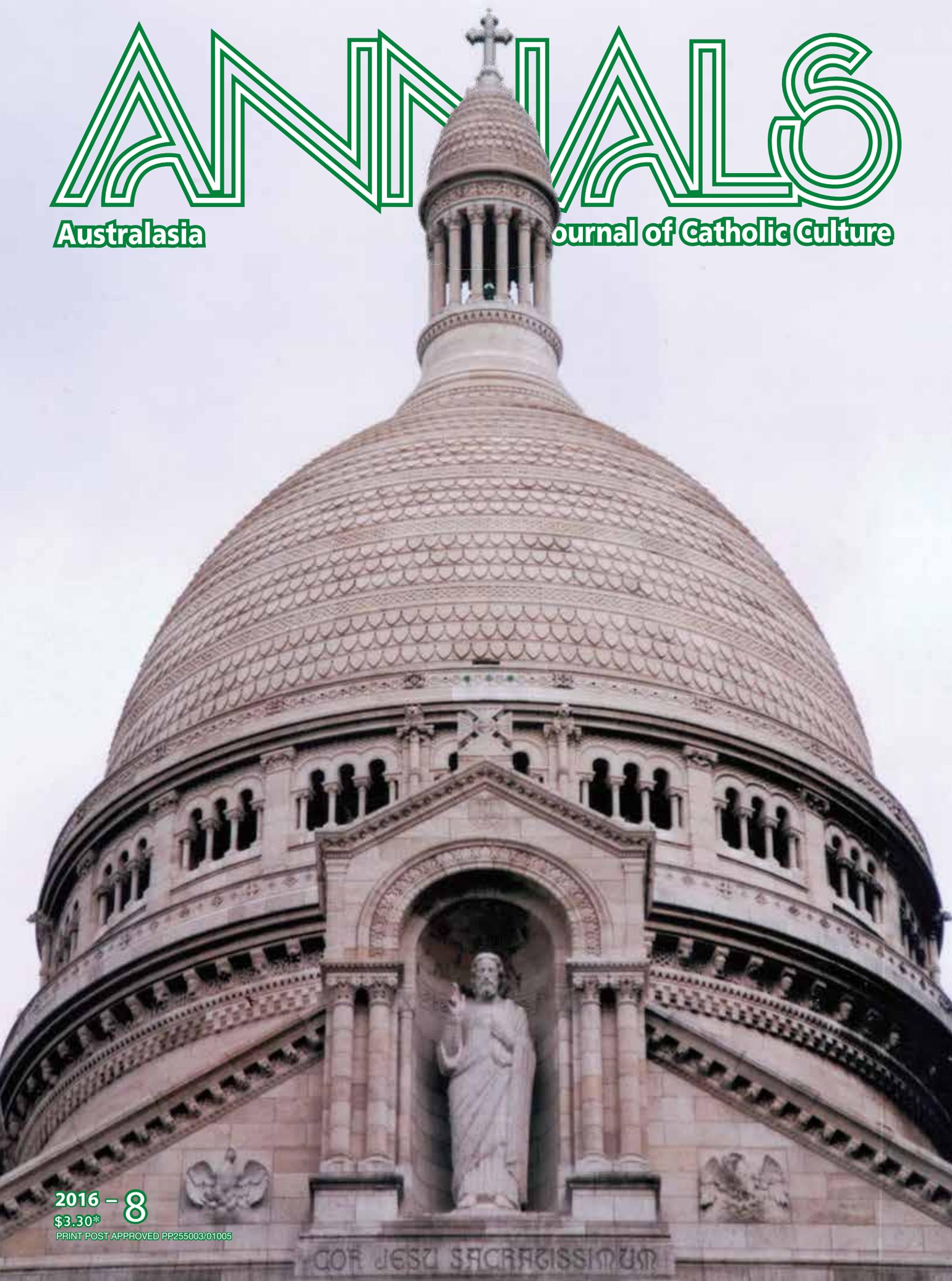


ANNUALS

Australasia

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2016 - 8

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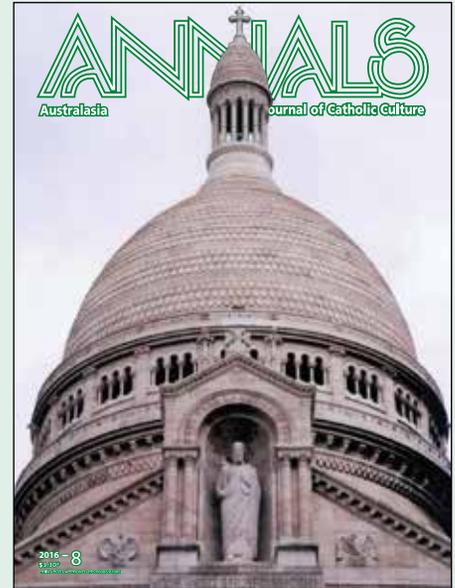
Volume 127, Number 8, October 2016

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

Australia's Oldest Catholic Magazine

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

- 3 **Reflections on the Catholic Church**
PAUL STENHOUSE MSC
- 7 **The Making of Hitler**
JUDE P. DOUGHERTY
- 10 **Endangered Harvests**
ANTHONY YOUNG, MSC
- 14 **Francis Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan**
WANDA SKOWRONSKA
- 19 **The Dangers of Poisoned Prose**
GILES AUTY
- 26 **Ancient Roman Churches, Part II**
GRAHAM HUTTON
- 34 **British Intellectuals and the Catholic Church in Spain**
PAUL CHIGWIDDEN
- 38 **Sheffield's Fields to Sheffield Shield**
TONY EVANS
- 44 **Matteo Ricci and the Rebels**
ROBERT ROYAL



Front Cover: Our cover photo is of the dome of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in Paris. The Latin below the statue of Jesus reads: Cor Iesu Sacratissimum, 'Most Sacred Heart of Jesus'. The high hill upon which the Basilica stands overlooks Paris, and is called Montmartre, or 'mount of the martyr,' referring to St Dionysius and his two companions who were decapitated here around 250 AD. St Denis, as Dionysius is known in France, was the bishop of Lutetia, an earlier name for the region of Paris. He became the patron saint of the kingdom of France, and is still, today, one of France's principal patron saints. Lutetia had its name changed to Paris in 360 AD. The new name was taken from the Callic tribe of the Parisii. The Basilica was built as national act of Penance after the defeat of France in the 1871 Franco-Prussian War. Commenced in 1875 it was completed in 1914, and consecrated in 1919.

Back Cover: Annals Australasia turns 127 this year. Help support Australia's oldest and most popular Catholic journal by encouraging your friends and relatives to subscribe. Or send them a gift subscription for Christmas or the New Year. See page 9 of this issue for a gift subscription form.

Cover Photo: Paul Stenhouse

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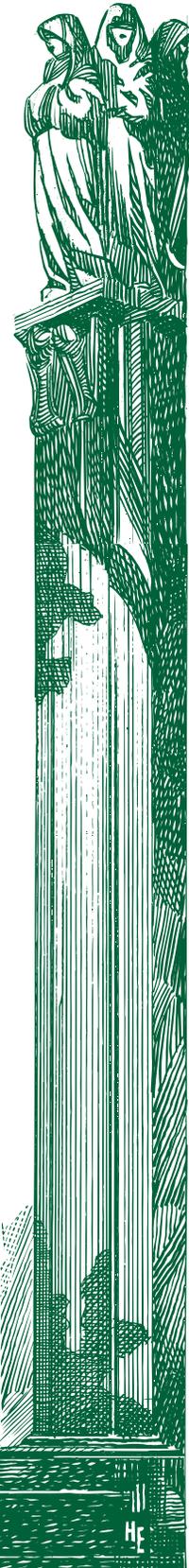
WHEN WE contemplate ourselves we are troubled ... when we contemplate God we are restored.

— St Bernard of Clairveaux, *De Diversis*, v. 4-5. From The Roman Breviary, 2nd reading at Matins, Wednesday in the 23rd Week of the Year.



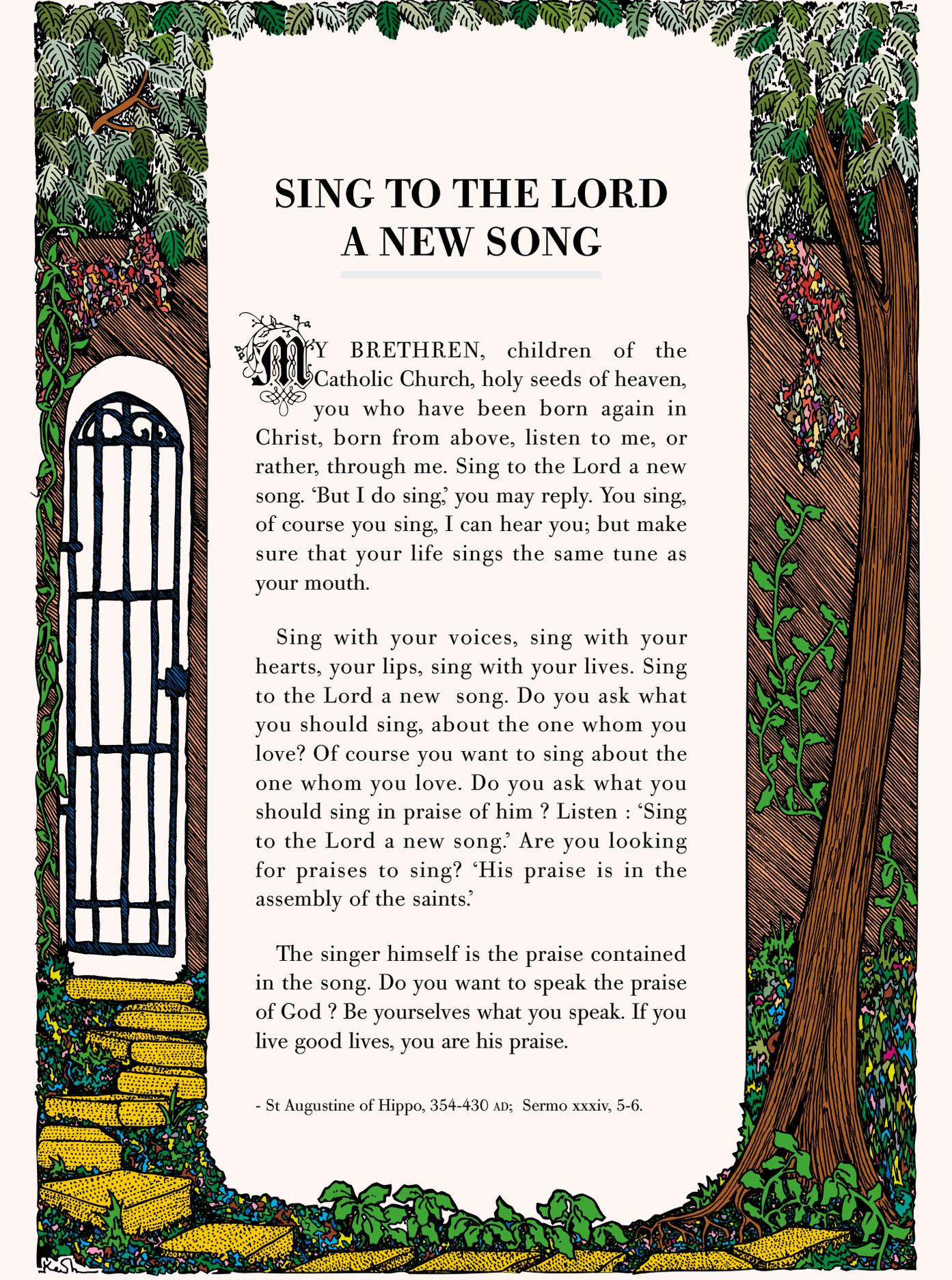
In the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and
of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

TO A LOVING FATHER



ALMIGHTY, ever-living God,
whose love surpasses all that we ask
or deserve,
open up for us the treasures of your mercy.
Forgive us all that weighs on our conscience,
and grant us more even than we dare to ask.
We make our prayer
through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the
Holy Spirit,
One God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

– *The Roman Missal*, Collect or Opening Prayer, at Mass for the 27th
Sunday of the Year.



SING TO THE LORD A NEW SONG

MY BRETHREN, children of the Catholic Church, holy seeds of heaven, you who have been born again in Christ, born from above, listen to me, or rather, through me. Sing to the Lord a new song. 'But I do sing,' you may reply. You sing, of course you sing, I can hear you; but make sure that your life sings the same tune as your mouth.

Sing with your voices, sing with your hearts, your lips, sing with your lives. Sing to the Lord a new song. Do you ask what you should sing, about the one whom you love? Of course you want to sing about the one whom you love. Do you ask what you should sing in praise of him? Listen: 'Sing to the Lord a new song.' Are you looking for praises to sing? 'His praise is in the assembly of the saints.'

The singer himself is the praise contained in the song. Do you want to speak the praise of God? Be yourselves what you speak. If you live good lives, you are his praise.

- St Augustine of Hippo, 354-430 AD; Sermo xxxiv, 5-6.

The love and joy derived from our Catholic Faith, is still the antidote to the topsy-turveydom that lays claim to normality in our lovable and seductive, yet terrifyingly mad, mad world.

REFLECTIONS ON THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

By Paul Stenhouse

BY MY ordination as a Catholic priest, I undertook to be a true servant of the Church which, as St Paul stresses, is the Body of Christ.¹

I feel a bit like St Augustine – no slouch when it came to explaining the Faith – who, nevertheless, in speaking on the occasion of the Mass in honour of the birth of St John the Baptist,² said that should he not be up to examining all the twists and turns of so great a mystery as John’s miraculous birth, either for lack of skill or for lack of time, his flock will be taught much better by the Holy Spirit. For the Holy Spirit speaks in their hearts at all times. He reminds them that they have taken Him into their minds and hearts through baptism. They are His temples.

Religion is the noblest instinct in man: like the fish that swim upstream to reach their spawning ground, or the migratory birds that fly half-way around the world to reach their hatcheries – we humans also have a homing instinct.

Once upon a time all Christians recognized within them an instinct, a drive, far superior to the homing

and breeding instinct in birds or insects. They celebrated this reality by giving primacy of place in their personal calendar of events to be celebrated, not to their birthday [the date of their physical birth] but to their baptismal day [the date of their spiritual re-birth].

This was before Santa Claus [formerly *Saint Nicholas*] was listed on Wall Street; before Valentine [formerly *St Valentine*] joined the ranks of Hollywood extras; and before commerce and greed even



seized on our Lord’s deathday on Good Friday, as they seize on everything intended for the glory of God, to exploit them in the name of their Master, Mammon.

St Augustine, if I may quote him again, in his *Confessions*, [Bk I, c.1] put this longing for heaven and God – our atavistic homeland and true birth place and our Creator –

into words that once were on the lips of most Christians:

‘Thou hast made us for Thyself,
and our hearts are restless
until they rest in Thee.’

The latin is exquisitely unambiguous and insightful:

‘Fecisti nos *ad te*,
et inquietum est cor nostrum,
donec requiescat *in te*.’

‘Thou hast created us *ad te*: for Thyself’ – like an arrow that flies true towards its target, like a stone obeying the rules of gravity, we search for our natural resting place in God. ‘And our hearts are unquiet until they rest *in te*: in Thee,’ in God, like a child in its mother’s arms.

The Sacred Scriptures describe the cause of this unquietness, and warn us; children’s fairy tales speak of it; all ancient literatures are replete with examples of it; the myths of our ancestors try to articulate and explain it; the media feed off it, like birds of prey, like scavengers; crime and all suffering results from

it; it was once the constant refrain of sermons from priests around Australia, yet still we refuse to acknowledge it: the fact of evil, of sin, the antithesis of good.

Evil is a spiritual virus that re-programmes our natural direction finders, that re-sets the coordinates of our homing instinct, and turns us back on ourselves. It offers us the tempting idea that

We deplore national madness.

WHAT IS NATIONAL SANITY?

MR. BELLOC once said that he would no more part with the idea of property than with his teeth yet to Mr. Bernard Shaw property is not a tooth, but a toothache. Lord Milner has sincerely attempted to introduce German efficiency; and many of us would as soon welcome German Measles. Dr. Saleeby would honestly like to have Eugenics; but I would rather have rheumatics. This is the arresting and dominant fact about modern social discussion ; that the quarrel is not merely about the difficulties, but about the aim. We agree about the evil ; it is about the good that we should tear each other's eyes out. We all admit that a lazy aristocracy is a bad thing. We should not by any means all admit that an active aristocracy would be a good thing. We all feel angry with an irreligious priesthood; but some of us would go mad with disgust at a really religious one. Everyone is indignant if our army is weak, including the people who would be even more indignant if it were strong. The social case is exactly the opposite of the medical case. We do not disagree, like doctors, about the precise nature of the illness, while agreeing about the nature of health. On the contrary, we all agree that England is unhealthy, but half of us would not look at her in what the other half would call blooming health. Public abuses are so prominent and pestilent that they sweep all generous people into a sort of fictitious unanimity. We forget that, while we agree about the abuses of things, we should differ very much about the uses of them. ... I maintain, therefore, that the common sociological method is quite useless : that of first dissecting abject poverty or cataloguing prostitution. We all dislike abject poverty; but it might be another business if we began to discuss independent and dignified poverty. We all disapprove of prostitution; but we do not all approve of purity. The only way to discuss the social evil is to get at once to the social ideal. We can all see the national madness ; but what is national sanity?

— G. K. Chesterton, *What's wrong with the world?* Cassell and Company, 1913, pp.6-7.

it is we who are God, and that all things seek us and should flow towards us.

'The serpent said, "of course you will not die. God knows that as soon as you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing both good and evil"' [Genesis iii,4]

The irony and deceit was lost on poor Adam and Eve: they *would* assuredly die, and while it was true that their eyes were to be opened, the sight of evil would blind them to the beauty of good; and suffering and death would follow.

This saga repeats itself every second of our lives, and we find ourselves dealing with serpents that would con us at every turn.

Our Lord came to re-set our coordinates, to re-open the eyes of Faith, to re-adjust our direction

finders so that we could once again fly true towards our heavenly goal.

Daniel Arnault, whom Ernst Curtius³ describes as the 'great and distant master of Dante,' writing of the upsidedown world of his day – the late 12th century – says that love and joy born of his Catholic faith was what had restored his balance 'when he attempted to hunt the hare with the ox.' that is to say, when he attempted the impossible, the preposterous, the unimaginable.⁴

This love and joy derived from our Catholic Faith, is still the antidote to the topsy-turveydom that lays claim to normality in our lovable and seductive yet terrifyingly mad, mad world.

In our own time we find people like Jim Muller, a cardiologist who helped launch an effort by

American and USSR physicians to oppose nuclear warfare and whose movement resulted in a Nobel Prize, now spearheads a lay initiative called The Voice of the Faithful. Its motto is: 'Keep the Faith, change the Church'.⁵

This is not the place to argue the point about democracy versus monarchy in the Church – some amongst us have succumbed to that temptation too readily, and its divisiveness is too apparent.

The Church is neither for or against either of these systems. Its own hierarchical structure was given to it by our Lord. But the destructive effects of de-centralisation as it is sometimes called, or more correctly, 'de-Catholicising of the Church,' have been unleashed on numerous occasions since the Church was established by our Lord – notably in 1054 [when the Greeks definitively separated themselves from Rome] and in 1534 [when the English followed Germany and Switzerland into Protestantism].

The pernicious effects of these ruptures are still with us. Michael Cerelarius in Constantinople, Luther in Germany, Henry VIII in England, Calvin in Switzerland and Knox in Scotland are good examples of human beings playing at God and bringing His house down about our ears.

The history of the Church is not a homogeneous, monochrome reality. The Faith [which is preserved in its purity, like a treasure, by the See of Peter the fisherman who was entrusted with confirming his brethren] acts as a leaven – but not all the grains that go into making up the loaf are of the same texture, or of the same family: some are barley, some are spelt or other forms of wheat or maize, rice, millet, oats, rye or even carob beans.

And we humans are even more diversified than the grains that form our 'staff of life'. So the leaven acts in each of us differently. But we would be unwise to claim that its manifestation in us is its totality.

TRUTH IS THE TRAP

IT IS impossible to be just to the Catholic Church. The moment men cease to pull against it they feel a tug towards it. The moment they cease to shout it down they begin to listen to it with pleasure.

The moment they try to be fair to it they begin to be fond of it. But when that affection has passed a certain point it begins to take on the tragic and menacing grandeur of a great love affair. The man has exactly the same sense of having committed or compromised himself; of having been in a sense entrapped, even if he is glad to be entrapped. But for a considerable time he is not so much glad as simply terrified. It may be that this real psychological experience has been misunderstood by stupider people and is responsible for all that remains of the legend that Rome is a mere trap. But that legend misses the whole point of the psychology.

It is not the Pope who has set the trap or the priests who have baited it. The whole point of the position is that the trap is simply the truth. The whole point is that the man himself has made his way towards the trap of truth, and not the trap that has run after the man. All steps except the last step he has taken eagerly on his own account, out of interest in the truth; and even the last step, or the last stage, only alarms him because it is so very true.

If I may refer once more to a personal experience, I may say that I for one was never less troubled by doubts than in the last phase, when I was troubled by fears. Before that final delay I had been detached and ready to regard all sorts of doctrines with an open mind.

Since that delay has ended in decision, I have had all sorts of changes in mere mood; and I think I sympathise with doubts and difficulties more than I did before. But I had no doubts or difficulties just before. I had only fears; fears of something that had the finality and simplicity of suicide. But the more I thrust the thing into the back of my mind, the more certain I grew of what Thing it was. And by a paradox that does not frighten me now in the least, it may be that I shall never again have such absolute assurance that the thing is true as I had when I made my last effort to deny it.

– G. K. Chesterton, *The Catholic Church and Conversion*, London, Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1926, p.62.

Ulrich shows how an essentially good populace can easily be swayed by incessant rhetoric and a partisan press.

THE MAKING OF HITLER

By Jude P. Dougherty



CONFRONTED with a 998-page volume, one can only hint at its content. The book is not a pleasant read, although it contains a lot of material relevant to the present that needs to be taken seriously.

The story of Hitler's rise to power is interesting in itself, but Volker Ullrich describes Hitler's ascent to power in the context of Germany's turmoil in the years following its defeat in the First World War and the damage done to its economy by the Treaty of Versailles. Social conditions begged for strong leadership. And Germany got it with the creation of the National Socialist Party with Adolf Hitler in command.

At age 30, Hitler was not the anti-Semite he eventually became. In spite of a few eccentricities – he was a serious, introverted man who read a lot and did not say much – he could be taken as an ordinary young man. He was discharged from the Wehrmacht after admirable service on the front line in the First and Third Battle of Ypres and was awarded the Iron Cross, First Class, an unusual award for a mere private.

There is evidence that he got along well with comrades. His relationship with Jews was amicable. He loved the poetry of Heinrich Heine and the music of Gustav Mahler. He remained grateful to a number of Jewish patrons and to the Jewish community of Munich for their homeless shelters, which he used when he was down and out.

Ulrich, Volker. *Hitler: Ascent 1889-1939*. Translated from the German by Jefferson Chase. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. x + 998 pp.

Hitler's rise to power was due in part to his speaking ability, a talent that enabled him to engage an audience large or small, which he used effectively in opposing Kurt Eisner, a Bolshevik who in 1919 attempted to establish a Bavarian Soviet Republic. Eisner was a Jew, a Communist, and an internationalist, traits anathema to one, like Hitler, devoted to the Fatherland. In opposition to Eisner Hitler founded of the National Socialist Party (NDSAP).



In 1920 alone he was twenty-one times the main speaker at Nazi party rallies. He did not speak extemporaneously but carefully prepared all his speeches, which like an actor he could modify to meet the mood of his audience.

At some point, due to the support of some prominent figures, he realized that he had been thrust into a position of leadership and could make a difference in the political scene. He seized upon a current of anti-Semitism in the populace and used it to his advantage.

Jews were widely perceived as shirking military combat duty and as financially profiting from the war. Though he had little respect for the masses that followed him, he adopted their anti-Semitism and declared that "Germany must be for Germans alone" and rid itself of the influx from the East.

In January 1923, French and Belgian troops entered the Ruhr Valley to punish Germany for falling behind on its reparation payments. In an effort to pay its debts, authorities in Germany had devalued its currency to such an extent that the exchange rate with the dollar was a million to one.

Almost overnight the middle and working classes saw their savings disappear, while the financial sector amassed huge fortunes. The capitalists who gained by devaluation were perceived to be Jewish. Demonstrations, strikes, and food riots shook the entire country.

Hitler thought that the time was ripe to seize political power in order to cleanse the Fatherland of

its internal enemies and prepare the populace for liberation. Hitler's failed attempt to seize power in the Beer Hall Putsch in Munich (November 8-9, 1923), resulted in his being tried and imprisoned, but did nothing to undermine his stature.

Confined at Landsburg Prison to serve a six-month sentence, he lived in quarters that were described at the time by a journalist as "more like a spa than a prison." His treatment reminded another of "the kind of punishment that might be handed out for a gentleman's indiscretion, a holiday disguised by some legalese."

In prison, Hitler received visitors, up to as many as five a day, from all walks of life. He was provided with a typewriter and a gramophone, and showered with gifts, flowers, and confections from admirers, so much so that his room, in the account of a guard, had the odor of a delicatessen.

While in Landsburg Prison Hitler wrote his two-volume *Mein Kampf* (published in 1925, initially to modest sales). His latent or dormant anti-Semitism was reinforced by what he read while imprisoned. Transformed, he became the fanatic of his popular image. He took seriously Arthur de Gobineau's teaching on the inequality of the human race.

He read Hans Gunther's *Racial Ethology of the German People* and Martin Grant's *The Passing of a Great People*, as well as the racial pamphlets of Henry Ford. He found support for his racial social theory in the social Darwinism of the day.

Chapters of Ullrich's book follow with titles such as "Dark Star Rising," "Totalitarian Revolution," "Eviscerating Versailles," "Prelude to Genocide," and "Hitler and the Churches."

After coming to power Hitler initially posed as a statesman who wanted to cooperate with Germany's two churches. Catholic laymen early on had resisted Hitler's rise to power. Catholic

Dealing with Obstacles

AT POINTS where we find resistance to the word of God our best *efforts* will not avail unless we rely on love and prayer. With these arms we shall often find it possible to bring down the walls of hostility as Joshua did when he brought down the walls of Jericho with the blast of a trumpet.

—Avery Dulles, S.J., "Catholics in the world of Mass Media, Lecture for the Salesian Guild, Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, January 23, 1999.

bishops in their pastoral letters consistently warned against the teachings of National Socialism. In August 1932 at their annual meeting at Fulda, the bishops declared that Catholics were not allowed to become members of the NSDAP.

Once in power, in a conciliatory mood, primarily because he needed the Catholic vote, Hitler instructed Franz von Papen draw up a treaty with the Vatican along the lines of the Lateran Accords that Mussolini had concluded in 1929. Though von Papen's draft prohibited Catholic clergy from engaging in any kind of political activity, the Nazi regime, in return, agreed to guarantee Catholics the freedom to practice their religion and Catholic lay organizations the ability to create schools and provide religious instruction. The treaty was perceived as "Hitler's handshake with the Pope."

The concordat had barely been signed when violations of its spirit and letter began. Party functionaries and police began targeting Catholic associations and the Catholic press. Munich's Cardinal Michael Faulhaber in a pastoral letter voiced his disapproval of the regime.

That letter, later edited by Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli and approved by Pius XI, became the papal encyclical *Mit brennender*

Sorge ("With Burning Concern"). Faulhaber's letter was printed and read in all Catholic churches on Palm Sunday, March 1937. Hitler was furious, and although Goebbels advised him to ignore it, Hitler began an all-out war in the press against the Church. "Opposition to the state cannot be tolerated," he declared.

Hitler's dealings with the Protestant Church were easy at the start. Prior to 1933, the NSDAP had received its biggest electoral triumphs in the Protestant sections of Germany. Hitler wanted to amalgamate the twenty-eight regional Protestant churches into a single Reich Church that would serve as a counterweight to the Catholic Church. Ludwig Müller was elected Reich Bishop at the first national synod in Luther's home city of Wittenberg. But Lutheran cooperation soon gave way, in part due to the opposition of Pastor Martin Niemöller and theologian Karl Barth, who recognized the direction the state was taking. Niemöller was imprisoned; Barth went on to achieve fame for his postwar treatises.

Volker Ulrich's *Hitler's Ascent* has to be considered the definitive biography of Hitler to date: 758 pages of text are supported by 212 pages of footnotes. While ever respectful of the work of previous biographers, with ample textual support, Ulrich often corrects many previously drawn profiles and judgments.

He is especially critical of those psychological analyses which superficially skim the surface of his subject's character, while ignoring its philosophical roots. Above all Ulrich shows how an essentially good populace can easily be swayed by incessant rhetoric and a partisan press.

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

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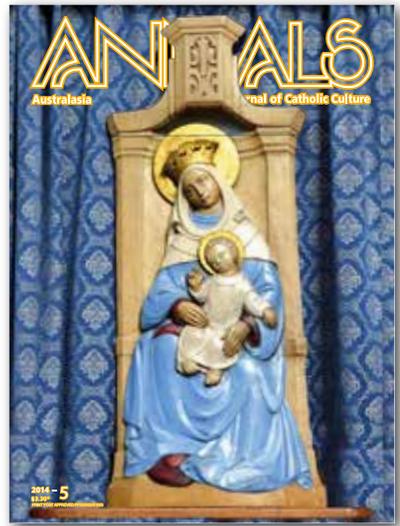
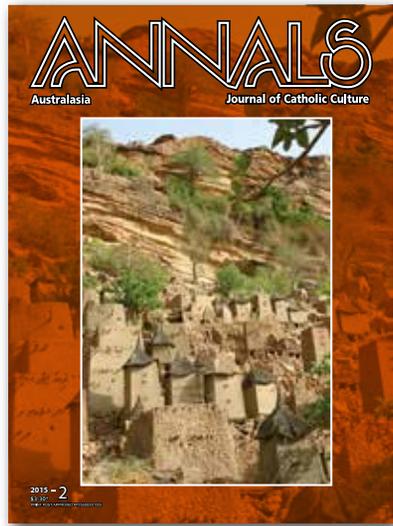
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Untended altars and empty pockets threaten the existence of isolated Catholic communities in Papua New Guinea

ENDANGERED HARVESTS

By Anthony Young, MSC



LEVATE OCULOS vestros ... *'Lift up your eyes* and see the fields, ripe for the harvest ...'. We sang those couple of verses in simple

polyphony often when we were seminarians. For many of us they encapsulated our fondest hopes; they still do, today, for me.

In the islands of the eastern Louisiade Archipelago I have been privileged to see the growth of the harvest almost from its beginning. There are so many faces there, so many stories, both happy and tragic, that mean something to me; all are beyond words. Yet one must try.

Out on the vast plains traversed by the Sepik River, a thriving parish community is born, and flourishes. It is centred on a large church built by the German Divine Word missionaries.

Then something happens: a decline begins. It continues over decades until today not even a stick of timber from the parish church remains. The harvest has been dispersed to the four winds, some of it being gathered by one or other of the small evangelical or pentecostal churches that are always waiting on the boundaries of the field.

In the mountains of Papua, our MSC mission heartland, a once thriving parish declines. Distant

communities are no longer visited by a priest. An American Southern Baptist mission flies in with helicopters and efficiently deploys to fill the vacuum. The harvest of decades is reaped, but not by the Catholic Church.

These two stories I have heard from people who have witnessed what happened. There are other stories, perhaps many, that I have not heard.

I sit with my cup of tea – or something about the same colour – looking out over the islands stretching far out of sight to the west, and behind me to the east, with their many communities of people I have known and worked for over generations. I retired as

their parish priest last year, but there is as yet no sign of a new priest on the horizon.

I can hear the sound of the shipwright and the crew hammering to fasten the roves on the copper nails of the new planks in the hull of Majella, our mission launch. As anybody in the business of maintaining wooden boats knows, keeping them seaworthy is an expensive business. Over the past five or six years it has cost us nearly \$80,000 to keep Majella afloat and working. That money came from my mother and others who support the work of the parish.

The shipwright and the crew, like the rest of the staff that keep this remote parish centre alive, have not been paid for weeks or months. Most of them have families to keep. They expect I will find the money to pay them – as I have done frequently for years now, thanks to the goodness of friends. But perhaps I am going soon.

The shipwrights have no need to hurry; they can spend time in their food gardens if they want to, because when Majella is repaired all it will do is mostly float at anchorage: it has no fuel in its tank, nor is there money to buy it.

Decline in parishes is not inevitable anywhere; the causes are complex, but I believe there are two most common, and they can be named, crudely perhaps: no priests, no money.



Celebrating the Consecration of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Alotau, Milne Bay, Eastern Papua, in June 1995. Bishop Desmond Moore, MSC officiated.

Let's look at the lack of priests. It is real. I resigned as parish priest last year to leave the way open for somebody younger to replace me. I am still waiting.

The parish of Rossel Island, our nearest neighbour, and the field in which great men have labored – Fathers Kevin Murphy, Norbert 'Nobby' Earl, Kevin English, Michael Sims, all Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) – has been without a parish priest now for over a year.

I believe there is a solution. For eight years I had an assistant priest, Alonso Memenud, a wonderful and saintly man. He came from an island in our parish. Before he was ordained he had been a catechist for forty years. He had a wife and ten children. He had left school after completing Grade 6 Primary. After his wife died he was ordained deacon and then priest, at the age of 72. For the next eight years he carried on a very fruitful ministry among his people.

We are fortunate to have in this country many good men like him, catechists and church leaders, whose wives have sadly predeceased them, who would qualify for training to be ordained as Alonso was.

The long and precious tradition of a celibate clergy in the Roman rite is not in question. But as always, *lex suprema salus animarum*, 'The salvation of souls is the most important law'.

The only option open to the parish is to wait for a new, celibate pastor. But even if a priest for the parish came over the horizon tomorrow morning, there would still be a problem: he would be unable to move around his far flung parish!

To visit the many other communities and the schools in the islands that make up the parish, he would need to travel by boat; a boat requires fuel – lots of it – to visit the whole parish, and fuel needs to be bought. We have no money for that.

For those who are unfamiliar with our situation, here are a few quick statistics to make it a bit clearer: our parish comprises a group of many islands in a chain about two-hundred-and-fifty km end to end. There are more than five thousand Catholics in more than thirty village centres, plus students and staff in six primary schools, to whom an active pastor is expected to bring Mass and the Sacraments at times during the year.

He would normally use a large, seagoing launch, or one of the outboard motor dinghies to travel. The two launches have a total of five crew; the dinghy has a trained operator.

The pastor is also required to take care of the patients in the parish hospital and AIDS Care Centre. There is also a small high school whose students come under his care.

There are other parish staff who look after maintenance of buildings and machinery. Also a wonderful lady, formerly a religious sister, whom we call our cook, but who does much else besides.

In 2005 the parish expenditure for the year was 150,000 kina (AUD\$58,000). Allowing for inflation, today this would be roughly the equivalent of 200,000 kina (\$81,563). Nearly all this amount was made up of equal subsidies from the MSC and the diocese. A small amount – about 10,000 kina (\$4,078) – came from parishioners who are nearly all subsistence farmers without a regular cash income. In 2005 the amount of cash they received was increased by the sale of beche-de-mer. Harvesting beche-de-mer is, however, forbidden at present, as a conservation measure.

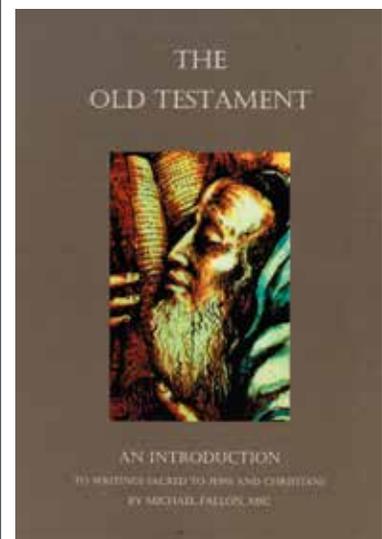
Today, our parish income for the year is roughly 50,000 kina (\$20,391), made up of 3000 kina (\$1,223) a month from MSC, and other smaller amounts from here and there. The diocese cannot now afford to give any subsidy. This income is not enough to pay the parish staff regularly,

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nor to purchase enough fuel to travel anywhere except to nearby communities. In fact, in some months, when we have a lot of visitors, it just suffices to pay the kitchen bills.

I sit here, next to the houses of our unpaid staff, who almost all have large households. I look at the boats without fuel. I look at the holes in the church gutters. I field, as best I can, enquiries from people from island communities as to when I am coming to say Mass and to baptise the children. And I think, what if a local man, a diocesan priest, comes to take over? What does he do – probably with little or no subsidy?

It is too easy to say that 'it's up to the people of the parish,' especially if the person saying it has not seen how those people live. I think that if anybody came and made a survey of the 'disposable income' held by most of the families in the parish the conclusion would be that they should be disposing of it to feed and educate their children better, and improve their overall living conditions. It would be unjust, perniciously so, in my opinion, to expect them to bear anything but a minor part of the burden of supporting the parish.

What's going to happen? These island people have a strong faith; they are tough and resourceful and it may be a long time before the sharks start to circle.

But images of the Sepik and the mountains are there, nagging. And I wonder, how is it that the fate of a harvest that has been sown and tended by so many years of love and labour, can be left solely in hands that, despite the best they can do, are seemingly quite unable to save it?

The Good Shepherd promised that nobody would ever be able to take his sheep from his hand. I have absolute faith in that promise.

FATHER TONY YOUNG, msc was for thirty-five years Parish Priest of the island of Nimoa and surrounding islands, in Eastern Papua. He can be contacted at: ayoungmsc@gmail.com or on satellite phone 0147 14 61 15.

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He was imprisoned for thirteen years in several places, nine years in solitary confinement. In one small dark room where the air was rank, he tried to breathe some fresh air through a pipe connected with the outside world. He writes in a personal record, entitled Five Loaves and Two Fish, that 'the solitary confinement with only two guards [was] a mental torture, in absolute emptiness...walking in the cell from morning until nine-thirty at night so as not to be destroyed by arthritis, at the edge of insanity'.¹

FRANCIS CARDINAL NGUYEN VAN THUAN

Agnes Nguyen speaks of her elder brother

By Wanda Skowronska



CHANCE meeting after Mass one day, near the doorway of Maroubra's Holy Family church, led to a long conversation with

Agnes Nguyen in a nearby cafe. Agnes, quietly spoken, attentive with deep, searching eyes, is the sister of the Servant of God Francis Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan, whose cause for beatification is before the Congregation for the Saints in Rome. It is not every day that one meets the sister of one many already refer to as a 'saint', who along with his family suffered immensely because of the Communist takeover of Vietnam and who was imprisoned in solitary confinement for many years.

At the *Tradewinds* Cafe, a regular meeting place for people at Maroubra parish, Agnes sat peacefully and took a deep breath before telling me her story which involved major geo-political events, dislocation and war in the past century.

She was one of eight children and her brother – now Venerable Francis Nguyen Van Thuan (henceforth Van Thuan) was the eldest. Agnes was child 'number 8'. In our conversations she told me of her special relationship with Van Thuan. Her abiding memory of was of a kind elder brother who, when he caught Agnes misbehaving,

as young children sometimes do, would never punish her, just explain quietly why she should act differently. She recalls that she sensed he was different, that he had an abiding sense of eternal things – a sense that never left him and which imprinted itself in her memory.

Agnes gave a brief outline of her brother's life. Van Thuan was born April 17, 1928, in Hue, about half way up Vietnam. Hue is an especially beautiful city - Agnes' eyes misted over when she recalled earlier happier days there. It so happens that I visited Vietnam and myself had formed the view that Hue was its most beautiful place. It was known as the Divine Capital, the seat of the emperor whom the people considered a god.

While the capital of Vietnam changed many times, none of the other ancient cities remained as well preserved as Hue. Van Thuan, growing up in this ancient city of poets and artists, was always drawn to its sense of history, its natural beauty and to scholarly and spiritual pursuits. From here grew his love for his war-torn



Cardinal Van Thuan in prison, painted by well-known Australian artist Paul Newton.

country with ever vivid memories of suffering alongside its history of cultural achievement and religious persecution.

Van Thuan's family were devout Catholics and prayed each night in a family chapel which was part of their home. Agnes remembered sleeping through some prayers and litanies but despite dropping off, their import seeped into her soul.

Van Thuan and Agnes came from a family that had the first Vietnamese martyrs of 1698 among its ancestors. Their ancestors also suffered for their faith under the Emperor Tu Duc who tried to stamp out 'the imported religion' in the nineteenth century. In fact, The Holy See estimates the number of Vietnamese martyrs at anywhere between 130,000 and 300,000.² Pope John Paul II decided to canonize those whose names are known and unknown, giving them a single feast day, November 24.

Van Thuan grew up with memories of heroic loyalty to his family's Catholic faith and knew early in life that he had a vocation to the priesthood. Agnes remembers him at age 13, leaving with a small suitcase for the minor seminary in An Ninh and wondered, as a little girl, where he had disappeared to. She learned of his studies there and at the major seminary of Phu Xuan.

He came home for holidays and spent time talking to his sister in the garden. Once he found Agnes up a tree, not wanting to come down. He patiently explained that it was dangerous to stay up there as she might fall asleep and fall down. When she was on *terra firma*, he would teach her to colour in, to pray and would answer questions such as - why do some trees have beautiful fruit to eat and why do others have none, why are some flowers red and others white? She recalled him teaching her to make the sign of the Cross slowly, with reverence saying, 'we must always venerate the Cross.'

The Clay Pot, and the Potter

IN THE LAST analysis it is on this elementary yet generally misunderstood notion of the state of a creature, the condition of a creature, that we must here place the decisive accent. By a paradox which well deserves our attention, the more man, misled not by science but by a certain elementary philosophy of science, comes to regard himself as a mere link in an endless chain, or as the result of purely natural causes, the more he arrogates to himself the right of absolute sovereignty in all that concerns the ordering of his personal conduct. The more [man] is theoretically humiliated by a materialistic philosophy which claims to deny any special identity to himself or his action, the more does he actually develop a practical pride which impels him to deny the existence of any human order to which he might owe obedience.

– Gabriel Marcel, *Homo Viator: Prolégomènes a une Métaphysique de l'Espérance*, Aubie, Editions Montaigne, 1944, p.130; *Homo Viator: Introduction to the Metaphysic of Hope*, St Augustine's Press, Indiana, 2010, p.89.

On June 11, 1953 Van Thuan was ordained a priest and sent to the parish of St. Francis in Hue as a curate. A few months later he was appointed chaplain of the Pellerin Institute (where he had received his education), the central hospital and the provincial prison.

Van Thuan was gifted as a scholar and linguist and memorised reams of facts with ease. Sent to Rome to continue his studies, he graduated in Canon Law at the Pontifical Urbanianum University and returned to Vietnam to be professor, then rector of Hue seminary, the diocese where he became vicar general in 1964. During these years of war and upheaval, he watched his country torn apart, suffered when his uncle President Diem was assassinated, and saw many people around him killed.

On April 13, 1967, Pope Paul VI appointed him the first Vietnamese bishop of Nha Trang and then seven years later he was appointed Archbishop coadjutor of Saigon. Then began his *via crucis*.

In 1975, while some westerners thought the Vietnam war 'over', a period of intense suffering for the Vietnamese under Communism was to intensify and become a nightmare, during which many

attempted to escape, many died at sea and many were imprisoned.

While some ignorant, if not deluded, westerners such as Jane Fonda supported the victory of the Viet Cong, millions began to die violent deaths as victims of Communism. The left simply fail to grasp that Communism was, as American ex-Communist David Horowitz observes 'an idea so passionately believed and yet so profoundly mistaken that it has caused more misery and suffering than any single force in history.'³

Some of Van Thuan's family escaped but the bishop was confronted by Communist leaders who arrested him, shouted at him as if he were a criminal, and took him to Nha Trang and demanded he renounce his faith. He did not. He was imprisoned for 13 years, in several places, nine years in solitary confinement. In one small dark room where the air was rank, he tried to breathe some fresh air through a pipe connected with the outside world. He writes in a personal record, entitled *Five Loaves and Two Fish*, that 'the solitary confinement with only two guards [was] a mental torture, in absolute emptiness...walking in the cell from morning until ninety-three at night so as not to be

destroyed by arthritis, at the edge of insanity.⁴

Van Thuan, in conversation with God, came to understand he was to 'choose God and not God's works' adding 'in truth Lord, here is my cathedral, here is the people of God ... in the midst of these desperate, miserable brothers. It is your will, so it is my choice.'⁵ He prayed, sang, and was able to receive some wine for his 'stomach ailment' on rare occasions. He recalls, 'I will never be able to express my immense joy: every day, with three drops of wine and one drop of water in the palm of my hand, I celebrate Mass.'⁶ He was able to dole out small portions in such a way as to say Mass every day. When he was in crowded cells, he and fellow prisoners made little containers out of cigarette boxes to reserve the Blessed Sacrament which the emaciated bishop wore in his shirt pocket.

In time, Van Thuan befriended some guards individually, speaking to them of Christ, and the hope he always had, despite his arrest.

Even though the guards changed regularly, he managed to convert some and even to persuade some to give him bits of paper on which he wrote his book *The Road to Hope*, a short reflection on the nature of hope – which actually helped him keep his equanimity and sanity. With a small piece of wood he scraped out the shape of a cross and wore this with a piece of wire he acquired, as his pectoral cross.

While in prison Van Thuan's family had escaped to the west – two sisters and Van Thuan's parents came to Australia. There were unceasing efforts to free him, alerting others to the plight of Van Thuan and others after Vietnam's liberation. Finally in 1989 with the fall of the Soviet Union, a window of opportunity arose, and negotiations intensified for his release.

One can only imagine how fragile Van Thuan was, leaving prison, being transported to Rome to meet a fellow survivor of Communism, the then Pope John Paul II. The

Communists' idea was to be rid of him to spread the lie that the bishop had abandoned his diocese. After prayer and consultation with the pope, Van Thuan returned to Hanoi, as there was no bishop there. Catholic bishops were accused of plotting against the state and Van Thuan's stay became increasingly difficult. Finally he was told he had to leave Vietnam and so he went forcibly into exile to Rome.

Van Thuan was given the position of vice president of the Pontifical Council for Social Justice and Peace, becoming president in 1998. He never ceased trying to help the nearly seven million Catholics in Vietnam (8% of the population). On February 21, 2001 he was elevated to the College of Cardinals by then Pope John Paul II, who named him Cardinal of the Church of Santa Maria della Scala.

Agnes will never forget the reunion with his parents after so many years imprisonment. Van Thuan asked his sisters not to inform his parents and simply



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turned up at the house of Agnes' sister (Anh Nguyen) in Haberfield, Sydney, where they lived, giving all concerned unforgettable memories of an emotion-filled reunion after long, dark years of suffering. Van Thuan then came to Australia on annual visits - cuddling koalas and feeding kangaroos - until he himself died on Sept 16, 2002 at 6pm in Rome.

Agnes has never ceased asking his intercession for many needs in her life and there have been several cures from terminal illnesses. In fact one person, Joseph Nguyen, has had a death certificate declared 'void' because of the intercession of Cardinal Van Thuan. Joseph, an American seminarian had the virus H1N1 "Swine Flu" and severe pneumonia leading to a 32 day coma and 'death'. His heart rate dropped beyond recovery and all brain activity was gone. As a death certificate was filled in, Joseph's parents asked an old family friend for help 'from a Vietnamese cardinal' who was being considered for beatification. To everyone's surprise, after intercessory prayers, Joseph woke up and to the amazement of doctors, recovered completely. Joseph also related that Cardinal Van Thuan had appeared to him on two occasions as he lay dying - and had spoken to him.⁷

It was in 2007 that Agnes recalls 'three officials from the Holy See' coming to Sydney ask her for testimony in regard to Van Thuan's life, as they had done with other family members. She recalls their question in Polding House: 'Are you Agnes?' After she replied in the affirmative they said they sought 'only the truth'. Agnes was able to recall the life she shared with her brother in Vietnam and his singular focus in following Christ and her memories became part of the testimony. Pope Francis stated on July 8, 2013:

So many people have written to tell of graces [received] and signs attributed to the intercession of the Servant of God Cardinal Van Thuan. We thank the Lord for this venerable

The Blind leading the Blind

SINCE No one can teach a skill unless he has first diligently learnt it, what is it that makes the unlearned so rash as to enter the profession of teaching, when the art of teaching is the art of all arts?

Everyone knows that injuries to the mind are more difficult to avoid than wounds in a body. Physicians of the body would not be so presumptuous as to attempt to suggest cures for complaints they could not identify, especially if they knew nothing of the disease, or of the effects of the herbs that were to be used.

Sometimes, however, there are teachers ... who although they are ignorant of spiritual matters, unblushingly set themselves up as physicians of the mind. And since, in our day, by God's grace, the world bestows great honour on the pious, it appears that many claim to being devout teachers because they desire the honour of the world. Since they have undertaken Pastoral Care out of pride and vanity they are incapable of fulfilling their role adequately, and cannot themselves teach others to be humble.

It was such people whom God criticised through the mouth of prophets, and reproached them for their behaviour when he said: 'They reigned, but not by my will; they were princes, but I do not acknowledge them'. If they exercise authority, they do so by their own power, not by that of the Highest Judge. Their authority does not rest on a foundation laid down by God's Power, nor were they appointed because they possessed special qualities. It was of their own volition, and because they wanted to grasp power rather than be given it as their just dessert. And the eternal and unseen Judge allows them to rise, as if he did not know them. He does not interfere, as an example of patience. But though they perform many wonders in their office, when they come before him eventually, he will say to them: 'Depart from me, you evildoers; I do not know you'.

He also rebuked them for their lack of learning when he said, 'The shepherds had no understanding: they had access to my Law, but they did not know me.' Often, through the folly of the teacher, disciples come to grief; and often, because of the wisdom of the teacher foolish disciples are saved. But, if both be foolish, then we must consider what Christ said in his gospel: 'If the blind lead the blind, then they will both fall into a ditch'.

— From *Pastoral Care* by Pope St Gregory the Great [540-604 AD] from a west Saxon version translated from the Latin by King Alfred of England [848-899].

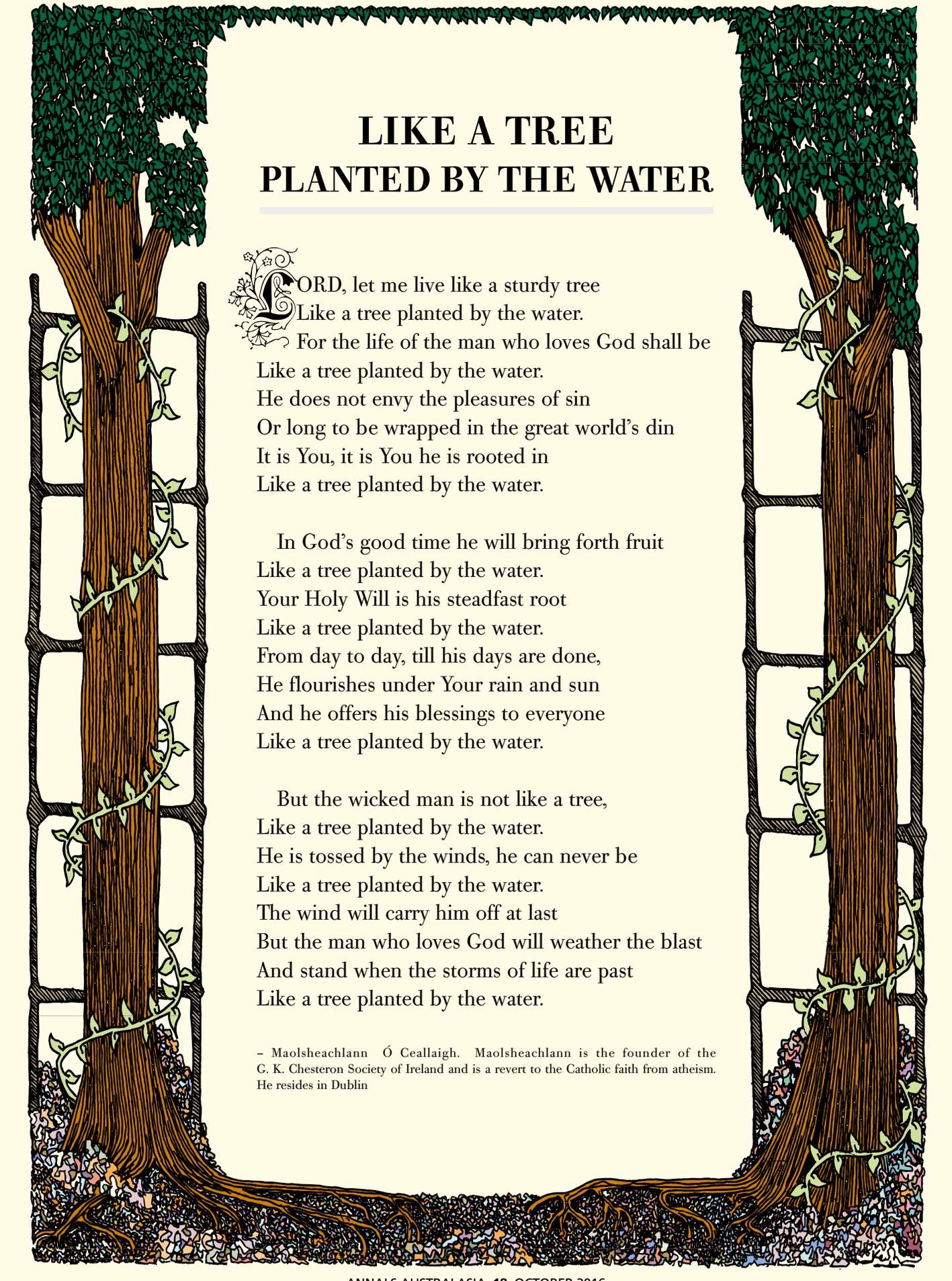
*brother, son of the East, who ended his earthly journey in the service of the Successor of St Peter.*⁸

On October 5, 2015, the diocesan process for the beatification of Servant of God Van Thuan began in Rome. And no doubt before long, Agnes will come quietly to a pew at the local Catholic church in Sydney, knowing her brother has been proclaimed by the Pope to be Blessed and after that, who knows....?

WANDA SKOWRONSKA is a registered psychologist who works as a counsellor in inner city schools in Sydney. She has recently been awarded a PhD in Psychology/Theology at Melbourne's John-Paul II Institute. She has done voluntary work

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

1. Nguyen Van Thuan, *Five Loaves and Two Fish* (Vietnam: published by the community of Our Lady of Lavang, 2000), 21.
2. A history of the Vietnamese martyrs can be found on: http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=4951
3. David Horowitz, *Left Illusions: an Intellectual Odyssey* (Dallas: Spence Publishing Company, 2003), 139-140.
4. Nguyen Van Thuan, *Five Loaves and Two Fish* (Vietnam: published by the community of Our Lady of Lavang, 2000), 21.
5. *Ibid.*, 25.
6. *Ibid.*, 40.
7. <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/seminarian-may-owe-his-life-to-cardinal-van-thuans-intercession/>
8. 'Pope's Address to Vietnamese Delegation of Beatification Cause of Cardinal Van Thuan', *Zenit*, July 8, 2013: <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/pope-address-to-vietnamese-delegation-of-beatification-cause-of-cardinal-van-thuan>



LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY THE WATER

GOD, let me live like a sturdy tree
Like a tree planted by the water.
For the life of the man who loves God shall be
Like a tree planted by the water.
He does not envy the pleasures of sin
Or long to be wrapped in the great world's din
It is You, it is You he is rooted in
Like a tree planted by the water.

In God's good time he will bring forth fruit
Like a tree planted by the water.
Your Holy Will is his steadfast root
Like a tree planted by the water.
From day to day, till his days are done,
He flourishes under Your rain and sun
And he offers his blessings to everyone
Like a tree planted by the water.

But the wicked man is not like a tree,
Like a tree planted by the water.
He is tossed by the winds, he can never be
Like a tree planted by the water.
The wind will carry him off at last
But the man who loves God will weather the blast
And stand when the storms of life are past
Like a tree planted by the water.

- Maolsheachlann Ó Ceallaigh. Maolsheachlann is the founder of the C. K. Chesteron Society of Ireland and is a revert to the Catholic faith from atheism. He resides in Dublin

In Australia this leftist capture of the cultural heights has advanced to a frightening degree. The ABC pours out leftist propaganda and provides highly-paid sinecures for leftist cultural figures and activists. Its charter and obligations of impartiality are blatantly ignored.'

THE DANGERS OF POISONED PROSE

By Giles Auty



URING the eleven years in which I worked for *The Spectator* in London our circulation more than tripled yet I can recall seeing only one very modest form of external advertising for our weekly during that whole time.

That took the form of small, so-called 'tube cards' on London Underground trains and bore a very simple message indeed: *The Spectator* - Politically Incorrect.

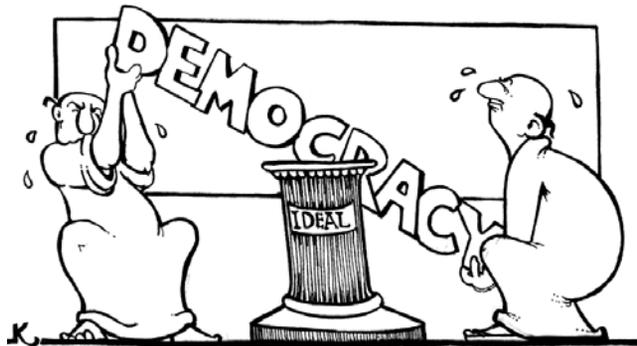
In those days *The Spectator* could certainly claim a forceful team of writers yet I suspect our simple slogan also had a significant bearing on our rapidly rising tally of readers. I continue to believe that most people of genuine intelligence distrust political correctness instinctively even if they fail as yet to grasp its long-term political purposes.

Here are a few telling words from noted English philosopher Roger Scruton on this precise subject: "Leftist Newspeak is a powerful tool ... the greatest task on the right, therefore, is to rescue the language of politics: to put within our grasp what has been forcibly removed from it by jargon".

I am sad that too few in Australia comprehend, as yet, the wealth of wisdom to be found in this and

other published comments by one of our current world's clearer thinkers. In Australia, by contrast, we succumb all too easily to the temptations offered by the purely rhetorical and often tainted prose, which has infiltrated everyday life and parlance here, seemingly with little resistance.

Two of the major culprits for this state of affairs are our advertising industry which attempts, on the



whole, to anaesthetise our thinking processes while in pursuit of profit for its clients, and, less obviously perhaps, much of our general media, which sadly employs similar tactics - often shrinking life-changing moral and political issues to easily digested sound-bites.

I am strongly tempted here to compare a poisoning of our language to an imagined poisoning of our water supply. If the latter were to occur we would all be up in arms in an instant, yet the verbal forms of pollution to which I refer really are happening here, more or

less continuously - all too often without remark.

Happily, not everyone is asleep at the wheel.

Recently *The Spectator Australia* carried an article in which Hal G. P. Colebatch repeated some of the words he spoke at the fund-raiser he organised to help preserve Australia's 60-year-old literary magazine *Quadrant*, whose grant has just been summarily ended

without explanation by the Literature Board of the Australia Council. Here is some of what Mr. Colebatch said:

"The most important figure in Australian politics today died in Italy some decades ago. He was the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci adapted Marx to modernity. He believed that the way to overthrow the capitalist democratic state was

not to attempt a working-class revolution but to overthrow the culture. This was to be done by the Left capturing the cultural institutions and the commanding heights of cultural power. In Australia this leftist capture of the cultural heights has advanced to a frightening degree. The ABC pours out leftist propaganda and provides highly-paid sinecures for leftist cultural figures and activists. Its charter and obligations of impartiality are blatantly ignored.'

In Australia, *Quadrant* has stood out consistently during its long

England's Unacknowledged Cultural Revolution

THESE HISTORICAL remains in one of England's oldest towns tell their town story of the nature of England's past. They are replicated in many other English towns and villages, like nearby Fairford where the Church of St Mary the Virgin has the only complete set of medieval stained glass windows in England, setting out the Christian faith in pictorial form. Later we visited the county city of Gloucester, dominated by its superb cathedral which has been a site of community and worship for 1300 years, bespeaking stability, continuity and permanence to the human mind. Here again is a soaring Norman tower which is regarded as one of the finest in western Europe, and the harmony of design, light and colour of the Lady Chapel is crowned by the magnificent medieval stained glass of the great east window. One of the most obvious signs of some drastic change in the past is the disappearance of the old abbey at Cirencester and the monastery at Gloucester. The elegance of the ruined remnant of the Augustinian gatehouse and the still beautiful Benedictine cloisters reminded us - as did the broken, defaced reredos in the superb Lady Chapel at Gloucester - of the countless treasures of art and architecture which were destroyed during Henry VIII's 'Reformation' and are now much lamented by cultural historians. It gives some perspective to the scene when we remember that, just as in so many other places in England, the great Cathedral itself was just the monastic church of the Benedictine community at Gloucester until the monastery was destroyed in 1540.

- Edwin Jones, *The English Nation, The Great Myth*, Sutton Publishing, 1998, Introduction, pp.vi-vii.

and honourable history against the creeping, covertly anti-Christian totalitarianism of our post-modern political Left. Supposedly neutral organisations such as the ABC, and the Australia Council, are, as Colebatch pointed out in his talk, key figures in this anti-democratic process as also are most of our universities and non fee-paying schools - to say nothing of state-sponsored cultural bodies of all kinds.

Australia - as are many notable Western democracies - is, in fact, being eroded rapidly from within, by bodies which basically despise most true forms of political, religious and cultural freedom and belief.

If you doubt me, even for an instant, consider the ferocious campaign waged against Christian groups which planned to discuss a balanced Christian contribution to the current 'same-sex' marriage debate at a Sydney hotel. Hotel staff were threatened physically by

advocates of so-called 'marriage equality,' and the harmless discussion itself was therefore sadly called off. Can you seriously imagine such a thing happening ten, let alone twenty years ago, in Australia?

If you cannot, please ask yourself this: what is really happening now to the country you once thought that you knew?

Indeed, if you start to consider this whole matter even briefly it becomes apparent that the expression 'marriage equality' is, in itself, a perfect example of sophistry - which simply means fallacious reasoning.

Were the phrase itself to be *universally* 'accepted' it would, in fact, serve the cleverly conceived purposes of being a semantic 'trojan horse'. The fact that homosexual couples of either gender wish to undergo some kind of civil ceremony or other is basically neither here nor there; indeed many people who are broadly

sympathetic, may actively applaud such private celebrations.

The supposed 'enemy' which is really being addressed is the 'traditional' family which in turn upholds the time-honoured and traditional Western state.

Why then is it that people without first-hand experience of old-fashioned communism or of more recent forms of leftist totalitarianism imagine that the embrace of ideology such as this could conceivably bring benefits of any kind to the nations of the free world?

The Black Book of Communism which was first published in French in 1997 was republished in English in 1999 by Harvard University Press. The book is less than perfect, I agree, yet if anyone of student age were to seek an invaluable factual primer to the terrible human deprivations wrought by communism during the 20th century they could hardly do better. Yet neo-Marxism in a variety of different guises, continues to underwrite much of contemporary Australian culture with predictably stifling effects.

For the first half of the twenty years I have spent so far in Australia I found pervasive Australian ignorance of foreign affairs merely difficult to credit but since becoming an Australian citizen myself seven years ago my sense of disbelief has been replaced by one of increased frustration plus a desire for greater personal involvement.

This is thus, now, also *my* country, which internal militants are trying to wreck.

Indeed, while culture continues to be used as a cloak for what are basically political intentions, the stature of our culture itself has likewise gone into reverse.

When the ambitious exhibition AUSTRALIA opened at the Royal Academy of Arts in London at the latter end of 2013 it was very poorly received by senior British journalists who voted it the worst major exhibition held in London

during that entire year. Very strangely to me, much of the publicity for the show centred on artists and ideas drawn from the ground-breaking Australian show *Recent Australian Painting* which was held at the Whitechapel Gallery in London *way back in 1961*. Had we really achieved nothing new of any note at all, in the intervening half century?

What you may not realise here is that within our current, stifling cultural regime, art is judged generally now by its putative contribution to leftist politics rather than simply as art – a view also encouraged in generally deskilled art training courses. Take a trip to Europe sometime soon and take a look at the art produced more than a third of a millennium ago by the likes of Rembrandt, Velazquez and Vermeer. Then please deliver to yourself – or to me – a lecture about the inevitable ‘progress’ of art itself and of human civilisation as a whole – if you still feel able to do so.

I came to Australia in 1995 to take up a post offered me as national art correspondent for *The Australian*. Even before writing a word here, my appointment was attacked in a long article in the Fairfax press followed shortly by a lengthy, most dishonestly-edited television program put out by the ABC.

Inadvertently I had walked into a hornet’s nest by coming here. Indeed, when a question arose of re-employing me about seven years ago at *The Australian* I was informed by a senior editorial figure there that my views on visual art were completely unacceptable since they failed to be based on ‘Marxist analysis’.

I do not for a moment dispute the person-in-question’s right to make such a judgement. Indeed there may be an odd publication or two still left in Australia where ‘Marxist analysis’ may neither be especially welcome, let alone *de rigueur*. In my world, at least, people have a perfect right to their

ANNALS QUICK CROSSWORD NO. 93

Across

- 2 Major part of play
- 4 Capital of Belarus
- 6 Lowers in dignity, status or character
- 8 Has possession of
- 9 Annoy or anger
- 11 Equally scored in a contest
- 12 To ring a bell slowly
- 14 Cash register
- 15 Morally excellent
- 16 Rain heavily
- 18 Spellbound
- 19 Distribute cards
- 21 Window glass
- 22 Sliding components of a chest
- 24 Cognizant
- 25 Egg of a louse

Down

- 1 Skin condition
- 2 Points a weapon
- 3 Former Russian emperor
- 4 Repair
- 5 Join together closely
- 6 Lived as a permanent resident
- 7 Advertising phrases
- 8 Lubricated
- 10 Run away to get married
- 11 Gratuity
- 13 Nephew of Abraham
- 17 Historic seat of ancient Irish kings
- 18 Infrequent
- 20 Fine linen fabric
- 21 Impudent
- 23 Serve at table

© Brian O'Neill November 2015

opinions. Much the same arguments may be applied therefore to our publishing industry.

Rather oddly, therefore, in a country where my kind of opinions are supposedly shared by so few I am grateful that a publisher I respect is shortly producing an anthology of some fifty of my best and most hard-hitting articles from fairly recent times. Their scope covers a very wide range of subjects indeed which just possibly share a

single underlying theme: what on earth have we done to what was once a truly wonderful civilisation and culture?

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*. His book *Culture at Crisis Point*, £29.95 (Connor Court 2016) is now available from Connor Court 0497-900-685.

GORKY, EUGENICS AND EXPERIMENTING ON HUMANS

SOME ... did not hesitate to cross the ideological barrier and move from social to racial concerns. In a 1932 letter, Gorky (who it should be remembered was a personal friend of Genrikh Yagoda, the head of the GPU, an organization for which his son also worked) wrote: 'Class hatred should be cultivated by an organic revulsion as far as the enemy is concerned. Enemies must be seen as inferior. I believe quite profoundly that the enemy is our inferior, and is a degenerate not only on the physical plane but also in the moral sense.' Taking these ideas to their logical extreme, [Gorky] favored the creation of the U.S.S.R. Institute of Experimental Medicine. Early in 1933, he wrote that 'the time is nearing when science will imperiously address normal people and say, would you like all diseases, handicaps, imperfections, senility, and premature death of the organism to be studied minutely and-precisely? Such study cannot be carried out solely with experiments on dogs, rabbits, and guinea pigs. Experiments on human beings are indispensable, for what must be studied are the human mechanisms of the functioning of the organism, intra-cellular processes, hematopoiesis, neuro-chemistry, and all the processes that go on inside the organism. Hundreds of human guinea pigs are required. This will be a true service to humanity, which will be far more important and useful than the extermination of tens of millions of healthy beings for the comfort of a miserable, physically, psychologically, and morally degenerate class of predators and parasites.' The worst aspects of socio-historical scientism thus rejoined those of biological scientism. This biological or zoological strain of thinking enables us to understand better why so many of the crimes of Communism were crimes against humanity, and how Marxist-Leninist ideology managed to justify these crimes to its followers. Considering legal decisions about recent discoveries in biology, Bruno Gravier writes: 'Legal texts about bioethics ... act as signposts about some of the more insidious threats linked to the progress of science, whose role in the birth of ideologies linked to terror has yet to be fully realised. The fundamentally eugenic thrust of work by well-known doctors such as [Charles] Richet and [Alexis] Carrel clearly paved the way for Nazi extermination and the wayward actions of Nazi doctors.'

– The Black Book of Communism, Stephane Courtois *et alii*, Harvard University Press, 1999, p.751-752

Helen Gibbons's eye-witness account of the carnage in her letters to her mother, is just one among many such independent testimonies to the genocide of Armenian Christians at the hands of Sultan Abdul Hamid – whom the Young Turks deposed on April 27, 1909.

THE RED RUGS OF TARSUS

By Paul Stenhouse



MURICE BARING, quoting Robert Louis Stevenson, once wrote that a book without a preface was like a man without a hat.

Well, there is an author's Preface to this book, so we are not hatless. What follow are a few reflections on the reprint of an early 20th century book with a grim yet salient message to a 21st century readership.

Its author, Helen Davenport Gibbons, was a twenty-five-year-old Presbyterian turned Congregationalist from the United States. In 1908 she and Herbert, her missionary husband, found themselves in the province of Adana in the southern part of the Ottoman Empire, not far from Aleppo in what is, today, Syria. They had been invited to go to help Protestant missionaries who were working in Tarsus among the Armenians there.

Her book is an anthology composed of letters that she wrote to her mother between December 2, 1908 and May 27, 1909. Treasured by her mother, they reflect the impressions and reactions and feelings of a self-styled 'lucky' American girl, whose childhood had been 'wholesome' and who was waiting to gain what she called 'experience'. 'The experiences I was looking for, came,' she wrote, and they were 'painful'.

This newly married bluestocking was a graduate of Pennsylvania University's Bryn Mawr College. She tells us that until she came

Helen Davenport Gibbons,
The Red Rugs of Tarsus, First
published 1917, Reprint: Connor
Court Publishing, 2016, pp 130,
RRP \$19.95. For copies:
0497-900-685.

to Tarsus and the Ottoman empire, her whole world had been circumscribed by South Station Boston, Grand Central New York, Trenton Michigan, Princeton New Jersey and Bryn Mawr.

Within a few months of arrival in Tarsus she was to live through and describe at first hand the atrocious massacres of April 1909, 'when thirty thousand Armenians

were killed by the Turks in Adana Province alone.

Her early letters unselfconsciously depict the privileged life in Ottoman Turkey of a young foreigner with an Ivy League background and occasional youthful flashes of snobbishness and religious prejudice. Also, they show how unprepared she was for the horrors that would engulf the Armenian Christians in the *Vilayat*, the Province, of Adana, in April 1909 – lending credibility to her simply-told yet graphic account of the nightmare that she was to live through.

'The sunshine here,' she had written on March 15 to her mother, 'reminds me of Nice at its best.' 'This is a great life ... we have fresh figs stewed or raw and honeysweet, and oh, the oranges. ... I may feel the limitations of life in Turkey in many ways, but until I outgrow them, I can put on my khaki riding things, swing into my Mexican saddle and at sunset ride like the wind across the Cilician Plain with the crying of jackals and the chant of the Muezzins in my ears.'

A few weeks later 'Hell broke loose'. The killing began in Adana on April 14, and many of the Armenians in Tarsus fled to the foreign school. 'How would you like to live in a country,' she asked her mother rhetorically, 'where you know that your Government not only would not protect you but would periodically incite your neighbours to rob and kill you with the help of the army?'



Her letters from this date describe the massacres that she witnessed or about which she learned from other eye-witnesses. They are a stark recital of horrors, and a harsh reality call for a young woman preparing to bear her first child and cut off, as she was, from her husband visiting Adana, by the chaos.

She relates how Armenians were killed at Tarsus railway station, and when a train pulled in and disgorged a wild mob of Bashi-bazouks, or much feared Ottoman irregular soldiers, the authorities handed out guns, ammunition and other weapons to them. Townspeople joined the mob and set fire to the Armenian quarter.

‘They say that eight hundred houses have been burned. Many people were still in the houses. If they showed themselves or tried to get out by windows or roofs they were shot. It was death either way. We fear that few Armenians are alive in Tarsus outside of our compound and in the Catholic Mission nearby. The whole Armenian quarter right up to my windows, is burning.’

At one time, she wrote to her mother, a ‘pump affair’ was being pushed up in front of a house nearby. ‘Humanity is not dead yet; they are going to try to limit the fire,’ she thought. But they were not pumping water; it was kerosene.

Helen Gibbons’s eye-witness account of the carnage in her letters to her mother, is just one among many such independent testimonies to the genocide of Armenian Christians at the hands of Sultan Abdul Hamid – whom the Young Turks deposed on April 27, 1909.

Abdul Hamid had put to death almost 200,000 Armenians in the most brutal fashion in the massacres of 1894 to 1896.

The Young Turks, despite paying lip-service to calls for reform and democracy, reverted to earlier ideas of Pan-Turkism, and set about establishing a country exclusively for Turks.

During the course of the first World War the Young Turks outdid Abdul Hamid in their bid to exterminate the Armenians and other Christians. The University of



THE RED RUGS OF TARSUS
A WOMAN'S RECORD OF THE
ARMENIAN MASSACRE OF 1909
Helen Davenport Gibbons
 With a New Introduction

Minnesota’s Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies has compiled figures that show there were 2,133,190 Armenians in the Ottoman empire in 1914 and about 387,800 by 1922.

These independent testimonies all corroborate the detailed and damning evidence tended by Henry Morgenthau, United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916. Despite official

U.S. Government unwillingness to take sides, Morgenthau nevertheless publicised as best he could the horrors perpetrated against the Armenian Christians in his *Murder of a Nation*, which comprised chapters xxii to xxviii of his earlier book, *Secrets of the Bosphorus*.

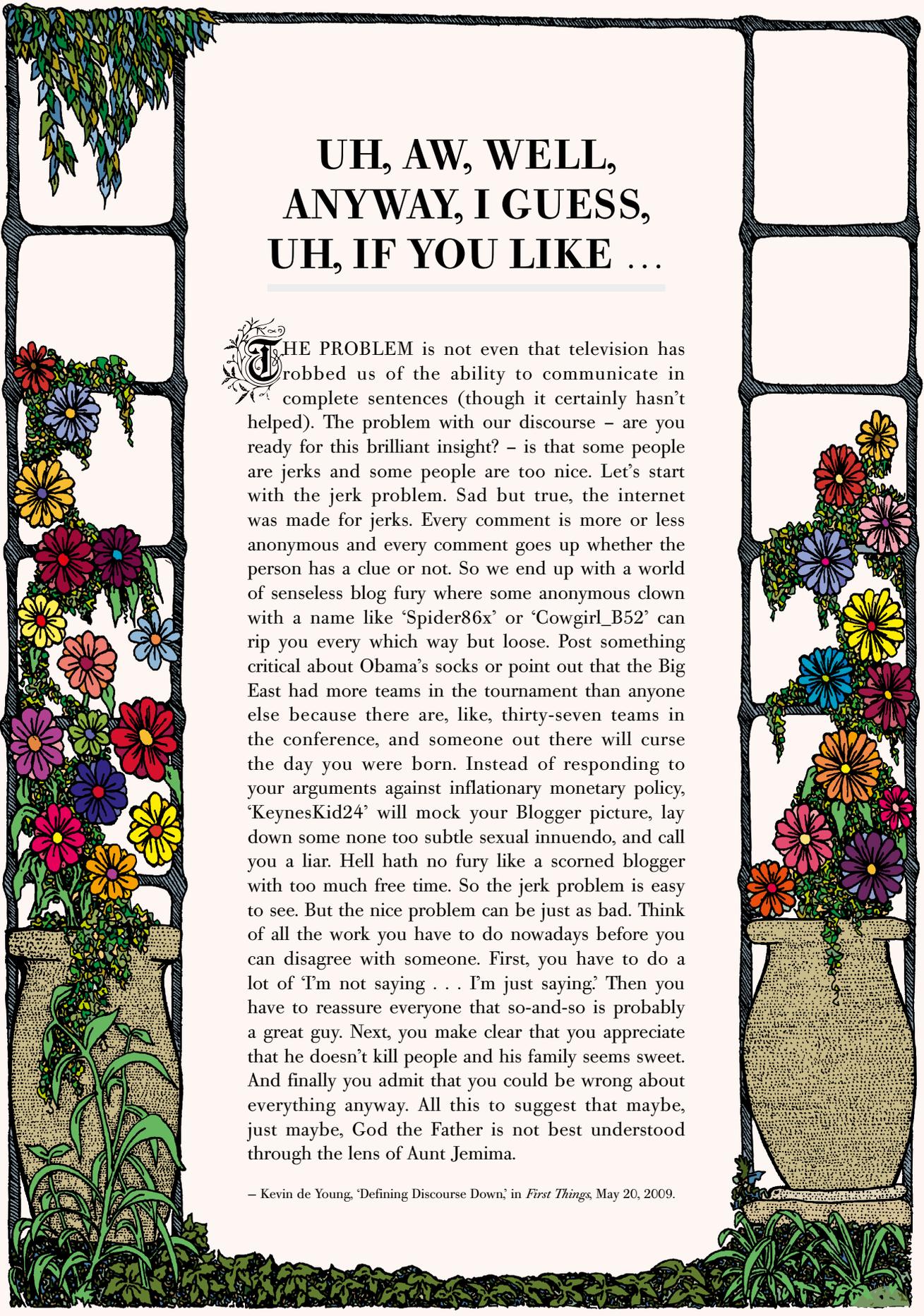
Ambassador Morgenthau’s detailed exposé of the genocide of the Armenians and his warnings that Assyrian, Chaldaean and Syriac Christians, as well as Greeks were also being murdered, were in turn corroborated by the memoirs of eye-witness Dominican Father Jacques Rhétoré, 1841-1921, published as *Les Chrétiens aux bêtes* by Les Editions du Cerf, Paris, 2005.

* * *

On Sunday April 12, 2015, at an Armenian-Rite Mass in St Peter’s Basilica to commemorate the centenary of the massacres and deportations of the Armenian people in 1915, and in the presence of the Catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Aram I, Pope Francis spoke of ‘the first genocide of the 20th century’.

Outraged, Ankara recalled its ambassador to the Holy See, and issued ‘a barrage of strong condemnations’. When news reached Ankara that on June 2, 2016, the German Parliament had recognized that the killing of Armenians in Turkey in the late 19th and first decades of the 20th century, was ‘genocide,’ Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim reportedly said, “There is no shameful incident in our past that would make us bow our heads.”





UH, AW, WELL, ANYWAY, I GUESS, UH, IF YOU LIKE ...

THE PROBLEM is not even that television has robbed us of the ability to communicate in complete sentences (though it certainly hasn't helped). The problem with our discourse – are you ready for this brilliant insight? – is that some people are jerks and some people are too nice. Let's start with the jerk problem. Sad but true, the internet was made for jerks. Every comment is more or less anonymous and every comment goes up whether the person has a clue or not. So we end up with a world of senseless blog fury where some anonymous clown with a name like 'Spider86x' or 'Cowgirl_B52' can rip you every which way but loose. Post something critical about Obama's socks or point out that the Big East had more teams in the tournament than anyone else because there are, like, thirty-seven teams in the conference, and someone out there will curse the day you were born. Instead of responding to your arguments against inflationary monetary policy, 'KeynesKid24' will mock your Blogger picture, lay down some none too subtle sexual innuendo, and call you a liar. Hell hath no fury like a scorned blogger with too much free time. So the jerk problem is easy to see. But the nice problem can be just as bad. Think of all the work you have to do nowadays before you can disagree with someone. First, you have to do a lot of 'I'm not saying . . . I'm just saying.' Then you have to reassure everyone that so-and-so is probably a great guy. Next, you make clear that you appreciate that he doesn't kill people and his family seems sweet. And finally you admit that you could be wrong about everything anyway. All this to suggest that maybe, just maybe, God the Father is not best understood through the lens of Aunt Jemima.

– Kevin de Young, 'Defining Discourse Down,' in *First Things*, May 20, 2009.

We see today the church [of Santa Pudenziana] as it was rebuilt by Cardinal Caetani in 1588 but the mosaic is original and extraordinary. Poussin thought it the most important mosaic in Rome and it is certainly the earliest Christian mosaic in the city dating from the end of the fourth century.

ANCIENT ROMAN CHURCHES

By Graham Hutton



GEORGINA MASSON calls St Prassede “one of the most moving and appealing of Roman Churches”¹

The present church was built by Pope Paschal I (817-24) to house the thousands of relics of martyrs which he moved here from the catacombs of St Alessandro on the Via Nomentana, he having been parish priest of the Church of Sts John and Paul, known as the *titulus* or ‘church’ in the home of *Pomachius*, and mentioned in AD 499 in documents from the Council held that year.

Legend has it that it was built on the site of St Prassede’s house in which she sheltered Christians in the first century. Twenty-three of them were apprehended here and slaughtered before her eyes and she is said to have collected their blood in a sponge and placed it in a well where she herself was later buried after her own martyrdom.

Once again the church has a beautiful cosmatesque pavement but it is the mosaics, first in the chapel of St Zenone and then in the apse of the main church, which are its finest feature.

THIS IS the second of two articles on the ancient churches of Rome. The first article [Annals 7/2016] described the Basilica of San Clemente, the church of the Four Holy Martyrs, the church of Sts John and Paul, the church of St Gregory the Great and the Basilica of St Mary Major.

These mosaics date from 822-24 and show strong signs of Byzantine influence. Those in the chapel are exceptional because they cover the entire chapel and can be seen at close quarters.

In the main church on the triumphal arch we see the jewelled

walls of the heavenly Jerusalem, with a dazzling luminosity which only mosaic can capture. On both sides of the city, crowds of martyrs march towards their heavenly reward carrying crowns. A delightful touch is the angel who stands by the gate indicating to the elect that they may enter.

In the half dome of the apse, a majestic Christ descends the clouds of Heaven as if a flight of stairs. SS Peter and Paul present Saints Prassede and Pudenziana to Him and in a tender gesture each places his hands on the shoulder of the female saints. The palm trees of paradise are superbly depicted to the sides. The whole composition lifts the spirits and fills one with the hope of Heaven.

Cl o s e l y connected with Santa Prassede is the Church of Santa Pudenziana only a short distance away. The first church here was begun by Pope St Siricius (384-99) and completed by Pope St Innocent I (401-17) so again we are dealing with one of the very first churches built in Rome and although the archaeological evidence no longer



Sanctuary of the church of Santa Prassede, ‘one of the most moving and appealing of Roman churches,’ just across the piazza from the ancient Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore.

supports the legend that it was built on the site of the house of Pudens where St Peter lodged for seven years, there is an link to that site shown in its ancient name of *titulus Pudentiana* (the church of Pudens).

We see today the church as it was rebuilt by Cardinal Caetani in 1588 but the mosaic is original and extraordinary. Poussin thought it the most important mosaic in Rome and it is certainly the earliest Christian mosaic in the city dating from the end of the fourth century. Its style is totally classical in contrast to the later ones which show Byzantine influence. We are so used to seeing classical buildings depicted in medieval and renaissance art that it takes us by surprise here to see these same buildings depicted by contemporary artists as they actually were.

The colours of the mosaics are delicate and various, pale blue for the sky, rich gold for Christ's robes, a realistic terracotta for the roof of the classical portico. The faces of Christ and the Apostles are astonishingly life-like. One of the things which most struck us was the splendid bull of St Luke. Many commentators have said that St Marks' lion is less impressive, but we fell in love with it all the same. Again, the four symbols of the Evangelists, the Tetramorph, have become commonplace to us from their frequent depiction in later art. Yet here we see them depicted for the first time anywhere. It may well be that this was the first time anyone had linked the four animals of the Apocalypse with the Evangelists, and with what skill had the artist done so.

We were nearing the end of our trip now and it was hard to believe that we could see anything as inspiring as the mosaics of the first two days.

Yet the mosaics of St Cosmos and Damien was perhaps the most stunning of all. Again this is a very early work and was to become the model for much of what came later. Executed in the classical style, before Byzantine influence set in,

the two saints, martyred doctors of medicine, are depicted as real living characters.

The figure of Christ, the most majestic of all those which we had seen, dressed in a magnificent golden toga, descends a stairway of clouds surrounded by an astonishingly blue sky towards the waiting martyrs each brought forward and presented by Saints Peter and Paul who, as at Santa Prassede, place their hands on the shoulders of the saints in a warm gesture.

There is rich symbolism in the mosaic. One of the palm trees has a delightful phoenix, symbol of the resurrection, nesting in its branches and below the half dome a wonderful Lamb of God stands on a rock from which flow the four rivers of paradise.

Once again those long legged Roman lambs to which we were becoming accustomed, each individually depicted, flock towards the Lamb of God. We sat and gazed at the composition filled with awe at

the faith and skill of the artist who had completed this work less than four hundred years after Christ has walked this earth.

We finished our trip in Trastevere, with two of our favourite churches, Santa Maria and Santa Cecilia in Trastevere.

The first of these was once thought to be the oldest church in Rome and the first dedicated to Our Lady, although the latter honour probably belongs to Santa Maria Maggiore since as late as 499 the church in the Trastevere was still known as the *titulus Juli*. Even the outside of the church has a lovely mosaic, this time of the twelfth century and depicting Our Lady and ten female saints carrying lamps (though presumably not the wise or foolish virgins as only three of the lamps seem not to be trimmed).

The apse mosaic depicts a most wonderful Byzantine Christ and Madonna sharing the same throne. Below this is a series of mosaics by Cavallini. They are utterly beautiful but we have entered the medieval



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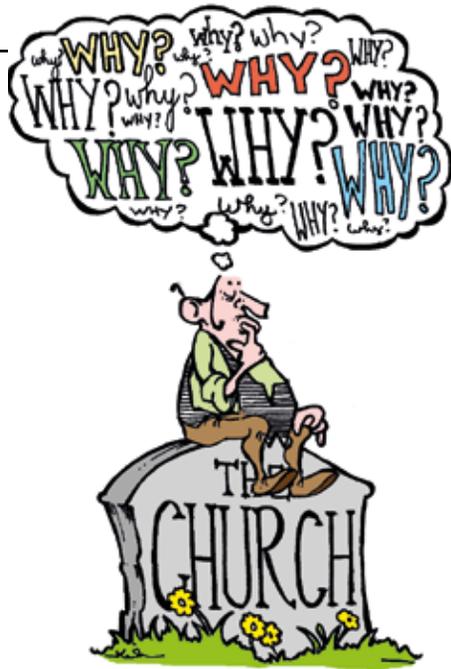
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world and left the ancient one at this point.

One of the best discoveries of our visit, and I would recommend to any visitor that they take the trouble to track down the delightful Benedictine nun who will admit them to the oratory where it can be seen, was the fresco by Cavallini in the monastery attached to the church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere.

The beauty of Christ's face, the pathos with which He still bears His sacred wounds although He is seated in glory, the power and individuality with which the Apostles are depicted and the detailed scenes of the Last Judgement below, make this one of the most moving thirteenth century frescos that I have ever seen.

Our visit to Rome had been wonderful if short and one of the last things that we saw in the church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere seemed to encapsulate everything that had most moved and inspired us: Maderno's tender life size sculpture of the dead body of Santa Cecilia depicted exactly as he saw it when her tomb was opened in 1599.

Maderno conveys with great pathos the saint's body which seems to be in a deep sleep, the garments loosely draped over it and the head gently turned away from us. We can still see, as Maderno did in 1599, the cut of the sword on the martyr's slender neck and the testimony to her faith which she gives with her body is inexpressibly lovely.

Unable to speak as she died Saint Cecilia extended three fingers with one hand and one with the other in honour of the Holy and Undivided Trinity. Nothing could be more lovely nor a more fitting testimony to the faith of the many saints and martyrs who created the Rome of the early Christian centuries which had so captivated us.

GRAHAM HUTTON is the founding partner of the private equity firm Hutton Collins. He studied History at Cambridge and Theology at Oxford as an Anglican before converting to Catholicism in 1982. He serves on a number of charity boards, including the *Christian Heritage Centre* as well as *Aid to the Church in Need*, UK, of which he has been chairman since last year.

1. Georgina Masson "The Companions's Guide to Rome"

Perhaps one or other, consistent with their free-speech belief and under parliamentary privilege, could read Dr van Gend's conclusion into Hansard; failing that, perhaps Shorten would nominate a member of his party's right wing for the honourable task.

DAVID'S SLINGSHOT FELLS GOLIATH CENSOR

By James Murray



FICIONADOS of 'Marriage Equality' – the tag that has evolved from the earlier, less marketable 'Same Sex Marriage' – tend

to be literate yet seem unable to see the relevance of three texts prophetic of the kind of society they dream of socially engineering.

The texts are Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, George Orwell's *1984* and Anthony Burgess's *The Wanting Seed*. The first describes a world of scientific perfection; the second an all-powerful state where to survive Newspeak and Doublethink are necessary; the third a world where homosexuality is the norm.

All are classics of their fictional genre. David van Gend's book is neither a classic nor fiction; rather it is an eloquent tract for the times and shares a factor with Orwell; he had troubles on the way to publication at a time when many saw atheistic Soviet Communism as the new heaven on earth.

Dr van Gend's trouble was that Connor Court's printer for a decade McPherson's, now controlled by Opus Group (but obviously not *Opus Dei*) refused to print the book because of its content. Fortunately Connor Court publisher Anthony Cappello had a back-up printer and didn't have to rely on the latter day equivalent of *samizdat*.

Not surprisingly Dr van Gend sees the traditional family unit as

Stealing from a Child: The Injustice of Marriage Equality

By David van Gend, Connor Court Publishing 2016 rrp pb \$29.95.
Copies 0497-900-685

a redoubt against the all-powerful state Orwell envisaged. By way of apt quotations from the disillusioned children of same sex unions, from homosexuals opposed to such unions and not least from the atheist libertarian Brendan (*The Spike*) O'Neill; Dr van Gend tracks the notion of 'Marriage Equality' to its source.



Surprise, surprise, the source is Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx's co-writer and money-bags. In 1884, Engels wrote in *The Origin of the Family*: 'With the transfer of the means of production into common ownership, the single family ceases to be the economic unit of society. Private housekeeping is transformed into social industry. The care and education of the children becomes a public affair; society looks after all children alike, whether they are legitimate or not. This removes all anxiety about the consequences which today is the most essential social moral as well as economic factor that prevents a girl from giving herself completely to the man she loves. Will not that suffice to bring about the gradual growth of unconstrained sexual intercourse and with a more tolerant opinion in regard to a maiden's honour and a woman's shame.'

Here is the *Ur-text* for post-modern, family deconstruction, its aim being to enhance State power (and also corporate power, hence the alliance, possibly temporary, between right-wing corporations and left-wing governments).

The *Ur-text* goes some way to explaining the advent of Roz Ward, the academic Marxist facilitator of what is spun as the Safe Schools programme but is in potential effect a scheme for the indoctrination of children.

It also explains why the Catholic Church has been specifically targeted for suppression; it

dares to preach its dogma on the sacramental, God-given, life-long nature of heterosexual marriage as bravely as it preached against atheistic Soviet Communism.

Other religions and traditions, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism have not been similarly threatened with suppression. And in media less has been made of the shut-down effort than of the possible effect of the plebiscite on the feelings of homosexuals.

For all those who feel – and it is feeling (sometimes parental) rather than thinking – that ‘Marriage Equality’ will not alter the society in which we live, Dr van Gend has found a brace of conclusive quotations.

The first is in the work of the Lesbian social historian EJ Graff: ‘Same-sex marriage is a breathtakingly subversive idea.’

The second is from the work of Professor Margaret Somerville: ‘Same-sex marriage...forces us to choose between giving priority to children’s rights or to homosexual adults’ claims.’

Researching and writing his work, David van Gend expected that it would be used in discussions on the ‘Marriage Equality’ plebiscite; that measure is now in check, due to the intransigence of Bill Shorten’s Labor opposition competing for votes with Dr Richard di Natale’s Greens (are Good 4U).

Perhaps one or other, consistent with their free-speech belief and under parliamentary privilege, could read Dr van Gend’s conclusion into Hansard; failing that, perhaps Shorten would nominate a member of his party’s right wing for the honourable task.

‘All that remains in this extended prosecution of the injustice of “marriage equality” is the summing up.’

The opening indictment in the book was threefold, and the proposition of “same sex marriage” is found guilty on all three counts ; it is untrue, unjust and unnecessary.

Christianity and Eternity

THE ENEMIES of Christianity ... repudiate Christianity because it [does] not succeed on earth This is a criticism capable of quite a different import and interpretation. It is true that Christianity [shares] the collapse of every other historical process.

Two thousand years have not sufficed to realize the ideals of Christian faith and consciousness. They will never be realized within the framework of human time and history. They can only be realized by a victory over time, by the transition from time to eternity, by the triumphant passage from the historical to the super historical process. But the failure of Christianity can no more be used as an argument against its higher truth than the failure of history can be taken to imply the aimlessness and emptiness of history. The failure of history does not mean that history is devoid of necessity or relevance.

Similarly the failure of Christianity does not mean that Christianity is not the highest truth. Historical success and achievement do not constitute a valid criterion of the true. The nature of history and all that it contains is such that nothing perfect can be realized in time. The profound significance of historical destiny and experience does not depend on any realization. It exists beyond the limits of history.

The failure, so painfully clear within the framework of historical time and terrestrial reality, does not imply limitation and failure outside that framework. It rather goes to prove that the destiny of man reserves a higher realization for his potentialities than any to be achieved in his purely historical experience.

– Nicholas Berdyaev, ‘The Historical Meaning of Christianity,’ in *The Modern Tradition*, ed. Richard Ellmann and Charles Feidelson, New York, OUP, 1965, pp. 526-527.

Untrue to nature which alone defines the male-female reality underlying marriage; unjust to children, since the institution of “same sex marriage” destines future kids to a motherless or fatherless life; unnecessary for civil equality since that has already been achieved completely in our current law.

‘A further conviction to be served concurrently with the above is made for narcotic slogans like “love is love” and “love makes a family”; dangerous shots of emotion that would justify aberrations like group marriage, incestuous marriage and others yet unimagined.

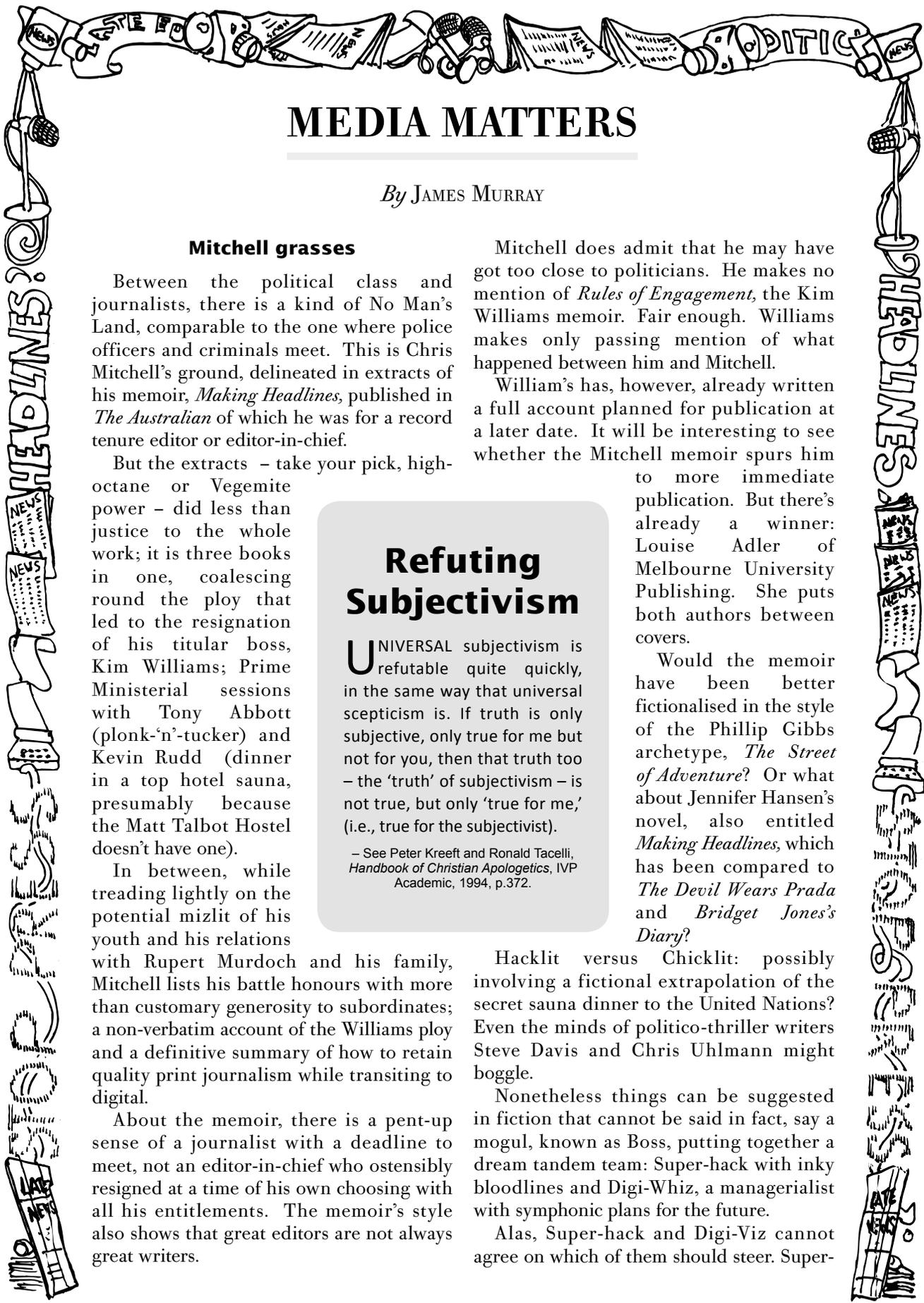
‘We are advised there is no crime in the statute book for being seen in the vicinity of Marx, Marcuse, Millett and Ms Ward but that is the intellectual company we keep if we vote to deliver them the long-sought prize of the deconstruction of marriage and family. Nor is it

an indictable offence to be Premier Daniel Andrews, but he embodies the coercive character of rainbow politics smearing opponents of gay marriage as bigots, subjecting all Victorian public school children to the corrupting “Safe Schools” programme, appointing a fulltime Thought Policewoman to ensure Victorians only hold approved attitudes to LGBT matters.’

In a relatively rare typo, the Q was omitted from the above list; but where does the alphabetisation of sexual typology end? When it does, it’s as long and complex as the human genome sequence in a world beyond the prophetic imaginations of Huxley, Orwell and Burgess.

Call it Nudystopia

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



MEDIA MATTERS

By JAMES MURRAY

Mitchell grasses

Between the political class and journalists, there is a kind of No Man's Land, comparable to the one where police officers and criminals meet. This is Chris Mitchell's ground, delineated in extracts of his memoir, *Making Headlines*, published in *The Australian* of which he was for a record tenure editor or editor-in-chief.

But the extracts – take your pick, high-octane or Vegemite power – did less than justice to the whole work; it is three books in one, coalescing round the ploy that led to the resignation of his titular boss, Kim Williams; Prime Ministerial sessions with Tony Abbott (plonk-'n'-tucker) and Kevin Rudd (dinner in a top hotel sauna, presumably because the Matt Talbot Hostel doesn't have one).

In between, while treading lightly on the potential mizlit of his youth and his relations with Rupert Murdoch and his family, Mitchell lists his battle honours with more than customary generosity to subordinates; a non-verbatim account of the Williams ploy and a definitive summary of how to retain quality print journalism while transiting to digital.

About the memoir, there is a pent-up sense of a journalist with a deadline to meet, not an editor-in-chief who ostensibly resigned at a time of his own choosing with all his entitlements. The memoir's style also shows that great editors are not always great writers.

Mitchell does admit that he may have got too close to politicians. He makes no mention of *Rules of Engagement*, the Kim Williams memoir. Fair enough. Williams makes only passing mention of what happened between him and Mitchell.

William's has, however, already written a full account planned for publication at a later date. It will be interesting to see whether the Mitchell memoir spurs him

to more immediate publication. But there's already a winner: Louise Adler of Melbourne University Publishing. She puts both authors between covers.

Would the memoir have been better fictionalised in the style of the Phillip Gibbs archetype, *The Street of Adventure*? Or what about Jennifer Hansen's novel, also entitled *Making Headlines*, which has been compared to *The Devil Wears Prada* and *Bridget Jones's Diary*?

Hacklit versus Chicklit: possibly involving a fictional extrapolation of the secret sauna dinner to the United Nations? Even the minds of politico-thriller writers Steve Davis and Chris Uhlmann might boggle.

Nonetheless things can be suggested in fiction that cannot be said in fact, say a mogul, known as Boss, putting together a dream tandem team: Super-hack with inky bloodlines and Digi-Whiz, a managerialist with symphonic plans for the future.

Alas, Super-hack and Digi-Viz cannot agree on which of them should steer. Super-

Refuting Subjectivism

UNIVERSAL subjectivism is refutable quite quickly, in the same way that universal scepticism is. If truth is only subjective, only true for me but not for you, then that truth too – the 'truth' of subjectivism – is not true, but only 'true for me,' (i.e., true for the subjectivist).

– See Peter Kreeft and Ronald Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, IVP Academic, 1994, p.372.



the entrails there suggest the possibility of an Abbott-Turnbull-Abbott.

There is, however, an option that could prevent the toil and trouble of that ill-omened sequence: a come-back by former Treasurer Peter Costello. His prestige has been buffed by his Future Fund tenure and star-dusted as chairman of the Nine Network (no politician's fitness for TV benefited more than Costello's, through his *macarena* with the immortal Kerri-Anne Kennerley).

Friendly fire

Celebrations of Islamic State defeats are understandable but premature. As noted here before, the jihad strategy of extreme Islamists does not ultimately rely on local map co-ordinates but on the global concepts of *Dar al Islam* (Land of Islam) and *Dar al Harb* (Land of War).

The Islamic State defeats happen in *Dar al Islam*; its auxiliaries in *Dar al Harb* will try to ensure they are balanced with victories.

Baird's backflip

Beware lobbyists bearing policies, for they tend to be absolutist: that's the morale to be drawn by all politicians in all States as a result of NSW Premier Mike Baird's backflip on greyhound racing.

Baird was prudent enough to commission a report from former High Court judge Michael McHugh before promulgating a total ban. But he did not consult with the leaders of other States where greyhound racing is legal.

The result was predictable: his popularity plummeted and the grassroots rose up in anger (sorry about that), not just in country towns but in all the suburbs where greyhounds are owned and exercised.

The sudden totality of the ban without a chance to reform was unwise. Political systems are in a constant flux of reform as are all other human institutions; it's called civilisation.

Papal ode

No pope has been more maligned than Pius XII. Uplifting, therefore, to come

across, *Ode on the Death of Pius the Twelfth* by AD Hope (1907-2000) Presbyterian-born with a satiric, Burnsian disposition. Sample sequence:

*I thought of this old man whose life was past
Who in himself and his great office stood
Against the secular tempest as a vast
Oak spans the underwood;*

*Who in the age of Armageddon found
A voice that caused all men to hear it plain,
The blood of Abel crying from the ground
To stay the hand of Cain;*

*Who found from that great task small time
to spare:*

*– For him and for mankind the hour was
late –*

*So much to snatch, to save, so much to bear
That Mary's part must wait,*

*Until his last years the change began:
A strange illumination of the heart,
Voices and visions such as mark the man
Chosen and set apart.*

*His death, they said, was slow, grotesque and
hard,*

*Yet in that gross decay, until the end
Untroubled in his joy, he saw the Word
Made spirit and ascend.*

Tuchman's Law

As bombing alarums and knifing excursions increase, it may be time to remember Tuchman's Law: 'The fact of being reported multiplies the apparent extent of any deplorable development by five-to tenfold.'

Barbara Tuchman (1912-1989), one of the greatest of war historians (See, *The Guns of August*) was writing in her 1978 book *A Distant Mirror*.

Would she have created her law in the face of rampant Islamist terrorism? Probably; she was related to Henry Morgenthau, United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, who reported on the massacres of Christian Armenians.

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[T]he Church had been under sporadic attack since 1931 during the early days of the Spanish Second Republic. However, the worst of the violence took place during the first six months of the war. ... 6,832 members of the Catholic clergy were killed, including 13 bishops, 4,172 diocesan priests and seminarians, 2,363 monks and friars and 283 nuns.

BRITISH INTELLECTUALS AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN SPAIN:

By Paul Chigwidden



THE SPANISH Civil War (1936-1939) has always conjured up disparate visions. The popular image, carefully constructed by many western historians, is of a battle between young idealists preserving a democratically elected government against Adolf Hitler and his fascist client Franco, leader of the Nationalists.

For Catholics, this version of the war has always been difficult to accept because the Spanish Civil War remains a conflict sharply defined by the brutal, even genocidal, attack on the Spanish Church, clergy, religious and laity, perpetrated by different elements of the Republican forces.

It is important to remember that the Church had been under sporadic attack since 1931 during the early days of the Spanish Second Republic. However, the worst of the violence took place during the first six months of the war.

The statistics established by Antonio Montero in the 1950s reveal that 6,832 members of the Catholic clergy were killed, including 13 bishops, 4,172 diocesan priests and seminarians, 2,363 monks and friars and 283 nuns.

The violence was particularly savage in certain places such as Barbastro where 88% of the secular clergy were murdered. Moreover,



it was not uncommon for victims to suffer torture including various forms of genital mutilation. Finally, irrespective of the type of death they had suffered, the corpses of clerics were likely to be dragged through the streets, exposed in public places or desecrated in many other ways.¹

Added to this was the iconoclastic violence manifested in the burning of Churches or the removal and destruction of all religious objects. In *Homage to Catalonia* George Orwell concluded: 'In six months in Spain I only saw two undamaged churches.'²

Despite the confronting nature of these statistics, one often encounters histories of the Spanish Civil War that seem at pains to minimise the anti-clerical violence, or even to promote the idea that there were historical justifications for the violence. To cite but one example, Richard Baxell's 2012 *Unlikely Warriors: The British in the Spanish Civil War and the Struggle Against Fascism* talks of 'a number of exaggerated, and often unsubstantiated, atrocity stories' before going on to repeat a number of (plainly exaggerated and completely

unsubstantiated) 'familiar stories of the role the village priest had played in the uprising.'³ Baxell is no hack. He is a fine writer and generally a good historian. However, his attitude to the murder of priests and nuns during the Spanish Civil War follows a long tradition among British intellectuals. A tradition that really

began with those who volunteered to fight in the Communist organised International Brigades.

Of the 35,000 foreigners who served it would seem that nearly all were British or American intellectuals. But their overrepresentation is a product of their voluminous literary output. Each recruit seemed to send countless letters and articles home during the campaign, and then, assuming they survived, produce the inevitable memoir afterwards. In reality, eighty per cent of British volunteers were working class. Only about sixty per cent were communist⁴ while a further twenty per cent became communist after their experiences in Spain.⁵ The Communist poet Miles Tomalin summed things up in his diary, 'undoubtedly the great majority are here for the sake of an ideal, no matter what motive prompted them to seek one.'⁶

Across the articles and memoirs written by British volunteers one can discern a range of responses. These include complete denials of the atrocities, brief descriptions of inexplicable violence, nonchalant accounts right through to complete justifications. It is very rare to find the violence being explicitly condemned.

In his memoir, *Homage to Catalonia*, George Orwell describes visiting Barcelona and encountering the 'feeling of having suddenly emerged into an era of equality and freedom.'⁷ In his gushing description of the city under Republican control he casually mentions the fact that 'churches here and there were being systematically demolished by gangs of workmen.'⁸ Orwell was at great pains to dismiss any practical motivation. They were simply a feature of life in the embryonic socialist state. 'Some of the foreign anti-Fascist papers even descended to the pitiful lie of pretending that churches were only attacked when they were used as Fascist fortresses. Actually churches were pillaged everywhere and as a matter of course...'⁹

The Catholic Church

THE CHURCH is not Catholic because she is spread abroad over the whole of the earth and can reckon on a large number of members. She was already Catholic on the morning of Pentecost, when all her members could be contained in a small room, as she was when the Arian waves seemed on the point of swamping her; she would still be Catholic if tomorrow apostasy on a vast scale deprived her of almost all the faithful. For fundamentally Catholicity has nothing to do with geography or statistics. If it is true that it should be displayed over all the earth and be manifest to all, yet its nature is not material but spiritual. Like sanctity, Catholicity is primarily an intrinsic feature of the Church.

– Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* (Ignatius Press), 48-9.

Yet his desire for objective reportage certainly had its limits. For instance, he lamented the lack of nurses without seeking to fully explain the cause. 'Apparently there was no supply of trained nurses in Spain, perhaps because before the war this work was done chiefly by nuns.'¹⁰

In a twist of irony, Orwell only escaped the Communist agents who were looking for him (he was in the POUM, a brigade considered dangerously heterodox by Stalinist agents) by hiding in one of the few churches not destroyed in Barcelona.¹¹

Other writers simply used their accounts to deny the existence of any anti-clerical violence. Philip Toynbee, then a student organiser for the Communist Party, wrote of his time in Spain 'the barracks had been a convent, converted a few months before, when the nuns had all been sent back to their homes – *not*, we were assured, molested...'¹²

T. C. Worsley quoted a former Catholic revolutionary growing frustrated with her family: 'They assert that we burn churches and nuns, and as I know *for a fact* that we don't, what's the good of going to see them [the family]?'¹³

Perhaps the most astonishing denial came from the man popularly known as the Red Dean, Hewlett Johnson, the Dean of Canterbury Cathedral. Johnson was one of the more curious fellow travellers of the period. He actively supported Communist regimes

believing Communism to be 'more fundamentally Christian in essence, however much it repudiates the name.'¹⁴

In 1937 Dean Johnson was invited by the Republican government to visit Spain with a team of investigators to combat the seditious propaganda that they were, in any way, anti-religious.¹⁵ Despite working hard and speaking to a significant number of Spanish Communists, the Dean and his fellow investigators found no evidence of attacks on religious freedom. (In fact they 'saw no signs of revolutionary upheaval' of any kind.)¹⁶ Instead they only found Communists frustrated that they couldn't yet open the Churches because they couldn't trust the priests.

Johnson goes on to repeat the popular myth that 'probably no less than 90% of the clergy were implicated in the rebellion.'¹⁷ The investigators did admit that in the previous year there 'were scenes of violent anti-Church demonstrations' but dutifully added that 'the Church cannot be acquitted of responsibility for the hostility which she evidently inspired among [the protestors]'.¹⁸

The ignorance and insouciance with which many of these radical intellectuals ignored or even defended such obvious attacks can inspire a certain cynicism among students of the period. What is interesting is the way in which some of those who fought with the



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Machiavelli and the Devil

NICK MACHIAVEL had ne'er a trick,
Though he gave his name to our Old Nick.

– Samuel Butler 1612-1680, *Hudibras. Part iii. Canto i., line 1313.*

International Brigades produced accounts that were not only somewhat sympathetic to the plight of the Church but, at times, awed by the enduring religiosity of the Spanish people.

Jason Gurney, for instance, was intrigued by the anti-clerical violence and the desecration of Churches. He concluded 'at no time or place in history has there been such a violence of hatred against a national religion. There was no bestiality that was not committed upon the persons of priests, and occasionally of nuns... In every village that I saw the churches had been destroyed with an extreme of hatred and detestation that was unmistakable...'¹⁹

Gurney, himself could not understand the violence but noted that the village people, many of whom were involved in the violence, were extremely uncomfortable with what they had done. In one place the Church had been converted into a Battalion mess-hall. Gurney noted that while the international soldiers would eat there, none of the locals would ever enter.²⁰

Far from being a source of liberation, the desecrated Church seemed to act as a horrible reminder of a great evil.

Another English writer, Laurie Lee, found something similar when he was fighting. In a little village, the company quartered in a small chapel, now 'wrecked and gutted'. Lee, the only foreigner in the group, set up his kitbag on the altar a gesture which shocked his hardened comrades. 'But for most, even the most ribald, profane and godless, there seemed to be an invisible area here which it was still impossible to cross without the blessing of a priest. Even in this bare and mutilated chapel a holy charm seemed to lie on the ground surrounding the sacred stone. An unseen line ran from wall to wall and everyone appeared content to remain behind it. Except for me, the petty violator.'²¹

Many of these soldiers had participated in the shocking violence that characterised the conflict but they could not forget the faith of their fathers. Lee himself was moved by their reaction and concluded: 'with this gesture ... I believe I stained the rest of my life.'

In the previous volume of *Memoirs, As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning*, Lee discussed the changing fortunes of the Catholic Church in Almuñécar in Andalusia, during the first months of the war. The local Communist leader accosted him one morning, excitedly telling him that 'they've done it at last' and the two joined the townspeople in watching the burning church.

A week later came a Feast Day, and a quick change of heart. The smoke blackened church was filled with lilies. The images of Christ and the Virgin were brought out into the sunlight and loaded as usual on to the fisherman's backs ... As the procession moved by, a peasant tore off his cap and threw himself on his knees with outspread arms. 'Holy Mother, Maria, intercede with your Son!'... It was a day of tears and breast-beating, a day of contrition. The invincible Christ had risen again – the private Christ of Almuñécar, scorched and defiled, yet returning to his sons ... Profanity, sacrilege, had been a passing madness. This was the Faith as it had always been. Then, a few days later, the church was fired again, and this time burnt to a shell.²²

As with the soldiers he later bunked with, there was a sense that the rage against the Church could never completely triumph over the faith that had survived in Spain so long. One young intellectual who saw this most clearly was Giles Romilly. A nephew of Winston Churchill, he was one of the few to leave the war with his Communist convictions strengthened by the experience. And yet by 1949 he was attending High Mass in the village of Morata de Tajuña, just outside of Madrid and wondering

how 'Morata had ever been a powder-box of international emotions or had ever known clashes more brutal than those of a donkey-cart and a Van?'²³

Romilly was particularly impressed by the local Priest who tended to his 'parishioners of proved blood thirstiness'. In that Mass he found something that seemed to be present across all of Spain, something that could outlast 'droughts and wars.'²⁴

Whilst they are only snippets, we can find in the writings of Laurie Lee and Jason Gurney and Giles Romilly, a profound insight into the ability of the Spanish faith to endure, even amidst the chaos and violent excesses of a fratricidal war.

PAUL CHICWIDEN, a graduate of Charles Sturt University, is a high school teacher living in Wagga Wagga. He is married with four children.

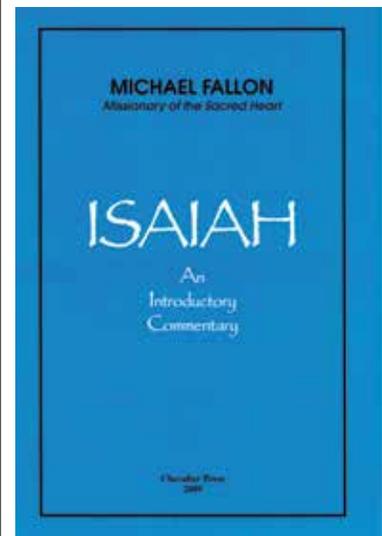
1. Julio de la Cueva, 'Religious Persecution, Anticlerical Tradition and Revolution: On Atrocities against the Clergy during the Spanish Civil War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 33 (3), 1998, pp. 355-356.
2. C. Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*. London: Penguin Classics, 2000, Appendix I, p. 202.
3. R. Baxell, *Unlikely Warriors: The British in the Spanish Civil War and the Struggle Against Fascism*, London, Aurum Press, 2012, pp. 45, 120. Admittedly Baxell does go as far as mentioning one Irish volunteer for whom 'the widespread anti-clericalism in the Republic – the church burnings, the murder of monks and nuns – was difficult to accept' p.98.
4. Non-Communists were investigated by the NKVD, usually at Paris.
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— Isaiah 49, 18, 22.



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SHEFFIELD'S FIELDS TO SHEFFIELD SHIELD

By Tony Evans

IN THE heart of the Sussex countryside, not far from where I live now, is one of South England's most popular and famous tourist attractions - the historic steam railway known as the Bluebell Line. Visited by thousands of tourists every year, it is also seen (perhaps unknowingly) by millions more in television costume dramas, and in cinema films when characters are required to arrive or depart at authentic railway stations of the period, or travel in carriages pulled by restored steam engines. Many of the railway scenes in the *Downtown Abbey* TV series were filmed on the Bluebell Line and its several stations.

The Bluebell Railway, like several other heritage steam railways in Britain, was rescued in 1965 by retired railwaymen and enterprising amateurs after many country branch lines were closed having been judged by the notorious Dr. Beeching as uneconomic.

The Bluebell Railway Preservation Society was formed and has grown in importance having increased its track length to 17 kms. It

is now running regular steam services linking Sheffield Park with the major Sussex town of East Grinstead where passengers can join the main British Rail network and take the fast trains to London and the coast.

Few passengers enjoying a family outing on the Bluebell Railway today - even Australian visitors - are likely to be aware of the strong connection the railway has with Australian cricket. So strong in fact, that on the base of the resplendent Sheffield Shield cricket trophy there is a silver medallion depicting the original steam engine of the 1890s. It is not known whether the present-day design of the Shield retains this commemoration since the advent of large commercial sponsorship in 1999.

This strong connection was all due to the third Earl Sheffield who promoted the building of the Lewes and East Grinstead Railway in 1877. As Lord of the Manor and a main investor in the Railway, he was able to ensure that the station, known as Sheffield Park, was closer to his domain rather than - more logically - the two nearby villages of Fletching and Danehill and the market town of Uckfield.

The Earl was a fervent cricket enthusiast, a firm friend of W. G. Grace, England's star batsman, and also a patron of Australian cricket. He donated £150 for the provision of a trophy to be awarded annually to the winning team in the Australian interstate competition known universally as 'The Sheffield Shield'.

He also initiated the custom of inviting the Australian touring cricket teams to open their tours with a game against an England eleven held on his especially constructed ground at Sheffield Park. There he built two pavilions - one for the players and officials and the other for ladies only; also seating for supporters. The Duke Of Norfolk followed



Local gossip would have it that the Earl built Sheffield Park Station to bring cricketing crowds to his ground

this custom in recent years, by inviting touring teams to Arundel Castle for a warm-up match. These matches in the beautiful grounds adjacent to the Castle attracted thousands of spectators.

Local gossip has it that the noble lord sited his Sheffield Park station primarily to convey the cricket teams and the vast crowds of followers to his ground with the least possible inconvenience.

Not the first Australian cricket team to avail themselves of the Earl's hospitality, the touring side of 1896 was thought to be the most popular, drawing a capacity crowd of 25,000 to the ground at Sheffield Park all admitted free of charge - and most of these would have travelled from London on the main line, changing at East Grinstead onto the Earl's railway, now known as the Bluebell Line.

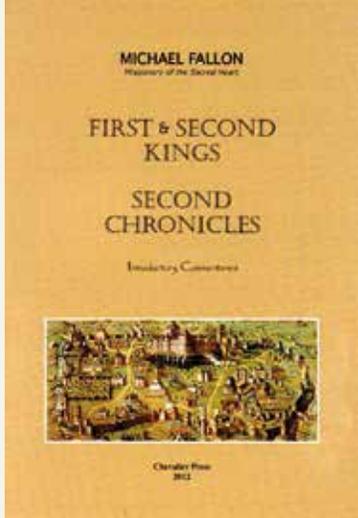
The Australian team on this occasion was led by the highly successful, popular all-rounder, Harry Trott. Although this would be his last tour as captain he scored over 1000 runs in 34 first-class matches. Also in the team were Clem Hill, another leading batsman and in-fielder who played 89 test innings, scoring 3412 runs, and Joe Darling who usually opened the batting, and went on to captain Australia on tours in 1899, 1902 and 1905.

These were the years before the First World War, popularly known as 'the Golden Age of Australian Cricket'. Sadly for the tourists, England won the series, 2-1, thus retaining the Ashes. The team won only the second test at Old Trafford. Australia was to have its revenge the following year when England lost the Ashes in a five game series 4 - 1.

The First World War put an end to cricket at Sheffield Park. The pitch was ploughed up for other purposes. The 3rd Earl, apparently in some financial difficulties, relinquished the ancestral home and now the Park and gardens are in the hands of the National Trust. The old venue has become

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Perhaps if you visit Sussex one day and take a nostalgic trip on the Bluebell Railway, you may lean out of the window of the restored nineteenth century carriage, and glimpse the 'field full of shades as you near the shadowy coast' and see imperfectly through misty eyes, 'the run stealers as they flicker to and fro'.¹

If you do, raise your hat (or cricketing cap) to the memory of the good Earl of Sheffield, who was such a generous friend and supporter of Australian cricket.

TONY EVANS was a producer with the ABC for many years and is now a freelance writer living in the U.K. He has published four historical biographies, the latest being a biography of the nineteenth century Catholic architect William Wardell.

1. Quotation from the poem, 'Lords' by Francis Thompson. *Collected Poems*, OUP

The Confirmation

Aptly framed between confessional-box sequences, writer/director/producer Bob Nelson's family drama tells of the reconciliation between Walt (Clive Owen) and his son Anthony (Jaeden Lieberher).

Owen, doing handdog not James Bon debonair, is superlative as Walt whose carpenter's tools are stolen just as he is offered a job. Lieberher does the grammatically impossible; he tops superlative as the son who comes to the aid of his father.

Maria Bello plays Bonnie, Anthony's mother estranged from Walt and with a new mate Kyle (Matthew Mondine) but determined that Walt should be part of their son's life.

Movie buffs may find he story line reminiscent of Vittorio De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves*. And Nelson has said that it is one of his favourite movies. Nothing wrong with a potential master admiring a past master, it makes for a classic tradition.

PG★★★★SFFV.

Julieta

Two incomparable players, Emma Suarez and Adriana Ugarte, combine flawlessly to create the title character at different ages as she seeks reconciliation with an only daughter, Antia, and her grandchildren.

Writer/director Pedro Almodovar sets this theme in flashbacks intercut with current hints outlining the reasons for mother-daughter estrangement.

Pedro Almodovar, it must be said, is, no rock, he slips around the Catholic roots of the great Spanish vineyard, possibly because he has based his film on three short stories by Canadian writer Alice Munro who, unlike one of her inspirations Flannery O'Connor, does not imbue her work with faith in a redeemer.

Almodovar (who prefers billing himself by his surname) fudges the nature of the strict community where Antia has found refuge. The presumption of guilt is that it is Spain's traditional Catholicism. But could it be Scientology? Or that nascent, pseudo-religious movement: PCZ - Politically Correct Zeitgeistism.

M★★★★NSFV.

MOVIES

By James Murray

Life, Animated

Director Roger Ross Williams tells us a remarkably true story with equivalent dramatic flair. At the age of three, Owen Suskind was diagnosed with what his doctors identified as 'regressive autism', the prognosis being a speechless life.

His parents Ron and Cordelia Suskind did not put him into care but kept him at home, treating him as normally as possible, the normality including watching television.

One year after the dire prognosis, his father heard Owen making sounds while watching a Disney cartoon; from there he progressed to talking coherently, membership of a cartoon appreciation group and addressing a congress of specialists in France.

The Williams approach includes animated drawings of Owen making for an extraordinary documentary about an extraordinary family and that extraordinary master of the cinema cartoon, Walt Disney.

PG★★★★SFFV.

Never beyond Saving

THAT IS, the charity that makes us love all men, even our most bitter enemies; the charity that inspires in us compassion for their faults and mistakes, and obliges us to look upon them as brothers and to employ every means in our power to save them from a miserable end; the charity that forbids us ever to regard them as being beyond saving while they have breath in their body.

— l'Abbé Jacques Balmes, *Le Protestantisme comparé au Catholicisme dans ses rapports avec la Civilisation Européenne*, Paris, Debécourt, Libraire-Editeur, 1842, p.175-176.

Hacksaw Ridge

Great subjects await great directors as witness *Hacksaw Ridge* inspired by battlefield events more than half a century ago. The great director? Mel Gibson, his path to greatness already blazed with *Brave Heart*, *The Passion of the Christ* and *Apocalypto*.

Like them Hacksaw Ridge is distillation of true events: how conscientious objector and medic Desmond Doss saved 75 casualties during the battle for Okinawa and was awarded the Medal of Honor.

Gibson and cinematographer Simon Duggan open with a battle sequence of fearsome, flame-thrower intensity, editor John Gilbert cuts to Doss's rural and religious childhood and manhood with his tough, war veteran father Tom (Hugo Weaving), mother Berthe (Rachel Griffiths) and sweetheart Dorothy (Teresa Palmer).

There may be a sense here that Gibson is over-prolonging the domestic scenes of scriptwriters Andrew Knight, Robert Schenkkan and Randall Wallace. But when the main battle sequences begin and Doss gets into rescue you begin to wish for the domestic quietude.

Andrew Garfield plays Doss with mix of intensity and nonchalance akin to that of the real Doss, seen in post-credit archival footage. Vince Vaughn as Sergeant Howell perforce sets the movie's American tone; the bulk of the cast are Australians playing Americans. Gibson's GIs include: Sam Worthington, Richard Roxburgh, Luke Bracey, Ryan Corr and Milo Gibson.

The movie was shot in NSW locations, raising the question: has Mel Gibson (with his main producer Bruce Davey) created a new Austral-American industry to replace the car industry?

TBA★★★★NFFV.

The Magnificent Seven

Director Antoine Fuqua's western is a long way in style from the John Sturgess 1960 version of Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*, released in 1956 and still a timeless classic.

Fuqua's take is more Quentin Tarantino than Sturgess who it can be said was a graduate of the John Ford Academy of Westerns.

In Denzel Washington, playing Sam Chisholm, a bounty hunter, Fuqua has a star able to carry off the Tarantino excesses. And in Chris Pratt, Chisholm's offside Josh Faraday, Fuqua has an actor capable of matching Washington. Ethan Hawke is Goodnight, a sharpshooter, Byung-Hun Lee, his friend Billy Rocks, Vincent D'Onofrio, a mountain man, Manuel Garcia-Rulfo is the outlaw Vasquez and Martin Sensmeier is Red Harvest, a Native American whose preferred weapon is the bow and arrow.

The obligatory villain Bart Bogue, intent on taking over the mining village of Rose Creek is Peter Sarsgaard. Haley Bennett rides in as the redoubtable Emma Cullen, the townswoman who persuades the Seven to ride to the rescue.

Trivia note: some may find the showy gun-slinging reminiscent of Gene Autry or Hopalong Cassidy. In fact the movie's weapons instructor Thell Reed toured with the Gene Autry Wild West Show.

M★★★NFFV.

The Beatles: Eight Days a Week

Director Ron Howard's documentary paean covers a lot of melodies for nostalgics, their children and even their children's children. Your reviewer was surprised at the under-emphasis on material from Sidney Bernstein's Granada Television which did so much to promote the neophyte group.

It may be that Howard stuck more or less strictly to touring days; it may be a copyright matter or it may be that the Ampex tapes then used were frugally taped over without regard to their potential value.

Fair enough, the way it goes. But early interviews involved Gabriel Byrne, now the patriarch of Irish chat shows, and your reviewer who did TV interviews with the Fab Four and remembers no more than they do.

An even more notable omission, however, was reference to the Liverpool Catholic element in the Beatles canon, epitomised in John Lennon's, *Let it Be* with its Mother Mary line.

M★★★SFFV.

Like Crazy (La Pazza Gioia)

It happens: a performance so enthralling that other elements become irrelevant. Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi gives such a performance, playing an eccentric whose fantasies are as elaborate as her name: Beatrice Morandini Valdirana.

Her performance is heightened when she is joined in her private clinic by a complementary spirit Donatella Morelli (Micaela Ramazzotti).

They run away from the clinic to the nearest beach resort, Beatrice in search of frolics, Donatello seeking re-union with the son she gave up for adoption to caring parents.

Staff from the clinic, including nuns, pursue them. Director Paolo Virzi and his co-writer Francesca Archibugi stir the mix of hilarity and sentiment. Don't be surprised if they turn it into a tragi comic opera for two divas.

M★★★NFFV.

Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children

Peculiar indeed. They include an invisible boy, a girl who has to wear heavy shoes to stop her floating away, a boy who is hived to a swarm of bees, a girl with ravaging teeth in the back of her head.

Official Classifications key

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

Annals supplementary advice

SFFV: Suitable For Family Viewing;
NFFV: Not For Family Viewing.
TBA: classification to be
announced

As for Miss Peregrine (Eva Green) she can manipulate time and turn into her namesake bird. All these and more come into play with the arrival of Jake (Asa Butterfield) whose gift is that he can see monsters.

These are to a limited extent manipulated by the shape-shifting Mr Barron played by Samuel L Jackson in a melodramatic style that almost matches his make-up.

Director Tim Burton, whose recent work has drawn on the Lewis Carroll's Alice fables, relies on the work of American Ransom Riggs for this excursion. The Burton/Riggs images, it must be said, may be more disquieting for children than John Tenniel's Alice illustrations.

M★★★NFFV.

Joe Cinque's Consolation

Director Sotiris Dounoukos and co-scriptwriter Matt Rubenstein add little to the material in Helen Garner's celebrated book, subtitled: *A True Story of Death, Grief and the Law*.

Indeed they omit Garner's courtroom material, preferring to focus on re-enactment of events that led to a controversial trial. In summary those events were that in 1997 Australian National University law student Anu Singh, having told party friends of her intent, killed her boyfriend, engineering student, Joe Cinque, with a lethal dose of heroin after lacing his coffee with Rohypnol.

Brought to trial, Anu Singh was found guilty of Cinque's manslaughter; her most closely involved friend Madhavi Rao was acquitted on all charges. To these fraught legal circumstances Dounoukos brings a prudent detachment yet he contrives to elicit from his principals, Maggie Naouri, Jerome Meyer and Sacha Joseph, performances that indicate his sympathies and establish their careers.

Dounoukos and cinematographer Simon Chapman also catch the eerie nature of Canberra itself by day and night. If the story were fiction, the capital's buildings and spaces designed by Walter Burleigh Griffin and his wife Marion Mahony Griffin according to esoteric beliefs would be an apt, *film-noir* set.

M★★★NFFV.

The Girl on the Train

The Paula Hawkins novel of the same title became a bestseller because the train involved was the kind of slow-stopping train that has made Clapham Junction a byword for delay.

Director Tate Taylor and scriptwriter Erin Cressida Wilson switch to smooth-running American commuter trains, destroying the original psycho-thriller's eyewitness, not to say pie-eyed, plausibility.

As Rachel Watson, the alcoholic seer, Emily Blunt does her best. It is not enough, however, to allay the narrative shunts, reverses, delusional flashbacks, blackouts and fast-forwards involving Rachel's ex-husband Tom (Justin Theroux) now remarried to real estate agent Anna Boyd (Rebecca Ferguson) while philandering with Megan Hipwell (Haley Bennett) who is having an affaire with her psychiatrist Dr Kamal Abdic (Edgar Ramirez).

Allison Janney, whose playing has enhanced so many ramshackle plots, is cast as Sergeant Riley duty-bound to clarify the murderous consequence. She retires looking confused. Ditto your reviewer.

MA15+★NFFV.

Chasing Great

All Blacks Captain Richie McCaw has been called the greatest rugby player of all time. Hyperbole, of course yet Justin Pemberton and Michelle Walshe's documentary does go some way to validating the hyperbole by intercutting domestic movie footage with epic archival footage leading to McCaw's final year of World Cup rugby, 2015.

The running time is two hours but there are no idle shots as McCaw and his team head for an *annus mirabilis*. Pemberton and Walshe keep their account this side of stained-glass hagiography by omitting rose-colour and including criticism of McCaw's uncanny ability to bend the arcane rules of Rugby Union without breaking them.

McCaw's chase was a sustained comeback after 2007, his first year of captaincy, when the French defeated the All Blacks

For a nation that has produced



so many meticulous sub-editors, the title is inept; it should be *McAwe* over footage of the great player piloting his glider above the Alps of New Zealand/Aotearoa.

PG★★★★SFFV.

Inferno

The title is a reference to the first part of Dante's great work, *The Divine Comedy*, the other two being *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*. But there is little of greatness in director Ron Howard's and scriptwriter David Koepp's thriller based on a novel by Dan Brown who also wrote *The Da Vinci Code* and *Angels and Demons*.

Difficult to define the Brown trilogy. Fortunately Tom Hanks who plays the linking (clunking?) hero, symbologist Robert Langdon is on record with the summing up: 'Tosh'.

Tosh it is, set against the postcard backgrounds of Florence, Venice and Istanbul; Langdon, suffering from induced amnesia, is pursued by various non-ecclesial forces; these include the WHO (not the rock-'n'-roll band, the World Health Organisation). He is aided but not abetted by Dr Sienna Brooks (Felicity Jones, cast against type).

Amid the tosh, Ben Foster's turn as Bertrand Zobrist is outstanding;

he plays a neo-Malthusian intent on using pandemic means to cut what he perceives as over-population, possibly inspired by the benign David Attenborough's remark that people are a plague on the earth.

The climactic struggle in the ancient cisterns of Istanbul is a credit to cinematographer Salvatore Totino and editors Dan Hanley and Tom Elkins.

At 121 minutes, the thriller is more than a minute too long, say, 30 minutes or a jumbo box of popcorn. And where is the credit for Brown's researcher, his missus Blythe Brown?

No plusses? The tosh might inspire a reading of Dante's work in its most recent translation by Clive James or his wife Prue Shaw's introductory work: *Reading Dante: From Here to Eternity*.

M★★NFFV.

Hell or High Water

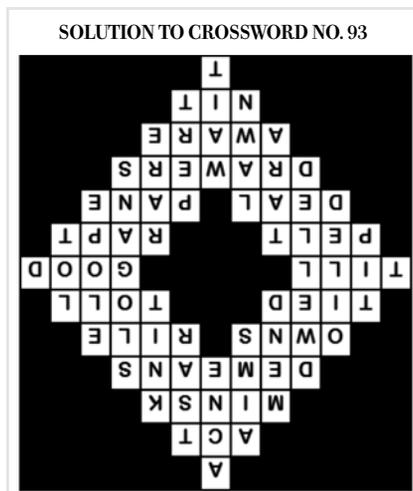
Brothers Toby and Tanner Howard (Chris Pine and Ben Foster) set out on a harum-scarum round of robberies involving a bank threatening to foreclose on their family property. Texas Rangers Marcus Hamilton (Jeff Bridges) and Alberto Parker (Gil Birmingham) take off in pursuit.

Pine is the edgy, careful planner, Foster the wild, lethal joker. Bridges, who dared match the memory of John Wayne in the remake of *True Grit*, gives a performance of imperturbable persistence contrasted with Birmingham's amused tolerance.

Director David Mackenzie and scriptwriter Taylor Sheridan with principal producer Sidney Kimmel have created a high-calibre take on the modern western – a western of pick-up trucks rather than Broncos, of automatic pistols rather than six-guns, of oil wells rather than saloons where the only sign of prevailing belief is three black crosses embedded in the brickwork of a car park.

Nick Cave and Warren Ellis contribute a sound track appropriate to the folkloric nature of the movie, its climax a violent gunfight followed by quietly intense denouement in which Toby Howard defends his behaviour to Hamilton, now retired.

M★★★★NFFV.



Matteo Ricci College at the Jesuit University of Seattle has recently been under fire from students for its emphasis on Western civilization – ‘too many dead white dudes’ as one student put it.

MATTEO RICCI AND THE REBELS

By Robert Royal



MATTEO RICCI may well have been the most interesting Westerner ever to have entered China. As a young Jesuit in the order's early decades, he pursued the usual studies in philosophy and theology in Rome, but also had interests in mathematics and astronomy. The Counter-Reformation was at high tide in sixteenth-century Europe and the Jesuits had been founded in part to help advance it. But Ricci asked to be sent to the Far East. He spent three years in India and, before he even turned thirty, arrived at Macau.

It took him twenty years of work inside China to become the first Westerner invited into Beijing's Forbidden City. But during that time he learned to speak Chinese fluently (and compiled two Chinese-Portuguese dictionaries); came deeply to understand Chinese culture; made many friends among the country's elite; and brought Confucianism and Catholicism into quite fruitful dialogue.

China was interesting mission territory. It had a sophisticated, ancient civilization, and men of

learning were highly regarded there. Ricci impressed the mandarins by drawing maps of the world that indicated China's true extent and position. (The Chinese had mostly been ethnocentric to that point, and thought their vast land virtually coterminous with the world.)

He performed the usual tricks of trained cosmologists, such as predicting eclipses. And also

astonished the Imperial court with great feats of memory thanks to mnemonic methods developed in medieval Europe. (You can find these in Jonathan Spence's entertaining book *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*.) Still, he never lost sight of his main mission: evangelization, which he carried out slowly and meticulously and respectfully, finding openings for serious conversations and conversions in Chinese culture.

It's a great shame, and injustice, to his memory, then, that the Matteo Ricci College at the Jesuit University of Seattle has recently been under fire from students for its emphasis on Western civilization – ‘too many dead white dudes’ as one student put it. A common complaint at many institutions of higher learning today, even though it would be the rare observer who would find American college graduates suffering from a surfeit of narrowly Western studies.

Further, Matteo Ricci College was set up specifically to offer an intensive program in the history of our civilization for those students who want it, and consider it a good foundation.



The Inscription reads: *P. Mattheus Riccius Maceratensis qui primus e Societate Iesu Evangelium in Sinas invexit. Obiit anno Salutis 1610. Aetatis 60.* That is: 'Father Matteo Ricci from Macerata [in the then-Papal States], who was first from the Society of Jesus to carry the Gospel to the peoples of China. He died in the Year of Salvation 1610, at the age of 60.'

There are other undergraduate colleges at the University of Seattle, presumably more like the grab-bag programs of most American colleges and universities, where a certain kind of student can study what he wants, which seems to be mostly himself.

The university administration is, at this point, going through the usual *kabuki* dance. Fr. Stephen Sundborg, S.J., university president, has been talking about the importance of 'listening' to student concerns – good up to a point, as Ricci himself would be the first to say. But deans are being threatened and demands being made about hiring minority faculty.

And this story is already showing signs of ending the way so many others have in recent years. There will be committees set up to review curriculum and, perhaps without expressly saying so, there will be a kind of tacit repentance – even though deep acquaintance with Western philosophy and theology, science and history, are what enabled Matteo Ricci really to appreciate cultures outside the West.

And not only him. It's risky for anyone on a university campus to say so, but it was thanks to the early European missionaries that the first steps in anthropology and ethnology, non-Western history and cross-cultural studies began. Instead, it is colonialism and imperialism and racism on campus, all the way down.

Modern scholars, of course, have greatly developed knowledge of non-Western cultures, far more than was possible at the beginnings. But here in the Americas, for example, we had the Franciscan missionary Bernardino de Sahagún, a slightly younger contemporary of Ricci's and almost entirely unknown today. He learned Nahuatl and wrote volumes about Aztec culture and religion that many modern scholars believe to be among the most remarkable studies of non-Western cultures. Some even regard him as the first true anthropologist.

The Seattle controversy exhibits what is now a common Western syndrome. We seem quite prepared to throw overboard many of the greatest figures of our civilization – who are hardly all in agreement, by the way – in order to maintain a contemporary democratic truce.

Instead of really *studying* unfamiliar cultures (including the one, by the way, that came out of ancient Greece, Rome, and the Bible, and is equally unknown today), we're content to hire a few more minorities or to set up non-traditional programs – and to leave students pretty much where they already are.

Especially since they demand it, and we know what happens when university administrators do not 'listen' to student demands. As one newspaper reported, students have set up a 'shrine' in a university building of books they want to read: Buddhism, the civil-rights movement, feminist theory, social movements, poverty, mass incarceration, alternative views of American history.

They say they want to read and discuss authors like Ta-Nehisi Coates, Toni Morrison, Richard Wright, Malala Yousafzai, Maxine Hong Kingston, Sherman Alexie. Instead, they say, many Matteo Ricci courses are focused on close readings of the classics.

Fine. But is it impossible for at least one institution today to say, and mean it, yes, that's what we do here: a close reading of the classics. And of Catholicism. And we don't believe that this makes us narrow. We think it makes us broader. We're even happy to read the works you suggest, after we've done some more fundamental work. But you think you know all this already, and that it doesn't speak to you. You're wrong. And missing a lot. Here's why.

ROBERT ROYAL is Editor of *The Catholic Thing* - a forum for intelligent Catholic commentary. Reprinted with permission. © 2016 *The Catholic Thing*. All rights reserved.

SAINT MATTHEW



'St Matthew wrote for the Hebrews'

— St Gregory of Nazianzus, 329-389 AD

'In the centre, round the throne itself were four living creatures ... the third had a human face ... ' See St John's *Apocalypse*, 4,6-7.

ST MATTHEW is represented with a cherub as he writes his Gospel. The cherub is winged to indicate that the message it bears comes from heaven. It has a human face, because St Matthew's Gospel begins with our Lord's genealogy, and the evangelist dwelt on the earthly life of Jesus. The cherub became a symbol of our Lord's Incarnation.

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