

# ANNALS

Australasia

Journal of Catholic Culture



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# ANNALS AUSTRALASIA

Journal of Catholic Culture

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Australia's Leading Catholic Magazine

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## Reflections in a Seminary Garden

Well-conducted Seminaries are an indispensable part of the strategy of Christ's Church for continuing its mission in the world. Our EDITORIAL ponders the role of Seminaries in our 21st century world of hi- and ever higher tech.

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## New Key to de-Porning the Net

Annals was on hand when Michael Ghougassian and Simon Totonjian demonstrated their wizardry at Greenpoint Christian School recently.

JAMES MURRAY explains how CountryNet software has developed an effective shield against pornography on the net.

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## Looking beyond Afghanistan

Analysts persist in pointing to Iraq as the next target in the US war on terrorism. PAUL STENHOUSE suggests that the long history of Islamic extremism, as well as the money trail, points in a different direction.

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## Children's Literature for Older Readers

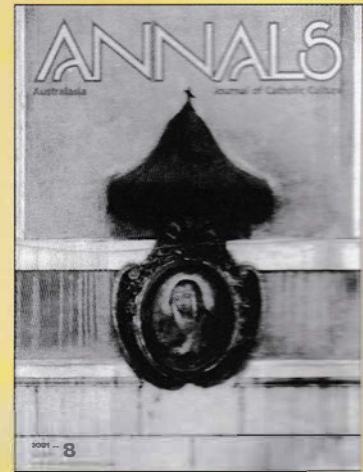
This is the final article on our 4-part series on the importance of fine literature for children. DR SUSAN MOORE looks at certain unhealthy emphases that have occurred in children's literature in Australia and overseas in recent years.

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## Different Priestly Expectations

The baby-boomers have affected religion as well as politics and education and economics. BENEDICT GROESCHEL reviews a book on the Catholic priesthood that owes more to Freud than to St John of the Cross and confuses psychological health with Christian spirituality.

Cover Photo: Paul Stenhouse, MSC



Front Cover: A shrine to the Blessed Virgin dating from Renaissance times. In a street filled with antique shops alongside the Tiber in Rome, it represents an antique faith that still lives in the hearts of Romans and of modern-day pilgrims to the Holy City. Rome is dotted with such shrines. I used to live in the 70s near the (then Communist) Embassy of Albania. To the horror of the other inhabitants of the African Quarter, as our region was and still is called, the statue of our lady that had been for years in a niche in the wall of the property had been removed and the aperture was filled with marble. No sooner had the Albanian Communist Government in the early 90s, and the property been sold, than the shrine reappeared, with statue and flowers.

Back Cover: A selection of books published by Chevalier Press. Ideal as gifts for relatives and friends interested in the Catholic Faith, for RCIA groups following suitable courses in preparation of baptism at Easter, or at school press.

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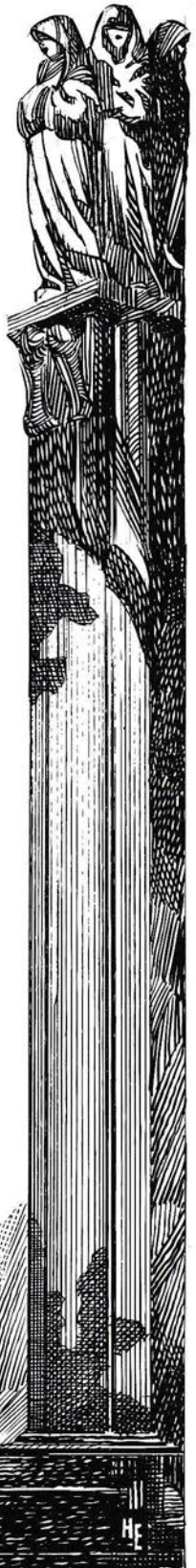
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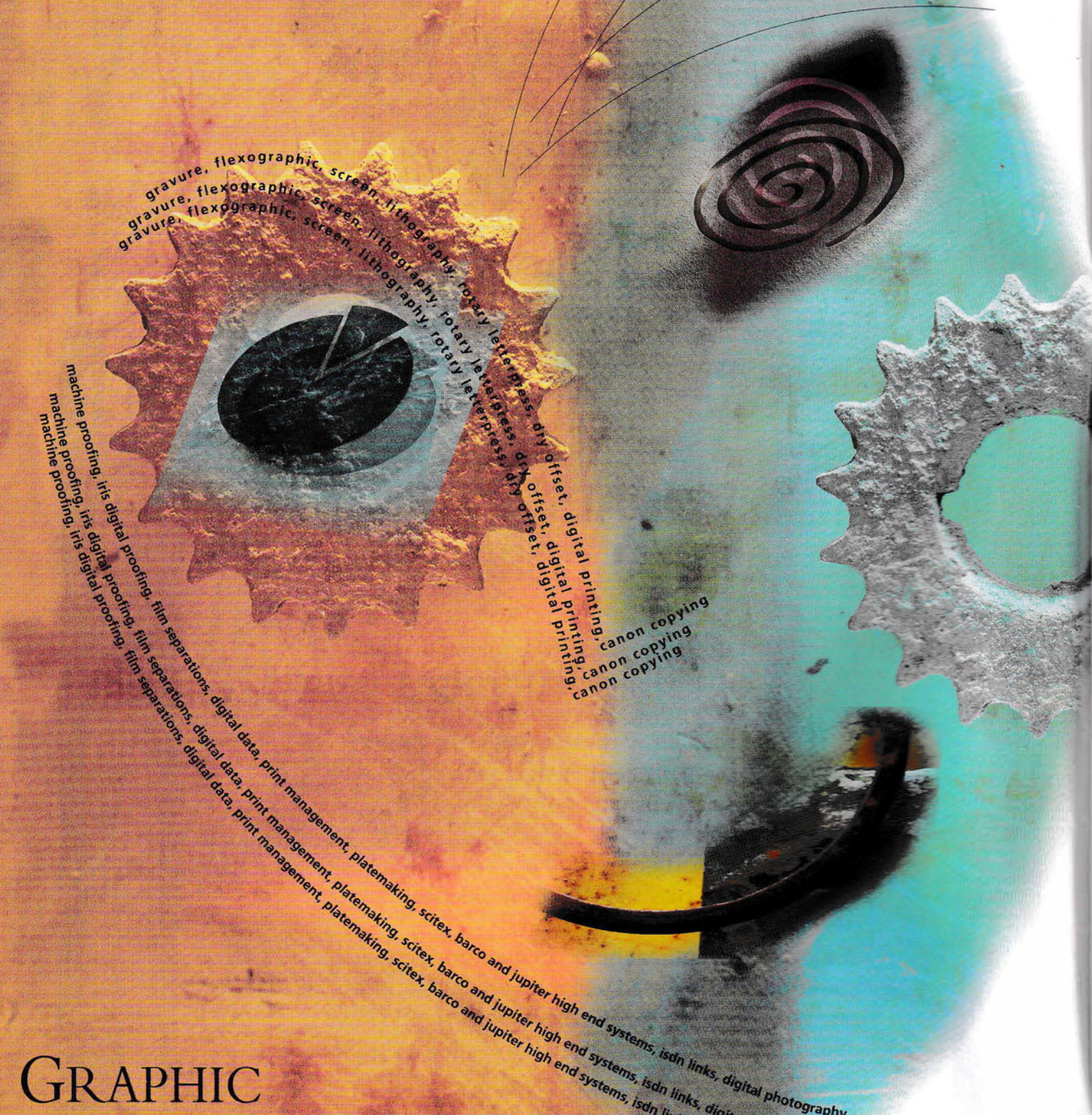
In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and  
of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

## INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT MORAL BORDERS



“**T**HERE are some who maintain that any artistic experiment however anarchical or abnormal, or manifestly or even medically insane, has a mysterious right to override any social custom or convenience, any common-sense or ordinary civic dignity. Even the worst play must take precedence over the best law. If the artists want real blood in their murders, as some other artists used real mud on their landscapes, one can only suppose that these critics would have agreed to sacrifice a few human lives to the thrill of realism. He might make a feature of real lions, which would be expensive, and real Christians, which would be rare.”

— G.K. Chesterton



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REFLECTIONS IN A SEMINARY GARDEN

*Well-conducted Seminaries are an indispensable part of the strategy of Christ's Church for continuing its mission in the world. Shepherds these days need more than good-will, faith and a sturdy crook.*

PAUL STENHOUSE *ponders the role of Seminaries in a 21st century world of hi- and ever higher-tech.*



CLERIC' was once synonymous in English for 'scholar'. In French the word 'clerc' still means 'intellectual' as well as 'priest'. Seminaries

for training Catholic priests, like universities, their earlier prototype, are still with us; in fact, they are enjoying a renaissance. Their infrastructure and outward form may have changed with the passing of time, but their spirit and goal remain as before: dedicated to preparing worthy shepherds for Christ's flock. And the relationship between priesthood and scholarship is as close as it was in pre-Reformation times in England.

**Today's Seminaries**

The word *Seminarium* from which Seminary is derived, means a 'seed-plot,' and the ancient Romans used the term for schools for training legionaries. To the modern ear it may have an old-fashioned ring to it, but that's hardly surprising: in today's world of allegedly value-free morals, politics and education, discounted religion and 'virtual' everything, 'truth' itself has an unfamiliar tone.

Seminaries are not really *that* old. The first modern one, properly-so-called, was built by order of the Fathers of the Council of Trent at the fourteenth Session held on November 24, 1563. That

may seem old to us as we prepare for the advent of Space Tourism, but they are far from old-fashioned if by that one means 'out-of-date' or 'irrelevant'.

**Centres of Excellence**

Catholics should need no convincing that seminaries are meant to be centres of intellectual

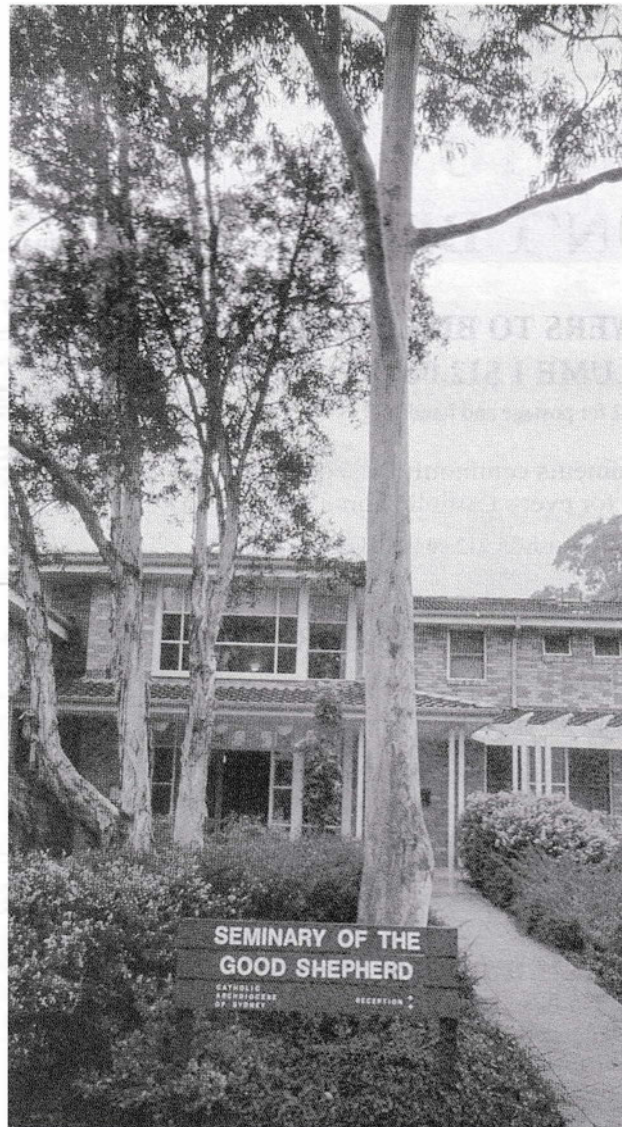
and spiritual excellence. Their *raison d'être* is the thorough preparation of young men for the priesthood. That was an imperative in 1563. It is no less so today as society reaps the bitter fruits of the moral and social confusion of two world wars and the rise and fall of Marxist-Leninist Communism.

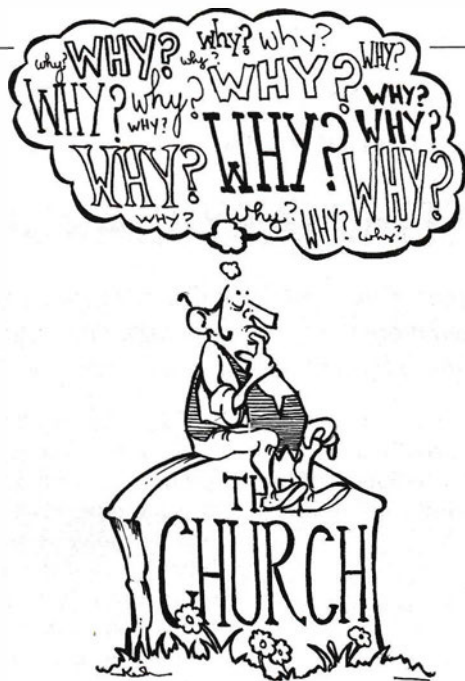
Between them these forces destroyed much more than tens of millions of innocents – they deprived the word 'innocent' of its meaning for many people. They attacked man, body and soul, and the inhumanity of these twentieth-century 'thinkers,' dictators and democratically elected despots spawned mayhem on a global scale that is still with us.

**Seminaries targeted**

Not surprisingly granted their importance, seminaries along with Catholicism's intellectual and cultural legacy in general have been continually under fire from minimalists. These, if they had their way, would reduce seminaries to glorified social service centres and priests to counsellors or bureaucrats.

Some critics, with privileged access to the media, have images of Catholicism and the training it imparts to its priests that draw more on the tenets of failed liberalism and failed socialism dressed up as premodern or postmodern wisdom, than on reality.





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Their ignorance is bolstered by myriad anti-Catholic writings: flawed historical works like Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, or Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* – a more modern [1981] but no less scurrilous caricature of timeless Catholic life and spirituality in the name of a philosophy of pessimism – or Bishop John Spong's *Why Christianity must change or die* [1998] which offers spiritual euthanasia as an alternative to living traditional Christian beliefs and values.

#### *Seminary life a privilege*

I spent two weeks in a seminary recently in the company of numerous priests, and admit to having enjoyed the experience. I was threatened by no mad monks or poisoned books. If Sean Connery was there, I didn't spot him.

I further admit to having spent almost eleven years of my young life [from age 17 until I was 27] in seminaries. The privilege that was mine then was undeserved and inestimable. I am still in awe of the knowledge and wisdom of the numerous priests and lay people who prepared us for our lives as priests in a largely uncomprehending world.

#### *Good Shepherd Seminary*

Sydney's newest Catholic Seminary is in a typical suburban street of the inner west. Australian native flora – ti-trees, grevilleas and eucalypts – dominate the landscape. Its students no longer live together in a large institution but in separate cottages that accommodate eight seminarians in conditions that are excellent for study and reflection.

Slightly adapting the mediaeval adage [which spoke of Monastery], its Chapel is a seminary's heart; its head is its library. On both counts, Good Shepherd Seminary, which inherited the traditions of St Patrick's College Manly, is impressive.

Modern and prayerful, the chapel verges on the austere, with the altar

and tabernacle ensuring that the Blessed Sacrament is its focus, and the Lady chapel keeping the Mother of God ever-present.

The Msgr. Veitch library attached to the Catholic Institute of Sydney, within walking distance, is perhaps the best theological library in the Southern hemisphere. Its collections of ancient and rare treasures and modern writings since the Second Vatican Council offers students for the priesthood who possess the necessary linguistic skills, unequalled opportunities for learning and personal development.

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### ***Seminaries rejuvenate the Church***

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Twenty-eight seminarians ranging in age from twenty-one to fifty-seven and from all the dioceses of New South Wales except Wagga Wagga reside in the Good Shepherd Seminary, in various stages of preparation for ordination as priests.

One student is from the diocese of Port Pirie. In addition there are four gaining pastoral experience, and another four waiting to be ordained:



making a total of thirty-six. Since the seminary was founded in 1996, six priests have been ordained. There are fifteen seminarians in first year.

Seminaries play a crucial role in the life of the Church. Tertullian [died 220 AD] likened the second-century Christian martyrs to flowers in a field that are cut down by their persecutors – the seed of the flowers mown down in their full-bloom, he said, ‘becomes the life-blood of Christians.’<sup>1</sup> We can continue the metaphor and as truly say that the learning and self-discipline imparted by modern seminaries is ‘the life-blood of Christians’ in the twenty-first century.

Of course, everything depends on the calibre of the teaching, the dedication of the teachers, and the degree of application of the seminarians.

### **Pope John Paul II's Guidelines for Seminaries**

Father Michael Foster, Rector of Good Shepherd Seminary since its foundation, explained that the formation of the students follows closely the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II ‘Pastores Dabo

Vobis’ of March 25, 1992.

Quoting Jeremiah 3,15 ‘I will give you shepherds after my own heart,’ the Holy Father lays down the ground-rules for four-fold priestly formation in the modern world: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral. Helping students to integrate these different aspects of the formation programme presents a special challenge, says Father Foster.

The few students whom I met had generously given up two weeks of their mid-year break to assist the priests of the archdiocese who were making their annual retreat at the Seminary.

I thought of the Holy Father’s appeal to parents to be generous in encouraging vocations among their sons, and to young men to be docile to the invitation of the Spirit.

New growth in nature and in the Church is a sign of hope. Sydney’s Good Shepherd seminary seems well-suited to the needs of young Australian Catholic men who want to respond effectively to the Pope’s appeal for youthful shepherds to tend Christ’s flock.



<sup>1</sup> Apol. 50, ad finem

the victim’s family then have their say. The perpetrator presents his or her version and expresses sorrow. The perpetrator’s family expresses its shame, anger and sorrow at the offense. Then the two families agree on appropriate punishment. Often this will involve the perpetrator’s working for the victim’s family.

By the time this work has been carried out, friendship and respect have been restored between the families. The perpetrator’s family may help in this work. Once the punishment has been carried out, the whole affair is regarded as forgotten, and if more punishment is extracted than agreed to, this has to be paid for by the victim’s family. This can come into play when western justice catches up to the perpetrator: any punishment becomes a debt on the victim’s family.

In western justice systems the criminal is taken out of the family environment and their actions are tried according to State law. If found guilty they are placed in correctional centers where public funds are used to pay for the running of the prisons. Sometimes the accused is held in detention for months or years before the outcome of the case is determined. Victims are sidelined to the point where their only involvement is in giving evidence to support the charge brought by the State. Once the criminal’s time has been served he or she returns to similar or worse circumstances without any reconciliation with the victim who remains traumatized, unprotected, and largely unacknowledged.

Statistics show that when punishment becomes harsher, the incidence of crime increases. Longer sentences increase the alienation of the perpetrator from society, from the victim and from his or her own family which is traumatized and thrown off balance by the long absence of a parent or sibling.

Theories of crime and punishment, Father Consedine says, would benefit from taking restorative justice into consideration.



FR MARTIN NICOL was Priest Chaplain to Sydney’s correctional centres from 1996-1999. At present he is parish priest of Mt Pritchard in the archdiocese of Sydney.

## LOOKING FOR JUSTICE

FR. MARTIN NICOL



THE understanding behind the administration of justice in much of the western World has long been that of crime as an offence against the Crown. It is Society that punishes the culprit. This effectively takes the victim, and the families of perpetrator and victim out of the equation. It isolates the perpetrator from the victim. The court-room is a venue for argument between counsel on points of law, far removed from the context of the crime, and the those personally affected by it.

In tribal justice systems - Father Jim Consedine SJ, a New Zealander, looks at New Zealand Maoris, Celts,

American Indians and Australian Aborigines - the response to crime is quite different. Its principal aim is to restore balance. ‘If my pig bites your ankle, I will have to plough your field, i.e. I give your family the ankle my family has injured.’ Tribes are family based so the offense affects the family, not just the individual. The family of the perpetrator is shamed and responsible for restoring order to the tribe.

The advantage tribal societies have over modern societies is that faces are known: the perpetrator can usually be identified by the victim and the wider tribal society. The first step is to identify the criminal. Once he or she has confessed to the crime, the families meet on some common ground. The victim and





(Source: CRTN Information Service, edited by Catherine Ancion for Aid to the Church in Need, Königstein, Germany.)

### **Christians under attack**

Nigeria: Muslim youths armed with gas bombs attacked three churches and 10 Christian-owned stores in the north-western Nigerian city of Kaduna on Sunday, a local resident told the press. The Kawo district where the attacks took place is known to have many supporters of Osama bin Laden. Kaduna is a half-Muslim, half-Christian city, but the Kawo district is predominantly Muslim. The city was the site of two deadly riots which killed hundreds of people last year, provoked by an attempt to impose Islamic sharia law on the population in the mainly-Muslim northern states of the African country.

### **Catholic Church not hostile to Muslims**

Vatican: Mgr Girolamo Grillo, Bishop of Civitavecchia, explained that there was no clash of religions behind the current attacks by British and US military forces on targets in Afghanistan. 'The Catholic Church is on the side of the Muslim people in these dramatic hours, despite the declaration of a 'holy war' by bin Laden,' the Bishop and former Vatican diplomat added. According to him, Osama bin Laden's war-declaration on the Christian and Jewish communities has been clearly rejected by important Muslim leaders, for the Taliban government being in no way representative of Islam as a whole.

### **Italian lay missionary killed**

Rwanda: Giuliano Berizzi, a 60-year-old Italian layman, was killed at his home in Rwanda last Saturday.

Over the past eight years Berizzi had made it his custom to travel to Rwanda every year and to stay there for three months until Christmas in order to assist the poor. He also used to invite young people from the African country to come to Italy to receive training as skilled workers. One of his friends said that Berizzi had always been very happy with his work which supported the Salesian mission in Rwanda.

### **Bishops express concern for safety of Christians**

Pakistan: Pakistani bishops expressed grave concern for the safety of the country's minority Christian population (less than 2% of 142 million inhabitants) in the wake of US-British air strikes against the Taliban government in Afghanistan. Several bishops voiced fears that the air strikes, coupled with a potential ground war, could make Christians a target for violence by Islamic fundamentalists who identify them with the 'Western world'. Although not all the bishops see the October 7 air strikes as justified, they all agree that Christians in Pakistan are also Pakistanis and therefore must be protected by the government.

### **Despite Islamisation campaign, 5,000 people baptised each year**

Sudan: According to Daniel Adwok Kur, Auxiliary Bishop of Khartoum, dialogue with Islam is difficult but necessary. During the civil war between the Muslim government of Sudan and the Christian and animist rebels in the South of the country, more than two million people have been killed over

the past 18 years. The Bishop observed that such a dialogue does already exist on a personal level, but not however on an official level. Bishop Adwok also underlined the fact that, even with government policies strongly repressive to Christianity, in the Archdiocese of Khartoum alone an average of more than 5,000 people a year are currently being baptised.

### **Prudent and measured reaction against terror**

Canada: The Canadian Council of Churches sent a letter to the Prime Minister Jean Chretien asking Canada and the US to have a prudent and measured reaction against terrorism, and not a vengeful and indiscriminate use of violence. The Catholic Church is a member of the Council. The religious leaders of Canada also noted that an excessive reaction will only escalate the violence. A more measured reaction, they said, will also be more efficient in bringing the people responsible for the carnage to justice. Their condemnation 'shall be based not in vengeance, but on the principle of responsibility'.

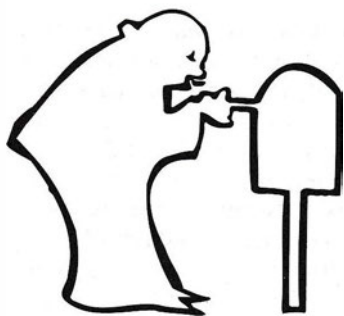
### **Pope beatifies German martyr who resisted Nazism**

Vatican: Pope John Paul II last Sunday beatified a German journalist, Nikolaus Gross, who was killed by the Nazi regime in 1945. Nikolaus was married with several children and was working on an union newspaper, the Westdeutsche Arbeiterzeitung. The Pope mentioned in his homily that 'Nikolaus understood with his intelligence that the national-socialist ideology was incompatible with the Christian faith,' adding that 'He used his pen with boldness to write in favour of human dignity, and he was taken to the scaffold because of this.' Gross used his profession to give a sure orientation to the German workers during the Nazi regime. The Pope also beatified six other people, including another martyr, Mgr Ignace Maloyan, an Armenian bishop killed by Turkish Muslims in 1915.

## **No wonder**

**W**HY wonder, Aulus, that our friend Fabullus is so often deceived. A virtuous man is always vulnerable.'

- Marcus Valerius Martialis 38-104 AD, Latin poet



**Monumental task**

Congratulations on your leader in *Annals* 9/10 2000. What a pity you could not cover the many other aspects of hype which infest our society, junk journalism and junk politics in particular. Unfortunately, wider coverage would require an edition of *Annals* running into hundreds of pages. This would be asking a bit much from an editorial staff of one plus one part-timer despite its ability to perform a monumental task week in week out.

South Brighton, SA 5084 BERNARD MARTIN

**Great Magazine**

Thank you for a great magazine. It is refreshing to read the truth about our Catholic culture and the history of the church instead of the garbage that passes for enlightened entertainment in the secular media.

Blackmans Bay Tas 7052 BRIAN COOPER

**Pornography and censorship**

If you've wondered, like many others, how it is that material of such low moral standards is able to get into Australia, then hearken to some basic assumptions used by the Office of Film and Literature Classification, regarding audio recordings, films and video games.

The first principle assumed by the Australian Record Industry Association Ltd. (ARIA), is that 'Adults in a democratic society should be free to listen to what they wish.' At the same time, it is acknowledged that 'audio recordings which advocate suicide, violence, sexual violence, necrophilia and other abhorrent or criminal activities should not be available to children.'

It seems to me that no person, of any age, should have access to any of this abhorrent or criminal material.

How has this so-called freedom to indulge in the viewing or listening to material with abhorrent or criminal activities, been allowed to happen?

Regarding the Classification Guidelines for publications, films and video games, the first principle of the Code is that 'adults should be able to read, hear and see what they want.' Alongside this principle, the Code states that 'the standards or morality,

decency and propriety generally accepted by reasonable adults' must be taken into account.

As far as I can see, this means a contradiction of their first principle. For someone who demands the 'freedom' to have access to anything he wishes, principles of common decency would only be seen as a denial of his rights.

It is obvious that the principle which gives adults the freedom to read, hear and see whatever they wish is clearly flawed, and is therefore a spurious 'freedom' when viewed in the light of common decency, common sense and the acknowledgment of the results when this 'freedom' is taken to its local extreme.

Goodness and decency should regulate everything that Australians do or have access to, and it is time that good, decent people had their say. These things have been too long left to a few.

The Office of Film and Literature Classification can be contacted by phoning (02) 9289 7100 or faxing (02) 9289 7101. Their Internet address is [www.oflc.gov.au](http://www.oflc.gov.au)

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**A grouse mag**

It is a grouse mag, really top hole, to use an old plug.

Parkdale, Vic. 3194 TERENCE O'BRIEN

**Speaks the truth**

Thank you for your wonderful magazine. I always go straight to your editorial, finding it one of the few Catholic papers that speaks the truth, which a lot of people don't want to hear. May God bless you and keep you safe.

Upper Mt Gravatt, Qld 4122 MARGARET BISSHOP

**Motherhood 2001?**

Thank you for the copy of August *Annals*. It was to be expected that there would be a wide divergence of opinion about the satirical poem, 'Motherhood 2001?', and it is only fair that you publish letters from both sides.

I most certainly do appreciate the longings of childless couples, and the temptation to resort to IVF. But I

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firmly believe that such practices as egg donation and surrogate motherhood (particularly when done on a commercial basis) contribute to the 'degradation of women', rather than 'lifting us up.'

My view is shared by many feminists, and by a great number of other people, irrespective of their religious (or irreligious) persuasions.

Longerville NSW 2066

FRANCES HACKNEY

### Jim Waldерsee

Dear Editor, today I was cleaning out my desk and I came across a copy of *Annals* dated January/February 1989. Browsing through it, I found your obituary for Jim Waldерsee, which I re-read. I was transported back to the late forties and early fifties when it was my good fortune to know Jim. In those days I lived at Rockdale, literally in the shadow of St Joseph's church, and was a keen member of the local CYO, as was Jim. Each year we would put on a CYO concert at the Rockdale town hall and, almost as a matter of Divine Right, Jim was in charge of the music.

Part of each concert was a short musical play. One year it was *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Another it was *Robin Hood*. Jim, at the time was playing tuba in the opera orchestra, the forerunner to The Australian Opera orchestra, and he wrote lyrics for each of our plays based on various arias, duets and choruses from the operas he was playing for. Thus we had 'Jack's going to climb up the magic stalk' to the tune of the Soldier's Chorus from *Faust*, and the stirring chorus at the end of *Robin Hood*: 'Gone are days of tyrannous oppression', to the tune of the Grand March from *Aida*. So that the music was not too 'high brow', he contrived to have Robin Hood's Merry Men introduce themselves with a rousing chorus of 'We're the merry men of Sherwood, we're the finest in the land' to the tune of *Macnamara's Band*. Gilbert & Sullivan and Mozart, as well as others, also came in for Jim's marvellous parodies. He accompanied all this on the piano, or any other instrument available that would suit. His rehearsals were amazing in that in a few weeks



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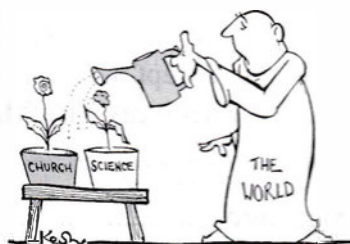
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he could mould the raw, very raw, 'talent' of a group of fairly keen youngsters into a reasonable *ensemble*. The customers, a packed town hall, loved it. And Jim was always such fun to be with.

He spoke very little of his scientific work. He told a small group of us one night about his work with the vibration of machines and structures.



## Religion and Science

RELIGION is not founded on science, nor is science an extension of religion... While each can and should support the other as distinct dimensions of a common human culture, neither ought to assume that it forms a necessary premise for the other... Science can purify religion from idolatry and false absolutes. Each can draw the other into the wider world... in which both can flourish.

— Pope John Paul II, See *New Republic* 26/12/94 and Tad Szulc, *Pope John Paul II*, p. 442.

But his interests were so varied that I wasn't at all surprised when I learnt later in life, after I had lost contact with him, that he was a lecturer in history at the university. I think he could do well in anything he attempted: except to teach me how to play the trombone. He did teach me a lot about classical music and I credit him with a great deal of my love of that music to this day.

There is an interesting coincidence in your article. You mention Duke Farrell. Before my family moved to Rockdale in 1940, we lived in Canterbury, NSW. One of my best friends was Cliff Farrell, otherwise later known as 'Duke' Farrell. Cliff named himself 'Duke' because of his almost worshipful love of Duke Ellington. Cliff played the double bass, and it was quite a sight to see him riding his pushbike around the streets of Canterbury with the huge instrument strapped to his back. His moment of glory came when he found himself in a lift in a hotel in Kings Cross with none other than the great jazzman himself. Cliff told Duke how much he enjoyed his music, whereupon Duke Ellington invited 'Duke' Farrell into his hotel suit, introduced him to members of his group and had 'Duke' Farrell accompany them on the base fiddle. To my mind, Cliff's biggest feat was to encourage me to join the Holy Name Society at St Mel's church, Campsie, which was our parish church at the time. It is incredible that I should have separately met these two men before they came together in the jazz bands in the St George district.

I always looked forward to reading Jim's articles in *Annals*. As I read each one I could recall his bubbling, falsetto giggle and his way of leaping off at an always interesting conversation tangent, to be followed by a self effacing bob of the head and a shy grin. I lost track of Jim when Rosemary and I moved here to Beecroft in June 1956. We were both very sad and shocked to read of his death at such a young age. He is no doubt organising the celestial harps and writing lyrics for the angelic choirs.

Beecroft NSW 2119

KEN RITCHIE

### Interesting

I really enjoy reading the *Annals* from cover to cover and the letters page is very interesting. Keep up the good work.

Eastlakes, NSW 2018

M McMAHON

### Black and white

I now find *Annals* to be too 'right wing' and the letters and articles seem to be by and large written by people who see things in very black and white terms and are more interested in rules and regulations than anything else. Nevertheless I have found many articles of interest over the last few years and appreciate the contribution *Annals* makes to the overall debate. I could be interested in renewing my subscription in the future if a more balanced viewpoint was encouraged or at least allowed from time to time.

Coogee NSW 2034

JOHN BRANSBY

[Sorry, John, to lose you as a reader. We try to be balanced - but the imbalance in the media and in society at large demands sometimes that we speak of 'rules and regulations'. We look forward to your re-subscribing some day. Editor.]

### Globalisation

I have enjoyed most of the articles in *Annals Australasia* since subscribing earlier this year. There is an exception.

Gaining the World - and Losing One's Soul, (August 2001) is the article I take exception to. I had some difficulty grasping the point of Sam Simmonds' position. Perhaps it was no more than his paranoia about 'Globalisation'. His gratuitous comments about 'Presidents of the United States of America, the arms industry and the gun lobbies' believing in 'shooting wars' might better have been directed to the hijackers who were committed opponents of globalisation that drove the four planeloads of innocent people into the New York World Trade Centre and The Pentagon. But, then they were *not* members of 'the gun lobbies'. I suppose most of the passengers were financial beneficiaries of globalisation since they could afford airplane tickets.

I am an American citizen and a member of both The Sporting Shooters Association of Australia and The American Rifle Association and hold a NSW shooters license.

Cromer NSW 2099

RICHARD BYRNE

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### Threats and Perils

Sam Simmonds (Gaining the world - and losing one's soul, *Annals* 6/2001) states: In 21st century Australia it is acutely embarrassing to recall that only a few decades ago, even before World War II, people were seriously talking about the imminent threat from 'the yellow peril' or 'the menace from the near north'. Are we to believe that the events dating from 7th December 1941 to 15th August 1945 did not constitute a threat to our country?

Woodberry NSW 2322

NEVILLE SMITH

### Too good to miss

My 94th birthday is just around the corner and I may be guilty of presumption when I send you a two year subscription to the *Annals*. The truth of the matter is that the copy that comes to the Friary seems to gravitate to somebody's room and one is lucky to see it at all - and it is too good to miss.

Waverley NSW (BISHOP) JOHN DOGGETT OFM

[Readers' comments are welcomed, not just on material that appears in *Annals*, but on issues that concern the Catholic and the wider community generally. Please keep your letters short. They may be edited if too long. Always print your full name and address, and include a day-time phone or fax number or e-mail address at which you can be reached. Editor, *Annals*.]

# THOUGHT FROM THE LITURGY OF THE DAY



## NOVEMBER

- 1** Thur *All Saints* Mat 5:8  
Happy those with a pure heart, for they shall see God.
- 2** Fri *All Souls* 6 Jn 6:39  
It is my Father's will that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me.
- 3** Sat *Week 30* Mat 11:29  
Shoulder my yoke and learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart.
- 4** Sun *Week 31* Luke 19:10  
I have come to seek out and save what was lost.
- 5** Mon *Week 31* Jn 8:31  
If you make my word your home you will learn the truth.
- 6** Tue *Week 31* Eph 1:18  
May the Father enlighten you so that you can see what hope his call holds out for you.
- 7** Wed *Week 31* 1Peter 4:14  
You bear the name of Christ. The Spirit of God rests on you.

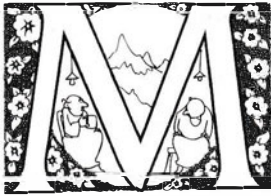
- 8** Thur *Week 31* Luke 15:10  
The angels of God rejoice over one repentant sinner.
- 9** Fri *John Lateran* 1Cor 3:16  
You are God's temple. His Spirit is living among you.
- 10** Sat *Leo the Great* Ps 37:4  
Make the Lord your delight and he will grant your heart's desire.
- 11** Sunday *Week 32* Psalm 17:8  
Hide me in the shadow of your wings.
- 12** Mon *Josaphat* John 17:26  
May the love you have for me be in them.
- 13** Tue *Week 32* John 14:23  
If you love me my Father will love you and we will come to you.
- 14** Wed *Week 32* Luke 17:19  
Go on your way. Your faith has saved you.
- 15** Thur *Week 32* Luke 17:21  
The kingdom of God is among you.
- 16** Fri *Week 32* Luke 21:28  
Hold your head high, for your liberation is at hand.
- 17** Sat *Elizabeth* Luke 6:36  
Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate.
- 18** Sunday *Week 33* Mal 3:20  
The sun of righteousness will shine out with healing in its rays.
- 
- Thoughts compiled by Father Michael Fallon, MSC.

- 19** Mon *Week 33* Ps 119:88  
Give me life, Lord, and I will do your will.
- 20** Tue *Week 33* Psalm 130:5  
My soul is waiting for the Lord, I count on his word.
- 21** Wed *Presentation* Lk 1:48  
People forever will call me blessed.
- 22** Thur *Cecilia* Hosea 2:21  
I will betroth you to myself in tenderness and love.
- 23** Fri *Week 33* Luke 19:46  
My house will be a house of prayer.
- 24** Sat *Viet martyrs* 2Tim1:10  
Jesus proclaimed life through the Gospel.
- 25** Sun *Christ King* Lk 23:43  
You will be with me in paradise.
- 26** Mon *Week 34* Apoc 2:10  
Remain faithful and I will give you the crown of life.
- 27** Tue *Week 34* Dan 2:44  
God will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.
- 28** Wed *Week 34* Luke 21:19  
Your endurance will win you your lives.
- 29** Thur *Week 34* Dan 6:26  
God is a living God. Who saves and sets free.
- 30** Fri *Andrew* Rom 10:15  
How welcome the footsteps of those who bring Good News!

## Unhackable software to protect school web-surfers

# NEW KEY TO DE-PORNING THE NET

*ANNALS was on hand when Michael Ghougassian and Simon Totonjian demonstrated their wizardry at Greenpoint Christian School near Gosford, NSW. JAMES MURRAY explains to our readers the benefits of the CountryNet software developed to provide an effective shield against pornography on the net.*



**M**ICHAEL Dertouzos, who died recently, was the visionary director of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's computer science unit. From this prestigious position, starting in 1993, he inspired the expansion of the World Wide Web aka the Internet. Tim Berners-Lee, whose concept the Web was, said of Dertouzos: 'He was a spring of enthusiasm, capability, insight and experience that drove a half-formed idea ... into an international reality'.

Both Berners-Lee and Dertouzos were altruists. Neither was interested in dot-com billion-dollar boom and bust. Their vision was of the World Wide Web as an educational instrument of unprecedented scope, a kind of global university, open to all. It was never part of his vision academic that the most lucrative and most cunningly promoted content on the Internet should be pornography, ranging across the spectrum of perversity to an extent that made all but the most zealous proponents of anti-censorship feel the need for shield software, particularly for school-age children.

So pervasive is pornography that some experts estimate it represents more than 80 per cent of the material on the Internet. Certainly, those who download pornography do not appear to have any qualms about giving their credit card details to suppliers. Despite the dot-com crash, sales of Internet pornography continue to rise.

But devising an anti-porn shield or content filter has not been easy. In fact, many schools with a total of millions invested in computers cannot

use them to their full potential because of the risks of intrusive pornographic down-load.

To ensure shielding, schools rely on teachers down-loading curriculum material before classes start, a method wasteful of both time and computer investment. This rough and ready approach may change with the adoption of software marketed by an all-Australian company CountryNet Solutions. But it might more aptly be called The A-A - Australian-Armenian - Solution. The package took three years to develop. The duo behind it are Michael Ghougassian and Simon Totonjian.

They make an intriguing contrast. Ghougassian tends to be self-effacing but gives off a convincing sense of genius. Necessarily, he cannot give operational details of his package. He does say: 'This software is unhackable by even the most ingenious operator and unbreakable by anyone seeking to push unwanted

material of any kind. It has applications not only in education but in politics, defence and business where super-safe encryption is necessary.'

He cites specifically security in relation to the Singapore Government instrumentality SingTel's takeover of Cable and Wireless Optus and the Australian Defence Department's use of the latter's network. He also mentions the recent furore over alleged hacking within the NSW Parliament which he says would not have arisen had the CountryNet software been installed.

Totonjian is all eloquence and unstoppable enthusiasm inspired by personal as well as a business factors. 'I have five children and I know I have to protect them from the kind of pornographic material that is as commonplace on the World Wide Web as it is too easily accessed.

'Our aim is to protect our children from invasive exploitation from pornographers whether they are based here or beyond Australian jurisdiction overseas. Our system is not the cheapest available but it is the most effective. Not only does it prevent the intrusion of pornography on educational or general websites, it stops the spread of anti-semitic and other offensive ethnic material. Indeed it can be used to screen out any material, including hot-mail, violence or gambling.

'In other words it ensures that the personal computer linked to the World Wide Web fulfils its design function as an academic tool rather than a sophisticated distraction.'

Despite the genius and the enthusiasm, there has been no rush to acquire and install the anti-porn shield. Approaches have been made to State, private and religious schools,



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(Don't forget to mention *Annals Australasia*)

including Catholic schools but they prefer to rely on the vagaries of their established, if ad hoc, systems.

One school has been prepared to use the software. In what is potentially a pilot project for the rest of Australasia, the Greenpoint Christian College, a thriving Baptist establishment near Gosford, New South Wales, has been using CountryNet software for two years. Its teachers are enthusiastic about the results in terms of cost effectiveness and focus on learning.

Their consensus is that CountryNet is a totally reliable system which enables them to create curriculums that are both selective, effective and in the best interests of their students, and lives up to its slogan: Faster. Cleaner. Smarter.

**Faster:** It uses state of the art technology which runs on AIR (Accelerated Internet Response). Nor does it operate on the basis of shared lines which means that connection speed is constant rather than slowing during peak periods.

**Cleaner:** No cached information, which can be up to 30 days old, is used. Thus the information displayed is absolutely current.

**Smarter:** Packages are designed to meet the needs of individual clients and maximise Internet use. All connections are via Frame Relay directly to the Internet and are fully digital. Hardware is also designed to meet individual needs with firewalls to prevent unauthorised access to confidential information. All this comes with a guarantee of Minimum Time to Repair.

Gradually, through that most potent of promotions – word of mouth – and his own marketing expertise, Simon Totonjian is bringing other teachers to test the system. He also organises seminars for education authority officials and teachers who may be interested in installing their system.

'We will not be satisfied until our anti-porn system is installed Australia-wide,' he says. 'And after that the world. Our children must be protected.'



Simon Totonjian can be reached at Shop3-4 Park Plaza  
131 Henry Parry Drive Gosford NSW 2250. Phone:  
(02) 4323 7579 Fax: (02) 4323 1482 email: simon@trent-  
vale.com.au



## Peter and Paul in Rome

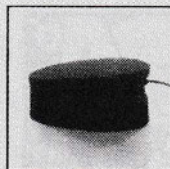
**N**O other monuments of apostolic Rome can make so absolute a claim to authenticity as the two tombs which are now covered respectively by the great basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul. Already at the beginning of the second century we have notice of their existence in the words of the priest Caius, 'I can show you,' he says, 'the monuments (*tropaea*) of the Apostles, for you will find them on the Vatican and on the Ostian Way'; and Eusebius himself, who has preserved this testimony, bears witness that in his time the monuments were still extant.

Each of these two primitive apostolic sepulchres was necessarily situated outside the city limits, for burial within those limits was not allowed, and they are each of them placed as near as might be to the spot of the actual martyrdom. As regards the tomb of St. Peter there can be no doubt that the place was used for burials in the age of Nero, for many tombs of that period were discovered in the course of the excavations made when the basilica was rebuilt. A small portion of ground in this area was already in Christian hands, even before St. Peter's death, and it was here that the remains of the martyrs in the great persecution of A.D. 64 had been deposited. More than 1600 years afterwards, when the excavations were being made for the great *baldacchino* over the tomb, these remains were discovered close to the tomb of the Apostle himself. He was laid, therefore, as that discovery clearly proved, in ground that was already Christian, and already rendered holy in Christian eyes by being the resting-place of so many who had given their lives for the faith.

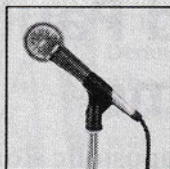
The body of St. Paul is said in like manner to have been buried by a matron called Lucina in her own ground on the Ostian Way, a little beyond the first milestone.

– *The Early Church in the light of the monuments*, Arthur Stapylton Barnes, London 1913.

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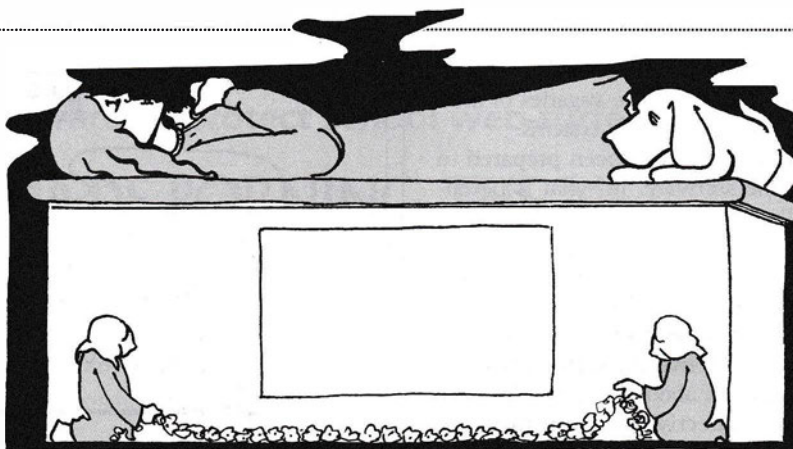
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## Ilaria Di Caretto May her soul rest in peace

**T**HE last Florentine work in which the proper form of the Etruscan tomb is preserved, and the first in which all right Christian sentiment respecting death is embodied. It is perfectly severe in classical tradition, and perfectly frank in concession to the passions of existing life. It submits to all the laws of the past, and expresses all the hopes of the future.

Now every work of the great Christian schools expresses primarily, conquest over death; conquest not grievous, but absolute and serene; rising with the greatest of them, into rapture.

But this, as a *central* work, has all the peace of the Christian Eternity, but only in part its gladness. Young children wreath round the tomb a garland of abundant flowers, but she herself, Ilaria, yet sleeps; the time is not yet come for her to be awakened out of sleep.

Her image is a simple portrait of her – how much less beautiful than she was in life, we cannot know – but as beautiful as marble can be. And through and in the marble we may see that the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth: yet as visibly a sleep that shall know no ending until the last day break, and the last shadow flee away; until then, she 'shall not return.' Her hands are laid on her breast – not praying – she has no need to pray now. She wears her dress of every day, clasped at her throat, girdled at her waist, the hem of it drooping over her feet. No disturbance of its folds by pain of sickness, no binding, no shrouding of her sweet form, in death more than in life. As a soft, low wave of summer sea, her breast rises; no more: the rippled gathering of its close mantle droops to the belt, then sweeps to her feet, straight as drifting snow. And at her feet her dog lies watching her; the mystery of his mortal life joined, by love, to her immortal one.

Few know, and fewer love, the tomb and its place, – not shrine, for it stands bare by the cathedral wall: only, by chance, a cross is cut deep into one of the foundation stones behind her head. But no goddess statue of the Greek cities, no nun's image among the cloisters of Apennine, no fancied light of angel in the homes of heaven, has more divine rank among the thoughts of men.

– John Ruskin, 'Three Colours...' in *On The Old Road*, I, 249



## The Search for Usama bin Laden

# LOOKING BEYOND AFGHANISTAN

*Commentators persist in pointing to Iraq as the next target of the US war on terrorism. In this article, PAUL STENHOUSE suggests that the long history of Islamic extremism, as well as the money trail, leads in a different direction.*



THE credibility of much of the rhetoric surrounding the US and British offensive against Usama bin Laden and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan was not helped by recent statements attributed to British PM Tony Blair. Seemingly trying to reassure British Muslims he is reported as saying that he felt angered 'to hear bin Laden and his associates described as Islamic terrorists. They are terrorists pure and simple'.

If Usama bin Laden is not an Islamic terrorist, then George W. Bush is not the President of the United States of America. Such sophistry on the part of Blair does harm to the justice of the cause of the US and its allies, and is condescending to those Muslims who know their history, and have suffered much at the hands of Islamic extremists.

The US and her allies have rightly stressed that the military action in Afghanistan [and wherever terrorists find safe-havens and support] is not aimed at moderate Muslims, but at fanatics claiming to act in the name of Islam. Those demonstrating in support of bin Laden and the Taliban throughout the Arab and Muslim world would do well to check on the Islamic credentials of those whom they are supporting.

The religious and political antecedents of Usama bin Laden are well known. His ancestors were a thorn in the side of successive Turkish Sultans, Sherifs of Mecca, Sikhs in Peshawar and the Punjab, and the British throughout their Indian Empire from 1747 onwards.

Calling themselves *Muwahhidun* [Unitarians] while their Muslim

enemies called them *Wahhabiyyun* [Wahhabis, after their founder Muhamed bin Abd al-Wahhab who died in 1787], these puritanical Bedouin tribesmen spread their heterodox form of Islam by the sword, carrying it into most countries with Muslim populations.



## Patent eye potions

COLLYRIA formed an important class of preparation and were used for the eyes, for among the Romans diseases of the eyes seem to have been very prevalent. The formulæ were numerous, the active ingredients usually consisting of calcined copper, antimony and opium. In preparing them the drugs are directed to be first rubbed to a very fine powder, then starch, gum, the white of egg or milk added, and the whole made into a paste, but sometimes they were used also in liquid form. Their popularity is shown from the numerous formulæ of a proprietary kind to which the name of the originator was attached. These are evidenced in the Roman oculists seals that were used to stamp certain preparations in the form of Collyria and ointments recommended for the treatments of the eyes.

— *The Mystery and art of the Apothecary*,  
CJS Thompson, London, 1929.

Proclaiming jihads against Turks, Hindus, Sikhs and especially the British they denounced saints, tombstones, minarets, ornaments in the mosque, worry beads, Muhammad's name inscribed in mosques, and much else besides.

They were regarded by the Muslim Sherifs of Mecca as dangerous fanatics and heretical non-Muslims, and were never permitted to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. On one occasion, in 1807, when they entered Mecca by force, Ali Bey al-Abassi described the fear of the inhabitants 'at the sight of the torrent of naked and armed men,' adding, 'everyone fled and hid'. The Sherif watched from his castle on the hillside, waiting for the tide of desert fanatics to turn. Eventually they swept out as they swept in – 'like a swarm of bees'.

Their calls for jihads in British India in the late 19th century led the Sunni and Shi'a Muslim communities there to repudiate the Wahhabi doctrine of jihad, and to distance themselves from the heretical sect as far as possible.

As the co-founder of the sect, Muhammad bin Sa'ud, lay dying in May 1814, he gave advice to his son and heir Abdulla that Usama bin Laden and other Islamic extremists ever since have taken to heart: 'Never engage the [enemy] in the open plains'. The US and their allies would do well to pay heed to this advice as they plan their strategy for capturing the elusive bin Laden and holding him accountable for his crimes against humanity.

The unthinkable happened in the aftermath of the turmoil caused in Arabia and the Gulf by the First World War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. In October 1924

and December 1925 another Ibn Sa'ud took Mecca and Medina, and established the Wahhabi kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The descendants of Muhammad bin Sa'ud thus achieved their aim of supplanting the traditional Sunni rulers of Mecca, and passing control of the central shrines of Islam to the heterodox Wahhabis.

The rightful Emir of Mecca, Hussein, abdicated on October 13, 1924 in favour of his son Ali and died in exile in Amman on June 4, 1931. Ali, in his turn was forced by the Wahhabis to flee on December 18, 1925 and the last Hashemite Guardian of Mecca died in exile in Baghdad on February 14, 1935.

In a recent article in the *Middle Eastern Quarterly*, Sheikh Abdul Hadi Palazzi warned his fellow Muslims

that the Wahhabis 'transform[ed] these two sanctuaries from centres for the transmission of the Sunni heritage into places for propagating a primitive and literalist cult to Muslims coming from every part of the world'.

Neo-Wahhabis, of whom Usama bin Laden is a notorious example, are supported, says the Sheikh, by a world-wide network of extremists 'funded by the Saudi and some other Gulf governments'.

The leader of the Islamic Supreme Council of America, Sheikh Hisham al-Kabbani, Lebanese by birth but now a resident of the US, notes that the fanatical Wahhabis 'took over 80% of the mosques of the United States ... this means that the ideology of extremism has been spread to 80%

of the Muslim population, mostly the youth and the new generation'.

In the words of Sheikh Abdul Hadi, 'the great majority of all mosques in democratic countries – not only in North America – but in most of western Europe as well – are controlled by extremists.'

The plight of moderate Muslims in Western democracies is well described by the Bengali Sufi writer Zeeshan Ali: 'Muslims from Bangladesh in the US, just like any other place in the world, uphold the traditional beliefs of Islam, but due to lack of instruction, keep quiet when these beliefs are attacked by Wahhabis in the US who all of a sudden become 'better' Muslims than others. These Wahhabis go even further and accuse even their own fathers of heresy, sin and unbelief. And the young children of immigrants, when they grow up in this country, get exposed only to this one sided view of Islam and are led to think that this is the only Islam'.

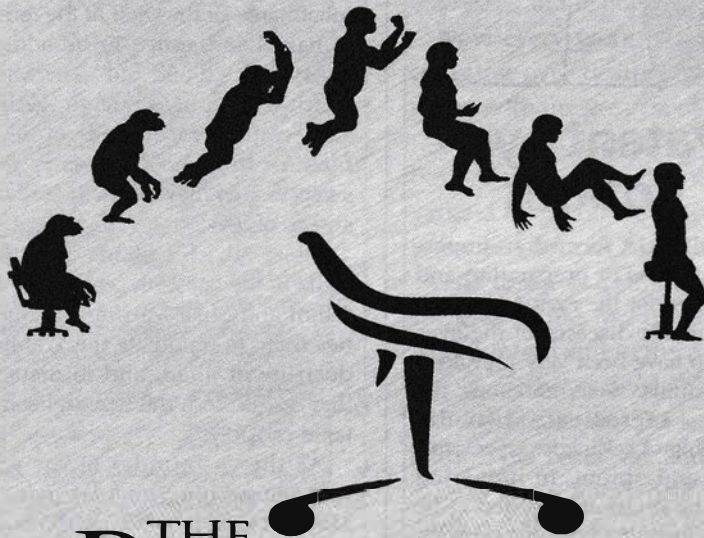
If German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's recent call to 'dry up' the terrorist swamp is to be successful, then as much attention needs to be paid to the alleged 'friends' of the US and the West in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf whose financial and ideological support for terrorism cannot be overestimated, as to the search for terrorist cells in the UK, Europe, and the US.

Is it a coincidence that the only countries that recognised the Taliban regime in Afghanistan were Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates? Or, quoting Sheikh Abdul Hadi again, is it a coincidence that the Council for American Islamic Relations, a front for the Wahhabi-controlled Muslim Brothers, has obtained a monopoly for training Muslim chaplains for the US army?

Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, professor of political science at the University of California in San Diego and author of a book on Islamic extremism in Pakistan does not mince words, 'If the US wants to do something about radical Islam it has to deal with Saudi Arabia. ... Saudi Arabia is the single most important cause and supporter of radicalisation, ideologisation, and the general fanaticism of Islam'.



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# APOLOGETICS AND CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

Archbishop Michael Sheehan  
 Co-adjutor Archbishop of Sydney  
 Revised and Edited by Father Peter Joseph

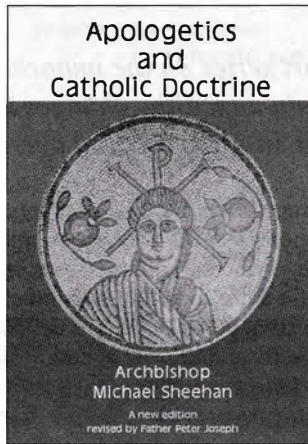
Launched in Sydney by His Grace Archbishop George Pell on 24 July 2001, this long-awaited Catholic classic has already proved to be a runaway best-seller.

Archbishop Pell has commended Father Peter Joseph's work and the book itself to the Church of today, emphasising its freedom from "muddled thinking".

FATHER PETER JOSEPH was born in Wagga Wagga NSW and educated at St Ignatius College, Riverview. He studied for the priesthood at the Pontifical College of Propaganda Fide, Rome. He gained his Licentiate in Sacred Theology at the Pontifical Urban University, Rome in 1992. He was ordained for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga in 1992 and served in various parishes.



He is currently Vice Rector and Dean of Studies at Vianney College, the Diocesan seminary of Wagga Wagga. In that position he is also engaged on his Doctorate in Theology with the Gregorian University.



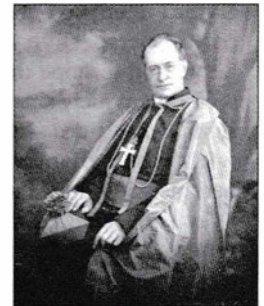
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## Significant Value Shifts

## CHILDREN'S LITERATURE FOR OLDER READERS

*This is the final article in a 4-part series on the importance of fine literature for children. DR SUSAN MOORE looks at certain unhealthy changes in emphasis that have occurred in children's literature in Australia and overseas in recent years.*



SIX years ago the founder of Bega Valley Christian College, Jill Ireland, published a memorable essay on the Australian Book Awards for older readers. Starting in her teens, for a period of twenty years, she read every available winning, highly commended, commended, and short-listed entry. Subsequent study at Oxford deepened and enlarged her critical perspective without giving her reason to hope that her concerns would be widely shared. Indeed, the significant values shift noted by her with some dismay in 1995 has become very much more pronounced – not simply in Australia, but everywhere in the English-speaking world.

In the 70s and 80s the world view underlying the books considered best was that since people are essentially trustworthy, they can change for the better and improve the quality of their lives. In the 90s a very different message was proclaimed. Typically, the universe was perceived as malevolent, and the reform of lives or institutions was declared an illusory prospect. Futuristic fantasies, produced in increasingly great numbers, maintained that secrecy and cunning were the only viable means of fighting endemic institutional abuses of power and establishing a new order to replace the existing, vicious one.

During her own youth, Mrs Ireland reported, the authors of critically esteemed literature had commended virtues such as honesty, self-sacrifice, justice, and fortitude. People were perceived, not as cogs in

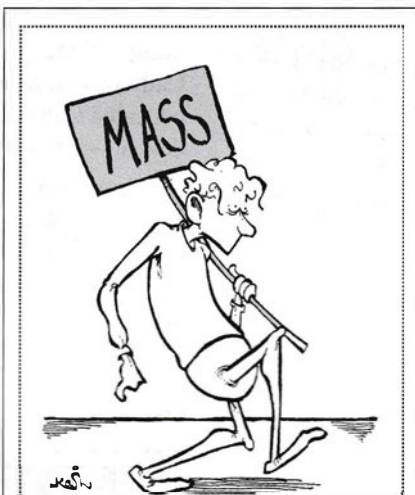
corrupt machines, but as unique and cooperative beings whose efforts bore fruit. Personal fulfilment was seen to derive from accepting self and others, adjusting personal dreams by looking honestly and bravely at dark realities, working at relationships in the belief that they provide genuine security

and well-being, and accepting disappointments for the sake of growth.

In contrast, later in her life, acclaimed writers portrayed a world propelled by a fascination with evil. Vengefulness, exploration of the forbidden, and major risk-taking on violent terrain were presented as hugely satisfying to children, even when accompanied by selfishness, greed, or other forms of moral laxity. To the related questions 'Can order be established in society?', 'Can trust in other people be justified?', 'Do relationships have more than temporary value?', answers were invariably negative. The distinguished novelist Katherine Paterson's view that the best literature has always offered a message of hope was rejected out of hand.

Although my own reading in Australian children's literature has not been as extensive as Mrs Ireland's, it corroborates her views. In prize-winning 90s young adult fiction by such well-known writers as Isobelle Carmody, Gillian Rubinstein, John Marsden, and Eleanor Nilsson, evil is portrayed as more pervasive than good, parents are seen as too imprisoned by their own pasts to be helpful to their children, and suicidal depression is not uncommon. Novels published by such respected writers as Colin Thiele, Thurley Fowler, and Christobel Mattingley have not been as well received, despite depicting such common difficulties in family life as sibling rivalry, parental fatigue, and the discovery by children that adults don't know as much as they think they do.

To find such patterns disturbing is not to demand sanitised or senti-



## Another world

These students are not on their way to bum the library or otherwise "protest", according to a fashion that was recently dominant and still retains much power: they are on their way to Mass, though under no kind of compulsion. And believe it or not, the Mass is going to be mostly in Latin and in full obedience to the discipline of distant and un-American Rome: worse still, these children actually know Latin and can take part in the Church's worship in the language of the Western and Christian centuries. They are growing up, easily and naturally, into some larger citizenship than that of California. What kind of a freaked-out world have I wondered into?

– Christopher Derrick, *Escape from Scepticism*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1977.

mental literature for older children. Nor is it to reject accurate portraits of frightening, commonplace realities that offer implicit, alternative solutions to destruction – like prize-winning author Judith Clarke's. Over many centuries, fine writers of fiction have always avoided distortions of experience that omit painful events or exaggerate their importance. If a writer's experience is grounded in a balanced view of life, even potentially sensational events like the abandonment of children in a parking lot (explored in Cynthia Voigt's beloved Tillerman series) do not inevitably generate long-term ruin.

### The international scene

Over the past decade, a prize-giving pattern similar to Australia's has emerged overseas. Although gifted novelists with a sound perspective – e.g. Tim Bowler, Henrietta Branford, Berlie Doherty, Janni Howker, E.L. Konigsburg, Lois Lowry, Geraldine McCaughrean, William Mayne and Cynthia Rylant—have received the prestigious Carnegie (UK), Guardian (UK), Newbery (US), and Horn Book/Globe (US) awards, lesser writers have also been similarly honoured. Pulp fiction like Robert Swindels' *Stone Cold* has garnered unmerited accolades, as has New Age material with a strong interest in the occult, such as Han Nolan's *Dancing on the Edge*.

More worrying still, beautifully crafted literature that cannot be seriously faulted for its portraiture or plotting has been universally praised by international reviewers without even a hint that its world views contain troubling features. Included in this difficult category is Philip Pullman's award-winning *Dark Materials* trilogy. Although Pullman has openly stated that he wrote his compelling series to challenge Judao-Christian teaching about the nature of the cosmos, no review that I have read has discussed the implications of this belief. Nor, in response to the early volumes, has there been even the slightest hint that anything about his *zeitgeist* is contentious.

In the first two volumes of his fantasy series, Pullman does not

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declare his own moral and spiritual position. Although children mysteriously disappear from city streets, strange scientific experiments in a distant arctic region reduce kidnapped boys and girls to vegetables, and witches, talking bears, angels, and ordinary human beings vie for centre stage, his attitude towards his subject matter cannot be securely inferred. How total disaster can be averted in the conflagration sure to succeed the crimes dramatised in *Northern Lights* and *The Subtle Knife*,

no reader can accurately predict. In much science fiction, after all, stranger things are featured.

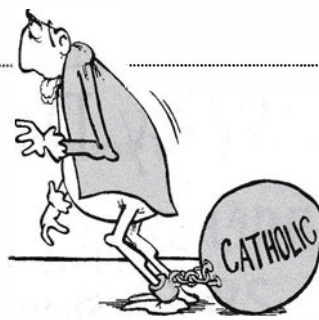
What, precisely, Philip Pullman intends by creating a powerful religious Authority (referred to as a Magisterium) linked with influential Oxford Dons, or weird worlds that can be entered through specially cut windows, or shadowy figures that murder young adolescents, is cloaked in mystery. Only in Volume 3, *The Amber Spyglass*, does Pullman state unequivocally that he's framed

his trilogy with quotations from Milton and Blake, not because he embraces their basically Christian view of life, but because he departs from it in ways he clearly hopes they'd have sanctioned.

What makes Pullman's position dangerous to impressionable minds is that his major characters have feisty, appealing natures. Isolated much of the time, and in extreme danger, his young male and female protagonists, Will and Lyra (Ariel backwards), do their best to protect and rescue the helpless despite the risks involved. Unlike the series' most odious adults, they have open minds; they're not power seekers; and their commitment to justice never flags. Typically, their actions are courageous, and they try hard to think things through 'rightly'. As a result, the ideas they embrace, fleshed out by trusted older figures, carry authorial weight.

Significantly in Pullman, every powerful adult belongs to a ubiquitous, corrupt Church or has fled from its ambit. Near the end of *The Amber Spyglass*, a female scientist whose behaviour has been fearless and admirable declares Christianity to be a credible 'mistake'. If anything can save humankind and the universe itself, the novel suggests, it's imaginative story telling. In a visit to the bleak and terrifying land of the Dead undertaken by Will and Lyra for redemptive purposes, the ghosts encountered are uniformly unhappy. Among their number is a martyr. Explicitly, the idea of a Kingdom of Heaven is rejected in favour of a vague Republic of that name. This, clearly, is Pullman's own 'story'.

If the international claims made about the extraordinary literary accomplishments of this best-selling writer were unrelated to other, similar claims made recently about skeptics whose views are taken seriously by the young, it would be easy simply to dismiss them as a passing fad. But because they dramatise a pattern of judgment linked with the pattern noted by Jill Ireland in her study, and with patterns usually found in occult fiction (see the third article in this series), they are more



## Feeding intolerance

MR Murphy lives in Limerick, and Mr Murphy and his son are subjected to a thousand inconveniences and disadvantages, because they are Catholics. Murphy is a wealthy, honourable, excellent man; he ought to be in the corporation; he cannot get in because he is Catholic. His son ought to be King's Counsel for his talents, and his standing at the bar; he is prevented from reaching his dignity because he is a Catholic. Why? What reasons do you hear for all this? Because Queen Mary, three hundred years before the natal day of Mr Murphy, killed Protestants in Smithfield; because Louis XIV dragooned his Protestant subjects, when the predecessor of Murphy's predecessor was not in being; because men are confined in prison, in Madrid, twelve degrees more south than Murphy has ever been in his life; all ages all climates are ransacked to perpetuate the slavery of Murphy, the illfated victim of political anachronisms. ... When are mercy and justice, in fact, ever to return upon the earth, if the sins of the elders are to be ever visited on these who are not even their children?

— Sydney Smith, (1771-1845) wit, co-founder of the *Edinburgh Review* and *Anglican Clergyman*, quoted in *The Smith of Smiths*, by Hesketh Pearson, 1934.

than a little disconcerting. The belief, widely endorsed by influential reviewers, that it doesn't matter what the characters in fiction THINK so long as their acts are decent, is becoming increasingly pervasive; and without religious formation, its shallowness is hard to discern.

An idea that surfaced publicly during the Demidenko Affair was that literary values alone should determine who wins prizes. But what are literary values? If they are manifested only by stylistic flair and facility in creating believable and interesting characters and plots, how reliable can they be? What can they

reveal to any serious person about the subject they are designed to illuminate, namely, the conduct of life?

When *The Hand That Signed the Paper* was the subject of major public controversy, several university teachers argued that students with Helen Darville's habits of mind, dramatised in a glitzy crassness, should not be awarded First Class honours degrees. Furthermore, they said: more than strong plots, or accurate descriptions of grotesque characters, or vividly rendered settings, should be required of texts required for tertiary study. Since the world view of imaginative writers is an integral feature of any literary work, what authors studied in academic courses have to say about good and evil is as important as their stories as story.

For a long time within the field of Children's Literature, the most reliable and enriching books have been written for innocent pre-readers. Increasingly, assaults on the innocence of primary-aged and older readers have taken hold everywhere in the English-speaking world. As a result, large numbers of books about helpless, ineffectual, or tyrannical adults, institutions characterised by distrust and hypocrisy, and children so lost that they would prefer Mars to earth have found their way into school and municipal libraries.

A major reason for the popularity of the Harry Potter series, surely, is that JK Rowling explodes contemporary bias about how few people there are who can be trusted to care properly for others. Unlike Pullman, or the many prize-winning children's writers whose works are criticised by Jill Ireland, she upholds the view that the habits of mind of benevolent authorities like Dumbledore (the principal of Hogwarts) deeply matter. In her world, the silly reflections of grown-ups like Professor Trelawney, or the cunning and malicious ones of children like Malfoy, are satirised with unashamed acerbity. Virtue isn't treated as a species of fraud, quickly outgrown by the canny. It's considered everyone's province, to be suitably rewarded.



DR SUSAN MOORE is the author of the updated guide for parents and teachers, *What Should My Child Read?* (Five Senses, 2001).

## Reflections on some current negative stereotypes

# DIFFERENT PRIESTLY EXPECTATIONS

*The baby-boomers have affected Religion as well as Politics and Education and Economics.*

BENEDICT GROESCHEL reviews a book on the Catholic Priesthood that owes more to Freud than to St John of the Cross, and confuses psychological health with Christian spirituality.



THE first thing that one observes in this book is that Fr Cozzens loves the Catholic priesthood. In many passages he writes with respect and enthusiasm, but with a very particular point of view, which I believe is quite lopsided. There are 11 references to Sigmund Freud and in fact several whole pages given to his psychoanalytic theory which right now is very passé in the behavioural sciences. There are also eight pages on themes of Carl Jung. There are only two references, both of them rather negative, to John Paul II. Although the Pope has written extensively on the priesthood and the theology of love, chastity and sexuality, none of this monumental work is even alluded to. There are four references and two pages of Andrew Greeley's thought but no mention at all of saints like Augustine, John Chrysostom, Thomas Aquinas, Alphonsus Ligouri and John Eudes, who all wrote extensively on the priesthood.

There are several other indicators of the lopsidedness of Fr Cozzens' position. His view of the priesthood is very much limited to what might be called progressive American Catholicism, an approach that has been co-terminus with the drastic reduction of the number of seminarians and the loss of vocations. If Cozzens is correct about where the priesthood is going it will get there without most of the men studying in the seminary today.

Fr Cozzens concentrates on ideas of the priesthood only from the immediate post-Vatican II era. This was a confusing time, perhaps unavoidably, that saw an immense decline in vocations - a time that thankfully appears to be coming to an end.

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### *The Changing Face of the Priesthood*

Donald B. Cozzens  
(Liturgical Press: Collegeville, MN)

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I must confess my own biases. For the past 25 years I have been suspicious of fads. I taught in a seminary that long ago disappeared where the ultimate answer to every problem arrived about every six months. I learned to hold on to the faith and solid teaching and to be patient with the fads. I owe some of this caution to my teachers at Columbia University and the doctoral program in psychology. They had seen it all. People ask me if being a psychologist ever challenged my faith. Not one bit. Faith is a rock. Theories like those of Freud and Jung and many others are just that - theories. In science older theories are supposed to give way to better ones or at least to ones better related to that moment. Faith is a rock. Psychological theory is snow. You fit the snow around the rock.

The point that needs to be emphasized and explained is that the particular psychological theories that Fr Cozzens is using, those of Freud and Jung, are outmoded at the present time. You may have to take this on faith, but the whole field of behavioural science has moved from a psychoanalytic emphasis to a bio-

social approach to human behavior, for better or for worse. It may surprise Fr Cozzens and those who agree with him that because there is no empirical evidence for Freud and Jung's ideas, these two venerable figures are often called 'mystics' by psychologists who don't know what a mystic is. They're so designated because they are seen as creators of myths, and very time-bound myths at that. This book contains an evaluation of the Catholic priesthood based on the point of view of a psychologist in Vienna in the 1920s.

On a far deeper level, I have a criticism that I hesitate to make but it is at the core of the problem of this book. Fr Cozzens is obviously a sincere, dedicated priest. I give him an 'A' for effort and I admit we probably could have a great dialogue on the fraternity of priests which he celebrates. My prayerful conviction is that Cozzens' concept of the transcendent and his use of this idea is the core of the problem. He uses transcendence in an abstract philosophical way. He describes transcendence on page 29 as 'those elusive moments in which we experience, literally, an unspeakable, harmonious, liberating union with creation... One feels both infinitely small as (the soul) experiences the vastness of the universe and yet significant, as a part of it, in communion with it ... the soul, was created for such experiences.'

I categorically and emphatically reject this philosophical notion of transcendence as the Christian experience. Indeed, it may well be antecedent to Christian prayer and grace-filled contact with God, but it is not what the Christian writers mean by transcendence. Paschal said in his description of his mystical encounter with God: 'Not the God of

### Hitler and the Pope

'I'll go into the Vatican when I like. Do you think the Vatican worries me? We'll grab it. Yes, the whole diplomatic bunch is there. I couldn't care less. That bunch is there, we'll drag them out, the whole swinish pack of them. What does it matter? We can apologise afterwards.'

— Adolf Hitler, *Lagebesprechungen*,  
September 9, 1943.

the philosophers, but the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'.

Christian spirituality is not philosophy, scriptural exegesis, theology or liturgy though all of these may serve to help us relate to the transcendent God. Christian spirituality is a personal relationship with the living Christ and through Him to the Father and the Holy Spirit. This is Christian transcendence. It is in every sense of the word personal, as is seen in the lives of such fervent Christians as St. Stephen who called out in his martyrdom to the living Christ.

Fr Cozzens, having given us a very inadequate description of transcendence, then takes up the other dimension of priestly development, namely – intimacy.

His thoughts on friendship and intimacy show a depth of pastoral experience and understanding, although the ghost of Sigmund Freud seems to be standing in the corner. He never seems to refer to that intimacy which is an essential part of Christian spirituality – intimacy with Christ, which spiritual writers, Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox, all describe in a surprisingly similar way.

As someone who deplores the loss of a real sense of religious devotion as an essential component of a balanced personality I think that this lack of recognition of intimacy with Christ, Our Lady or the saints suggests a secularized approach to the Christian life. This is a key objection because this ultra-objective, emotionally uninvolved, ultimately defensive approach to the Christ of faith and of the sacraments has produced a crippling spiritual anaemia in seminaries, religious orders and in Catholic life in general. Liturgical fads and the complete attention to liturgical details with no personal involvement, have left most formation programs pale and intellectualised. It's no wonder that few seminarians hold on; and most of those who stay do so in spite of the isolated prayer forms they encounter.

Now we come to a part of Fr Cozzens' book that I totally agree with – his criticism of the pre-Council seminary. Seminaries, however, did change. New and fresh ideas came in. Only, these ideas were often uncritically accepted – especially psycholog-

ical ones at a time when psychology was undermining the moral foundation of 80-90% of college students. The same ideas were brought into the seminary. This assessment by Professor Donald Campbell was given in his presidential address to the American Psychological Association in 1975. And mea culpa! I was part of this circus for a while, but then realised that something was terribly wrong.

Christian morality and tradition were replaced by very flimsy psychology and moral philosophy based on it. We had to change but in some coherent way integrated with what we already were. Just looking

at Catholic higher education and seminaries in particular you could write a great book on the theme, 'The children of this world are wiser in their own generation than the children of the light'.

Fr. Cozzens falls into the trap of equating psychological maturity with spiritual growth. This is a semi-Pelagian idea which has been so popular in recent years that it is accepted as a truism. The actual fact is that a review of the lives of saints or even people being considered for canonization at the present time does not reveal a great many people who fit into the modern psychological category of very well-balanced



## Music is value free?

**T**HE studies confirm what seems obvious. Common sense and experience are sufficient to reach the same conclusions. Music, for example, is used everywhere to create attitudes – armies use martial music, couples listen to romantic music, churches use organs, choirs, and hymns. How can anyone suppose that music (plus the images of television, movies, and advertisements) about sex and violence has no effect?

Indeed, Hollywood's writers, producers, and executives think popular entertainment affects behaviour. It is not merely that they sell billions of dollars of advertising on television on the premise that they can influence behaviour; they also think that the content of their programs can reform society in a liberal direction. They understand that they can influence behaviour; they also think that no single program will change attitudes much, but they rely upon the cumulative impact of years of television indoctrination. Why should we listen to the same people saying that their programs and music have no effect on behaviour? That argument is over. The depravity sold by Hollywood and the record companies is feeding the depravity we see around us.

– Judge Robert H. Bork, *Slouching towards Gomorrah*. Regan Books, 1996.



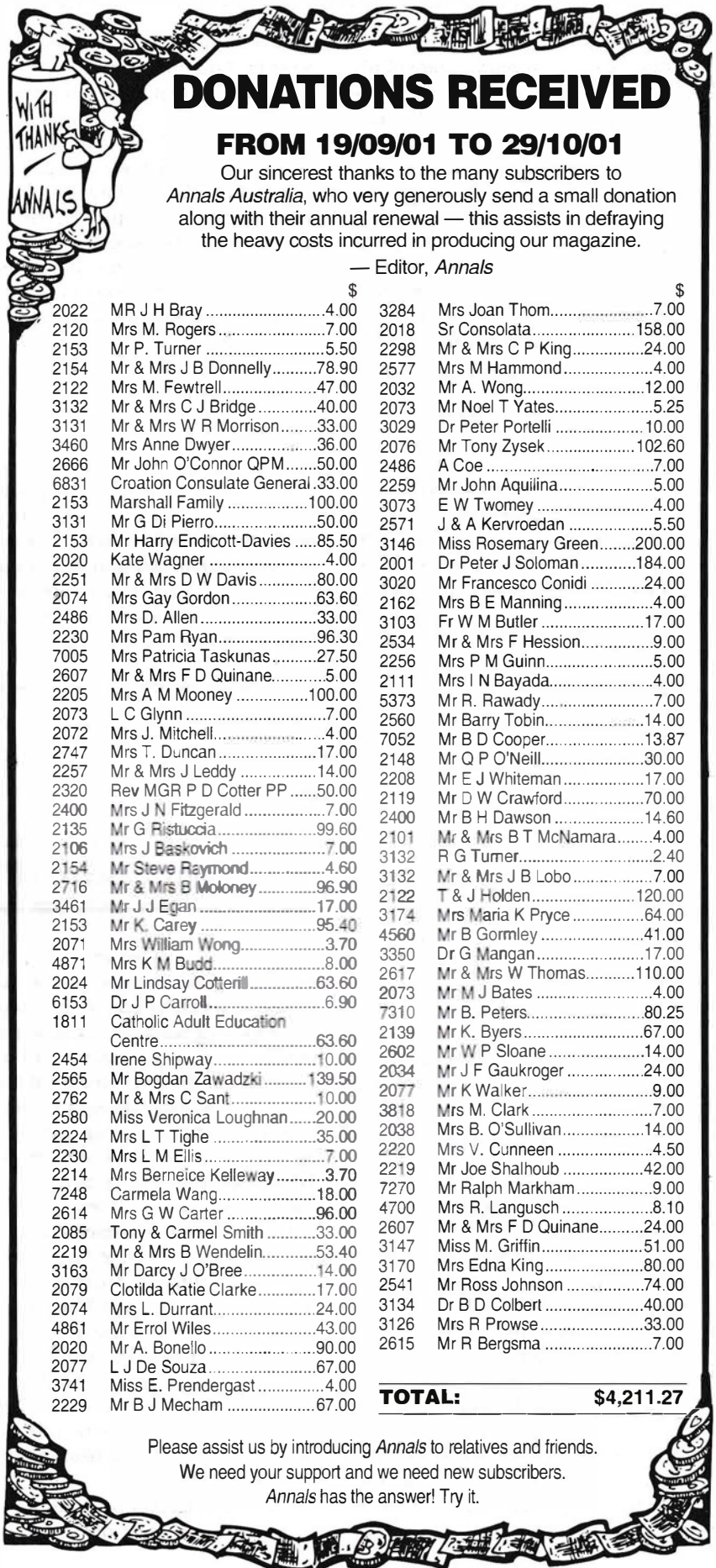
people. While I do think the saints have spiritual maturity, often very saintly people and profoundly religious people struggle with other personality conflicts. My own patron saint was a mentally ill homeless man – St. Benedict Joseph Labre. Yet, whatever there was left of the poor soul, he gave it all to God.

What's the point of making this distinction? The point is that grace may build on nature but they are not the same thing. Persons become spiritually mature by surrendering themselves to God with all they have and as sincerely as they can. This is true of a priest as well. Because some have personality conflicts (and don't we all) they should not despair of the possibility of genuine spiritual growth. I am not disputing Fr. Cozzens' contention that a priest needs good friends. I consider good friends one of the greatest blessings of life, but the ability to make good friends is not the same as the ability to surrender oneself to God.

I think Fr. Cozzens equates the natural with the supernatural too easily and in this way loses some of the beauty of transcendence and the mystery of Christianity. This shortcoming is not unique to Fr Cozzens. One can find it in much religious writing at the present time.

The central hypothesis of Fr Cozzens' book is that priests and even bishops are engaged in a Oedipal conflict with the bishop and Pope respectively. Fr Cozzens' rather orthodox Freudian view is not relevant at all to the present thinking on personality development.

Fr. Cozzens sees the unresolved clerical Oedipal complex as the source of much unhappiness and immaturity and lack of fulfillment in the priesthood. He describes a priest still dominated by an unresolved Oedipal conflict as either a 'pious effete cleric' or a maverick. I object to the use of the word pious as a negative quality. I know many devout (pious, if you will) priests who have remained the loyal opposition of very liberal bishops. They have not been effete and they have not been sycophants as Fr Cozzens suggests. As a matter of fact, lots of them have toughened up by living in an atmosphere where they are rejected and marginalized.



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2214	Mrs Berneice Kelleway.....	3.70	2219	Mr Joe Shalhoub .....	42.00
7248	Carmela Wang.....	18.00	7270	Mr Ralph Markham.....	9.00
2614	Mrs G W Carter.....	96.00	4700	Mrs R. Langusch.....	8.10
2085	Tony & Carmel Smith.....	33.00	2607	Mr & Mrs F D Quinane.....	24.00
2219	Mr & Mrs B Wendelin.....	53.40	3147	Miss M. Griffin.....	51.00
3163	Mr Darcy J O'Bree.....	14.00	3170	Mrs Edna King.....	80.00
2079	Clotilda Katie Clarke.....	17.00	2541	Mr Ross Johnson .....	74.00
2074	Mrs L. Durrant.....	24.00	3134	Dr B D Colbert .....	40.00
4861	Mr Errol Wiles.....	43.00	3126	Mrs R Prowse .....	33.00
2020	Mr A. Bonello.....	90.00	2615	Mr R Bergsma .....	7.00
2077	L J De Souza.....	67.00			
3741	Miss E. Prendergast.....	4.00			
2229	Mr B J Mecham.....	67.00			
			<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>\$4,211.27</b>

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Space does not permit a proper criticism of Fr Cozzens' picture of his inadequate priest. While there is certainly some validity to his observation about priest archetypes and even about the Puer Aeternus (the eternal child), his observations can be hurtful and wounding to a number of people who simply don't fit the stereotype of the American self-actualizing personality. I am puzzled that anyone with this much experience could so blithely fall into the culture-bound stereotypes of what is healthy and what is not. I have seen some of the very people whom Fr Cozzens seems to dismiss as hopelessly inadequate grow and by good will and grace learn to serve God's people well, guided by the moral teaching of the Gospel and the Church. They have gained truly impressive reputations as priests. I've also seen some of the beautiful people he describes throw the priesthood over. He would tend to dismiss the healthy aspects of some who don't fit in well with his thinking. They come closer to his scathing caricature of saintly people whom apparently he does not like.

Finally we come to what is the most objectionable part of Fr Cozzens' book. This is his discussion of what he calls 'gay priests and seminarians'. I object to the use of the word 'gay' because it is seriously ambiguous. This cynical word was generated by the active homosexual community years ago in order to communicate the fact that people were not happy with this life-style. In the film *The Boys in the Band* there is a sarcastic remark – 'Show me a happy homosexual and I will show you a gay corpse.' Unfortunately, this word, which, if one is honest, means a life-style contrary to the teaching of the New Testament and the Church, is used here simply to mean homosexual, and not gay. Homosexual is a neutral word. A person could be homosexually oriented and a saint. A homosexual can lead a totally chaste life and many do. On the other hand, the word 'gay' refers to the gay scene – an immoral subculture, one of many in our society. While Fr Cozzens may not be using it that way, his use is entirely ambiguous.

Throughout this section of his book Fr. Cozzens discusses in a very detached way the behaviour and misbehaviour of some seminarians and priests. I did not find any clear moral statement that the engagement in homosexual genital acts is wrong and morally unacceptable. Those who without repentance are given to this behaviour or even support this behaviour without repentance should not function in the Catholic priesthood because they have a commitment to a life-style or to the defense of a life-style that is contrary to the explicit moral teachings of the Catholic Church.

When we put this anomaly into a spiritual context it's even worse. Any life-style at all which commits a person to immoral behavior – it can be heterosexual misbehaviour, it can be simony, it can be calumny and detraction, it can be anything – such a life-style is utterly inconsistent with

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### 'Christian morality and tradition were replaced by very flimsy psychology and moral philosophy based on it'

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the life of a person publicly committed to the service of the Gospel and to Christian discipleship. I'm not saying that Fr. Cozzens denies this, but in his entire discussion I do not see any clear statement on the moral aspects of this whole question.

Also the characterization of people as homosexual is problematic itself. What does the word mean? Does it mean behaviour? Does it mean attractions? Does it mean conflicts? Some of the authors that Fr. Cozzens quotes with approval, including John Boswell and Richard Sipe, hide under ambiguity and use statistics in a way that I would simply call dishonest and a purposeful distortion. I have read their works and I am appalled that these and others would be positively cited in a book on the Catholic priesthood.

Much damage has been done and many vocations lost or destroyed

because those of formation programs for priests and religious were confused or even complicit in immoral behaviour. If they were sinfully involved and they repented and asked pardon, an evaluation could be made as to their ability to remain chaste and to serve the Church in an appropriate way. This is exactly what was not done in some cases. Sins can be forgiven and sinful habits overcome but only if one repents of them. A very simple line from the Psalms could have guided the confused in these decades. 'Blessed are they who walk in the law of the Lord.' And unblessed are they who do not.

I have known a number of persons, clerical and non-clerical, who have confronted and deeply repented homosexual behavior. They have struggled to put it out of their lives and with the help of grace almost always succeeded. The Courage movement throughout the United States assists Catholics of all vocations to lead a chaste life even though they may have compulsions in a homosexual direction.

I have been very critical of this book and I feel badly about this because its author is a Catholic priest. I am sure that Fr. Cozzens is a dedicated priest who sees things in an entirely different way from the way I do. He's expecting a new Church and I'm expecting the Church to reform.

We have very different views of the Catholic Church and where it is going. I can only say that I hope he's wrong and he's surely hoping that I'm wrong. But, let's put the differences out on the table. Let's admit that there are profound differences of approach, values and even, perhaps, belief. At the same time, we do belong to the same priesthood and the same Church.

I can only pray that in the future these profound differences will be resolved. Since both of us are getting on in years, I suspect that we will have ample opportunity to discuss our differences when we arrive in purgatory.



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FR. BENEDICT GROESCHEL, CFR, is a psychologist seminary professor and Director of the Office of Spiritual Development of the Archdiocese of New York. He's one of the founding members of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal.



(Source: CRTN Information Service, edited by Catherine Ancion for Aid to the Church in Need, Königstein, Germany.)

### **Abortion legalised under UN pressure**

Nepal: Less than two months after receiving instructions from the United Nations, Nepal's parliament has, for the first time, voted to legalise abortion. Last week, the House of Representatives approved an Amendment to the Civil Code allowing abortion in cases of rape or incest up to ten weeks into the pregnancy, and abortion at any time where pregnancy poses any danger to the health of the mother or if the child will be disabled. A UN committee document explicitly demanded that Nepal legalise abortion. In its Concluding Observations on Nepal, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights urged the State party 'to reinforce reproductive and sexual health programs, in particular in rural areas, and to allow abortion when pregnancies are life threatening or a result of rape or incest.'

### **Legion of Mary revived**

Vietnam: After overcoming difficulties to serve the Church and society in Vietnam discreetly, a Marian association has reviewed its achievements and challenges on its founding anniversary. Legion of Mary members have been carrying out their apostolate discreetly but actively in most parishes in almost all of the country's 25 dioceses, said a representative who attended the legion's 80th anniversary celebration. In recent years, a few Church associations in Vietnam - including the Legion of Mary - have revived their activities, although the government has yet to grant them legal status. According to the source, the Church's

hierarchy has not officially discussed the issue of Catholic pious associations with the government.

### **Catholic churches under attack**

Malaysia: Arson attempts against Catholic churches in Malaysia might be a reaction to the US-led attacks on Afghanistan, unofficial Church sources reported. Arsonists last Saturday tried to burn down the Catholic Church of Christ the King in Sungai Petani, in the northern state of Kedah, the Malaysian Prime Minister's home state. Last Sunday morning, in the southern state of Johore, Molotov cocktails were thrown at the door of St Philip's Catholic Church in Segamat. The door was burned, but not the tabernacle, where another Molotov cocktail failed to explode. Malaysia has 22 million people, most of them Muslim. According to Church records, Catholics number about 712,000.

### **Muslims put christian churches and shops on fire**

Nigeria: Three Christian churches and several shops and cafes which were selling alcoholic drinks were set on fire by a Muslim mob. The violent incident occurred in the Hayin-Banki area of Kaduna, a city that has already seen violent inci-

dents between Muslims and Christians. Other Christian residents in the area were quickly alerted and came to the rescue of five people who had been trapped inside one of the blazing churches. Nobody was killed and security agents are patrolling the city to avoid further incidents. A spokesperson for the local government said that a man responsible for inciting the mob against the Christians has already been identified.

### **More missionaries going abroad**

Kenya: Nairobi. In a colourful ceremony held at the Consolata Shrine, 12 new Kenyan missionaries were sent out to the world to evangelise. According to the press, eight priests, two nuns and two religious brothers received a mandate to leave their country to proclaim the Gospel. The celebration was presided over by the newly ordained Bishop Virgilio Pante of Maralal, and marked the conclusion of the centenary of the foundation of the Consolata Missionaries. Out of the 12 new missionaries, only three will remain in Kenya. There are more than 250 Kenyan missionaries around the world. More than 70 of them are Consolata priests, brothers and nuns. Two of the new missionaries are going to Korea; they are among the first African missionaries to be sent to Asia.

### **Traditional paper cut-outs boost Marian devotion**

China: Hong Kong. A mainland Catholic artist's traditional Chinese paper cut-outs on the 15 mysteries of the Rosary have helped boost Marian devotion in Hong Kong. Louis Zhang Zhen-Cai of Wuhu, eastern China, made the rosary paper cut-outs for the Hong Kong Diocesan Liturgy Commission. Zhang's paper cut-outs - accompanying verses in classical Chinese by Father Yu Jian-Hua, also from eastern China - were published last August in a booklet titled 'The 15 Mysteries of the Rosary'. Catholics are now using the booklet in October, the month of the Holy Rosary.

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## The cult of irrationality in post-modernist Australia

# PERFECTING THE CULTURAL CRINGE

*The 'Ugly Australian' receives a long-overdue profiling in this article by GILES AUTY who stresses the need to confront and combat the intellectual and moral infections that cause this condition.*



It is a worrying fact that some of the more destructive problems which face whole countries and cultures often fail to make even the small print in our newspapers. That, in itself, contributes to their danger.

In short, a serious menace can easily remain invisible rather like a shark submerged in a couple of metres of murky water. It is not until it grabs one of us that we begin to understand the nature of the problem.

Based on less than seven years of residence in Australia I have nevertheless become increasingly conscious of a pair of problems which, if unchecked, will spoil or even destroy the fundamental character and quality of future Australian life.

Although far from obviously so, the two problems are also basically connected.

Although this now seems hard to believe, I had never heard the expressions 'tall poppy syndrome' or 'cultural cringe' before first coming to Australia in 1994. Lack of confidence

is not a quality most of us would associate with Australians based on those we have encountered overseas.

In an article I wrote in *The Financial Review* on 4 September, I suggested that as well as being the world's finest at cricket, rugby union, rugby league, netball and swimming, contemporary Australians may also soon claim a less happy distinction: world champions at irrational hating.

To qualify as an object of such hatred you do not have to do or be anything at all; nor is it necessary even to know whose who apparently dislike you. A bit of foundationless gossip can usually do the trick.

So far as an old-fashioned upbringing went, equal blame traditionally attached to those who listened as well as to those who spread malicious gossip. Are children still encouraged anywhere by parents or teachers to avoid both?

Part of the hidden purpose of gossip is to suggest that prominent figures or other people we may or may not know are behaving less well than they might, so giving the gossipier some temporary sensation of superiority.

The long-standing Australian habit of lopping off anyone with aspirations at the knees – 'tall poppy syndrome' – is a mere variation on this unattractive theme. If those who aspire can be brought down to some lower common denominator, we may all rest content in our professional or intellectual sloth: ...'they thought they were better than us but we soon brought them down'.

Where, then, does 'the cultural cringe' fit into this picture?

The traditional cause of the problem is one of cultural insecurity: an often wrong assumption that the home-grown could not possibly compete with the international. Over the years, of course, the justification for any sense of inferiority grew less as contemporary home-grown Australian opera singers, ballet dancers and choreographers – to quote only three examples – competed equally with the world's best.

Unfortunately, this dealt only with a contemporary problem since clearly Australia could not instantly create for itself a cultural heritage that could compete with that of, say, Holland, Spain, Italy and France in art, with Germany in music or with Britain in theatre or literature.

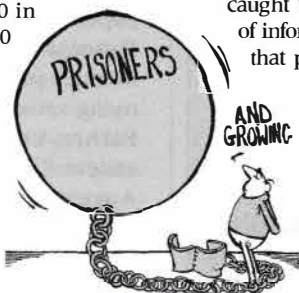
But what if the staggering successes of past generations of Europeans could be diminished somehow or derided or otherwise discounted? What if the astonishing achievements of a Rembrandt, or a Velazquez, a Bach or a Mozart, a Shakespeare or a Milton could be dismissed, out of hand, as the mere products of 'paternalistic societies' and Dead White European Males?

What if no objective standards of artistic, musical or literary achievements could be held to exist? What if Christianity could be portrayed as an anachronistic superstition and the

## Women in prison

THE number of women in US jails and prisons has more than tripled during the past fifteen years, from about 39,000 in 1985 to close to 150,000 today, and with that increase has come a sharp rise in reported incidents of sexual harassment and assault.

More than 75 percent of women in prison are doing time for nonviolent offenses, thanks in



large to increasingly punitive drug laws. Women often act as the transporters, or 'mules,' of the drug trade; when they are caught they rarely have the kind of information about drug bosses that permits male drug dealers to bargain down their sentences. According to one estimate, at least half of the overall increase in women prisoners in state prisons is a result of prosecution for drug crimes.

— William F. Schulz, 'Women in Prison', in *The New York Review of Books*, May 31, 2001.

differences between men and women held to be caused solely by social forces?

What if there were no single truth about anything, no genuine factual history, no possibility of justice, not any desirable outcome to be derived from reasoning?

Since the advent of the half-baked but insidiously appealing doctrines of post-modernism, the human moral and intellectual condition has been regressing at an alarming rate.

When, over 2000 years ago, Cicero (103-46BC) stated confidently that 'only a madman would maintain that the difference between virtue and vice is a matter of opinion and not of nature' did he have some uncanny prescience perhaps of the kind of idiocies which would sweep western academic institutions two millennia into the future?

Greater by far than the external threat of international terrorism is the kind of menace posed by indifferent and often irrational post-modern intellectual theories and practices which threaten to corrode and destroy contemporary western societies from within. Indeed, that is often their stated aim.

Lack of cultural confidence lies behind the wholesale adoption in Australia of highly questionable post-modernist theories which have their origins largely in America and France. To lesser minds such theories are 'progressive' as well as merely fashionable.

Clearly, the corrosion which is bringing down our western citadels of achievement is much less visible or obvious than the physical consequences of a terrorist attack. It is for that reason that the intellectual and moral destruction of western societies which is effectively taking place fails to make headlines in newspapers.

Yet if we decline to oppose them we will find that, just like international terrorism, post-modernist heresies will not simply or conveniently fade away.

In fact, our silence makes them stronger.



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 when he became national correspondent for *The Australia*. Currently he is writing for Brisbane's *Courier Mail*.

## RUNNING SHORT OF SINGAPOREANS

FRANCES HACKNEY DSC, FRSA, IWA

UPON our arrival in Singapore, in February 1982, the hostess of the coach which conveyed us from the airport to our hotel treated us, over the PR system, to a long diatribe on that government's policy for restricting population size. There was 'no compulsion' (that supreme hypocrisy) for couples to limit the number of children to two, BUT anyone having a third child (with the exceptions of those having twins at second birth or triplets at first birth) lost their right to a separate apartment, as well as various other privileges. Should an unplanned pregnancy occur, abortion was easily arranged, at five dollars (Singaporean), or less if the couple could not afford the sum. In extreme cases, abortion was free. There was, of course 'no compulsion, BUT...'

We returned to Sydney in May that same year. Within a few weeks of

return, we read in SMH that, fearful of declining population, the Singaporean government was urging its academics and other professionally trained citizens to have three children per couple. The ignorant poor, we presumed, were still to be discouraged from contributing to increase in the population.

Earlier this year (SMH 23rd April 2001) we were struck by a headline, 'Singapore gets really serious - about sex'. The New York Times was quoted as saying that, alarmed by its declining birthrate, Singapore was urging its four million people to multiply as fast as they could. 'We need more babies,' Mr Goh Chok Tong is quoted. 'The world is in danger of running short of Singaporeans.'

The Working Committee on Marriage and Procreation has devel-

oped monetary and workplace incentives, such as maternity leave, a brief paternity leave, flexible working hours, cash bonuses and special deals on flat rentals.

The local press has taken to extolling not only the joys of parenthood but of sex. An article in The Straits Times gives tips for 'having sex in the back seat of a car', complete with directions to 'some of the darkest, most secluded and most romantic spots for Romeos and Juliet's.' All in the good cause of increasing flagging population numbers.

Incidentally, whatever gave the writer of the article the idea that, in these days of rampant contraception, the 'having of sex' would necessarily lead to the birth of more babies?

The birthrate in Singapore is presently 1.5 per women of child bearing age. It needs to be 2.5 in order to simply maintain the population level. Many other Asian countries, including Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea are suffering similar problems with declining birth rate. In SMH August 31, '01 an article from Jonathan Watts in Tokyo summarises some of the falling birthrates and the consequent 'aging of the developed world', which is 'pushing the Global Aging urged 'urgent action' by world leaders ' to prevent protracted aging recession and financial turmoil.

One of the commission's chairmen, Mr. Ryurano Hashimoto, former Japanese prime minister, is quoted; 'Among developed nations, Japan stands closest to the edge.' The demographic trend is the fundamental cause of the dire straits we now face. It has taken us too long to recognise that.' The commission recommended that, to raise the fertility rate, governments should offer tax incentives for having children and improve child care services, among other measures to encourage those who hesitated to have children because of economic pressures.

R.J.Stoves' article, 'Europe's Ticking Time Bomb' (*Annals*, July 2001) is of particular interest, with its implications of the impending self destruction among western societies as a result of birth control. But it is becoming more and more plainly evident that the problem of 'not enough young people' is a global one.

# WANXIAN DIOCESAN APPEAL TO REBUILD CATHOLIC CHURCHES SUBMERGED BY THE THREE GORGES DAM

**T**HE YANGTSE RIVER cleaves its way through the centre of China from the highlands of Central Asia down to the Pacific Ocean. Half-way down the river tower the Three Gorges, the gate between Sichuan province and the outside world. For thousands of years the Yangtse, which brought material and cultural benefits to the regions it touched, brought in its wake calamitous floods and great loss of life and property.

To prevent the disastrous floods, the world's largest dam is in the process of being built covering a surface area of 1,000 square kms. The dam will stretch 600 kms in length, from above Yichang to a point below Chongqing. Recent TV coverage in Australia has focussed attention on the project. Six Catholic churches are to be submerged – those of Wanxian, Wuling, Kaixian, Yunyang, Fengjie and Wushan – and many thousands of Catholics are to be relocated far from their traditional religious centres. In addition to churches, there is urgent need for clinics, hostels, kindergartens and convents around the church compounds.

Compensation is to be made - based on 1992 valuation and far from sufficient to cover the cost of purchasing land and erecting new churches and ancillary buildings. In most of the new towns the Catholic Church will need more land than before if it is to continue to carry out its vital work of evangelisation.

Through the generosity of individuals and agencies in Hong Kong and abroad, nearly HK\$9 million has already been raised – sufficient to cover the cost of the land and some preliminary site formation. More than HK\$15 million is needed to cover the cost of construction.

Donations no matter how big or small are much needed and will be greatly appreciated. God will undoubtedly reward with the promised hundred-fold those who devote what they can spare to this work so important for the survival of the Catholic Faith along the banks of the Yangtse River in central China.

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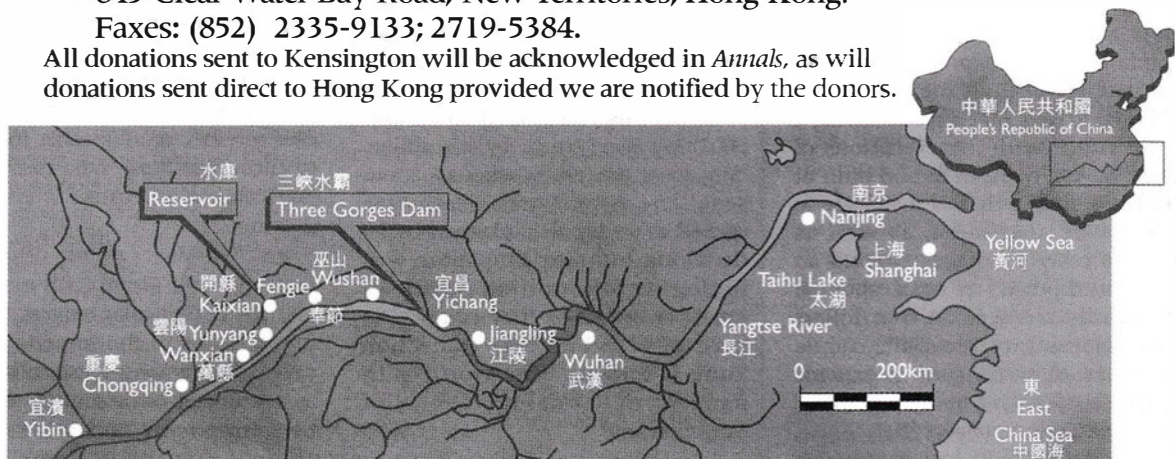
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# MEDIA MATTERS

By James Murray

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## Trauma Reportage

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Of all the think pieces written after September 11, among the most pertinent was Anatole Kaletsky's (*The Times*, London/*The Australian* Sept 21).

After noting the psychological trauma experienced as a result of watching the 'living nightmare', he went on to cite the mental pathology known as Stockholm syndrome. 'This is the chilling psychological reversal whereby victims of brutality and hostages of murderous gangsters become fanatical supporters of the people who terrorized them.'

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## More Bylines

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Bylines abound in current journalism. But one hard-grafting group fails to get personal credit: sub-editors. It would surely be possible for at least initials to be appended to reports so that praise (or blame) could be equitably shared.

The thought is inspired by a standfirst (*The Australian* Sept 22-23) attached by a sub-editor to a feature by your correspondent's contemporary James Murray (with whom your correspondent is sometimes confused).

He wrote a characteristically judicious piece on Islam. But the sub-editor's standfirst said: 'James Murray points out that it was Christianity that first made war on Islam, a religion of peace and tolerance.'

Murray's copy made no such definite point. Moreover the time-line running alongside the feature made it clear that before the First Crusade in 1095, there had been almost 500 years of Arab-Islamic conquest, including France, Italy and Spain, all parts of what was then known as Christendom.

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## Cross Sensitivity

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Islamic sensitivity to the word crusade may have the benefit of expunging it from the journalist's lexicon from which it has too often been lifted to describe everything from a row over dustbins to an overseas footy tour.

No such sensitivity was displayed when General Dwight D Eisenhower used it in the title of his book, *Crusade in Europe*, a crusader's sword being the shoulder patch of allied soldiers who fought and died all the long way from the beach-heads of Normandy to Berlin to liberate Europe from Nazi tyranny.

Nor was the sensitivity displayed in 1917 when the commander of the force that freed the Arabs from the Ottoman Turks, General Edmund Allenby, dismounted from his horse before Jerusalem to walk through its gate as a Christian pilgrim.

Among the Arabs were the Saudis, now the royal family of Saudi Arabia and guardians of the Holy City of Mecca.

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## Wilderness Voice

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Much comment has passed on the failure of the United States to create a new Marshall Plan, following the implosion of the Soviet Union and the resultant power vacuum in what had been its empire, including Afghanistan. The latter country, which took its Soviet-defeating weaponry from the Central Intelligence Agency and its social philosophy from the religious schools funded by Saudi Arabia, is now the focus of the sharpest hindsight.

But one voice did cry in the wilderness of greed, known variously as economic rationalism or market forces; it cried for the bridging of the chasm between rich and poor countries; it was the voice of Pope John Paul II, recorded in his encyclicals.

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## Blair's Brother

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The death of anti-apartheid campaigner Donald Woods was given due obituary space. But there was less emphasis on his Catholicism than he himself gave it. Before his death, he spoke to his friend Glyn Williams (*The Tablet*, Sept 1) who became editor of *The Daily Dispatch* in 1977 after Woods left South Africa secretly, bound for London.

Woods laid particular emphasis on his education by the De La Salle Brothers in the Eastern Cape city, East London, and the Christian Brothers in Kimberley.

'The most significant influence on my young life for six years were the brothers,' he told Williams. 'Wonderful, wonderful men.' Woods went on to say: 'My Catholic upbringing and spirituality were to prove very important to me as an editor and in the years of struggle against apartheid.'

This prompts the thought that it may be time for a book in tribute to education by brothers. The editor might well be Ron Blair whose one-act, one-character play, *The Christian Brothers*, has been revived by the Sydney Theatre Company. Your correspondent missed its first run back in 1975, but was knocked out by the revival.

Having recovered on the count of ten and a glass of fizz, he has to say that Peter Carroll reprise of the title role demonstrates how talent matures to greatness. And the term is not used idly. Carroll's performance is one of sustained personification of a brave soul in peril of despair as he seeks to teach a dim class (represented by a solitary wooden chair). The performance reaches its apogee in the final scene as he recites the Litany of Our Lady. Subtle variation of tone between invocation and response defeats the scepticism intrinsic to the stage business of painting the chair blue as a stand-in for the vision of Our Lady he once experienced. No doubt a share of the royalties goes to the Catholic Church which has moral rights, if not copyright, on the litany.



Here and there, Carroll's performance is too broad, giving the teacher gratuitous, caricature elements, halfway between Whackford Squeers and Mr Chips. Possibly this is down to John Bell's direction. Blair's wife, the brilliant director/actress Jennifer Hagen, might have brought less personal baggage to the work. The weakness of the solo nature of the play is that references to Masonic and anti-Catholic prejudice are necessarily without context and thus tend to amuse as part of the ramblings of semi-demented clerical pedagogue. But the prejudice was real, endured and defeated without the ameliorative efforts of anti-discrimination boards, acceptance being marked when the daft epithet Anglo-Celtic replaced the equally daft Anglo-Saxon in social discourse.

It would be interesting to view the work in translation and staged in a country with a stronger Catholic culture: Italy, France, Spain. And at a time when curricula have become narrowly utilitarian, it is fascinating to realize how broadly civilized was the scope of the education offered by the brothers.

One final point: the play's original title *The Christian Brothers*, has connotations of Catholic cringe to the secular. It should be retitled: *The Christian Brother*; that is singular which it is.

Successful as the revival is, another of Blair's major works might have been more timely; Kabul, his saga play tells of the disastrous British punitive expedition into Afghanistan.

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### **Riotous Report**

The race riots in Bradford, Yorkshire were amply covered. Not so much space has been given to the former chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, Lord Ouseley's report, entitled, *Community Pride not Prejudice*.

It is no politically correct tiptoe through the local Molotov cocktails, and its analysis has wider application. Ouseley speaks of Bradford as a city in the grip of fear and identifies 'self-segregation' of local Pakistani-Muslims as a major problem.

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### **Plane Profiteers**

America's War against Terrorism became in Australia the Campaign Against Terrorism, a decent modification. But either way, it was the kind of situation in which, profiteering must be deemed outrageous. So why should Qantas (at this writing, 25 per cent owned by British Airways) have been allowed to charge increased fares following the grounding of Ansett Australia aircraft. If ever there was an occasion for a brisk joint criticism from Prime Minister John Howard and Prime Minister Tony Blair this was it.

Once again Australia and Britain were in hazard together. No excuse for Qantas/British Air execs, intent on a better bottom line, their performance bonuses, share options, etc, to take advantage of the public. Particularly since, at the end of the free-market day, the same public as taxpayers have to come to the rescue of failed airlines in an extension of Clyde Cameron's sagacious dictum about farmers capitalising their profits and socialising their losses.

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### **On You, Rupe**

It's always pleasant to encourage an old employer; the most cogent speech of the year so far has been Rupert Murdoch's on education, delivered at the State Library of Victoria in honour of his late father Sir Keith Murdoch.

In effect Murdoch junior repeated what every civilized society has always known: funding of education is not a cost, it is an investment. Paradoxically, however, the speech was ill-reported in newspapers of which Murdoch is principal proprietor. Had your correspondent not watched the full ABC coverage, he would have missed some of the more intriguing lines. These included a reference to Australia as 'an hour-glass economy' by which Murdoch said he meant one in which the gap between rich and poor was growing. An additional interpretation is possible: an economy for which time is running out to close the gap before the advent of catastrophic social consequences.

Another intriguing aspect of the speech was Murdoch's reference to 'the political class', a usage that smacked of the young radical he was before he became the world's greatest manager of debt to the passing benefit of many hacks, including this one.

Even more intriguing was Murdoch's use of possessive pronouns in relation to Australia, a country whose citizenship he gave up - intriguing because it could mean he is considering the dual-citizen option open to him, and thus spending more time in his native country.

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### **Money Power**

As every schoolboy used to know, *nervi belli pecunia infinita* - endless money is the sinews of war. Accordingly the United States government's plan to track the Bin Laden terrorist money pipeline and block it seemed a more effective and peaceable method than smart-bombing.

But it was a major policy switch for George Bush II's Republican administration which big business lobbyists had influenced. Why? Because big business, including Australia's, uses offshore banking facilities for tax avoidance and other creative purposes. The amounts involved boggle the mind: Antigua alone has an estimated \$US800 billion in its offshore banking facility, an amount increasing by \$US120 billion a year.


Terrorism could be described as an extension of guerilla warfare by horrific means. The classic tactic in guerilla war is for the fighters to hide among the more or less sympathetic general population. But measures to cut the terrorist sinews are not expected to become effective earlier than next year. In the meantime, it would be a supreme irony were terrorist funds enabled to hide among big business funds, given that big business was specifically targeted in the mass assassinations of September 11.

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### **Good Hacks**

In the 1920s, it was said, 'Good Americans go to Paris when they die.' Now it might be said, 'Good journalists





go to America when they die.' With its constitutional guarantees to the press, the United States offers journalists extraordinary access and freedom to inform and criticise, not available elsewhere.

And certainly not available in Australia where the laws of libel have created a culture beneficial to the rich and powerful, including rich and powerful lawyers. No separation of these powers; rather they have created a culture of private frankness and public silence with lawyers of judicial rank more intent on their superiority over parliament than on the day-to-day liberty of the subject.

American journalists rise to the responsibilities conferred on them. Case in point: Time magazine reported New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's rejection of a \$US10 million charity donation from Prince Alwaleed bin Talal bin Abdel Aziz al Saud of the Saudi Arabian royal family because the prince criticised US policies in Palestine/Israel.

Time then disclosed that the prince had an investment of \$US932 million in its proprietor company America On Line-Time Warner and an investment of \$US1.1 billion in News Corporation. The report was also carried in *The Australian*. No disclosure of the prince's investment was appended.

That said, reported crackdowns on American journalists who dissent from the war consensus are disquieting, not least because they represent a collateral victory for terrorism against the *sine qua non* of the United States: freedom of speech.

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### Changi Follies

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The TV series *Changi* was budgeted at \$6 million-plus by the ABC and was highly praised by most previewers. Commendably its author John Doyle revealed that his original concept was a modest comedy in the style of *Hogan's Heroes*.

On the basis of *Changi's* first two episodes, your correspondent can see traces of this concept, particularly the pompous senior British officer, presumably intended as comic counter to the laconic Aussies as the dopey Germans were to the smart Yanks in *Hogan's Heroes*.

Doyle as Roy Slaven (offsider to HG Nelson) sends clichés up remorselessly. So why did he allow this cliché Blimp to remain? His presence adds to improbabilities already criticised by survivors. In *Changi*. Australian and British prisoners of war were under separate command. The most renowned senior officer on the Australian side was Black Jack Gallegan, no Blimp.

Moreover Doyle's series so far has a sentimental streak at variance with two classics of Japanese prison camp literature, written by Australian survivors: *King Rat* by James Clavell and *The Naked Island* by Russell Braddon.

A lesser-known work is *From the Somme to Singapore* by Charles Huxtable, MC and Bar, an army doctor who served with British and Australian forces during World War I and II. In his *Changi* diary, Huxtable makes points against the egalitarianism between Australian officers and

other ranks and its twin, the mateship of all Australians.

On 19 January 1944, he notes: 'In my opinion the glamour and privilege that attach to army rank are much more in evidence in the AIF [Australian Imperial Force] than in the BEF [British Expeditionary Force] here in Changi, so much so that one sometimes wonders whether it is entirely forgotten that we are just as much prisoners of war awaiting an uncertain fate and, fundamentally, we are all in the same bag.'

On 27 July 1945, he notes: 'There are some in camp who are not only well but fat. These include cooks and racketeers ... Then there are those who become rich in dollars, some fabulously rich ... Those with capital eat extras with meals and between meals, and often in large amounts, and often without apparent thought of the many who were without means and property to sell. Most of the latter class were men who had been up-country in 1943 and who had come back at the end of that year or early in the next bereft of everything ...' Up country meant, of course, the hell of working on the Siam-Burma Railway.

*King Rat* was made into a film in 1965. *The Naked Island* was not filmed but Braddon did turn it into a three-act play. Time for re-showing the first and reviving the second?

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### QM Blues

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Fifty years after 3 Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment serving in Korea had to rely on Americans for cold-weather kit, the Australian Special Air Service unit committed to Afghanistan had to contact a Canberra ski-wear supplier to obtain its cold-weather kit.

This, coming on top of criticism of the quality of army hot-weather kit in East Timor, does not say much for defence bureaucrats. Big-ticket armaments cost billions. Couldn't the odd million have been spared to army quartermasters for the acquisition of cold-weather kit from local manufacturers such as Paddy Pallin whose expertise is renowned?

Your correspondent talked to SAS founder David Stirling in the 1960s when the latter was operating a television company as a front for his security consultancy. He was charmingly discreet about the consultancy and seemingly bemused that the irregular unit he assembled during World War II had achieved such glamour status.

Stirling, a Catholic, was commissioned into the Scots Guards which has a claim to being the first anti-terrorist unit. When Winston Churchill was Home Secretary in the 1920s, an anarchist, known as Peter the Painter, caused a terror stir in London. The Scots Guards were called out. Pictures are extant of Churchill peering round a corner, covered by a Scots Guardsman with loaded .303 Lee Enfield rifle. Beat that John Winston Howard. But don't place over-reliance on the effective range of the Australian Army's Steyr automatic rifle compared to a .303 or an Afghan sharpshooter's Kalashnikov.

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Christmas Gift Suggestions

THE SPIRIT OF OZ:  
OUTBACK TO EAST TIMOR

Three very different books about Australians are reviewed by IAN MACDONALD.



THE cover picture of *Father Browne's Australia*, a wonderful remembrance of things past, says more than a thousand words. It shows a couple of outback children, captured with a fresh honesty and a timing that Henri Cartier Bresson might envy.

EE O'Donnell SJ is to be congratulated on the discernment he has shown in selecting from the 40,000 negatives taken by his confrere in religion, Francis Browne, during an Australian sojourn in the 1920s.

Browne came here for health reasons after being gassed in the Great War of 1914-18. O'Donnell discovered the photographic trove in an old trunk after Browne's death in Dublin in 1960. There are archivists here and there who could wish they had got to the old trunk first. Not only were the negatives in reasonable condition, they were all dated and identified. These are priceless images from the heartland of Australia.

So, too, are the memoirs of Georgette Wall. Their coverage includes the period of Browne's pictures and like them they speak the truth about the heartland, of how its steady beat of children born and nurtured, of tasks undertaken and completed, formed the nation.

Too honest to be elegant, the Wall memoirs have the durability and charm of bush furniture. Georgette Wall is the daughter of an English soldier who met and married her mother, a red-headed Frenchwoman from the Armentières area, celebrated in one of the rousing ditties of the Great War: *Mademoiselle from Armentières, parlez-vous?* This was still being sung at the start of World War

*Father Browne's Australia*

By EE O'Donnell SJ  
Wolfhound Press/Tower Books \$38.38

*A French Aussie*

By Georgette Wall  
Direct from the author, Unit 106,  
The Cecil, 20 Gerrale Street, Cronulla  
NSW 2230 \$20.

*Mission Accomplished: East Timor*

By Bob Breen  
Allen and Unwin \$39.95

It although the Nazi blitzkrieg gave no one much time for parlez-vous-ing.

The passage of the Wall family from England to Australia was arranged under the scheme whereby fares paid by a prospective employer were worked off on the land. These memoirs are living history, full of the kind of vivid detail that summons the past:

Her father being offered a Sydney job by her honorary Uncle Jock; labourer, said Uncle Jock, but something better if her father became a Freemason. He opted for labouring.

Her husband Tim, a policeman on the basis of 18 shillings and a penny a day, seven days a week.

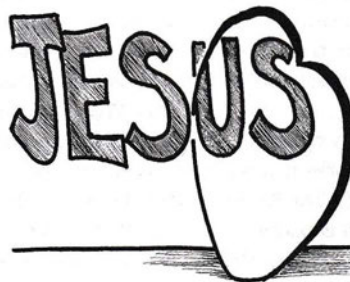
The building of their fibro house (downgraded from colonial brick) outside Sydney in the post-war days before Gough the Not Bad (Whitlam) brought mains sewerage pipes to the area.

The author makes clear the tension between her French inheritance and her Australian life. But the tension has been creative, inspired by a profound Catholic faith. And as her memoirs demonstrate, she has retained the classic French characteristics: spirit, clarity and balance.

Bob Breen is an early bird in the field of Timor war and peace studies. And he gets something much better than a worm's eye view. Aside from its narrative exhilaration, *Mission Accomplished: East Timor* will surely be an invaluable resource because of his meticulous detail on the INTERFET units involved in the operation and their tactical deployment.

His concise text is complemented by the pin-sharp photographs of Corporal Paul Hartigan (promote that man or you'll lose him to a top newspaper or magazine). Breen, as a reserve army officer, had a deserved but enviable inside track as well as the backing of the INTERFET commanding officer, Major General Paul Cosgrove, as deft in military politicking as in Vietnam tunnel close-combat or a rugby scrum.

Breen makes one thing eloquently plain with a gesture: military forces win victories or reduce tensions; lasting peace is created by other forces. He is donating the royalties from his book (the first of two) to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco) to help with the rebuilding and refurbishing of the Kindergarten Elementary School in Comoro, partly burnt and completed looted in September 1999.



How else but through a  
broken heart  
May Lord Christ enter in?

Oscar Wilde, *Ballad of Reading Gaol*

## Australian myths, legends and cover-ups

# NED KELLY

*On June 29, 1880 Ned Kelly was shot and captured. Dan Kelly, Steve Hart and Joe Byrne were killed in the shoot-out. Some little-known facts about the destruction of the Kelly family are revealed in this article by JOHN COLBORNE-VEEL.*

**T**HE first great media event in Australian history was the siege at the Glenrowan Inn where Ned Kelly and his gang made their last stand. More than one thousand spectators gathered to watch the event which was photographed by five photographers. Telegraph lines were overloaded and it was reported that 90,000 words describing the event were wired to Sydney alone. The *Melbourne Herald* wrote: 'Our circulation was nearly double that of any other occasion'.

Among the thousands of words being passed along the telegraph lines on June 29, 1880 was the following description of Ned Kelly's last fighting moments as he tried to make his way back into the Glenrowan Inn at six thirty in the morning after being mysteriously absent for some time:

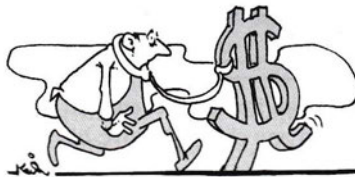
'Suddenly we noticed one or two of the men, with their backs turned to the hotel, firing something at the bush. Presently we noticed a very tall figure in white stalking slowly along in the direction of the hotel. There was no head visible and in the dim light with the steam rising from the ground it looked for all the world like the ghost of Hamlet's father with no head, only a very long thick neck. Those who were standing with me did not see it for a time, and I was too intent on watching its movements to point it out to others. The figure continued gradually to advance, stopping every now and then, and moving what looked like its headless neck slowly and mechanically round, and then raising one foot onto a log and aiming and firing a

revolver. Shot after shot was fired at it, but without effect, the figure generally replied by tapping the butt end of its revolver against its neck, the blows ringing out with the clearness and distinctiveness of a bell in the morning air. It was the most extraordinary sight I ever saw or read of in my life, and I felt fairly spellbound with wonder, and I could not stir or speak. Presently the figure moved

toward a dip in the ground near some white dead timber and, more men coming up, the firing got warmer. Still the figure kept erect, tapping its neck and using its weapon on its assailants. At this moment I noticed a man in a small round tweed hat stealing up on the left of the figure, and when within thirty paces of it, firing low two quick shots in succession. The figure reeled and staggered like a drunken man and in a few moments fell near the dead timber. The iron mask was torn off and there in the light of day were the features of the veritable bloodthirsty Ned Kelly himself.'

The only hero of the siege was Father (later Bishop) Gibney who had arrived on the twelve o'clock train. Father Gibney administered the last rites to Ned Kelly because he appeared very close to death. Father Gibney said, 'After I had attended him, I asked him did he think it would be safe for me to go up to the house and get this man, his brother, I think, to surrender. He looked very steadfastly at me seemingly reading me, and he said. 'I would not advise you to go; they will certainly shoot you'.

Some time later Father Gibney was told that Ned Kelly's sisters had arrived and he asked one of them to go to the hotel and ask Dan Kelly if he would allow the priest to come and see him. His sister agreed but was stopped by the police. Then, at about three o'clock in the afternoon the police set fire to the building. Father Gibney said that, 'When the fire seemed to have taken well, just as it seemed to break through the house... there was a volley fired into the house, and then I said to myself, 'These men have not five minutes left



### Property and self-hood

**W**E have tried to show that the new freedom which capitalism brought for the individual added to the effect which the religious freedom of Protestantism already had had upon him. The individual became more alone, isolated, became an instrument in the hands of overwhelmingly strong forces outside himself; he became an 'individual', but a bewildered and insecure individual. There were factors to help him overcome the overt manifestations of this underlying insecurity. In the first place his self was backed up by the possession of property. 'He' as a person and the property he owned could not be separated. A man's clothes or his house were parts of his self just as much as his body. The less he felt he was being somebody the more he needed to have possessions. If the individual had not property or lost it, he was lacking an important part of his 'self' and to a certain extent was not considered to be a full-fledged person, either by others or by himself.

- Erich Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom*, 1960.



## Gossip Beats History

**P**UBLISHERS, though sniffing at sermons, and surfeited with Novels, snatch greedily at Diaries, and may be found with their usual effrontery asserting on the dust-covers that these publications of theirs cannot fail to remind the reader of either Pepys or Evelyn, two very different men who have become as much the sponsors of English Diaries as erst were Herodotus and Thucydides the Fathers of History.

It is perhaps possible that the popularity of Diaries is to be accounted for by the growing distaste for 'standard' histories. Had Smollett and Hume (yoked together by the 'Trade'), Macaulay and Froude been included in the Canon of Holy Scripture, their authority could hardly be more harshly scrutinized than they are today by the younger race of Students.

— Augustin Biorell, *Et Cetera*, 1930.

to live". Ignoring calls from the police to stop, Father Gibney walked into the hotel much to the delight of the spectators who applauded him as if he 'was going on stage'.

Once in the blazing building, Father Gibney just had time to check on the bodies of Dan Kelly and Steve Hart who had been dead for some time but not from gunshot wounds and that of Joe Byrne who had been shot early that morning after he took his armour off to drink a glass of scotch. When Father Gibney reappeared the crowd cheered and then rushed forward to look into the burning building and get their photographs taken in front of it, but they had to quickly retreat when the outlaw's unused ammunition started to go off in the heat of the blaze.

Under intense media scrutiny, the events surrounding the capture of Ned Kelly began to show that there were discrepancies and irregularities in police procedure. During the siege the police had fired without regard into the hotel knowing that it was full of hostages. They also sent to Melbourne for a field gun to help in the subsequent battle with the four bushrangers. Ned Kelly's trial was

hardly an impartial event and he was denied any chance to give his side of the story.

As a result of the media interest, two years after he was executed a Royal Commission was held to investigate Ned Kelly's case, and despite the fact that it called sixty-five witnesses only one of whom was in any way connected to Kelly's supporters, its report led to either the sacking or demotion of most of the officers involved.

Apart from being Australia's first great media event, the Ned Kelly saga was probably the last big event that was celebrated in song and passed onto the general population as news in the form of popular ballads. In his lifetime, songs about Ned Kelly were everywhere. For example, just before the raid on Jerilderie he called in at the Woolpack Inn, where the barmaid (who didn't know who she was talking to) said in conversation that she thought that the Kellys were very brave, and sang 'The Kellys have made another escape'.

Joe Byrne, who Ned acknowledged to be the best man in his gang, used to write and sing songs about

their exploits. As they were singing and dancing in the bar at Glenrowan before the siege Joe Byrne sang his ballad of Ned Kelly to the tune of 'The Wearing of the Green'. At the time, the police claimed to have examples of Joe Byrne's anti establishment poetry but they have never been released. Byrne's diary of the Kelly Gang's escapade has never been found.

Although she was only a teenager at the time, Ned's sister Kate seems to have caught the public imagination and been known to them (probably though ballads that have been lost), while the siege at Glenrowan was in progress an unsubstantiated report that Kate had shot Sergeant Steel seems to have touched off a stampede of reporters trying to verify the rumour. Even the police have credited Kate with helping her brothers with things that were actually done by her married sister Mrs Skillion. Journalists who saw her at Glenrowan said she seemed to be too young to understand the dreadful reality of the events that were taking place. On the night after Ned was hanged an unscrupulous promoter tricked Kate, his brother Jim and Steve Hart's sister Ettie into appearing at a music hall to thank the public for their support, an event that was said to have turned into a circus.

Censorship is very much part of the Ned Kelly story, three plays about his exploits were written during his lifetime and produced in the theatre only to be closed down by order of the Colonial Secretary. Up until Federation, with one exception, all other plays about Ned Kelly were closed down by the same office.

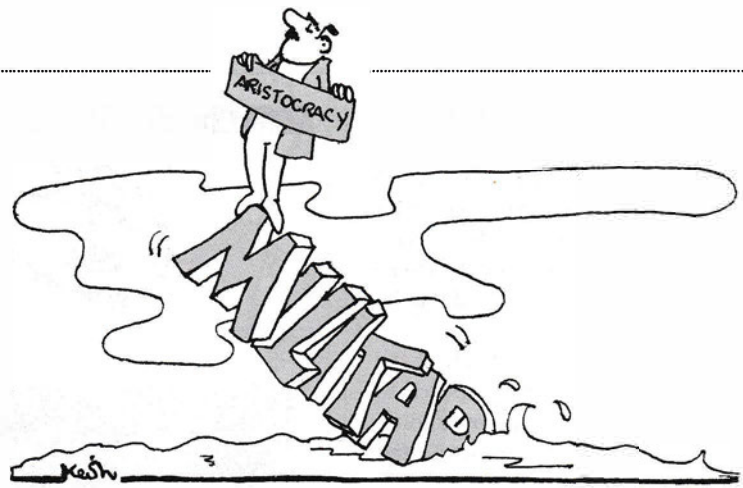
Some claim that Ned Kelly carried a paper containing a declaration of independence for the State of Victoria in his pocket when he was captured but it disappeared soon afterwards. While there is no evidence of the alleged declaration it's interesting to wonder why a bank robber would take the trouble to burn a bank record books and mortgages as Kelly is reported to have done during his raid on Jerilderie. It is also interesting to notice that this information

seems to have been screened out of subsequent reports of the robbery.

Ned Kelly sent letters to the press as well as politicians, outlining his reasons for taking to bushranging, but the documents found their way into the hands of the police who censored them. He claimed that, because Premier Berry had sacked over two hundred public servants including police magistrates and judges, and threatened to replace the whole police force with soldiers, the police had set him up to use him as a means of justifying their existence and continued employment. He also accused one of the local squatters and his son-in-law – a policeman – of using the law to steal livestock from small landowners (free selectors) and said that they had been blaming him for their crimes. The obvious connection between police persecution of the Kelly family and what was at the time an ongoing struggle between the squatters and the free selectors is one area of the Ned Kelly saga that should be fully investigated.

Many police documents describe the Kellys' in very unflattering terms and their homestead as a shanty. From police reports it's easy to get the impression that the Kellys' were a family of dirty impoverished uncouth rogues. But in the early nineteen fifties a friend of mine who was apprenticed to the tailor at Benalla said that they still had the old order books and it was apparent that the Ned Kelly and the so called 'Greta Mob' that later became his gang were among the best dressed men in the district.

In 1877 Police Superintendent Nicholson visited 'the notorious Mrs Kelly's on the road from Greta to Benalla' and noted that, 'They appeared to be existing in poverty and squalor'. In his report on the Kellys', Nicholson said: 'Until the gang referred to is rooted out of this neighbourhood one of the most experienced and successful mounted-constables will be required in charge at Greta'. Nicholson then left orders that, 'Whenever they commit any paltry crime, to bring them to justice, and send them to Pentridge even on a paltry sentence, the object being to take their prestige away from them.'



## Of Dukes and Colonels

**N**OW it can be easily shown that the thing we call aristocracy in Europe is not in its origin and spirit an aristocracy at all. It is not a system of spiritual degrees and distinctions like, for example, the caste system of India, or even like the old Greek distinction between free-men and slaves. It is simply the remains of a military organisation, framed partly to sustain the sinking Roman Empire, partly to break and avenge the awful onslaught of Islam. The word Duke simply means Colonel, just as the word Emperor simply means Commander-in-Chief. Now in an army nobody ever dreams of supposing that difference of rank represents a difference of moral reality. Nobody ever says about a regiment, 'Your Major is very humorous and energetic; your Colonel, of course, must be even more humorous and yet more energetic.' No one ever says, in reporting a mess-room conversation, 'Lieutenant Jones was very witty, but was naturally inferior to Captain Smith'. The essence of an army is the idea of official inequality, founded on unofficial equality. The Colonel is not obeyed because he is the best man, but because he is the Colonel. Such was probably the spirit of the system of dukes and counts when it first arose out of the military spirit and military necessities of Rome.

- G.K. Chesterton, *What's wrong with the world.*

In the light of Nicholson's orders it's easy to see where Ned Kelly got the idea that he was being persecuted by the police.

Despite the bravado and gallantry of the ballads and the scorn, ridicule and self-righteous indignation and sometimes adulation of the media, the story of Ned Kelly remains needless human tragedy that should never have happened.

The tragedy was set off by Constable Fitzpatrick, an officer who was described by the acting Commissioner of Police two years later as a 'liar and a larrikin'. Fitzpatrick called at the Kelly homestead in April 1878 against orders,

without a warrant, and drunk, to arrest Dan Kelly for allegedly stealing a squatter's horses. Fitzpatrick later claimed that Ned Kelly shot him in the wrist and that Mrs Kelly, together with her son-in-law William Skillion and a farmer, had attempted to murder him.

Kate Kelly and Margaret (Mrs Skillion) had witnessed the whole event but were not called to give evidence at the trial so there was no one to contradict the constable's charges. At that time, by law, the accused were not entitled to give evidence on their own behalf, so, despite the fact that they were all innocent, and that Constable

Fitzpatrick had admitted to writing the 'evidence' in his notebook at a later date, all three were sentenced to lengthy terms of imprisonment with hard labour. Mrs Kelly with her baby daughter was sentenced to three years. And Ned Kelly decided that he had had enough.

Ned Kelly gave his version of the incident in the following speech to the townsfolk whom he was holding prisoner in the bar at the Royal Mail Hotel Jerilderie:

'Boys, I'll tell you how I'm an outlaw, and how I've been treated by the police in Victoria. When I was accused by Fitzpatrick of shooting him, I swear I was four hundred miles away from home. When I heard of the way he treated my sister, I hurried home, and found I was accused of shooting Fitzpatrick. I don't like to present a revolver to any man, as naturally it makes him tremble, unless I am compelled to do so, but what must have been the feelings of my sister - a mere child - when she had a revolver put to her head demanding her to submit her virtue, or be shot by the

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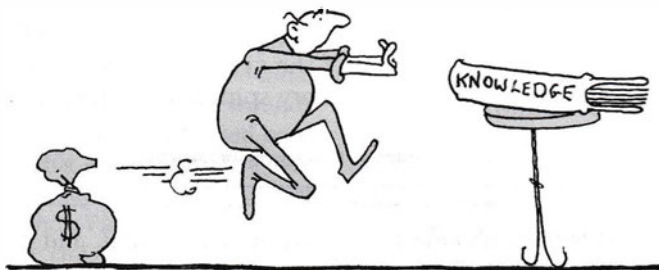
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villain Fitzpatrick. I don't deny having stolen horses, and sold them, but of shooting Fitzpatrick I was entirely innocent. When outlawed I was only three weeks married. When we came upon the police they were all fully armed. All I had was an old rifle,

with a barrel shaking about. Enough of this you will find it all in the paper I have left to be printed.' [The Jerilderie letter]

In 1911 Sydney Journalist B.W. Cookson went to Greta and interviewed Mrs Kelly, to get her side of the story. Cookson wrote that:

'Going back to the early history of the family, Mrs Kelly said that her husband, John Kelly, made some money on the goldfields, and bought a farming property at Beveridge. He got into trouble, and died not long afterwards. There were seven children. With these children Mrs Kelly took up land at east Greta, on which the old Kelly homestead still stands. Here she and her children lived happily enough, if roughly, till the visit of Constable Fitzpatrick. 'People blame my boys for what happened. They should blame the police. They were at the bottom of it all... I remember it as if it was yesterday.... Before that black day when Fitzpatrick came we were all living so happily at the old homestead... We were not getting too rich, but we were doing alright. It was a lonely life, but we were all together, and we all loved each



## The Secret of Success

**D**OCTOR Johnson was impressed by a boy rowing him in a boat who, on being asked what he would give to know about the Argonauts, said he would give what he had. 'Sir', Johnson observed, 'a desire of knowledge is the natural feeling of mankind; and every human being, whose mind is not debauched, will be willing to give all that he has to get knowledge.'

He had not met Chris Evans, the twenty-eight-year-old presenter of *Don't Forget Your Toothbrush*, currently the most successful man in British television. It has been rumoured that Evans has read only three books in his life. For *The Times* (November 26), Robert Crampton asked Evans if this could possibly be true, 'I've actually read about five or six now', Evans replied.

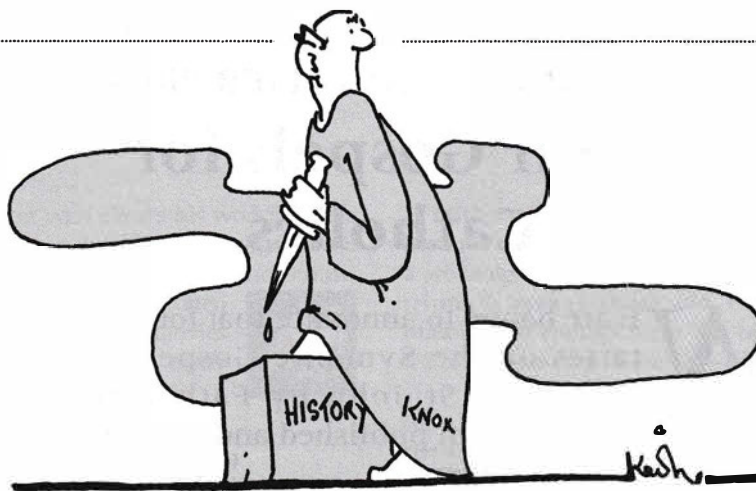
- *Times Literary Supplement*, 2/12/94.

other so dearly. Dear little Kate! I can see her now, bustling about the place, keeping things tidy, helping outside whenever she got a chance; always bright and cheerful, just like a sunbeam about the house...

'The trouble began over a young constable named Fitzpatrick. That was in April 1878. He came to our place over there and said that he was going to arrest Dan. He started the trouble. He had no business there at all, they tell me – no warrant or anything. If he had he should have done his business and gone. He tried to kiss my daughter Kate. She was a fine looking girl, Kate; and my boys tried to stop him. He was a fool. They were only trying to protect their sister. He was drunk and they were sober. But his story was believed. If he'd been badly hurt he would have richly deserved it. But I never hurt him – before God I didn't. They swore I hit him with a shovel. It was untrue. Why did he want to interfere with my girl? He stayed there to make trouble; and there was trouble. That was the end of the happiness for us. After that, nothing but misery. And there has been nothing but misery ever since.'

Cookson wrote that, 'At the memory of her forcible severance from her family the old woman broke down and wept bitterly.' After recovering Mrs Kelly continued, 'Oh, you can't imagine what I suffered. You can't understand what it means to us poor people in the bush, to be taken away from all that we have – our children. But they took me away and I had to stay in prison for years. And for nothing, nothing at all. Because I never touched that constable at all. I had no part in his being hurt. That was all his own fault. I declare this to you now, declare it before the God I shall soon see, and by my hope of salvation after a life of dreadful trouble, that I did nothing to Fitzpatrick.'

Cookson continued, 'The old woman had many tales of what



## The Perils of Prophethood

**A**S an individual man, John Knox would not have hurt a fly. As a prophet, he deliberately tried to restore, by a pestilent anachronism, in a Christian age and country, the ferocities attributed to ancient Israel. This he did not even do consistently, and when he is inconsistent with his prevailing mood, his biographers applaud his 'moderation'. If he saw a chance against an Anabaptist, or if he wanted to conciliate Mary of Guise, he took up a Christian line, backing it by texts appropriate to the occasion.

His influence lasted, and the massacre of Dunavertie (1647), and the slaying of women in cold blood, months after the battle of Philiphaugh, and the 'rouping' of covenanted 'ravens' for the blood of cavaliers taken under quarter, are the direct result of Knox's intellectual error, of his appeals to Jehu, Phinehas, and so forth.

– Andrew Lang, *John Knox and the Reformation*, 1905.

she called the persecution by the police to tell. Her daughters had been, she said, subjected to continued and studied indignities. Police would come at all hours of the night to search the house; and they would pull the girls out of bed and turn their beds upside down in the most rough and brutal fashion. 'The girls could have told you more about these things than I can', she said wearily. 'They had to suffer. And it was the conduct of the police all through – the brutal ill-usage that we had from them that made all the trouble. But I don't know much about what happened after Fitzpatrick came that day. But the things that the girls have told me the

police used to do were simply brutal and without excuse at all. If they had been trying to provoke the boys to break the law and retaliate they could not have done more than they did.'

Australia's first great media event was a tragedy, and it is ironic that the charges against Dan Kelly that Constable Fitzpatrick used as an excuse for being at the Kelly household were thrown out of court for lack of evidence when Dan's cousin and co-accused John Lloyd was arraigned three weeks after the incident that destroyed Mrs Kelly's family.



JOHN COLBORNE-VEEL is a regular contributor to *Annals*. For six years President of the Fellowship of Australian Composers, John is a distinguished jazz musician, composer and librettist.

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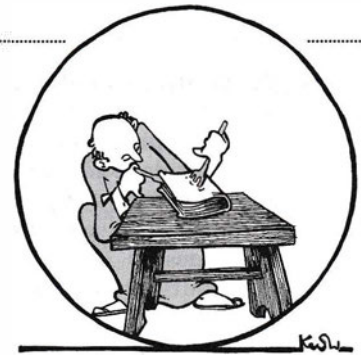
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- John Ruskin, *Deucalion*, II. I, 55,56



By James Murray

### The Golden Bowl

This Merchant Ivory production is magnificently located in England and Italy. Nick Nolte, in gravitas rather than hell-raiser mode, is outstanding as an Andrew Carnegiesque tycoon. Kate Beckinsale plays his heiress daughter, loved not wisely but too well. Jeremy Northam, with an Italian accent thicker than mine-strone, is her fortune-hunting husband and Uma Thurman the beauty who seeks to come between them, having married the tycoon by way of an opening gambit.

Only Henry James could conjure relationships so complicated and resolve them so audaciously. And morally. But for all its lustrous appointments and cast, the film's impact is less than the sum of its parts, possibly because Henry James himself lacked passion. *MA*



### La Ville Est Tranquille (The City is Quiet)

The title of Robert Guédiguian's tenth film is profoundly ironic. His birthplace city, Marseilles, is quiet only in its desperate violence. Guédiguian's genius is that he leads his troupe of actors in the creation of a film precise in its location but with global relevance at a time when so many cities are in process of being transformed from working ports and manufacturing centres to uncertain tourist destinations.

Ariane Ascaride plays the heroic mother Michelle looking after her drug-addicted daughter and grandchild. Her working life in the local fishmarket intersects with the high and low life of the city where the new right rails against immigrants and the old left, personified in the enigmatic barkeep Gerard (Gerard Meylan), plots against rich developers with ultimately lethal effect.

In the background is a church, unvisited but a constant redoubt. Above all, Guédiguian is a film-

maker who allows his working-class characters to retain their dignity. He neither caricatures them nor criminalises them – too often their fate in local movies subsidized by their taxes. *MA*



### Shackleton

Photographer Frank Hurley's starkly beautiful black and white image of the Endurance trapped in the Antarctic ice opens this IMAX drama-documentary about Ernest Shackleton's 1915 expedition. Archival movie footage, also shot by Hurley, is combined with modern reconstruction footage to create a powerful account of the main expedition and the epic open-boat voyage which enabled Shackleton to save all the members of his crew.

The commentary, spoken by Kevin Spacey, is perhaps a touch too reverential and makes nothing of the fact that Shackleton virtually created what is now Australia's right to about one third of Antarctica and its still largely untapped mineral and food resources. *MA 15+*



### Legally Blonde

Novice Australian director Robert Luketic grabs his Hollywood chance and runs it in for a box-office hit. And his star Reese Witherspoon turns in the wittiest, sweetest-tempered performance by a blonde since Judy Holliday appeared in *Born Yesterday*. And that was last century.

Holliday played classic dim-to-dumb blonde. Witherspoon is Elle Wood, who thinks pink is profound and tort a kind of pastry yet makes it into Harvard Law School by means of a video application that has its staff reaching for their lost youth.

Initially she is in hot pursuit of the condescending boyfriend (Matthew Davis) who has jilted her but cool determination kicks in as she rises to the challenge of Harvard's Socratic tutorial method.

Witherspoon's wit and sparkle have the tonic effect of Buck's Fizz at a wedding. And her final courtroom triumph makes those old Perry Mason twist endings seem like beer, left too long on top of the dozy television. Her only problem will be topping this one. But then that was her problem after her brilliant turn in *Election*. *PG*



### Tigerland

Casual sex and disciplined brutality are the key motifs of Joel Schumacher's movie about American infantry conscripts in a final jungle training camp before being sent to Vietnam in 1971. Colin Farrell (late of Ballykissangel) plays Bozz, a charismatic rebel against the system who helps others to escape from it. Ultimately, however, he goes to war. Matthew Davis plays his offside, also saved from the slaughter, who records the legend of Bozz.

So intense is the bastardization of the recruits that it inspires the dismal thought that the Vietnam war was lost on the training fields of America. *MA 15+*



### The Chase for Skase

An adventure comedy, inspired by comedian Andrew Denton's stunt, about the hunt for failed entrepreneur Christopher Skase. Despite the latter's demise, it works after a fashion, that is, it is rough when it is not ready and ready when it is not rough. What emerges is not so much the Dirty Dozen as the Ditzzy Half-Dozen. Lachie Hulme, a newcomer with bags of swank and the kind of magnificent conk Laurence Olivier used to spend hours constructing from putty and paint, co-wrote and co-stars as the leader of the band.

Alex Dimitriades is his klutzy offside. Craig McLachlan does a surprisingly funny muscleman turn and Bill Kerr, that veteran of foreign wars for laughter, plays the old

soldier who does not fade away until he has inspired the band to an action where order and counter order create farcical disorder. MA



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### **The Man Who Sued God**

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Ingenious comedy about a fisherman who takes legal action after his boat is destroyed and his insurance company refuses to pay on the basis that the destruction was an act of God. The original idea came from the redoubtable actor/writer and Irish whiskey promoter Patrick McCarvill. The credits are odd: based on a script by John Clarke and written by Don Watson (Paul Keating's former speech ghost) which may account for the less subtle moments.

Casting creates imbalance. Anyone who has seen Judy Davis and Colin Friels acting together knows they are a natural comedy team. But presumably for box-office reasons, comedian Billy Connolly was chosen to play the fisherman opposite Davis as a hackette. He is at the top of his voice, but not his form or vocabulary, displaying an obsessive reliance on his stage persona and the expletive first used in literature by his compatriot, the poet (and ex-Franciscan friar), William Dunbar.

Director Mark Joffe does give Davis scope to display her gift for comedy. But her peculiar makeup can make her look as if she has wandered in from a Woody Allen opus about Marcel Marceau. Colin Friels has to settle for playing the fisherman's staid brother. Wendy Hughes has an even sketchier part as the fisherman's former wife.

Necessarily the action involves religious representatives: Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and Jewish (in a breach of multiculturalism Islamic representatives are absent, surely not because the film involves a little, light mockery of religion and business?)

Vincent Ball, playing a cardinal as to the manner born, delivers the most effective speech (on caritas). Connolly is loaded up with the old, lefty line about the churches being so rich they could afford to solve all Third World poverty. He speaks this line with a faint air of embarrassment, possibly

because in real life he is engaged in spruiking for a multinational lucre company which needs no plugs here.

The comedy ends with a double twist, satisfactory to both sides.

MA 15+



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### **The Anniversary Party**

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The nightmare private lives of Hollywood's public dream-makers are the subject matter of this satire written, directed and starring Alan Cumming and Jennifer Jason Leigh as a husband and wife, balanced on a frayed marriage.

Too much already. Cumming is the least dour of Scots actors. He has tics, twitches, grimaces and flamboyant gestures the way a Scotch terrier has fleas. And he deploys them all as a English Booker Prize winner about to direct his own script of his novel, having cast a new star Skye Blue or possibly Grey (Gwyneth Paltrow) instead of his wife.

Angst and drugs, revelation and boredom collide as the wedding anniversary party proceeds. Making a disciplined film about undisciplined people is as difficult as making a comedy about bores. Despite their combined talents, and those of their cast which also includes the great Kevin Kline, Cumming and Leigh do not succeed. But they do provide proof of how ridiculous it is that nutty showbizniks should provide lifestyle guidance for so many throughout the world.

MA 15+



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### **Our Lady of the Assassins**

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Director Barbet Schroeder's film takes its title from the vestigial devotion of young gangsters to Our Lady. But it loses itself in its own nihilism as its main character, the writer Vallejo (German Jaramillo), returns to die in his birthplace Medellin, centre of the Columbian drug trade where fireworks celebrate a successful drug run into the United States.

Vallejo doesn't die but those with whom he becomes intimate – trigger-happy youths from the city's gangs – do. Schroeder may intend Vallejo's

solipsism as a metaphor for the world's lack of care and commitment. But ultimately his own film prefers to curse the darkness rather than light a candle.

To be seen only if already depressed after watching a party political broadcast in which John Howard does his famous imitation of Robert Gordon Menzies and Kim Beazley does his imitation of Gough Whitlam and Bob Hawke (there's enough Kim for two). MA



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### **Atlantis: The Lost Empire**

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A search for the legendary drowned city provides the basis for this Disney cartoon feature. But it relies more on the star status of its voice-over cast, who include Michael J Fox, James Garner and Leonard Nimoy, than the strength of its story-line, special effects and sombre drawings. PG



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### **The Vertical Ray of the Sun**

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The success of films from so-called Third World countries is based on the fact that their makers remember the movie camera's fundamental magic: to show the wonder of the ordinary. Vietnamese director Tran Anh Hung succeeds admirably in his examination of the lives of three Hanoi sisters, their husbands and lovers as they flash back and forward during the elegiac preparation of a meal to celebrate their dead mother's memorial feast.

Tran's focus is more on celebrating a traditional way of life maintained in the present than analysing or judging his characters.

But he paces his editing to their heartbeat and matches his vision to their hopes. MA



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### **America's Sweethearts**

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Julia Roberts in a fat suit may not have quite the ring of 'Garbo talks'. But it does show the pains Roberts will take to raise a laugh. And she raises a few, playing the put-upon

sister of a spoilt star in this romantic comedy. Catherine Zeta Jones is the star, John Cusack her estranged sweetheart. Yes, Roberts doffs the fat suit. Yes, Cusack falls in love with her. Yes, Jones gets her comeuppance.

Comedian Billy Crystal is the Puck of the piece, charged with seeing the sweethearts through their press preview rituals. His effrontery is effortless. But as co-writer he gives himself too many bits, particularly dog jokes, that slow the pace. Christopher Walken, his wig and panache wild enough to give him a resemblance to director Hal Ashby, plays the wayward creator of the preview movie (so much funnier than the main effort that it should have replaced it).

Hacks who take part in the merry-go-round of interviewing stars are the target of some outrageous slings and arrows. Older cinema-goers, and younger addicts of late-night TV, may find it reminiscent of *Simon and Laura* in which Kay Kendall and Peter Finch starred in 1956 when air, eggs and ideas were fresher. **MA 15+**



### Rush Hour 2

Reaction to martial arts movies can be similar to reaction to Chinese food: half an hour afterwards you wonder what all the visceral excitement was about. Jackie Chan who combines comedic timing and lethal kicks co-stars with Chris Tucker (and Hong Kong).

The plot? Goodies who grin versus baddies who snarl. What more do you want? Shakespeare? Dostoevsky? Bronte? Give these guys a break. They have agents to support. This is the second of a franchise that may well become as popular (and as phony) as chop suey. **MA 15+**



### Kiss of the Dragon

Jet Li, by comparison with Chan, displays a Confucian reticence and modesty as a martial arts master sent to Paris by China's secret service to aid a squad of France's finest in the

arrest of a Chinese drug lord. Needless to say the cops, led by Tcheky Karyo at his most melodramatically villainous, appear to be in extreme need of a Police Integrity Commission.

Writer/director Luc Besson's plot is long on violence and short on coherence, the fights are lethally choreographed and the gunfire indiscriminate. So destructive is Li, it comes as a welcome relief that he refrains from kicking the Eiffel Tower into scrap metal. Bridget Fonda makes several doleful appearances as a prostitute whose child is being held hostage by the cops. Silly girl. She shouldn't even have made one. The child had no choice. **MA**



### Spy Kids

As the James Bond movies have become lighter and cornier than popcorn, it is not surprising that a variation franchise should be developed for children by writer/director Robert Rodriguez. All concerned have fun, including Antonio Banderas and Carla Gugino as secret agent parents rescued from dire plot complexities by their kids Carmen (Alexa Vega) and Juni (Daryl Sabara).

The plot complexities combine original special effects with slightly kleptomaniacal tendencies: elements appear from Ian Fleming's *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and Roald Dahl's *Willy Wonka in the Chocolate Factory*, not to mention CS Lewis's classic, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (the entrance to adventure is through a clothes closet).

The movie ends with the members of the cast, gazing eagerly in the general direction of *Spy Kids 2* and their respective banks. **PG**



### The Fast and the Furious

Powerful engines, thin plot, thick tyres and thicker-headed characters

make up this high-octane saga which does have its exciting bits, not least the spare parts from the *Mad Max* movies. Vin Diesel and his pectorals star. He plays the leader of a wild bunch who combine drag-racing with running a garage.

But is it the motorists or a rival gang of machine-pistol packing Asian bikers who are responsible for hijacking trucks and their valuable cargoes? Paul Walker, an actor seemingly created with the same cookie-cutter used for Patrick Swayze, aims to find out. In his path stands, the wild bunch's mascot, played by Jordana Brewster, an actress of distracting beauty beyond the range of any cookie cutter.

Coca-Cola optional. Ear-plugs recommended. **MA 15+**



### The Glass House

Modern variation on Hansel and Gretel with the high-tech house of the title replacing the traditional gingerbread cottage and sun struck Malibu beach substituting for the dark forest. Diane Lane and Stellan Skarsgard play a husband and wife. She is living on drug-borrowed time; he beyond his means and his morals limits.

Threatened themselves by loan-sharks, they seek to solve their financial problems, by disposing of two rich orphans placed in their care.

The house itself is a character, shadowy and all knife-edged angles. Skarsgard is particularly menacing, part desperado, part creep, all cunning. But as the elder orphan Leelee Sobieski ensures an outcome different from what he plans. **MA**



### Cats and Dogs

The old television serials *Francis the Talking Mule* and *Mr Ed* have a lot to answer including *Babe*, the witty pig, and the loquacious felines and canines of this comedy in which the former are the baddies and the latter are the goodies.

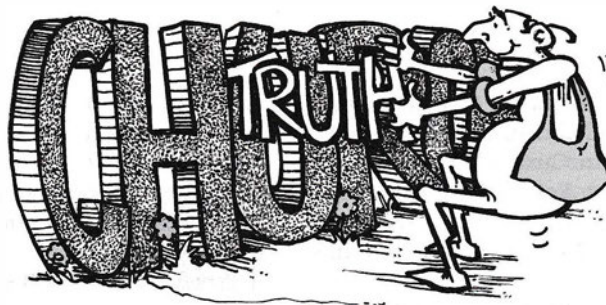
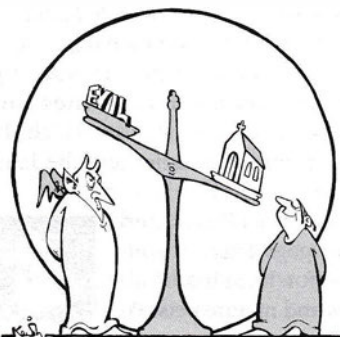
Special effects and sight gags make it suitable for humans of all ages and mature pets. **PG**



## Charlemagne saved from the devil

THE following is a statement made by Turpin, archbishop of Rheims: – 'But a short time ago, in 814, the death of king Charlemagne was intimated to me in the following manner. On a certain day, when I was at Menna, standing in the church before the altar, rapt in ecstasy, and occupied in my prayers, and singing the psalm, 'O God; come thou to my aid,' I saw innumerable hosts of odious-looking soldiers pass before me, and bend their course towards Lothogaringia; and when they had all passed, I saw one of them, resembling an Ethiopian, following the others with a slow step, to whom I said, 'Whither are ye going?' and he replied, 'To Aix-la-Chapelle are we going, to the death of Charlemagne, in order to carry his spirit off to hell.' And I said to him, 'I adjure you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that after you have accomplished your journey, and effected your object, you do not refuse to return to me.' Then, after a short interval, almost before I had finished my psalm, they returned to me in the same order. And I said to the last one, to whom I had originally spoken, 'What have you done?' And the devil said, 'We weighed the actions of Charles, but the Galetian without any regard to the sum of them, put so many huge stones, and such a countless quantity of beams from his churches, in the scale, that his good deeds weighed more than his evil ones, and therefore he took his soul away from us.' Having said this, the devil disappeared. And, therefore, I understood that on that day Charlemagne had departed from this life, and had been deservedly transferred, by the assistance of the blessed James (to whom he had built many churches), to the kingdom of heaven'.

– *Flores Historiarum*, possibly by Matthew of Paris, 1200-1259, the most famous Latin chronicler of the thirteenth century Galicia, a Province in Spain: referring to St James.



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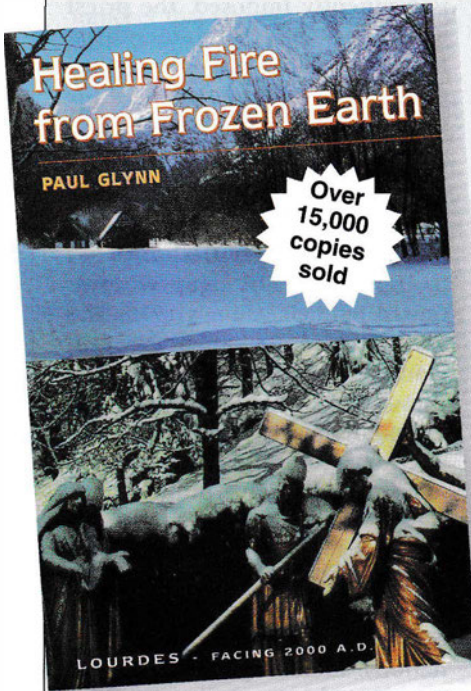
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(Source: CRTN Information Service, edited by Catherine Ancion for Aid to the Church in Need, Königstein, Germany.)

### **Patriarch says that Holy Land peace is answer to terrorism**

Jerusalem: Latin-Rite Patriarch Michel Sabbah of Jerusalem said that a solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine could eliminate 90 per cent of the terrorism in the world. Speaking to the press, Patriarch Sabbah - who is in Rome to participate in the Synod of Bishops - said that US efforts to stamp out terrorism could not succeed as long as the Palestinian people are subject to occupation and oppression. 'If the injustice continues,' he explained, 'despite all the attacks against terrorists, there will always be anti-Western sentiments.' Those sentiments, he continued, 'are the seed of terror and death, so that terrorism will always find fertile soil until there is a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.'

### **'People of different religions can live together peacefully,' says Bishop Lobo**

India: Bishop Salvatore Lobo of Baraipur, a diocese located south of Calcutta, stated that, even with the religious conflicts in many parts of today's world, 'a peaceful co-existence of people belonging to different religions is possible' - and he mentioned his own diocese as an example. The statement was made during the Bishop's visit to the Catholic charity, Aid to the Church in Need. According to Bishop Lobo, Catholics are merely a small minority (55,000) of the diocese's population of eight million, most of it being made up of Muslims and Hindus. In the remote diocese, the

Bishop explained, the main problems are the almost complete lack of infrastructure as well as natural disasters such as cyclones and disastrous floods. He expressed his thanks for the support he receives, via Aid to the Church in Need, from Catholics around the world.

### **Religious minorities under attack**

Bangladesh: Christians in Bangladesh say they are under attack and are being harassed after the country's 1st October general elections which gained majority seats in the National Assembly for Muslim parties. 'What can be more sorrowful than when my son tells me to leave our country because of threats from local people?' asked one Catholic resident. In Dhaka, 50 Christian leaders met recently to address 'minority oppression' following the polls.

missionary news agency, said it 'all began last Friday, during the traditional Muslim prayer. When the prayer was over, the people came out of the mosques and the demonstrations began.' Pointing to the fact that in northern Nigerian federal states, the Shariah - or Islamic law - is frequently imposed, the priest explained that 'fundamentalist Islam is unable to make the distinction between the secularism of the state and the religious aspect'.

### **Catholics aim to heal 1930s wounds with China**

Japan: Japanese Catholics are trying to heal the deep wounds caused by their nation's 1930s war with China. A group of priests, religious and laity from the Nigata and Urawa dioceses in Japan travelled to Beijing and Nanjing recently to pay homage to the victims of the massacres committed by the Japanese Imperial Army during the Sino-Japanese war. The visit was part of an exchange programme fostered by the Diocese of Urawa between Japan and other Asian nations, including China. Bishop Tanu Daiji of Urawa explained that the programme is directed primarily at young people, to promote friendly relations between Japan and the Asian countries which suffered military occupation during the 1930s.

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### **Vatican greets Hindus on Diwali festival**

India: New Delhi. The Vatican has greeted Hindus on their prime annual festival urging more studies to promote Hindu-Christian dialogue for peace. The annual message for Diwali, the festival of lights, issued by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue stresses interreligious education to foster dialogue between 'our communities'. Signed by council president Cardinal Francis Arinze, the message calls for 'mutual respect and esteem for our respective religious traditions' to help the two communities work for social peace and harmony. 'War and violence waged in the name of religion' are against religion, asserts

### **Muslim-Christian violence, weekend of terror**

Nigeria: Confrontations between Christians and Muslims last weekend resulted in at least 200 dead and hundreds wounded in the city of Kano in northern Nigeria. The attacks followed protests against the US bombing of Afghanistan. Father Giulio Albanese, director of the Misna

the message titled, 'Hindus and Christians: Educating their respective communities to dialogue.'

### ***Battle against terrorism must also target culture***

Philippines: Bishops here say culture has a vital role in forming a mindset that supports terrorism and that promoting a culture of peace will help end violence. While some may see US-led attacks on Afghanistan as a just war, work for lasting peace must continue in order to neutralize the culture of violence, said Jesuit Bishop Antonio Ledesma of Ipil, southeast of Manila. Archbishop Oscar Cruz of Lingayen-Dagupan, a northern Diocese, noted that war against terrorism is without territorial boundaries and may last a long time. Even if current terrorists are eliminated, there will be new generations who have been reared in and fed with terrorist ideology, he warned. 'Terrorist deculturation' needs much time, effort, focus and money, said the former president of the Philippine bishops' conference.

### ***Low religious education enrolment***

Serbia: After enrolment began in Serbian schools for newly-instituted religious education classes, the Orthodox Synod and the Catholic Bishops' Conference fiercely attacked the education ministry for 'antidemocratic and illegal behaviour' by the minister and his close associates. As preliminary results showed that few pupils had opted for religious classes, the Synod complained that parents had not been offered a fair choice. The Catholic bishops called for the enrolment period to be extended. However, Serbia's education minister Gaso Knezevic denied any accusations of bias, insisting that school principals had been instructed to be 'visibly neutral'.

### ***Muslim groups condemn military action against Afghanistan***

India: Muslim leaders in India including a top cleric have

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condemned the US air strikes in Afghanistan as an attack on Islam. 'I support the jihad call by the Taliban against the United States,' Syed Ahmed Bukhari, India's most prominent Muslim cleric told the press on Oct. 10. Bukhari, chief priest of Jama Masjid in Delhi, warned that Muslims all over the world would unite to fight the US, whose military actions, he said, 'are a war not against Afghanistan but (against) Islam. India has the third largest

### **A Salutory warning**

**N**OTHING is so well-guarded that it cannot be taken by money.'

- Marcus Tullius Cicero 106-43 BC. He was killed by order of Mark Antony

Muslim population in the world after Indonesia and Bangladesh. India's federal government has given 'unconditional' support to the US-led strikes, while Catholic Church leaders have cautioned that violence does not solve problems.

### ***Controversial proposal to legalize abortion***

Kenya: Despite a proposal to legalize abortion in Kenya, citing clandestine abortion as a leading cause of maternal deaths in the country, pro-life groups reject the claim that legalization is a better solution. The proposal is contained in a government report titled 'Family Health Program', which says, in part, 'in keeping with international trends, elective abortion on request should be available with suitable safeguards to enable such abortion to be performed by doctors or certified health workers who will also give post-abortion care and follow-up.' Pro-life groups argued that pressure was being exerted on Third World countries to accept abortion in the guise of medical and social progress. They underlined the fact that, according to statistics, in countries where abortion is legal teen pregnancies even increased in number. For the time being, Kenya's constitution only permits abortion for the preservation of the mother's life.

### ***No agreement envisaged in the near future***

China/Vatican: Contrary to an earlier report in the Far East Economic Review weekly, there are 'no grounds' to suggest that China and the Holy See will re-establish diplomatic relations in the immediate future, sources close to the Vatican say. Statements implying that a break-through in relations between China and the Holy See will soon take place are 'pure invention' and lack any solid foundation, Vatican sources told the press. China closed all dialogue after Pope John Paul II canonised 120 Chinese Martyrs on October 1 last year. The 1st anniversary of that canonisation was celebrated a few days ago in Hong Kong.



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