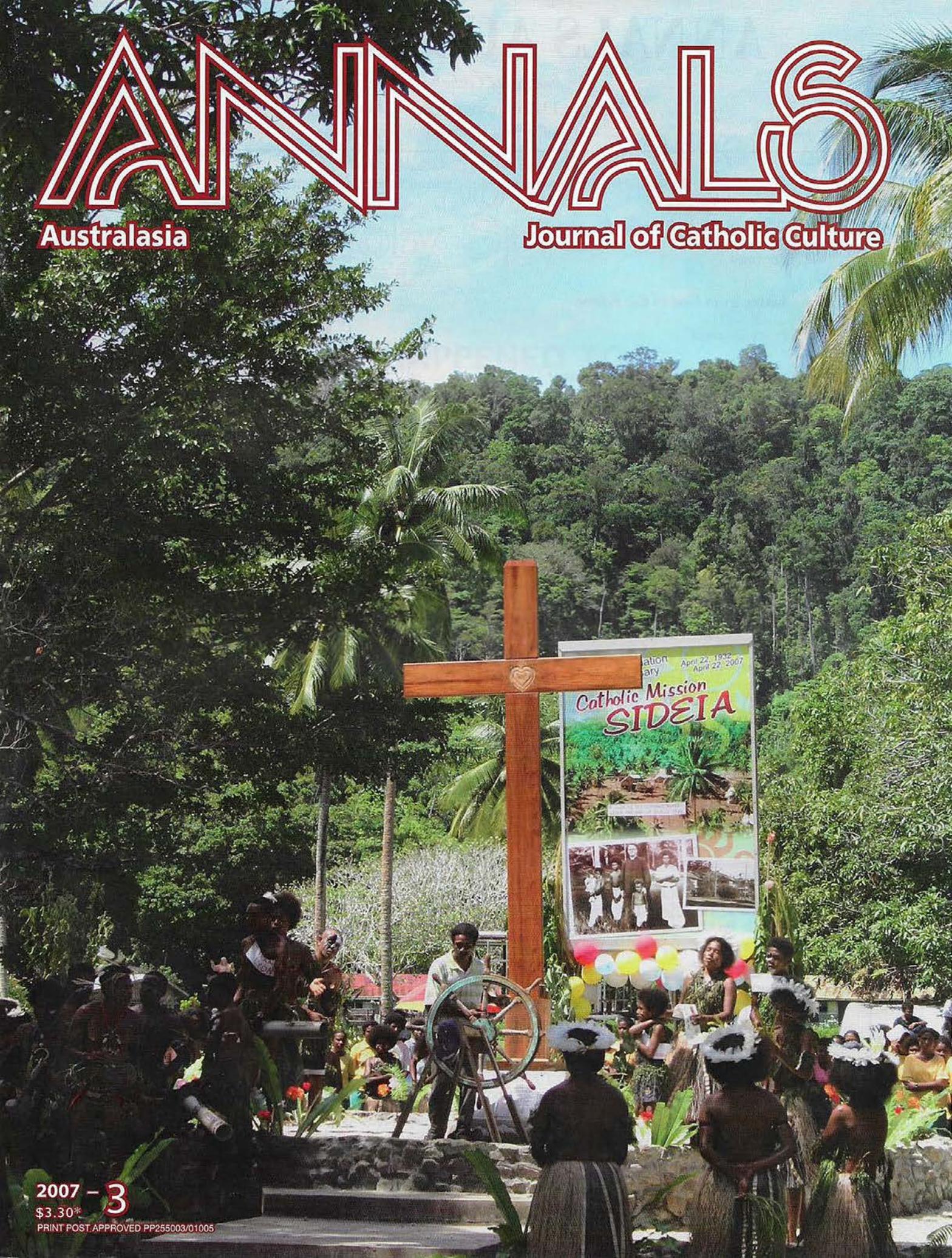


# ANNALS

Australasia

Journal of Catholic Culture



2007 - 3

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# ANNALS AUSTRALASIA

*Journal of Catholic Culture*

Volume 118, Number 3, April/May 2007

[Sunday Year C/weekdays Year II]

*Australia's Oldest Catholic Magazine*

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

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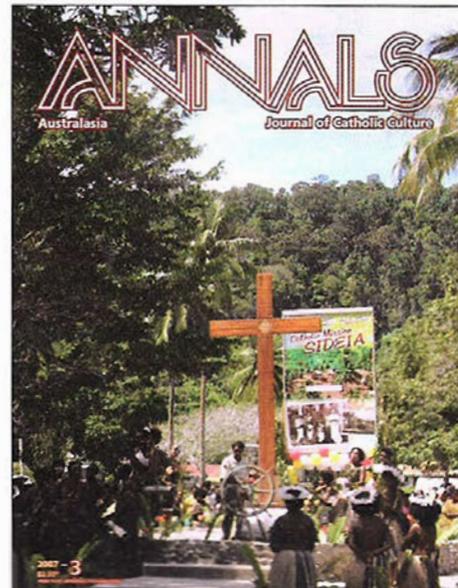
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*Front Cover:* People from Sideia Island, Eastern Papua New Guinea, re-enacting the arrival there of Father Francis Lyons, MSC on April 22, 1932. Father Lyons wasn't the first Catholic priest to visit the Island. 328 years before – on April 28, 1625 – the Franciscan Chaplain of the Spanish ship *Elmoranta* under the command of Captain Luis Váez de Torres, offered Mass there when the ship dropped anchor close to Sawasawaga Passage, Milne Bay. The Cross in the background is a replica of the World Youth Day Cross, made for the diocese out of local rosewood. Representatives of youth from Milne Bay Province hope to attend World Youth Day in Sydney in 2008.

*Back Cover:* School children, their teachers, dancers and well-wishers waiting at the end of the jetty at Sideia Island, to welcome the Papal Nuncio to Papua New Guinea, their own Bishop of Alotau, the Father General of the Rogationist priests, and other visitors from PNG and overseas on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the first Missionaries of the Sacred Heart to Sideia Island.

Cover Photos: 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: 1:1 ff; written around 70AD.

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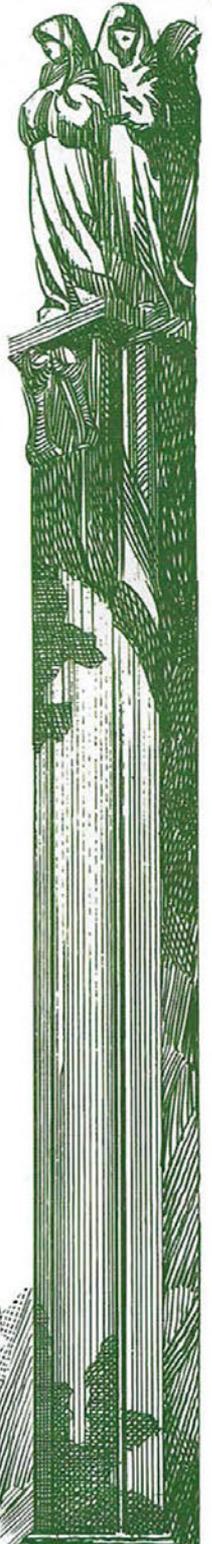


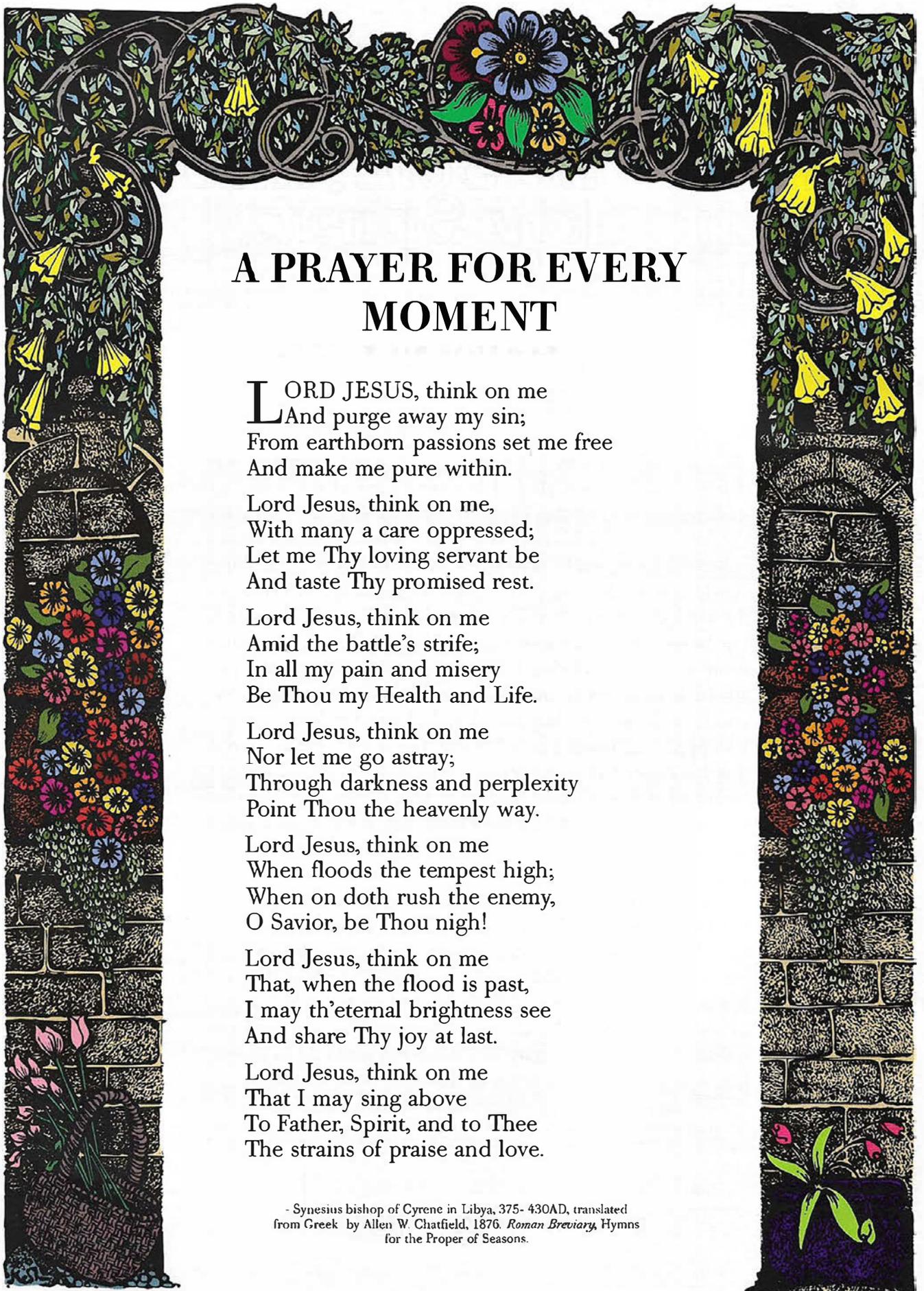
In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and  
of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

## WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MAN?

It was dark. Just as I was reaching a street corner which faced a large open place, I became aware of the sound of muffled, persistent sobs. I looked round, and I saw sitting on the pavement, with his back to the wall, a little boy, a peasant's child, who was softly crying his eyes out. He was sobbing slowly, not loudly, but persistently; not whining, or crying in the kind of way children cry when they fall down or quarrel, but he seemed to be sobbing out of the fullness of his little heart. He was not trying to attract attention, nor did he pay attention to me or to any one else. He seemed quite unconscious of the surrounding world, and plunged in his own grief. I stopped and asked him what was the matter. He answered that his father had sent him to the town to buy something (I forget what it was), and had given him the money, and that the money had been taken away from him. It was quite a small sum. He was afraid to go home. I at once gave him the money, and the little boy stood up, dried his eyes, and crossed himself. Then, without a word, he went home. He thanked God: it was not necessary to thank any one else. And I never saw anything like the expression of gratitude on his face as he crossed himself; but to me he did not say one word. What was the use? It was God who had come to his rescue, not I; you might just as well thank the violin after a concert for the beauty of the music. This is only the story of a child; but the child in Russia, just as anywhere else, is father of the man.

- The Hon. Maurice Baring, [1874-1945] *The Mainsprings of Russia*,  
Thomas Nelson and Sons, London 1914, p.50. Baring became a Catholic in  
1909 and was a close friend of Belloc and Chesterton.





## A PRAYER FOR EVERY MOMENT

**L**ORD JESUS, think on me  
And purge away my sin;  
From earthborn passions set me free  
And make me pure within.

Lord Jesus, think on me,  
With many a care oppressed;  
Let me Thy loving servant be  
And taste Thy promised rest.

Lord Jesus, think on me  
Amid the battle's strife;  
In all my pain and misery  
Be Thou my Health and Life.

Lord Jesus, think on me  
Nor let me go astray;  
Through darkness and perplexity  
Point Thou the heavenly way.

Lord Jesus, think on me  
When floods the tempest high;  
When on doth rush the enemy,  
O Savior, be Thou nigh!

Lord Jesus, think on me  
That, when the flood is past,  
I may th'eternal brightness see  
And share Thy joy at last.

Lord Jesus, think on me  
That I may sing above  
To Father, Spirit, and to Thee  
The strains of praise and love.

- Synesius bishop of Cyrene in Libya, 375- 430AD, translated  
from Greek by Allen W. Chatfield, 1876. *Roman Breviary*, Hymns  
for the Proper of Seasons.

*Seventy-five years of Catholicism in Eastern Papua*

# FAITH AND HOPE IN JOY, WHERE BIRDS OF PARADISE FLY

By PAUL STENHOUSE MSC



IN perfect weather, the Catholic Mission boat the *Morning Star*, filled to capacity with visitors, or people returning home, anchored off Eastern Papua's Sideia Island late in the morning, on April 22, 2007.

As the tide was low we couldn't reach the jetty. But we could see in the distance the crowd of adults and children that had been patiently awaiting our arrival. The excited buzz of anticipation on the *Star* was audible.

Sideia is 10 km east of the tip of the Papuan mainland, and 10 km due east of the former colonial administration centre on tiny Samarai island. The passage called *China Strait* separates it and neighbouring Basilaki and Sariba Islands, from the mainland. The trip from Alotau, in Milne Bay, capital of the Milne Bay Province of PNC, had taken us almost four hours.

Though Sideia has numerous peninsulas and deep bays, the sea around the Catholic Mission is not navigable by deep draught vessels, except at high tide.

In fact, the more than two-hundred-and-fourteen acre site that was to become the Catholic Mission Sideia – a generous gift from Mrs Patching of Samarai Island to Archbishop Alain de Boismenu, MSC of Yule Island – was initially not considered suitable for settlement because it was so swampy and had a poor approach from the sea.

The last time I had seen the island was March 7, 1969, when I attended the ordination to the priesthood of Father John Sinou, a Fergusson Island boy who had studied in the Catholic school at Sideia, and gone on to the seminary at Bomana, Port Moresby. At that time, Sideia was the centre of the Catholic Mission in Eastern Papua. The

Cathedral and residence of the then-Bishop John Doyle, MSC, were on the Island.

We waited patiently for the *Miva*, a smaller mission vessel with a more shallow draught, to pull alongside and take off our passengers, amongst whom were the Papal Nuncio to PNG, Archbishop Francisco Montecillo Padilla, and Bishop Francesco Panfilo, SDB, bishop of Alotau-Sideia.

Along with Father Giorgio Nalin, Father General of the Rogationist Fathers and several of his priests, we were coming to Sideia to celebrate with

the local villagers, the school-children, priests, sisters and teachers, the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival on Sideia of the first Catholic priest in modern times – Father Francis Lyons, MSC – on April 22, 1932.

Father Lyons wasn't the first Catholic priest to visit the island.

Three-hundred and twenty-eight years before – on April 28, 1605 – a Spanish ship, the *Elmoranta*, under the command of Captain Luis Vázquez de Torres, dropped anchor on the south side of an island close to Sawasawaga Passage, Milne Bay. Torres named the island '*Island of St Bonaventure*,' possibly because the ship's chaplain was a Franciscan like St Bonaventure. Today that Island is known as *Sideia*.

It was customary for the chaplains of Spanish vessels to go ashore to offer Mass where the ship anchored. So it is presumed that the priest on board the *Elmoranta* went ashore on Sideia and offered the first Mass on Papuan soil. However that may be, Mass would certainly have been offered in Papuan waters on board ship, and the chaplain would undoubtedly have gone ashore at some time.

When Father Lyons arrived, he was accompanied by a Kuni native Camillo Loula, a Yule Island-trained young woman Basilia Obi, with her husband Solomon, two young children, and a young man, Edimodo.

The seven of them had sailed aboard a very small launch, through the reefs and dropped anchor in a quiet little bay on Sideia Island with large and heavily timbered hills rising abruptly from the foreshore. Mangrove trees grew tall and straight around the coastline. Coral reefs abounded in front of the selected Mission site and made the approach to the anchorage very tricky – as we discovered



The canoe that met the *Morning Star* for the re-enactment of the arrival of Father Lyons at Sideia on April 22, 1932



Section of the crowd of young people and adults who awaited the arrival of the Papal Nuncio, Bishop Panfilo, Father Nalin and the boatload of parishioners from Alotau

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seventy-five years later to the day, when we arrived at low tide.

Father Lyons described the manner of his arrival as follows:

'When I surveyed the launch with its mixed cargo, and glanced across at the little opening in the mangroves where I presumed our landing place would be, and then looked at the one crazy canoe which a native had brought across to convey us to the shore. I wondered what the result would be. There were packing cases and all kinds of lumber collected in and around Samarai ... not to speak of the nanny goats ... to be transferred to dry land; and the old canoe seemed to say: 'Well, it all depends on me'. I can still see those goods making the perilous crossing. Anyhow, everything arrived safely at that little opening. There was water on one side of us and bush, bush, on the other three - a wilderness in every sense of the word. Night was coming on. It did not take very long to find the sago-palm dwelling that a native boy had erected some time earlier in view of the coming of the Missionary.'

How different was the reception we received in 2007 from what greeted the captain, chaplain and crew of the Elmoranta in 1605; or Father Lyons in 1932.

Many hundreds of villagers and school-children, dancers, sisters, priests and brothers, waited at the jetty to greet the Papal Nuncio, Bishop Francesco, the Father General and the crowd of well-wishers who accompanied them. Visitors had come from neighbouring islands. School-children looked very neat in their uniforms. Dancers and musicians proved that the local and Catholic culture could blend harmoniously and joyfully.

Children held up a banner that read: 'Foundation Anniversary of Catholic Mission Sideia: April 22, 1932 - April 22, 2007. We thank you and love you with all our hearts.'

On the previous evening, after Mass in the Sacred Heart Cathedral at Alotau, a replica of the World-Youth-Day Cross carved from Papuan rosewood, had been solemnly taken by some fifty young Milne Bay Catholics, to Sideia by boat, where it awaited its installation and blessing in a special ceremony.

Father Michael Sims, MSC, Superior of the MSC Community in Eastern Papua, and for twenty years parish



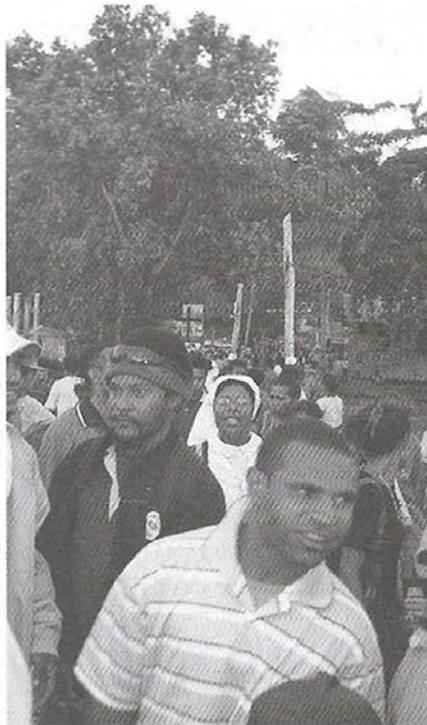
After the Anniversary Mass: R-L: Bishop Panfilo SDB, bishop of Alotau-Sideia, Archbishop Padilla and Father Nalin

priest of Sideia, was taken off the *Morning Star* aboard a native canoe, and ceremonially landed at the spot where Father Lyons probably made landfall.

Before the Mass, the arrival of Father Lyons was recalled in song and dance, and much was made of his description of the 'crazy canoe' that met him and his companions seventy-five years ago.

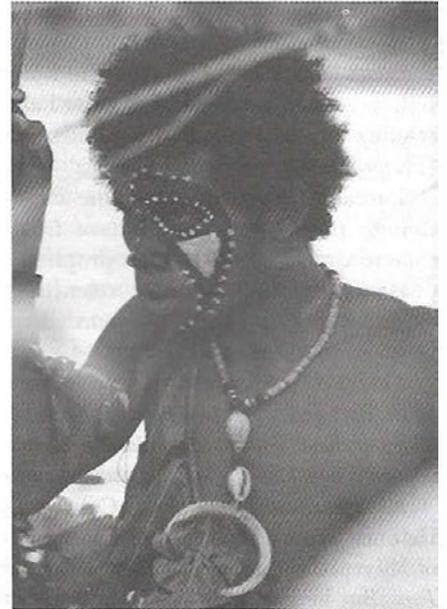
The Papal Nuncio was principal celebrant at the Mass which was enthusiastically attended by close to a thousand people who crammed into the former Cathedral which had been refurbished for the occasion. During the Mass the work of pioneer MSC priests and brothers, and OLSH and MSC Sisters, local catechists, lay people and especially lay-missionaries, was recalled and justly praised.

The strongest impression that I took away from the celebrations organized by the people of Sideia, their bishop, priests, religious and teachers, was one of optimism, hope and deep faith.



Section of the crowd of Milne Bay parishioners waiting on the jetty at Sideia to return to Alotau on the *Morning Star*

Today, a third of PNG's population of six million is Catholic. Catholics occupy positions of trust in all the professions, in the bureaucracy and in government in this, one of the world's least explored countries with more than eight-hundred-and-fifty indigenous languages – more than 12% of the world's total – and with less than 20% of its people living in urban centres. The very flag of the independent nation of Papua New Guinea is based on a design submitted by Susan Kanike, a Catholic school-girl from the MSC mission school on Yule Island.



One of the dancers who took part in the ceremonial greeting, and the re-enactment of Father Lyons's arrival on Sideia

For years the MSC and OLSH congregations have worked tirelessly for the people of Papua New Guinea. With the passing of time, they have been joined in the work of evangelization and spiritual renewal in Eastern Papua by local diocesan and MSC priests, by the Salesians, by the PIME Fathers and Brothers, by the Rogationist Fathers and Brothers, and by many congregations of Sisters.

*Annals* was founded in 1889 to assist their work. I was happy to be able to see for myself the fruit of the labour of so many faithful workers in the Lord's vineyard – many of them long-dead. I value the opportunity I've had to appreciate first hand the enthusiasm and dedication of the generous priests, religious and laity who carry on their work and have come to replace them.



*P. P. McGuinness vs. the Almighty*

# LETTER FROM GOD TO THE EDITOR

By PETER COLEMAN



DEAR PADDY,

I see that you have been criticising Me again (*Quadrant*, March, 2007 and *The Australian* (24/25 February)). The holy scriptures say I am not mocked, but I am sending you this rejoinder for publication (I hope) in your splendid journal.

I usually keep in touch with the world though the Church. But I have from time to time spoken through prophets, peasants, poets, composers, scientists, even film makers. I rarely use journalists. I once used a donkey.

I recently hurled a small thunderbolt at Dr Richard Dawkins' best-seller, *The God Delusion*. The London *Sunday Times* reported it at Christmas.

My amanuensis was John Cornwell. He once wrote a foolish book about one of My representatives. He called it *Hitler's Pope*. But he is a good writer and came highly recommended.

For this letter to *Quadrant*, I am using Peter Coleman as an amanuensis. He is not John Cornwell, but he is doing his best.

I write to you the more readily because one of your editorial innovations has been to open *Quadrant's* pages to Christian argument. Even *Quadrant's* famous founding editor, Jim McAuley, did not do that. He was a recent convert to My cause and he did not want even to seem to be using the magazine for propaganda. He also knew that many, perhaps most, of his readers were – not to put too fine a point on it – atheists. He did not want to scare or enrage them by telling them the facts of life too frankly.

You have no such scruples. You have published a number of My apologists including Cardinal George Pell, Bishop Tom Frame, Dean Phillip Jensen and Fr. Paul Stenhouse. You will surely extend your tolerance to Me?

Your recent polemic against Me is a subtle piece of work. You begin by

putting in a good word for Me. You mention the “enormous” heritage I have passed on to civilisation in art and culture, science and philosophy. Then in sociological mode, you give Me a tick for providing the community with “a kind of social glue.” You credit Me with “some social utility”, even if not much.

You go on to bad-mouth the atheists as well. When you mention Dr Richard Dawkins, the words that leap from your pen are: ignorant, superficial, one-sided, simple-minded, intolerant, and hate-motivated.

You also note that, in My twentieth century, the most powerful atheists were the blood-soaked totalitarian dictators, from Hitler and Stalin to Mao Zedong.

They set out to destroy all belief in Me everywhere.

Yet when it comes to the crunch, you side with the atheists. You are careful not to ally yourself with “half-educated journalists”. But your final verdict on *The God Delusion* is that it is “good rollicking stuff”. Despite your many criticisms of Dr Dawkins, you conclude: “Essentially, of course, he is right. There is no good reason to believe in a monotheistic god.”

All that the seekers of truth have going for them, you say, is Science: “Those who like to speculate that there are avenues to knowledge other than those offered by science are having themselves on.”

You present three lines of argument against Me. First you brush aside the philosophers and theologians who stick up for Me. For example, you see the argument from design as “dubious” at best. It depends on physical phenomena which scientists have not yet explained. In time, you say, they will.

This is not the place to try to sum up, in a word or two, the issues that the world's great thinkers have argued about for centuries. Enough to say that the argument from design is not made redundant by science. It simply considers the laws discovered by science to have been designed. But if St Augustine will not satisfy you, it is unlikely you will listen to anyone else now.

Next you turn to those believers in Me who rely not on argument or theology but on religious experience. They include converts, mystics, zealots and ecstasies. You reject their evidence. It is “worthless”. They are neurotics, suitable cases for treatment, best explained by psychologists and neurologists.

Your criticism goes too far. There are of course cases of religious delusion. But a certain caution is sensible. Why not also say that irreligious or atheistic or pantheistic experience is neurotic? Much of it surely is. The primary question is: is it true?

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There must be an emotional core in faith. Religion is not entirely intellectual. *Le coeur a ses raisons etc.* People often turn to Me in emotional crises—when they have suffered a heart-breaking loss, or when they become acutely aware of their sins, or when they develop a sense of the here-today-gone-tomorrow nothingness of worldly life. (*Le silence eternal de ces espaces infinis m'effraie.*)

Do you really believe this quest for reconciliation is merely a matter for neurologists? I do not believe you do.

Finally you consider, and reject, those who accept Me as the true basis for morality. You follow the French mathematician, Laplace, who said “I have no need of the hypothesis.” If there is a case, you seem to concede, for natural law as the basis of morality and as a restriction on “humanity’s propensity for evil”, it can only be a secular law.

This a weightier argument. There are indeed good people who follow a secular code and not Mine. But do you really think that all mankind can or will? I am sure you do not.

So what are you left with? As you see it, most atheists and nearly all Christians talk nonsense. You do not expect much from the human race. You quote Kant that, from the crooked timber of humanity, no straight thing can be made. (By the way, why not just say Original Sin. It’s quicker.)

So you are left with a plea for tolerance. To quote you:

The most that can properly be demanded of any religion or ideology is that it be tolerant, if not respectful, of other religions and of non-believers. The same should be demanded of atheists. By all means ridicule or criticise religion. But it should not be forgotten, as Dawkins forgets, that many highly intelligent people have believed in some kind of god and contributed to world civilisation in the process.

If there is a patronising note in the last sentence, your eloquence balances it. But however important tolerance will always be, it is never enough. You do not demand tolerance of the Nazi holocaust or Pol Pot’s genocide or Stalin’s Gulag. Civilisation is the basis of tolerance – and it protects itself by being intolerant of evil, just as religion protects itself by being intolerant of error.

Which brings us back to what you call “some kind of god”. That is, back to Me.

## Catholic Education 1855

The children [at the Catholic school at Darlinghurst, Sydney.] read and write indifferently, and have a very slight acquaintance with arithmetic. Grammar and Geography appears not to have been taught. Their knowledge of Scripture, and of the catechism also, is but small. The children are not regular nor punctual. They are tolerably clean, but rude and disorderly.’

— Extract from the Report of the Select Committee on Education, 1855.

Let me put to you another consideration which is not decisive but which some find persuasive. There is little point in simply asserting My existence. Atheists proclaim deniability. There are no certain truths, they point out. Every proposition may be doubted. Certitude is a psychological condition, and not a property of propositions.

There is in short no unchallengeable naturalistic proof of My existence. At best, philosophy or theology lead to Pascal’s Wager: Why not have a bet on Me? If I exist, the punter wins eternal life. If I do not, he is no worse off than the unbelievers.

I have never appreciated Pascal’s Wager. It reduces Me to a shrewd investment. It is an appeal to cautious and canny atheists.

So what do you think of the following alternative? It does not rely on the invisible. It appeals rather to My visible manifestation – that is, to the Church. It asks you to consider its influence on the

world from its foundation. This argument is not theological or philosophic but historical.

Despite all the well documented corruption, crimes, sins, failures and hypocrisies of so many churchmen and Christians, the Church has had an enormous, overwhelmingly beneficial and revolutionary influence on mankind.

Its appeal to the individual soul, ITS BELIEF IN OBJECTIVE TRUTH, its teaching of peace and equality, its doctrine that the first shall be last, its call to forgive one’s enemies, its visions of hope and glory and of eternal loss, have changed the world. From its beginnings it has opposed war, infanticide, racism and misogyny. (Let us leave the Crusades for another day.) It created the university and the hospital. It nurtured science (despite the Galileo fiasco) and the self-governing society. It inspired the greatest art, music and literature.

Magnificent worldly achievements are not the primary purpose of the Church. It exists to redeem mankind. But do you really believe that such wonders could have emerged from such crooked timber without My guidance?

I suspect you do. And I do not think you will change your mind. Once atheism gets into a man’s bones, it is almost impossible for him to return to the faith. He will always find a naturalistic explanation of everything. If he tries to open his mind to the supernal, his naturalism will blot it out. The convert, who seems to disprove this, often turns out to have been a secret believer all the time.

But not in every case. There is always, as you observe, the leap of faith. One of *Quadrant’s* earlier editors wrote (not in *Quadrant*):

And when the heart is once disposed to see,

Then reason can unlock faith’s treasury.

I am not without hope. You are after all an old Riverview boy.

I remain,  
As always,

God.

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PETER COLEMAN is a former editor of *The Bulletin* and *Quadrant*. He spent some years in the State and Federal Parliaments. Among his other books are an autobiographical volume entitled *Memoirs of a Slow Learner*, and *The Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe*. Reprinted with permission from *Quadrant* April 2007.

*The first non-martyr English saint since the Reformation?*

## SAINT JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN?

By PETER JENNINGS



THE EVIDENCE into an alleged miraculous cure through the intercession of the Venerable John Henry Cardinal Newman, 1801-1890, the best-known English churchman of the nineteenth century, has now been sent to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. The reported cure took place in the Archdiocese of Boston, Massachusetts.

The Roman Postulator of the Cause, Dr Andrea Ambrosi, was assigned by the Boston Tribunal as the official carrier of the package of documents, containing two copies of the Process. He flew from Boston to Rome, and handed over the package to officials at the Vatican Congregation on November 14, 2006.

The package, containing the sworn testimonies and the medical evidence into the healing of Jack Sullivan, a 68-year-old deacon, from Marshfield, in the Archdiocese of Boston, was sealed during the Closing Session of the Diocesan Tribunal, five days earlier, on November 9.

The package was wrapped in brown paper, tied with red ribbon and secured with the wax seal of Cardinal Sean O'Malley, Archbishop of Boston. The final two-hour, closed session took place at the tribunal office situated in the Convent of St Teresa of Avila, in West Roxbury, about eight miles south west of Boston. Those present at the meeting included Bishop Walter J. Edyvean, an auxiliary bishop of Boston, Mgr Mark Mahoney, Judicial Vicar of the Archdiocese, and other members of the Diocesan Tribunal. Bishop Edyvean, who has responsibility for the western region of the Archdiocese, also represented Cardinal O'Malley at the Opening Session of the Tribunal on Saturday, June 25, 2005.

Also present for the Closing Session were the Roman Postulator, Dr Andrea Ambrosi, and Fr Paul Chavasse, Provost of the Birmingham Oratory (founded by Cardinal Newman in 1848), in his capacity as *Actor Causae* (Actor of the Cause) for the Beatification and Canonisation of Cardinal Newman. The Actor has overall responsibility for introducing and overseeing the progress

of the Cause. At the start of the meeting Mgr Mahoney reminded the members of the tribunal about their oath of secrecy surrounding the proceedings. The session consisted of the signing and the sealing of the documents, of which a third copy has been retained in the archives of the Archdiocese of Boston.

The Closing of the Tribunal took place on the Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica – the Cathedral of Pope Benedict XVI in Rome – the Mother Church of Christendom. Fr Chavasse said afterwards: "It was extremely fitting that the Closing Session of the Tribunal took place on this particular feast. In his own day Cardinal Newman was a great defender of the Catholic Church and the Papacy, and his life and writings are increasingly seen as of enormous significance for the mission of the Universal Church today." Fr Chavasse added: "It was very moving to be privileged actually to seal the package of documents with the hot red wax and so witness the ending of this particular chapter in the history of the Cause."

The Decree for the Opening of the Process in Rome was signed at the Congregation for the Causes of Saints on November 16, 2006 by Cardinal José Saraiva Martins, Prefect, and Archbishop Edward Nowak, Secretary. As Press Secretary to the Newman Cause on behalf of the Fathers of the Birmingham Oratory, founded by Cardinal Newman in 1848, this author issued the following statement: "We have been informed that this is remarkably fast and an indication of just how important the Cause for Cardinal Newman's beatification and canonisation is seen to be in Rome."

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Finally, the cardinals, appointed by the Pope, as members of the Congregation for Saints will meet and make a recommendation that the Cardinal Prefect will put before the Holy Father for him to make the final decision and the consequent announcement. Pope Benedict XVI was first introduced to the works of Cardinal Newman in January 1946, at the age of eighteen and has retained a lifelong interest in his writings. Many senior cardinals and bishops in the Curia and throughout the world have a devotion to Cardinal Newman and would like to see this great champion of orthodoxy declared a saint.

The particular case now under investigation in Rome concerns Deacon Jack Sullivan, Clerk Magistrate at Plymouth County Court, in the Archdiocese of Boston, who had a severe spinal disorder. Deacon Sullivan was restored to full mobility after prayers to Cardinal Newman on August 15, the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, in 2001.

In July 2006, during the course of a meeting about the cause with Cardinal Sean O'Malley, Archbishop of Boston, Dr Ambrosi informed him that he would also be following up the cause of Andrew Munroe, a 17-year-old South Korean boy, the adopted son of Greg and Mary Ann Munroe Sullivan (no relation to Deacon Sullivan) of Salem, New Hampshire. Andrew suffered a severe head injury, and was near to death, after falling off the back of a car at the end of school on October 17, 2005.

By a remarkable coincidence, on the same day, at the Venerable English College in Rome, during the launch of the book *Benedict XVI and Cardinal Newman* which this author was privileged to edit, Fr Chavasse had spoken about an unnamed deacon in the Boston area who had been healed after praying to

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Cardinal Newman. This was reported by the Catholic News Service and picked up by the Boston Globe newspaper.

Doctors told Andrew's family that they had done all they could for him and thought the time had come to switch off his life-support machine. His mother refused and told the doctors that she believed in the power of prayer.

Andrew Munroe's parish priest, Fr Richard Cleary S.J, had read the

news story in the Boston Globe and suggested that they start praying to Cardinal Newman. Someone in Salem Parish had identified the unnamed deacon and contacted him. Deacon Jack Sullivan agreed to conduct a healing service for Andrew at Massachusetts General Hospital on November 20, 2005. Deacon Sullivan had requested a relic of Cardinal Newman from Fr Chavasse in Birmingham, who sent over a lock of the Cardinal's hair. Deacon Sullivan held a second healing service six days later on November 26, attended by family and friends, at the North East Rehabilitation Hospital in New Jersey where Andrew had been moved a few days before. During the service Deacon Sullivan touched Andrew's forehead with the lock of Newman's hair and then placed it beside him on his pillow. Andrew began to make remarkable progress and has continued to do so.

Fr Chavasse said on his return home to the Birmingham Oratory: "Meeting with Deacon Sullivan and Andrew Munroe and hearing at first hand accounts of their healing was both impressive and deeply moving. It is important that we continue to pray as this Cause reaches another important stage in its history."

Deacon Sullivan, during an exclusive interview with me at his home in Marshfield, Massachusetts, said: "To prepare myself daily for Morning Prayer, I express my gratitude to Cardinal Newman for my healing and my vocation to the diaconate. He has become my very special friend. In like manner, I am grateful to Cardinal Sean O'Malley and his Tribunal for the opportunity to testify to the beautiful experience which I received through Cardinal Newman's kindly intercession."

Meanwhile, in Oxford, on October 9, 2006, Newman scholars attended a reception at Trinity College - Newman was made the First Honorary Fellow of this, his second Oxford College - to mark the publication of Volume X - *The Final Step, of The Letters & Diaries of John Henry Newman*, edited by Dr Francis J. McGrath, an Australian Marist brother.

During the evening Father Paul Chavasse read a letter of thanks to Dr McGrath from Archbishop Vincent Nichols of Birmingham, the diocese where Cardinal Newman lived much of his Catholic life. It was here in the

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Oratory House in the Edgbaston district of the city that Newman died on August 11, 1890. He had opened the Oratory himself in 1852.

Archbishop Nichols wrote: "Newman scholars and devotees around the world owe you a debt of gratitude for the generous way that you undertook

this work after the sudden death of the previous editor, and Archivist at the Birmingham Oratory, Gerard Tracey in January 2003 at the early age of 48.

The decision to publish the Letters and Diaries of Cardinal John Henry Newman was taken in 1958 - nearly 50 years ago. The first to appear was Volume XI in

ANNALS AUSTRALASIA 10 APRIL/MAY 2007

1961, according to the scheme laid out by the first editor, Fr Stephen Dessain."

The Archbishop of Birmingham ended his letter: "The publication of Volume X brings to a fitting conclusion this monumental work in 31 volumes. These last three volumes which you have edited help us to understand not only important moments in the history of the Catholic Church in this country, but also shed light on Newman the man and reveal his innermost thoughts in the last years before he was received into the Catholic Church by Father, now Blessed, Dominic Barberi, on October 9, 1845, exactly 161 years ago today."

A leading Newman scholar, Dr Sheridan Gilley, of Durham University, gave a masterful address during which he said: "Our special congratulations on this occasion must go to my fellow-Australian, Dr Frank McGrath, for completing the series with volumes IX and X, covering 1842-43 and 1843-45, with such quicksilver efficiency and wide-ranging scholarship, and for bringing to it his own particular love and understanding of Newman"

Dr Gilley reminded his listeners of Newman's own dictum: 'A man's life lies in his letters'. "We would not say that a man's life lies in his e-mails. The letter is a particular literary form, which reached its height in the nineteenth century, and Newman is its master."

If Cardinal Newman is beatified and canonised he would become the first non-martyr saint in England since the Reformation. Were Newman one day also to be declared a Doctor of the Church, he would become the first Englishman to be thus honoured since the Venerable Bede, who died in the eighth century and is buried in Durham Cathedral. The Venerable Bede was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1899 by Leo XIII, the pope who made Newman a cardinal in 1879.

There are at present 33 Doctors of the Church. The last to be named was St Thérèse of Lisieux, in 1997, by Pope John Paul II. Let us redouble our prayers that one day the great English cardinal will also be named as a Doctor of the Church.



PETER JENNINGS [ime@peterjennings.co.uk] is a Catholic journalist, writer, and broadcaster.

\* The book, *Benedict XVI And Cardinal Newman*, edited by Peter Jennings, is available from Family Publications, in Oxford. Website: [www.familypublications.co.uk](http://www.familypublications.co.uk)

EVERYTHING had lost its meaning; there was no goal, no end to hope or work for.

This, it was said, was what it means to be free. There was no dogma, no doctrine that imposed itself; just a benign smile that hovered over all things, it looked like the Dalai Lama's.

There were no boundaries to run up against; everything was tolerated. Death held

no fear, for, after all, when life meant so little then death meant nothing as well. Reason and free-will were universally accepted to be illusions that now and then could excite one to activity, but deep down one knew it was all pretence.

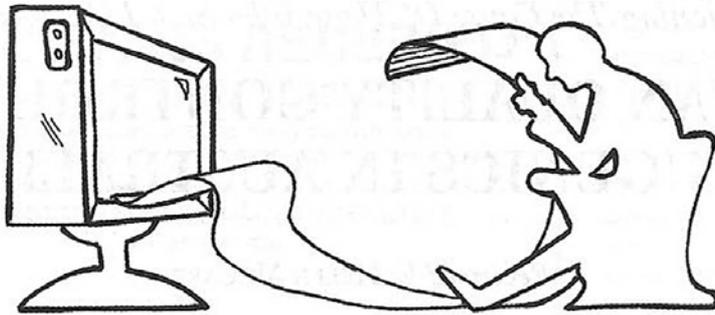
All was permitted, although nothing satisfied. It wasn't the best of all worlds but it was comfortable.

One day the Herald arrived and with him came hope. He began his announcements, and all eagerly listened. He announced the virtue of lifestyles and the attractions of a distracted life. He had the answers: short-lived controversies that provided a little spark and thrill; good weekends to look forward to; satires to pleurably vex one so that people would be moved to express opinions. And then there was Real Estate. Oh, was there Real Estate!

Soon the world came alive again, and people only dimly remembered that there was no goal, no meaning to anything. There was only the eternal return of the same. Still, as seasons and disputes became shorter and quicker no one really noticed how predictable it all was. The pace picked up, although no one was really running anywhere. It made no sense to ask if it would all end, for the simple reason no one remembered what an "end" was. If there were enough distractions then no one noticed they were running on the spot.

All praised the Herald. But one day his circulation began to falter, so he pumped the same things with desperation, taking all manner of supplements. Perhaps a change of diet? Or, more celebrity chefs?

No, the problem was one of acute fatigue. No one could sleep, all were too tired to sleep, and too tired to be entertained. Fatigue turned to desperation, and in desperation an answer was found. The answer was blood. At first it was received with fear by those in power, but the Herald was able to persuade them otherwise. He pointed out that ethics committees had



## THE HERALD

By ROBERT TILLEY

agreed that as agreement on this matter couldn't be reached then no one had any right to prevent it. And, as it would help the economy, then there was no reason to be scared, it could only be beneficial.

The Herald announced a new entertainment; gladiatorial combat to the death. Freely entered into, of course. At first there was general reluctance but The Herald won the people over by its opinions: life, after all, is one's own, and one can do with it what one wills

- that's freedom. Furthermore, the losers' remains would be put to good use, their organs donated to worthy recipients and what was left over could be used for experimentation. Gladiators' DNA would be harvested and this would be used to create a fitter, more robust race of people. The result would be an increase in the general standard of health. It was a win-win situation.

With the slogan 'Better People Through Genetics' flying over the stadiums the world became a better more robust place, just as the Herald had predicted.

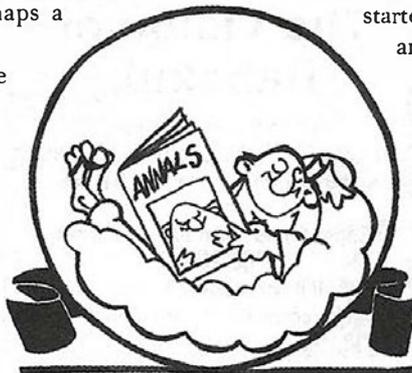
Controversy and comment were up, and so too was consumer confidence. Stocks hit the roof, and sales were high. Everyone was rich. Everything was booming!

After a while, however, the booming began to sound a little hollow. Someone tracked it to its source. The booming was coming from behind a hoarding holding up a billboard. The billboard featured happy healthy people telling everyone to be free and to spend. It was such a pleasant and inspiring billboard that no one had thought to look behind it. Until now, that is.

There was a sheet of rusty metal propped against the back of the hoarding, probably left over from when the advertisement was put up. It was long and thin, and when the wind blew the metal would shake causing it to fold in and out. It was this that was making the booming sound.

At first people were dismayed, but when the Herald started to charge people money to see the metal, and queues began to form, everyone was happy again.

Above all else, the people had learnt the lesson of the Herald: don't question prosperity, for if you look too closely, fairyland begins to fade.



ROBERT TILLEY has a Ph.D from the University of Sydney. He currently lectures in Adult Education on Philosophy, Theology and History of Ideas.

*Championing The Cause Of Those Who Seek Life Over Death*

## HUMAN QUALITY CONTROL AND EUGENICS IN AUSTRALIA

*Reviewed by* HELEN MCCABE



so-called 'principle of reproductive autonomy' is employed by Britain's Human Genetics Commission to justify the provision of both prenatal screening programmes, as well as of 'selective abortion' in cases where a foetus is found to bear a 'serious condition'. In a recent report, the Commission recommends that the 'voluntary' nature of screening be emphasised; in doing so, they respond to the objection that few women are adequately informed of the implications of such measures. In the same report, it is noted that the benefits of prenatal screening and 'selective abortion' include that of cost savings: the fewer people with genetic disorders 'and impairments more widely', the less expense to be borne in caring for them. Once again, mindful of objections to this utilitarian view, the writers propose that any offence caused by this claim can be avoided if such 'health economic studies' are conducted with 'sufficient sophistication' and with regard to public debate.

In her book, *Defiant Birth: Women Who Resist Medical Eugenics*, Melinda Tankard Reist responds to the kind of views espoused in the above report. In particular, she proposes: a) that the practice of medical eugenics is pervasive in our society, b) that resistance to this measure requires, on the part of women, exceptional courage, and c) that underlying this development is the ideology of material perfectionism or (what the author calls) 'the ideology of quality control and the paradigm of perfection'.

The book has three discrete parts. In part one, Tankard Reist concentrates on

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Melinda Tankard-Reist, *Defiant Birth: Women Who Resist Medical Eugenics*, Spinifex Press Pty Ltd., North Melbourne, 2006, 338pps. ISBN 1 876756 59 4. RRP \$27.95

---

the way in which the medical profession has embraced a programme of eugenics; by way of illustrating her point, she addresses such topics as the norms of contemporary obstetric practice, genetic screening and extermination, the coercive power of testing, the 'tyranny of expertise', the reckless use of medical technology and the fallibility of its findings, medical ignorance with regard to the conditions 'screened out', the dehumanisation of disabled people, the rise of eugenicist thought and, finally, a particular cost-saving agenda. In providing empirical support for her case, the author also attempts to emphasise the way in which eugenic practices act to induce (among other things) unnecessary fear in expectant mothers. As well, she illustrates the trend to deem women 'irresponsible' and, even, 'selfish' should they refuse either to undergo screening or, more to the point, to terminate a pregnancy on the basis of any abnormal findings.

Part two comprises the personal narratives of nineteen women who have swum against the eugenic tide to proceed with pregnancies deemed 'abnormal'. Each narrative forms a short chapter in which a woman recounts her own struggle to overcome those obstacles to motherhood constructed by both contemporary obstetric practice and social norms. For instance, Elizabeth was encouraged to terminate the life of her unborn baby who was found to bear Down syndrome, prompting her to comment that a child is now reduced to a 'choice', and not a unique human being. Elizabeth states: '[T]he medical professionals I was dealing with through all those tests were not trying to find information to help me protect the health of my baby.' Rather, they sought information to determine the 'need' for an abortion. And, in also rejecting the recommendation to abort her abnormal baby, Teresa insists that she loves her children not because they are healthy but because they are her children! In general, the women's narratives make explicit the importance of the *content* of choice; they lend meaning to the nature of the problem of eugenics beyond merely that of its proclivity for undermining the autonomy of women.

In part three, the 'Afterword', Tankard Reist provides a reflection on related issues. For instance, mention is made of the lack of adequate services for the disabled in consequence of the dominant trend towards eugenic 'solutions' to the problem of disability. Accordingly, the courage of those who elect to keep their babies is emphasised. And under such titles as 'the erosion of empathy', 'losing our humanity' and 'mutual interdependence', the author also records some comments on the effects that this approach has for humanity itself, including questions

### The Vision of Habakuk

'Write the vision down,  
inscribe it on tablets to be easily read  
since this vision is for its own time  
only.

Eager for its fulfilment it does not  
deceive.

If it comes slowly, wait,  
for come it will without fail.'

- Habakuk, 1.1-2.4

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concerning who is now counted as a human being.

Tankard Reist's approach coheres with the terms of standard feminist approaches inasmuch as she views prenatal screening and the medical management of pregnancy through the lens of both women's experiences and the broader social and historical contexts out of which these experiences arise. Further, she confines the study of medical eugenics to the implications it has for the lives of women and the way in which women's bodies are manipulated in the quest for realising eugenic goals. As well, she refrains from challenging, in any overt sense, the theoretical weight that is placed on the principle of respect for a woman's choice. However, Tankard Reist clearly and unapologetically champions the cause of those who choose life over abortion; she attempts to dignify an alternative choice to what is normally implied by the right of a woman to choose with regard to pregnancy and childbirth. Further, she expresses the moral offence that has always accompanied eugenic practice no matter where or when it has occurred and for no matter what reason. Ultimately, she leaves contemporary eugenics in need of defence, along with the societies in which it is condoned. In these respects, the author becomes something of a maverick in the realm of feminist thought and writing.

In the approach taken, it is not the author's purpose to provide a rigorous philosophical argument. So, those seeking this kind of discussion will be disappointed. However, the book's easy accessibility is only one of its strengths: *Defiant Birth* is insightful, important, informative and written in a style that is engaging and reflective of the author's background in journalism. For this reason, a perusal of *Defiant Birth* would profit a wide audience, particularly those studying obstetrics, midwifery, medicine, social work and nursing. Given the inclusion of a comprehensive and excellent glossary of terms, this book is readily accessible to a broad readership; this is fortuitous as it is the kind of book which could also be read by expectant parents, as well as more generally. Ultimately, it is an excellent contribution to the debate on beginning-of-life issues. Indeed, *Defiant Birth* is a remarkable achievement.

*Nationalism and 'Democracy'*

## *Sowing Dragons' Teeth in the Furrows of War*

**I**T seems to me that the most typical and significant feature of the new political trend in the post-war world is neither Fascism nor Communism but the new type of national dictatorship which is seen in its purest form in Turkey but which can adapt itself to almost any level of culture and every shade of opinion. This tendency is often described as Fascism, but the expression is a misleading one, since Fascism is only one of its forms and not by any means the most typical one. It is true that Nationalism is also a somewhat indefinite term, for the new nationalism of the post-war dictatorships is a very different thing from the traditional nationalism of Western Europe. It is in fact largely due to the breakdown of European culture and of the sense of European unity, and represents the return to a simpler and more elementary social tradition. When President Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George appealed to the principles of national self-determination and proceeded to redraw the map of the world on national democratic principles, they were evoking forces that they could not control. The peace-makers of Versailles sowed dragons' teeth in the furrows of war and today we see the outcome of their well-intentioned efforts in a world bristling with national antagonisms and economic rivalries. This state of things has produced its repercussions in the West, so that the supremacy of democratic ideas and parliamentary institutions is being challenged even in the cradle-lands of democracy in Western Europe.

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- Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State*, Sheed and Ward, London 1935, p.19.

*Revealing riches contained in the Liturgy of the Roman Rite*

## SEARCH FOR TRUTH AND BEAUTY

By Arthur Roche, Bishop of Leeds, UK



A new translation of the Order of Mass into English from the Latin text has been a lengthy and sometimes controversial process. The challenge for the International Committee on English in the Liturgy, the body charged with the task of translation, has been to provide a version that is solemn and profound, yet, as its chairman reports here, accessible as well.

Earlier this summer bishops of eight English-speaking countries voted to approve the new translation of the Order of Mass which was prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL). I was present at two of these meetings and have received reports of the others. In each case, after thorough discussion, the vote was decisively in favour. Clearly, we have reached a significant moment.

It strikes me that this is a good time to offer a brief review of ICEL's work in translating the third edition of the *Roman Missal*, which of course is ongoing - the Order of Mass forms only a part of it. I should like to look both at the process of consultation - which has been profoundly collegial - and at the process of translation, which has produced liturgical texts that are of a high aesthetic and theological quality and which will make a major contribution to evangelisation in the coming decades.

It may be helpful to recall the reasons why ICEL was given the task of producing a new translation. Firstly, while there have been three Latin editions of the *Roman Missal* since the Second Vatican Council, the English text we use now is a translation of the first edition. Secondly, this translation was only ever intended to be provisional: the bishops who produced it freely acknowledged that of necessity it was produced in a hurry.

More than 30 years of use, of course, makes us all reluctant to change. Indeed, praying our present texts for such a long time has, in a sense, sacralised them. But this is not change for change's sake; this is a change to bring to light the depth of riches contained in the liturgy of the Roman Rite.

The favourable vote of the Episcopal Conferences is undoubtedly a milestone in preparing an English translation of the third edition of the *Roman Missal*. For four years, ICEL has been in dialogue with the bishops of the countries it serves, honing its work to meet their wishes while seeking to remain faithful to the original Latin texts. Some people have criticised this process, arguing that consultation should extend beyond these bishops. It should be remembered, however, that when bishops meet, they do so not to express their personal opinions, but to witness to the life and faith of the local churches.

### The Church's Prayer

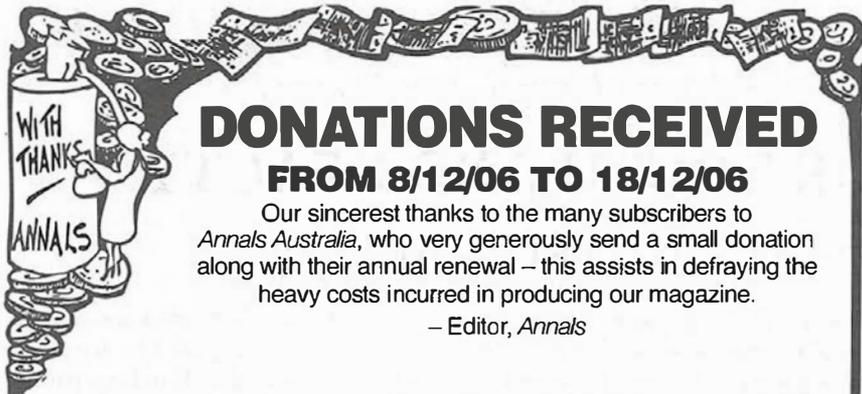
Notice, at the conclusion of our prayer we never say, "through the Holy Spirit", but rather, "through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord". Through the mystery of the Incarnation, Jesus Christ became man, the mediator of God and man. He is a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech. By shedding his own blood he entered once and for all into the Holy Places. He did not enter a place made by human hands, a mere type of the true one; but, he entered heaven itself, where he is at God's right hand interceding for us. Quite correctly, the Church continues to reflect this mystery in her prayer.

- St Fulgentius of Ruspe [in North Africa] 462-527 AD, in the Roman Breviary for Matins of Thursday in the 2nd week of the year.

The bishop is the one person who experiences liturgical life across the whole diocese, not only in large parishes with a variety of liturgical resources, but also in tiny communities where it is sometimes a struggle to organise any but the most rudimentary celebration, and in convents, hospitals, prisons - everywhere Mass is celebrated. He may consult with whomever he wishes, but ultimately it is the bishop who must exercise his apostolic ministry of discerning what is for the good of the local church. The liturgy is not just for experts: it is for everybody.

The work ICEL undertakes is an exercise in collegiality, seeking to craft a liturgy that will serve the entire English-speaking world. This cannot be done without a degree of compromise. For instance, we in Yorkshire might wish to read in 1 Corinthians 12:3 "Jesus is Lord, is Jesus" because that is the idiom of this area, but we accept the commoner form "Jesus is Lord" for the greater good. The same is true internationally, although this is not everywhere acknowledged. Some English people say our new ICEL texts are too American, and some Americans say they are too English. The truth of the matter is that ICEL is keeping its eyes on International Standard English, recognised by linguists but hard to define.

Collegiality serves catholicity: if we can produce a single worldwide English liturgy it will be both a sign and a safeguard of the Church's catholicity. Given that the liturgy preserves the apostolic tradition of faith, the bishops have worked collegially with the Pope to ensure that the English liturgy is a channel for that tradition. At the same time, ICEL seeks continually to involve other collaborators from as many countries as possible. These include not only translators but some highly expert musicians, for liturgical texts are sung as well as spoken.



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The work of ICEL is guided by *Liturgiam Authenticam*, the document published by the Congregation for Divine Worship in 2001, which has been criticised for putting the clock back, whereas in fact it puts the clock forward. For more than 30 years, liturgical translators were advised to aim at “dynamic equivalence”, rendering the content of a text while freely reshaping its form. This method was devised for the translation of Scripture, and can work well in the translation of narrative. For instance, the two sentences, “John baptised Jesus” and “Jesus was baptised by John”, clothe the same informational content in two different forms.

But we do more with language than provide information: we seek also to persuade. In liturgy, we seek to persuade God. If we want somebody to close a door for us, we might simply say, “Close the door”, or we might say, “Would you mind closing the door for me, please?” Both sentences transmit the same information (that I wish you to close the door), but the second form seeks to persuade rather than command.

The originator of the idea of dynamic equivalence, Eugene Nida, himself ceased to use it in his later writings. In insisting on the importance of linguistic form and its interdependence with content, *Liturgiam Authenticam* takes account of recent work in linguistics. It must have been a difficult document to write, for it is always difficult - some would say impossible - to write about language prescriptively and well. But something needed to be said, for the current texts we use simply do not hand on the tradition of prayer that we find in the *Latin Missal*.

Whatever is said about *Liturgiam Authenticam* by its critics, it has served us well as a key to unlock the treasury of the Missal. We have been surprised and delighted by the riches that a careful attention to forms of prayer has revealed to us.

For example, we have translated the Prayer after Communion for Easter Day like this:

With unflinching love and care, O God,  
watch over your Church,  
so that, renewed by the paschal mysteries,  
she may reach the bright glory of the  
Resurrection.

Notice first that, whereas our current texts often begin with an address to

God ("O Lord" or "O God" or simply "Lord"), we have delayed mentioning the divine title until a little later in the prayer as the Latin does. This seems to give prayers a less peremptory, more courteous tone.

Secondly, whereas in English a word or phrase that qualifies a verb usually comes after the verb, we have followed the Latin in putting it before. A more natural English word order would be "so that she may reach the bright glory of the Resurrection renewed by the paschal mysteries", but this ends the prayer on a diminuendo whereas our proposed version ends on a climax with the word "resurrection". Frequently the Latin prayers will end on a note of hope, naming what we look forward to either in this world or the next. We have judged it worthwhile to follow this pattern even though it often involves using constructions such as parentheses (like "renewed by the paschal mysteries" in this text) that may offer a certain challenge to the one who proclaims it.

We are constantly concerned with the issue of register. A register is a subset of a language suitable to a particular context: I would use one register to address Parliament and a different one to speak to a class of young children. Early in the process, we proposed that towards the end of Eucharistic Prayer 1 (the Roman Canon) the priest should say: "To us sinners also ... deign to grant some share and fellowship with your holy apostles and martyrs." "Deign" was greeted with howls of derision from all sides: it was thought to belong to too formal a register for the liturgy. So we tried a much more colloquial version, "please grant some share and fellowship". This was judged too informal. So we finally settled on "be pleased to grant ..." which seems to fall between the two.

The prayers of the Roman Rite use many expressions of courtesy in addressing God. To find the appropriate polite form for an occasion is not easy: ask yourself what you would say if you unexpectedly met the Queen, for instance. The liturgical texts that we currently use omit many deprecatory expressions found in the Latin original. We are restoring them, and in doing so trying to forge a new register of courteous address to God. Like any new register, it will need to be learnt.

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ICEL's work has moved on now from the Order of Mass to the Proper of Seasons. Here the prayers - Collects, Prayers over the Offerings and Post-Communion Prayers - are shorter and bring new challenges. They are drawn from many sources, not only the *Veronese, Gelasian and Gregorian*

*Sacramentaries*, which are the heart of the prayer books of the Roman Rite, but ancient sacramentaries from Milan and Spain, and more recent compositions.

Each source has its own distinctive mode of expression. The sobriety of expression, which the liturgist Edmund Bishop famously defined as characteristic of the Roman Rite, is not always to be found in texts from elsewhere, so that translators as they work through the *Missal* are constantly surprised. Should they aim to reproduce the variety of styles they meet, or render all the texts in a similar style? ICEL has chosen the former course. This means that the new texts will not display the homogeneity to which the current missal

## Habits die Hard

**M**AN will sometimes act slowly upon new ideas; but he will only act swiftly upon old ideas.

- G.K.Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, The Bodley Head London, 1949 ed. pp 183-4; 185-6.

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has accustomed us. They will take some getting used to, both for those who will proclaim and for those who will hear them.

Some people assume that liturgical language should be comfortably predictable: it should not shock. That assumption was not shared by the compilers of the post-conciliar *Latin Missale Romanum*. Following them, ICEL has not been afraid to introduce an element of surprise into the prayers we are offering. What is surprising eventually becomes familiar, while retaining the vividness that initially caused surprise.

Many of us could name a piece of music that shocked us when we first heard it and that, as it has become familiar, has continued to enrich our experience. Liturgical texts have a long life. We want the landscape of the *Missal* to have some colour, some peaks and some troughs, not to be the dull monochrome desert across which we currently traverse year by year. To use a different metaphor, the *Missal* is a jewel-

box, not a deep freezer.

A topic that has required particular attention has been the image of God that the *Missal* presents. Much of its language is drawn from that of pre-Christian Roman religion, which was greatly concerned with placating gods who would otherwise be angry. The Latin words for placation and propitiation and their cognates recur constantly. There is a line in the Third Eucharistic Prayer that asks God to recognise on the altar the Victim (that is, Christ) "by whose immolation you have willed to be appeased". When we proposed these words as a translation

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- Editor. *Annals Australasia*.

of that line, many protested. Some objected that the word "appease" made them think of Neville Chamberlain. Others, more persuasively, argued that the image of an angry and vengeful God that it implies should have no place in Christian worship. ICEL in response deepened its research.

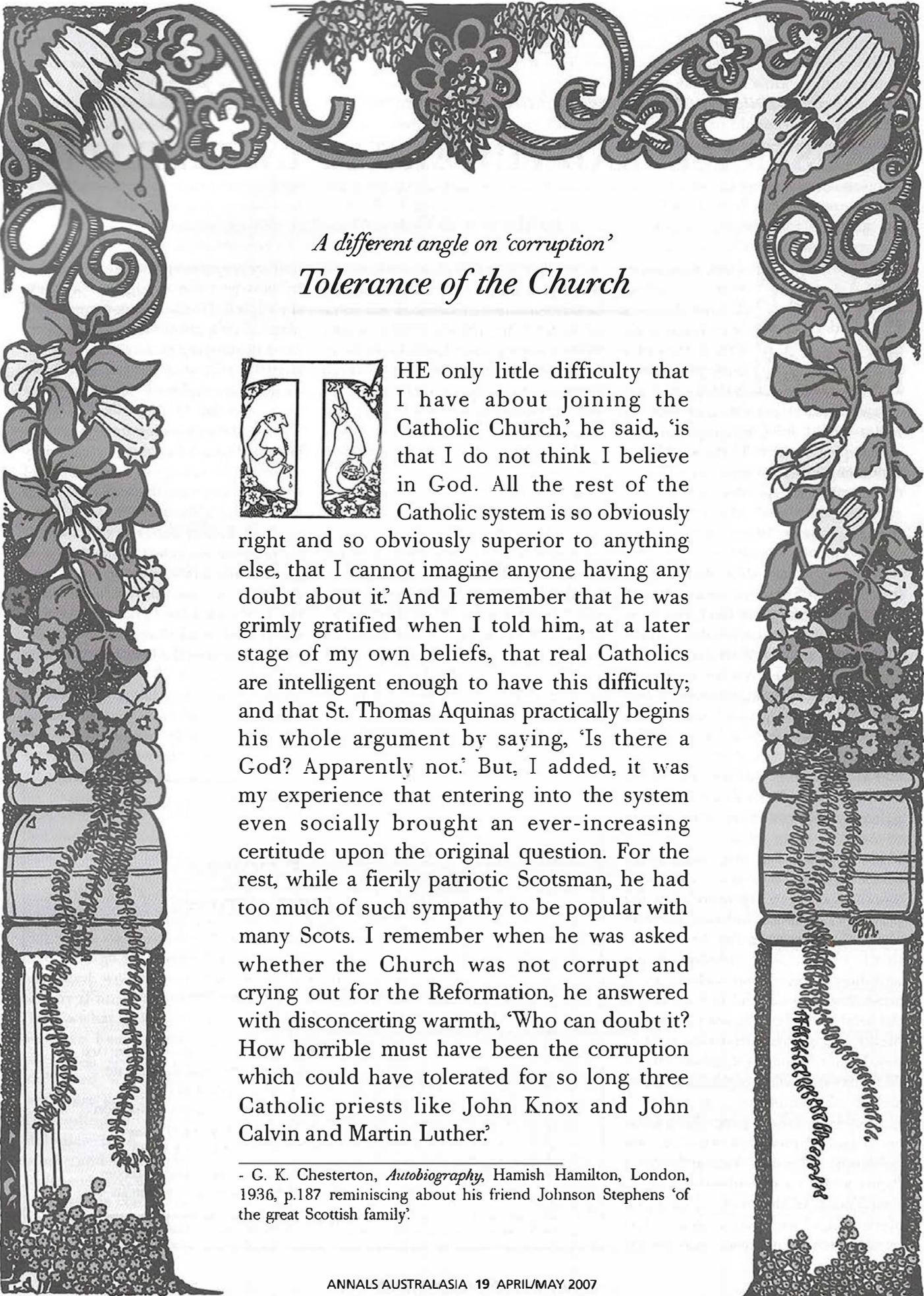
This is sensitive territory ecumenically, for Protestants have long objected that Catholic teaching on the Mass implies that Christ's sacrifice was insufficient to take away the sins of the world, so that each Mass is a further propitiatory act intended to placate God the Father. We found that, whereas in English "propitiation" and "placation" are what people try to do to gods, in Christian Latin they are characteristics of God himself. The prayers of the *Missal* appeal to God's "perpetual propitiation" and "perfect placation", which are the result of the sacrifice of Christ offered once for all. So when prayers apply the epithet propitius or placatus to God, as they do very frequently, we are not asking God to be propitiated, but remembering that everything necessary for us to win God's friendship has already been done for us by Christ.

This most central of issues points to the importance of nuance in our theological understanding, and hence in our liturgical language. Our faith is both simple and mysterious, for God, its object, has both revealed Himself to us and dwells in unapproachable light.

Thirty-odd years ago there was a general assumption that, because vernacular liturgy was entirely new to Catholics, it should be easily assimilable. Thus texts were composed with a small vocabulary and a small repertoire of syntactic patterns. What we received all those years ago and have become used to has served us well, but in the long run, texts that transmit as many nuances of the original as possible, and which remain closer to their scriptural and patristic origins, will be more nourishing to the faith and the prayer life of the Church. Judging by the opinions which bishops throughout the English-speaking world have expressed in recent months, there appears to be a growing consensus on this.



Arthur Roche is Bishop of Leeds and the chairman of ICEL. This first appeared in *The Tablet*, London, August 5, 2006. Reprinted with permission.



*A different angle on 'corruption'*  
**Tolerance of the Church**



THE only little difficulty that I have about joining the Catholic Church,' he said, 'is that I do not think I believe in God. All the rest of the Catholic system is so obviously right and so obviously superior to anything else, that I cannot imagine anyone having any doubt about it.' And I remember that he was grimly gratified when I told him, at a later stage of my own beliefs, that real Catholics are intelligent enough to have this difficulty; and that St. Thomas Aquinas practically begins his whole argument by saying, 'Is there a God? Apparently not.' But, I added, it was my experience that entering into the system even socially brought an ever-increasing certitude upon the original question. For the rest, while a fiercely patriotic Scotsman, he had too much of such sympathy to be popular with many Scots. I remember when he was asked whether the Church was not corrupt and crying out for the Reformation, he answered with disconcerting warmth, 'Who can doubt it? How horrible must have been the corruption which could have tolerated for so long three Catholic priests like John Knox and John Calvin and Martin Luther.'

- G. K. Chesterton, *Autobiography*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1936, p.187 reminiscing about his friend Johnson Stephens 'of the great Scottish family'.

*Nationalism and former colonies' that are 'close to becoming failed states'*

## AUSTRALIA AND THE ARC OF INSTABILITY

By MICHAEL O'CONNOR



MORE than seven years ago, as the United Nations was organising its hasty independence ballot in East Timor, it was clear to sceptics that the ballot would solve nothing and that an independent East Timor would face continuing low-level civil strife. Today, the so-called independent government survives only with the support of foreign, mostly Australian, security forces.

A year after that ballot, the independent Solomon Islands began to implode. Six years later, the local government is maintained in power by foreign, mostly Australian, troops and police to the growing dismay of the local government, whose freedom of action is sharply constrained by an increasingly frustrated Australian government.

Twice in the intervening years, Australia has deployed armed forces and police to both countries in an attempt to stabilise their collapsing security. In the Solomon Islands, Australia has further provided a team of senior administrators to try to rein in the pervasive corruption and administrative chaos. The problem for Australia is that, in both cases, the problem lies not with hostile rebels but with the local government itself. And in both cases, the local politicians do not like having their failings brought into the light of day. If there is an arc of instability in Australia's immediate region, it is clearly a Melanesian problem.

For the most part, Melanesia comprises Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, West Papua and, to a considerable extent, East Timor. In the post-colonial era, Melanesia, West Papua apart, has developed into a collection of politically

independent and highly nationalistic but economically mendicant states largely sustained by overseas aid, some of which comprises outright grants while a large proportion is in the form of barely manageable debt. Foreign investment in sustainable industry is limited, infrastructure is poor and badly maintained, internal security is problematic and official corruption widespread.

The Solomon Islands is generally typical of the rest of Melanesia. Until about 1999, it was just another poverty-stricken mini-state depending for its survival as a state upon a limited range of primary exports and foreign aid. As with the rest of Melanesia, the great bulk of the population continues to live in the villages at little more than subsistence level. Economic growth is negligible and hampered by a rapidly growing population. Increasingly, the governing elite began to govern for their own benefit so

that corruption grew, often fuelled by mostly Asian foreigners. As well, the capital, Honiara, was increasingly plagued by a phenomenon common to most developing countries, a surge of partially educated, de-tribalised and usually unemployed squatters from outlying areas.

Over the succeeding three years, the island of Guadalcanal was plagued by a low-grade insurgency, a collapse of order in Honiara, a flight of capital and an effective 1500 per cent devaluation of the Solomon dollar. If one were to exclude the existence of the facade of government and a small private sector, it would be possible to argue that the Solomon Islands had reverted to the pre-colonial state that led to the establishment of the British Protectorate in the 1890s.

Whether the latest Australian interventions in the Solomon Islands and East Timor by combined military and police forces will be effective

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remains an open question, as does the much broader issue of whether it is any more than a Bandaid. The introduction of some senior administrative experts in the Solomon Islands has yet to prove its long-term value.

The dangers of a collapsed state as a base for criminal or political groups hostile to Australia are significant, given that those groups are able to hide behind the legal sovereignty of a local government dependent upon their good will. That is clearly an Australian interest. Arguably too, it is also an Australian interest to see the Solomon Islands restored as a state at least capable of providing for the welfare of its own people.

As with all the other failed or failing states in the region, media reporting focused on the restoration of internal security by the military and police but the administrative assistance will be much more important. It is not, however, a task for a handful of more or less senior experts with their own bureaucratic culture but for a corps of administrative and technical personnel at all levels working with their indigenous colleagues because the challenge is to show that government is for the benefit of the whole community and not just the population of the capital. If the job is to be done properly, Australia is unmistakably launching a new form of colonialism, the nature of which is not yet fully understood or developed but which is none the less real. Nevertheless, solutions to Melanesia's problems lie with the governments of those failing states.

The reality is that these former colonies are actually or close to becoming failed states. Yet each was left with a viable system of government and enough resources that, properly managed, would provide the basis for steady if unspectacular development. This is what nationalism was supposed to have been about and, generally speaking, the metropolitan powers delivered what was needed, often with rare generosity. The failures or impending failures of these former colonies have been all their own work and after three decades of independence, playing the blame game carries little conviction. Essentially, the political leadership forgot one of the basic tenets of democracy, indeed of

nationalism itself, that government was for the people as much as it was of and by the people.

As is the case with virtually every serious conflict in Melanesia, the root cause lies in the attempts to rationalise the demand for land and the traditional land rights of the people. It is not enough to assert as some have that traditional rights are out of date in a modern society if only because Melanesia is not a collection of modern societies. Collapse is rooted in the clash between traditional land rights and the pressures on land imposed by a rapidly growing population, the failure - or inability - to modernise traditional agricultural practices, and a failure by the political, administrative and legal systems to resolve disputes. Land troubles cannot be legislated out of existence or ignored; they are real and, in the minds of the traditional owners, of fundamental importance.

Providing a group of senior Australian administrative experts - as in the RAMSI project in the Solomon Islands - will be valuable but will not be enough unless junior and middle-

ranking indigenous civil servants can be persuaded to forgo the comforts of the capital to work at the regional and village levels as a condition for promotion to higher levels, their task being to interpret government to the people and people to the government.

A Peace Corps type of program could work. Such a scheme would need Australian government blessing and support. Australia would need to recruit and train young professionally and technically qualified people to work at the village or district level in health, education, agriculture and possibly business development. They would necessarily be prepared and willing to work at a poor standard of living for at least three years, preferably longer, if only to show their local colleagues that such work can be personally satisfying.

One of Melanesia's core challenges is to operate complex and bureaucratic administrative systems. To the extent that such systems have been developed to try to eliminate waste and corruption, they have not worked in Melanesia. What has happened, as in Papua New Guinea, is that local politicians have managed to bypass the administration on the plea that it is not working but in the process have corrupted the basic elements of good governance. The challenge is not to bypass the administration but to make it work. A useful Australian aid program for Melanesia generally would fund a team of academics, administrators and people familiar with Melanesia to develop a simplified public administration system and the associated training programs for middle and senior level public servants. This should be designed to reduce process without removing the fundamental checks on mal-administration or corruption. Usefully, it could be used to instill in local officers a spirit of service to their peoples.

Failing some drastic and threatening strategic realignments, Australia and Melanesia are joined by geography at the hip. It lies within Australia's power to develop and sustain a comfortable relationship, perhaps using some distasteful medicine. Otherwise, we will simply run out of Band-aids.

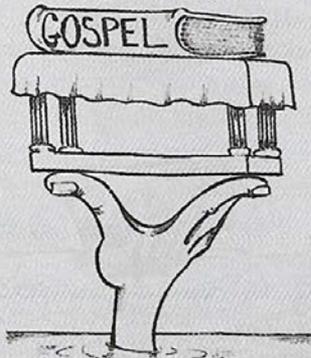


MICHAEL O'CONNOR is executive director of the Australian Defence Association. A former patrol officer in Papua New Guinea, he also served in the Royal Australian Navy as an intelligence officer.

## The Invisible Hand

On the other hand the Church does not bear responsibility for the mistakes committed by some of her ministers. She deplores them. ... There is indeed, perhaps, no spectacle more reassuring for her future destiny than that of survival after trials. What a miracle that the Gospel has been rescued from rapacious hands without a single page being destroyed, that the Divine words were not altered in being transmitted by impure mouths, that these seductions have never succeeded in falsifying the source of truth, and that the altar, undermined at its base, remained upright, supported by an invisible hand!

- Frederick Ozanam, 1813-1853 AD *Two Chancellors of England, St Vincent de Paul Society, Sydney, p. 80.*



*Expressing Faith or Trivializing it?*

## ANOTHER ANGLE ON YOUTH MASSES

By Jacinta Livingstone



ATHER up those glockenspiels, tap away at the tambourines - it's time for a "youth" Mass. Time to hold hands to symbolise "togetherness" and perform peculiar-looking wavy looking actions in the middle of Mass to show that we are still alive (just).

Yes, the youth Mass craze is still going strong in parts of Australia, with a preponderance of loud singing, strange noises and made-up prayers. From the perspective of a 15-year-old in the "target" audience range, however, it seems high time that well-meaning youth "workers" realised that rather than trying to use Mass as a mock-up rock concert, younger people need to be better educated about the true meaning of the sacred institution. What it should never be is a big party where you go to clap your hands and eat some free pizza afterwards.

On holidays recently, I attended a youth Mass where the priest stood at the front of the church with his back to the altar and explained - at great length - how a pile of dirt signified us being at one with God and at one with nature. Had we accidentally stumbled into a meeting of tree-hugging Earth worshippers? From there, Father then went on to hold up an ugly, torn backpack and enlighten us as to the contents and what significance each object had in relation to us being Catholic, including a compass to lead us towards Christ and shoes for the journey. At that point I silently vowed to bring along a hat and sunscreen the next week - or perhaps a magazine in case we got bored on "the journey". You see, whatever this journey is that youth Masses are eternally telling us about is going to be pretty big, because ever since I can remember we have been

preparing for it by clapping and writing down what we'll need, but we never actually seem to get anywhere. Whether we're looking at pictures of squiggly lines symbolising "elements of the Earth" or reading poems about footprints at the beach, everything these days seems to be related to an elusive journey which never actually starts.

This particular Mass continued with children taking up the collection, numerous peculiar objects such as balloons being taken up in the offertory procession and a PowerPoint presentation with the words for singing 'amen'. Yes, to sing 'amen' six times we needed the words up on a screen. After all - it is young people they are dealing with. When it came time for the Consecration, the priest asked for all the young people to come up to the altar with him and stand around in a big circle holding hands. Being the rather old-fashioned creature I am, I stayed in my pew and watched the troops march up. Some seemed a little too old to be "youngsters" but given the low numbers at Mass, I suppose we must just make do with thirty-five years olds pretending to be teenagers.

One thing I did learn at the Youth Mass, however, is that prayer after Communion is very old-fashioned. Instead of having some silent time for the congregation to pray we were entertained by the group in the corner banging away on what sounded like various kitchen utensils, singing their hearts out. At least I think it was singing. I wonder if they

even noticed that they had just received Jesus Christ into their hearts.

Yes, in all this finery and musical performance there is one key ingredient left out - Jesus. Of course we get to sing along about Jesus but there is a minimum of time dedicated to thought or reflection about our Lord.

So my point is- why is it that we have these youth Masses? Is it because, a) the church believes that Mass is not interesting or important to present to young people as it should be done or b) that young people are so stupid and have such short attention spans that loud noise is needed every two minutes to prevent them from "zoning out"?

I think it is lovely to have a thriving parish community where young people take part in reading, altar serving or playing the music, but surely it is not necessary to bring a mini-version of Green Day into the church each Sunday along with chocolate frogs and balloons. Or worse still a bad imitation of Bozo the clown, which a friend of mine witnessed in Victoria a few years ago when the priest actually rode up the aisle of the Church in a clown suit. Like Queen Victoria, my friend was far from amused.

Unless modified to promote the true meaning of Mass and the importance of Catholic beliefs and values, these "youth" Masses may end up doing "youngsters" more harm than good. If you want a rock concert, go to a concert. If you want alternative dance, go to a dance class. If you want pizza, order one. If you want all three combined into one, go to a "youth" Mass.

Alternatively, if you want to feel as though you've been to a reverent Mass conducive to quiet prayer avoid the "youth" Masses at all cost and go elsewhere.



Jacinta Livingstone's first book, *Mr Waffles and Plum Pudding*, a picture storybook for children, was published in November. [www.connorcourt.com.au](http://www.connorcourt.com.au)

*Richard Wagner: A call for fact-checking and honest quoting*

## I CONTAIN MULTITUDES

Reviewed by R. J. STOVE



ALMOST a century and a quarter after Wagner's death, the observation of Wagner scholar Bryan Magee remains pertinent:

'there are two Wagners in our culture, almost unrecognisably different from one another: the Wagner possessed by those who know his work, and the Wagner imagined by those who know him only by name and reputation.' (Magee of all people can bear personal testimony to this: an otherwise benign friend of his, on seeing the Wagner discs in Magee's record collection, blurted out: 'I had no idea Bryan was a bit of a Nazi'.) When writing about

every other great composer, a certain listening and score-reading knowledge is usually considered desirable. Wagner alone generates torrents of prose from the musically uninterested, as the 1968 anti-Wagner diatribe by New York academic Robert Gutman demonstrates. Conjectures that would be universally ridiculed if applied to Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, or Schubert are treated as gospel when Wagner is their subject, and preferably their

victim. It would be tempting to blame Gutman's effort – as one Wagnerian has openly done – on overindulgence in mind-altering Sixties campus drugs, save for the plethora of comparable misrepresentations among subsequent Wagnerphobes, who ignore the most basic requirements for fact-checking and honest quoting. Sometimes one wonders if a sane Wagner-related book can be printed anywhere today.

Now we know: it can. Louisiana-based Milton E. Brener, whose writing has often appeared in *Opera News*, *Opera Canada* and elsewhere, has produced an account of permanent value. His study's sheer unpretentiousness is a salutary shock. Instead of mindlessly rehashing Wagner's modern foes – or, for that matter, modern friends – Brener has consulted source materials usually ignored, and thereby conveys what Wagner actually said, as opposed to what he might have said. Where Wagner's meaning is ambiguous, as it periodically is (in what after all were journals and letters never meant for publication), Brener says so, rather than proclaiming his own glosses with maniacal certitude. What is more, Brener seems to have visited every extant German and Swiss building where Wagner ever worked or lived. And, *mirabile dictu*, he cherishes Wagner's actual music, explaining – in language that any moderately bright adolescent could understand – why it matters, where Wagner innovated, where he upheld existing traditions, and how it changed the world forever.

Brener's title immediately raises two questions. To what extent, if any, did Wagner's openly expressed alarm at Jews in general (an alarm most conspicuous in his 1850 essay *Judaism in Music*) form a central dogma of his thinking, either before or after his marriage to Cosima von Bülow? And

### Rome and Italy under threat from Muslim Invaders, 876 AD

'Were all the leaves of the forest turned to tongues, they could not tell of all the troubles that we are suffering at the hands of the Saracens.... Cities, walled towns and villages, bereft of their inhabitants, have sunk into ruin. Their bishops have been driven hither and thither. The thresholds of the Princes of the Apostles [the twin Basilicas of Sts Peter and Paul, in Rome] are the only places they have to turn to for refuge, as their houses have become the dens of wild beasts. Homeless wanderers, no longer have they to preach but to beg... In distress, rather in ruin, is the Mistress of nations, the Queen of cities, the Mother of Churches. ... In the year that has passed we sowed the seed, but did not gather in the harvest. This year, as we have not planted we have not even a hope of reaping. ... You must come and help the Church, which freely chose you as another David for the imperial sceptre. If this Church is brought low, not only will the glory of your empire totter, but the greatest loss will accrue to the Christian faith." Still no help came.

- Letter from Pope John VIII to Frankish Emperor Charles the Bald, and to his Empress Richildis, November 876 AD. See Epistles 43-4; and 45 quoted in Horace Mann, *History of the Popes in the Early Middle Ages*, vol. 3, pp 324-325.

what effect did it have on his practical dealings with specific Jews? On the first of these enquiries, Brener is forthright as early as page 3: 'I do not believe that, at the deeper levels, the man who created *Tristan und Isolde*, *Parsifal* and *Der Ring des Nibelungen* could possibly have been the monster that so many have painted.' On the second, Brener combats, and lastingly vanquishes, those critics who have construed Wagner as callously exploiting Jewish individuals for his own cynical ends. Wagner's relations with five Jews in particular – pianists Carl Tausig and Joseph Rubinstein; conductor Hermann Levi; impresario Angelo Neumann; and journalist Heinrich Porges – prove to have been of the most remarkable complexity, requiring Whitmanesque phrases to describe them: 'Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself. I am large, I contain multitudes.' Not that Whitman's erotic tastes inspired in Wagner any emotion except disgust, though numerous Bavarian gossips accused the composer of sharing both King Ludwig II's sexual orientation and his bed.

Unlike those slanderers, Brener maintains a cool detachment throughout his examinations of the evidence. This evidence includes an increase in thoughtless, generalised anti-Jewish remarks during Wagner's last fourteen years (1869-1883), such remarks having been faithfully noted in his wife's diary, which remained unpublished till 1974. They may be connected with his increasingly erratic health, and with the propinquity of Cosima (who herself – like her father Liszt and her first spouse Hans von Bülow – was hardly backward in sniping at 'Israelites'). Brener sums up his overall findings as follows (p. 294): '[Wagner] judged all individuals ... not by their ethics, morals, strength of character, or religion, but by their artistic talent or their willingness to help in a great cause, namely his own. There is not an instance in his well-documented life wherein he refused the help or the friendship of anyone because he or she was a Jew, or anything else.'

Discussing *Judaism in Music* itself, Brener makes several points seldom spelt out elsewhere. That Wagner himself felt some embarrassment about his screed is suggested by his insistence

himself Brener's insights (which include acquitting Wagner of having advocated mass racial violence in the essay's last paragraph).

It should be noted that all musically literate Wagner commentators from his own day to the present have admitted Wagner's propensity for vile anti-Jewish outbursts, sometimes aimed at Jewish devotees like Joseph Rubinstein. Compare and contrast this candour with the gross humbug by which socialists, often Jews themselves, have routinely concealed the lifelong, fetid race-hate indulged in by Marx: notably Marx's descriptions of Ferdinand Lassalle as 'little kike,' 'water-Polack Jew', and 'Jew-nigger'. (Wagner felt towards Lassalle considerable, albeit bemused, goodwill.) Brecht's Jew-baiting we shall not even mention, though that habit has been as incapable as his Stalinism, and his still more pathological plagiarism, of abashing his sycophants in the slightest.

With typical recklessness Wagner insisted on reissuing *Judaism in Music* in a revised version, this time under his own name, in 1869. Public outrage caused by its reappearance threatened to make his music unperformable. Those who still think of Wagner as a ruthless social climber, adopting a rigorous career timetable of soaking Benefactor X on Monday and Benefactor Y on Tuesday, know precious little about how he operated. Obsessional self-destructiveness played a much bigger role in his livelihood than careerism ever did. Witness his endless youthful fights with successive theatre managements; the Dresden revolutionary activism of 1849, which sent him into exile for twelve years; and, even after King Ludwig had become his champion, his fury over Ludwig's insistence on staging *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* without the composer's approval. The more one reads of Ludwig, the more sensible he appears, not least in his gift for compartmentalising. His Wagner-worship co-existed with a thorough awareness of Wagner's vices, and of the dangers in Wagner's lunatic desire to be Bavaria's unofficial chief minister. Brener – recalling how Ludwig's tragic demise constituted an early triumph for the Therapeutic State – cites with justified approval the witticism of Wagner biographer Ernest Newman:

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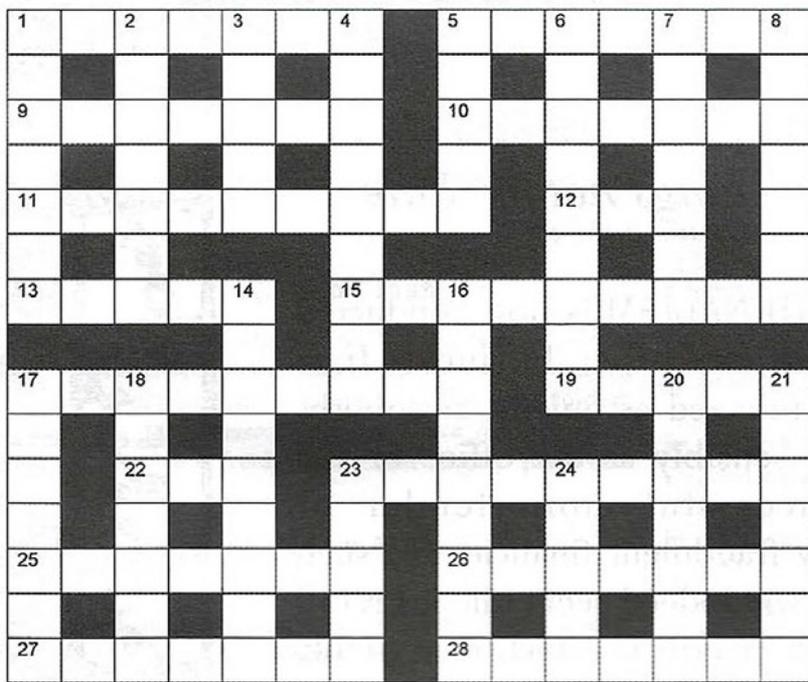
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on publishing it pseudonymously, signing it 'Free Thought' [Freigedank], although as soon as it appeared the public recognised his own authorship of it. Brener, conceding that the pamphlet 'transcends the bounds of logic or rational human understanding', hints by his marshalling of data that conventional interpretations of Wagner's motives have been the wrong way around. Rather than hating his imagined opponents – notably Mendelssohn and Giacomo Meyerbeer, both of whom had shown him goodwill – because they were Jews, Wagner seems to have done the opposite: invoked their Jewishness because he hated them. Brener emphasises the especial silliness of the essay's attacks on the recently dead Mendelssohn, whom he had once personally liked, and whom he stupidly castigated for not being Beethoven: 'There must have been hundreds of composers of the day ... none of whom, or whose works, would have shown to advantage in such a comparison' (p. 43). Since Brener has helpfully reproduced the essay as an appendix, the reader may judge for

## ANNALS CROSSWORD No. 45



### ACROSS CLUES

1. Founder of the Camaldolese Benedictines (Feast day 19th June) (7)
5. Prophet; book of the Old Testament (7)
9. Took advantage of someone's generosity (3,4)
10. Diabolic (7)
11. Martyred with his brother Nereus (Feast day 12th May) (9)
12. Feel regret for one's own wrongdoing (3)
13. Reported as Paul's first European convert (5)
15. Dungeon (9)
- 17 & 25 across. Patron of theologians (Feast Day 1st June) (9,7)
19. Mother of 25 down (5)
22. English cathedral city (3)
23. Sixteenth Pope and patron of gravediggers (Feast day oct.14th) (9)
25. see 17 across
26. Not fully cognizant of what is going on (7)
27. A fashionable dressmaker or milliner (7)
28. Expunges (7)

### DOWN CLUES

1. Archangel and patron of the blind (7)
2. Corresponded to (7)

3. Shock (5)
4. Perilous (9)
5. Brother of Aaron (5)
6. Forms of service officially proscribed by the church (9)
7. One who has a change in belief (7)
8. Aromatic substance burnt during religious ceremonies (7)
14. Having no known name (9)
16. Archbishop of Westminster (1976-1999) (5,4)
17. Third son of David (7)
18. Solemnly promised (7)
20. Conventional procedures (7)
21. Causes to hurry (7)
23. An unlawful act (5)
24. Father of Jacob and Esau (5)

### SOLUTION TO NO. 44



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'He [Ludwig] exhibited so many signs of exceptional sanity it was a foregone conclusion that the world would someday declare him to be mad.' As Brener himself says, 'How well the world could use more such madmen.'

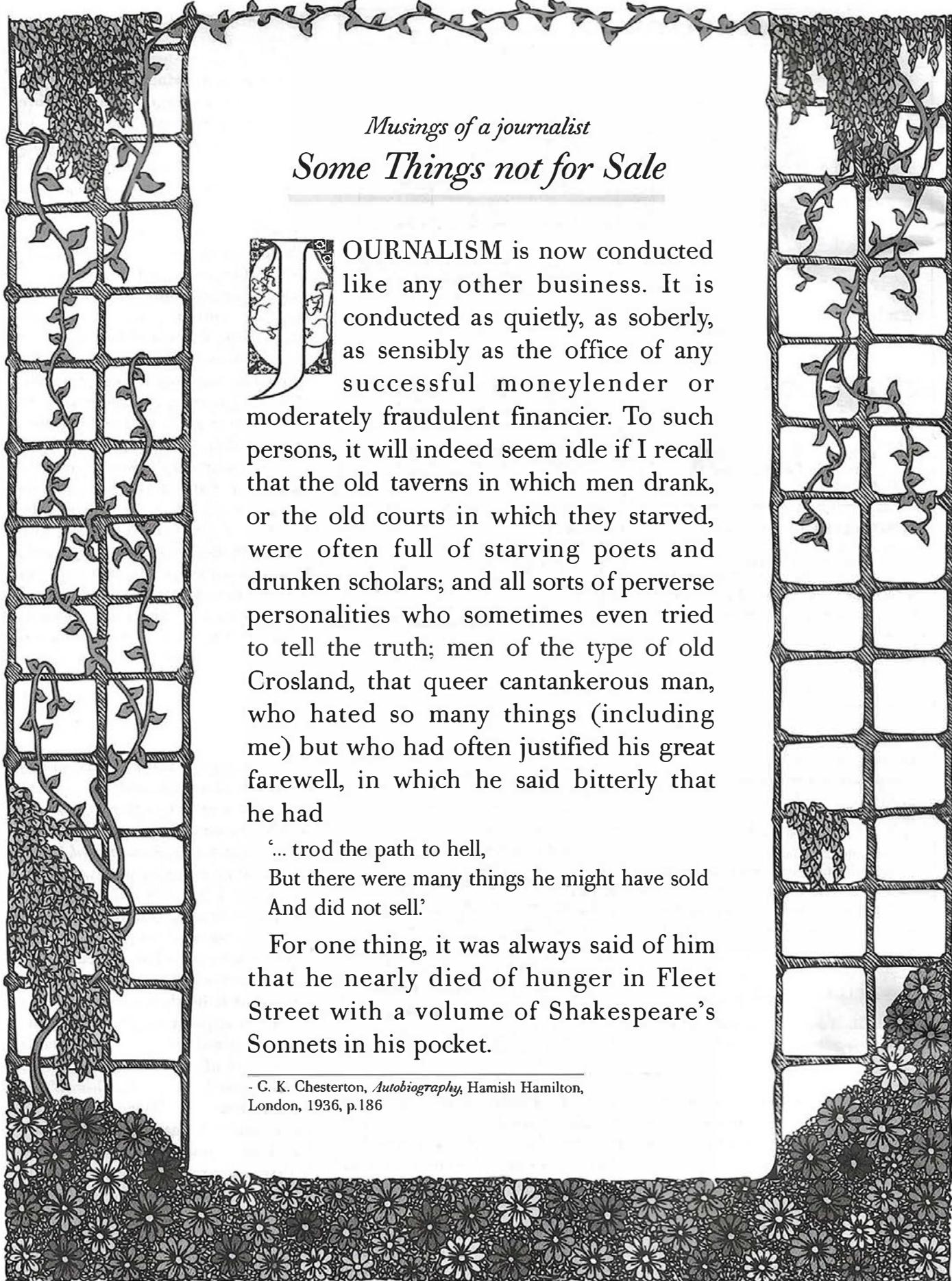
The world could use a few more Breners also. His observations about Hermann Levi's role in Wagner's

later life inspire deep regret that no phonographic equipment ever captured Levi's clearly astonishing abilities in opera direction. Levi and Porges were among the pallbearers at Wagner's funeral; Wagner called Levi 'dear Best Friend', and Levi for his part called Wagner 'best and noblest of men ... The most beautiful thing I

have experienced in my life is that I was permitted to be close to such a man.' This notwithstanding Wagner's eccentric and unfulfilled hopes that Levi would undergo baptism before conducting *Parsifal*. Brener, like so many persons whose normal writing style indicates great amiability, can, when required, trash with a vengeance. He exposes Gutman's lofty contempt towards scholarly ethics (p. 288): '[Wagner]'s operatic texts and prose works alike are contorted by Gutman beyond recognition, and mixed in with that author's opinions in such a fine mesh that it is difficult, and for the uninitiated hardly possible, to tell where one ends and the other begins.' (Gutman has called *Parsifal* 'an allegory of the Aryan's fall and redemption', heedless of the fact that the Third Reich banned stagings of the work from 1939 onwards.) Further, Brener devotes almost a whole chapter to revealing the fatuities of Freudian Peter Gay, who has contended – on no discernible foundation except his own caprices – that Levi, despite his exceptional solicitude for his rabbi father, somehow exemplified Jewish self-hatred. How any form of self-hatred can be reconciled with the ferocious leadership demands of conducting in general, and theatrical conducting in particular, Gay refuses to explain.

No such gaps and implausibilities disfigure Brener's volume. There do occur a few slips in this volume, which a second edition might usefully amend. (Brahms's *Schicksalslied*, 'Song of Destiny', is twice misspelled as 'Shicksallied' [pp. 224, 227]; and opera composer Peter Cornelius, described [p. 90] as 'about Tausig's age', was in fact seventeen years Tausig's senior.) Yet against so much through which Brener has put us in his debt, these solecisms are inconsequential. Brener, by his enthusiasm and erudition, has validated the remark of that superb Wagnerian maestro Sir Georg Solti (himself of Jewish extraction): 'To me, anyone who can create such beauty, whether he be half-Jewish, anti-Semite ... or royalist, is first and foremost a musical genius and will remain so as long as civilisation lasts.'

R. J. STOVE lives in Melbourne, and is a Contributing Editor at The American Conservative.



*Musings of a journalist*  
*Some Things not for Sale*

**J**OURNALISM is now conducted like any other business. It is conducted as quietly, as soberly, as sensibly as the office of any successful moneylender or moderately fraudulent financier. To such persons, it will indeed seem idle if I recall that the old taverns in which men drank, or the old courts in which they starved, were often full of starving poets and drunken scholars; and all sorts of perverse personalities who sometimes even tried to tell the truth; men of the type of old Crosland, that queer cantankerous man, who hated so many things (including me) but who had often justified his great farewell, in which he said bitterly that he had

‘... trod the path to hell,  
But there were many things he might have sold  
And did not sell.’

For one thing, it was always said of him that he nearly died of hunger in Fleet Street with a volume of Shakespeare’s Sonnets in his pocket.

- C. K. Chesterton, *Autobiography*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1936, p.186



# MEDIA MATTERS

By JAMES MURRAY

## Roo Crash

No Latin scholars on the Qantas - or is that Qantass? - board. Had there been an ancient tag would have been quoted and disaster avoided: the tag, *Timeo Danaos et donna ferentes* which translates freely as, 'I fear equity privateers bearing gifts.'

## Clive Alive

Increasingly readers are offered book extracts in newspaper and magazine. Do these sell more books? Or is the book, unbought, deemed read through the extract?

Your correspondent favours the second view. Case in point: Clive James's new work, *Cultural Amnesia: Necessary Memories from History and the Arts* (Picador rrp \$49.95). The extract (*The Australian Literary Review*, April 4) was an essay about Alan Moorehead. James waxed lyrical about his subject's gifts as a writer, his ability as a World War II correspondent to traverse front lines and walk in lofty HQs.

James also cited several of Moorehead's works, not, however, *Gallipoli*. Strange, because James does have a dig at what he calls, 'Keith Murdoch's fanciful press campaign, placing such disproportionate emphasis on the Dardanelles' adding, 'there was no comparably imaginative prose to stress what the Australians achieved on the Western Front.'

Philip Knightley, James suggests, has been 'almost the only popular historian to mention the matter'. Knightley, a stickler for accuracy, would be the first to point out this is to ignore CEW Bean's official history, ex-soldier Geoffrey Searle's classic, *Monash*, and any number of other war historians here and overseas.

If Keith Murdoch was fanciful so, too, was Moorehead. His eminence as a war correspondent buttressed the Gallipoli myth and added weight to his criticism of its commanding general, Sir Ian Hamilton.

Yet the criticism includes egregious howlers. Moorehead finds effeminacy in Hamilton's hand - the hand shattered by a Boer marksman's round after Hamilton, pinned down with the Gordon Highlanders on Majuba Hill, picked up a fallen infantryman's rifle to return fire.

In addition, Moorehead refers to a bowstring, mentioned by Hamilton in his diaries, and assumes

it was a device used in deciphering signals whereas Hamilton's reference was metaphorical, bowstrings being used by Turks in assassinations, and Hamilton about to face a character version.

James seeks Moorehead's elevation by suggesting he, 'set up his post-war European camp in the full knowledge that it was an advance post for Australia's forthcoming cultural expansion although not even he could guess how successful the expansion would be.'

This reads like a self-serving retro-fit; there is no suggestion of it in Moorehead's memoir, *A Late Education*, uncited by James. Nor did Moorehead refer to it when your correspondent interviewed him in the early 1960s.

He did not see himself as a precursor of Australian cultural expansion. He was, like many others, a hack on the make who made it brilliantly on *The Daily Express* when Lord Beaverbrook ensured the salary and exes of his correspondents were high and the going as glamorous as possible, great operators, yes, brave, yes, cultural precursors, no, satirically immortalised in *Scoop* by one of them, Evelyn Waugh.

So full reading of the Clive James work, doubtful. His reverence for Moorehead, makes his essay a piece of jingo-lit, a paen in the neck, conjuring the scent of Clag, essential ingredient in the scissors and paste job. High-minded without a doubt, like the first edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, scissored and pasted in Edinburgh by William Smellie - 'a veteran in wit, genius and bawdry'.

## Rudd On Song

Histories of Ruddism are already rushing shelfward. Apropos. When Lathamitis was high, your correspondent tipped Kevin Rudd as prime ministerial material. Now that Rudd is up and front running for The Lodge and/or Kirribilli House (on precedent, whichever his missus prefers), this is no longer the case. Why? Already mentioned here, Rudd's penchant for fudging.

In addition, he tends to leave the hard stuff to Julia (Gillard) who on television contrives to place herself in the power position: screen left. Yet historians may find material to lighten the page in Rudd's Howard Hawk persona.

Hawk was, of course, director of the musical *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. By adding South Australian





*Pro-war evangelicals have made exiles—and martyrs—of Iraqi believers*

## CHRISTIANS IN THE CROSSFIRE

By DOUG BANDOW



**T**HE killing in Iraq continues, and support for the occupation is waning even among Christian conservatives. It would probably fall further if they were aware of what Fred Markert, director of *Terra Nova* missions, calls the “horrible, horrible climate for Christians in Iraq.” Before the invasion, Christians argued over the criteria of a just war. But Richard Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, asked another question: had war supporters “thought about their obligation to the Christian community in Iraq?”

Most leading evangelicals seemed to accept blithely the administration’s war rationale. For instance, Prison Fellowship founder Charles Colson said President Bush’s arguments justified the invasion: “Of course, all of this presupposes solid intelligence.” Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, pointed to Saddam’s development “at breakneck speed of weapons of mass destruction he plans to use against America and her allies” and the “direct line from those who attacked the U.S. [on 9/11] back to the nation of Iraq.” D. James Kennedy, pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, blustered, “Why any churchman would choose to support [Saddam Hussein] rather than to support our own president, I don’t know.” Pat Robertson proclaimed that “carping criticism” of President Bush “amounts to treason.” James Dobson of Focus on the Family opined, “Saddam Hussein must be stopped. Appeasement of tyrants is never successful.” Gary Bauer, chairman of the Campaign for Working Families, said, “Saddam Hussein’s Iraq was a hell hole of torture and mass murder” and “he allowed Iraq to become a safe haven for terrorists.” Rev. Jerry Falwell wrote an article entitled simply: “God is Pro-

War.” In his view, “Christians must live as Galatians 6:2 instructs: ‘Bear ye one another’s burdens.’”

About the only Evangelical Christian leader who considered the fate of her Iraqi co-religionists was Roberta Combs of the Christian Coalition, who declared in November 2003: “In the new country, under the new democracy, why should the official religion be Muslim? I think as Iraq becomes a democracy, there are going to be a lot of churches springing up.”

Alas, most of these arguments proved to be illusory. The result is a tragic irony

for Christians: while the invasion opened Iraq to evangelism, it also unleashed a violent tsunami that is driving many believers abroad. As Richard Cizik, vice president for governmental affairs of the National Association of Evangelicals, observes, evangelicals strongly supported the war yet “their co-believers are suffering as a result.”

Unsurprisingly, Saddam Hussein did not exactly provide a warm home for Christianity. Nevertheless, Samuel Rizk, a spokesman for the Beirut-based Middle East Council of Churches, noted in July 2003: “There’s not much you can say about the old regime. But one thing you could say is that Christians enjoyed freedom to worship.” Hussein used Christians to help provide political balance. Still, living under a brutal dictatorship and international sanctions is hard, and the number of Christians fell from 1.4 million to 1.2 million or even fewer during the 1990s.

Saddam’s ouster led to a dramatic increase in indigenous evangelism and an influx of foreign Christians, including American troops. “A lot of Iraqis were seeing Christianity for the first time,” observes Jim Jacobson, president of Christian Freedom International. The result was an “explosion of conversions” and “underground, nondenominational churches.” However, notes Mindy Belz, international editor of *World*, that growth “tapered off as things have gotten worse.”

In short, “there is a very important window of opportunity,” as Jacobson puts it, which “probably will close soon.”

Many Iraqi Christians fear that this window has already shut. Solaka Enweya, who fled to Syria with his three sons, told the *New York Times*: “When we heard that the Americans were going to liberate Iraq, we were so happy. Yet our suffering has only increased.”

So far the government does not itself oppress, but Christians live—and die—



### Dangerous Admissions

**D**isputants are always exposed to the temptation of being over-candid towards objections which they think they have outrun; they admit as facts or truths what they have shown to be irrelevant as arguments. Thus, even were there nothing of a kindred tone of mind in Hume, who has assailed the Scripture miracles, and in some of our friends who have defended them, it might have been anticipated that the consciousness of possessing an irresistible weapon in the contest would have led us to treat the arguments of our opponents with a dangerous generosity.

— John Henry Cardinal Newman, *Two Essays on Biblical and on Ecclesiastical Miracles*

## No one is beyond Hope

Let us think over the hidden meaning of this parable [of the Shepherd who went in search of the one lost sheep]. The sheep and the shepherd in the story do not refer simply to an ordinary sheep and to the shepherd of dumb beasts. The whole story has a sacred meaning and it warns us not to think of any man as lost or beyond hope. We must not easily despair of those who are in danger or be slow to help them. If they stray from the path of virtue, we should lead them back and rejoice in their return and make it easy for them to rejoin the community of those who lead good and holy lives.

- St Asterius of Amasea in Pontus, a contemporary of St John Chrysostom  
[347-407 AD] *Homily 13.*

in fear. They are targeted for robbery, extortion, and kidnapping because of their perceived wealth and the belief that they likely have foreign relatives with money. Christians also suffer from insurgent and sectarian violence. Car bombs don't discriminate; U.S. translators are killed irrespective of their religion. Carl Moeller of Open Doors USA says, "Christians find themselves literally caught in the crossfire."

Iraq's Christian leaders commonly argues that Christians are targeted no more than Muslims are. But even if that is true, Christians are uniquely vulnerable because their religious communities and geographical enclaves are much smaller. Nor do they possess an armed militia for defence. And most observers believe this claim to be a vain attempt to reduce Muslim attacks and Christian fears. After visiting Iraq, Lawrence F. Kaplan of *The New Republic* wrote: "However much the clergy may deny it, Iraqi Christians suffer for their faith." Carl Moeller agrees: "Christians are targeted specifically for being Christians." CFI warns of "a silent reign of terror" against Iraqi Christians.

Most Iraqi Christians feel like human targets. One problem is identification with America, even though Washington has been reluctant to offer any assistance. Notes business analyst Glen Chancy: "Evidencing too much concern for Iraqi Christians, it is feared, would reinforce the idea that the U.S.

is fighting a 'war on Islam.'" But the real issue is that they are not Muslims. Younam Kanna, elected to the Iraqi parliament in 2005, told Kaplan: "The fanatics ... blame us for being Christian." Earlier this year Chaldean Catholic Bishop Rabhan Al Qas of Amadiyah and Erbil said church bombings were part of "the continuing attempt by Arab fanatics to push the Christians out of Iraq."

Attacks on Christians started early and have steadily increased. In February 2004 Paul Marshall of Freedom House warned that one sign of increasing

## Islamisation is the Goal

We have to start from the assumption that in the vision of Islam every means is good if it contributes to the final end of the installation of the Islamic state or the protection of Islam. One sees this in the Islamisation of education. Every morning in Egypt they start with the reading of the Koran; the texts of the teaching matter are full of references to Islam, whether in mathematics, in history or in literature; the learning of the Koran is obligatory for all.

- Interview with Father Samir Khalil Samir by Vittorio Emanuele Vernole, Religious Freedom in the Majority Islamic Countries, 1998 Report Aid to the Church in Need. [http://www.alleanzaccattolica.org/acs/acs\\_english/report\\_98/aaa\\_appendices.htm](http://www.alleanzaccattolica.org/acs/acs_english/report_98/aaa_appendices.htm)

Islamic extremism was the targeting of religious minorities. The co-ordinated bombing of five churches in mid-2004 triggered the first mass exodus of Christians overseas, perhaps 30,000 to 40,000.

Car bombs were soon used around churches. By Christmas 2004, people feared attending religious services. Violence also escalated against shops that sold alcohol and music, most of which were owned by Christians. Their stores were bombed and robbed; owners were kidnapped and murdered. Christian women were harassed for not wearing hijab. Some had acid thrown on them or were killed.

George Mushe, a Chaldean Catholic who fled from Baghdad to Istanbul with his family of five, told freelance journalist Yigal Schleifer, "Before the war they looked at us as different, but we could go to church, to work." Afterwards that became impossible, since if you leave your family "you don't know if you will see them again."

Iraqi Christians tell wrenching stories that are repetitive in their barbarity: fathers murdered, children killed and maimed, relatives kidnapped and tortured, families imprisoned at home, businesses destroyed, jobs lost, churches abandoned. The Christians of Iraq website includes an 18-page list compiled by historian Fred Aprim of violent acts beginning in April 2003 and running through July 2006.

Although violence is worst in Baghdad, it reaches even into Kurdistan, where the political authorities are hostile. Last year, reported Kaplan, the Kurdish religious affairs minister said, "those who turn to Christianity pose a threat to society."

Although virtually all Iraqi Christians were pleased to be rid of Saddam, some now say the unthinkable: they were better off under him. Even Richard Land told me that it is "very sad and tragic" that "Christians have had their level of suffering increased by the overthrow of Saddam." Shea and Rayis were more blunt: "The Chaldo-Assyrians have endured much throughout the last century in Iraq, including brutal Arabization and Islamization campaigns. But this current period may see their last stand as a cohesive community" before the Christian minority is "driven out of its ancestral homeland."

## Christian Librarians

**T**heonas, Bishop of Alexandria (A.D. 282-300), has left his directions for the behaviour of Christians who were in the service of the imperial court. The utmost caution is enjoined them, not to give offence to the heathen emperor. If a Christian was appointed librarian, he was to take good care not to show any contempt for secular knowledge and the ancient writers. He was advised to make himself familiar with the poets, philosophers, orators, and historians, of classical literature; and while discussing their writings, to take incidental opportunities of recommending the Scriptures, introducing mention of Christ, and by degrees revealing the real dignity of His nature.

- John Henry Cardinal Newman, *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, Longmans Green and Co 1908, I, iii, p.66.

with from the beginning." But is there something more? Land acknowledges that building democracy in the Mideast "is going to be difficult." But it "is difficult in large parts of the world," like Yugoslavia. Despite all the problems, Iraq "is a battle that we cannot lose," he believes.

Cromartie seems a bit more pessimistic. He says he is listening to the continuing conservative debate over whether "there is a culture that can be democratized" in the Mideast. He acknowledges that "culture and tradition are very important and need to be weighed before trying to reshuffle the decks of a very nasty place." Obviously, we can't "believe that the opening of a society means it will stay open."

Gary Bauer forthrightly acknowledges that "this has been one of the things that has really troubled me, and I'm a strong supporter of what the president is trying to do." Although Bauer had thought building democracy in the Mideast "would be a positive development," it is evident that we are not "dealing with a people who have a concept of Western values and the value of liberty." Land defends his support for the war, blaming current problems on the inadequate numbers of troops, "one area of Bush policy that I have disagreed

to these holy and sensible fasts we should link almsgiving which under the one name of mercy covers a multitude of praiseworthy deeds of charity. Thus all the faithful, even though unequal to one another in their worldly possessions, should be equal in their devotion to the spiritual life."

- Pope St Leo the Great, *Sermon 6 "On Lent"*, from the *Roman Breviary*, second reading in the Office of Matins for the Thursday after Ash Wednesday.

## Lenten Practices

Land and Andrews Abouna recently estimated that about half of Iraq's pre-war 1.2 million Christians had left the country. However, Mindy Belz says, "I tend to question those numbers, though I don't have any way of refuting them." For instance, these estimates might not reflect the growth of evangelical congregations. Todd Johnson, director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, believes that "some of the slack has been taken up by independent churches." Still no one doubts a substantial Christian exodus that could eventually eliminate the historic Iraqi Christian church.

Johnson told me that "emigration is really the biggest thing" in Iraq today. Standard statistical projections are of dubious value in a nation convulsed by conflict: "many have fled in the last three to four months," he notes. Will they return? Bishop Abouna retains some hope—"once stability returns." But an authoritarian Shiite state would provide the wrong kind of stability.

The problem is not confined to Iraq. Carl Moeller says that the actions and words of the U.S. government "have caused great harm to Christians on the ground all over the Muslim world." Similarly, Jim Jacobson observes that "everything we do has become much more difficult and dangerous because of Iraq." Radical Islamists "can't strike at us, so they strike at people they think of as surrogates for us," he adds.

Many Christians have fled, especially to Syria, despite its bad reputation in America. In contrast, the U.S. accepted barely 200 Iraqi Christians last year. The administration simply denies the existence of religious persecution since doing otherwise would suggest that its Iraq policy was failing, explained *The New Republic's* Kaplan.

Estimates of the number of Iraqi Christian refugees vary widely. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees figured that roughly 36 per cent of the 700,000 Iraqis who had fled to Syria as of March 2005 were Christians. Bishop Andrews Abouna recently estimated that about half of Iraq's pre-war 1.2 million Christians had left the country. However, Mindy Belz says, "I tend to question those numbers, though I don't have any way of refuting them." For instance, these estimates might not reflect the growth of evangelical congregations. Todd Johnson, director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, believes that "some of the slack has been taken up by independent churches." Still no one doubts a substantial Christian exodus that could eventually eliminate the historic Iraqi Christian church.

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nanced and complicated situation in the Mideast than many Christians and Americans understand." Fred Markert is even more direct. "The idea of freedom is at the very core of the Gospel message. The opposite philosophy is at the core of the Koran." He doesn't believe that liberal democracy can take root until local people and institutions are transformed through Judeo-Christian ideas, a process that "there is no way to fast track." Military intervention just "can't solve problems of the human heart."

Given this reality, Cizik told me that "evangelicals need to be really careful not to identify themselves with Caesar." Today, alas, "evangelicals are perceived by Muslims in the Mideast as being in league with the Pentagon. The soldiers come first and then the missionaries," he explains. In the case of Iraq, "Evangelicals trusted the president's perception of the threat. I was wrong. Without casting blame, the threat was misunderstood, and some would say purposefully."

U.S. policymakers may not give much consideration to the status of foreign Christian communities. But religious activists, especially evangelicals who talk about spreading the Gospel, should make fellow believers a high priority.

At the time of the Abdul Rahman controversy, Tony Perkins, president of Family Research Council, argued, "Religious freedom is not just 'an important element' of democracy; it is its cornerstone." If Islamic states "don't democratize in a way that protects religious freedom, it's almost not worth doing."

Sadly, that appears to be the case in Iraq. Writes Paul Marshall of Freedom House, the U.S. risks presiding "over the demise of one of Iraq's, and the world's, most ancient religions and peoples." Evangelical leaders might still believe that the Iraq War was worth supporting. But they should reflect seriously on what has happened to their fellow believers. As Catholic Archbishop Louis Sako of Kirkuk said earlier this year, Iraq's Christian community is becoming "once again a church of martyrs."



DOUG BANDOW is vice-president of policy for Citizen Outreach. A member of the Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy, he is writing a book on international religious persecution.  
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– Editor, *Annals*

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*Indictment of greed, heartlessness, mindless fashion and self-satisfied ignorance*

## CULTURAL IDIOCY WRIT LARGE

Reviewed by SUSAN REIBEL MOORE



N Shelley Gare's *The Triumph of the Airheads* forms of cultural idiocy rife in Australia, and internationally linked with more powerful countries that should know better, are exposed with passion, indefatigable wit, brilliant timing, and style. As a Pure Mathematician, Professor James Franklin, has pointed out in *Quadrant*, Gare is affectionately remembered by intellectuals for starting and editing the now defunct *The Australian's Review of Books*. Her own favourite authorial mode is prose satire.

Fine satirical writing, alas, is often not appreciated in milieus with an earnest flavour. Because it is derisive, its bedrock aim of correcting evil by exposing its diverse varieties and permutations can be missed. Too often, satire is dismissed for being unpleasant, grotesque, and pointless – or for being, like Byron, mad, bad, and dangerous to know. Its voice of 'honest indignation' is not regarded as 'the voice of God,' as it was in the finest poetry of William Blake. Instead, this voice – whether it belongs to Juvenal, Swift, Dryden, or one of their less gifted heirs – is considered a noxious irritant.

This is how the fiction of the late, great American writer of short stories and novellas, Flannery O'Connor, was received during her short lifetime at her mother's farm in rural Georgia. Literati who either knew nothing about Catholic teaching or – like Mary McCarthy – rejected it, had no idea what O'Connor was saying; and neither did almost everyone else. Because American readers had as much difficulty hearing the authorial voice behind her tales as later Australian readers did with the very different, destabilising, voice of Helen Demidenko, they decided that *she* was identical to her characters at their ridiculous worst.

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Shelley Gare, *The Triumph of the Airheads and the retreat from common-sense*, ACP Magazines Ltd/ Media 21 Publishing, Sydney.  
See [www.media21publishing.com](http://www.media21publishing.com)

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Many of Shelley Gare's tales in this packed satirical volume are so surreal that if we didn't know from her scrupulously cited evidence and our own life experience that they were true, we could well accuse her of having an overheated imagination. She is devastatingly fresh and graphic on media claptrap, the salaries and the endemically dishonest practices of staff at more than one powerful bank,

### Unleashing 'Dark Forces'

Kamal [Ataturk] treats religion as an enemy to be ruthlessly suppressed, while Mussolini regards it rather as a valuable ally to be conciliated. Hitler, on the other hand, is favourable to religion, but only in so far as it renounces its spiritual autonomy and becomes an organ of the national life. The Nazi ideology is in fact neither Christian nor secularist, it has its own religious ideal, which is not unlike that of the late D. H. Lawrence in its cult of "the blood" and of the "dark" forces that underlie the rational surface of life. This, however, is one of the aspects of the German problem which is still obscure. It remains to be seen whether this new race mysticism becomes a permanent factor in the development of National Socialism, or whether the new state will either come to terms with the Churches, as in Italy, or adopt a policy of thoroughgoing secularism, as in Turkey.

- Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State*, Sheed and Ward, London 1935, p. 18.

unmanageable stress in the lives of hapless workers, the typical behaviour of Human Resources despots and the moguls who have allowed them to run riot in corporate settings, and the defeat of ordinary decency and plain speech in too many milieus dominated by postmodernist absurdities to name in a brief review.

Although Gare's focus is on Australian hypocrisy and fraud, she links recent, well-established practice in this country with overseas scandals in ways that have frightening global implications. As trenchant in her book as her descriptions of contemporary corporate practice are chapter and verse on the aversion to discipline that has prevented countless children in English-speaking countries from developing basic literacy and numeracy skills, mendacious and obsessive number-crunching by uneducated, influential fantasists who know exactly how to deploy misleading statistics, and the slide of universities and once well-funded research institutions like the CSIRO into market-driven activity impossible to justify on intellectual grounds.

The flavour of Shelley Gare's indictment of greed, heartlessness, mindless fashion, and self-satisfied ignorance is dramatised by her chapter titles (e.g. "Why I Comes Before U", "How to Educate a Goldfish", "Stuff Happens"); by bottom-of-the-page satirical headings and snippets ("REALLY? I cannot recall the last time I heard a bride promise to love unto death. People are more realistic now, especially if they are on their second or third marriage' US association of bridal consultants spokeswoman, *The Sunday Times*, JULY 31, 2005"); and by seven summary remarks at the start (e.g. "Airheads are driven by how the next five minutes may turn out").

At bottom, *The Triumph of the*

*Airheads* is about injustice camouflaged by the wickedly dishonest PR now associated in the public mind with scandalous organisations like Emron. Gare is especially scary on the ways in which the language of serious people has been hijacked and made use of in leechlike contexts. Relentlessly, she describes the behaviour of ninnies bent on the pursuit of phantom guarantees of well-being – especially, celebrity and other shallow repositories of status, and material splendour advertised by obscenely expensive possessions and leisure pursuits. On almost every page there are deeply felt, carefully controlled, observations.

A Macquarie University study found school-leavers turning away from the hard sciences because their parents were pushing them towards more prestigious and potentially more lucrative areas of study. One professor said that where bright maths-science students might once have gone into science at university, now they go into economics, financial studies and accounting. (p. 75)

Managerialism has dressed itself up in jargon and double-speak and woof-woof language as well as expensive clothes, high-powered cars and Black-Berrys. It does a very good job of looking much, much smarter and cleverer than it is. (p. 167)

Meanwhile, women now make up 45 per cent of the [Australian] workforce, with almost half of them in part-time work. This swing to women is becoming entrenched. Of the full-time jobs created in the six months to June 2006, 56 per cent went to women. But women get paid between 10 and 15 per cent less to do the same jobs as men. (p. 202)

Then there's "spiritual intelligence", or SQ, which I heard about from a professor at a business school. ... It is supposedly a hot business topic in companies from hamburger chain McDonald's to Shell, while at least one of the senior directors at McKinsey, the elite international management consulting group, is a vocal fan. ... It takes current feel-good fad words like "vision", "meaning", "values" and "service", and phrases like "holistic collaborations" and looks to a future where we have all harnessed the wisdom of our inner selves so that we understand our common purpose together. (p. 217)

What Gare doesn't do is analyse the sources of her own, or our, discontent.

## Seek the Truth

Christians often lack courage with regard to their Faith, on some grounds or other: fear, or a false understanding of the concept of tolerance. All this is an error and leads to the loss of one's own identity. Never attack in word or deed, but seek the truth and always point out error. To say only half of what I'm thinking is a lie; a complicit silence. One cannot co-exist with lies, intolerance and injustice.

- Father Samir Khalil Samir SJ, of the Russicum, Rome, and the University of St Joseph Beirut, and Director of CEDRAC - Centre for Arab-Christian Documentation and Reseach. Quoted *Corriere della Sera* February 7, 2006 p.2.

Although it's abundantly clear that her values are humane, the issue of how virtue is best protected in grotesque times – in a word, how the ubiquitous ills detailed by her can be conquered – is beyond the scope of her book. Perhaps in the books she is yet to write, she will address this vital subject in the

nitty gritty terms that come naturally to her. The example of JK Rowling, on how a satirist can expose wickedness in no uncertain terms while, at the same time, dramatising courage, loyalty, family feeling, and innocent suffering, could be helpful.

Beleaguered believers and ostensible agnostics with deep moral insight share the view that the best – indeed, the only – cure for hideous problems of mind, will, and spirit is sound religious formation. What the world needs now is not, exactly, love sweet love, even though sweet love *is* needed as much as it was when the song came out. What is required everywhere on the planet is living faith: not beautiful rhetoric, but manifest obedience to the truths enunciated in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount.

How hard it is to give authentic witness to a living faith, and how much work is required of people who are prepared to do more than occupy pews or plant knees on floors, we all know – whether or not we are familiar with the distinction between sincerity and authenticity made many years ago by the late, great literary critic and teacher, Lionel Trilling. Through prayerfulness, sensitive conversation, eloquent silences, and little, nameless, unremembered, daily actions, those of us who are appalled by the spectacles tainting the institutions in which we ourselves battle can create a very different cultural scenario. Gare herself, involved in such a project, would have much to offer.

DR SUSAN MOORE is a grandparent raised in America, who has lived in Australia for 35 years. Her most recent book is *Text Types: A basis for Classroom Study* (Five Senses, Sydney).

## Abusing the 'Property of Youth and Maidhood'

A fairly complete handbook for studying the extensions of man could be made up from selections from Shakespeare. Some might quibble about whether or not he was referring to TV in these familiar lines from *Romeo and Juliet*:

"But soft! what light through yonder window breaks?

It speaks, and yet says nothing."

In *Othello*, which, as much as *King Lear*, is concerned with the torment of people transformed by illusions, there are these lines that bespeak Shakespeare's intuition of the transforming powers of new media:

"Is there not charms

By which the property of youth and maidhood

May be abus'd? Have you not read Roderigo,

Of some such things?"

- Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*. McGraw Hill Book Co 1964, Chapter 1, The Medium is the Message

# SPIRITUAL READING AND PRAYER



PIRITUAL reading is not the same as study or ordinary reading for improvement of our theological knowledge, or even of knowledge of the spiritual life, though obviously all that is extremely important. The traditional Latin name, *lectio divina*, gives us a clue to what it is. Literally, the word means 'divine reading' or 'reading in which God is present and active'. And, as always for us, the One God is Father, Son and Spirit.

In other words, I don't merely read *about* God but I read in such a way that I am open to listen to what *he* wants me to hear, not necessarily what *I* want to hear. I don't impose myself on the text; I let the text speak to me. This means I have to read slowly, contemplatively, open to letting the words enlighten my life.

If God wants to speak to us, he has to use human words - both the words of other people and our own thoughts and words. Experience and discernment will let us know when we are 'on line'. Whenever this sort of enlightenment comes, we will experience it in varying degrees as a 'gift', usually an unexpected gift.

Normally, this will come to us with what spiritual writings have traditionally called 'consolation'; at times, however, it may be a disturbing and unwelcome word at first. Nevertheless, it will 'ring true' like the pleasing sound of a well-made bell, but signalling us to move in another direction, even in a direction we are reluctant to take.

There is a *lectio divina* that is much the same as our usual spiritual reading; but, in the strict sense of the word, this sort of reading is a form of meditation, or what we call also 'mental prayer'. Traditionally, it has been used in this way especially in Western monasticism. It has produced many great men and women of prayer.

Not every book, even every spiritual book, is suitable for this type of *lectio divina*. It needs to be a book that has depth; that makes us reflect; that does not take whole pages to get an idea across, but each paragraph, even each line and often enough just a single phrase grasps us and makes us think. The Bible, of course, is a primary source; classic spiritual texts are another; modern authors, too, who write from deep reflection and prayer.

There are four main steps in *lectio divina*. However, in anything as personal as prayer it can be misleading to make these divisions too sharp. In practice, we will often find that the various divisions overlap. They are not watertight compartments. Nevertheless, each has its own distinctive features.

We begin by 'recollecting ourselves' - reminding ourselves of what we propose to do. We humbly recognize that 'we do not know how to pray as we ought' (Rom 8:26); and we ask, 'Lord, teach us to pray' (Lk 11:1). To be taught to pray means to be taught to be honest with ourselves and with God, to have our 'feet on the ground'; the word 'humility' comes from the Latin *humus*, ground.

We read a text slowly, attentively and devoutly, covering a bit at a time. This is not easy; we usually want to move ahead as quickly as possible. It is customary to read a section two or three times slowly and pausing between each reading, noting any phrase or word that struck us.

We then pause for a longer period to think about what we have read; we turn it over in our mind, look at it from various angles. In Western terminology

this is called 'meditation'. It is sometimes likened to chewing food before digesting it.

We pray about what we are reading, that is, we speak with the Lord about it. This is a crucial stage, because here we enter into the essence of prayer, 'speaking to the Lord as with a friend'. It is a time of great honesty, when we bring our life, just as it is, to our Friend, looking at it in the light of his word.

We accept gratefully those moments when the reading draws us into quiet, wordless contemplation. We are happy to be in silence. Normally, this comes, if at all, in relatively short bursts. We accept it gratefully when it comes; and if it doesn't, we continue calmly with our prayer, speaking with the Lord.

St Teresa wrote: 'Mental prayer, in my opinion, is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us.' This does not mean we spend all the time chattering. Friends do not have to talk all the time; there are times when deep contentment is found simply in being together in silence with one we love. St John of the Cross says, 'the language God best hears is silent love' (Maxim 53).

With all this in mind, we should never consider *lectio divina* as an inferior way of spending time in meditation - a sort of last resort when we feel we cannot pray. It is not merely for beginners. It is a valid form of meditation and contemplation that has been tested by centuries of experience.

'Mental Prayer ... means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us.'

- St Teresa of Avila 1515-1582

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.

## Into Great Silence (Die Grobe Stille)

Not a movie, a meditation on film depicting life, day by day, night by night. at the centuries-old mother house of the Carthusians, La Grande Chartreuse, whose buildings match in austere magnificence their remote location in the French Alps.

No music except plain chant, no commentary, no extraneous material, simply the life of the monks pure and simple as they seek in the rhythm of prayer, the rhythm of eternity.

La Grande Chartreuse is, of course, celebrated for its green and yellow liqueurs, originally devised as medicine by its apothecaries. But its essence is seclusion. Only after years of negotiation was German documentary maker Philip Groening given permission to bring cameras into the monastery. He spent a total of six months there and begins his visual meditation with the acceptance into the community of two new postulants, one African, one European.

Ultimately by editing to the repetitions of the contemplative life, intercutting exteriors of clouds, rivers and trees with the interior life of the monastery cells including close-ups of individual monks and spiritual captions in French, German and English what Groening shows is the living quintessence of why Jesus retired into the desert for 40 days and 40 nights and why He said that while Martha was busy about many things, Mary her sister had, in quietude, chosen the better part.

Impossible to see Groening's masterly work without realising he has created an insight into a power house. Not an easy film; at 164 minutes it is long but so, too, is art, including the high art of prayer.

Apropos Groening quotes 1 Kings, chapter 19, verses 11-13: 'And the Lord passed by. Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.'

Not to be missed. Marvellous to see it in a preview theatre or cinema, even more, marvellous, perhaps, seen under the stars - or in a cathedral.

G\*\*\*\*SFFV.

See also [www.chartreux.org](http://www.chartreux.org)

## MOVIES

### Breach

Based on the life and betrayals of Special Agent FBI Robert Hanssen, seemingly a devout Catholic and adherent of Opus Dei but a traitor and sexual deviant, party to what has been described as the vilest episode of treachery in modern American history.

Chris Cooper brings to Hanssen a tough, woebegone, sinister brilliance along with a sense of a thwarted ambition that, like Judas's, betrayed not from conviction but for money.

Ryan Phillippe plays the novice agent, Eric O'Neill, given the task of observing Hanssen by his boss, Special Agent Kate Burroughs (Laura Linney as a kind of austere secular nun of espionage).

Phillippe brings out the ingenuousness of O'Neill. But surely a Jesuit educated (Gonzaga University) graduate would have asked himself whether a crucifix on the office wall plus a statue of Our Lady on the desk and an initial question about saying the rosary daily were not clues to someone over-using religion for cover purposes?

This, emphatically, is not Ian Fleming although Graham Greene could have made a masterpiece of the moral ambiguities involved. As it is, writer/director Billy Ray and his co-writers Adam Mazer and William Rotko eschew glamour for a humdrum treason that entailed the execution of America's Russian assets and was rewarded with millions of Soviet roubles over a period of 20 years.

O'Neill resigned from the FBI and is now a lawyer. Hanssen is serving life in solitary confinement. *Breach* is an apt short title; a longer one might have been more morally appropriate: *Corruptio Optimi Pessimi* - Corruption of the Best is the Worst.

M\*\*\*\*NFFV

### Copying Beethoven

Stardom is easy. But creative genius, is hard to capture on screen. Director Agnieszka Holland does it, and does it magnificently, with Ludwig van Beethoven.

Her success is down to two main factors. First, Beethoven as embodied by Ed Harris who, leonine wig flying,

catches both the pathos and the daemonic creativity of an artist not simply raging against the dying of the light - and sound - but raising a dawn of new beauty and song to God as he goes down.

Second, Holland frames and edits her shots to Beethoven's music in composition and performance, nowhere more tellingly than in the re-enactment of the first performance in Vienna of that baroque cathedral of music, Choral Symphony No 9.

In this sequence, she adds immeasurably to her effect by having Beethoven's (fictional) copyist Anna Holst (Diane Kruger) prompt his deaf conducting. Harris's performance is mighty. By contrast Kruger is delicate yet strong: a crystal goblet alongside a tankard of gold.

Holland gives full rein to Beethoven's outrageousness. At one point during his ablutions he bares his backside. This in the dialogue becomes 'mooning', inspiration for the *Moonlight Sonata*. Ouch!

PG\*\*\*\*SFFV

### Clubland

The Western Suburbs of Sydney have become the equivalent of Hell's Kitchen in such ancient Hollywood flicks as *Dead End Kids*. To her credit director Cherie Nowlan, through Keith Thompson's script, shows us another facet: the lives of club entertainers.

Jean Dwight (Brenda Blethyn) is such an entertainer, a comedienne with a brighter past in England and an inglorious local prospect: supplementing club gigs with work in a canteen to keep together her home and two sons Tim (Khan Chittenden) and disabled Mark (Richard Wilson).

While she tells saucy jokes, the shy Tim confronts the forward Jill (Emma Booth) leading to the neat irony of Jean defending her son from the minx. Her ex-husband John (Frankie J Holden) aims for a comeback with a self-funded tape of Conway Twitty songs while she fends off a dim star suitor (Phillip Quast).

Suburban snobbery gets a smack (Jill's parents live in a beachfront house). To say more would spoil a rousing ending.

MA15+\*\*\*NFFV

## The Dead Girl

Writer/director Karen Moncreiff propels the murder-mystery genre to new levels by using the perspective of five different people: The Stranger (Toni Collette), The Sister (Rose Byrne), The Wife (Mary Beth Hurt), The Mother (Marcia Gay Harden) and The Dead Girl (Brittany Murphy).

Each of the five takes is separate and individual. The work, however, is not without plot flaws. The Sister, a forensic student, misidentifies the victim although she has a recent photograph and a chance to compare it with the face of The Dead Girl, victim of a serial killer.

In the take involving The Mother, Marcia May Harden's controlled grace redeems Moncreiff's over-indulgence in sordid bleakness. Apropos bleakness, the marvellously enduring Piper Laurie (to whom Tony Curtis uttered the immortal line, 'Yonda lies the castle of my fadda') puts on a turn that redefines overbearing motherhood. A player less strong than Toni Collette would have withered away at her blast from the past

In key male roles, Giovanni Ribisi and Nick Searcy, provide a contrast in creepiness.

MA15+\*\*\*NFFV

## Inland Empire

Writer/director David Lynch is celebrated (by some) as a master of the sinister. In this psychological thriller he brings together Nikki (Lara Dern), Devon (Justin Theroux) and Kingsley (Jeremy Irons) as a trio remaking a movie that turns out to be one with a past.

Exciting premise. But Lynch choose to intertwine a ghost story involving Polish gypsies, leaving us in doubt where reality, movie making and ghost story begin and end. The result is like watching the drip of water joining a stalactite and stalagmite, fascinating but slow. In seeking to engender tension, Lynch begets boredom.

Laura Dern's performance, given almost three hours of running time, is a heroic mix of Botox impassivity and melodramatic hysteria. Irons has fun with the role of director Kingsley. Harry Dean Stanton, as his assistant director, without saying a word, sets up expectations of guilt. But that would be too simple in a movie where another three characters,

### 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

dressed as rabbits, are involved in the plot.

MA15+\*\*NFFV

## The Number 23

Is based on an Internet obsession that seeks out coincidences involving 23.

Director Joel Schumacher and scriptwriter Fernley Phillips use this as a peg for a psycho-drama starring Jim Carey as dog-catcher Walter Sparrow whose wife Agatha (Virginia Madsen) gives him a self-published, second-hand murder mystery entitled, *The Number 23*.

Elements within the book interconnect with Sparrow's nightmares in which he comes on as a private eye to Madsen's *femme fatale*.

More red herrings than a Moscow fishmonger's. More gore than a Chicago abattoir. Plus Carrey mugging like a nutter who wishes he could get back to Square 1- comedy.

MA15+\*\*NFFV

## Paris, Je t'aime (Paris, I Love You)

Vintage collection of 18 short movies, about the districts of Paris by a scintillation of directors ( Alexander Payne, Nobuhiro Suwa, Tom Twyker, Christopher Doyle...) and a constellation of stars (Juliette Binoche, Natalia Portman, Willem Dafoe, Geena Rowlands, Gerard Depardieu...) Only one movie breaks the enchantment: a crude vampire piece where the blood runs *rouge* and the mood is *noir*.

Certain to be imitated. What price Sydney Opera House by moonlight

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and Cate Blanchett bailed up by David Williamson brandishing a play about a star and her husband who take over a theatrical company or the Perth Mint at dawn and Russell Crowe playing a soldier of fortune trying to steal enough gold for a molar filling so that he can become a star.

MA15+\*\*\*NFFV

## Romulus, My Father

Actor Richard Roxburgh chose to make Raimond Gaita's memoir the subject of his debut. as director. The result is a pastoral elegy where madness supervenes. From his principals, Eric Bana, Franka Potente and Kodi Smit-McPhee, Roxburgh elicits performances of the highest merit. in the roles of the estranged Romanian husband Romulus, his German wife, Christina, and their watchful son, Rai.

Marton Csokas. Russell Dykstra and Jacek Roman provide high calibre support. The indestructible Terry Norris and Alethea McGrath are the farmers for whom Romulus works while also forging garden furniture. Esme Melville provides gentility as Miss Collard.

Yet the total impact is less than the sum of their performances Why? It may be that Roxburgh and his script writer, Nick Drake, are too respectful of the book: Gaita is after all a distinguished moral philosopher at both the University of Cambridge and the Australian Catholic University.

But a book is a book and a movie a movie and Roxburgh does not quite bring off a complete transmutation. One sticking point is the depiction of the sun-bleached frugality of life in post-World War II Maryborough, Victoria; odd to see Romulus and his son eating tinned pasta on a farm amid some of the richest land in Australia. What - no mutton chops?

There again Roxburgh does provide a masterly episode that links the tragedy to hope: Romulus constructs a wooden cross and nails it to the side of his ramshackle house. As the Catholic religious teachers in the movie might say: Good work. Can do better.

MA\*\*\*NFFV

## Noise

Writer/director Matt Saville opens with a barbed hook of shock on a suburban train and does not let go until the end. His hero is Graham McCahan

(Brendan Cowell) one of those cops who in civilian life, like the infantry in war, hold the line while wounded. (in McCahan's case by tinnitus, the noise in one's ears that can incapacitate all but the heroic).

McCahan's redoubt is a police van in a suburban shopping strip. Cowell's stoic, deadpan approach puts him in line to play Buster Keaton in any future biopic. His fellow players Henry Nixon, Katie Wall and the debutante Maia Thomas match him as the action proceeds and Saville creates an explosive climax linked inexorably to his opening.

MA15+\*\*\*NFFV

### Blades of Glory

Opens idyllically with children and nuns on ice-skates. But from the idyllic, directors Will Speck and Josh Gordon twirl into a lively satire on the glitz of figure-skating where the rivalry is sharper than the ice blades.

Will Ferrell and Jon Heder co-star as the macho Chaz and the fey Jimmy, two skaters, forced to team up when they are barred as individuals. No rudery is left unexplored but when the sight gags work they trigger guffaws.

M\*\*\*NFFV

### The Reaping

Okay, the Bible has been providing material for movies since Cecil B De Mille was knee-high to a megaphone. But director Stephen Hopkins and his writing team, Carey Hayes, Chad Hayes and Brian Russo, attain a nadir by extracting from the Book of Exodus the 10 plagues visited on the Egyptians and transferring them to here and now America.

Katherine Winter (Hilary Swank), a believer turned professional sceptic, assisted by a crucifix-wearing Ben (Idris Elba), is invited by Doug Blackwell (David Morrissey) to investigate paranormal events in a bayou township in Louisiana. Predictably, the plot thickens with frogs and locusts. But Team Hopkins must disparage what they see as fundamentalist credulity by transforming it into a secret enormity involving a cult of child murder in a narrative held together by the brilliant child player AnnaSophia Robb.

Pestilential hokum

M\*NFFV

### Tideland

Writer/director Terry Gilliam's name is synonymous with fantastic. Here he pushes beyond fantastic to the grotesque. And he takes some powerful actors along for the trip; Jeff Bridges, playing a Joe Cokeresque rock star, is in fine form while alive. But he spends most of the movie dead, purpling tongue protruding until he is mummified by a witchy neighbour Dell (Janet McTeer). Essentially the movie is Gilliam and co-writer Tony Grisoni's re-working of *Alice in Wonderland*; Alice is Jeliza-Rose (Jodelle Ferland) a wise child whose scenes include preparing and administering her father's heroin fixes when she is not frolicking with the lobotomised Dickens (Brendan Fletcher).

All these shennanigans are performed with a wooden cross prominently displayed. You get the picture. The excesses are down to fundamentalist Christianity not rock-'n'-pot or heroin or, perish the thought, the untamed imagination of T Gilliam. Esquire.

MA\*\*NFFV

### Premonition

Sandra Bullock's last romantic drama *The House by the Lake* experimented with time shifts. This one examines whether it is possible to foresee catastrophe and prevent it. As Linda Hanson, Bullock, whose strength is ordinary glamour, is living out the American - make that global - dream: beautiful house, beautiful children, handsome husband Jim (Julian McMahon, demonstrating he has more talent for acting than his father had for prime ministering though there have been worse treasurers).

But the dream has its real edges, mortgage and work relationships. Director Mennan Yapo (and writer Bill Kelly) bring off their ending in a whiplash surprise that we should have seen coming but don't. That's fate.

M\*\*\*\*NFFV

### The Lives of Others

Director Florian Henckel von Donnersmark does justice to the past and gives a warning to the future about totalitarian surveillance as it evolved in Stasiland, otherwise known as East Germany.

Prominent playwright Georg Dreyman (Sebastian Koch) his actress-paramour Christa-Maria Sieland (Martina Gedecki) intersect with Stasi Captain Gerd Wiesler (Ulrich Muhle) when he is given the task of spying on them.

Direction, script and acting are of compelling strength. And it is the spy who is caught even as he brings death, caught by the need to save. One false moment: Wiesler reads a book of poetry for consolation - a book by Berthold Brecht whose relationship with the East German dictatorship was by no means heroic.

MA15+\*\*\*\*NFFV

### The Science of Sleep

Michel Gondry's romantic comedy hops between reality and fantasy like a performing flea drunk on its alcoholic trainer's blood stream. The lead character is Stephan Miroux played by Mexico's Gael Garcia Bernal which adds a further comical element: Bernal, in pursuit of Hollywood stardom, has learned English but does not speak French.

Thus Stephane, newly returned from Mexico to work for a firm that produces calendars, speaks English while the rest of the cast including Charlotte Gainsbourg speak mainly French, the action spiralling higher and higher into fantasies based on Stephane's childhood pretence of fronting a TV show (complete with cardboard cameras and paper props).

M\*\*\*NFFV

### Hey, Good Looking (Comme t'y es belle)

Director Lisa Azuelos (not Jewish herself though brought up in a Jewish community in Paris) sets her romantic comedy within a Sephardic family, held to orthodoxy by their frail grandfather but more fervent about romance and fashion focused on a beauty salon rather than the synagogue.

The plot involves the interplay of the lives and loves of four friends Isa (Michele Laroque), Lea (Aure Atika), Alice (Valerie Benguigui) and Nina (Geraldine Nakache). Enough already.

MA\*\*NFFV

### Burke & Wills

Essentially a bold, calling-card movie that should open many doors to its co-

producers, co-directors and co-stars Matthew Zeremes and Oliver Torr. The relevance of the title to the real Burke and Wills may be tenuous but the grip of the fictional Burke (Zeremes) and Wills (Todd) is assured.

Their edit by black screen rather than dissolve or mix-through serves to emphasise the disconnectedness of the characters, getting by on pot and beer while searching for work and diving deeper into depression.

Wills's death scene, as played by Todd, is likely to garner a notoriety akin to Ewan McGregor's scene in *Train Spotting*; it is as abrupt as it is shocking in the naked use of an old fashioned Gillette razor blade.

MA15+\*\*\*NFFV

### Disturbia

Variation on a theme by Alfred Hitchcock, namely *Rear Window*, in which the protagonist James Stewart witnessed suspicious events and was unable to act personally because of a broken leg.

Here the broken leg is replaced by security device on the ankle of a teenager Kale (Shia LeBoeuf) under house arrest for biffing his school teacher.

Director RJ Caruso, and writers Christopher Landon and Carl Elisworth, soon abandon pretensions to the Hitchcockian by going full-tilt for schlock-horror involving a neighbour played by David Morse in a mix of mayhem and glee, and the sense of a fine professional asking himself: is this why I became an actor?

M\*\*NFFV

### Shooter

Director Antoine Fergus and his writing team Jonathan Lemkin (script) and Stephen Hunter (novel) set up an assassination which embittered, ex-marine sniper Bob Lee Swagger (Mark Walberg) is called in to prevent.

In this some may find distorted echoes of Lee Harvey Oswald, ex-marine sharp shooter. But Oswald's mail-order Carcano was primitive compared to Swagger's .50 calibre Barrett telescopic sniper rifle (one shot, one kill out to 1000 metres plus).

When Swagger - and Walberg certainly lives up to the name - finds he has been stitched up to take the blame for the killing he goes on the run. Having

shown Swagger's expertise, however, Fergus regresses to a hyped up version of the kind of shoot-'em up that Rambo/Sylvester Stallone (cinematic grandson of John Wayne) perpetrates with automatic weaponry and grenades.

Far more effective to have had Swagger pick off the baddies, not terrorists but a thoroughly nasty senator Charles F Meachum (the immortal Ned Beatty) representing big, bad business in cahoots with Colonel Isaac Johnson (Danny Glover). Misfire at 24 frames per second.

MA15+\*\*\*NFFV

## Be selfless

'From the  
contemplation  
of ourselves  
we grow in fear and  
humility.  
From the  
contemplation  
of God,  
we grow in hope  
and love.'

- St Bernard, 1090-1153 AD,  
Abbot of Clairvaux  
Sermons, De diversis 5,4-5

### Mr Bean's Holiday

The title is a tribute to the great Jacques Tati's *Monsieur Hulot's Holiday*. Unfortunately Rowan Atkinson/Mr Bean fails to imitate Tati's subtlety, instead going for the kind of mugging that would give a monkey terminal melancholia

But director Steve Bendelack (and his writers Hamish McColl, Robin Driscoll and Simon McBurney) include enough sight gags to keep the chuckles flowing as Mr Bean helps a lost boy Stepan (Max Baldry) and makes his way to Cannes in a Mini, charm-driven by an actress Sabine (Emma de Caunes)

Their arrival is synchronised with the film festival and the comedy's best sequences in which Mr Bean inserts himself into the ego-driven drama of Carson Clay (Willem Dafoe) and saves Sabine from a thespian fate worse than

death, being left on the cutting-room floor.

PG\*\*\*SFFV

### Happily Never After

Is Shrek-ish in that it attempts to deliver electronic cartoon comedy to both adults and children. Where Shrek succeeded, this one fails because the deconstruction of traditional fairytales such as Cinderella and Rapunzel is too crude for adults and too cynical for children.

PG\*\*SFFV

### Reign Over Me

Charlie (Adam Sandler) and Alan (Don Cheadle) became friends in dental college but lost touch when Charlie had to cope with a family crisis and Alan rose to the anxieties of forming, but losing authority, in a multiple-partner dental practice in New York.

A chance meeting gives Alan a chance to help Charlie who leads a life of mad loneliness symbolised by the way he rides a motorised scooter through the streets of New York.

How Alan's help is reciprocated is at the heart of director Mike Binder touching and marvellous tragi-comedy, marvellous because Sandler in playing mad puts aside his manic loon persona to play for truth.

M\*\*\*NFFV

### Bridge to Terabitha

Jess Aarons (Josh Hutcherson) is a loner even within his own family. Leslie Burke (Annasophia Robb) is sunbeam who lets her light shine on everyone. They meet when she beats him in a race at school and swing together across a neighbourhood creek to a place where his talent for drawing combines with hers for story telling to create the fantasy world of Terabitha.

Hutcherson, an actor of wary reticence, is a perfect foil for Robb's outgoing charm. Zooey Deschanel comes on as the music teacher who intervenes in their lives.

Director Grabar Csupa's treatment may have its scary moments for older viewers who haven't been toughened by the Harry Potter movies. For younger viewers the wrenching shock may be an untimely death, key to the opening of a beautifully realised final sequence.

PG\*\*\*SFFV

## Love Struck: Wrestling's No1 Fan

So many recent documentaries have, like too many sweet puddings, wrecked our palate for the real thing. Film maker Megan Spencer take on irrepressible wrestling fan Sue Chuter is real to the point of rawness. Despite obvious budget constraints, she conveys the headlock obsession that inspires fans and not just fans of wrestling.

The aforesaid budget constraints, tact or a combination of both appear to prevent Spencer, a formidably outspoken film critic and incisive interviewer, from establishing how Chuter finances her excursions, and how they are connected to her dilapidated family life.

M\*\*\*NFFV

## 300

The selling slogan is Prepare for Glory. Make that prepare for gore, buckets of it in a retelling of Leonidas and his 300 Spartans holding the Pass of Thermopylae against the massed armies of Exerxes, King of the Persians.

Your reviewer saw the IMAX version which multiplied the special effects of heads rolling and elephants and rhinos lumbering, escapees from another time. Director Zack Snyder works an international cast to mighty, if ridiculously inaccurate effect. Scotsman Gerard Butler plays Leonidas but looks as if he would be happier in the kilt rather than the leather nappy he has to wear (no helmet, no body armour, no greaves).

At first sight David Wenham looks like a spear carrier but ends dominating the screen. Incongruously, the rag he has tied round a wound resembles the one he wore round his neck as Diver Dan in *Sea Change*.

Another incongruity: the Spartans tend to be bearded and the Persians clean-shaven destroying the trivia information that the barbarians (oi barbaroi) were so called by the Greeks because they were bearded. On the other hand, as the Greeks taught us to say, this is comic-book history by Frank Miller, an incongruity in every frame.

MA\*\*\*NFFV

## Deliver Us From Evil

All organisations by their socially cohesive nature are self-protective.

## Joy and Sorrow

The eye that has specks of dirt in it cannot see the brightness of true light. What brings joy to a clear, shining mind, causes pain to a mind that is corrupted.

- Pope St Leo the Great, 440-461 AD  
*On the Beatitudes, Sermon 95, 8-9*

Banks are in relation to financial probity, military forces in relation to courage, police forces in relation to law, academic organisations in relation to scholarship, scientific organisations in relation to empirical truth. Even media organisations have been known to practise self-protection in relation to mistakes.

In other words every organisation protects not so much the person as its *raison d'être*. Thus the Catholic Church protects itself in relation to morality and virtue. This is a context writer/director Amy Berg neglects in her documentary about paedophilia, specifically the notorious case of Oliver (known as Ollie) O'Grady in northern California.

Aggravating the situation, O'Grady was shuffled from parish to parish by diocesan authorities before being brought to book in the US courts. What gives Berg's documentary its horrific fascination is O'Grady's self-exculpation, disconnected from his compulsive immorality.

Among the John Grierson rules of classic documentary is recording events with minimal intervention. Did Amy Berg always adhere to the rule? She has two of O'Grady's victims head for Rome to hand-deliver a letter to Pope Benedict XVI. They have no appointment and are halted by the Swiss Guard. Predictable, of course, but the kind of 'good footage' sought by any pro-active TV producer (Berg's longtime occupation).

Berg also makes play with the notion that paedophilia is an inevitable outcome of clerical celibacy despite all recent and continuing evidence to the contrary in the secular sphere.

O'Grady is now back home in Ireland. Ironically, Berg does what she accuses

church authorities of doing; she protects O'Grady by not revealing where in Ireland he lives.

Distasteful, but the documentary should be seen. Implicit in it is a message for all organisations: the more complicated the cover-up, the greater the scandal caused by later revelation. How long the scandal of the Temple money-changers had been going on, we do not know. We do know that Our Lord's reaction was swift and effective. And the millstone words he used about those who harm little children still resonate. But not, on the evidence of his appearance, with O'Grady, sinner or in secular parlance, psychopath.

MA 15+\*\*\*NFFV

## Reno 911 Miami

Doltish comedy involving a team known through the US Comedy Central TV series. Its prime movers are Robert Ben Garant, Thomas Lennon and Kerri Kenney-Silver. Has not travelled well.

M\*NFFV

## Infamous

Writer/director Douglas McGrath was out of luck when he made his movie about Truman Capote's magnum opus, *In Cold Blood*; he was beaten to first release by the version that won an Oscar for Philip Seymour Hoffman. Not out of talent, however; McGrath's version is superior, including the intercutting between sophisticated Manhattan, middle-class Kansas and death row.

Toby Jones doesn't act Capote, he clones him. Sandra Bullock's Harper Lee surpasses Catherine Keener's and so it goes to Daniel Craig's untamed turn as the killer Perry Smith who fascinated Capote and was fascinated by him.

MA 15+\*\*\*\*NFFV

## Perfect Stranger

Director James Foley (and writer Todd Kamarnicki) might well have titled this murder mystery, *Curse of the Oscar*. Foley requires of Halle Berry (Best Actress, 2002), a performance above and beyond the call of duty in Adland situations of louche, not to say ludicrous, glossiness. Even Bruce Willis who has bravely faced mighty turkeys looks ready to make a heroic break for it with Berry over his shoulder.

M\*NFFV

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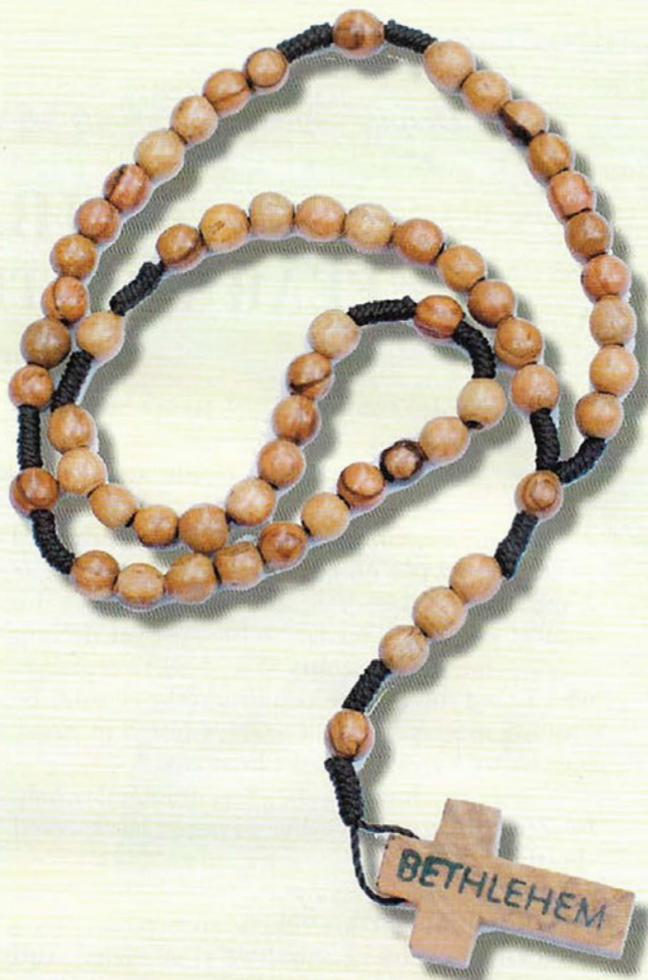
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PG519

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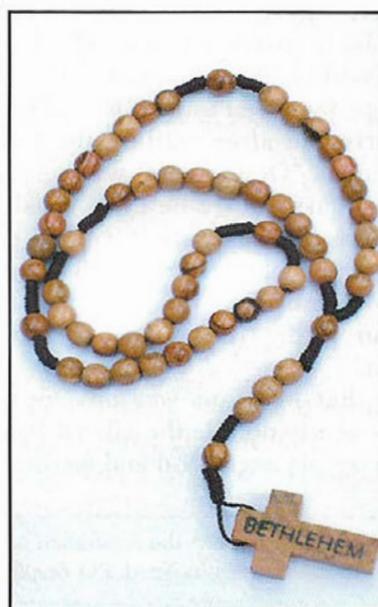
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*Despite grave risks, priests are desperate to help starving people*

## ZIMBABWE FEAR TIGHTENS ITS GRIP

*by John Pontifex*

**P**RIESTS in Zimbabwe are living in fear of being arrested, tortured or killed after the Mugabe regime launched a tirade against the Church.

Undaunted, Church leaders are determined to help a people on the brink of starvation, as Zimbabwe's economic meltdown shows no sign of abating. This is the bleak – yet defiant – assessment repeatedly stated by two priests who risked their lives deep inside the country by sending messages to Aid to the Church in Need, the charity for persecuted Christians.

The charity has already given emergency help for Zimbabwe and another payment is expected shortly.

In the first message, a priest described how a number of his fellow clergy had been "blacklisted" by Zimbabwe's security and central intelligence organisations. He added: "Please would you continue praying for us as we struggle to speak out for the voiceless people of Zimbabwe."

This plea comes as President Robert Mugabe announced that the Catholic bishops were on a "dangerous path" for criticising his regime. The bishops stated that the country's "corrupt leadership" had put the people in "deep crisis". Mugabe turned on the bishops after they released an Easter pastoral letter, which the president dismissed as "political nonsense".

In his message, the priest told ACN how some priests were arrested after reading the letter to the parishioners. "One [priest] was actually dragged out of Mass before he even finished reading it." And in a separate development, ACN spoke on the telephone with another priest – both priests cannot be named for security reasons – who said: "People are dying of malnourishment."

Mentioning that inflation was now nearly 3,000 percent – nearly double the official figure – he said: "The people need food and medicines

in order to survive otherwise more and more people will die." He gave a graphic snapshot of the country's economic collapse, putting unemployment at 80 percent.

The priest said that the number fleeing Zimbabwe had already topped five million, nearly double the official figure for a country with a total population of just 13 million. He described how people were turning to the Church, mentioning that the churches were packed for services.

The priest went on to say that the Government had clamped down on the Church's humanitarian relief work and had refused to grant residence and work permits for foreign priests and religious. He described how the Government was blaming the Church for the country's economic crisis.

The priest hit out at other African countries for refusing to intervene. "Most of the African countries support the government [in Zimbabwe] and the elite. "The people simply laugh at the idea of South Africa being supposed to mediate. It is simply a farce."

He went on to denounce the independent news blackout, orchestrated by a Government which has banned the BBC from reporting from inside Zimbabwe and applies strict state control on all media activities.

"The Church must tell the world about the true extent of the crisis," he added.

A few weeks ago, Aid to the Church in Need provided \$16,000 to help 460 children threatened by massive shortages of food and medical supplies.

The scheme, based in Bulawayo city, received the backing of outspoken Catholic prelate Pius Ncube.

The project provides for needy families whose homes were destroyed in the government's universally-condemned 2005 slum clearing programme.

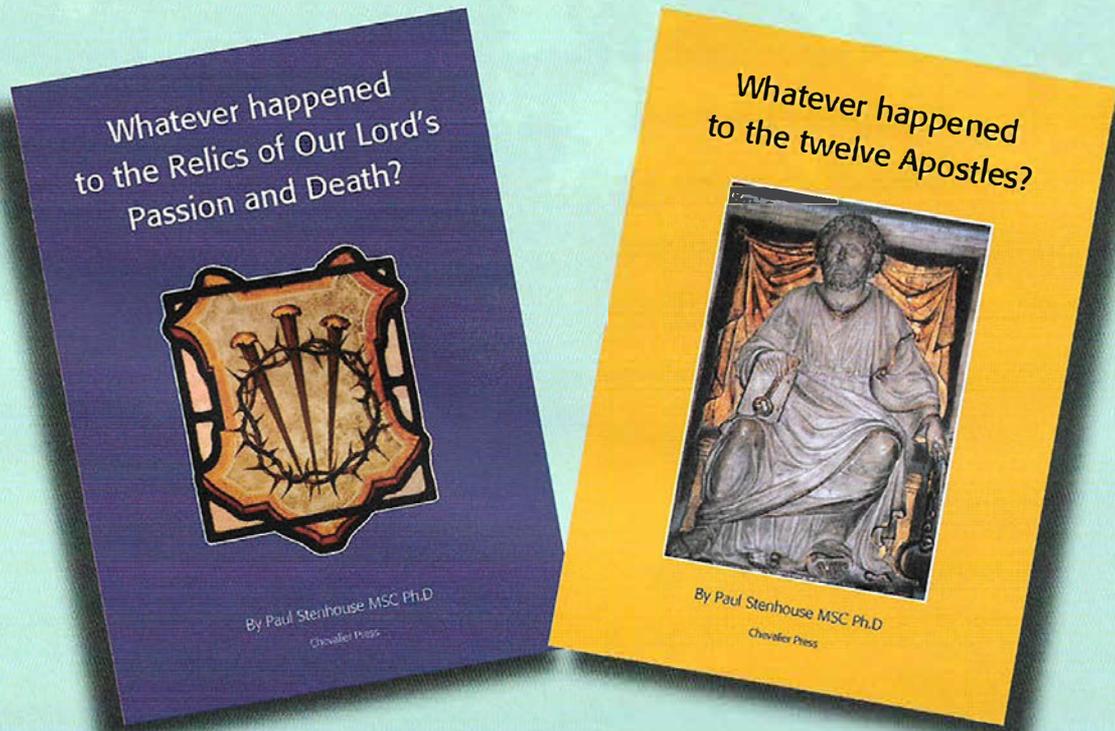
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To help this cause please contact the Australian office of ACN on (02) 9679-1929. e-mail: [info@aidtochurch.org](mailto:info@aidtochurch.org) or write to: Aid to the Church in Need, PO Box 6245, Blacktown DC NSW 2148. Web: [www.aidtochurch.org](http://www.aidtochurch.org)

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