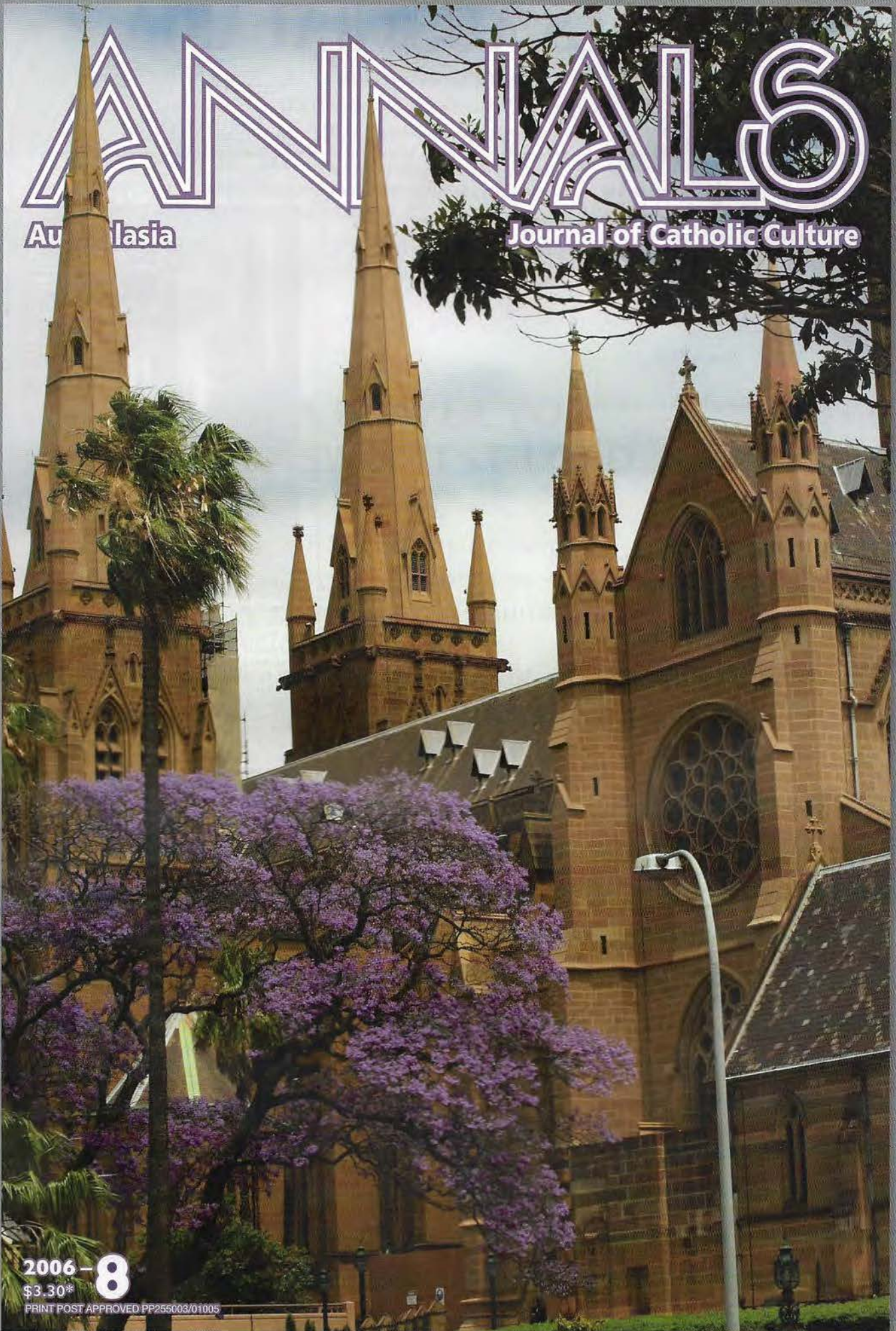


# ANNAALS

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# ANNALS AUSTRALASIA

*Journal of Catholic Culture*

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*Australia's Oldest Catholic Magazine*

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

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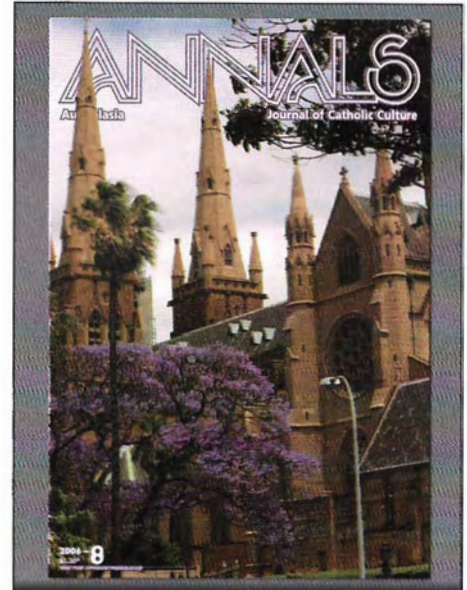
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*Front Cover:* View of St Mary's Basilica, Sydney, looking across from lower Woolloomooloo, across lawns not far from the New South Wales Art Gallery and the Botanical Gardens. Governor Macquarie laid the foundation stone of St Mary's Cathedral in 1821 and the silver and ivory trowel he used was made by the convict silversmith Samuel Clayton. In 1865 the Cathedral – which had a close relationship with Irish Catholic convicts in the Hyde Park Barracks from 1819 until 1848 – was destroyed by fire. Amazingly, several stained glass windows survived, two of which are installed in the chapel of St Benedict's Monastery Arcadia, Sydney. In 1868 Archbishop Polding blessed the foundation stone of the beautiful neo-Gothic Cathedral that is pictured on our cover.

*Back Cover:* A selection of new booklets recently published by Chevalier Press. They are ideal as gifts for relatives and friends interested in the Catholic Faith, for RCIA groups following catechism courses in preparation of baptism at Easter time, or as school prizes. They make ideal bedtime reading, and we recommend them to all Catholics wishing to deepen their understanding of their history, and of their faith.

Cover Photo: Paul Stenhouse MSC.

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‘I have been at pains to send you this small essay so that, in addition to your faith, you may be put in complete possession of knowledge as well.’  
– St Barnabas, Epistle 1,1ff, written around 70AD.

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

## A PRAYER TO HIS SWEETEST LORD

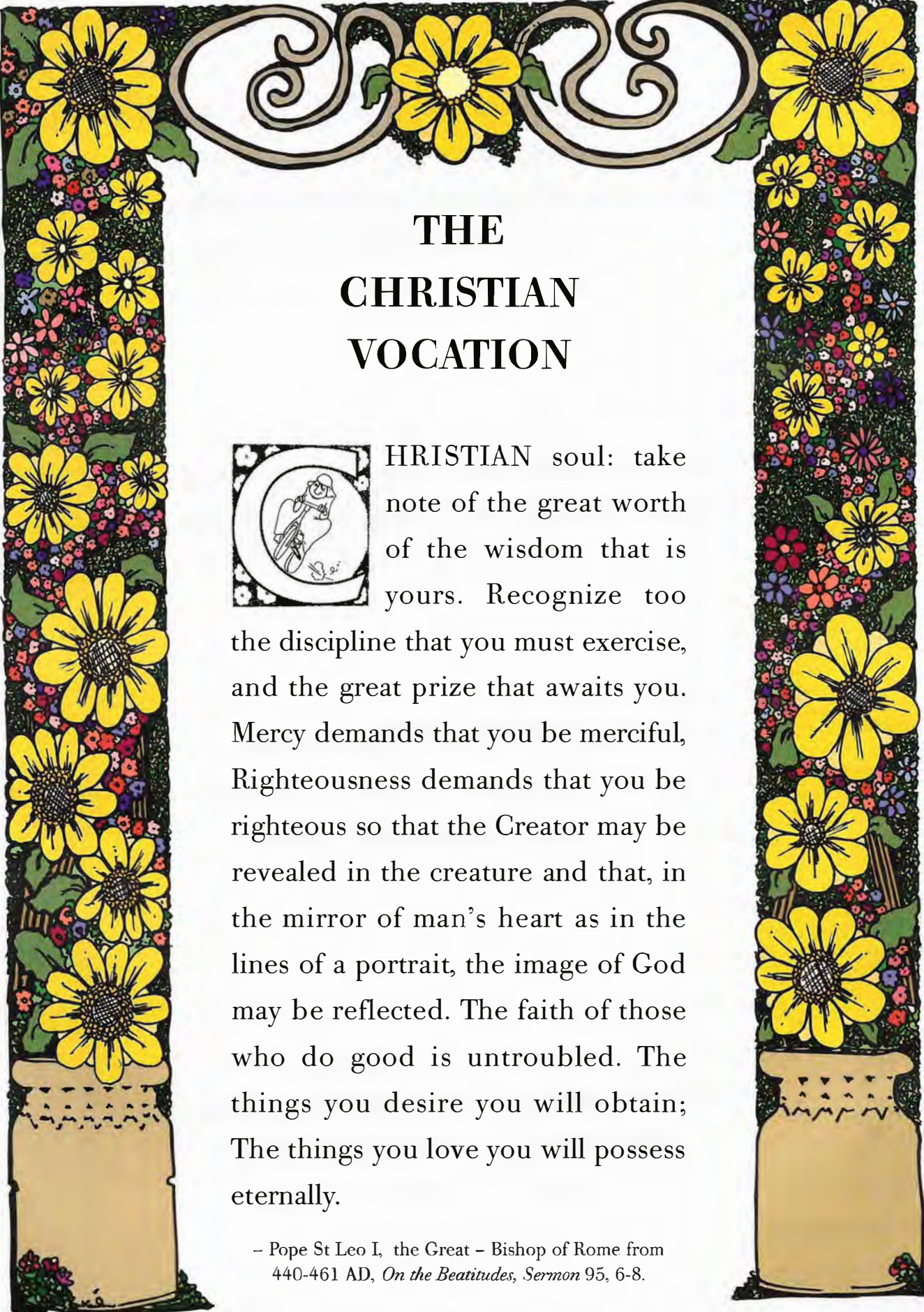
**N**EVER weather-beaten sail  
more willing bent to shore,  
Never tired pilgrim's limbs  
affected slumber more,  
Than my wearied spright<sup>1</sup>  
now longs to fly,  
out of my troubled breast:  
O come quickly, sweetest Lord,  
and take my soul to rest.

**E**VER-BLOOMING are the joys  
of Heaven's high Paradise,  
Cold age deafs not there our ears,  
nor vapour dims our eyes:  
Glory there the sun outshines,  
whose beams the blessed only see:  
O come quickly, glorious Lord,  
and raise my spright to thee.

- Thomas Campion [died 1619]. <sup>1</sup> Spright: archaic form of 'spirit'.







## THE CHRISTIAN VOCATION



CHRISTIAN soul: take note of the great worth of the wisdom that is yours. Recognize too the discipline that you must exercise, and the great prize that awaits you. Mercy demands that you be merciful, Righteousness demands that you be righteous so that the Creator may be revealed in the creature and that, in the mirror of man's heart as in the lines of a portrait, the image of God may be reflected. The faith of those who do good is untroubled. The things you desire you will obtain; The things you love you will possess eternally.

- Pope St Leo I, the Great - Bishop of Rome from 440-461 AD, *On the Beatitudes*, Sermon 95, 6-8.



*Background to recent attempts to stamp out Christianity in Indonesia*

**FORCED ISLAMISATION**

By PAUL STENHOUSE



THE person speaking had lived through it all. He was from the Moluccas - the Spice Islands of legend - and had been there most of his adult life. He was a Catholic and spoke from experience of people and events known to him at first hand. The tale he told of friends and communities betrayed, and innocents tortured and murdered without qualm or mercy was heart-rending. All the more so because it need never have happened; and because it reflected badly on those who were obliged to prevent it: the Indonesian government and the International Community, especially the UN and its International Court of Justice.

It also exposed an unpalatable truth: that evil, cruelty and plain stupidity lie just beneath the surface of our seemingly humdrum lives, waiting to be summoned like the ring-wraiths and orcs in Tolkien's classic metaphor of the human struggle of good against evil. Without compassionate and humane solidarity with those who suffer and are oppressed, our world becomes an uninhabitable jungle. There, as the pagan Roman playwright Plautus warned us, *'homo homini lupus,'* man preys on his fellow men like a wolf, and fear and hopelessness dominate where once was love.

During 1997 and 1998 more than 500 Catholic and Protestant churches were burnt down throughout Indonesia. The figure is conservative, as according to some estimates, more than 350 churches were burned down in the first months of 1998 alone. The Christians were weaponless and politically powerless. They were a minority in a Muslim country. They made no effective response.

This church-burning had been mainly restricted to Java and Sumatra including

Acheh. Since 1968 more than 1,000 Indonesian churches had been burned down or demolished. The problem had not yet touched the Moluccas - mainly because Christians comprise 50 % of the population and relations between Muslims and their Christian neighbours were good.

By January 1999 all this had changed. When Christians in Kupang - the capital of West Timor - finally retaliated by burning down two mosques this act was regarded by Muslims as an affront by the 'Christian dogs,' - the infidels - and in January 1999 several people were killed in Dobu, in the Aru Islands.

Not long afterwards, on January 19, 1999, the killing started in Ambon, capital of the Moluccas.

**Democracy and Multiculturalism**

Navy blue hijabs, loose-fitting shirts and turbans emblazoned with the police logo will be part of a new range of West Australian police uniforms. But the institution of religiously appropriate attire to attract to the ranks Muslims and Sikhs was lambasted yesterday by the police union and state Opposition. Opposition police spokesman Rob Johnson asked if officers would also be permitted to interrupt their duties to pray to Mecca. Victoria and Queensland police have already allowed culturally appropriate uniforms for Muslims and Sikhs on a case-by-case basis, but West Australian Police are the first to introduce blanket uniform exemptions to accommodate religious beliefs. Superintendent Duane Bell said that under the initiative, officers would be allowed to keep their beards or wear shoes made of synthetic materials rather than leather in order to remain faithful to their customs. "In essence, we recognise that the police uniform has been a barrier to people wishing to become police officers, from certain ethnic backgrounds," Mr Bell said.

- Fox News [www.news.com.au](http://www.news.com.au) Alana Buckley-Carr Jan 14, 2006

A Christian driver of a minibus refused to give into extortion when a young Muslim demanded money; a fight started and people took sides and it quickly spread to the whole of the island. Muslims came from Hitulama and butchered many people - about twenty in the village of Benteng Kareng including one or more pregnant women - because they had heard that the mosque in Ambon was surrounded. The Christians then heard that the Silo Protestant Church had been burnt and destroyed. Tensions mounted.

The Catholics in Ambon were mainly immigrants from nearby islands and from other parts of Indonesia. The Ambonese were Protestants from Dutch colonial times, and Muslims. So the Catholics tended to stay out of the conflict - not regarding it as 'their fight'. This all changed when the Laskar Jihad arrived in May 2000. The *Mujahidun* in their distinctive white robes and caps, and brandishing machetes and guns, did not distinguish between Catholics and Protestants.

The Catholics and the Chinese subsequently suffered terrible material losses, but fewer of them were killed than the Protestant Ambonese because they fled back to their islands since they had no weapons with which to defend themselves, and they had fewer family estates to defend than their Protestant neighbours.

These latter on the other hand had weapons, and because they were locals, had nowhere to go. Ambon was their home, and they had been there longer than many of the Muslims who had taken part in early large-scale migration from Bugis, Buton and Makassar, or had arrived only after 1949 in this part of the Moluccas under government-sponsored transmigration from Java. This partly explains the reaction of the Protestants to the violence of the Laskar Jihad and the local Muslims.



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The Muslims looted and burnt the shops and homes of the Catholics and Protestants. Local Muslims also suffered damage to their homes and shops, but the military were ordered not to fire against the Muslims. Sometimes they did so. *Mujahidun* snipers controlled certain areas, and particularly bridges that Christians had to use, but the police never caught them.

*Agence France Press* [AFP] reported that east of the capital, Ambon. Muslims massacred 93 Christians on Kasui, a small island in Indonesia's Moluccas chain, for refusing to convert to Islam.

*Annals* hasn't been able to confirm this number. But reliable sources confirm that all attacks by the *Mujahidun* on this occasion [November 23-26, 2000] took place at about 6.00 a.m. and that an estimated 3,000 Muslim fighters were involved.

The village of Utta was attacked on November 23, resulting in the burning of a church and 4 houses. Karlomin was attacked on November 24, resulting in several residents being killed, others wounded, and a number of houses burned. On November 25, it was the turn of Wunin to be attacked. The Catholic church, a school and 100 houses were burned. The village of Tanasoa became target of an attack on November 26: several Christians were killed, a church, a school and a number of houses were burned.

Two-hundred and seventy people from these villages escaped to the neighbouring island of Teor. More than 700 Catholics and Protestants subsequently agreed to convert in fear of their lives.

The victims were among an estimated 3,000 refugees who fled into the jungle when Islamic *mujahidun* attacked four other villages on November 28, according to AFP.

*Associated Press* [AP] reported similar attacks earlier in the week [referred to above] that destroyed two Christian churches and left 54 villagers dead. The soldiers reportedly pursued the villagers and forced captives to choose between Islam and death.

Some Muslims sought to protect their Christian friends and neighbors, a Catholic priest told AP. 'There are good Muslims who want to protect, while there are bad people who want to slaughter,' he said. The government



was slow to respond to the emergency, said a witness who claimed that only one boat came to evacuate the refugees. Government officials said about 500 people were rescued and several infantry companies have been sent to the island to prevent more violence, according to AP.

In a statement to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the Catholic bishop of the Moluccas, Petrus Canisius Mandagi MSC, testified,

“Only recently, reports have reached us about large-scale and ruthless Islamisation of Christians, both by brutal force and leaving them no choice. This happened in many places, including the islands of Buru and East Ceram, and most recently on the small islands of Kasui and Teor. On Kasui of the 692 Catholics, at least 473 are still alive and they have been Islamised; nothing is known about the fate of the other 219 Catholics. On Teor, with 841 Catholics, 142 have been Islamised, about 300 succeeded in fleeing to Kei Kecil island, while the remaining 400 are still on Teor. So of the 1,533 Catholics on the islands of Kasui and Teor, 615 have been forced to become Muslims, or have chosen to become Muslims rather than lose their lives. On these islands there are hundreds of Protestant Christians who have been converted to Islam in the same way. All these people urgently need to be freed and evacuated from Kasui and Teor.”<sup>1</sup>

Christina Sagat was one such Catholic woman forcibly Islamised and,

## SAVE US FROM SINKING!



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along with hundreds of other Catholic and Protestant Christians, forcibly circumcised in brutal and unhygienic conditions by the Muslims. Her story was printed in *The Sydney Morning Herald* in January 2001.

Christina was born and raised in Karlomin, a Catholic village in Kesui island referred to above, and lived with her parents and seven brothers and sisters, in-laws, nieces and nephews. Catholics, Protestants and Muslims used to live peacefully before the Laskar Jihad came to the island.

After her uncle and a Catholic youth were killed, she and her family, and hundreds of other Christians fled into the mountains. On the fourth day

... some of their Muslim neighbours found them and told them that they had to become Muslims, otherwise they couldn't protect them from the Laskar Jihad.

‘... we finally decided to follow the Muslims to their village and do whatever they told us to do in order to save our lives. We're fully aware that refusing to do so would only get us all killed. The Muslim representatives told us to go straight to a mosque in Kampung Baru village so that when the jihad arrived they would think that we had already become Muslims. ... When we all entered the mosque, the habib (Islamic preacher) asked us whether we really wanted to be Muslims. I felt miserable. The habib then told us to say the Al Fatiha prayer (chanted when a person adopts Islam) three times. I did not remember any of the words at all because I did not say it. I just opened my mouth but in my heart I said my own Catholic prayers. The Muslim crowd inside and outside the mosque yelled and

### UNLIKELY TESTIMONIES TO JESUS

‘Virtuous unto death, he was considered to be a criminal, perverse, and as such he will be whipped, tortured and finally crucified’.

- Plato [427-347 BC] Republic, I, ii.

‘When Plato paints his imaginary Just Man, covered with all the opprobrium of crime, and worthy of all the rewards of virtue, he painted Jesus Christ, trait by trait. The resemblance is so striking that all the Fathers noted it, and it isn't possible to be deceived about it.’

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1712-1778, Emile, liv, iv.

waved their machetes, spears. We all cried. I felt mixed up, scared. I told my mum, who sat beside me, "Why do we have to go through all of of this?... it's coercion. I can't do this. But what else can I do? We would only be killed if we refused it, wouldn't we?" Meanwhile, the crowd in the mosque searched our bags, they took out the Bibles, Rosary necklaces and small statues of Mary, which were torn and broken to pieces and burnt outside the mosque. ... All of us, men and women, old and young, even infants and pregnant women, were circumcised?<sup>2</sup>

Forced Islamisation on the island of Kasui to the south-east of Ceram Island started in November 2000. The Islamised Christians who, like Christina, managed to be evacuated after lengthy delays and much intimidation by the Muslims on the island - 1,670 persons, most of them Catholic - lived on the island of Kei-Kecil or in Ambon while awaiting government action to guarantee their safety upon their repatriation to their homes in Kasui. At the time of writing I have no certain knowledge that all have managed to return to their homes without meeting opposition from their former Muslim friends who forcibly 'converted' them to Islam. Some 80 former Catholics who were 'converted' by force on Kasui have 'chosen' to remain Muslims, seemingly out of intimidation. Their land and spice crops are in Muslim villages.

Forced Islamisation is not confined to the use of physical violence, or to the Moluccas.<sup>3</sup> Christians living in Muslim countries often are denied promotion unless they become Muslims. In West Java, in the Kuningan district, Christians' wells have reportedly been poisoned, their flocks have been killed, and access to their fields has been denied by Muslims in order to intimidate them into converting. In south Kalimantan, in Banjarmasin city, Shari'a law has been proclaimed, and all who do not fast during Ramadan - including Christians - have been arrested and jailed if found eating in a public place. In Tangerang city, west of Jakarta, there is a curfew for all women. If caught travelling alone after dark unveiled even non-Muslim

## Dialogue as part of Jihad

The US State Department believes that Washington can contain the Muslim Brotherhood and its ilk through dialogue and should avoid any further clash with them, because this "would only fan hatred and incite more attacks against US interests." The State Department has asked the US Embassy in Cairo to reach out to the Muslim Brotherhood's leaders as a preliminary step for an organized dialogue.

At the same time, the new Brotherhood leader Muhammad Mahdi Othman 'Akef said in 2004 to Arab media that America is 'Satan' and "will soon collapse." "I have complete faith that Islam will invade Europe and America, because Islam has logic and a mission." Western authorities are thus trying to "reach out" to an organization that wants to conquer and subdue them.

Besides, exactly what does "dialogue" mean, anyway? Poul E. Andersen, former dean of the church of Odense, Denmark, warns against false hopes of dialogue with Muslims. During a debate at the University of Aarhus, Ahmad Akkari, one of the Muslim participants, stated: "Islam has waged war where this was necessary and dialogue where this was possible. A dialogue can thus only be viewed as part of a missionary objective."

When Mr. Andersen raised the issue of dialogue with the Muslim World League in Denmark, the answer was: "To a Muslim, it is artificial to discuss Islam. In fact, you view any discussion as an expression of Western thinking." Andersen's conclusion was that for Islamists, any debate about religious issues is impossible as a matter of principle. If Muslims engage in a dialogue or debate on religious subjects, this is for one purpose only: To create more room for Islam.

- The Fjordman Report,  
Friday, September 08, 2006

women may be arrested and charged with being prostitutes. In Makassar city in south Sulawesi Muslim students randomly check ID cards and if the bearers are found to be non-Muslim, they may be taken aside and beaten. The non-Muslims of Sindh and Boluchistan in Pakistan, and the Sufi Muslims, have endured forced Islamisation, and denial of their indigenous culture and Sufi traditions since the Pakistani State came into being fifty-five years ago.<sup>4</sup>

As well as in Indonesia and Pakistan, forced Islamisation in a variety of subtle and less subtle forms is the bane of non-Muslims - and even some Muslims regarded as less observant - in a number of Muslim countries, including

Iraq,<sup>5</sup> Kashmir,<sup>6</sup> Malaysia,<sup>7</sup> Cameroon,<sup>8</sup> and the Sudan.

Alarming reports were received of cases in southern Sudan where those who refused to convert and to send their children to a *khalwa*<sup>9</sup> were killed. During his recent mission, the Special Rapporteur received testimonies, including an eyewitness account, of the summary execution of 12 civilians, men, women and children, at Lobonok on 3 May 1995, at noon. At the end of April 1995, following fighting which reportedly had lasted almost three months, government troops entered Lobonok. The local population was forced to convert to Islam. Children were dressed in white jellaba and given Arabic names. Although some adults did convert to receive food, the group mentioned above was executed because it refused to convert and to send its children to the *khalwa*. According to an eyewitness, Victoria Yakisuk (aged 55), Salivar Yugu (aged 45) and Redendo Wani (aged 40) were killed after trying to run away into the bush; and Loku Mario (aged 35), Gumat Mario (aged 18), Yugu Mario (aged 10), Pitia Mario (aged 7), Redendo Tombe (aged 15), Renado Keny (aged 26), Kaku Tombe (aged 55), Kaku Lege (aged 12) and a middle-aged woman whose name the witness could not give, were lined up and shot dead. Kaku Lege was reportedly raped before being killed. The eyewitness claimed that the killings were carried out by a group of 12 soldiers in uniform.<sup>10</sup>

The silence of official Islamic leaders and spokesmen in Indonesia and Australia at the inhuman treatment of the Christians - old and young, men, women, even pregnant women, and children, - in the Moluccas forcibly 'converted' to Islam, and circumcised with old Gillette blades and at the hands of so-called 'female priests',<sup>11</sup> is revealing.

It throws doubt on claims that Islam



is a tolerant and peaceful religion, and that Muslims understand the much quoted verse 256 of Sura 2 - 'there is no coercion<sup>12</sup> in the religion' - to forbid the use of physical force to impose Islam on non-Muslims who fall into their power.

It may be helpful to comment on briefly on this much-quoted Sura.

Popularly it is translated 'There is no compulsion in *Islam*'. But the verse reads *din* 'religion,' not *Islam*. Also it should be noted [though this is never usually stated when the verse is used as a proof of the peacefulness of Islam] that Sura 2,256 is addressed to Muslims, not non-Muslims. It warns Muslims not to dally with 'unbelief,' and implies that belief is *easy* which is what the reference to 'no force' seems to suggest.

The following verse - usually never quoted - is the one that deserves attention. It applies to non-Muslims whom it warns in unambiguous language of the dire consequences of not embracing Islam: '[you] are the inmates of hell, and shall dwell there'. There is intimidation and coercion in *this* verse [Sura 2, 257] and perceptive Muslims would realise that if you can threaten unbelievers with hell fire if they don't become Muslims, then a *fortiori* you can use physical force to make them embrace Islam.

There is an even more cogent argument against the 'tolerance,' and lack of coercion allegedly preached by Sura 2.256: the behaviour of Muhammad.

"Then the Apostle [Muhammad] sent Khalid bin al-Walid ... to the tribe of Beni Haritha bin Ka'b in Najran and ordered him to wait three days before attacking them, after inviting them to embrace Islam.. If they agreed then he was to accept their submission from them; and if they refused he was to fight them. So Khalid set out and came to them and sent out riders in all directions inviting the people to Islam saying "If you accept Islam you will save your life." They embraced Islam because of the threat. .... When they came to the Apostle [Muhammad] and he saw them he asked "Who are these people who look like people from India?" and they

replied, "These people are the Beni al-Haritha bin Ka'b. ... The Apostle [Muhammad] said to them: "Had Khalid not written to me that you had accepted Islam and not resisted, I would have tossed your heads beneath your feet".<sup>13</sup>

Despite denial by modern-day Islamic spokesmen, according to Ibn Hisham his biographer, Muhammad not only approved, but *commanded* the use of force in religion. And Islamic Law, especially the Qur'an, *explicitly approves* the use of such force.

Some Muslim scholars may grudgingly admit this privately when pushed, but publicly attest the opposite, claiming against all evidence to the contrary that the Qur'an opposes the use of force in spreading Islam.

Sura 2,256 is a trap for unwary non-Muslims. It cannot be taken at face value. The final blow to its credibility comes from the fact that *whatever* it may originally have meant, informed Muslims consider it to have been abrogated.<sup>14</sup> The abrogating verse is

## Fantacists and Fanatics

In Egypt [in 2004] year one of the most popular songs says that the U.S. was behind September 11. The following are excerpts from a review in the January 15-22, 2004 Cairo Times of beloved Egyptian singer Sha ban Abd Al-Rahim's new album, which included the song. "[Popular] singer Sha ban Abd Al-Rahim is making headlines again with his announcement that he has put the final touches on his latest album Mahibish Al Karasi (I Don't Like the Chairs) — possibly referring to political positions as opposed to furniture. The new album includes a new ditty about the U.S., Israel, and the road map. 'Kharittat Al Tariq' (Road Map) is the name of the song which gives voice to widespread views in the Egyptian street regarding the September 11th events and the U.S.-Iraq standoff... Abd Al-Rahim ... boldly sing[s] that the U.S.A. is the perpetrator of the September 11th attacks. 'Hey people it was only a tower and I swear by God that they are the ones who pulled it down.' Abd Al-Rahim further sings that they purposely did it to make people think that Arabs and Muslims are terrorists and were behind that disaster. Now the U.S. can do what it pleases to the Arab world since everyone thinks they are to blame."

— Middle East Media Research Institute [MEMRI], Special despatch No. 647

Sura 9:73 : 'O Prophet, struggle with the unbelievers and hypocrites, and be thou harsh with them.'

When confronted with the indisputable fact of the abrogation Islamic apologists then try another spin by claiming that the abrogation only applies to pagans, not to Christians and Jews.

The history of Islam, and the recent actions of Muslims in Kasui and elsewhere in Indonesia and throughout the Islamic world, however, leave all thinking non-Muslims in no doubt that the abrogation of Sura 2, 256 and the continuing validity of Sura 2, 257 empower fanatics who don't hesitate to use force to make non-Muslims embrace Islam.

Attempts to prove the opposite amount to falsifying the meaning of the Qur'an, and denying the example of the life and commands of Muhammad.



1. The New Martyrdom: A Special Report. *From the Caribbean to Oceania, Anti-Christian persecution heats up.* See ZENIT.org (13.01.2001) /HRWF International Secretariat (16.01.2001)
2. *Christina's Story*, Lindsay Murdoch, SMH January 21, 2001.
3. Hizb ut Tahrir stresses that they are "non violent" while advocating the forced Islamisation of the Western World. It was reported that several of the 9/11 hijackers were connected to the group in Germany. HT was banned due to its virulent anti semitic rhetoric. See *Soldiers of Allah* in California: Islamist 'rap' is all the "intellectual rage." *Muslims: Islam Monitor.org* August 1, 2004
4. *Singis Popular*, Forum Ref: SBF/14/08/C2, 14th August 02. *Publisher: Madrasa Reform A Mirage* Adnkronos International August 16, 2006.
5. *Cartoon: A depiction of Iraq's tragedy*, June 6, 2006.
6. *Acid test in the face of acid attacks*, Sandhya Jain. *The Pioneer*, Augus: 13, 2001.
7. *Temple Demolitions Spell Creeping Islamisation*. Baradan Kuppussamy, Inter Press News Service. August 16, 2006.
8. North Province. See any Encyclopedia entry: e.g. Islam is the dominant religion in the north due to the cultural and political domination of the Fulbe. Those ethnic groups which resisted the Fulbe conquests and forced Islamisation are collectively referred to as Kirdi ("pagans"), though they are not culturally homogenous. Kirdi groups include the Chamba and Fali. In addition, many inhabitants of the province profess Christianity, as well, particularly Catholicism.
9. A small Islamic rural school that stresses memorization of the Qur'an and provides some instruction in the reading and writing of Arabic.
10. United Nations, Human Rights Commission, CN.4/1996/62, 20 February 1996.
11. *Christina's Story*, Lindsay Murdoch, SMH January 21, 2001.
12. 'The Arabic word Ikrah means 'coercion,' 'use of force' or 'constraint'.
13. Ibn Hisham, *Biography of Muhammad*, [Arabic version, Dar Ehia alTourath al-Arabi, Rue Dakkache Beirut Lebanon] Part 4, pages 249-250. Trans. Paul Stenhouse. Also, see 'The Wolf Pack. What it means to live by Muhammad's words and deeds,' by Bruce Thornton, *Private Papers: A review of Robert Spencer's The Truth about Muhammad.* (Regnery Publishing, 2006).
14. See e.g. al-Nahas, *An-Nasikh wal-Mansukh*, p. 80. See also Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi, *An-Nasikh wal-Mansukh*, Beirut, 1986, p. 42. Quoted: 'Tolerance in Islam' by M. Rafiq ul-Haqq and P. Newton. <http://debate.domini.org/newton/tolerance.html>.





HE well-meaning often say that if only Christians were more Christian then the world would take notice and listen. The implication is that if the Church were more Christ-like the World would like and respect us a great deal more. The problem with this is that Christ was, well, Christ-like and the World did everything it could not to listen to

him, going so far as to kill him. I suppose it's true that the World did take notice, although I'm not too sure that's quite what the well-meaning have in mind.

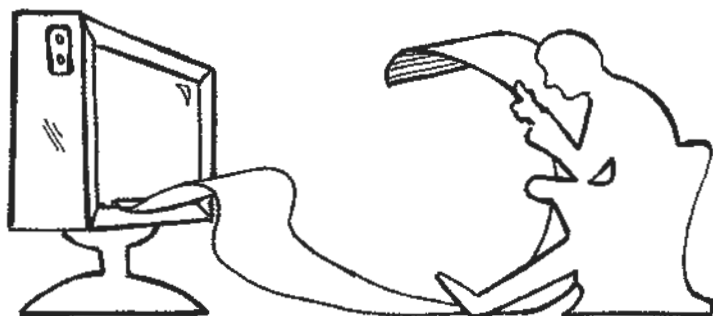
So what is it that they do mean? First, I think they mean something commendable, something like our current Pontiff, Benedict, meant when he spoke of clearing the 'filth out of the Church'. Which is to say those who abuse their offices for sex, money or power. Well and fine, but they then go on to confuse this with the rather vague idea of 'being nice', something which involves being concerned with social justice and not being morally censorious. This, we're assured, will make the World like us. But there's something seriously askew with this logic. Indeed, one might argue the very reverse; the nicer you become the more the World will hate you.

It's a hatred that exhibits itself in raising the bar higher and higher until you crack. 'Why don't you march for the refugees?' will soon become 'Why don't you eat only free-range eggs?' Then, 'How can you smoke when big business makes money out of it?' Having done these things, establishing your niceness, then it'll be, 'How can you own a house when people have kidney stones?'

In short the World is not interested in you being saintly, it's only interested in you being a hypocrite, for then it can dismiss anything you or the Church say. If you'll excuse the phrase, abusive priests were a godsend to the World. Like the man in the parable it could sit back, relax, and rest content with its barns full of pious self-regard having conveniently dismissed all the Church as a bunch of sex-offending hypocrites.

And this brings us to the real issue, pious self-regard.

It wasn't those whose sins were evident to themselves that killed Jesus; not the thieves, murderers, scam artists, prostitutes, or pick-pockets. Not them, they had no pretense to piety, there was



## BE NICE!

By ROBERT TILLEY

nothing there to defend. It was those whose status and livelihood relied on their claim to piety who set out to murder.

Today, however, the positions are reversed; everyone thinks they're pretty good and it's only the clergy, of any denomination, who seem to have an ounce of humility. Every criminal and sex-worker justifies themselves, every indulgent well-off party animal thinks they're spiritual, and we all know the comfy

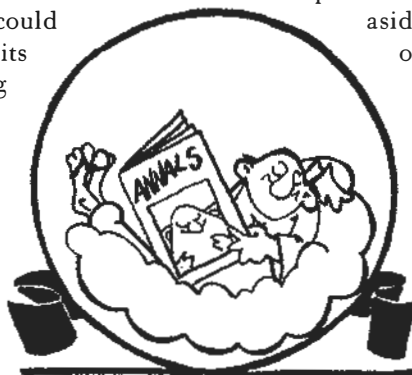
rich lefties who broadcast their pristine consciences for all to hear. But it's the same with the common aspirational folk; greed, materialism and piety sell well when skilfully blended. Mammon and God are a heady combination, throw in sex, status, the feel of being spiritual and no drug can match it. It's a party out there and everyone's trying to feel good. Earnest, well-meaning niceness just doesn't cut it I'm afraid.

Of course, no one calls it being pious, rather 'self-esteem' and 'spirituality' are the spin, but twirl it whichever way it always comes round to comfort and big money. As long as the comparison is with a sexually depraved priest then the party-goers are happy. But by being rigorous and sincere, exercising self-deprecating Christian charity, you've sent the police around to turn the music down. In plain words, the comparison no longer works to their advantage. Their self-image is threatened; the party loses its vibe.

It's a terrible thing to come between a vanity and a mirror, and today everyone wants to preen and pride themselves on their warm-hearted nature. So it is that they will raise the bar. They don't want you to jump it they want you to fail, and when you try all the harder the more angry they become.

First, the rules become more extreme and little faults dwelt upon. Then it gets serious. Then the subtle provocations begin, the barbed comments, sneering asides, jokey put-downs, slander and then outright aggression. Then the nice Christian learns what it is to be despised. Then he finds out that he is playing Ned Flanders to the World's Homer Simpson.

The nice and well-meaning Christians among us deserve our praise and our support, but one thing they lack. They should take to heart what Jesus said to His disciples; 'Be ye wise as serpents but harmless as doves'. In other words, be nice, not naive.

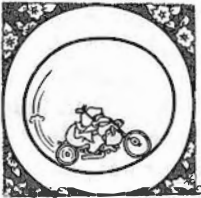




*100 Years of MSC Presence in the Northern Territory*

## FRANCIS-XAVIER GSELL, MSC

Martin Wilson MSC



On 15 August this year, 2006, Darwin diocese celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of the arrival of the first Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus [MSC] in the person of Fr Francis Xavier Gsell. On the feast of the Assumption 1906 he stepped off the boat onto Darwin wharf as the Administrator Apostolic of the diocese of Victoria Palmerston – nowadays, since 1938, known as Darwin.

In the succeeding years he was joined by other MSC priests and brothers who founded churches and missions in various parts of the Territory. Meanwhile, he established himself on Bathurst Island in 1911, and built up the mission on Nguui. He was helped in the early days by Fr Bill Henschke, MSC.

Progress in a missionary sense was very slow, because Fr Gsell wanted to understand as much as he could of the local Tiwi culture before he introduced any of the changes that he thought Christianity might demand.

His hand was forced by the bravery and desperation of a small Tiwi girl named Martina. According to Tiwi custom, she had been promised to an old man as his wife (or rather, as another one of his wives) before she was born—her mother had been appointed as the old man's potential mother-in-law. With other young Tiwi girls, all as yet unbaptised, she was living at the convent in a pretty carefree existence when one day the old man came in from the bush and claimed her. She didn't want to join the old man's harem and ran to Fr Gsell for protection.

Fr Gsell was in a quandary. He felt very sorry for the girl. At the same time he had to recognize that the old man was claiming what was his by right, and Fr Gsell tried to respect the tribal law. He spent a troubled night praying and searching for a solution. He hit upon

the plan of trying to buy the rights to the girl from the old man. In those days Tiwi men were in the habit of selling their women for a few nights to visiting buffalo hunters or pearl fishermen, but to sell them off in perpetuity was a novel idea. The array of goods Fr Gsell offered as bride-price was too attractive to be

refused. The deal went through and Fr Gsell acquired his first Tiwi wife. Later on she found a young baptized Tiwi man whom she chose to marry, with whom she had five children. Fr Gsell continued to buy Tiwi wives for himself until on being ordained bishop in 1938 he became known as the "Bishop with

### 170 Years of Catholicism in the Northern Territory

ONE HUNDRED YEARS ago this year, Father Francis Xavier Gsell arrived in Darwin. His arrival followed two earlier missionary efforts to establish the Catholic Church in the Northern Territory, where a diocese, named 'Victoria', had been established as early as the 1840s. The first missionary in the Northern Territory was Don Angelo Confalonieri, who went to the settlement of Victoria at Port Essington in 1846, and died there two years later. The second missionary effort was made by the Jesuits, who came to Darwin in 1882, and worked in Darwin, at Rapid Creek, and at the Daly River, before finally withdrawing in 1902. Then in 1904 the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were given responsibility for the Church in the Northern Territory by Pope Pius X, and Father Francis Xavier Gsell was appointed as Apostolic Administrator, arriving in 1906. In due course he would become the first bishop of the re-named Diocese of Darwin.

Recalling his arrival and beginnings in the Northern Territory, Bishop Gsell wrote:

On the day of the Feast of the Assumption, 15th August, 1906, I landed at Port Darwin. There were three Catholics to greet me on the wharf ... My parish church was a tiny chapel dedicated to our Lady Star of the Sea which could hold forty people. My parishioners led me to a comfortable little bungalow, built by the Jesuits; and this was to be my home for five years.

... To begin with, my headquarters at Darwin had to be organized, with due arrangements made for the saying of Mass and necessary attention to the sacraments, teaching, inculcating a knowledge of the Catechism, and house-to-house visiting. As a shepherd I saw I must begin by trying to count my flock ...

And thus I wandered about this vast land, always seeking my sheep, sheep whom I might not gather into a compact fold but who could be taught to see they were still under the care of a shepherd.



150 wives". He tells us in his book about his missionary life that he explained the whole procedure to the Pope and gained papal approval for this novel missionary method.

There was a series of celebrations in Darwin from Wednesday 9 August until the following Tuesday 15th. On Wednesday 9th an exhibition of historical memorabilia was opened in one of the internal balconies of the NT Parliament house under the care of Fr Pat Sharpe MSC.

In the late afternoon of Friday 11 August the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Clare Martin, hosted a reception for official guests to the Gsell Centenary and others at Parliament House. The principal guests of honour at the celebrations included the Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Ambrose de Paoli, the Superior General of the MSC society, Very Rev. Mark McDonald MSC, Fr Raymond Dossmann MSC representing the French province and companion to a special invitee, the Archbishop of Strasbourg, Most Rev. Joseph Doré. Fr Paul Cashen MSC represented the archbishop of Adelaide. Various MSC personalities were present, including the Provincial Superior, Fr Tim Brennan, MSC and Peter Hearn MSC the deputy provincial, both of whom had been stationed in the Territory.

The theme of historical continuity was marked by two factors that combined nicely into one event. The Archbishop of Strasbourg had been invited to the celebration to acknowledge the fact that the founder of the diocese, F X Gsell, had come originally from a small village in the archdiocese of Strasbourg, in Alsace Lorraine, called Sainte Marie-aux-Mines.

At a special open-air Mass celebrated on Bathurst Island on Saturday 12th of August, the main celebrant, Archbishop Doré, in the name and presence of Dawn Cardona, principal of Nungalinga College, presented the degree of diploma in theology to two graduates from the College, one of whom was actually a grandson of Martina and the other his wife. Dawn herself was the granddaughter of the buffalo hunter, Joe Cooper, who from his camp at Paru on Melville Island had directed Fr Gsell's attention to Nguiu as a good place for his proposed mission back in 1911.

On Sunday a special Mass was



Bishop Francis-Xavier Gsell, MSC.

celebrated at 11 am in Darwin Cathedral. Its purpose was to honour the MSC missionaries, alive and dead, who had ministered in the Northern Territory since 1911.

A simple remembrance ceremony was held before Mass on the lawns between the cathedral and the Bishop's House in front of several Tiwi pukamani poles. Led by the provincial superior, Fr Tim Brennan, Frs Peter Hearn and

Peter Robinson and Sister Helen Little, Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart [FDNSC] read lists of all the MSCs to be remembered. Immediately afterwards we proceeded to Mass in the cathedral. The Papal Nuncio was the main celebrant; all the bishops and priests present concelebrated and the homily was delivered by the Superior General of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Fr Mark McDonald. The Daughters of our Lady of the Sacred Heart plan to celebrate their own centenary in 2008.

On Sunday evening to conclude this MSC remembrance part of the celebration a special dinner was provided at the MSC central house in Nightcliff.

At 3 pm the following day Fr Martin Wilson MSC delivered the occasional address at Nungalinga College. Its theme was 'Missiological Reflections – an overview of the missionary efforts of Bishop Gsell and his companions and successors from the point of view of social anthropology and missiology. Four speakers presented prepared responses of varying lengths: Dawn Cardona (principal of Nungalinga), Lorraine Erlandson (staff member), Fr Pat Mullins SJ and Fr Peter Hearn MSC.

The climax of the celebrations was an evening Mass in St Mary's Cathedral on Tuesday, the feast of the Assumption, the actual centennial day.



Tiwi women and men during entrance procession of the Mass on Bathurst Island celebrating the arrival and work of Bishop Francis Xavier Gsell MSC.



*Italian response to the aftermath of Regensburg*

## RESOLUTION OF THE ITALIAN SENATE ON POPE BENEDICT AND ISLAM

*This is the full text of the Italian Senate Resolution of Oct. 12 concerning Pope Benedict XVI's Sept. 12 comments on Islam, which passed 208-8, with the support of all the major parties of both the center-left government and the center-right opposition. According to Vatican sources, it is the first time that the Italian legislature, in a near-unanimous act, has given its support to a public declaration of a pope.*

### **GIVEN THAT:**

On Sept. 12, at the University of Regensburg, Pope Benedict XVI delivered an academic lecture dedicated to the theme of the relationship between reason and faith, in the course of which the Pope cited a passage from a dialogue between the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Paleologus and a learned Persian on the relationship between Christianity and Islam;

Defamatory intentions toward Islam were attributed to the Pope based on an absolutely inappropriate political reading of the lecture, while a complete reading of the text demonstrates in unequivocal fashion the sincere desire of Benedict XVI for dialogue between cultures and religions;

Repeated efforts at meeting with representatives of the Islamic religion undertaken by Benedict XVI in the days after the Regensburg lecture cannot but confirm the will of the Pope to promote inter-religious dialogue;

### **ALSO CONSIDERING THAT:**

The Italian Parliament is committed to making every effort so that its own acts will be explicitly oriented towards maximum respect for all faiths and all opinions, and in contrast to every form of violence:

Towards the end of discouraging the prospect of a clash between cultures, or between cultural and religious identities, which is a possible and dramatic outcome of the spiritual and cultural crises of our time, the Italian Parliament is committed as a priority to combating every form of intolerance and fanaticism;

### **THE GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKES:**

To express to Pope Benedict XVI the full solidarity of Italy following the unjust attacks and unacceptable threats that were directed at his person and against the institutions of the Catholic Church, and following the violence directed at individual faithful and at communities;

To continue in a policy of prevention and caution, undertaken with efficiency by the forces of the Italian police, in order to safeguard the security of the person of the Pope and the places of cult on national territory, as well as to guarantee the safety of citizens; To make itself a promoter, in the context of the European Union as well as the international organizations in which Italy participates, of initiatives designed to reaffirm the principles of religious liberty and respect of civil rights, to favor dialogue among peoples and inter-religious dialogue, which constitute an integral part of the common traditions of Europe;

To work among European states, and within the EU, to strengthen the front of solidarity against the exhortations to violence of the exponents of radical Islam which are also expressed against other religious confessions as well as against the baseless diffidence manifested by certain governments;

To give continuity to Italian foreign policy and to reinforce it, with particular reference to cooperation and economic relations, to affirmation of the right to religious freedom and to freedom of speech, against every form of persecution, and in a context of reciprocity. Religious freedom is understood to mean the freedom to practice one's own faith, to change it, or not to have one.



*Unintelligible Writing about*

INTELLIGENT DESIGN

By BRIAN POLLARD



ROBYN WILLIAMS is well known to many Australians as the chief science reporter for the ABC since 1972. Because his reputation is high in much of the science community and he is widely respected by many, his book comes both as a surprise and a major disappointment. Far from being cohesive and compelling, as one would expect from him, the level of his argumentation on important issues would do no credit to a high school student, his flippancy becomes merely an easy way of avoiding difficult issues and he has clearly not informed himself on some of the areas he has chosen to discuss. His method is quite at odds with his stated view that ID needs to be taken seriously as a possibly malign presence in our times.

Since the earliest days of science, rational inferences have been made, from observing the orderliness of the cosmos in action, to some sort of intelligent designer or first mover. Until recently, such inferences were generally thought to stand on their own merits. But new scientific discoveries in the areas of molecular and cellular science, called intelligent design or ID, have provided evidence to suggest that current theories fail to account for some of the features in the universe. In other people, they have engendered a novel counter-intuitive refusal to recognise that this design is related to intelligence.

The current theory of evolution was developed from the work of Charles Darwin, though not entirely in his original form. While he is rightly credited with the discovery of the ability of species to adapt to changes in the environment, he remained unable to reach any conclusion about the origin of life. As to complex life forms, he said 'If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not

possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down'. It was some of his adherents, notably Michael Dawkins and Stephen Jay Gould, who further proposed and popularised what is now called natural selection. Dawkins suggested that nature could 'tame chance' through the progression of a sufficiently large series of finely graduated intermediaries. Eventually, he claimed that 'we shall be able to derive anything from anything else'.

The focus of the argument for ID is what is called irreducible complexity. This describes a system where its individual parts alone would have no function and which can work only when they are all present, in the right order. It has not yet been explained by any scientist how such a system could have developed step by step by chance, as it can't be shown how chance could have 'known' of the end towards which it was developing, a point that may have been many thousands of years away. A simple example is the mouse trap and a complex one is the system of sight, extending from the eye to that part of the cerebral cortex in the back of the head where the visual image is formed in a way that remains totally mysterious.

Williams is a proud atheist and a proud scientific supporter of modified Darwinism. As to the former, he says 'Atheists like me don't think about God at all' but he fulfils Dawkin's opinion that Darwin 'made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist'. Williams has chosen to include a chapter in this book, titled Williams versus God. In it, he ignores the main world religions, for reasons not given, and relies on interviews with certain people, including an investigation into ESP, a clairvoyant and Australian Skeptics, from whom he says he has gained his spiritual insights. As a result, his treatment of this subject reveals his utter lack of preparation to discuss this topic. He would have been wise to omit it, rather than reveal such superficiality.

His gospel is Dawkins' book *The Blind Watchmaker*, of which he says on page 14 'It's all there, carefully argued and with every creationist chestnut demolished with evidence stacked to the sky'. But he gives the game away as he proceeds. Re the beginning of life, on page 35 he writes that science can tell us how this *may have* happened. Simon Morris *proposes* that a force intrinsic to our universe makes it *almost inevitable* that intelligence will develop. Paul Davies *suggests* that life *may have* developed from the quantum realm. Then *perhaps* quantum life began..., and 'life *likely* existed on Mars, which *may have* seeded life here, as Hoyle *suggested*'. Francis Crick is sure that consciousness 'arose in gradual stages, *evolved* through the animal kingdom, *much as a dim light becomes bright*. It's all so easy – just say it and it's done. When William Dembski finds intelligence in the DNA messages in cells, H Allen Orr responds that some proteins *may have* acquired different functions and these *may have been* preceded by another role. And so on.

His chapter on the human body, where many examples of irreducible

**When is a Duel not a duel?**

IN 1806, Messrs. Jeffrey and Moore, met at Chalk-Farm. The duel was prevented by the interference of the Magistracy; and, on examination, the balls of the pistols, like the courage of the combatants, were found to have evaporated. This incident gave occasion to much waggery in the Daily Prints.

- Note to a poem in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* – a *Satire*, by Lord Byron.



complexity are to be found, provides the perfect opportunity to offer his or any scientist's explanation as to how they might have arisen without a designer. Not a word. Instead, he resorts to student humour about bad backs and smelly armpits and the like to show that a putative God must have had 'a deadline rush job at the end of the Six Days'.

Williams reserves his most strident scorn for the human brain. Where others see this organ as the most complex piece of design in the known universe, he sees it as 'more a creation of a devil than of a God'. In a book conceived to address design in nature, he never even mentions the brain's design but damns its existence in its present form, incredibly, because too many people have used it to justify their evil deeds. Based on this utterly irrelevant observation, he declares that ID is like a computer program with a built-in virus, that ID is a baby born with syphilis, that ID is an insult to the intelligence and that ID is an insult to God. However that may be, his ranting is certainly an insult to an intelligent reader who can only conclude that Williams has nothing to say of any value about the undoubted complexity of the brain.

But surely the overwhelming evidence of design in DNA must bring some acknowledgement of the need for a designer? Not a bit of it. The author says he was present when Francis Collins and Craig Venter announced in 2001 the mapping of the human genome. In 2006, Collins (who admitted that at the age of 27 he was 'a pretty obnoxious atheist') wrote 'When you have for the first time in front of you this 3.1 billion-letter instruction book that conveys all kinds of information and all kinds of mystery about humankind, you can't survey that, going through page after page, without a sense of awe. I can't help but look at those pages and have a vague sense that this is giving me a glimpse of God's mind'. When Williams looks at the same book, he thinks it is as 'scientific as the tooth fairy or Santa Claus'.

In *The Dreams of Reason*, a book about scientific reasoning, published in 1988, Heinz Pagels, an atheist, wrote 'So powerful is the scientific method that virtually everything scientists know about the natural world comes from it. What they find is that the architecture

## No Genetic Legacy for the Feminists?

Declining birth rates also change national temperament. In the United States, for example, the percentage of women born in the late 1930s who remained childless was near 10 percent. By comparison, nearly 20 percent of women born in the late 1950s are reaching the end of their reproductive lives without having had children. The greatly expanded childless segment of contemporary society, whose members are drawn disproportionately from the feminist and countercultural movements of the 1960s and 70s, will leave no genetic legacy. Nor will their emotional or psychological influence on the next generation compare with that of their parents.

- 'The return to Patriarchy,' by Phillip Longman, in *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2006

of the universe is indeed built according to invisible rules, what I call the cosmic code. (He then gives examples of various physical, chemical and mathematical laws). Scientists in discovering this code are deciphering a hidden message. No human mind could have arranged for any message so flawlessly coherent, so strangely imaginative, and sometimes so downright bizarre.

Despite that, a few paragraphs later he writes 'There is no scientific evidence for a Creator of the natural world, no evidence for a will or a purpose that goes beyond the known laws of nature'. Phillip Johnson, who discusses this in his book *Darwin on Trial*, reflects on the fact that though intelligent design was so blindingly obvious to this atheist, he still was unable to accept it because, for him, scientific evidence for something that went beyond the laws of nature would be a contradiction in terms. Johnson concluded that naturalistic philosophy could control minds so completely that they could stare at evidence for intelligent design, describe it as such, and yet not see it. Such a person is thus prepared to accept a message sent by no-one and to attribute to mindless matter what is admittedly far beyond even a human

mind. Another possible explanation is that such minds recognise intuitively also that their atheism is on the line. Once a designer is conceded, atheism may have to be renounced, a price too high.

That background may help to explain how it is that Robyn Williams, faced with the same pervasive evidence for design, insists that 'There is nothing in the cosmos to let us infer the hand of a Designer'.

If we move from the physical to the metaphysical, can we not find there even a trace of a power to account for morality? No, we can't. In the author's view, the source of our morals is what we decide for ourselves and we are offered this pearl of condescension 'Moral codes that are just, flexible and based on an understanding of human psychology tend to work best. It is interesting that the teachings of Jesus, minus the referrals upwards to Dad, reflect this rather well'. Presumably, the more flexible the better. And what's this about justice? Where did that idea come from?

The final nail in the coffin of ID is meant to be this. 'The suggestion that evolution is a random process is one of the monstrous distortions perpetrated by ID. Nothing of the kind. Mutation may be random but natural selection is *supremely focused*'. (My emphasis). As Peter Kreeft has pointed out, 'Such an explanation violates the principle of causality, which states that you can't get more in the effect than you had in the cause. A universe ruled by blind chance has no intelligence. Therefore there must be a cause for human intelligence that transcends the universe: a mind behind the physical universe. (Most great scientists have believed in such a mind, by the way, even those who did not accept any revealed religion)'. Chance is, by definition, blind.

It sometimes seems to me that most things worth saying have already been said - by Gilbert Keith Chesterton. 'When you don't believe in God, you don't believe in nothing. You believe in anything?'



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

*'The Vatican of Iraq' falls victim to ethnic cleansing*

## A CHRISTIAN HEART STOPS BEATING

by John Pontifex

**G**UN-TOTING Islamist militia have effectively wiped out the heart of Catholic Iraq with a form of ethnic cleansing that is the stuff of nightmares.

Up to a dozen centres of Catholic life and worship, including a seminary, a monastery, several religious houses and at least five churches have been closed in Baghdad's Al Dora district, known as 'The Vatican of Iraq'.

About two-thirds of the 900 Christian families living there have been forced to leave as a result of Sunni militants taking control of the district and carrying out ethnic cleansing along strict religious lines.

Among the centres to have closed in Al Dora is the Babel College, which is Iraq's only theological university, used both by priests and religious as well as lay people.

The escalation in violence and extremism across Iraq, which is pitting Shia and Sunni Muslim militants in a civil war, has led to increased concerns for the survival of the minority religious groups caught in the middle, especially the Christians.

In an interview with Aid to the Church in Need, the charity for persecuted Christians, Baghdad parish priest Father Bashar Warda put himself at risk by revealing the latest tragic developments, explaining that the faithful left in Al Dora now had to travel outside the district to receive the sacraments.

Fr Warda, a young Redemptorist priest said the breaking point for Christians in Al Dora came last August with the capture of two priests in the district. Chaldean priest Fr Saad Sirup Hanna, 34, from St Jacob's Church and Fr Basil Yaldo, the rector of St Peter's Seminary.

Although the priests were subsequently released, the stories of their torture struck fear into the local community.

"For many of our people," said Fr Warda, "these two events provided us with a sign that we had to leave that area altogether."

But worse was to come with the evacuation with some Christians granted permission to live in other parts of Baghdad and still more being left with no option but to flee the country.

As militia from competing Muslim groups stamp their authority on areas under their control, Fr Warda

too has had to heed the warning signs and has just stepped down as parish priest of St Elya's Church, in eastern Baghdad and hopes to take up a new role in the city's Sacred Heart Church.

Fr Warda went on to describe the wanton cruelty now gripping the city, describing scenes in a hospital local to his parish where the distinguishing marks of thousands of young men killed in the conflict were being surgically disfigured to prevent identification by their mothers.

He said: "You see mothers outside the hospitals shouting and crying in despair. Some people doubt the existence of the devil but when you go into a hospital like that you realize that the devil is alive and well."

But offering a glimmer of hope Fr Warda told how in his parish in eastern Baghdad, he had opened a primary school which was bringing together children of all faiths in harmony under one roof.

He insisted on the importance of the Church providing schools, medical care and other key welfare support, which he saw as being vital for the future of Christianity in Iraq.

Using a building part-funded by Aid to the Church in Need, Fr Warda explained that of the 380 children at The Tent of Mary School, 70 percent were Muslims.

He said that in the two years since the school was opened, it had proved so popular with parents that some had offered to pay up to three times the fees to ensure a place for their child.

The initiative is but one of a host of schemes masterminded by churches including medical centres, such as one at Fr Warda's neighbouring parish of St George, food aid and even electricity supply, powered by generators in church grounds.

Fr Warda said: "Because of the trust that the Muslims have in our educational medical institutions, we should definitely keep them going. It is the only hope we have that some day Iraq will rise again from this terrible situation."

Aid to the Church in Need undertakes thousands of projects every year including providing transport for clergy and lay Church workers, construction of church buildings, funding for priests and nuns and help to train seminarians. Since the initiative's launch in 1979, 43 million Aid to the Church in Need *Child's Bibles* have been distributed worldwide.

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For more information about Aid to the Church in Need, contact the Sydney office of ACN on (02) 9679-1929. e-mail: [info@aidtochurch.org](mailto:info@aidtochurch.org) or write to Aid to the Church in Need PO Box 6245 Blacktown DC NSW 2148. Web: [www.aidtochurch.org](http://www.aidtochurch.org)



*Religion and culture:*

# CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA

By GEORGE CARDINAL PELL



**C**ATHOLICS have always been the most significant and interesting minority in Australian history. Whether the long established Irish-Australians are more interesting than the Maronites or the recently arrived Vietnamese is a moot point as is the unanswerable question of whether race or religion is more powerful.

Catholic history in Australia extends for little more than 200 years and for at least one hundred years of that story Catholic schools did more to change Australian hearts and minds than even the extraordinary network of parishes. One challenge is to continue to believe in the capacity of our schools to change minds and hearts and so keep Catholics in Australia interesting – and for the right reasons.

Australian history would be very different without Caroline Chisholm and Mary MacKillop, without the network of Catholic dioceses and schools everywhere across the continent, without Cardinal Moran, Archbishop Mannix and Archbishop Duhig. Without Catholics the First World War referendums on conscription would have been carried. As it turned out Les Murray, our greatest contemporary poet, claims that Mannix then saved

“perhaps half  
the fit men of a generation  
from the shrapnelled sewer  
landscapes of Flanders”.

Most of us have heard the story of the ALP member in N.S.W. who genuflected in the aisle as he left his branch meeting. He had thought he was in Church as the same people were present. Without Catholics there would have been no split in the Labor Party in 1954 and Menzies’ time as Prime Minister would have been much shorter.

There was also in those days no ready substitute for the working class Catholic unionists, who removed the Communist leadership in key Australian unions. Without them the struggle would have been longer, harder and probably violent. Would the Mabo judgements of the High Court on aboriginal land rights have been different or delayed without Catholic lawyers and judges and their understanding of natural law?

Without Catholics there would not have been a successful ninety year campaign for “state aid” as it was called inappropriately i.e. for government funding for non-government schools which Prime Ministers Menzies and then Whitlam successfully introduced and expanded. We might have been like the U.S.A. where the separation of Church and State is still interpreted

to preclude such funding of Church schools. Without government money many Catholic schools would have been forced to close. My first cousin, a Josephite nun, like many others once had to teach a primary class of over ninety children, some of them with English only as an imperfect second language. This was unsustainable.

Originally the Catholics were poor, undereducated and Irish. Especially in the first half of the nineteenth century they were often wild, victims of centuries of systematic oppression in the “old country” and the terrible transportation system.

William Ullathorne, an English Benedictine was the first Vicar General in Australia. He arrived in 1833. Then young, formidable and strait-laced, he wore no rose-tinted glasses as he surveyed the early Sydney community. “The eye of God looks down upon a people, such as, since the deluge has not been ... A community without the feelings of community, whose men are very wicked, whose women are very shameless and whose children are very irreverent”. He became a determined and effective opponent of transportation: “the removal of such a plague from the earth concerns the whole human race”, which ended in Eastern Australia in 1853 and 1867 in Western Australia.

The waves of immigrants and the wealth which followed the discovery of gold in 1851 broke these patterns of deprivation. But it was the arrival of hundreds of Irish teaching nuns and brothers after the removal of government funding for Church schools in the 1870s that accelerated the steady development and improvement of the Catholic community. This paralleled the improvements in Catholic life and practice in Ireland after Catholic Emancipation in 1829.

These achievements were

## Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Let us speak then as the Holy Spirit gives us utterance; let us ask him humbly and earnestly to bestow his grace on us, so that we may fulfil the day of Pentecost by the perfection of our five senses and our observance of the ten commandments. Let us ask for a keen sentiment of contrition, and for fiery tongues to profess the true faith so that inspired and enlightened in the splendours of the saints, we may be found worthy to behold the Blessed Trinity, the One God

-St Antony of Padua, born in Lisbon Portugal and died in 1231 AD. Sermons 1,226, quoted in The Roman Breviary June 13, the feast of Saint Antony. From the Second Reading of the Office of Matins.

immortalized in the folk poetry of John O'Brien, also known as Father Patrick Hartigan, for 27 years parish priest of Narrandera, whose collection of poems "Around the Boree Log" sold 100,000 copies. I have only rarely come across classes who were introduced to his poetry and that is a pity. The schools he described, including the religious schools I attended fifty years ago, were effective reinforcers, indeed transmitters of our tradition.

"Long the quest and ever  
 thieving pass  
 the pedlars o'er the hill  
 With the treasures in their  
 bundles, but to  
 leave us questing still.  
 Mystic fires horizons redden,  
 but each  
 crimson flash in turn  
 Only lights the empty places  
 in the bracken and the fern;  
 So in after years I've proved  
 it, spite of pedant,  
 crank and fool.  
 Very much the way I found  
 it in  
 the old bush school."

This is not only the language of faith, but of self-confidence; confidence in the Irish Australian identity and the personal and intellectual adequacy of Catholicism.

Everywhere in Australia the Catholics were (and are) a minority in

## Nibbling Stale Ideas

Something was making him nibble  
 at the edge of stale ideas  
 as if his sturdy physical egotism  
 no longer nourished his  
 peremptory heart.

- Nick Carraway, speaking of Daisy's  
 husband Tom Buchanan, in *The Great  
 Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

both town and city, not concentrating in urban centres like Boston and New York as they did in the U.S.A., but still visible through churches, schools, hospitals and public activity. This continues today. We take it for granted but a visiting priest from New Zealand, where Catholics only comprise 14% of the population, was surprised at the media coverage Catholic activity received here.

Peter Lalor, the Irish leader of the Eureka Stockade rebellion at Ballarat in 1854, was Catholic and indeed had his arm amputated in the Ballarat East presbytery after the fighting. More happily, Australian life largely avoided political violence after that brief episode and Catholics became increasingly visible in public life especially with the founding of the federal Labor Party in 1900. Australia had a Catholic Prime

Minister, James Scullin in 1929, more than thirty years before the U.S.A. had a Catholic president. The tertiary scholarships for ex-servicemen of World War II also provided opportunities previously unavailable to young Catholics.

The steady Catholic progress towards respectability had begun. Today in every parliament there are Catholics on both sides of the house and probably in every ministry. There were many Catholics in Moonee Ponds where Dame Edna Everidge was born. She, of course, was not herself a Catholic but Sir Les Patterson was! More seriously, the Australian Catholic schools promoted a social mobility among their students which was not bettered anywhere, even in the United States, and today we live with the consequences of this, which are overwhelmingly good, but not without a downside. Many Anglo-Celtic Catholics are no longer struggling to keep up with the Joneses, but through intermarriage and education are included among them.

One consequence of keeping up with the Joneses is that a quarter of young Australians are leaving their Christianity behind by the time they are 30. To what extent will Catholics follow this pattern? Another issue is whether those who remain, or, hopefully, return to the fold, will also be marked with the colours of the Australian majority religiously. That is, while fundamentally decent and Judaeo-Christian in most of their instincts, will they also be religiously indifferent and confused? As they and their children struggle with all the wonderful benefits of prosperity, e.g., education, health care, travel, material comforts and struggle too with the down sides of our allegedly post-modern society including the consequences of marriage breakdown, the comparatively new threat of drugs, the old challenge of alcohol, soft porn in magazines and T.V. and on the internet, will their underlying faith be a strong enough compass to guide their reactions? We live in interesting times, and as educators, the question of how strongly the faith underpins the lives of generation after generation of our young people rests in our hands also. Like previous generations of teachers we too have influence.

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## STATE AND CHURCH AFTER WORLD WAR II

During my life time there have been myriad alterations in Australian life, but two in particular are significant as contributing to important changes in the Catholic community: post-War immigration and the invention of the contraceptive pill.

Catholic life is stronger and more colourful because of the arrival successively of the Italians and Maltese, smaller numbers of the Dutch, Central Europeans such as the Poles and Lebanese Maronites, then the Vietnamese who are still producing many vocations to the priesthood and religious life and finally the Filipinos, South Americans and Pacific Islanders. As provincial school boys we worried that many Italians, especially the men, only went to Mass at Christmas and Easter (they proved to be trend setters for many of the Anglo-Celts, but today most of our ethnic communities have a Mass-going rate above the steadily declining national average, now 16%.

The invention of the contraceptive pill was the catalyst for a social revolution everywhere in the Western world. There were high hopes that the abortion rate would fall because of its development and that children would be better cared for. None of this has happened, although the birth rate has collapsed dramatically with no country in the Western world producing sufficient children to avoid population decline. Russia is now losing people at the rate of 700,000 a year through abortion, contraception and some emigration. The pill has liberated sexual activity from procreation, so that sexual activity has become a recreational right for adults, separated from marriage, family, children and often from love itself. The incidence of divorce increased exponentially. The Beatles and the Rolling Stones wrote the hymns of the sixties for this permissive revolution and not surprisingly, recreational sex, divorced from higher purposes, has provoked the rise of powerful homosexual lobbies. Against these trends the recent upturn in the birthrate in Australia is welcome as a sign of confidence in the future.

Different factors were at work in

## Our lady and the Flag of the EU

When we think of the European Union - its Constitution omits all mention of its Christian past or Christian heritage, and its members constantly fear that Catholic principles might be allowed to influence its decisions - think of the European flag. You will see it from time to time - 12 stars on a blue background - flying from buildings in Australia or even on some number plates of cars. It turned fifty on November 16 last. It is older than the European Union, being the flag of the old Council of Europe. The Council of Europe adopted it in 1955 and the EU officially took it over as its flag in 1986. The Council adopted the flag on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, December 8, 1955. The flag's designer, Arsene Heitz, revealed last year that he had designed the flag after reading about apparitions of the Virgin Mary. Blue is the colour of Mary, and the twelve stars are from the description of the Mother of Jesus in the Apocalypse of St John. Those who would deny the Catholic Church's pivotal role in European culture and history must be mortified by this revelation by the flag's designer.

- Editor, *Annals Australasia*

the Church. The most powerful agent of change in the Catholic Church was the Second Vatican Council held in Rome between 1962 and 1965, which broke the Tridentine mould of Catholic life and was followed by radical developments, only some of which were intended. Before proceeding to list some of these, it is useful to recall that most young Catholics have little or no idea what Catholic life was like before the Council. Vatican Two is for them as relevant as the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451).

Pope Benedict, like his predecessor Pope John Paul, is important as an accurate guide to the true meaning of Vatican II, which has to be seen in continuity with previous Church

history; certainly a development but not a radical break which invalidated the previous ninety or indeed four hundred years of Catholic history.

A number of Conciliar teachings impinged directly on Catholic schooling with the renewed emphasis on baptism, on the primordial role of the lay faithful being particularly appropriate for the changed makeup of Catholic teaching staffs.

This recognition of lay leadership and the doctrine of the collegiality of bishops led to the introduction of parish and school boards and eventually diocesan, state and national education commissions. It was my privilege to be a foundation member of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria in 1973.

In those days there were very few non-Catholics in any Catholic schools and official contacts between Catholics and Protestants were discouraged. Despite the fact that my father was Anglican, I had never been inside a non-Catholic church before the Council, as this was forbidden, even for the weddings and funerals of relatives.

The most profound changes

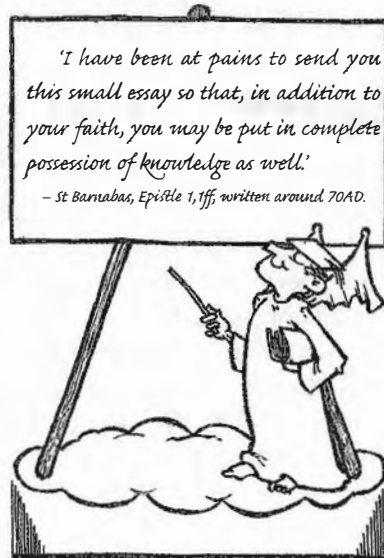
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- Editor, *Annals Australasia*.

emanated from the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, the most problematic of all the Council documents at least in its implementation. This constitution quite properly called for dialogue with the surrounding culture rather than condemnation and urged us to emphasise what was common rather than to begin immediately with our differences. This is fundamental to the way we now see ourselves as an integral part of Australian society, the main reason why the majority accepts us as such and why all educated Australians now automatically and rightly presume that they have every right to comment publicly on distinctively Catholic teachings on e.g. the impossibility of women's ordination, or contraception or the mandatory celibacy of priests. Most Australians are much slower to do this with e.g. the Orthodox or the Jews and Moslems.

The two principal motifs of the Council were "aggiornamento": bringing things up to date and "ressourcement", a return to the genuine sources i.e. New Testament and the Fathers. The tension between these two approaches still lies at the heart of the differences today between gospel Christians in every denomination (sometimes called conservative or traditional) on the one hand and the liberals or radicals on the other.

Many of my contemporaries in the seminary saw the Council documents as a starting point for further reforms. Most were not ordained and others left after ordination. Unfortunately very few



remain as priests now, an enormous loss to the Church.

Movements for reform are difficult to contain and direct, often developing into a revolutionary itch requiring more and more changes.

Many of my contemporaries were naïve and optimistic like myself, expecting a new Pentecost with all this sensible modernization. Many others, older and wiser, who should have known better also seriously overestimated our capacity to influence and change events as we scrambled to escape from our Catholic ghetto, real or imagined. We forgot that nearly everywhere in the West, and certainly in Australia, serious Christians of any sort are in a minority.

Very soon vocations to the religious life dried up, now vanished almost completely in many non-contemplative

orders, and many left religious life, often to return and offer excellent service as lay teachers.

The arrival of large amounts of recurrent finance into the Catholic schools after the Whitlam-sponsored Karmel Report (1973) enabled many religious who continued as religious to leave the schools for other apostolic activities. Governments regretted the extra money this required, but were powerless to prevent it.

We soon had a situation where religious teachers were in a minority in nearly every school; a development which was covered adequately in an educational sense but crucially weakened the religious witness in the schools.

This has developed further now as most schools have no religious at all on the teaching staff and often a significant percentage of non-Catholic (in fact 20% nationally) or non-practising Catholics as teachers. While many lay teachers are serious Catholics and an increasing number possess theological qualifications, the balance has changed. Obvious consequences flow from this.

The lay faithful have stepped forward to replace the religious. Lay principals and the executive staff are responsible for the religious leadership of their schools, including the Catholic life of the schools. Many lay leaders are now more explicit about this than some of the religious principals of ten or twenty years ago.

This transition, this turn of the wheel back to a situation where most teachers are lay, as they were generally



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in Catholic schools until the 1870s has often been noted. What has provoked less comment has been the rise of the complex organizations that now administer schools and school systems. Fifty years ago no diocesan or religious order education office would have employed more than ten people.

These Catholic education bureaucracies are a new phenomenon in the Catholic Church and it is essential that we also reflect on how they can best contribute to the evangelizing mission of the Church as well as in a more general educational sense.

There is no doubt that the schools and school systems are now administered more efficiently and governments have only a limited number of competent agencies to deal with on a host of matters, including the increasing requirements of financial accountability. Excellent work is done too on educational quality.

But the leadership role of diocesan bishops and religious order superiors in relation to their schools has been changed radically by the rise of these bureaucracies. Some bishops and religious superiors have just abdicated, opted out, perhaps after watching the B.B.C. series "Yes, Minister". There will be yet another stage in these developments as many religious orders increasingly hand over policy control of their school systems to totally lay boards. Such incorporations raise important canonical issues, because it is vital that neither properties nor institutions move outside official Church control (variously defined) to become independent secular institutions.

These new bureaucracies are indispensable leaders and allies of bishops and superiors in any concerted efforts to reform and improve standards, to change the curriculum or improve Religious education outcomes. Their vital role has often been under-remarked and underestimated and there is little likelihood that their influence will reduce in the future.

I would like to pay public tribute to the work of Brother Kelvin Canavan, the Sydney Archdiocese Director of Catholic Education, and his team. While he does not hesitate to tell me what he feels I need to hear, he has

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been conspicuously loyal to established policy directions, to working for better academic standards, improving outcomes in religious education, ensuring that most of our schools now have excellent facilities and he continues to work regularly and effectively for good schooling. He is also a good friend. In this case the new participative system is working

**Where are we now?**

In the 2001 census Catholics constituted 26.7% of the Australian population, a percentage which has not varied much for forty years. Catholics replaced Anglicans as the largest denomination in 1986 and our numbers increased by 202,000 between 1996 and 2001, reflecting the steady

increase in Australia's population.

However, this increase, a percentage decline in 2001 of just over one third of one percent for Catholics, masked a significant exodus, as Catholic migration should have pushed the percentage higher. Another significant change, also little noticed, was that the percentage of self-declared irreligious declined from 16.6% to 15.5% in 2001, the first such decline for 100 years. Most Australians are still Christian (68%) and there is no inevitable progression to majority secularism despite the political correctness and irreligion which dominate most of the media.

All of us are aware of the steady decline in regular worship among Catholics from an estimated high point of 50% in 1950, to the present rate of 16%. I had concluded from these different sets of figures until quite recently that few Catholics were opting out explicitly even when they did little that was Catholic to justify the title. As there had been a big opt-out between 1971 and 1976, this conclusion was wobbly and a recent survey has further dented my carefully circumscribed optimism.

A research project completed by Redemptorist Father Michael Mason and his co-workers, "The Spirit of Generation Y," surveys the beliefs and practices of Australians aged from 13 to 29 years. Not surprisingly there was a mixed bag of good, bad and indifferent news. Three quarters believe in God variously defined, but only about half identify with a religion, considerably below the national average.

An old Irish-Australian woman, when talking kindly about young people, told me once that what is in the cat comes out in the kitten. There is much truth in this. Parents remain the most powerful influence on their children, as this survey found little difference in belief and practice between continuing Gen Y Christians and their baby-boom Christian parents, but there are two particularly important developments.

About 30% of Gen Y are moving away from their Christian origins. Some have reduced their attendance at worship or stopped attending altogether. Others no longer identify with a religious denomination or no longer believe in God.

## The Myth of Over-population

With the number of human beings having increased more than six-fold in the past 200 years, the modern mind simply assumes that men and women, no matter how estranged, will always breed enough children to grow the population—at least until plague or starvation sets in. It is an assumption that not only conforms to our long experience of a world growing ever more crowded, but which also enjoys the endorsement of such influential thinkers as Thomas Malthus and his many modern acolytes.

Yet, for more than a generation now, well-fed, healthy, peaceful populations around the world have been producing too few children to avoid population decline. That is true even though dramatic improvements in infant and child mortality mean that far fewer children are needed today (only about 2.1 per woman in modern societies) to avoid population loss. Birth rates are falling far below replacement levels in one country after the next—from China, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea, to Canada, the Caribbean, all of Europe, Russia, and even parts of the Middle East.

Fearful of a future in which the elderly outnumber the young, many governments are doing whatever they can to encourage people to have children. .... As governments going as far back as imperial Rome have discovered, when cultural and economic conditions discourage parenthood, not even a dictator can force people to go forth and multiply.

- 'The return to Patriarchy,' by Phillip Longman, in *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2006

By the time Gen Y reach the age of 29, 25% of those who used to belong to a church are already ex-members. The number for Catholics is 29%, higher than any other denomination.

Another historically significant finding is that young women are no more religious than young men. This has enormous consequences for the future. Generations of children across most ethnic groups in Australia had the faith passed on to them and nurtured by the devotion of their mothers. It remains to be seen how many Gen Y women revert to this role once they have children of their own.

Three other findings surprised me. Only 10% of young Catholics believe "only one religion is true", against a national average of 11% and a rate of 34% for other Christians, excluding Anglicans. The question is capable of being understood in several ways, but the pressures on young Catholics beyond tolerance and ecumenism and towards muddle are evident here, channeled sometimes through the ill effects of courses in comparative religion.

Worse is to come. Seventy-five per

cent of young Catholics believe it is "OK to pick and choose beliefs" against a national average of 36%. While the national average is meaningless, because (for some strange reason) nine out of ten non-identifiers were not asked the question, this is still a particularly disturbing finding for

Catholic educators, indicating a malaise and confusion in the general approach to life rather than a few isolated points of heresy or unbelief.

This finding is paralleled by the fact that 56% of young Catholics believe "morals are relative", almost exactly mirroring the national average of 57% and being much higher than other Christians (40%) and even the Anglicans (39%).

Too many young Catholics have been led by the pressures of contemporary propaganda, whatever might be said about the inadequacies of family life and Catholic religious education, so that their religious confusion is worse than that of all other young Australian Christians. Why is this so?

They are also poorly equipped for any return to the fold when they have little instinct for or understanding that there are truths of faith and morals, which are to be sought after and judged according to rational criteria. More of them seem to believe that life offers a smorgasbord of options from which they choose items that best suit their passing fancies and their changing circumstances.

The Generation Y Survey was not able to detect any religious effect of attendance at Church schools, although a majority of those who believe in God and attend Church schools say the religious education is helpful. Neither was I surprised to learn that about a third of the more religiously committed students (fewer at Catholic schools, only 19%) reported being made fun of at school because of their religion, confirming anecdotes I have heard off and on for twenty years. This parallels a small number of religiously committed parents who choose to send their children to non-Catholic schools claiming that their children's religious practice was more likely to survive intact there.

Like the Holy Father citing a comment about Mohammed in his recent Regensburg address I too cite this example without endorsement!

The Spirit of Generation Y is a thoroughly professional survey, which makes no claims to infallibility. Neither do I know what margins of error the authors might estimate, but there are no professional reasons to reject its findings.

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In some ways it does not square exactly with the official 2001 census and a better context will be provided by the results of the 2006 census. But there is some chance that we are experiencing an acceleration in the Christian slippage, with Catholics slipping faster, even though they have bigger numbers on the slope.

Catholic school enrolments do not necessarily contradict such an hypothesis. Across the nation we now educate 677,659 students, 20% of the nation's children, an increase of 201,229 since 1965. Most of the growth is at secondary level, with primary enrolments almost steady in N.S.W. and declining each year since 2000 in Victoria.

Three factors, however, are important in reflecting the changing place of Catholics in the national profile.

Twenty-three per cent of Catholic school students are not Catholics, with Tasmania (44%) and South Australia (36%) having the highest non-Catholic participation. This is a tribute to the perceived qualities of our schools, a result of the blessing of ecumenism and of cementing our place as an accepted part of the Australian mainstream. In N.S.W. all enrolment growth for the last 20 years has come from non-Catholic pupils. Without them enrolments would have declined by 1600!

There are 47,115 young Catholics at non-Catholic private schools (5% of Catholics attending school) for a variety of reasons. Better academic standards and more powerful social networks are two possibilities. Once or twice in parishes I have found that all the teenage altar servers have been from such non-Catholic schools, but Anglican chaplains have explained that most Catholics in their schools are not excessively committed to the devotion of the fifty-two consecutive Sunday Masses.

Forty-three per cent of Catholics are educated in state schools, including 69% of Catholics students from families with lowest third of family income. Only 21% attend Catholic schools.

As a consequence Catholic schools are not educating most of our poor, especially at the primary level. Seventy-two per cent of Catholic students from families with lowest third of family income attend Government infant/

primary schools and only 19% attend Catholic schools

At secondary level 63% of the "poorest" Catholics attend Government secondary schools and 22% attend Catholic secondary schools.

Predominantly our schools now cater for the huge Australian middle class, which they helped create.

This is of significant challenge, a major reason for holding down increases in school fees and explains the necessity for nurturing and expanding our network of C.C.D. catechists working in the State schools.

## Conclusion

This year Professor James Franklin of the University of New South Wales produced a brilliant little book entitled "Catholic Values and Australian Realities".

The introduction began with these words "Australian Catholics have had a distinctive image: Irish tribal loyalties, Labor but anti-communist politics, childhoods full of guilt and incense. There is more to their distinctiveness than that. Their central contribution to Australian thinking is an objective view of ethics." (p1)

## Remember Your Creator

Rejoice in your youth, you who are young; let your heart give you joy in your young days. But ... remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before evil days come and the years approach when you say, 'These give me no pleasure'; before sun and light and moon and stars grow dark, and the clouds return after the rain; the day when those who keep the house tremble and strong men are bowed; when the women grind no longer at the mill, because day is darkening at the windows and the street doors are shut; when the sound of the mill is faint, when the voice of the bird is silenced, and song notes are stilled, when to go uphill is an ordeal and a walk is something to dread.

- The Book of Ecclesiastes. 11-12,5.

Guilt will always be with us, even when it is unrecognized and emerging as hatred of self or society. Burning incense, too, continues at Catholic funerals and in our Cathedrals, but an objective view of ethics among most Gen. Y Catholics has disappeared as completely as Irish tribal loyalties. Our situation is changing.

I realize that my thumbnail sketch of Catholicism in Australian culture requires another paper of equal length spelling out what might or should be done. You will be relieved to know that you won't be receiving it from me today.

I have not set out to be bland and anodyne any more than I have set out to ignore our achievements and our considerable strengths. I love the Catholic schools too much for that.

In five years I have visited more than 100 of our 163 schools in the Sydney archdiocese. Overwhelmingly these are happy places of learning, serving and basically satisfying their constituencies, generally in good facilities where the Federal Government provides 50% of the capital money and the N.S.W. government covers the interest on the money contributed by the local community and the System. There is no crisis of morale in the Catholic schools and testing results reflect the quality of these schools and the socio-economic makeup of the pupils, being regularly better than national averages.

I also realize that I am not talking to a local parish group, but to the leaders of Catholic-education across Australia who deserve the bad news with the good. We are in a complex and turbulent process of change. Tomorrow Generation Z will be different again just as older generations have their own particularities.

We Catholics are likely to remain around one quarter of the population in an increasingly secular Australia. While ours is a God of surprises we have only a limited capacity to transmit our tradition and preserve our identity. We should clarify our goals and try to learn from our mistakes.

Secularists strive to remove religion from the public domain and restrict it to private life, where individual religious choices reflect personal preferences unrelated to truth and general principles. They see religion as another area for consumer choice.

For us as Catholics our central concern is the presentation of the person of Jesus Christ, with His call to repent and believe. We espouse crucifixion Christianity which leads to the resurrection and believe that everyone stands under the four last things of death and judgement, heaven and hell. Catholicism calls to faith and reason as well as love and hope. This is now profoundly countercultural.

The decisions to believe in Christ are mysterious and individual. But schools can impart religious knowledge, encourage patterns of clear thinking, constructive enquiry and a thirst for answers. We need to inculcate a respect for reason and tradition as well as call to faith, hope and love.

These are mighty tasks, but attempting them is a wonderful vocation. Especially in our challenging environment, catechesis, and evangelisation are not only a duty, but an adventure and challenge, truly one great work of the Holy Spirit.

I thank you for what you are doing and urge you to continue with all the wisdom and perseverance we can muster.

I conclude with a series of questions to help focus your thinking

**D**ictatorship naturally arises out of democracy; and the most aggravated form of tyranny and slavery out of the most extreme liberty.

- Plato, 428-327 BC

and discussion.

1. Do Catholic schools retain today a capacity to strengthen the faith and improve the morals of their students, as they did in the past?

2. Are Catholic truths presented to your students sequentially and comprehensively over the 13 years of schooling? Do students know what are the 4 or 5 fundamental truths of our faith? What is the place of student text books in Religious Education?

3. What strategies would overturn the assumption that all morality is relative? How can the truths about life, marriage, family and social justice be defended?

4. What strategies might be adopted to strengthen the Christian faith and perhaps make converts among the 23% of non-Catholic students in our schools?

5. What strategies would make

Catholic schools more accessible to lower income families? Should our "elite" colleges offer more scholarships to the disadvantaged?

6. Is it a concern that few Catholic schools are listed among the best academic schools?

7. Is there sufficient diversity among Catholic schools?

8. Should more be done for the religious education of Catholics in state schools?

9. What must we do to prepare the next generation of leaders for truly Catholic schools?

10. How can we attract committed Catholic school graduates into the teaching profession?

Pope John Paul II should have the last word from his message at the start of the third Christian millennium "Duc in altum! These words ring out for us today, and they invite us to remember the past with gratitude, live the present with enthusiasm and to look to the future with confidence: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8).



Amen to that.

George Cardinal Pell Archbishop of Sydney



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## AUSTRALIA'S NORTHERN TERRITORY

# A MISSIONARY CHURCH

During his many years on Bathurst Island, Fr Gsell MSC remained responsible for the Catholic Church throughout the Northern Territory, including the establishment of the Church at Alice Springs in 1929 and at Tennant Creek in 1936, and a mission at Wadeye in 1935. In 1935 he received the Order of the British Empire. Then in 1938, he was named Bishop, which office he held until his retirement in 1948. For his coat of arms he chose the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, above crossed spears and boomerang. As Bishop he lived in Darwin, except for the war years, 1942-1945, when he governed the Diocese from Alice Springs. During the 1940s Bishop Gsell continued to establish the Church and its mission in the Northern Territory, founding missions at Melville Island in 1940 and at Arltunga in 1943. Catholic schools were opened at most parishes and missions.

In 1948 Bishop Gsell was succeeded by Bishop John O'Loughlin, also a Missionary of the Sacred Heart. He retired to the Sacred Heart Monastery at Kensington New South Wales. In 1951 Pope Pius XII created him Bishop Assistant at the Pontifical Throne, and that same year he received the Legion of Honour from his native France. He died in Sydney on 12 July 1960 and was buried at St Mary's Towers, Douglas Park. In 1982 his remains were re-interred in the crypt of St Mary's Cathedral in Darwin.

The missionary labours of Fr Confalonieri, the early Jesuits, and Bishop Gsell and his many fellow missionaries have left a lasting missionary spirit in the life and works of the Catholic community in the Northern Territory. In this Gsell Centenary year, this missionary spirit is celebrated in a DVD presentation that evokes the story of Bishop Gsell and his successors, of the missionaries who established the Catholic Church throughout the vastness of the Northern Territory, and of Catholic parishes, communities and schools today. This DVD has been provided to all Church communities, to help them recognise this story as their own, and to enhance local celebrations of the Gsell Centenary.

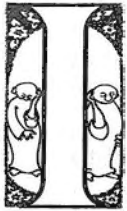


Mass on Bathurst Island on the occasion of the centenary of Fr. F. X. Gsell's arrival in Victoria Palmeston now known as Darwin. The mass was celebrated by Most Rev Joseph Doré, P.P.S., Archbishop Emeritus of Strasbourg, (centre) with concelebrants Most Rev Edmund JP Collins MSC Bishop of Darwin (left) and Most Rev Ambrose De Paoli, Apostolic Nuncio in Australia (right).

*A step backwards or a step forward?*

## SEPTEMBER 11 : SEPTEMBER 12

*By* Dennis J Murphy MSC



S Pope Benedict XVI's speech in the University of Regensburg, September 12, a counterblast to the bombing of the Twin Towers, September 11? Are both examples of the coming 'clash of civilizations' that some fear? Or is it a challenge for Islam and Christianity to work together for peace in the world?

Though many have praised the topic of the Pope's speech on faith and reason, very few give him full marks because of what they consider his diplomatic blunder in the course of it. People who have not liked the Pope from the start are saying 'I told you so!' The Ratzinger we feared has now appeared! And many who have supported him all along are perplexed.

The response of a Muslim academic, Dr Ameer Ali, mentioned in an editorial in *The Australian* (October 5, 2006), may add some light. Dr Ali is an academic, his field economics, attached to Murdoch University in Perth, Australia. He is President of the Australian Government's Muslim Advisory Board. To the surprise and consternation of a number of his co-religionists he spoke with some sympathy about the Pope's reference in his Regensburg speech to the Emperor Manuel II Paleologus.

I have noticed that a number of adverse commentators on the Pope's speech are surprised that he should have given any importance to such an 'obscure' figure as this medieval ruler. The Emperor might be obscure to them, but the siege of Constantinople and its ultimate capture, the subjugation of an empire, and the symbolic act of turning Santa Sophia into a mosque are not obscure events in history. They are facts, very significant facts, and Manuel II Paleologus played a significant and tragic role in it.

Dr Ali is concerned with how best to interpret Muslim faith in the modern

world. His interest in this is not unique. Other devout Muslim thinkers share the same interest and a number of them are coming to the same conclusions – not without, at times, serious risks to their own safety.

These Muslims accept the Koran's religious message, but at the same time accept that Islam has to be seen in its historical context. There are essential elements in it that are true and lasting. However, as Dr Ali contends, there are other aspects of Islam that belong to the period and circumstances in which it came to birth and to the subsequent historical contexts through which it has lived.

Pope Benedict has stressed that the positive elements in Islam are compatible also with other religions, particularly Judaism and Christianity. The Catholic Church's statement on this in the Second Vatican Council is clear.

There are many modern jihadist calls to violence not only against non-Muslims but against their own co-religionists. This has given rise to, and heightened, the distinction between essentials and historical conditioning that Dr Ali and others want to make, especially when jihadists claim support from the Koran and from Muhammad himself. It is

unrealistic and unhelpful to sweep these claims under the carpet in the hope of promoting dialogue. It is not fair either to those Muslims who are disgusted by such actions; nor fair to those Muslims who are suffering from it in Islamic countries.

The jihadists and fundamentalists are correct in seeing support for their actions in the Koran itself. History gives clear evidence that Muhammad resorted to continued, systematic violence in the later Medina period of his life and had this written into the Koran. Osama bin Laden's *fatwa*, February 1998, is as enlightening as it is worrying:

Praise be to God, who revealed the Book, controls the clouds, defeats factionalism, and says in His Book "But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them, seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem".

'Pagans' for Osama bin Laden are, of course, especially Americans and Jews. Technically, he did not have the authority to issue a *fatwa*, but several mullahs quickly gave it any 'legality' it needed by repeating it. Leonard Weinberg comments: "Nothing in these 1998 remarks would have seemed out of place

### What Shari'a Law Implies

Centre Democrat Ben Haddou, a member of Copenhagen's City Council, has stated: "It's impossible to condemn sharia. And any secular Muslim who claims he can is lying. Sharia also encompasses lifestyle, inheritance law, fasting and bathing. Demanding that Muslims swear off sharia is a form of warfare against them."

Read that statement again, and read it carefully. Muslims in the West consider it "a form of warfare against them" if they have to live by our secular laws, not their religious laws. Will they then also react in violent ways to this "warfare" if they don't get their will? Moreover, since sharia laws ultimately require the subjugation of non-Muslims, doesn't "freedom of religion" for Muslims essentially entail the freedom to make non-Muslims second-rate citizens in their own countries?

- *The Fjordman Report*, Friday, September 08, 2006



had they been uttered in the centuries when the *caliph* ruled the faithful from Baghdad<sup>1</sup>.

A common Muslim rejoinder to the Pope's reference to Manuel II Paleologus has been to deny that Christians have any right to criticize Islamic violence considering their own history. It may be of interest to add that the Byzantine Emperor himself would have had complaints about the violence shown in the past by some of the crusaders in Constantinople.

Few if any religions are free of periods that can be called 'religious terrorism':<sup>2</sup> Neither Christianity nor Islam is an exception. Fortunately, the Catholic Church has publicly and formally repented, in some detail, of any moral or physical violence it has been guilty of in its history. It would be a significant step towards the world's religions being able to work together for peace in the world if all, including Islam, could do the same.

Pope John Paul II's first visit to a foreign country after becoming Pope was to Ireland, one of the most Catholic of countries. Unequivocally, he condemned violence there.

I proclaim with the conviction of my faith in Christ, and with an awareness of my mission, that violence is evil, that violence is unacceptable as a solution to problems, that violence is unworthy of man. Violence is a lie, for it goes against the truth of our faith, the truth of humanity. Violence destroys what it claims to defend: the dignity, the freedom of human beings.

Pope John Paul II did not stop there. Vimal Tirimanna, a professor of moral theology at the Alphonsianum in Rome, notes how the Pope "definitely moved towards total pacifism from the very beginning of his Pontificate"<sup>3</sup> Two days after the attack on the Twin Towers, he received the Ambassador of the United States and made the following statement.

I pray that the recent attack will awaken in the hearts of all the world's peoples a firm resolve to reject the ways of violence, to combat everything that sows hatred and division within the human family, and to work for the dawn of a new era of international cooperation inspired by the highest ideas of solidarity, justice and peace.

Those Catholics who see a break in continuity between the policies of Pope John Paul II and Benedict XVI in inter-religious dialogue need to measure this

particular point carefully. Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald and Fr Michel, experts in Islam, have gone on record saying that if they had remained in the Roman Curia, they would have seen to it that the Pope's reference to Manuel II Paleologus would have been erased from his speech. Upset would certainly have been avoided, but one can ask whether it would have promoted genuine dialogue.

## Jihad's Stealthy Legions

The prominent Deobandi cleric and scholar Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Kandhalawi (1885-1944) launched Tablighi Jamaat in 1927 in Mewat, India, not far from Delhi. Ilyas's followers were intolerant of other Muslims and especially Shi'ites, let alone adherents of other faiths. They rejected modernity as antithetical to Islam, excluded women, and preached that Islam must subsume all other religions.

The creed grew in importance after Pakistani military dictator Zia ul-Haq encouraged Deobandis to Islamize Pakistan.

The West's misreading of Tablighi Jamaat actions and motives has serious implications for the war on terrorism. Tablighi Jamaat has always adopted an extreme interpretation of Sunni Islam, but in the past two decades, it has radicalized to the point where it is now a driving force of Islamic extremism and a major recruiting agency for terrorist causes worldwide. For a majority of young Muslim extremists, joining Tablighi Jamaat is the first step on the road to extremism. Perhaps 80 percent of the Islamist extremists in France come from Tablighi ranks, prompting French intelligence officers to call Tablighi Jamaat the "antechamber of fundamentalism."

- Alex Alexiev, 'Tablighi Jamaat: Jihad's Stealthy Legions,' *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2005.

Certainly, the majority of the faithful of Islam desire peace; as do members of other religions. What is best in their religion and in human nature urges that. At the same time, recent years have shown that there is a significant minority of extremist Muslims who opt for violence, and appeal explicitly to their religion in doing so.

This hostility has been aggravated by traditional Islamic law's division of the world into *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb*. "The *Dar al-Islam* - the house, the abode or country of submission - is that part

of the world where Muslim governments and Islamic law prevail; the *Dar al-Harb* - the house, abode or country of war - is the rest of the world"<sup>4</sup> Paul Stenhouse's article is an important contribution that deserves close attention because it draws attention not only to the problems this legal distinction is causing in the Western democracies where Muslims have migrated, but also within Islamic societies themselves. Without this background sensitive dialogue is hardly possible.

The closed jihadist and fundamentalist Islamic approach to the world of our time is forcing Dr Ali (and other Muslims) to question the centuries-old literal interpretation of the Koran. Reason tells them that everything in it cannot be accepted as dictated word-for-word by God. Furthermore, Dr Ali is convinced that Islam's genuine faith is compatible with seeing Muhammad as human and imperfect. He feels that Muslims who reacted with violence to the Danish cartoons are specifically the ones who have helped create the image of the prophet found in those cartoons.

Finally, it is in this context that Pope Benedict's talk on faith and reason is not only a challenge to the West and Christianity, but also to Islam itself.

Sheikh Taj al-Din al-Hilali, Australia's controversial Mufti, found Dr Ali's statements worse than Benedict XVI's, for at least the Pope was quoting someone else and not expressing his own opinion. Sheikh Hilali has challenged him to withdraw his statements or be barred from any religious ceremony. According to the editorial in *The Australian*, the good news is that he has not been forced into hiding, like the French philosophy teacher Robert Redeker, who also dared to link Mohammad with violence.



Dennis J Murphy MSC

1. Leonard Weinberg, *Global Terrorism*, Oxford: One World, 2006, p.22.
2. *Op.cit.* p.20f.
3. Vimal Tirimanna, *Catholic Teaching on Violence, War and Peace in our Contemporary World*, Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2006, p.54.
4. Paul Stenhouse, "Democracy, Dar-al Harb and Dar al-Islam" in *Quadrant*, March 2006, p54-58.

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



# PAKISTANIS CONVERTED TO ISLAM BY FORCE

*By* KAISER FELIX



THE same Islam that pronounces death for conversion to another religion, forces women married to Muslims to become Muslims too. Forced conversions figures reach between 500 and 600 people a year in Pakistan, although 'national media report only 100 such cases' that police and the courts 'treat prejudicially'. This was the most significant conclusion of a meeting on 'Forced Conversion of Women and Minorities Rights in Pakistan' held on 26 May in a hotel in Lahore.

More than 50 human rights activists, lawyers and representatives of religious minorities from four provinces of Pakistan participated in the consultation organized by the Minority Rights Commission of Pakistan (MRC).

Khaliq Shah – MRC member – outlined the aims of the meeting: to highlight this important issue at national level; to launch a campaign against forced conversions; to analyze the causes and to review the law. Shah, who has been researching the topic for a long time, said: 'The problem is especially present among poorer and marginalized social groups.'

I.A. Rehman, member of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, said that according to the Universal declaration of Human Rights, every individual can join any faith of his choice and practice that faith freely, and no one can force him to change his belief. 'From this perspective, free conversion is no problem but forced conversions should be banned; this issue must be debated,' he said.

'In Pakistan we do not have any law against forced conversion and converting from Islam to any other religion means death. To change this state of affairs, we must consider the issue as a struggle for democracy and invite Muslims as well to these meetings, so they can help us to better understand all points of view of the argument.'

Mgr Joseph Coutts, bishop of Faisalabad, was also present at the meeting. 'This is a delicate problem and each of us should contribute towards resolving it. At the root of the problem are factors like feudalism and the country's socio-economic structure. When we discuss forced conversions, we must talk about these aspects too.'

Kalyan Singh, a Sikh participant said one of the toughest challenges to overcome was the 'subjection of judges to Islamic clerics. Judges do not manage to deal with such cases neutrally because they are scared of the revenge of religious extremists.'

Joseph Francis, of the Center for Legal Aid, Assistance and Settlement took up this argument. 'Our organization has dealt with hundreds of forced conversion cases. Not even the judges of the High Courts deal with such cases objectively. Parents are not allowed to talk to their daughters and many forcibly converted girls are made to be prostitutes.'

In conclusion, participants 'forcefully and unanimously condemned forced conversions' and called on the government to 'abolish personal laws and to punish those who indulge in such practices.'

Source: <http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=6305> May 30, 2006





# MEDIA MATTERS

By JAMES MURRAY

## All-in Contest

Come the New Year, Communications Minister Senator Helen Coonan should see implementation of her fresh deal for media which is shaping up not as a race for dominance but a wrestling match.

Three figures have already climbed into the ring, flexing their muscles. Two, Rupert (The Mighty) Murdoch and Kerry (The Intrepid) Stokes are contestants with proven ability to focus on the task in hand; the third, James (The Kid) Packer, shows signs of attention division between solid, inherited media assets and gambling Xanadus here, in Europe and in Asia, the latter at the highest risk end of the spectrum.

To an extent Packer has set up a safeguard by separating his media interests from his gambling interests. But it could prove to be a Maginot Line. Think the People's Republic of China in another puritan, cultural revolution. Gweilos go, go, go.

Packer, however, does have impressive seconds in his corner, including John Alexander who is likely to tag-team for Packer. This makes empty prattle of Packeratchik statements about lack of interest in the John Fairfax Group.

Alexander, sacked from the top Fairfax editorial job must feel an urge to do a MacArthur and return to shake up the system. Combined with the reactions of Murdoch and Stokes, not to mention no holds barred wrestlers from private equity funds, certain assets could come loose to the benefit of the public.

*The Bulletin*, for example, in Eric Beecher's hands, could return to its historic role as an arbiter of opinion and literature. *The Age*, under independent Melbourne control again, could reassert its status as the nation's greatest newspaper.

Television? It may be someone somewhere remembers that the original, licence to print money was based on maximum information and entertainment supported by restricted advertising not the other way round. Short of that, TV is the golden goose being stuffed with ads to make short-term foie de gras

But pre-Christmas predictions for the year ahead are as risky - to change the metaphor - as pontoon against players with marked cards.

## Carlyon's Colour

Your correspondent praised Les Carlyon's *Gallipoli* for going some way to giving context to the ANZAC contribution in the Dardanelles campaign.

But reading an excerpt of his new work, *The Great War*, (*Goodweekend*, SMH colour magazine, Nov 4), his eye went beady at the break-out quote: 'We didn't know until years later how badly the Australians had suffered in 1916 and 1917..'

Eh? Australian courage and casualties on the Western Front were extensively covered. Pages could be filled with book titles. Indeed Les Carlyon himself fills 13 pages with his select bibliography. Who is the 'we' who didn't know? Illiterates? Dyslexics? Rip Van Winkles?

The break-out quote reads inauspiciously like a marketing ploy implying either that the author has come up with a new view or that Australians have somehow been cheated of the full truth until now.

Les Carlyon is a great reporter who deploys beautifully elegiac colour to link his raw, research material. In so doing, he may be seeking belately to provide the emotional release about the horrors of the war provided earlier to the British public by frontline poets such as Sigfried Sassoon, Robert ( *Goodbye to All That*) Graves and Federick Manning, the Australian whose book, *Her Privates We*, about his service with a British infantry unit, was commended by Ernest Hemingway.

Suggestion: Serialisation excerpts should carry the line: Edited by and the name of the journalist responsible.

## Dim View

Former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser is not the first, only the most notable, commentator to compare the current rift between Muslims and other Australians with the past rift between Catholics and Protestants.

His comparison puts him in chalk and cheese land. The Koran, read as the direct word of Allah is a blueprint for a world theocracy administered and followed by Muslims. In conscience, therefore, devout Muslims are bound to go for this ultimate polity and have the right to do so in a plural democracy.

No such polity is possible for Catholics and Protestants. Both are bound by the same Bible,



and Christ's injunction, 'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.'

Okay, ignoring the injunction, John Calvin did establish a kind of theocracy in Geneva but all that's left of it is gin and hangover banking secrecy that protects criminals. The political power of the papacy? Pace the Belfast divine, Dr Ian Paisley, that power has always been constrained by the Caesar-God injunction

Fraser failed to take into account that the Catholic Emancipation Act legally ended Catholic disabilities but some Protestants continued to inflict them throughout the British Empire. The Catholic response was less bitter and litigious than a political, cultural, educational and social demonstration of equality; if the process involved degrees of violence on both sides, that is not an argument for equivalence. To quote ancient folk wisdom: 'Two wrongs don't make a right.'

Here your correspondent must make clear he was educated in Scotland but, as Malcolm Fraser might agree, that country through the Presbyterian John Dunmore Lang reinforced discrimination in Australia.

Worth emphasising: the Duke of Wellington in casting his crucial vote for Catholic Emancipation said in the House of Lords: 'We must confess, my Lords, that without without Catholic blood and Catholic valour no victory could ever have been attained ...' (Vide *Annals Almanac of Catholic Curiosities* by Paul Stenhouse).

Arguably the Catholic Emancipation Act is Bill of Rights waiting to be expanded. Not only Catholics benefited from removal of religion-based disabilities intrinsic to the Protestant Reformation. By extrapolation so did other religions, not least Islam.

Incidentally, a climb up Malcolm Fraser's family tree would surely reveal Catholic ancestors in a pre-eminent clan whose late, great chieftain, Lord Lovat, commando leader, showed during World War II that Highland Catholic valour was no less than Irish Catholic valour.

### Ruddy Good

Splendid to see Labor's Kevin Rudd reinforcing his credentials with lucid pieces and speeches about the relevance of Catholic social justice encyclicals from *Rerum Novarum* onwards.

Even more splendid to see him doing this in the context of the kind of market forces where trade unions are lambasted for seeking living wages and executives are applauded by non-union, but closely knit chambers of commerce and business councils, for salary packages that would make a rich-'n'-roller like Mick Jagger green with envy.

### Fief of Baghdad

Gulf War II, which Pope John Paul II opposed in one of his last pleas, has become a black farce in which the US government seeks to decide which door will get it off stage fastest with the least loss of dignity and damage to Iraq's emergent democracy.

Comparisons with the Vietnam War are rife. Both wars are said to be 'quagmires' (although Gulf War II is surely a quicksand). Both are perceived as being lost, not on battlefields, but on living room TV screens.

To the bitter end, Vietnam did entail dig-in or retreat options. So does Iraq. But the result of the interim congressional elections reinforces the retreat option. In turn, this raises the distinct possibility of the *status quo ante*. Not Saddam Hussein, but another military-political strongman who at best may be a US buddy.

Largely unmentioned: refugees. Retreat will mean that the US and its allies, including Australia, will have a moral obligation to take in Iraqis threatened as supporters of the allied cause.

### Stern First

The cultural cringe may be dead; the political cringe is alive and well if ongoing reaction to the climate change report by British economist Nicholas Stern is a benchmark. His report followed an earlier less alarmist report but was run big in the UK after being leaked from an area not unadjacent to Prime Minister Tony Blair's office (the Spinloo?).

Australian bureau hacks went with the flow, so to speak, and filed accordingly. Result: the kind of coverage not seen since the Millenium Computer Bug was going to stop the world so that we could all get off, and rest in space.

Not suprisingly Stern's solution is economic not scientific and involves carbon trading (read corporate welfare for companies that join in). The local winner may well be Malcolm Turnbull, neatly positioned as chief water spouter, set to be the first politician to rise to cabinet (and priministerial contention) on hot air, literal rather than metaphorical.

### Quip to Remember

In the all-in, ongoing debate about Islamism that dominates the 21st centry as debate about Communism dominated the 20th, a thought: Tolerance of intolerance results in the erosion of the first and the ascendancy of the second.

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*Catholicism's Early Days in Australia*

A WORTHY DESCENDANT OF ST. THOMAS MORE

WILLIAM ULLATHORNE OSB

By PETER ROACH



IN 1787, Britain began the transportation of convicts to New South Wales. Among these were many Irish men and women – predominately Catholic – whose numbers greatly increased after the 1798 Irish rebellion. The issue of their religion was ignored, no Catholic chaplains being provided, with all convicts compelled to attend Church of England services on Sundays. Defiance of this regulation by male convicts resulted in horrific penalties.

In January 1800 Father James Harold, a victim of the Irish uprising, arrived in the colony as a convict, forbidden to act as a priest. Another arrival was Father James Dixon, whose sentence had been commuted to transportation. Dixon arrived with a more genteel group and was permitted to minister to his fellow Catholics, celebrating the first Holy Mass in Sydney on Sunday 15 May 1803. When word of his situation reached Rome, he was promptly constituted Prefect Apostolic of New Holland. But the grinding bias accorded the Catholic convicts particularly, destroyed his health and he sought approval to return to Ireland, leaving Sydney in 1808. Father Peter O’Neil was another victim of the uprising, gaoled without charge or trial and flogged with bestial cruelty – 275 lashes – before being taken maimed to the transport ship. His reprieve arrived after his ship had sailed and he reached Sydney in 1801, spending two years there and in Norfolk Island before returning to Ireland in 1803.

The fourth priest to arrive was Father Jeremiah O’Flynn, an Irish priest who had served as a Cistercian missionary in the West Indies and who volunteered for the Australian Mission

while in Rome. He was secularised and invested with the title of Archpriest and empowered to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. He arrived in Sydney in 1817 but lacking Government authorisation was arrested and returned to England. It was 1820 before the provision of Catholic chaplains was considered and approved. Many followed, the best known of these early priests was Father John Therry, and he and others famously bore the brunt of those early struggles of the Catholics in this new country.

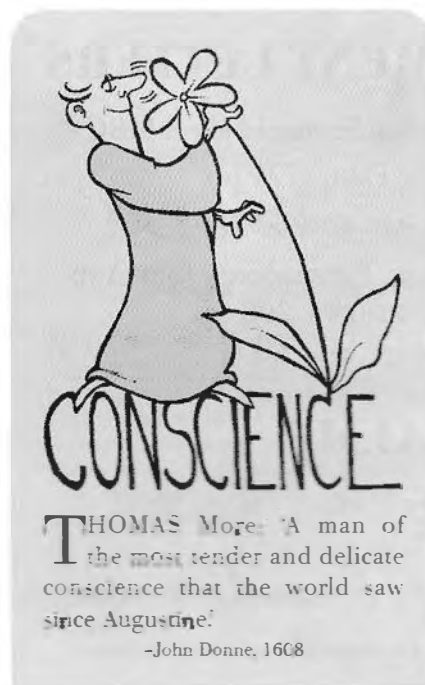
There was another priest who left his mark on Catholic Australia but whose story has been largely forgotten; he was the Benedictine Father William Ullathorne, the first priestly authority sanctioned by both Church and British Government to minister in the colony. And although in total he spent just fewer than six years in Australia, he

was instrumental in the planning of our Catholic Hierarchy here, the first such established in the English-speaking world since Henry VIII broke with Rome in 1534.

William Bernard Ullathorne, the eldest of ten children, was born in Yorkshire in May 1806. His father, able to trace his ancestry to the illustrious Sir Thomas More, was like many of England’s *Old Catholic* recusants and ‘had descended from gentle birth’ through the penalties and isolation inflicted by his country. At an early age, William went to sea as a cabin boy during which time he was encouraged in the practice of the Faith by his ship’s Mate, a devout old sailor. Later, aware of the necessity of an education and encouraged by his parents, he left the sea and enrolled at St Gregory’s Benedictine Priory at Downside, near Bath. Here, exposed to the monastic life, he recognised his true vocation, entered the Priory’s novitiate and in September 1831 was ordained a Benedictine monk.

Around this time, a fellow Benedictine had been appointed Bishop of Mauritius, with jurisdiction ranging over an area of astonishing size including the Cape of Good Hope, Mauritius, Australia, New Zealand and ‘the South Sea Islands’. When the new Bishop Morris urged his fellow monks to consider becoming Missioners to the penal colonies, Father Ullathorne recalled that during his training, Father Bede Polding, his Prefect and Director, had delivered a passionate talk about the grim conditions of the Botany Bay convicts and their need for priests. He decided then and there to become a missionary.

Bishop Morris was conscious of Ullathorne’s potential, accepted him



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and appointed him his Vicar General for Australia with residence in Sydney. Ullathorne then sought the necessary Government approval and was appointed Catholic Chaplain for NSW, sailing in September 1832 via Cape Town and Hobart Town, arriving at Sydney in February after a voyage of five months. At Hobart he met Father Philip Connolly who had arrived with Father Therry as Chaplains at Sydney in 1820. but who after continuing disagreements between the two, went to Hobart in 1821, where he had remained without seeing a brother priest in all those preceding years.

That Father Ullathorne, then in his twenty-seventh year, had been appointed Vicar General was an extraordinary accomplishment for so young a priest. He undertook his duties in the colony with relish, proving an able administrator, skilled with the written word and a convincing speaker. He was strongly opinionated and this, combined with a youthful almost cherubic countenance that belied his acuity, was to prove the undoing of the anti-Catholic bigots who tried to bring him down in Sydney. He vigorously rebutted much of this 'anti-popery' through the press, earning the sobriquet the *Very Reverend Agitator-General!* Prior to his arrival, the Governors had been dissatisfied with the Catholic priests in the Colony, none of whom held a sufficiently authoritative position with which they could deal. In 1825 Father Therry's official status was withdrawn for some infraction, thus denying his access to all the convicts. Despite this, the dogged priest remained in the colony, ministering to Catholics as best he could.

In London the Government raised this issue of authority with the Holy See who invited Bishop Brampton of the Catholic Church's London District to nominate a suitable bishop for Australia. Ullathorne had early concluded that an established hierarchy was essential for the Church in this vast land and had written to Downside Priory in 1834 begging them to urge Rome to create a separate Australia Vicariate and appoint a bishop. Bishop Brampton now nominated Father Polding OSB, who had long set his heart on serving in the Australian Mission and the Holy See responded



by hastening its approval. On 17 May 1834 Polding was appointed Bishop of Hiero-Caesarea ipi and Vicar Apostolic of New Holland and Van Diemens Land.

Bishop Bede Polding OSB arrived in Sydney in September 1835 and at once appointed Father Ullathorne his Vicar General, requiring him to bear the brunt of the calumnies and allegations brought against the Catholic Church, its priests and its activities colony so as to keep pristine the reputation of the new episcopal appointment.

Earlier in 1834, Governor Bourke requested Father Ullathorne to visit Norfolk Island after a mutiny and several murders there. Although it had been a penal colony since 1788, he was the first practising priest ever on the island! Enthralled by its untouched beauty, 'one of the most beautiful spots in the universe,' he wrote of the island, the system's brutality and the awful hopelessness of the wretched convicts there caused him grave concern. These concerns were recorded in his pamphlet *The Catholic Mission in Australia*, that received wide circulation in Britain. He journeyed to the island again in December 1835 for the hanging of thirteen of the convicts involved in that mutiny and his account of his ministrations then is particularly poignant. His Norfolk Island experiences remained indelibly on his mind and through his efforts, a post for a Catholic chaplain was established there and filled.

In 1835 there were 30,000 convicts in NSW and 20,000 in Van Diemen's Land.

To administer to the spiritual affairs of the rising number of Catholics among them, the need for more priests became urgent, and the Bishop sent Ullathorne on this quest to Britain and Ireland in June 1836. In 1835 in London a Select Committee was set up to inquire into the issue of Transportation. The Chairman read Ullathorne's *The Catholic Mission in Australia* and summonsed him to give evidence before the Committee. Public abhorrence at his revelations was widespread and contributed to the decision subsequently made to cease transportation. On his return to Sydney on the last day of 1838, Ullathorne experienced the universal fate accorded

'whistle-blowers'; he was vilified in the Sydney press and ostracised even by friends because of his part in the decision to cease transportation, the locals angered at the loss of their convict labour!

Following his earlier despatch of two companies of priests for the Sydney Mission as a result of this visit, Father Ullathorne left London at the end of July on the *Sir Francis Spaight* bound direct to Sydney without intermediate stops, a journey of five months. He led a large party comprising three priests, five Sisters of Charity, and five ecclesiastical students. Among those on this journey were Father Francis Murphy, who in 1842 was to become the first Bishop of Adelaide, Father Patrick Geoghegan OFM who succeeded to that see on Murphy's death in 1859, and Father James Alipius Gould OSA who became first Bishop of Melbourne in 1847.

In Sydney, with Bishop Polding's approval, he finalised the proposals for the establishment of an Australian

Hierarchy. Then, to seek more priests, the two of them left Australia for Europe in November 1840. Ullathorne was never to visit Australia again. He was aware Polding had put his name forward to be Bishop of Hobart, but his Australian experiences convinced him he desired nothing more than to be a missionary priest. Polding was disappointed but accepted his view. Back at Downside, Ullathorne was sent in 1841 to his Order's Mission at Coventry. The Catholic Church in Britain was in the throes of reorganisation and in 1846 he reluctantly accepted appointment as Vicar Apostolic of England's Western District. Then on Michaelmas Day in October 1850, Pope Pius IX, finally back in Rome, formally established the English Hierarchy, the first since the break with Rome.

Ullathorne became Bishop of Birmingham and laboured as a pivotal figure in those bitter and difficult days of the re-establishment of the Catholic Church in England until his retirement in his weary eighty-second year. Then, in gratitude for his life's labours, Pope Leo XIII 'absolved him from the see of Birmingham and appointed him to the archiepiscopal see of Cabasa, in Lower Egypt'. The unique honour delighted the old missionary who died peacefully later in the next year.



## Detective stories

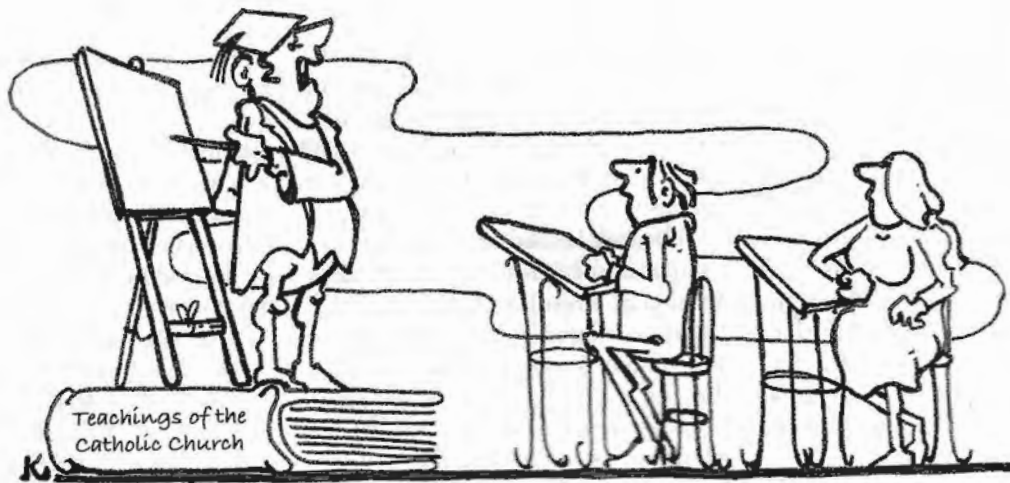
THE true object of an intelligent detective story is not to baffle the reader, but to enlighten the reader; but to enlighten him in such a manner that each successive portion of the truth comes as a surprise. In this, as in much nobler types of mystery, the object of the true mystic is not merely to mystify, but to illuminate. The object is not darkness, but light, but light in the form of lightning.

- C.K. Chesterton - Illustrated London News (28/8/1926), quoted *More Quotable Chesterton*, Ignatius Press, 1988.

The first book on this subject was *The Autobiography of Archbishop Ullathorne with Selections from his Letters* written in 1868 and not intended for publication. He partly revised this towards the end of his life and after his death in 1889, Burns & Oates published this revised edition in 1891. In 1926, Dom Cuthbert Butler OSB of Downside Abbey published *The Life and Times of Bishop Ullathorne 1806-1889* in two volumes to better record an extraordinary era in England's Catholic history. As well, much of the foregoing together with other details is included in the mammoth *History of the Catholic Church in Australasia* by Patrick Francis Cardinal Moran 1896. Ullathorne's writings have a sense of immediacy on a subject otherwise regrettably unrecorded.

In the years before and after World War II, every Catholic library in Australia held copies of these historic treasures, long out of print. Many of these libraries no longer exist, their books sold as job lots, disappearing with communion rails and much else of our Catholic lore during recent decades of progress.

PETER ROACH is a Barrister, with a special interest in justice issues. He has a special rapport with the MSC priests and brothers because he was a member of the first class to matriculate from Chevalier College Bowral in 1950. He resides in Hobart.



## DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH

By MAX BARRETT, CSSR

This is the ninth in a series of articles that look briefly at the lives and teachings of those saints who have been honoured with the title of 'Doctor' of the Church. The title is awarded *sanctitatis sapientiaeque causa* by the reigning Pontiff.



OCASIONALLY but only occasionally - one of the saints is declared a *Doctor of the Church*.

This declaration, coming from the Pope, recognises the outstanding value of the saint's writings. Up to 2006 A.D., thirty-three 'teacher' saints have been declared *Doctor*.

What is offered in this series is an introduction to each of the thirty-three, and a sampling of each one's writing.

Cronologically, the earliest of those officially declared *Doctor* is St. Athanasius of Alexandria (296-373 A.D.). The most recently recognised *Doctor* is St. Theresé of Lisieux (1873-1897).

### St. Ephrem the Syrian [died 373 AD]

Born in Nisibis (modern Iraq); said to have accompanied his bishop to the Council of Nicaea in 325 (as a 19-year-old). Thereafter, his energies were expended in combating Arianism. He taught Scripture at Nisibis and left that city only when it was handed over to the Persians. Ephrem went to Edessa in Syria where he lived an austere hermit-type of existence.

During a famine at Edessa Ephrem the Syrian shook the rich out of their apathy

and with their contributions erected a hospital for the needy with 300 beds.<sup>1</sup>

This saint introduced melody into the liturgy. The Gnostic heretics had advanced their teachings by the use of hymns; Ephrem countered with his own sacred songs which earned him the title of "the Harp of the Holy Spirit".

He wrote metrical homilies! - one would think, an inducement to sleep. This saint had exceptional devotion

to the humanity of Jesus, and to his Mother. When he preached, tears would stop his voice. He trembled and made his hearers tremble at the thought of God's judgments. Passionate as he was by nature, no one ever saw him angry.

He remained a deacon all his life. It is said that he once feigned madness in order to escape being made a bishop. As he approached death he said: "I am setting out on a journey hard and dangerous. Thee, O Son of God, I have taken for my viaticum. When I am hungry I will feed on thee. The infernal fire will not venture near me, for it cannot bear the fragrance of thy body and thy blood."

He inserted into his will: "When thirty days have passed after my death, offer the holy sacrifice for me; for the dead profit by the sacrifices offered by the living."<sup>2</sup>

What follows is based on St. Ephrem's sermon for the Third Sunday of Easter. The blank verse is an attempt to suggest his 'metrical homilies':

Death came to Christ, and tramped  
him underfoot;  
But Christ in turn used death  
and trampled it.  
On Calvary he let death have its way  
But ah! By dying he destroyed our  
death!  
His loud cry on the cross awoke  
the dead

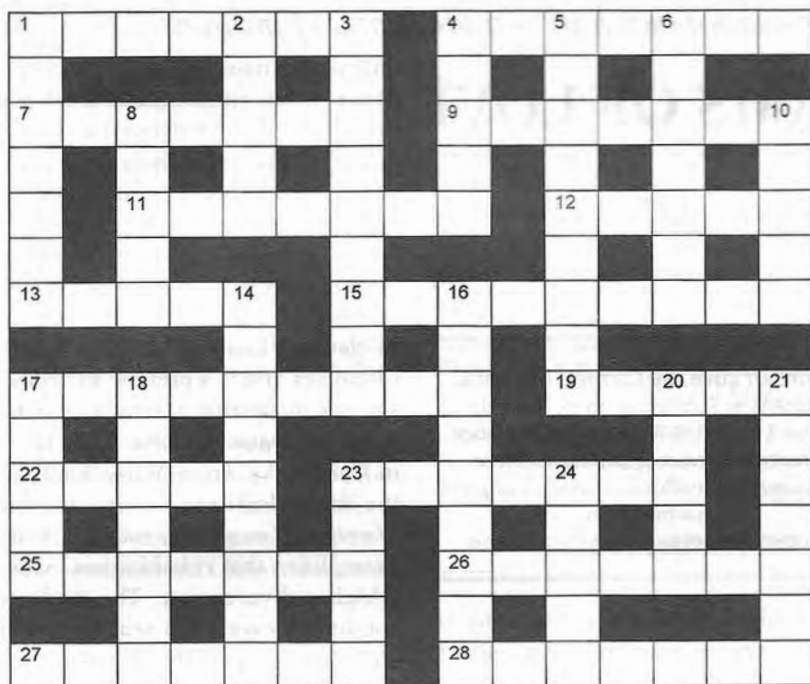
### Fear death no longer

'Since all will be  
share in the same flesh  
and blood,  
Jesus too shared  
equally in it  
so that by his death  
he could take away  
the power of the devil  
who had power over death,  
and set free all those  
who had been  
held in slavery all  
their lives,  
by fear of death.'

- Epistle to the Hebrews, 2,14-15.



## ANNALS CROSSWORD No. 43



### ACROSS CLUES

Note: all across answers are Saints and/or Patrons of as defined.

1. Mountaineers (7)
4. Popes (7)
7. The blind (7)
9. Austria, firemen (7)
11. Metalworkers (7)
12. Television (5)
13. Girls (5)
15. Theologians (9)
17. Engineers (9)
19. Wales (5)
22. France (5)
23. Lebanese Maronite (7)
25. Prisoners of war, parish missions (7)
26. Hunters (7)
27. Prague (7)
28. Florists (7)

### DOWN CLUES

1. Stiff clerical cap (7)
2. Family of Italian violin makers (5)
3. Tibetan religious leader (5,4)
4. Presents (5)
5. Expelled evil spirits (9)
6. Art of paper folding (7)
8. Primp (5)

10. Female relative (5)
14. Neat and orderly (9)
16. Baptismal sponsor (9)
17. Castro's first name (5)
18. Spite (7)
20. Large country residence (5)
21. Reduce or exhaust (7)
23. Young military trainee (5)
24. Moisten food during cooking (5)

### SOLUTION TO NO. 42



© Brian O'Neill 2006

And death was powerless to stay  
new birth.  
Our mother Eve, the source of all  
who live,  
By eating of a tree, bequeathed us  
death.  
Then in her stead came Mary, tree  
of life;  
Her Son, her fruit, the new life,  
dwelt in her  
Death impudently sought to eat  
her fruit:  
All unsuspectingly devoured It –  
And died! But He from death

triumphant rose!  
Come, brothers, sisters all: pour  
out to God  
Our ~~grea~~ and all-embracing  
sacrifice:  
Our love, our gratitude. Our  
Eucharist  
Abidingly ensures our life in Christ.  
All the 4th Century Doctors spoke of  
our divine adoption. Ephrem wrote:  
The Most High knew that Adam  
wanted to become a god,  
so He sent His Son who put on  
[Adam's flesh]

in order to grant him his desire.  
A Nativity hymn of this saint:  
From God, Christ's deity came forth;  
His manhood from humanity;  
His priesthood from Melchisedek;  
His royalty from David's tree:  
Praise be his oneness!

One of Ephrem's beautiful tributes  
to Mary still appears in our hymnals:  
Virgin wholly marvellous,  
Who did bear God's Son for us,  
My poor tongue would long to be  
Apt to praise your purity ...

With great tenderness and delicacy  
and in a dialogue which foreshadowed  
the mystery plays of the Middle Ages,  
Ephrem presented the Magi scene:

Mary: "My Son has no armies: no  
legions, no cohorts.  
He lies there in his mother's  
poverty -  
and you call him King!"  
Magi: The armies of your Son are  
on high.  
His knights move about the  
heavens as stars of fire."

In one of his sermons, Ephrem makes  
a morning prayer which asks that the light  
of the new day, through the reception  
of the sacraments, may bring us to the  
light of the eternal day which has been  
made over to us through the death and  
resurrection of Jesus.

The beginning of the sun's passage  
through the sky  
marks the beginning of the  
working-day for us mortals.

Lord, prepare in our minds a place  
where the day that knows no end  
may give its light.

Grant that we may have within us  
this light,

the life of the resurrection,  
and that nothing may take away  
our delight in you ...

In your sacraments we welcome  
you every day  
and receive you into our bodies.

Make us worthy to experience  
within us  
the resurrection for which we  
hope ...

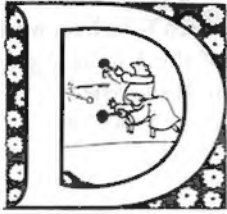
Your crucifixion, Lord, was the end  
of your bodily life;  
help us to crucify our will  
to give birth to the spiritual life.  
May your resurrection, Jesus,  
fill our spirits with greatness;  
may we see in your sacraments  
a mirror in which we may be able  
to recognise the resurrection.

1. Jedin, ed. *History of the Church*, Burns & Oates, 1980, Vol. II, p. 410.  
2. Altaner, *Patrology* Herder & Herder, 1960 p.404.

*'A splendid Catholic romance that has won the hearts of millions'*

## ARMS OF LOVE

*Reviewed by* PETER MURPHY



During a recent conversation at the local Public High School about 'True Love Waits,' a programme that promotes chastity among teens, a not so young teacher remarked 'Catholics are known to be prudes!' Somewhat taken back by her quip remark, a catechist beside me retorted: 'Better to be a prude than perverse.' Few today would associate themselves with the former term - much less know what it means - and too many are associated with the latter. I personally dissociate myself from both. A prude misconstrues the notion of purity, as was the case in the Victorian age, and the perverse has never grasped its very meaning.

In the front-line of pastoral ministry one readily encounters not prudery but the ugly and perverse. In some cases the perverse dimension dwells in homes. Yes, that's correct perverse home life. Home is no longer a haven for some children. In most classrooms every second child comes from a broken home, where couples are separated, divorced or divorcing, and mum's boyfriend or dad's partner are taken for granted. In some families sexual abuse, especially of teenage girls, is not uncommon. In recent times, Fr. Chris Riley, has voiced similar sentiments regarding sexual abuse in the home. A situation that is rife and most tragic.

Even if physical abuse is not the issue, what about sexual abuse in the media? Internet pornography is destroying the moral fibre of too many lives. Once sexual addiction is established it is difficult to sever. Yet perhaps some political consciences have been stirred. The recent announcement of the Federal Government to commit

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*Arms of Love, by Carmen Marcoux,*  
One Way Publishing House, Canada  
Price: \$16.95 (US) For copies of the book  
contact [www.courtshipnow.com](http://www.courtshipnow.com) or  
[www.revolutionoflove.com/aboutus/guest/carmen.htm](http://www.revolutionoflove.com/aboutus/guest/carmen.htm).  
Copies are not available from Annals.

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\$116 million to reduce pornography on the internet is a welcome sign. But it must not stop there! Television shows such as 'Big Brother' have had their day. Enough is enough and any decent parent cannot but admit that such reality TV inculcates a perverse attitude of sexuality that parades men not as protectors of women but predators. What should we do to change our present culture? What does the Church say?

Last century, in 1995, to be precise, the Church issued a document on sex education entitled, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*. Its aim was to provide parents with some clear guidelines on how to teach sex education within the context of chastity. Few Catholics have read this gem on sexuality from the Pontifical Council for the Family and fewer still know how to implement the guidelines into user friendly course material for parents. Tragically this Magisterial document has again become another forgotten letter in the episcopal box. Meanwhile kids are being deprived of their rights and the value of chastity.

Statistics on teenage promiscuity remain daunting as do the hard facts on S.T.Ds and teen abortions. Add to this moral quagmire the pedagogical reality that heavy dating among our teens leads to heartless divorcing among our adults. The claim that serial dating results in serial divorcing might sound extreme. But that depends on your definition

of 'dating.' If dating, however, involves casual sex and is a prelude to 'living in sin' or cohabitation as they term it, then it is a real issue. A recent study (2005) in Canada by Anne-Marie Ambert of the Vanier Institute, "*Cohabitation and Marriage: How are they related?*", clearly exemplifies that cohabitation leads to a higher divorce rate. The study was conducted over a ten year period and illustrates an increase in the divorce rate from 33% to 63% if couples cohabitated before marriage. One of the key factors in marriage breakdown is infidelity and a lack of trust. Serial dating and cohabitation is a recipe for disaster and family breakdown. The future of the family may seem bleak. How can we ameliorate the situation?

Against this tragic backdrop beams a ray of hope - a romantic novel. Recently I devoured this novel lent to me by some concerned parents: those who are concerned enough to care about what their children read. The author, Carmen Marcoux, is a Catholic mother of eight, who found time - I know not how - to write a book on chastity. As it turned out, the novel, *Arms of Love*, is a splendid Catholic romance that has won the hearts of millions since its publication in 2002.

Carmen Marcoux was born and raised in Saskatoon, Canada. She received her Bachelor of Education from the University of Saskatchewan in 1989. She and her husband home-school, and are very involved with their parish community. Carmen has been actively involved with music and youth ministries in the Catholic Church since she was very young - that becomes apparent in the book. Though Carmen never had any intention of writing a novel, she felt compelled to share this story in the hope that it would inspire young people to consider the value of



Christian courtship, and to encourage those who already embrace this ideal. It has worked!

Basically the plot is a story of Christian courtship. Joanie, a strong Catholic woman, setting out in a new career as a journalist, must face one of the greatest challenges of her young life . . . romance. Joanie finds herself attracted to the handsome young commercial producer, Brandon, but he is a 'neo pagan' in need of finding God. And Joanie won't compromise her love of Jesus. So Brandon must shape up or ship out!

The book faithfully presents the Church's teachings on Marriage and the Sacraments not to mention Sacramentals. Besides the romance it also provides some themes common to the above mentioned Church document on sexuality.

### Chastity

Upholding the virtue of chastity is a real challenge in today's society. Young people are bombarded by images of impure and sinful relationships. The notion of chastity would seem to some to be one that is outdated. Joanie is chaste but not a prude. She is an ideal yet human model for chastity which is ultimately a selfless love of neighbour. Pursuing physical intimacy outside of marriage is done for self-gratifying reasons. The opposite of love is not hate, it is selfishness. Chastity is the way to put love into practice in our relationships both before marriage and after marriage. Even married couples are called to conjugal chastity (cf. CCC 2348-2450).

### Dating versus Courting

The novel highlights the pivotal distinction between dating and courtship. A person would never enter into a courtship with someone whom they would not consider marrying; yet a person will often enter a dating relationship with someone to whom they are attracted while knowing that they would never want to marry that person. The problem arises when emotional commitment and often physical intimacy leads a couple who are dating to consider marriage and even pursue it, only later to decide that it was the wrong decision.

### Self-discipline

Young unmarried people are mistaken when they think that the key question in intimacy is 'how far can we go?' The question itself indicates a flawed outlook. In short, reserve your affection and guard physical intimacy so that you are not igniting passions that are intended to be reserved for marriage. The novel is filled with intimate yet pure moments that will provide practical guidelines for young unmarried couples. The thrust, of course, is save yourself in all ways for marriage so that you can someday reap the manifold blessings of a truly holy and passionate marriage . . . the way it was designed to be, by God. It is a great insurance plan for fidelity.

### Accountability

I found this to be one of the most unique traits of the novel. It is human nature for us to strive harder to achieve a goal when we know someone will be checking up on our progress. If

## Weaks Links in the 'Scholarly Chain'

Later investigators [into the Inquisition] have been more temperate in their epithets and more cautious in their methods of approach; but too many of them have leaned, with naive credulity, upon the work of Llorente [Juan Llorente, 1756-1823], a discredited official of the Holy Office, who proved his own bias by admitting that he had burned documents which did not serve his purpose. Dr Lea [H.C. Lea, 1829-1909] has depended somewhat upon Llorente, but has also done some good source work, though prejudice has betrayed him into taking some unscholarly liberties with his material. G.G. Coulton [1858-1947] has played the Inquisition with gusto, but when we look for his authority, we find it is principally Dr Lea. The same is true of most of the work of Professor Merriman of Harvard [Roger B. Merriman, 1876-1945] on this subject. One great "authority" leans on another great "authority," and so on back to the end of a chain, where often the searcher finds no fact at all, or the very opposite of what has been alleged . . .

- William Thomas Walsh (1891-1949),  
Characters of the Inquisition (1940)

we have to answer to someone else, we tend to be more focussed. If not their parents a couple should seek out at least one mentoring couple they trust. There are many exciting new emotions that come into play when a couple enters a courting relationship, but there are also many challenges. A good mentoring couple will guide the younger couple, helping to keep them on track while sharing with them the joys and struggles that they face.

### Family-centered

As much as possible, a courtship should take place in the heart of the home. The family plays a critical role in in your relationship, and the support of family throughout the years is an indispensable gift for a marriage. Get involved in family functions. Go to each others homes and do things with parents and siblings. Make the effort, even if family lives far away, for your potential future spouse and your family to get to know each other. It will often increase the respect that your parents have for you and that you have for your parents. Involvement with family is also an ideal way to spend time together without the temptation to compromise your decision to reserve physical intimacy!

It is a great story for promoting chastity within a contemporary setting. While those who enter into the witty and provocative life of Joanie and Brandon will be swept along on a splendid love story, there remains another dimension worthy of note. Throughout the novel there is a powerful theme of forgiveness. In moral matters what often prevents people from returning to God and being healed is the issue of guilt and forgiveness. How can I be forgiven? How can I start again? The book examines and resolves at diverse levels the art of forgiveness that is based on God's mercy.

Lastly, this book is not merely for teens but also for parents and grandparents who love the younger generation. Though the text is not a classic, as such, and the lay-out is not ideal, it's worth a read so that we can foster a culture of men who may be protectors and not predators of women in 2006 and beyond.



*Papua's Spiritual Ring of Fire*

# JOURNEY TO VANIMO

Wanda Skowronska



**W**HEN addressing 'the beloved people of Papua New Guinea' in a Port Moresby stadium in May 1984, Pope John Paul expressed deep gratitude to all missionaries, paying especial tribute to the work of the heroic early evangelisation efforts of the Marist and PIME [ Pontificium Institutum pro Missionibus Exteris] missionaries of the 1840s and 1850s. He also recounted the arrival of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in PNG in 1882 on the feast of St Michael the Archangel. Father Andre Navarre, stepping onto Matupit Island near Rabaul, was welcomed by the people of Nodup and their local leader To Litor and from here, the Pope said a 'new era dawned'!

In his speech, the Pope also recalled the great MSC Bishops Henry Verjus and Alain de Boismenu (who was instrumental in the conversion of the Australian poet James McAuley, during the latter's period of work in PNG) and the memorable date of the first Mass on the larger island of Papua - July 4, 1885. In his paean of praise for all missionaries everywhere he praised the illustrious heritage of other missionary orders such as the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and the MSC missionary Sisters ( allied with the MSCs), the Marists, the Divine Word Missionaries ( SVD) and PIME order, lay missionaries, catechists and all others who worked to produce 'the bountiful harvest'.

When one considers that there are around 800 local languages in Papua New Guinea [more per land area than anywhere else in the world] and that, as well as being Australia's neighbour, it is also the neighbour of one of the largest Muslim nations on earth, Indonesia, [estimated population 230 million] the missionary achievement there is extraordinary and has yet to be fully

appreciated in spiritual and geo-political terms.

The debt of gratitude will become clearer with time. In little over than a hundred years of missionary activity, 66% of the population of 5.5 million in PNG are Christian, about half of whom are Catholic. Of the remaining Christians, Lutherans are the larger group with smaller groups of Baptists, Pentacostals and Anglicans. The remaining 34% of the population mainly follow local animist beliefs.

Missionaries have usually worked in defined areas - the Marists in Bougainville, MSC priests, OLSH and MSC sisters in New Britain, Mount Hagen and Alotau among others, the Divine Word (SVD) missionaries in Madang with areas where various groups work together. This is not to mention the many missionary stations and schools deep in the bush whose only contact with the world is radio and the occasional light plane bringing supplies. In Papua New Guinea, there are 4 Catholic metropolitan sees and 14 dioceses in PNG and the first indigenous priest, Father Louis Vangeke, was ordained in 1937, becoming bishop in 1970.

It is often said PNG is located in the 'Pacific ring of fire' due to its volcanic

activity. But more aptly it is a spiritual ring of fire. With apostolic zeal, especially in Vanimo, Catholics consider the Pope in Rome as head of the Catholic church speaking in the name of Christ. With such clear-sightedness the Papua New Guineans could well evangelise many of those in the west who have lost the plot in this regard. Their clarity would cut like a double-edged sword through the theological confusions of ageing Western dissenters who still cannot bring themselves to accept fundamental church teachings - such as the 1968 *Humanae Vitae* encyclical - and who still think that being some kind of Guantanamero-singing-Che Guevara style revolutionary is what 'the spirit of Vatican II' was all about.

The clarity of PNG Catholics would be news to western deconstructionists seeking to recreate the church in their own image and likeness. There is unashamed fervour for the faith there, a clear recognition that Christ is the Way, the truth and the Life, the unique redeemer of the world and Lord of history. Western deconstructionists would realise, what some have forgotten, that the PNG Catholics are happy that some zealous missionary brought them the gospel and they in turn would like to pass the good news on.

## New from Chevalier Press

*By Paul Stenhouse, MSC*

\* Whatever Happened to the Relics of our Lord's Passion and Death?

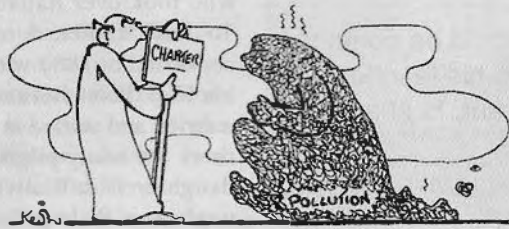
\$10 [incl. postage]

\* Whatever Happened to the twelve Apostles?

\$15 [incl. postage]

See advert on back page of this issue





## Stopping Pollution in its Tracks

As a cosmonaut one does not see frontiers – only a world, a fragile and vulnerable planet... The oceans have no frontiers, neither does the wind. There are no frontiers for pollution.

"I would like to see a global morality Charter proclaimed for the year 2000 – a wise way to begin the new century... There will be no second Noah's Ark."

– Valentina Tereshkova, first woman in space.

My recent visit to the not-so-well known area of Vanimo in Papua New Guinea was at to the invitation of seminary rector Father Marian Faliszek who asked me to teach the seminarians a psychology course from a Catholic perspective. Travelling with Gail Instance, director of the pro life organisation, Family Life International (which produces and distributes pro life materials) and who had been invited by Bishop Cesare Bonivento to set up an FLI branch in Vanimo and give pro life talks, it seemed strange to land in the middle of a shopping centre but that is in fact where we landed for that is where the airport is. In his 4WD, with rosaries hanging in the front, Bishop Bonivento took us for a tour of 'downtown' which took two minutes flat.

Vanimo is on the north west coast in Sandaun province, not far from the Sepik River, and is as far to the west as one can get in PNG. Go a bit further west and you are in Indonesia. With a population of about 100,000 (it is difficult to collect accurate census information in outlying areas of PNG) which is 33% Catholic, Vanimo is about 30kms from Irianjaya (under Indonesian rule) and not far from Aitape where the tsunami caused great loss of life in 2002. Along with the buildings, huts, street sellers of betel nut and palm trees, there is a large shipping port and fishermen out for a daily catch. Some Australian surfers have come here regularly to catch the huge waves from the Bismarck Sea (on Vanimo's coast) in monsoon season. A lot of time is spent 'hanging out' on the streets watching the comings and goings of other people and

wondering, if one does not already know, where others are going and why they are going there. As in many border regions there is a lot of movement between places - here especially between Aitape, Vanimo and West Papua and vice versa and one is aware that the Indonesian military presence on the border is not far away.

Vanimo's Bishop Cesare Bonivento, a PIME missionary, is intelligent, lively, compassionate, witty and a true apostolic pioneer. Apparently a priest in another part of PNG often jocularly asks friends to greet the Bishop with the words 'Say Hello to Cesare from Julius'.

The Bishop was meeting with PNG priest Father Martin when we arrived unfolding plans for the future. He oversees the 23 dedicated, young seminarians at St Charles Borromeo

## A Father's advice to his son

And death is ever, as I trowe\*  
the most certain thing that is;  
And nothing is so uncertain to know,  
as is the time of death, I wis\*:  
therefore, my son, think on this  
of all that I have said before  
And may Jesus bring us to his bliss  
that for us bore the crown of thorn.

Amen

\*Trow means 'know'; and so does 'wis'

This advice of a father to his son is taken from a MS (Lambeth 853) dating from 1430. Elsewhere in this mediaeval Catholic work entitled *How the wise man taught his son*, we find the advice: 'And look thou pay well that thou dost owe / and by other riches set no great price / For death will take both high and low / and then farewell all that there is'.

Major Seminary, the St John Vianney Minor Seminary (of around 80 students), is building a library, new seminary buildings, runs a radio communications network for his missionary priests and sisters and has a radio station next to his modest living quarters surrounded by palm trees. For his new library the Bishop is having entire collections of recently closed American seminaries shipped to his tropical diocese.

He has great plans for his radio station, which may prove to be the South Pacific's radio version of EWTN. To visit his missionaries he sometimes has to fly in a small plane or do treks on foot more adventurous than Crocodile Dundee could dream of. He speaks Pidgin and English as well as several other European languages. (In PNG, primary level education is in Pidgin, secondary level in English so these are the common languages for government, education and the missions).

He works closely with Fr Marian Faliszek, a Divine Word missionary from Poland who formerly lectured in moral philosophy at Madang's Divine Word University. Fr Marian radiates zeal, wisdom and a very droll humour. In the constant litany of unexpected situations in daily life he smiles with a peace 'beyond the world's understanding', is multilingual and says, chuckling of his bout of illness last year, 'I'm in the malaria club now'.

Father Pico Saw, the seminary vice-rector from Burma and Fr Tomy Thomas, the vicar general from India, likewise radiate persistent love and fervour for God's kingdom, are multilingual, give electrifying sermons and work closely with their Italian Bishop and Polish seminary rector. There are missionaries from several orders - The Missionary Sisters of Mary, Missionaries of St Frances de Sale (whose first priest Fr Joseph arrived not long ago), the Heralds of Good News, the Missionary Sisters of Mother Theresa of Calcutta, the local missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart and several others - all of whom work ceaselessly in the heat (Vanimo is only 2 degrees south of the equator) without ready access to phones, internet or TV.

There are no internet cafes - or indeed any cafes in Vanimo. If you want to get away from phones, Vanimo is the place to come. If you want to



contact someone forget it unless you want to walk. The streets are lined with people walking long distances to their destinations. There is no public transport. The only types of car are 4WDs.

Bishop Bonivento and Father Marian know that there is a global pro life missionary need to state clearly the Catholic moral teaching associated with contraception and abortion. The bishop has instructed his local priests to give compassionate but very clear direction on these matters. In fact Bishop Bonivento issued a pastoral in 2001 in which he asked all priests in his diocese to preach whole sermons unambiguously on Humanae Vitae. This is especially relevant as the United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], is very visible in PNG and as part of its 'help' is trying to implement a population control agenda through sterilisation and abortion.

If anything PNG, though exploited by various companies for its timber and raw materials, is underpopulated with huge remaining tracts of forests and land. As well, the UNFPA foists a kind of 'condom-mania' in the face of AIDS through the media and health organisations. As if condom distribution were the only possible solution to AIDS. It is well known that the successful widespread abstinence program in Uganda resulted in a rate of infection (from 18% to 5%) much lower than in condom promoting countries.<sup>2</sup> It is a message the Bishop of Vanimo is keen to spread, knowing that missionary activity cannot avoid the fundamental pro life issues, stating and restating the church's unchanging teachings in the current, pervasive, global assault on Catholic values.

Many PNG Catholics realise the UNFPA agenda is often deceptive - that its advocacy of abortion and sterilisation is inimical to Catholic moral values. While it disguises its agenda with the words' reproductive rights', it is precisely the rights of women that have not been respected in hospitals funded by international aid donors, where women have been sterilised after hasty assent to 'treatment' they did not understand.

In Vanimo such was the reception to the pro life seminar, a new Vanimo branch of Family Life International [FLI] was formed which will work with other local organisations and missionaries -

**A** pupil should be content  
to share his teacher's  
lot; the servant, to share  
his master's.'

- Jesus, Mt 10,25

such as Sister Lucy's local Family Life Centre, which currently teaches Natural Family Planning, provides counselling and assists families in various crisis situations and Sister Yoly - a missionary from the Philippines - who is teacher, counsellor, nurse and midwife at her bush mission station of Utai. The Catholic pro-life message will be beamed on Vanimo radio to far flung mission stations.

Vanimo has a whiff of first century Jerusalem about it. When bishop Bonivento recently organised a procession through the streets of Vanimo to 'proclaim the Divinity of Christ' to counteract the 'Da Vinci Code' hoax, a large ecumenical crowd of Christians turned up and the event was a sensation.

While giving the talks at parishes, on beaches and in lecture halls things were not always easy. On one occasion a swarm of insects attacked Gail, Fr Marian and myself on stage and we ended up whacking our arms and legs with great gusto in full view of the audience. Nor was anyone fazed by the appearance of a snake during a talk, which was promptly killed by a group of competent smiling teenagers who then sat down again to listen to the speaker (myself) who was relieved the snake had not reached the stage.

Journeys to some places involved balancing skills as roads and bridges in PNG are in various states of repair and disrepair. Like trapeze artists, Gail and I walked across some muddy logs without falling into the river as this was the only way (the bridge had collapsed) to get to Vanimo High School. 500 students at this government run high school patiently waited for their mud spattered guests. In this government school the students were gracious and receptive to pro life issues in a way unimaginable in Aussie schools.

One cannot go to Papua New Guinea without hearing that Blessed Peter To Rot died as a martyr there in 1945 rather than deny his faith as he was pressured to by the Japanese invaders

who took over Rabaul in 1942. Peter To Rot's father, a tribal leader, had converted in 1880 with many following his lead. Peter became a lay catechist, married and settled in Rabaul (to where there are many pilgrimages now). His daughter is still alive and his grand-nephew is Bishop Rochus of Kerema. When the Japanese army had imprisoned all the priests of the area Peter To Rot was left single-handedly to uphold his community, spiritually and materially. Eventually the invaders caught up with him too and decided to kill him by lethal injection. He was asked by the Japanese to revert to his tribal beliefs and to deny this detested 'western' Catholicism. Peter did not dialogue, discuss nuances or demythologise his beliefs. Though gracious with his captors he was a loyal son of the church and would not give an inch - being glad to uphold the truths of the church founded by Christ. When told by guards he was soon going to get an injection, he knew what this meant. From the stories told of him, Blessed Peter faced death in that profound calm with which martyrs gaze at the next world. The crowds who gathered after his death realised what had transpired - that they had a holy martyr in their midst.

While some of the West's cradle Catholics have fallen into catechetical torpor, if not moral anaesthesia, the Catholics of Vanimo are zealous about their faith, happy to be converts and would willingly testify to the change that the preaching of the Gospel produced in their lives. Perhaps there may come a time when they will re-evangelise their Australian neighbours, reawaken the sense of awe for spiritual things and in the words of James McAuley remind us of the 'men who walk within the fire of ceaseless prayer, impetuous desire.'<sup>3</sup> A journey to Papua New Guinea is a reminder of the deepest quest of the Christian soul.



1. Homily of Pope John Paul II at Port Moresby stadium on Monday May 7 1984  
[http://www.catholic.va/sermon/sermon\\_john\\_paul\\_ii/homilies/1984/19840507\\_messa-vocazioni\\_en.html](http://www.catholic.va/sermon/sermon_john_paul_ii/homilies/1984/19840507_messa-vocazioni_en.html)
2. <http://www.life.net/links/2005/oct/05161404.html>
3. James McAuley 'A Letter to John Dryden' Collected Poems (Angus and Robertson 1971).

WANDA SKOWRONSKA is a registered psychologist who works as a counsellor in inner city schools in Sydney. She has done voluntary work for the Catholic pro life organisation Human Life International.



## For Your Consideration

Director Christopher Guest and co-writer Eugene Levy turn their satirical beady eyes on actors suffering from Oscaritis. Using his mastery of the mockumentary, Guest shows how the fever intensifies as different cast members, making an independent movie *Home for Purim*, are nominated.

The premise challenges Guest's troupe to perform acting's most difficult task: using great skill to act badly. Here Catherine O'Hara, in a marvellous ensemble, is well, Oscar worthy.

Guest and Levy also put their acting talent where their words are, Guest as the *Home for Purim* director who prefers to work without a script, Levy as Morley Orfkin a cunning but hapless agent.

Due tribute is paid to Ricky Gervais and his exemplary mockumentary *Extras* by casting him as a diffident seeming but ruthless producer who contrives to de-emphasise the Jewish nature of *Home for Purim* by changing the title to *Home for Thanksgiving*.

The satire on showbiz is sliarp, particularly the barbs aimed at chat show hosts. This is a soufflé not a black pudding.

PG\*\*\*\*SFFV

## The Prestige

Magnificent plum duff of a movie, so rich it makes you feel you don't need to see another for a month. Hugh Jackman and Christian Bale co-star as a rival magicians, mad keen for fame and fortune in Victorian-era London.

Scarlett Johansson and Rebecca Hall are the conjuring women in their careers. Michael Caine, into his vintage years as a great character actor, is both narrator and the inventor of tricks.

Film itself is an illusion and director Christopher Nolan uses this to increase the tension of his plotline. It would spoil enjoyment of the duff to even hint at how he does this. Sufficient to say that the prestige is when the magician brings a trick off triumphantly. Nolan and his cast do so.

M\*\*\*\*NFFV

## The Departed

Tough? Director Martin Scorsese's cop-crim movie is so tough it should have been filmed on buffalo hide. And the lingo! Take out the non-deleted

## MOVIES

### By JAMES MURRAY

expletives and there would be enough dramatic pauses to turn Nobel Laureate Harold Pinter envy green.

The movie is set in Boston. A reading of the great George V Higgins would have shown the way to render the city's cop-crim dialogue without expletive overkill.

There again, overkill is the name of Scorsese's game. The movie is based on a Hong Kong original, *The Department*, which was scarcely a marshmallow and Scorsese goes all out to prove he is one helluva hard guy, directing other hard guys.

His cast is led by Jack Nicholson, playing an Irish-American crook able to refer disparagingly to the Knights of St Columba and to offer gratuitous insult to two priests and a nun.

Nicholson seems to be saying, 'You want acting? I'll show you acting.' He doesn't simply chew the scenery, he adds dollops of tomato sauce to every bite. His overwrought histrionics may be due to the casting of young lions Leonardo DiCaprio and Matt Damon playing a brace of cops sent into rival police forces, state and city, to mole on behalf of the state police chief (Martin Sheen) and the crook respectively.

Result: a dead heat. Though a rat does get a triumphal cameo in the final sequence.

MA15+\*\*\*NFFV

## The Last Trapper

Director Nicholas Vanier revives the spirit of Jack London in this true adventure about Norman Winther and his wife who make their living trapping animals in the Canadian Yukon.

To get his footage, Vanier spent a year living with the couple, observing them travelling with their sled dog team and building a log cabin from the ground up. His opening shot would make a greenie of a bitumen salesman and he includes a blizzard rescue scene straight out of Jack London, adding grizzlies, wolves and beavers plus touches that would not have been out of place in that splendid TV series *Northern Exposure*.

G\*\*\*\*SFFV

## Cave of the Yellow Dog

Director Byambasuren Davaa's quasi-documentary about the travels and travails of a nomad family in the plains of Mongolia has all the enthrallment of a folkstory enhanced by its non-professional cast.

Every frame is filled with the hard practicalities of life in a timber felt and canvas yurt diversified when the family's daughter Nansaa finds a dog Zochor and keeps him despite the opposition of her father. Yes, there are signs that the *Lassie* movies may have penetrated Mongolia but Davaa's rescue scene grips like a dog with a favourite slipper.

PG\*\*\*\*SFFV

## BoyTown

The band-reunion movie has been done before in the mockumentary, *This Is Spinal Tap*, and the feature, *Still Crazy*. But director Mick Molloy and his co-writer brother Richard put a larrikin spin on the genre that lifts it from being merely an extended TV comedy segment.

BoyTown is a quintet of singer-dancers: Benny G (Glenn Robbins), Tommy Boy (Mick Molloy), Bobby Mac (Bob Franklin), Carl (Wayne Hope) and Corey (Gary Eck).

If from time to time, they remind you of your children or grandchildren's favourite group The Wiggles that's part of the fun.

Lachy Hulme comes as record industry producer Marty Boomstein to put some chilli pepper into a potentially bland mix. And the Molloy brothers ensure that the band's pastel colours do not extend to the storyline by giving it a mordant, twist ending which would seem to ensure we're not into the start of a franchise - except of a course if there's a miracle at the box-office..

M\*\*\*SFFV

## Like Minds

Neo-Gothic thriller set somewhere north of the Yorkshire Pudding Line in England involving two boarding school lads Alex Bennett (Eddie Redmayne) and Nigel Colby (Tom Sturridge) in psychological games muddier and more lethal than rugby.

Toni Collette comes on as Sally Rowe, a forensic psychologist at odds with the investigating cop (and ex-lover)

McKenzie played with understandable asperity by Richard Roxburgh.

Writer/director Gregory Read piles references to dark deeds by Knights Templars, Free Masons and other horrors so high you half expect Frankenstein's monster to appear.

MA\*\*NFFV

### Breaking and Entering

The gap between cashed-up and down-and-out widens. The bridge between is criminality. This is the theme of director Anthony Minghella's drama set in London's Kings Cross as it undergoes seismic gentrification.

Involved are Will (Jude Law) a landscape architect and his colleague Sandy (Martin Freeman) whose HQ is a hi-tech converted warehouse, targeted by a gang of tearaways led by Miro (Rafi Gavron).

After a break-in too many, Will tracks Miro to his home and his mother Amera (Juliette Binoche), a Bosnian refugee seamstress. Will's meeting with her complicates his relationship with his concubine Liv (Robert Wright Penn) and their gymnast daughter Bea (Poppy Rogers).

To an extent the move smacks of sociology meets Mills and Boon. This is offset by Ray Winstone's portrayal of detective Bruno Fella who looks as if he is trying to be weird enough to appear on *The Bill*.

TBA \*\*\*NFFV

### A Good Year

Russell Crowe's acting skills are Protean. They do not, however, extend to the debonair. In other words, a Grant, he ain't, neither Cary, Hugh nor Richard E. Despite his getting the posh accent right, Crowe's appearance dims the piquancy of producer/director Ridley Scott's social comedy based on a novel by Peter Mayle, *Bard of Provence*.

The plot? Crowe is a London market enforcer, Max Skinner, (get it?). He inherits a chateau and vineyard from his Uncle Henry (Albert Finney) with whom he enjoyed idyllic childhood holidays.

Flashbacks of Max the child (Freddie Highmore) contrast vividly with Max, the hard-driving adult bond-trading while deciding whether to sell on the advice of his real estate agent friend Charlie (Tom Hollander) or stay

### Official Classifications key

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

### Annals supplementary advice

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

with the chateau, its retainers and neighbours, including Fanny (Marion Cotillard), and an interloper relative from California, Christie (Abbie Cornish).

Result? Witty, finely acted much ado about something important: wine. Provence is the real star, old trollop London, bedizened with glitter buildings, playing a supporting role.

Scott and scriptwriter Marc Klein could have made more of the market force tendency to destroy such relics of the High Middle Ages as Provence. And why France is correct to protect them with subsidies if only to maintain nostalgic locations for movie makers

M\*\*\*NFFV

### The Black Dahlia

Director Brian de Palma is not known for understatement. Inspired by James Ellroy's bestseller about an infamous murder he treads the murky streets of Los Angeles, he has difficulty restraining the clash between two boxer detectives Bucky and Lee (played with vigorous contrast by Josh Hartnett and Aaron Eckhart). He doubles on



the contrast with his *femmes fatales* Kay and Madelene (Scarlett Johansson and Hilary Swank). Mia (Elizabeth Short) is the would be star who auditions for death.

Not content, de Palma goes over the top into a derivative realm where *Sunset Boulevard* meets *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*

Fiona Shaw happened to her and she gives a performance that out Gloria Swanson's Joan Crawford and Bette Davis.

MA15+\*\*NFFV

### Flags of Our Fathers

Director Clint Eastwood is caught between a rock and a soft place, between action and meditation in his war movie inspired by the raising of the Stars and Stripes on Iwo Jima's Mount Suribachi by five US Marine Corps infantrymen and a Navy Corpsman (Medic) to signal victory in an epic three-week battle during World War II.

His action is grippingly realised (using locations in Iceland to recreate the black volcanic sands of Iwo Jima). His meditation on the nature of heroism in the context of a war-bond drive by the surviving marines Native American Ira Hayes (Adam Beach), Rene Cagnon (Jesse Bradford) and the Navy Corpsman John (Doc) Bradley (Ryan Phillippe) is less sure.

Eastwood suggests heroism is something imposed by a public that needs it. Not so. True heroism, in peace and war, is a quality human beings in extremity find within themselves, a quality Eastwood confuses with the celebrity imposed on the flag-raising survivors.

Clarification of the distinction would have meant more emphasis on the battlefield courage of Ira Hayes and Doc Bradley. Or inclusion of another kind of true hero, possibly a Jewish or Christian chaplain at their saving duty. Further clarification would have emphasised that true heroism has nothing to do with recognition.

When the Victoria Cross was instituted for supreme courage in the face of the enemy, some British Army units refused to make recommendations, arguing that no soldier should be specially noticed for doing his plain duty.

Despite his philosophical failure



Eastwood is such a master craftsman that his action-meditation never loses its power to enrall.

The movie is based on the book by Doc Bradley's son, James Bradley (working with Ron Powers). Despite the title's resonance of the hymn, *Faith of Our Fathers*, no explicit reference to religion is made.

Eastwood has made a companion movie from the Japanese perspective, *Letters from Iwo Jima*. It will be interesting to see how he deals with Shintoism and emperor worship, religious factors intrinsic to the courage of Japanese soldiers. Will he again Hollywoodise them into a generalised secularism?

MA15+\*\*\*NFFV

### Who Killed the Electric Car?

Blunt question. And writer/director Chris Paine is equally blunt in his response. There were accomplices but the principal assassins were members of the General Motors team, ironically, producers of the EV1, one of the most elegant, fastest and efficient cars to come off a production line when it made its debut in 1996.

Okay its early range was limited. But less limited than its plug-in life. GM withdrew it despite a campaign by enthusiast drivers. So adamant was GM management that an offer to buy remaining production models was turned down. Instead the pristine models were trucked off and pulverised.

Fast forward to now, and increasing concern about global warming. Revive the EV1? No way. Hydrogen cell vehicles are seen as the solution. Except, as Paine's experts allege, making hydrogen technology viable will take time, giving sections of the car industry (and the oil) industry another 10-20 years of gas-guzzle profits.

PG\*\*\*SFFV

### God On My Side

Easy targets don't make for outstanding documentaries. And Andrew Denton's target is a barn door: Christian fundamentalists attending the National Religious Broadcasters convention in the US.

He has fun with a ventriloquist's dummy. More fun with a religious artist. Most fun with the three McDuff brothers, evangelists whose wigs would

have been perfect for the *Mayflower*.

But it is they who signal the once-over-brightly nature of Denton's reportage. He is pressing them hard, seeking an equivalence between their belief in the Bible and Muslim belief in the Koran, when one of them says: 'Have you read the Koran?'

Denton rhubarb-rhubarbs before escaping into a quick edit. He shows signs here, and in his ABC *Enough Rope* programme, that he is on a journey of discovery. He would make it easier if he said where he is coming from: facile secularism by way of a Catholic mother and Jewish father Kit Denton.

The latter, a World War II British paratrooper, extended his physical courage into the moral sphere by deciding he was wrong in his published hero take on Breaker Morant and wrote another book debunking his first.

G\*\*SFFV

### The Story of My Life

Director Laurent Tirard builds a witty comedy romance on the premise of a ghost writer Raphael (Edouard Baer) who gets involved in the romantic life of one of his celebrity subjects, a star footballer Kevin (Clovis Cornillac). Raphael then finds himself caught between a new love Muriel (Marie-Josée Croze) and an old Claire (Alice Taglioni).

Baer adds a ruffled wryness to the wit and Marie-Josée Croze's charms do make it relatively easy to work out how the romance will end.

TBC\*\*\*NFFV

### Metal: A Headbanger's Journey

Fascinating documentary about the loudest sounds known to man outside a drop-hammer forge, the roar of a jumbo-jet engine on test or the artillery barrage that opened the Second Battle of Alamein.

Among its fascinations: all variations on Metal have a link with the music of Wagner. Here the director Sam Dunn's fan belief that metal is beneficent defeats his objectivity and that of his colleagues Scot McFadyen and Jessica Joy Wise.

Despite being monstered by a quasi-SS performer at a German mass concert, Dunn does not draw the obvious line between Wagner and Hitlerism and

between headbangery and an anarchy that included the burning of heritage Lutheran churches in Norway.

M\*\*NFFV

### Mrs Palfrey at the Claremont

Gives Joan Plowright a chance to conquer that part of Dameland not occupied by Judi Dench. She plays Mrs Palfrey, a widow, who moves into a London private hotel. There she makes the mistake of telling other residents of her grandson Desmond. When he fails to appear, she substitutes a charming would-be writer Ludo (Rupert Friend)

Genteel teatime and scenic tour time except that director Dan Ireland (drawing on Elizabeth Taylor's novel) overdoes the saccharine with references to *Brief Encounter*, a movie Ludo has not seen though, implausibly, he can refer to Terence Rattigan's *Separate Tables* while creating from the relationship his first novel.

PG\*\*\*SFFV

### The Caiman

There should be more comedies if this immediacy and brio. Writer/director Nanni Moretti gives us a movie within a movie about Bruno Bonomo (Silvio Orlando) a slapdash producer failing on both the fronts that count: professional and personal.

While he scratches for money to complete a scripted B-grader, life and Teresa (Jasmine Trinca) presents him with another possibility, a satire about Italy's uno numero Silvio Berlusconi (Michele Placido).

Which does he complete? That's the lure and the laughter of the witty plot.

TBC\*\*\*NFFV

### Irresistible

The obvious response to this title must be, er, resisted. To her credit writer/director Ann Turner makes no play with the usual trappings of local suburbia. movies. No backyard barbies. Instead Susan Sarandon comes on as Sophie Hartley, successful illustrator and mother under pressure to complete a new book. Craig (Sam Neill) is her equivalently successful executive husband

Enter Mara (Emily Blunt) and the plot thickens into mysterious disappearance of subjects and objects.

Paranoia? Or persecution? Turner twists the twists but could have been less stingy with clues as to what drives Mara.  
M\*\*\*NFFV

**The Nightmare Before Christmas**

Talk about a marketing double whammy. Tim Burton's new cartoonesque puppet musical contrives to combine Hallowe'en and Christmas in one plot. Plus it's in 3-D.  
G\*\*\*SFFV

**Trust the Man**

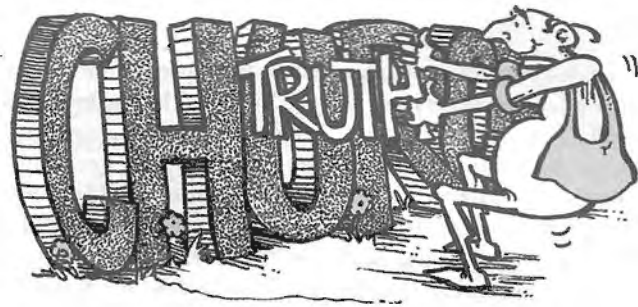
Writer/director Bart Freundlich's romantic comedy set among Manhattan couples, whose father is Woody Allen, starts jaunty but goes lame as he piles on the shtiks. The core of his superlative ensemble cast, Julianne Moore, David Duchovny, Billy Crudup and Maggie Gyllenhaal, personal friends, give off a sense that they are enjoying their romp, risky because audiences can think they are witnessing a private joke they don't quite get. And Freundlich is so enamoured of his comedy he can't let it go, bolting on a ramshackle ending  
TBC \*\*\*NFFV

**Suburban Mayhem**

Director Paul Goldman, working from Alice Bell's script gives us a bleak household behind the double brick facades of suburbia. Emily Barclay inhabits the character Kat, single mother, who is not one to tiptoe hrough the tulips when she can trash lives yet come up smelling of celebrity. Apropos. More might have been done to credit Greg Bearup who wrote the factual magazine feature from which the script derives.  
MA15+\*\*NFFV

**The CaterpillarWish**

Director Sandra Sciberras sets her dark romance in Robe on the coast of South Australia. Susan (Susie Porter) is a single mother with a daughter Emily (Victoria Thaine). Around them swirl the secrets of the small town in which Emily seeks to establish the identity of her father. Porter illumines the darkness and is supported by a strong ensemble cast that includes Robert Mamone, Wendy Hughes and Phillip Quast  
M\*\*NFFV



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*Keeping count of thuribles and incense*

## SANDS ON THE SHORE

By JAMES MUHREN, MHM

**I**T may seem an unenviable job, but the large brigade of 'sand tellers' does not think so. Ever since Abraham had been told that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the seashore, they had been there. We do not talk now of the first group of star gazers, but rather of the second, of those who have to count the grains of sand.

The great accounting Archangel Auditiel had devised a simple system by which the sands of the shores everywhere were divided into quite manageable plots, just a few millions of grains in each plot. On a particular day when there was a kind of holiday atmosphere in heaven, they would go out with their sand buckets to count their allotted space. It was quite fun really. They were free to

dress as they liked. The guardian angels of those saints who had been in the fashion business on earth as designers or clothes merchants sometimes wore the most atrocious caps and hats. It could be quite hot on some of the beaches. There were also the clever angels who would take all kind of counting machines along,

even the latest of the latest abacus. Computers galore of course.

And do not forget the picnic baskets. It is no use to count the grains on the shore for just an hour or two. You have to take a whole day for it. And when you get hungry you must be able to nibble a bit. Moreover the lunch hour would be just twenty minutes for no precious time could be wasted.

Then floating from the beach to beach and from plot to plot would be Abraham, the Father of many nations. He was easily recognizable not only because of his veritable age, but also because a long procession of Israelites and Ishmaelites and Jews and Catholics and Christians of all denominations and Muslims of all sorts would follow him. He was always preceded by Isaac who carried the long knife – now an





ornament of great value – with which his Father had wanted to sacrifice even his only son out of reverence for the one, true and holy God.

The donkey would be walking in the procession loaded with the firewood. Actually the firewood was heavenly firewood and that is quite light and transparent, so the animal would not be tired out by the long trip from cloud to cloud.

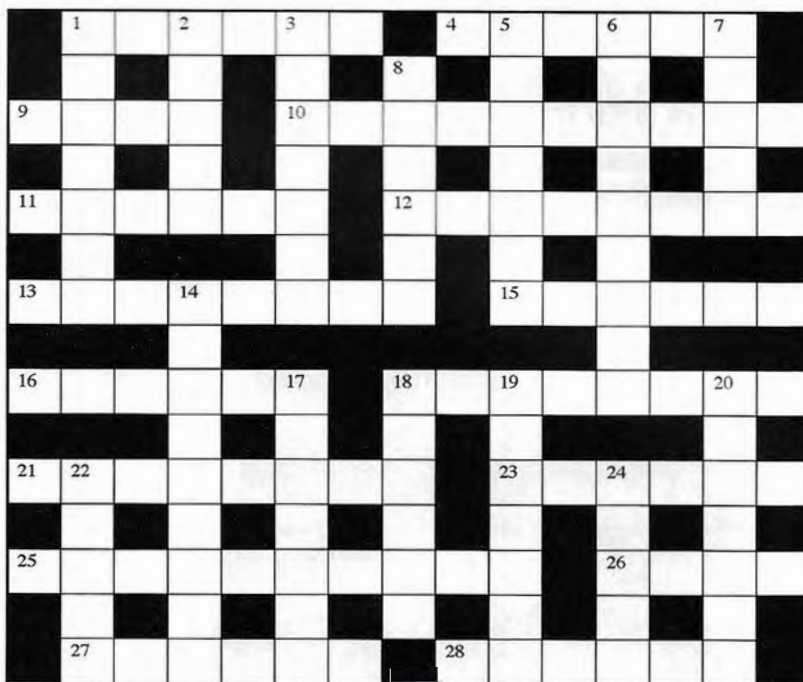
There would be burnt offerings, of course, and to facilitate this some fire-angels had lit nice little fires all along the way. True to say many angels liked to act as fire-angels – even angels think it fun to play with fire – and because there were too many of them, the great Council of the Archangels had decided that those who could not be fitted in, would be allowed to manage the fires of the many thuribles used in the churches in honour of the Blessed Sacrament.

It was deeply regretted that in some countries his great symbolic act of adoration had been abolished. 'No more charcoal and a lot less incense' was the specious argument that the angels had overheard. What nonsense! Surely these days there was hardly a parish that could not afford a bit of incense and charcoal. You could grind the incense yourself if you wanted to and you could make your own charcoal. Easy enough, where there is a will there is a way. This piece of human wisdom comes actually from the judgement-angels who have to assess the pros and cons of any activity on earth. Let us now leave the angels to their counting. They will be at it till the end of time. A few more years and you can watch them yourself.



FATHER JAMES MUHREN is a Mill Hill Missionary who has devoted his life to working among the people of Borneo, principally in the Parish of St Mary in Sib. He is now retired and living in Holland.

## ANNALS CRYPTIC No. 9



### ACROSS CLUES

1. He moves on board and bosses priests (6)
4. Gregory's on ship with very small spots (6)
9. Place of twelve springs in "Exodus" about 1.609 kilometres back (4)
10. Patient Tom restored by enticement (10)
11. Maid of Orleans not applicable as one of the women (according to Luke) at the tomb of Christ (6)
12. Human beings collectively responsible for Eve's ruin perhaps (8)
13. Egyptian sun god joins first Socialist Russian President to find monk (8)
15. E's inserted into sacred book of Islam as one of Japan's Chosen people (6)
16. First union state covers sculpture (6)
18. More than enough quoted for this clerical garment (8)
21. Decide at change and consecrate (8)
23. Pine for Capone prayerbook (6)
25. Recipient of letter from Paul rebuilds rich nation (10)
26. Morally wrong and wicked found in the village (4)
27. Used for sharpening saint when upright (6)

28. Monster slayer to stuff himself around start of Easter (6)

### DOWN CLUES

1. It's got a clapper on a Roman goddess of war (7)
2. He helped to carry cross in Assisi monastery (5)
3. Rejected person thrown father (7)
5. Father to con Irish patron (7)
6. The card A1 dealt in large church (9)
7. Catches sight of 4 across (5)
8. Assail little devil tossing gnu (6)
14. Aristocratic ancient Roman patriot loses Old Testament and upsets Cain (9)
17. Paul's assistant tears apart America (7)
18. Sheriff drops off first female descendant of Mohammed (6)
19. 14 down joins Church of England for love affair (7)
20. Carrol's girl supports ends of cloth with goblet (7)
22. Adam's grandson gets one up on chief (5)
24. Curse Satan initially leading evangelists into armed conflict (5)

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## Psychology Grows Up

One sign of the field's new maturity is the emergence of "positive psychology." Traditional psychology focused on traumas and pathologies – and bred the victim mentality and flight from personal responsibility that now afflict American society. Positive psychology, built on the research of Martin Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania, seeks to balance the discipline's focus by looking at "traits that promote happiness and well-being, as well as character strengths such as optimism, kindness, resilience, persistence, and gratitude." according to Vitz. In making this shift, he writes, therapeutic psychology "has moved not only from science to philosophy, but also from the past and its effects to the future and our purposes, from mechanical determinism to teleology."

At the same time, therapeutic psychology has become far friendlier to religion than it was in its younger days. Indeed, "many clinical psychologists today are themselves religious." Ironically, that friendliness has something to do with the democratization of therapy, which has brought psychologists into greater contact with ordinary Americans.

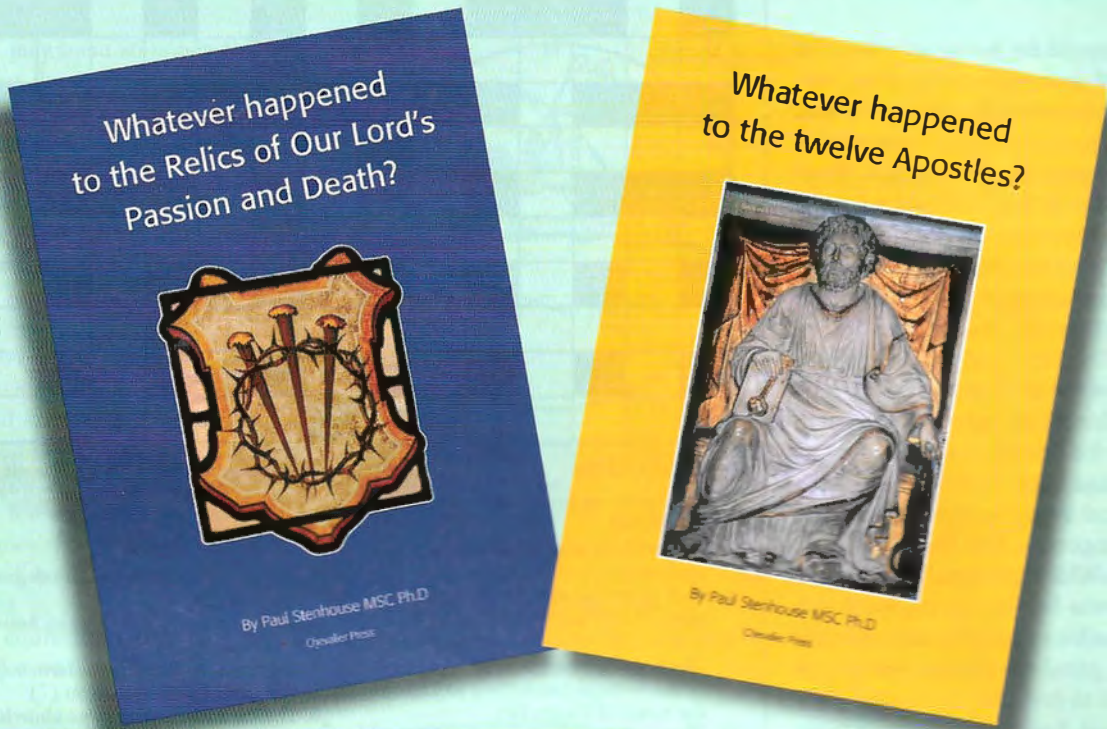
Vitz sees the possibility of a new "transmodern" psychology that incorporates the wisdom of traditional religious and philosophical thinking in guiding people to better lives. It would be a "smaller and humbler" discipline, but far more useful to its public than the overeager adolescent ever was.

- 'Psychology in Recovery,' by Paul C. Vitz, in *First Things* March 2005

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