *The Brain and the Person*, ABC, The Boyer Lectures 1965, p. 35.

Despite the evidence that several of his victims had no terminal illness, or even no illness at all, he could tell an interviewer in 2005 'I involve myself with terminally ill adults who are articulate, lucid and not suffering from clinically treatable depression.'⁹

Though it would have been impossible for him to know the mental status of everyone who attended his talks, he assumed that all those who took their own lives were acting rationally.

This view is at variance with that of many medical professionals with extensive experience of suicide. Professor Par McGorry, Professor of Youth Mental Health at the University of Melbourne, declared that 'Hardly anyone kills themselves unless they have poor mental health. Most of them are in dire straits due to psychosis or depression or some other significant health problem.'¹⁰

In 2006, when the death of one of his patients with Alzheimer's Disease was judged to be assisted suicide, and he was asked what he would do in future, Nitschke said

he 'would advise: 'Don't go to your doctor. Don't have tests and if you do have tests that show you're losing mental capacity, make sure it is not recorded.'¹¹

In 2010, one commentator¹² wrote 'It is becoming increasingly clear that euthanasia advocacy is an illness characterised by an unwillingness to take responsibility for one's actions, an inability to empathise with normal people and a morbid desire to help others die.'

DR BRIAN POLLARD is a retired anaesthetist/palliative care physician with an interest in bio-ethics. Most of his professional life was spent in private practice as a specialist anaesthetist. He was Director of anaesthetics at Concord Hospital NSW, and founding Director of the Palliative Care Service there.

1. *Perth Now News*, July 4, 2014.
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3. *ibid.*
4. *ibid.*
5. *The Case against Assisted Suicide*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002, Kissane D. p 203.
6. *ibid.* Chochinov H, Schwartz L. p. 263.
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8. *The Case against Assisted Suicide*, 2002, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002; Chochinov H, Schwartz L., pp 268, 277.
9. Pelly M., 'A Better Option'. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 March 2005.
10. McGorry P. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 December 2010.
11. *AAP* 19 June 2008.
12. Cook M MercatorNet, 19 February 2010.

While the State has asserted a right and duty to regulate marriage, its ... successive interventions since the Western cultural revolution of the 60s and 70s up to the present, have been socially destructive

WHAT IS MEANT BY MARRIAGE

by Michael O'Connor

IN THE CONTEXT of a current and politicised debate about same-sex marriage, both sides seem to me to have adopted the notion that marriage can be redefined to suit a personal meaning or political purpose. In Western society, marriage has increasingly become a plastic cultural concept rather than a reality sourced in the natural law. I was married to my beloved wife for a few days short of 51 years before God in His mercy took her home. Naturally the time was not devoid of stresses and strains but they were dealt with as a partnership. As with most couples, the notion that our marriage was some sort of optional or disposable arrangement was ludicrous. I can confidently say that neither of us ever broke - or bent - our marriage vows if only because, made as they were before God, they were the glue that defined our lives in tough times.

From that perspective, maybe I am not qualified to comment on the current state of marriage in Australia. On the other hand, my wife and I both at various times were involved in helping friends and relatives whose marriages were in difficulty. Further, my own experience in Papua New Guinea allowed me to observe marriage in primitive and pagan communities as a relationship that was natural and generally stable and long-lasting.

As a magistrate, I was sometimes called upon to adjudicate in cases of marital disputes, usually

between the families rather than the individuals. Under the law at that time, adultery was treated as a criminal offence so as to prevent hostilities between the families, clans or other interested groups. I emphasise the point that although customs varied sexual relations between unmarried people were frowned upon and that marriage was regarded as a lifetime commitment. That was a tradition dating back for centuries.

That said, marriage was certainly regarded as a means of overcoming tensions (sometimes lethal) between traditionally hostile groups. In this sense, it was similar to many arranged marriages in other cultures, including those between ruling families. The point is that the reasons for marriage may vary from place to place - and from couple to couple - but the essential nature of the bond does not.

Of course, polygamy was widely practised in some cultures but for social rather than personal reasons. Traditionally warfare between hostile groups resulted in a surplus of females over males and a relatively wealthy man would take more than one wife, rarely more than two, to 'soak up' the surplus. As warfare was mostly eliminated, many men left their villages to work under contract in distant parts of Papua New Guinea. While legislation required that these men be returned to their villages, many disappeared into the more sophisticated and distant workforce leading again to a surplus of women. With the coming of independence, even that restriction broke down.

Interestingly, the opposite phenomenon was apparent in agricultural Ireland where the lack of land meant that many young men could not afford to marry, contributing substantially to the well-known Irish diaspora.

As set out in the Catechism of the Catholic Church - with its many Scriptural and other references as recent as *Gaudium et Spes* - marriage is ordained by God as essential to the process of Creation. The Catechism states: "Marriage is not a purely human institution despite the many variations it may have undergone through the centuries in different cultures, social structures, and spiritual attitudes." This reality was very evident in the primitive cultures of Papua New Guinea, even among those that had not been exposed to Christian missionary activity.

She Still Stands

THE CHURCH still stands as she stood fifteen hundred years ago, as the one earthly representative of an eternal order which survives the fall of empires and civilizations; and the darker become the prospects of secular culture, the more clearly does the Church stand out as a city of refuge for humanity.

— Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, 1950.

The conclusion I draw from this is that while the State has asserted a right and duty to regulate marriage, its interventions have largely failed to reinforce marriage as a socially stabilising institution. On the contrary, the State's successive interventions² since the Western cultural revolution of the 1960s and 1970s up to the present have been socially destructive.

The present 'debate' over same-sex marriage is simply a logical step in the process of social disintegration of a Western culture that has traditionally been based in Christianity but whose cultural gurus reject Christianity as a cultural norm.

That the greater proportion of people in that culture retain for themselves a respect if not a reverence for traditional marriage, seems to me to represent the strength of that culture supported as it is by the Holy Spirit.

The problem with same-sex marriage is that homosexual relationships, whatever civil and criminal laws may declare, are unnatural and contrary to the orderly transmission of human life. Political pressure for their recognition is not based upon any natural right to such relationships but only upon an assertion of such a right.

The political campaign preys upon the natural inclination of most people not to interfere with the personal proclivities of others rather than any consideration of the true nature of marriage. Interestingly - and not particularly relevant - I am aware of one group in Papua New Guinea that deliberately raised a number of male children to be homosexual partners. I believe it was the only one known in PNG and was regarded by others as something of a joke.

During my naval service, I was sometimes required to investigate instances of homosexual behaviour, often little short of assault, from the perspective of their vulnerability to blackmail by a hostile intelligence service. Our policy was to treat

Modern Man – Civilized?

AS CONCERNS civilization, modern man had in the 'bourgeois' State a social and political life, a life in common, without common good or common work – for the aim of common life consisted only of preserving everyone's freedom to enjoy private ownership, acquire wealth, and seek his own pleasure. Modern man believed in liberty – without the mastery of self or moral responsibility, for free will was incompatible with scientific determinism; and he believed in equality without justice, for justice, too, was a metaphysical idea that lost any rational foundation and lacked any criterion in our modern biological and sociological outlook. Modern man placed his hope in *machinism*, in technique, and in mechanical or industrial civilization – without wisdom to dominate them and put them at the service of human good and freedom, for he expected freedom from the development of external techniques themselves, not from any ascetic effort toward the internal possession of self. And how can one who does not possess the standards of human life, which are metaphysical, apply them to our use of the machine? The law of the machine, which is the law of matter, will apply itself to him, and enslave him.

- Jacques Maritain, *The Range of Reason*, New York, Scribners, 1952.

each case on its merits but the navy's generally punitive approach was focused upon the effects on service discipline. Since my time, of course, the issue of sexual behaviour in the armed forces has become more significant given the wider employment of women in the defence force. As an outcome of the so-called sexual revolution, a part of the broader cultural revolution, it will ever be thus.

I am conscious that the Holy Father has made a number of comments suggesting a more compassionate approach by the Church to people with disordered lives. Typically, most lay journalists have reported his remarks as suggesting a change of belief rather than of practice. My understanding is that he has not indicated a change of belief, something that is beyond his power, but only a difference of pastoral demeanour, something that I personally applaud.

The intervention of the State in regulating marriage has been generally unhelpful in that it is not based upon natural law but upon a reaction to minority pressures and a dubious desire for civil order. Indeed it has been so destructive as to raise the question of the prudence, even of the right of the State to do so. For those

not committed to the concept of sacramental marriage, a civil contract backed by common law would be all that was necessary for the protection of individual rights. The State cannot do that and it demeans itself by trying.

If the State were to concede the legality of same-sex marriage as part of its self-asserted right to regulate marriage, it would be proper for the Church to surrender the right to celebrate marriages other than as a Sacrament. If any legislation required priests to celebrate a civil marriage upon demand, the Church should refuse any demand to celebrate a marriage for the purposes of the State.

Of course, it would then be doing what is normal in such countries as France, Spain and Italy. It may be that such a stance could lead to a confrontation between the rights of the Church and those of the State as has occurred in Victoria and Tasmania in the context of the recent abortion law changes. On the other hand, it could also lead to a strengthening of the faith among Catholics and that would be no bad thing.

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

*Neither the satire nor the sentiments seem to deter the young
– and young men in particular – from wanting to go to war.*

MANY PATHS, LITTLE GLORY

By Sam Simmonds



ODAY, many journalists report on the conduct and progress of wars. It is a tradition going back a very long time; indeed, many centuries, to the Persian Wars, five hundred years before Christ and, later, the Peloponnesian Wars. Of course, details of those conflicts came to us courtesy of historians – Herodotus and Thucydides, respectively – rather than war correspondents. A parallel genre of such journalism is that of the war artists, which seems to have originated in the 1650s, during a naval battle between the Dutch and the English.

Needless to say, there would have been a considerable interval between the recording of such wars and the public learning about them. With the development of newspapers and magazines, this interval was reduced, although not by much. Correspondents in the pay of *The Times* of London, in both the Napoleonic Wars and the Crimean War, submitted their stories almost in book form, to be published many weeks after the event. It was not until the development of the telegraph that anything like a daily bulletin could be achieved.

Finally, in the late twentieth century, with a television set in almost every household, it became possible for all the horrors of war to be brought directly into the home, to be savoured both before and after meals. As Erin McLaughlin, the daughter of a Vietnam veteran, graphically puts it, *“For almost*

The boast of heraldry, the
pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all
that wealth e'er gave
Awaits alike th' inevitable
hour: -

The paths of glory lead
but to the grave.’

Thomas Gray ‘Elegy Written In A
Country Churchyard’

a decade in between school, work, and dinners, the American public could watch villages being destroyed, Vietnamese children burning to death, and American body bags being sent home ... Journalists based in Saigon daily reported facts about battles, casualties, and the morale of the troops, yet only a soldier could grasp the true reality of war.”

For the last fifty years, then, it has been almost impossible to close one’s mind to what these conflicts really mean, in human terms: the visceral nature of combat, the trauma of the physical and mental aftermath of unrelenting bombardment, as evinced by the first reports of ‘shellshock’ in the First World War, and today’s ‘post-traumatic stress disorder’. So, now that we can see ‘the big picture’, there will be less incentive for young men to feel ‘called to the colours’, responding to the ‘coo-ee’ of the drummed-up regiments, bearing patriotic banners, and so on, right?



Wrong, apparently! Despite Rupert Brooke’s sardonic comment in 1915: *“The world’ll be tame enough after the war. For those who see it. Come and die. It’ll be great fun,”* and A.E. Housman’s famous verse:

*“Here dead lie we because we did
not choose*

*To live and shame the land from
which we sprung.*

*Life, to be sure, is nothing much to
lose;*

*But young men think it is, and we
were young”.*

neither the satire nor the sentiments seem to deter the young – and young men in particular – from wanting to go to war.

And nowhere, it seems, is this dread of being ‘left out of the fight’ more marked than in wars between religious groups. Since the end of the Second World War, how depressingly familiar we have become with media coverage of such wars. After the cessation of (most of) the hostilities in Northern Ireland, during which Catholics and Protestants routinely murdered one another, it is the Muslims who seem to feature most frequently: in the Balkans, with the ‘ethnic cleansing’ by what used to be called South Slavic Christians; or the seemingly interminable slaughter in the Middle East of and by both Muslims and Jews; and most recently in the latest of the periodic flare-ups between the two main subdivisions of Islam itself, the Sunni and the Shia.

Can a political decision about the leadership succession of a recently formed religion, made fourteen hundred years ago in the Arabian Peninsula, really amount to a matter of life and death in the twenty-

first century, and a call to arms for young people who have so much to offer the world without adding to its misery? To this writer, no aspect of any of these tragedies is sadder than that the cause of both sides in each of the conflicts mentioned above should be in the interpretation of forms of worship – and of the same God!

Part of the problem would seem to be in both the definition and the interpretation of the Islamic term ‘jihad’, which in Arabic translates as ‘struggle’ and appears in the Qur’an forty-one times, frequently as part of the phrase ‘striving in the way of God’. But it is apparently insufficient to translate it that simply, as its two commonly accepted meanings are of an inner, spiritual struggle, and an outer, physical one. And different sects accord different significance to each.

Surely it cannot really be as simple as explained in David Lean’s 1962 epic film *Lawrence of Arabia*, when Prince Faisal tells Lawrence: “Young men make wars, and the virtues of war are the virtues of young men – courage and hope for the future. Then old men make the peace, and the vices of peace are the vices of old men – mistrust and caution. It must be so.”

Whatever messages we have tried to send to such young men have fallen far too often on deaf ears. But we must continue to try - and to succeed, where even First World War poet Wilfred Owen failed, when, after graphically describing the dying moments of a gassed soldier, he says that if you had seen what he had ...

“... My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie; Dulce et Decorum est
Pro patria mori.”

SAM SIMMONDS is a writer, broadcaster and film and video producer. Sam has worked in all aspects of media in the UK and Australia.



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Benedict's lasting legacy: refuting False Christologies

MYTH-BUSTING

By Wanda Skowronska

IF THE last two centuries can be seen as epochs of myth making and ideologies about human nature and society, then no less can this be said of attempts to depict Christ. In a work entitled *The Humanity of Christ: Contributions to a Psychology of Jesus (1963)*, Romano Guardini stated:

‘Our minds, dulled by everything said and written on the subject, can no longer comprehend the passion with which for centuries the early Christians fought out the issues of Christology.’¹

Guardini saw that Christological distortions would be an especial

problem of his century, an attempt to revolutionise our understanding of Christ, a kind of mythmaking in keeping with the ideologies at hand. Some post Enlightenment Christological illusions depict Jesus as a Jewish rabbi, movement founder, healer, social prophet, revolutionary, meek friend, psychotherapist, the pre and post Post-Easter Jesus, among many others. One particularly harmful depiction has been that commonly known as the ‘Jesus of History’. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI made it his special mission to engage in a holy mythbusting of this particular false depiction of Christ.

The Jesus of History.

‘Jesus of history’ portraits are presented as factual, a product of the historical-critical method of biblical exegesis, which arose in the context of increasing archaeological and scientific discoveries in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They emphasised the historically verifiable, the reasonable, in contrast with the Jesus of living tradition, the ‘Jesus of faith’, the latter seen as imbued with pious and comforting accretions, but with little basis in historical fact.

Some early researchers in the quest for the ‘Jesus of history’ were Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768), whose Deism led him to reject the reality of miracles; David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874), who asserted that the supernatural elements of the gospels could be treated as myth; and Ernest Renan (1823-1892), who asserted that the biography of Jesus ought to be open to historical investigation just as is the biography of *any other man*.

In *Jesus of Nazareth*, Benedict prefaces his critique of the historical method by acknowledging that it is a useful first step, which ‘remains an indispensable dimension of exegetical work’ because ‘it is of the very essence of biblical faith to be about real historical events.’²

In fact, the Encyclicals *Providentissimus Deus (1893)*, *Divino Afflante Spiritu (1943)* and Pontifical Biblical Commission documents, had encouraged historical research. Without recognising Christianity’s historical dimension, Benedict says, there is a danger of Gnosticism, stressing personal enlightenment alone.



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Christianity, Benedict stresses, lies on the *factum historicum*, not symbolic ciphers or concepts alone:

*‘Et incarnatus est – when we say these words, we acknowledge God’s actual entry into real history.’*³

However, in *Jesus of Nazareth* (2007) and in his 1988 Erasmus lecture, among other works, Benedict especially critiqued the views of ‘Jesus as history’ scholars, such as Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930), Martin Dibelius (1883-1947) and Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976). They viewed the probable and measurable as solely of value, relegating miracles to the realm of doubt or myth.⁴

Benedict explains that even outstanding biblical scholars such as Schnackenberg, can end up constrained by its methods.⁵ The historical-critical method fuelled hermeneutical suspicion about everything in some quarters and sparked ‘anti-Christologies’, leaving genuine seekers for Christ submerged in endless scholarly conflicts and questioning. The shifting hypotheses of exegetes, as Avery Dulles noted, led to neglect of tradition and historical research became ‘the highest doctrinal authority of the Church.’⁶

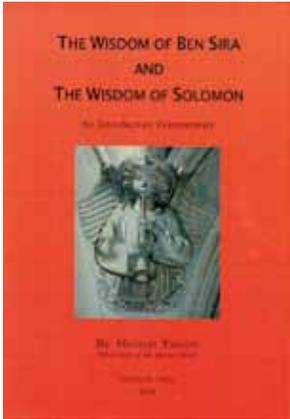
Some of the damaging legacy which undermined traditional Christological portraits, can be seen in this website account:

‘Jesus is not the only-begotten Son of God sent to earth to die for our sins. Rather, he is one of us who, as a man, simply had an unusual degree of experiential contact with God. He says remarkably little about himself. Having found freedom himself, his only goal is to help us find it.’⁷

Another ‘Jesus of History’ came from Father John Meier, professor of New Testament at Washington’s Catholic University of America, who declared, in *A Marginal Jew* (1991), that ‘...on painstaking deductions from the New Testament’, and ‘other knowledge about the Graeco-Roman cultures in which Jesus and his followers moved’ – that Jesus was probably married, had four

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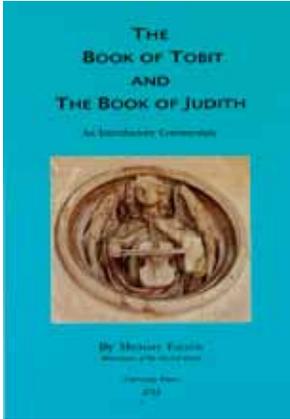


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brothers and sisters (not cousins) and that he was born in Nazareth not Bethlehem.⁸

Most Christological portraits à la Bultmann, deconstruct Jesus to be an ordinary, first century, Jewish rabbi, about whom little can be said, except that Jesus is not the ‘person’ the reader thought he was, that is, the Son of God, as proclaimed in Scripture and tradition for millennia. After perpetual deconstruction, Benedict notes, scholars often are then obliged to resort to novel

reconstructions in order to explain how everything came about’, their ‘sheer fantasy’ based on their philosophical proclivities.⁹

Benedict interprets the passage “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea” (Mark. 9:42), as not referring to sexual abuse victims alone, but rather to *victims of obfuscating theologians and exegetes*, who deconstruct and obscure Christ’s

face.¹⁰ Similarly, Benedict has quoted Joseph Gnilka's view that 'The devil presents himself as a theologian' especially one involved in biblical exegesis.¹¹

The 'crisis' Benedict referred to is that of conflicting historical-critical theories, which instead of unveiling the traditional Jesus of the Johannine, Synoptic and Pauline Christologies, create biblical cataracts for hapless seekers. Benedict underlines the *method's unreasonableness* in highlighting the 'word' (for endless interpretations) as opposed to the unique 'event', of endlessly exposing 'discontinuities' of text; and insisting that 'simple' accounts are original and believable, while 'complex' accounts are later Hellenic, mythic impositions on earlier Semitic paradigms - the paradigms and myths selected according to the writer's taste.

The historical-critical method's major flaw is that it is anti-historical in the sense that it is not open to revelation of a unique historic event, of God entering time, the basis of any Christology.

Benedict sees the philosophical roots of historical-criticism (especially in Bultmann) in the Kantian belief that the 'noumenon', the thing-in-itself cannot be known and only the methods of natural science can recreate Christ. This constitutes an unreasonably narrowed focus, an ostracism of metaphysics, an ontological phobia.

In a skilful volte-face, Benedict applies a *similar hermeneutic of suspicion* to the methods of the scholars themselves, saying 'What we need might be called a criticism of criticism'.¹² Praising a doctoral dissertation by Reiner Blank entitled "Analysis and Criticism of the Form-Critical Works of Martin Dibelius and Rudolph Bultmann", as a "fine example of a self-critique of the historical-critical method"¹³, he enlists the Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle in his attack:

Now, if the natural science model is to be followed without hesitation, then the importance of

Credulity

A GOOD MAN ought to love nonsense but he ought also to see nonsense - that is, to see that it is nonsense. Our very pleasure in pure fancies should consist partly in the certainty that they are not facts. Nothing is more perilous and unmanly in modern thought than the way in which people will be led a dance by some dexterous and quite irresponsible suggestion, some theory in which even the theorist does not believe, some intellectual levity which is not honest enough even to be called a lunacy. They hear some flying notion - as that Cromwell wrote Milton, or that Christianity was stolen from the Aztecs; they receive it first laughingly, then fancifully, then speculatively, then seriously, then idolatrously even to slaying; and yet all the time with nothing to go on but the fourth-hand version of a few entertaining coincidences. Exactly that sort of neat and fantastic solution which would make a glorious detective story is employed to make an utterly preposterous book of history or criticism.

— G.K.Chesterton, *The Illustrated London News*, May 15, 1909.

the Heisenberg principle should be applied to the historical-critical method as well. Heisenberg has shown that the outcome of a given experiment is heavily influenced by the point of view of the observer.¹⁴

In Heisenbergian spirit, Benedict critiques the "Jesus of history" under two main headings in *Jesus of Nazareth*. Firstly, he says, the historical critical method is restricted to leaving the biblical word *in the past*, which contradicts the Gospel's claim that Jesus is the eternal Logos, not confined to time. The Scriptures reach out to all, beyond the past, the moment - 'a voice greater than man's echoes in Scripture's human words'.¹⁵

CATHOLIC FAITH, Pope Benedict XVI stresses, concerns real, historical, events. We believe Our Lord Jesus to have been born of the Virgin, Mary; to have lived in Palestine during the time of the Roman Emperor Augustus; to have been crucified during the reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius; to have risen from the dead. We also believe him to be the Son of God, and the Messiah promised by the Hebrew Prophets. This article looks at Pope Benedict's answer to those who distort, deconstruct and create myths about the real historical Jesus.

Jesus' revelation of God 'really did explode all existing categories and could only be understood in the light of the mystery of God.'

The words and events of Christ's 'life' transcend time and 'one must look at them, Benedict says '... in light of the total movement of history and in light of history's central event, Jesus Christ.'¹⁶ True Christology requires openness to divine revelation *as a fact in itself*, taking into account, as Heisenberg noted, the human predisposition to perceive this reality in a manner suited to the knower.

Benedict describes the second major limitation of 'Jesus of History' portraits as 'presupposing 'the uniformity of the context within which the events of history unfold', therefore treating... biblical words it investigates as human words.'¹⁷ This eradicates the Jesus' suprahuman claim, that he came to do His Father's will. Highlighting this, in his essay on Guardini's *The Lord*, Benedict says:

The figure and mission of Jesus are "forever beyond the reach of history's most powerful ray" because "their ultimate explanations are to found only in that impenetrable territory which he calls 'my Father's will'.

Benedict goes on to say, 'One simply cannot strip 'the Wholly Other', the mysterious, the divine from this Individual. Without this

element the very Person of Jesus himself dissolves.¹⁸ When, as is recounted in *Jesus of Nazareth*, the rabbinical scholar Jacob Neusser, reads the Gospels with an open mind, he concludes that the dramatic, universal, plainly understood message of the New Testament is Christ himself. Benedict - implicitly asks- if a Jewish scholar can see it, why can't 'Christian' exegetes?

'Jesus understands himself as the Torah - the word of God in person'....Harnack and the liberal exegetes went wrong in thinking that the son Christ is not really part of the Gospel about Jesus. The truth is that he is always at the center of it.

.....The vehicle of universalisation is the new family whose only admission requirement is communion with Jesus, communion in God's will.¹⁹

So radical is the claim that 'Jesus understands himself as the Torah', the centre and living unity of the Old and New Testaments, that the Jewish scholar is overwhelmed and can hardly contemplate it, recognising its extraordinary claim as one that Buddha, Mohammed or other religious leaders never made.

Benedict uses the rabbi's fresh observations, to mythbust historical deconstruction, reminding us that 'humble submission to the word of the sources' dynamically unveils Jesus, and that 'he who sees Christ, truly sees the Father; in the visible is seen the invisible, the invisible one.'²⁰

Throughout Benedict's writings his Christology proposes what he calls a true 'non-conformism to the spirit of the age', not negative, but rather an '*offensive and creative sense of openness to Scripture*, to the transcendent, to reacquaint the world with Christ in a reflective, lucid, memorable way. He highlights the 'hidden Christology' of the Beatitudes as a direct and comprehensible road map for the church. He sees the new millennium's spiritual hunger, not as an obstruction,



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but an opportunity to proclaim Christ anew, because: '...the longing for the infinite is alive and unquenchable within man' and 'only the God who himself became finite... corresponds to the question of our being.'²¹

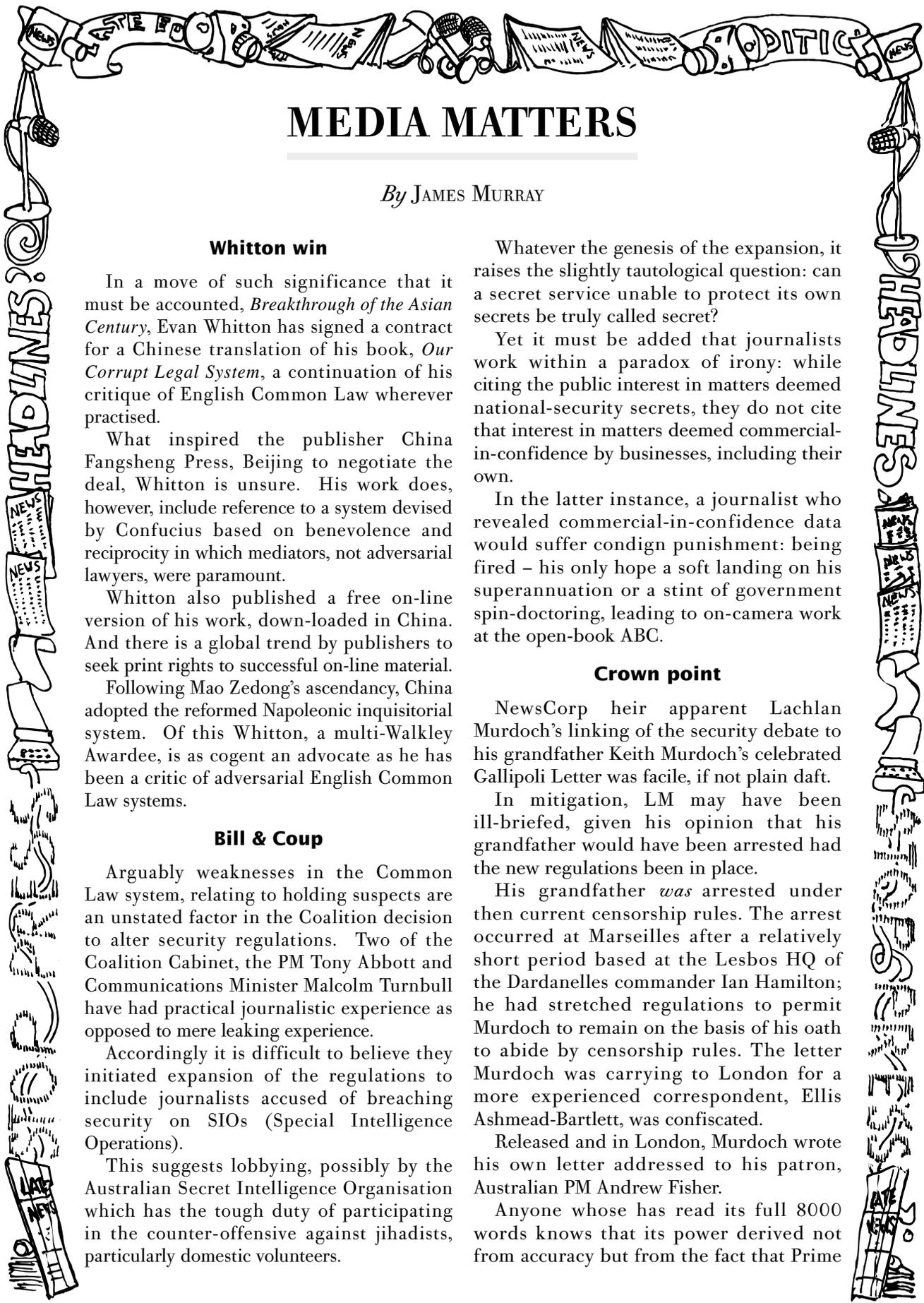
The distortions of the 'Jesus of History' are now in fact becoming 'history' for Christ, not Christophobia, speaks eloquently above the rusting ideologies of past and current deceptions, in an age where Christians sense there is something radically wrong trying to put Christ into strange moulds and where long-held Christian beliefs are attacked from all sides. As Benedict stated in his recent Dunwoodie address, to see His face '... is a discovery of the One who never fails us; the One whom we can always trust. In seeking truth we come to live by belief because ultimately truth is a person: Jesus Christ.'²²

Re-awakening Christians from their historic-critical slumber in a holy mythbusting of already mummified theories, and unveiling Christ who always invites our trust throughout the ages, will be one of Benedict's profound and lasting legacies to our times.

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for the Catholic pro life organisation Family Life International, and is a regular contributor to Annals.

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4. *Ibid.*, xi-xix: 34-38. Joseph. Cardinal Ratzinger, "Biblical Interpretation in Crisis: On the Question of the Foundations and Approaches of Exegesis Today," in R. J. Neuhaus, ed., *Biblical Interpretation in Crisis* (Grand Rapids : William B. Eerdmans, 1989), (originally delivered as an Erasmus Lecture at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in New York City on 27 January 1988). Also available on <http://www.catholicculture.org/library/view.cfm?recnum=5989> Retrieved 21/3/2013). (Quotations taken from this site).
5. Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), p.xiii. Here, referring to Schnackenberg's use of the historical-critical method, Benedict says 'His own account of the figure of Jesus suffers from a certain unresolved tension because of the constraints of the method he feels bound to use despite its inadequacies'
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12. Erasmusw Lecture <http://www.catholicculture.org/library/view.cfm?recnum=5989>.
13. Erasmusw Lecture <http://www.catholicculture.org/library/view.cfm?recnum=5989>.
14. Erasmus Lecture <http://www.catholicculture.org/library/view.cfm?recnum=5989>. Benedict makes the same point in an article entitled 'On the 100th anniversary of the Pontifical Biblical Commission Relationship between Magisterium and exegetes', *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English, 23 July 2003, p. 8, saying '...we have also learned something new about the methods and limits of historical knowledge. Werner Heisenberg verified in the area of the natural sciences, with his "Unsicherheitsrelation", that our knowing never reflects only what is objective, but is always determined by the participation of the subject as well, by the perspective in which the questions are posed and by the capacity of perception.' Also on the following website: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/pcb_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20030510_ratzinger-comm-bible_en.html
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18. Taken from <http://www.ewtn.com/library/CHRIST/HUMAN.TXT>
19. Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), p 110, p116.
20. Josph Ratzinger, 'Jesus Christ Today', *Communio*, Vol 17, 1990, p 80.
21. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Truth and Tolerance*, (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004), p137.
22. <http://www.ssmi-us.org/downloads/ssmi-vocation-dunwoodie.pdf>



MEDIA MATTERS

By JAMES MURRAY

Whitton win

In a move of such significance that it must be accounted, *Breakthrough of the Asian Century*, Evan Whitton has signed a contract for a Chinese translation of his book, *Our Corrupt Legal System*, a continuation of his critique of English Common Law wherever practised.

What inspired the publisher China Fangsheng Press, Beijing to negotiate the deal, Whitton is unsure. His work does, however, include reference to a system devised by Confucius based on benevolence and reciprocity in which mediators, not adversarial lawyers, were paramount.

Whitton also published a free on-line version of his work, down-loaded in China. And there is a global trend by publishers to seek print rights to successful on-line material.

Following Mao Zedong's ascendancy, China adopted the reformed Napoleonic inquisitorial system. Of this Whitton, a multi-Walkley Awardee, is as cogent an advocate as he has been a critic of adversarial English Common Law systems.

Bill & Coup

Arguably weaknesses in the Common Law system, relating to holding suspects are an unstated factor in the Coalition decision to alter security regulations. Two of the Coalition Cabinet, the PM Tony Abbott and Communications Minister Malcolm Turnbull have had practical journalistic experience as opposed to mere leaking experience.

Accordingly it is difficult to believe they initiated expansion of the regulations to include journalists accused of breaching security on SIOs (Special Intelligence Operations).

This suggests lobbying, possibly by the Australian Secret Intelligence Organisation which has the tough duty of participating in the counter-offensive against jihadists, particularly domestic volunteers.

Whatever the genesis of the expansion, it raises the slightly tautological question: can a secret service unable to protect its own secrets be truly called secret?

Yet it must be added that journalists work within a paradox of irony: while citing the public interest in matters deemed national-security secrets, they do not cite that interest in matters deemed commercial-in-confidence by businesses, including their own.

In the latter instance, a journalist who revealed commercial-in-confidence data would suffer condign punishment: being fired – his only hope a soft landing on his superannuation or a stint of government spin-doctoring, leading to on-camera work at the open-book ABC.

Crown point

NewsCorp heir apparent Lachlan Murdoch's linking of the security debate to his grandfather Keith Murdoch's celebrated Gallipoli Letter was facile, if not plain daft.

In mitigation, LM may have been ill-briefed, given his opinion that his grandfather would have been arrested had the new regulations been in place.

His grandfather *was* arrested under then current censorship rules. The arrest occurred at Marseilles after a relatively short period based at the Lesbos HQ of the Dardanelles commander Ian Hamilton; he had stretched regulations to permit Murdoch to remain on the basis of his oath to abide by censorship rules. The letter Murdoch was carrying to London for a more experienced correspondent, Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, was confiscated.

Released and in London, Murdoch wrote his own letter addressed to his patron, Australian PM Andrew Fisher.

Anyone whose has read its full 8000 words knows that its power derived not from accuracy but from the fact that Prime

[T]he Earth is in no danger from runaway global warming. The Earth's surface is largely ocean and transpiring vegetation; as the surface temperature is raised, the rate of increase of evaporation of latent energy increases near exponentially, and is a powerful brake on further temperature rise.

THE ABUSE OF SCIENCE

By William Kininmonth



PROFESSOR PAUL Compton introduces his recent article "Science, Miracles and Global Warming" (*Annals Australasia*, June 2014) by posing the question "... should it be a political choice to be climate change denier, agnostic or believer"? However, rather than address the specifics of climate change science and the potential human role in climate change, he chose to address "... the nature of science and the nature of certainty in science in general".

It must be recognised that climate is an emerging science; it is limited by constraints on data, subject to interpretation of data based on hypotheses, and whose predictions/projections are limited by imperfect theories and tools. In this sense it can be generally compared to other areas of inexact science but such a comparison cannot answer the question initially posed. A political stance cannot lead to a scientific outcome but the reverse is arguably true.

The answer to Compton's question is in the validity of the anthropogenic climate change hypothesis itself: if the hypothesis is valid then we should all be believers willing to take a political stance; if contradiction and uncertainty surround the hypothesis then we should be agnostic; and if the hypothesis is fundamentally flawed then we should be deniers.

For the majority of persons, who have limited understanding of climate science, the validity of the anthropogenic global warming hypothesis is a mystery. But it should not be compared with the mystery of miracles. Acceptance of miracles requires Faith. Revelations of science come from assembling and analysing data, developing theories, building a construct of laws that explain why various things happen and, where the construct is reasonably complete, predicting what might happen in the future.

Benightedness

ONLY A fool or a fanatic could deny the revolutionary impact of Darwinism on our outlook. ... The totalitarian claim of the neoDarwinists that evolution is 'nothing but' chance mutation plus selection has, I think, been finally defeated, and a decade or two from now biologists - and philosophers - may well wonder what sort of benightedness it was that held their elders in its thrall. Darwinian selection operating on chance mutations is doubtless a part of the evolutionary picture, but it cannot be the whole picture, and probably not even a very important part of it. There must be other principles and forces at work on the vast canvas of evolutionary phenomena.

— Arthur Koestler, *The Case of the Midwife Toad*, Pan Books, London, 1971 p.128.

It is the actions that are being proposed on the basis of potential dangers arising from anthropogenic global warming that have brought the validity of the hypothesis into the political sphere. We each are being asked to make a personal choice (a political judgement) as to whether we accept action to mitigate climate change is justified, and also the extent of any action given our appreciation of the potential danger and the economic cost. It would be rational, if the science was uncontroversial, to accept the consensus as the basis for political action. That is, to accept the scientific construct is soundly based and the predictions of anthropogenic global warming are reasonably accurate.

The very fact that Compton has seen the need to write his essay, calling into question the views of Ian Plimer, Christopher Monckton and by association others opposed to mitigation actions on anthropogenic climate change, suggests that the so-called consensus is more of a contrived fiction than a reality. It would be more constructive for Compton to address the real issues raised by the likes of Plimer and Monckton.

The fiction of the so-called consensus is exposed by Compton's attempts at addressing the science. He suggests that the basic idea of climate science is very simple: the Earth's atmosphere traps radiation energy to give us a climate which allows life to survive and prosper; carbon dioxide is a very effective greenhouse gas and more in the

atmosphere resulting from human activity will further warm the Earth. He indicates that about 97 percent of climate scientists believe this to be factually correct and if we do nothing to reduce emissions "... the planet will experience runaway global warming with catastrophic consequences".

Firstly, the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (principally water vapour and to a lesser extent carbon dioxide) emit more radiation than they absorb and consequently cannot trap heat to keep the planet warm. The explanation for the greenhouse effect is more complex: it also involves evaporation of latent energy from the surface and the release of that energy during condensation in cloud formation. It is the thermodynamics of convection that ensures the Earth's surface is warmer than the layer in the middle atmosphere whence radiation to space emanates.

Secondly, the Earth is in no danger from runaway global warming. The Earth's surface is largely ocean and transpiring vegetation; as the surface temperature is raised the rate of increase of evaporation of latent energy increases near exponentially and is a powerful brake on further temperature rise. Millions of years ago, when atmospheric carbon dioxide levels were nearly an order of magnitude greater than today, the climate did not exhibit runaway tendencies.

The central issue of the anthropogenic climate change debate is: "... whether the increases in carbon dioxide will drive temperatures to dangerously high levels". The only tool at our disposal to quantitatively assess the issue is the suite of rudimentary computer models developed in different institutes. These have projected between 3°C and 4.5°C temperature rise for each doubling of carbon dioxide concentration.

I say the models are 'rudimentary' because much of the energy exchange that takes place within the climate system is on a scale

Ideology and Faith

IN THE aftermath of World War II and the West's experience of totalitarian powers, [Christopher] Dawson stressed the vital distinction between an ideology and a faith. While an ideology is intended to fulfil the same sociological functions as a faith, it does not correspond to a genuine transcendental reality- 'a higher and more universal range of reality than the finite and temporal world to which the state and the economic order belong'.

Dawson realised that the new totalitarian states drew their power from the way they replaced the realities of religious faith with the deceptions of ideology, creating historical myths, for example, as a psychological basis of social unity. But finally such myths will not serve the purpose:

'When the prophets are silent and society no longer possesses any channel of communication with the divine world, the way to the lower depths is still open and man's frustrated spiritual powers will find their outlet in the unlimited will to power and destruction.'

— Karl Schmude, *Christopher Dawson: A Biographical Introduction*, The Christopher Dawson Centre for Cultural Studies, Hobart, 2014, pp.15, 16.

below that which the models are able to resolve. The representation of these processes relies on approximations and assumptions. This is particularly the case for the processes associated with clouds: radiation transfer through the atmosphere, vertical transport of energy, and the release of latent energy with condensation. Errors, no matter how small, accumulate over the thousands of timesteps of calculation; they ultimately bias the magnitude of temperature projection. The confidence in climate models is further reduced because global temperature, in contrast to computer model projections, has not risen over the last fifteen years despite 37% of the increase in carbon dioxide since industrialisation having occurred over this recent period.

The fact that scientists cannot adequately explain the temperature stall under rising carbon dioxide concentrations only adds to the underlying uncertainty associated with the science. However, it certainly disproves Compton's assertion:

"In summary: climate science confirms (not proves) that global temperatures will increase to dangerous levels unless we reduce carbon dioxide production".

Clearly the climate system is not part of the consensus!

Returning to the central issue,

it would seem that the politics of climate change is largely contrived. There are not 'thousands of climate scientists'. There are thousands of scientists working in fields allied to the climate system. These fields encompass physics, chemistry, geology, astronomy, computer science, agriculture, biology, etc., but do not entail a need for complete understanding by each of the climate system. Each of these scientists is likely adding to the sum of our knowledge of the climate system but few have knowledge that overarches the totality of the climate system.

The consensus often referred to arises through a general acceptance of the human-caused global warming hypothesis as a useful working paradigm while each looks more thoroughly at their own particular component of scientific interest. One could be cynical and say that the paradigm will continue to gather support so long as it remains a conduit for research funding! However Thomas Kuhn pointed out in his "Structures of Scientific Revolutions"; scientists cling to paradigms despite mounting evidence to the contrary until the contrary evidence is so overwhelming that the paradigm is brushed away and a new one emerges, often based on knowledge that has been well known.

We have an example of this in the

work of Australian Nobel Laureates Barry Marshall and J. Robin Warren who had to overturn an established paradigm in order to have their research acknowledged. As Marshall tells it:

“When the work was presented my results were disputed and disbelieved, not on the basis of science, but because they simply could not be true. It was often said that no one was able to replicate my results. This was untrue but it became part of the folklore of the period. I was told that the bacteria were either contaminants or harmless commensals.”

The issue with climate is that our knowledge of the system is riven with uncertainty and contradictions as a consequence of the complexity of the system and limited data. The uncertainty has been suppressed in the cause of a particular political cause: to deny civilization its access to fossil fuels. Why anybody would want to follow such a cause, given that fossil fuel is a cheap and accessible form of energy that underpins modern developed societies, is difficult to understand. Better access to cheap energy is the pathway to lifting the lives of millions from poverty and hardship and is to be encouraged as a humanitarian objective.

After warfare and disease, possibly the biggest challenge facing humankind is that fossil fuel reserves will be exhausted within a few hundred years, making human-caused climate change a non-issue. Scientists must be encouraged to identify and harness a suitable replacement energy source. Current knowledge of the structure of the atom suggests a pathway but this also faces entrenched political opposition. The longer science is abused in the cause of political objectives the longer the world's needy will remain denied and the greater the risk to future prosperity.

WILLIAM KININMONT, a retired meteorologist and a former head of Australia's National Climate Centre, is author of *Climate Change: A Natural Hazard* (Multi-science, 2004) and is co-author of *Taxing Air: Facts and Fallacies about Climate Change* (Kelpie Press, 2013).

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– Editor, *Annals*

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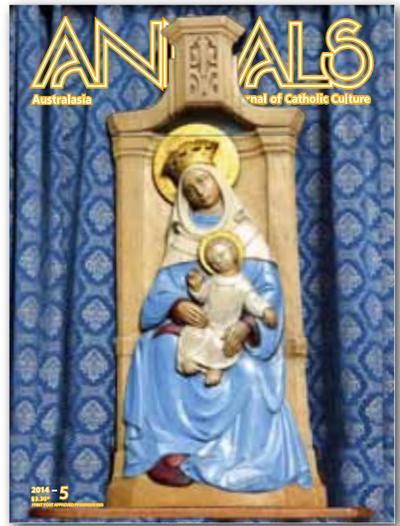
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The Young and Prodigious T.S. Spivet

Writer-director Jean-Pierre (Amelie) Jeunet has made another of his whimsical comedy dramas, this one centring on his title character, played with more than a touch of prodigy by Kyle Catlett.

So fresh is Jeunet's approach that it engenders a sense that a detailed summary would be like pruning a budding tree.

Enough to say TS invents a low-cost electricity generator. His problem is not the obvious one: dealing with those wishing to snaffle his invention to maintain market profit. He has to get from his home in Montana, via Wyoming and Nebraska, to Washington after his invention, in his father's name, wins the Smithsonian Institute's Baird Prize.

As its PR representative, Judy Davis exhibits what she does too rarely: her superlative gift for comedy. In casting, presaging a duel of angels, Helena Bonham Carter plays TS's mother, herself a scientist.

Callum Keith Rennie embodies TS's rancher father. No gunfights. But he does give an odious TV host his due and it's not a cheque. All this plus 3D used creatively in the action and on the spectacular locations.

The rating below would appear to apply to an untimely gunshot death, not shown only alluded to. Your reviewer would rate the movie PG. Inexplicably the release is limited.

M★★★★SFFV.

Annie

The 1982 movie version of this musical comedy, although directed by John Huston, was criticised as stage-bound, predictable given its Broadway origins (and its genesis as the Depression-era comic strip *Little Orphan Annie*).

Director Will Gluck and his co-writers Aline Brosh McKenna and Emma Thompson's version leaves no room for similar criticism. His location is the working class streets of Queen's, New York. Gone is Daddy Warbucks (Albert Finney). In his place, enter Will Stacks (Jamie Foxx), a candidate for the city mayoralty,

MOVIES

By James Murray

aided by his flacks Grace (Rose Byrne) and Guy (Bobby Cannavale).

Fine casting except perhaps for Foxx. Will Smith would have been a better choice; modestly he has contented himself with being the key executive producer alongside his wife Jada Pickett Smith.

As Miss Hannigan, the orphanage manager, Carmen Diaz tries to prove she can do grotesque and falls flat on her beauty.

The remake's vivacity and sparkle come from Quvenzhané Wallis in the title role. The moppet who dominated *Beasts of the Southern Wild* has no problem in conquering the fairy-tale sidewalks of New York.

TBA★★★★SFFV.

The Captive

Writer/director Atom Egoyan's subject is child abuse. Characteristically he approaches it from an unusual angle. In Ryan Reynolds he has an actor superbly equipped to play Matthew Lane, a father bewildered at the disappearance of his daughter, Cass, from his vehicle during a brief halt at the local store.

His bewilderment, compounded by his estrangement from the child's mother Tina, increases the suspicions of the local specialists in on-line tracking of predators and missing children.

Shot in winter in his native Canada, Egoyan's dark thriller shifts the months of its nine-year time frame as Matthew maintains a private search which triggers a conclusion (shocking without being horrific). To say more would be to lessen the shock. It does, however, inspire the question: who watches the watchers?

Should be seen by all who have care of children with Internet access.

MA15+★★★★NFFV.

Kill the Messenger

Pulitzer Prize winner Gary Webb is the messenger. Playing him, Jeremy Renner captures what it is for

reporters to go on adrenaline drive as a story gets bigger and riskier the more they follow up info given to them, in Webb's case a court document.

Director Nick Cuesta and scriptwriter Peter Landesman work from Nick Schou's, *Kill the Messenger* and Webb's, *Dark Alliance*, scheduled for re-issue.

To the role of Jerry Ceppos, Webb's executive editor, Oliver Platt brings a bluff heartiness – bluff in every the sense.

Rosemarie Dewitt is Webb's wife Sue, Michael Sheen plays a Washington insider who delivers an ominous line: 'Sometimes a story is too true to tell.'

Andy Garcia contributes an acidic satire of a drug lordling Webb visits in a Mexican jail. Cuesta should have denied Garcia a golf-iron, his prop in the *Ocean's Eleven* jolly scam-'n'-heist franchise.

Jolly cannot be applied to *Kill the Messenger*, it is a grim brief on what the CIA's late boss, James Angleton, called the 'smoke and mirrors' of security operations; in this case, 1990s anti-contra operations in Nicaragua, the thrust of Webb's story being that the CIA was involved in drug-trafficking to help finance the operations and thus introduced crack-cocaine to America's slums. The matter was subject to congressional, public scrutiny at the time, resulting in resignations.

Despite having won journalism's most prestigious award, Webb was unable to secure regular work as a reporter. He died in a motel, cause of death: two gunshots (repeat two). The verdict: suicide.

Cuesta opts to reveal these puzzling details in end-credit captions alongside archival footage of Webb with his wife and children; he could, with advantage, have opened with a re-enactment of them and then gone into flashback.

M★★★★NFFV.

Mr Turner

Writer/director Mike Leigh has accomplished a rare triple: a masterpiece about a master-artist, the painter JMW Turner (1775-1851), played by master actor Timothy Spall

whose performance is both funny and doleful, part Toad of Toad Hall or, given Turner's love life, Bullfrog of Margate, his favourite resort.

Leigh supports Spall with a fine ensemble that includes Paul Jesson as his father, invariably called 'Daddy', and Lesley Manville as a Scots suffragette who enhances his eye for light with spectrum experiments.

That said Leigh's masterpiece is a case of art is long (running-time 150 minutes), life short. As intent on a social history as on biography, he chose not to cut some of his set pieces. His work might best be watched on DVD at home with cups of tea or snifters of sherry every time the characters have one.

Leigh's work shows signs that he may have read, *The Sun is God*, by Michael Noonan, the New Zealand born, Franciscan novice and soldier who pioneered the fiction sub-genre based on Australian references in the works of Charles Dickens.

M★★★★NFFV

My Mistress

Emmanuelle Beart is one of the great beauties of French cinema. It takes some kind of genius to make her appear ugly. Neophyte director Stephen Lance possesses it. With his co-writer Gerard Lee, he films Beart as Maggie, a veteran S&M professional, in a triangle with an infatuated teenager Charlie (Socratis Otto) and client (Harrison Gilbertson).

Maggie's Australian country mansion has a faux-stone façade. So does the movie.

TBA★★NFFV.

The Judge

After more than a century of film making, few movies can be deemed totally original. Director David Dobkin's courtroom drama is not one of them. Possibly this is because the original script by Nick Schenk was subjected to the notorious Hollywood process of the rewrite, this one by Bill Dubuque (an alias?).

The result is a mix of family re-union for a funeral, southern town nostalgic romance, and the central courtroom drama.

What lifts the movie out of the mess is a brace of *tours de force* by Robert Downey Junior playing city-slicker lawyer, Hank Palmer, and Robert Duvall as his father, Joe the judge of the title, who faces a late-life charge in his own courtroom.

The supporting cast includes Vera Farmiga as Hank's nostalgia sweetheart. Billy Bob Thornton plays the prosecution attorney. Being the kind of actor he is, Thornton is not content to support; he puts on his own *tour de force*.

A surprising number of younger moviegoers are into classics of the past. The obvious suggestion is, *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, starring Gregory Peck but the greatest of southern court dramas is, *Inherit the Wind* starring Spencer Tracy and Fredric March.

M★★★★NFFV

Fury

Opens with one of the greatest sequences ever filmed: from the fog of war on a desolate battlefield, a lone horseman emerges. As he rides past a tank, he is attacked and killed by an apelike creature who frees the horse – a pale horse, symbolic of one of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse.

Cinematographer Roman Vasyanov shot the sequence as scripted by writer-director David Ayer. And if the rest of the movie doesn't quite live up

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to the opening sequence, it's not from want of trying.

Using locations in the English home counties (the only sign of Britain's participation in World War II) Ayer and his team show the atrocities, mud and blood of a late phase of World War II in Europe.

Their focus is on a Sherman tank crew: veterans, Sergeant Don Collier, the apelike creature (Brad Pitt), Boyd Swan (Shia LaBoeuf), Grady Travis (John Bernthal), Trini Garcia (Michael Pena) and new recruit, Norman Ellison (Logan Lerman).

Pitt, possibly building on his *Inglourious Basterds* role in Quentin Tarantino's ill-spelt take on war, may be in contention for the pillage called Oscar alongside Shia LaBoeuf.

Yet for all the effort, *Fury* resembles a war movie from a time capsule containing the archive of filmmaker Sam Fuller's classics: *The Steel Helmet*, *Merrill's Marauders* and *The Big Red One*.

There is, however, a crucial difference; Fuller imbued his war movies with his experience as a World War II infantryman. Ayer appears to have worked from research leavened with a yeasty imagination, hence criticism from those who were there that he has exaggerated the atrocities.

Be that as it may, his nicknames are evidence of that yeastiness. The tank is called 'Fury' and Sergeant Collier, 'Wardaddy' (misprint for 'Warbaddy?')

MA15+★★★★NFFV

Zero Motivation

Writer/director Talia Lavie's debut take on war depicts its main element – an element beyond horror or heroism – stupidity. Her soldiers three: Zohar (Dana Ivgy), Daffi (Nelly Tagar) and Rama (Shani Klein), are not Kiplingesque swashbucklers; theirs is not a vaunted front-line unit where women serve alongside men; they are conscripts in a rear-echelon base where the most valued weapons are a pair of automatic staple guns.

Lavie gives a vividly hilarious yet sad account of their service as they jostle for promotion, romance and (main objective) transfer to the glittering towers of Tel Aviv.

Once again, and with government funding, an Israeli filmmaker

demonstrates aspects of embattled life, under-reported elsewhere.

M★★★★NFFV.

Whiplash

Writer/director Damien Chazelle has made a concealed autobiography of his own education as a jazz drummer. And it is by no means sentimental, an element he emphasises by casting JK Simmons as a music teacher, Fletcher.

Simmons, a character actor for all parts requiring edge, has played the toughest including a marine drill sergeant. To play Fletcher, he removes his campaign hat, polishes his skull and treats his students like raw recruits.

Miles Teller is Andrew Neyman a student drummer, mentored and monstered by Fletcher, inspired to greatness by the failure of his father Jim (Paul Reiser) as a writer. (If this were common, there would be an over-supply of gigless drummers).

The autobio-pic moves through a romance with Nicole (Melissa Benoist), a cinema popcorn seller (joke?) to a concert at Carnegie Hall where Andrew (and his band mates, conducted by Fletcher) faces his ultimate challenge: breakdown or breakout.

Due reference is made to the drummer Buddy Rich none to Ringo Starr (living history) who may be consoled by a lack of mention of the greatest of drummers, Gene Krupa (1950s, ancient history).

MA15+★★★★NFFV.

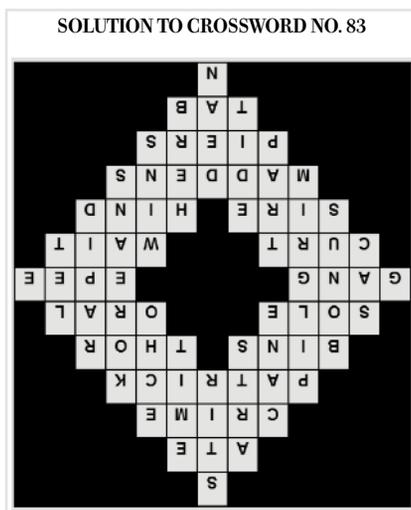
Two Days, One Night

Directors Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne concoct a socially realistic tract which see-saws between dreary and desperate. This, despite the charm of Marion Cotillard as Sandra, a factory worker facing a sacking deadline.

No hint of *La Vie en Rose* in the Dardenne's industrial estate milieu. *Vin ordinaire* has been totally displaced by fizzy, obesity drinks in the kind of economy (not community) originally created by France's *haute ecole* managerialists.

The Sandra Solution? Non-compliance. Should be seen by all econocrats and their subjects.

M★★★★NFFV



This Is Where I Leave You

Too many cooks and the spoilt broth we know about. Too much talent and its effect on a movie have been less examined. For their comedy-drama about the re-union of the Altman family, director Shawn Levy and scriptwriter Jonathan Tropper have cast a brilliant ensemble: among them Tina Fey as Wendy, sister to Jason Bateman's Judd.

The result - to keep mixing metaphors - is an over-egged pudding. One can watch Tina Fey steal only so many scenes while Jason Bateman can do his rueful shtick only so often before they pall, pall being the operative word; the reason for the re-union (here Levy drops a clue), is the dying wish of a Jewish atheist patriarch called Mort (now there's a pun) that his children sit *shiva*, the traditional seven-day period of mourning.

Rose Byrne plays Penny, an erstwhile sweetheart of Judd's and Timothy Olyphant is Horry, Wendy's might-have-husband who, to keep things simple, has lost his memory.

Oh, almost forgot; the immortal Jane Fonda is the matriarch (author of a tell-all book, *Cradle and All*) with her own secret. Add a derided liberal rabbi and a synagogue service interrupted by pot-smoking and what you get is a mess of idiotic schmaltz fit to feed any number of anti-Semites.

M★★NFFV.

Maps to the Stars

Havana Segrand is a burnt-out star, desperate to re-ignite her career by rubbing hope and ambition together, presumably to pay the mortgage on her de luxe habitat. And in Julianne Moore director David Cronenberg, working from a Bruce Wagner script, has an actress whose Celtic feyness has an enthralling yet repelling power.

Around her, Cronenberg sets Doctor Stafford Weiss (John Cusack), his wife Cristina (Olivia Williams) and their children Agatha (Mia Wasikowska) and Benjie (Evan Bird). Add a factotum Jerome Fontana (Robert Pattinson) and you have a group fit to be named Von Dysfunction.

It may be that Cronenberg, a notably independent (and outrageous) Canadian filmmaker is satirising Hollywood's pretensions to teach the world about life, or at least lifestyles, when a significant number of its eminent denizens are as crazy as paving.

Yet satire requires a benchmark of sanity. None is apparent here.

MA15+★★★★NFFV.

Force Majeure

Tomas (Johannes Bah Kuhnke) Ebaa (Lisa Loven Kongsli) and their children, Vera and Harry (Clara and Vincent Wettergren), come on as the perfect cornflakes (muesli?) family on a ski-ing holiday.

The perfection of the French Alpine location is disturbed only by the boom of explosions, designed to create controlled avalanches.

After a day of happy-snaps ski-ing, the family are enjoying a meal when one such avalanche appears to threaten them. On Tomas's reaction writer-director Ruben Ostlund turns the movie as if on a fractured jewel.

The cinematography of Fredrik Wenzel adds to the tension by showing that alpine snow country is never quite tamed.

Ostlund's work has been compared to Ingmar Bergman's, particularly *Scenes from a Marriage*. But Bergman's marital films are infused with the bleakness of his four marriages. Ostlund appears to be

inspired by a different Scandinavian source, that of Catholic convert and Nobel Prize laureate, Sigrid Undset's *Kristen Lavransdatter*.

Ostlund suggests that the *force majeure* of his title is not simple nature but marriage itself which can prevail against hazards, trivial and catastrophic.

M★★★★NFFV

Before I go to Sleep

Nicole Kidman gives another of her finely-tuned performances as Christine who suffers from chronic amnesia yet endures violent flashbacks. As her clean-cut husband Ben, Colin Firth is equivalently compelling. Mark Strong as her unshaven psychologist, Dr Nash, contrives to be both sinister and caring.

Essentially this is a whodunit. What can be said with absolute certainty is that it wasn't the butler; there is no butler.

Whodunits are designed to baffle. Director Rowan Joffe, working from SJ Watson's novel, succeeds all too well; his effort is as baffling at the end as it is in the beginning. Facing its challenges, Hercule Poirot would have called Miss Marple and found her on crossed line to him.

MA15+★★NFFV.

Gone Girl

Director David Fincher's signature is blood and it's so large in this thriller, co-written with best-seller author Gillian Flynn, that a better title might be, *Fifty Shades of Gore*.

Ben Affleck and Rosamond Pike are newly weds, Nick and Amy, he a footloose journalist, she a belle, rich from a series of Amy books written by her mother. When Amy vanishes, suspicion, in line with standard police procedures, falls on him.

Fincher and Flynn maintain tension by shuffling the best-sellers twin narrative lines. Affleck and Pike's performances have been justly praised. But mark Kim Williams as Rhonda Boney, a detective on the case. She is the Ace of Spades to Pike's Queen of Hearts and Affleck's King of Clubs.

MA15+★★★NFFV.

Las Vegas Churches accept Gambling Chips

THIS MAY come as a surprise to those of you not living in Las Vegas, but there are more Catholic churches than casinos.

Not surprisingly, some worshippers at Sunday Mass will give casino chips rather than cash when the basket is passed.

Since they get chips from many different casinos, the churches have devised a method to collect the offerings.

The churches send all their collected chips to a nearby Franciscan friary for sorting and then the chips are taken to the casinos of origin and cashed in.

This is done by the chip monks. Gotcha! You didn't even see it coming did you?

Tammy

The title may well be a nostalgic play on the sweet, romantic comedies of the Fifties and Sixties, starring respectively Debbie Reynolds and Sandra Dee. Not that Melissa McCarthy in the title role is sweet. On the contrary, her role derives from a tradition much older than Hollywood.

McCarthy's Tammy, directed by her husband and co-writer Ben Falcone, comes on as the irrepressibly bawdy offspring of Mrs Quickly and Pistol in Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Fired from a burger joint, Tammy goes home to find her spouse Earl (Gary Cole) in a tea-for-two situation with her neighbour Missi (Toni Collette). Allison Janney is Tammy's Mom, Deb; Kathy Bates her cousin, Lenore, Sandra Oh, her companion, Susanne, and Dan Aykroyd is Tammy's Dad, Don

Topping them all is Susan Sarandon, in an ill-anchored grey wig, playing Grandma Pearl. With her Tammy hits the road. Another nostalgic play: take your pick the Sarandon-Geena Davis, *Thelma & Louise* or the Hope-Crosby, *Road to Morocco*.

M★★★★NFFV.

The Equalizer

Robert McCall is an all-round good-guy, called Mister McCall, in a warehouse-sized Home-Mart store. His home-life in Boston is similarly unobtrusive; he reads classics and has a nightcap in a diner to which he brings his own teabag.

During one nightcap he meets a prostitute and witnesses her cruel treatment by gangsters (ethnically Russian). Kaboom! It's Mr McCall versus the gang by way of tag-team bouts of hyper-violence in which only Mr McCall's teeth escape undamaged.

The pre-climactic bout takes place in the warehouse where Mr McCall uses its hardware to dispatch his enemies. The location for the climax is Moscow and the country estate of the gang leader.

A touch of improbability there; surely the most notable of super-rich Russian exiles support the City of London economy by living in Belgravia, Mayfair and Chelsea?

The ending indicates a sequel, inevitable given that the character Mr McCall is a caped crusader without a cape, a masked avenger without a mask and Denzel Washington, graduate of Fordham University, is an actor gifted enough to carry loads of violent tosh a long way.

MA15+★★NFFV.

Life of Crime

Jennifer Aniston combines dauntless charm and comic timing in the role of trophy wife Mickey Dawson. Unhappily this is not enough to compensate for the miscasting of Tim Robbins as her husband Frank Dawson, a developer with a secret bank account (how implausible).

Mickey is kidnapped. Her captors Ordell (Yaslin Bey) and Louis (John Hawkes) are discombobulated when Dawson is less than keen on her return, given that he also has a trophy mistress (Isla Fisher) and is simultaneously golf obsessed.

Director Daniel Schechter, working from Elmore Leonard's thriller, *The Switch*, does bring off the final plot twist. The end credit reads: 'For Elmore'; perhaps it should read, 'For Elmore Leonard with apologies.'

MA15+★★★NFFV.

SOS! ... Christianity in the Middle East ... SOS!

Moved by the desperate plight of Christians throughout the Middle East, the Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) calls on your support to help the region's beleaguered Christian population.

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ACN is helping to keep faith and hope alive throughout the region by providing urgent aid to priests, religious and lay people, offering subsistence help to refugees and building and repairing Churches and convents. Please help us strengthen and rebuild the Church in the land of Christ's birth.

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Pope Francis



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Annals

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Atheists, modernists, or satirists – each found a home in the Catholic Church.

FIVE POETS WHO CONVERTED TO CATHOLICISM

by Matthew Archbold



THE POET Wallace Stevens is considered by many to be one of America's greatest poets. He is the champion of many atheists as well. He once wrote in his book *Opus Posthumous*, 'After one has abandoned a belief in God, poetry is that essence which takes its place as life's redemption.'

So you might see why so many are so opposed to a priest who said that Stevens was a deathbed convert to Catholicism.

Stevens won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1955. He was an executive with an insurance company and a Republican. Stevens once argued with Robert Frost, and lost a fight after breaking his hand on Hemingway's jaw.

His poetry seems to put the artist in the place of God in some instances.

But according to Father Arthur Hanley, Stevens converted to the Catholic faith on his deathbed. In a letter to Professor Janet McCann, dated July 24, 1977, he wrote:

Dear Janet: The first time he came to the hospital, he expressed a certain emptiness in his life. His stay then was two weeks. Two weeks later, he was in, and he asked the sister to send for me. We sat and talked a long time.

During his visit this time, I saw him nine or ten times. He was fascinated by the life of Pope Pius X. He spoke about a poem for this pope whose family name was Sarto meaning 'tailor'. At least three times, he talked about

getting into the fold – meaning the Catholic Church. The doctrine of hell was an objection which we later got through all right.

He often remarked about the peace and tranquillity that he experienced in going into a Catholic Church and spending some time. He spoke about St. Patrick's Cathedral in N.Y. I can't give you the date of his baptism. I think it might be recorded at the hospital. He said he had never been baptized. He was baptized absolutely [i.e. not *conditionally. ed.*].

Wallace and his wife had not been on speaking terms for several years. So we thought it better not to tell her. She might cause a scene in the hospital.

Fidelity

MANY CONVERTS to Rome,' I wrote, 'are less influenced by the Petrine texts than by the fidelity of the Church to the basic dogma of Christianity, the Godhead of Our Lord. The tendency of Communion which repudiate the divine authority of the Church to degenerate into camouflaged Unitarians is obvious in the case of Continental Protestants and is discernible even in the Church of England.'

— Sir Arnold Lunn, in *Difficulties: A correspondence about the Catholic Religion between Mgr. Ronald Knox, and Sir Arnold Lunn*, Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1958, pp. 243-244.

The Archbishop at the time told me not to make his (Wallace's) conversion public, but the sister and the nurses on the floor were all aware of it and were praying for him.

At the time I did get a copy of his poems and also a record that he did of some of his poems. We talked about some of the poems. I quoted some of the lines of one of them and he was pleased. He said if he got well, we would talk a lot more and if not he would see me in heaven.

That's about all I can give you now. God's Blessing. Father Hanley

To this day, some discount Fr. Hanley's testimony. Others simply say that if it happened at all it was a moment of weakness of a dying man. But I prefer to look at the totality of his life. I prefer to see his life as a spiritual journey.

This conversion should not come as a complete surprise as he wrote in his diary in 1902, that he would often go St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. 'I go [there] now and then in my more lonely moods,' he wrote.

Another entry, dated August 1, 1899, reads, 'I would sacrifice a great deal to be a St. Augustine.'

While his poetry was atheistic in many ways, he returned with frequency to spiritual themes. After becoming very sick, he reportedly told Fr. Hanley, 'I'd better get in the fold now.' After being baptized and receiving Communion he said, 'Now I'm in the fold.' He died a few days later.

Claude McKay

Claude McKay, was a prominent figure in the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s.

Born in Jamaica, his first work was written in the Jamaican vernacular and was received with great praise.

Later he published angry militant poems against white people, even calling them 'monsters.' McKay also publicly stated that Christianity was a tool of oppressive white capitalists. He was heavily involved with the Communist party, abandoned the United States for Europe, North Africa, and even the USSR. But something in his soul stirred.

It's difficult to know what did it. Some say it was the care given to him at a Catholic hospital. Others say it was the majesty of beautiful cathedrals. Some say it was The Catholic Worker movement. But for some reason or many of them, in 1946 McKay wrote in *Ebony Magazine* a piece entitled 'Why I Became a Catholic.'

In a letter around the same time he wrote that because of his conversion he was able to get past all the anger and had become able 'to think of people with wonder and love as I did as a boy in Jamaica, and the Catholic church with its discipline and traditions and understanding of human nature is helping me a lot.'

In the *Ebony Magazine* piece he wrote, 'In joining the Catholic church, I feel proud of belonging to that vast universal body of Christians, which is the greatest stabilizing force in the world today standing as a bulwark against all the wild and purely materialistic 'isms' that are sweeping the world.' Smart guy, huh?

Oscar Wilde

Wilde is known today for his wit and celebrated for a homosexual lifestyle. I think there's a Broadway show celebrating this aspect of the writer's life. In fact, Wilde is probably better known for his flamboyance and his homosexual

Make Much of Time

GATHER ye rosebuds
while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying,
And this same flower
that smiles to-day
To-morrow will be dying.

- Robert Herrick, 1591-1674,
'To the Virgins to make much of Time.'

relations than he is for his literary achievements which often had a strong moral lesson.

The fact that Wilde seemed to have a lifelong on-again off-again fascination with the Church and was a deathbed convert to Catholicism is just about completely ignored. It doesn't really fit into the caricature of Wilde.

Sally Read

A psychiatric nurse and poet, Sally Read is currently seen as one of the bright stars of poetry in England. Winner of an Eric Gregory Award from the Society of Authors in 2001, Read intended to write a risqué book and wanted to interview a nun. So she contacted a priest to see if he could recommend a rather open-minded nun.

Showing that the Holy Spirit certainly works in mysterious ways, it was those conversations that kicked off her journey to Catholicism.

'I was brought up an atheist,' she wrote in *The Tablet* last year. 'The creed of non-creed was in my blood: Christianity was a symptom of bigotry or feeble-mindedness.'

After lengthy, laborious, and sometimes even heated discussions with the local priest, in 2010, Read officially entered the Church.

'As a poet from a most secular culture, I have come to know the Church as the ultimate poem,' she wrote. 'An intricate composition of allegory and reality, that tries to give image to God's presence on earth.'

Roy Campbell

Roy Campbell was a South African poet who was considered by many to have been one of the best of the early 20th century poets. *The Flaming Terrapin* established his reputation and was favorably compared to T.S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*.

After moving to Spain, Roy and his wife, Mary Campbell, together with their daughters, were so moved by Catholic villagers in Altea and impressed by their faithfulness that they were inspired to seek reception into the Catholic Church in 1935.

It was a terrible time to be Catholic in Spain. In the following year, Spain's bloody civil war saw thousands of priests, monks and nuns murdered. On at least one occasion, Campbell actually hid a number of disguised Carmelite friars in his home. Months later, the friars came to the Campbells and asked for refuge not for themselves but for a large trunk which included the personal papers of St John of the Cross.

Campbell kept the trunk in his home even when the town was under siege and his home searched by republican forces. Reportedly, as the search was carried out, Campbell prayed to St. John of the Cross and vowed that if his family's lives were spared he would translate the saint's poems into English – a vow he carried out.

In a BBC interview in 1952, Campbell credited the success of his translations not to his own talents but to St. John of the Cross. 'Were I superstitious I should say that St John brought me luck,' he said. 'Not being superstitious, I say that he wrought a miracle.'

Campbell later became a friend of JRR Tolkien and it seems that Campbell may very well have been the inspiration for the character of Aragorn.

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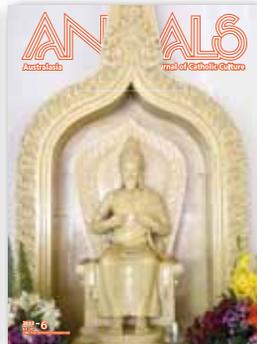
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