

# ANNUALS

Australasia

Journal of Catholic Culture



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# ANNALS AUSTRALASIA

*Journal of Catholic Culture*

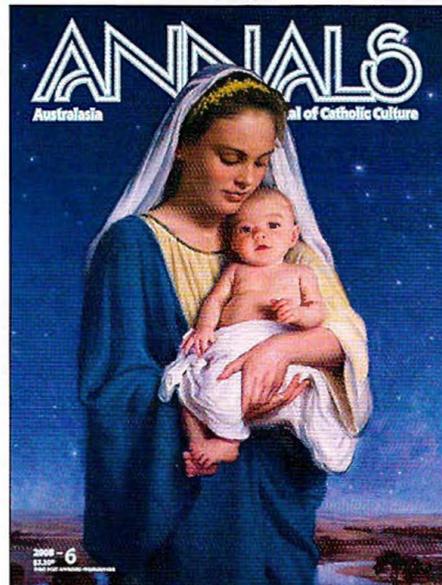
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*Australia's Oldest Catholic Magazine*

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*Front Cover:* This beautiful painting of Our Lady of the Southern Cross, Help of Christians is the work of well-known Sydney artist Paul Newton. Paul was commissioned by the Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal Pell, to produce a truly Australian image of Our Lady and the infant Jesus in the spirit of the traditional representation of Our Lady Help of Christians. It was unveiled and blessed by Pope Benedict XVI in St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney during World Youth Day. To obtain a beautifully framed copy of a print of this painting, contact Susan at the Catholic Weekly Office on [02] 9390-5400. For further information see the inside back cover of this issue of *Annals Australasia*.

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

Cover photo: Paul Newton

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Those Who Dishonour Religion  
**T**s it I whom they hurt?  
 - it is the Lord who speaks -  
 Is it not, in fact, themselves, to their own confusion?  
 - Jeremiah the Hebrew Prophet, [born c.650 BC] vii.19.

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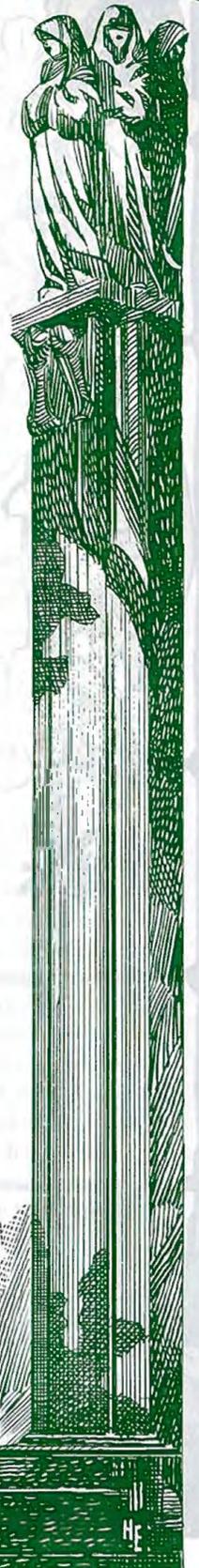
In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and  
of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

## GOODS



It is in the nature of possessions to be possessed and in the nature of goods to spread goodness. God intended them for man's well being. Our goods lie in our hands like tools, instruments that we can put to good use so long as we know how to wield them ... Nature has made wealth a servant, not a mistress. ... We ourselves are alone responsible for the use, good or bad, which we make of it. ... We should not destroy our goods but rather the covetousness that perverts their use. ... You gain nothing from depriving yourself of your wealth if you remain rich in unregulated desires.

– Clement of Alexandria (AD 150-215), Homily, 'How can the rich be saved?'



*Prayer of the Heart*

**REPOSE UNTROUBLED  
LET US FIND**



O you, before the end of day,  
Creator of the world, we pray:  
in love unfailing hear our prayer,  
enfold us in your watchful care.

Keep all disturbing dreams away,  
and hold the evil foe at bay,  
repose untroubled let us find  
for soul and body, heart and mind.



OUR life and health send from  
above,  
renew in us the fire of love,  
and may your splendour cast away  
night's darkness in eternal day.

Almighty Father, hear our cry  
through Jesus Christ our Lord most high;  
who reigns with you eternally  
in your blest Spirit's unity. Amen.

---

- Translation by nuns of St Cecilia's Benedictine Abbey,  
Ryde, Isle of Wight, of the seventh century hymn *Te Lucis Ante  
Terminum* traditionally said or sung at nightfall at Compline, in  
the Divine Office of the Roman Rite.

*71% of Sydneysiders thought WYD was good for Sydney*

# DAYS TO REMEMBER

*By George Cardinal Pell*



**T**HIS is a good time to be Catholic in Australia. I have been to three previous World Youth Days and I know the mix works. And it did in Sydney.

All Sydney, and not just Catholic Sydney, took the pilgrims to their hearts, going out of their way to help. One example is a local Islamic school which provided accommodation for a significant group from the USA.

The weather was perfect, although the week before and now the week after were cold and wet. One example of all the prayers for the success of the event being answered.

The events of the week saw the contrast of the wild enthusiasm of the 500,000 who turned out to welcome Pope Benedict on the Thursday and the prayerfulness that greeted the moving and spectacular re-enactment of Christ's last hours through the city the next day.

Sydney harbor in the sunshine is a magnificent sight. Vancouver or Cape Town might be sight rivals but as the flotilla of ships carried the Pope to the official welcome, the foreign visitors commented that few cities could offer a comparable approach.

It was a first to travel in the Mercedes Popemobile with the Holy Father. Kilometre after kilometre of excited young adults, youngsters too, running and waving behind the crowds, trying to keep up.

World Youth Day has given us many similar scenes to remember, with 400,000 at the Final Mass with the Pope, the largest gathering in Australian history.

And while Sydneysiders took the young pilgrims to their hearts, so did the pilgrims with Sydney. As they leave us this week they are taking away precious memories, not only of our beautiful city, but, more importantly,

also of the thousands – staff, volunteers and passersby – who worked hard or went out of their way to help.

They will also be able to keep in touch with the people they met in Sydney through the new online social networking site Xt3 (xt3.com), which was only launched a month ago and already has 27,000 members. Lookout Facebook – the Catholics are coming!

Despite some grizzles leading up to the event, Sydney loved World Youth Day. A poll published this week found 78% of Sydneysiders felt that the organizers led by Bishop Fisher and Danny Casey did a good job and

this majority verdict was justified. 71% thought WYD was a good thing for Sydney and only 12% said it was bad.

An even higher percentage, 81%, agreed it was good to see so many young people enjoying themselves.

Christianity makes a difference to daily living; and for the better. This is one reason why the followers of Christ have increased and multiplied across the world for nearly 2000 years.

WYD enabled us to restate our central claims in dramatic fashion. Our first task is to present Jesus Christ, his teachings and his followers who make up the Church. This is the core.

While Pope Benedict is not a great public orator, he is an outstanding teacher and his speeches bear rereading and study. His quiet personality reveals a good and decent man, at peace with himself and the world around him. People said they felt he was talking to them personally.

I have celebrated Mass in many different situations, occasionally even when the congregation becomes distracted and even noisy. One small miracle was that at all the great gatherings, each with congregations of 150,000 or more, there were long periods when you could have heard a pin drop. Tens and tens of thousands of young pilgrims, most of them Aussies at the weekend, praying silently. To those who claim it couldn't have been so, I say "ask someone who was there".

Pope Benedict was delighted, grateful for all the official and public kindness he received and possibly a bit surprised by the depths of faith he encountered.

I was pleased and honoured to have been part of the team organizing WYD2008. But I am also pleased the event is over!

It was a marvellous, life-giving celebration. It won't be back again in Sydney for at least a generation – if ever. Far after my time.

## United in Faith and Love

**T**HE principal actors on the stage over these last few days, of course, have been the young people themselves. World Youth Day is their day. It is they who have made this a global ecclesial event, a great celebration of youth and a great celebration of what it is to be the Church, the people of God throughout the world, united in faith and love and empowered by the Spirit to bear witness to the risen Christ to the ends of the earth. I thank them for coming, I thank them for their participation, and I pray that they will have a safe journey home. I know that the young people, their families and their sponsors have in many cases made great sacrifices to enable them to travel to Australia. For this the entire Church is grateful.

– From Pope Benedict XVI's Farewell Address, ZENIT, July 21, 2008

*An appeal for dialogue and openness*

## REJECTING THE PROFESSION OF DEATH

By Paul Stenhouse MSC, Ph.D



WHILE some English scholars argue that Shakespeare didn't write Shakespeare's plays, some Arabic scholars question whether a poem written by the Jewish poet of Medina, al-Rabi' ibn Abi al-Huqaiq, was actually written by him. There are sound reasons for thinking that it wasn't, and that it forms part of a significant anti-Jewish *corpus* of literature of the first century after Muhammad's death. But that is another story.

The poet laments the foolishness of his people who would not have been exiled and massacred if they had not [allegedly] broken faith with Muhammad:

'... but they followed Satan  
and the People of Blood stung home  
like vipers.  
The fool destroyed the counsel of the  
wise and the cause was irreparably lost.'

The source of the poem is Abu I-Zinad.<sup>1</sup> What is to be noted is the un-selfconscious way the Jewish poet describes the Muslims [or, the Muslims describe themselves] as 'People of Blood'.

The expression calls to mind a saying of Muhammad's about the Jihad recorded by 'Aisha, his favourite wife. It is to be found in the *Book of Fear and Hope*, the fourth book of his *The Revival of Religious Sciences*, written around 1096 AD in Damascus by Abu Hamid Muhammad [1058-1111 AD], known to posterity as Al-Ghazali. 'Aisha recorded Muhammad as saying: 'There is no drop more beloved of God than ... a drop of blood which is shed in the Path of God.'<sup>2</sup>

In a *hadith* – an alleged saying of Muhammad – quoted by nineteenth century Arabist Edward Lane, we learn that 'the gift of the believer is death'<sup>3</sup>

Another hadith is attributed to Salamah ibn al-Akwa' who says: 'The Apostle of God [peace be upon him] appointed Abu Bakr our commander and we fought with some people who were polytheists. We attacked them at night, killing them. Our war-cry that night was "Put to death; put to death". Salamah then said, 'I killed that night with my own hand polytheists belonging to seven houses'.<sup>4</sup>

Death also has been the gift Islam has brought to uncountable millions of largely uncomprehending non-Muslims whose independence, property and families stood in the way of burgeoning Islamic wealth and power, giving the lie to naïve claims that it is 'contrary to Islam to sow in stolen soil'.<sup>5</sup>

If the Arabs were not altogether convinced by these torrents of

blood that the religion preached by Mohammed was true, they at any rate recognised in Islamism an irresistible, and to some extent a supernatural, power. Decimated by the sword, overwhelmed with terror and amazement, they resigned themselves to becoming Moslems—at least ostensibly; and the Khalif, that they might have no time to recover from their dismay, forthwith hurled them against the Roman Empire and Persia—two nations ripe for conquest, because for many years rent by intestine discord, enervated by slavery, and cankered by all the vices of decadence. Boundless wealth and vast domains compensated the Arabs for their submission to the Law of the Prophet of Mecca. Apostasy was unknown, it was unthinkable, it meant death—upon this point the law of Mohammed is inexorable—but sincere piety and zeal for the faith were almost equally rare. By the most horrible and atrocious means the outward conversion of the Bedawin had been effected; that was much; it was indeed all that could fairly be looked for on the part of these unfortunate people, who had witnessed the death of their fathers, brothers, and children beneath the sword of Khalid or the other pious executioners who were his rivals.<sup>6</sup>

The famous 'Umayyad governor of Arabia, Al-Hajjaj, a schoolmaster from al-Taif in al-Hijaz who decided the sword was mightier than the pen, became Governor of Iraq in 694 AD. He is said to have arrived in the mosque of al-Kufah accompanied only by twelve riders on camels, with his face covered by a red silk turban. He went into the pulpit, uncovered his face and delivered to a hostile mob what is regarded as the most famous of all 'Umayyad orations. In his opening words he said

'... I see heads ripe and ready for harvest; and blood ready to flow between turbans and beards.'<sup>7</sup>

### Not Helpful

AN EDICT from Saudi Arabia circulating among Muslims in Australia said that Muslims should not greet anyone with 'Merry Christmas' and must not return the greeting to anyone who offers it.

The edict [or fatwa] also said that Muslims must not

- \* offer or accept any food or drink linked with the celebration of Christmas;
- \* send greeting cards for, or import or sell anything related to Christmas;
- \* put up Christmas lights or keep Christmas trees or have any signs relating to the Christmas season.

– Cameron Stewart, *The Australian*,  
December 24, 2003.

No head proved to be too important, and no neck too high for his sword to reach. Al-Hajjaj had more than 120,000 people killed.<sup>8</sup> He succeeded in putting down rebellions in Basrah and Kufah and pacified Iraq in the process.

The first of the 'Abbasid Caliphs – Abu al-'Abbas – was known as 'al-Saffah' – *the shedder of blood*. He obtained this nickname not just because of his relentless and murderous pursuit of the rival Damascus-based 'Umayyad dynasty, but also because the blood-stained carpet made of leather beside the Caliph's throne, used by the court executioner, became a symbol of the relationship between the ruler and the ruled.

In a world where talk of 'moderate Islam' fills the airways and cyber space and raises hope that this may be so, the Jewish poet of Medina, al-Rabi' ibn Abi al-Huqaiq – whether he wrote the poem or not – would caution us to ponder the words of Ibn Khaldun.

This noted Andalusian Muslim historiographer was born in Tunis in 1332 AD. He lived, as we do, at a time when there was hope for dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims.

In the section of his *Muqaddimah* dealing with non-Islamic religious institutions, Ibn Khaldun attempts to understand a system where religion and politics are not linked. He says of Jews and Christians that they 'find it difficult to grasp the nature of Islam, because in these other religions, there is no divine obligation to use force to make other people submit to their authority, as in Islam.'<sup>9</sup>

## Matter-of-fact War

THE circumstances of the society upon which he [Muhammad] felt divinely summoned to act were not of a sort to lull him into a relaxed confidence that 'Allah will fight on your behalf; you may remain silent.' To assure acknowledgment of his mission and even more of the supremacy of that mission, he had to go through a down-to-earth, matter-of-fact war. This down-to-earth, matter-of-fact war was the legacy his successors fell heir to. There was now no preference for peace: 'O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the messenger and do not cause your actions to come to nothing .... Do not weaken and invite (the unbelievers) to make peace when you hold the upper hand; and Allah is with you and will not reduce (the reward for) your deeds' (47:33, 35). The struggle must go on until 'God's word is supreme.'

– Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law, Ignaz Goldziher, Princeton University Press, 1981, p.23

Not mincing words, Ibn Khaldun spells it out even more: 'In the Muslim community, the Jihad is a religious duty because of the universalism of the Muslim mission and the obligation to convert everybody to Islam either by persuasion or by force.'<sup>10</sup>

He would not be drawn into dialogue with Christians about Qur'anic teaching because, as he put it,

'To discuss or argue these things with them is not up to us. It is for them to choose between conversion to Islam, payment of the poll tax, or death.'<sup>11</sup>

Ibn Khaldun died in 1406 AD. That his teaching continues to hold sway as an expression of the goals and beliefs of Orthodox Islam is borne out daily by events all too commonplace in Muslim countries but occurring more frequently now in the West.

The veteran Egyptian actor Omar Sharif, for instance, has been threatened with death after he played St Peter in an Italian TV film.

In remarks widely reported in Italy in October 2005, the 73-year old actor, a convert to Islam, said he had 'seemed to hear voices' during the filming of St Peter, a two-part mini-series shown last week. Sharif was quoted as saying: 'Playing Peter was so important for me that even now I can only speak about it with difficulty. It will be difficult for me to play other roles from now on.'

The Italian news agency *Adnkronos International*<sup>12</sup> said that a message on a web forum used in the past by al-Qaida had a link to a site carrying the threat. 'Omar Sharif has stated that he has embraced the crusader idolatry,' it said. 'He is a crusader who is offending Islam and Muslims and receiving applause from the Italian people. I give you this advice, brothers, you must kill him.'<sup>13</sup>

These kinds of sentiments are radically opposed to claims made by Islamic scholars like Adnane Mokrani,



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who recently assured the Italian Catholic News Agency SIR that as far as Christianity and Islam are concerned 'there is no going back, because serious dialogue has started'. He insists that dialogue is 'an ethical principle deeply rooted in faith, above all in the Abrahamic religions'.<sup>14</sup>

Dialogue was not in evidence when Pope Benedict XVI was attacked again by Ayman al-Zawahri, Usama bin Laden's second-in-command and principal ideologue of the terrorist movement al-Qaida, in a video issued after the November 6 meeting between the Pontiff and King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia.<sup>15</sup>

If dialogue is ever to be meaningful, then Muslims world-wide need to hear loud and clear from those leaders who claim to be moderate, that militaristic and/or intolerant, murderous, suicidal or subversive political activity cannot lawfully be engaged in by Muslims on religious or cultural grounds.

In other words, that Islam is entering a new phase of peace and tolerance, and whatever may have been accepted in the past, for 21st century Muslims the *sabil Allah* the *path of God* is not a path of blood and war.

Without that kind of clarification, dialogue becomes a sham, and clarity is lost in wilful and ultimately fatal obfuscation.

How fatal that obfuscation can be further illustrated by the pointless search for the masterminds behind Benazir Bhutto's assassins. She was indeed, as Barry Rubin points out, murdered by those within Islam who exercise the Profession of Death. And their number is legion. Their 'philosophy' for want of a better word is summed up in 1933 by an Iraqi official Sami Shawkat, who gave a talk that set the tone for the subsequent history of that country and all the others in the same region:

"There is something more important than money and learning for preserving the honor of a nation and for keeping humiliation at bay ... excel[ling] in the Profession of Death."<sup>16</sup>

'What, you might ask, was Shawkat's own profession? He was director-general of Iraq's ministry of education. This was how young people were to be taught and directed; this is where Saddam Hussein came from. Seventy-

## Jihad and Incitement to War

AL-SUHAYLI laboured in obscurity until he was offered the patronage of the Almohad ruler Abu Ya'qub Yusuf (1163-1184), for whom he would write his Prophetic biography/commentary, *al-Rawd al-unuf* during the last three years of his life. As Ibn Kathir put it acidly, 'He was ascetic and poor, but great wealth came to him at the end of his life from the master of Marrakesh.' In fact, it is nearly impossible to avoid the conclusion that the Almohads of North Africa and Spain (1130-1269) recognized the ideological utility of Prophetic biography in their war with the Christians of Spain, for it seems to have been precisely for this war that they commissioned another work of early history, the *Kitab al-Ghaza wa 'l futuh* ('Book of Prophetic campaigns and conquests') by Ibn Hubaysh (d. 1188). Al-Andalus, as one eleventh-century historian writing there put it, was 'the place for jihad'. In much the same way, Saladin had works on jihad written for his cause against the Crusaders: 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani even claimed that Saladin could not stop himself from reading the volume he had written for him. One fourteenth-century Mamluk would have hadiths about the jihad read out to him while on campaign.

— *Islamic Historiography*, Chase F. Robinson, Cambridge University Press, 2003 p.122

five years later the subsequent history of Iraq and the rest of the Arab world show just how well Shawkat did his job.

'September 11 in the United States; the Bali bombing for Australia; the tube bombing for Britain; the commuter train bombing for Spain, these were all merely by products of this pathology. The pathology in question is not Western policy toward the Middle East but rather Middle Eastern policy toward the Middle East.

'Ever since I read Shawkat's words as a student, the phrase, "Profession of Death," which gave his article its title, struck me as a pun. On one hand, the word "profession" meant "career." To be a killer – note well that Shawkat was not talking specifically about soldiers, those who fight, but rather those who murder – was the highest calling of all. It was more important than being a teacher, who forms character; more important than a businessperson, who enriches his country; more important than a doctor who preserves the life of fellow citizens. Destruction was a higher calling than construction. And for sure in the Arabic-speaking world what has been reaped is what has been sowed.'<sup>17</sup>

Christians, Jews and Muslims will never achieve the level of fraternal dialogue we all so desire unless each of us can freely, openly and without fear discuss not just the things that we agree upon, but the very real issues that divide us.





# DONATIONS RECEIVED

FROM 31/12/07 – 07/01/08

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– Editor, *Annals*

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On September 21 last year, meeting with members of Italy's Centrist Democrat International (IDC) political party at Castelgandolfo, Pope Benedict XVI criticized the violence carried out by terrorist networks which attempt to justify their threats against global security by arguing that society has forgotten God, and he denounced those who 'claim to act in God's name and harbor an inexcusable contempt for human life.'

After affirming the right of 'authentically religious traditions' to

manifest their own identity publicly," the Holy Father pointed out that 'respect for religion helps to counter the charge that society has forgotten God: an accusation shamelessly exploited by some terrorist networks in an attempt to justify their threats against global security. Terrorism is a serious problem whose perpetrators often claim to act in God's name and harbor an inexcusable contempt for human life.'

He defended the right of society to protect itself from terrorism, but he noted that 'this right must be exercised

with complete respect for moral and legal norms, including the choice of ends and means. In democratic systems, the use of force in a manner contrary to the principles of a constitutional State can never be justified,' he said.

'In this regard,' the Pope went on, 'the social teaching of the Catholic Church offers some points for reflection on how to promote security and justice both at the national and international levels. This teaching is based on reason, natural law and the Gospel.'

The Church knows that it is not her specific task to see to the political implementation of this teaching: her objective is to help form consciences in political life, to raise awareness of the authentic requirements of justice, and to foster a greater readiness to act accordingly, 'even when this might involve conflict with situations of personal interest,' the Pontiff stated.

In conclusion, Benedict XVI pointed out that the Church expects politicians 'to bear witness to that faith today with even greater courage and generosity. The integrity of Christians in political life is indeed more necessary than ever, so that the "salt" of apostolic zeal does not lose its "flavour", and so that the "lamp" of Gospel values enlightening the daily work of Christians is not obscured by pragmatism or utilitarianism, suspicion or hate.'<sup>18</sup>

1. Quoted *The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet and their Authors* by Josef Horowitz, ed. Lawrence I. Conrad. The Darwin Press, Princeton, 2002, p.14.
2. *ic in Holy War*. See William McKane, *Al-Chazali's Book of Hope and Fear*. Leiden, Brill, 1965
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## WHO STOLE THE PONIES?

By William Goodge

**A**WAY down the Darling by the Callewatta Forks  
 In the dreary, weary desert where the stone is,  
 On the right you find the region of the Raffertys and Rorkes;  
 On the left you see the Learys and Maloneys.  
 We were always pretty careful when the steamer anchored there,  
 It was well indeed for strangers to be chary,  
 For the Learys and Maloneys held the belt from County Clare,  
 And the Raffertys and Rorkes from Tipperary.

**T**HEY were all of them selectors on the Steelandummie run,  
 And the owner of the run was named McPherson,  
 He was Scotch and he was clannish (and his clan was Number One)  
 A sedate and very sober-sided person!  
 And he ran a lot of stock around adjacent to the Forks,  
 And he lost, he said, a half-a-dozen ponies,  
 And he swore they had been stolen by the Raffertys and Rorkes,  
 If they hadn't by the Learys and Maloneys!

**T**HEN the Learys and Maloneys said the men from County Clare  
 Wouldn't even steal a pansy from the prairie!  
 And the Raffertys and Rorkes they quite accorded with them there,  
 'But they often stole the pigs from Tipperary!'  
 Then the row it fairly started; there was murmur at the Forks  
 From the minute that McPherson lost the ponies.  
 It was dangerous to come betwixt the Raffertys and Rorkes  
 When they waited for the Learys and Maloneys!

**W**HEN the Learys crossed the river there was 'wigs upon the green'  
 And diversion for the men from Tipperary!  
 When a Rafferty or Rorke upon the other side was seen,  
 He would find things just as willing and as scary!  
 But as you are not agoin' to the Callewatta Forks  
 I can sell you half-a-dozen decent ponies,  
 But you hadn't better show them to the Raffertys and Rorkes,  
 Nor McPherson, nor the Learys and Maloneys!

William Goodge, 1862-1909, was born in England. He spent his first years in Australia as a swagman, and as a 'new chum rouse-about,' in shearing sheds. Then he was given a job as a reporter on the *Lithgow Enterprise* and *Sunny Corner Advocate* owned at that time by the Argentinian-born poet and journalist John Farrell, your editor's great-grandfather. He went on to work on various NSW country papers and eventually for John Norton for whose paper, *Truth*, he wrote every Sunday.

*Some stories from World Youth Day, Sydney, 2008*

## PILGRIMS, PIES AND THE POPE

*By* Wanda Skrowonska



SYDNEY Catholics, of all ages, who lived through the events of World Youth Day, have different stories to tell about it all, depending on which part of town they were in. Those welcoming pilgrims at the airport in the week leading up to the festivities, were treated to the sight of young people carrying banners and icons of Jesus and Our Lady into the arrivals section, to be met with local groups singing 'Alleluia' and the words of psalms. It is an understatement to say that the International Airport has never quite witnessed anything like this before- the flotilla of flags, the singing, the dancing, and even a group from Laredo, Texas called 'The Pope's Posse' walking by, ready for action. There were nuns and lay volunteers assisting newly arrived travellers. I was among this melee of thousands of newly arrived pilgrims one night, watching the Spaniards, Italians, Mexicans, Fijians, Poles and the Irish pour out into the terminal and electrify the entire area with their exuberance, singing and jokes. I waited, with a Latvian friend of mine, Gundega, for a contingent of thirty-eight Latvians about to arrive. As I looked out for them, a group filed past me carrying the huge flag of the United Arab Emirates. One young man explained in passing that a lot of Catholic pilgrims had flown in from Dubai - mainly Indians and Lebanese who work there - and they were eagerly awaiting their transfer to their mystery destination - slowly pronounced out as 'Voll-ong-gong'.

"Is it a nice place?", they asked me.

"Yes, it's really nice, on the sea - you'll like it".

The Dubai contingent then invaded McDonalds before boarding their bus for Vullongong.

Finally the Latvian pilgrims came

through, awestruck that any journey in the world could be as long as the one they had just undertaken to come to Australia. After the initial greetings, one of those sticky 'mess-ups' occurred where no one could find a record of the group's number, nor of the bus transfer for these northern Europeans, who were supposed to go to Canberra in an hour. As they sat exhausted in the airport, one young Latvian priest took out a book about St Therese of Lisieux while waiting and the rest looked with hope for something to happen. I realised that my 'reasonable' Latvian was being called into action for translation purposes. Luckily my friend Gundega, who is Lutheran, saved the day, with her perfect Latvian, and between us we managed to get a bus driver who agreed to go to Canberra at a moment's notice. One of the pilgrims rang a contact in Canberra speaking in French and so the entire group boarded the bus at 11 PM, and sailed off into the dark night, for their brief Canberra tour, prior to the official beginning of WYD. We learned later that the Australian families billeting

them, met them at 3 am at Manuka in central Canberra, having looked up the Latvian for 'Welcome', writing it on a little banner unfurled for the pilgrims (the temperature was minus two at that stage), as they drove in. The Latvians had a wonderful time, and sang in Latvian for their host families, but had come to the conclusion that Australia was not a land of perpetual sunshine, could indeed be cold and there were few signs of global warming around.

Meanwhile back in Sydney, the streets were transformed by the endless groups going places from Circular Quay to Broadway, many queueing at St Mary's Cathedral, others on the streets eating pies for the first time with curiosity. Those at Starbucks in the city were treated to Italians and Spaniards singing an endless repertoire of songs as they drank their coffee, and then saw the waiters and coffee makers join in the voluble performance as they served, swaying and dancing in time with the pilgrims. Those in Hyde Park in the evenings were treated to Samoan dancing, opera singing and gospel songs. The Italian pilgrims were carried away by the Samoan drums and sang along in an original Samoan-Italian mix.

Later in the week, those who waited at Rose Bay for the arrival of the Pope to join the boat-a-cade lined up enthusiastically at the barricades and got slightly perturbed when he hadn't turned up on time.

"Where's the Pope?" yelled a local resident from behind the barricades.

From out of nowhere someone yelled "He must have stopped off at Double Bay for the shopping - he's only got a red pair of shoes, and is looking for some others."

Chuckles gave way to cheering when the Pope arrived soon afterward, not to mention the riotously happy singing aboard the Captain Cook Cruises boat that sailed away into the afternoon

### Popes and Kings

**T**HERE are two things by which this world is chiefly governed: the sacred authority of the pontiffs and the power of kings. In which the burden of the priests is all the heavier, inasmuch as they will have to render an account to the Lord for the conduct of kings as well as for their own.

- Letter [Ep.xii] of Pope St. Gelasius I [AD 492-496] to the Byzantine Emperor Anastasius, AD 494. See Migne, *Patres Latini*, vol. lix, 42, A.

sunshine of an unusually radiant Sydney day, with the Pope, Cardinal Pell, Bishop Fisher surrounded by pilgrims at the front. My Buddhist friend Trong who had wanted to come along and experience the excitement of greeting the Pope, was not disappointed, and revelled in the crowds here and at Barangaroo. "But I think I'll watch the Mass at home" she said after staggering home on the crowded train.

The telecast of the Southern Precinct Racecourse Mass was superb I am told, but being on the spot, I witnessed close-up, many acts of disinterested kindness, and a sort of patience, one does not usually see in crowds so large, and certainly not often in brash, cynical Sydney. Standing with my billeted Latvian pilgrim among the flags of the Lebanese Maronites, the Chaldeans, the Fijians, Hawaiians, Tongans, Papua New Guineans, Poles, Mexicans and infectiouslv jovial Spaniards, I heard the holy roar erupt as the white Papal helicopter circled above us with a white ibis flying, rising and diving beneath it, in an elegant chereal pas de deux.

There was something unique about this moment and the subsequent Mass but perhaps what moved me most of all that day was hearing that a Chinese student, at present getting instruction for the Catholic faith, had got up at 3.30am to travel from Seven Hills to get to the racecourse. A seeker for the truth, she told me she just 'had to come' and indeed overcame all obstacles by bus and train to get to see the person who represented Christ on earth, and was in awe in seeing him even as a speck in the distance. I realised then that World Youth Day was not only for the youth, not only a sign of solidarity among priests, religious and Bishops united with the Pope, but a true invitation to seekers, who still, as they have always done, sell all to find the pearl of great price. Few noticed this young Chinese girl, brought up on Mao and Marx, amidst the singing crowd, quietly watching the Pope arrive - but on this bright day, she had seen in the joy, unity and universality in the church manifested before her - a purer, brighter light which has left its indelible mark in her memory.

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



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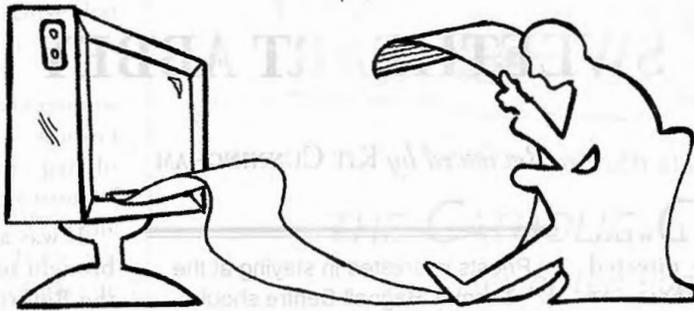
of photographic essays depicting once grand modernist industrial hopes now gone to seed. Derelict rusting factories, weed-strewn car-parks, abandoned shopping-centres, city wastelands, empty and crumbling hotels – they're all there in their full paint-peeling and grass-cracked cement glory. A glory that is wonderful because beautiful.

Often the same feeling of beauty comes upon us as we explore a vibrant city or suburb, when, in the midst of the shine and sheen, tucked away in a back-alley or side-street, we chance upon an old boarded-up shop or a piece of littered land with a long-time empty house upon it. It's like hearing a whisper beneath grand displays of thunders, shouts, and fireworks. One might not hear what is said but one experiences something; something delicate, yet stronger and longer lasting than all the yelling and grand displays. And the feeling which attends this experience is just as puzzling; a kind of sad joy.

This "sad joy" is more than poignancy for it is more than the mere intimation of mortality, it is deeper than that; it is an intimation of temporality, and thus of being itself. Which is to say an intimation of *created* being, and, thereby and there-through, a glimpse of God.

Although we can truly know God through the things He has made there is always *the* big difference: we are created and He is not. We do not have our existence in and of ourselves, while God, of course, does. He is unchanging, He is true and full Being; we change and our very beingness is radically dependent upon God. In short, we are temporal and God is not. We might say that temporality is the voice of creation telling us it is not God. It is, thereby, the means by which creation clears a space for the appearing of God, not under the form of an idol but in His very otherness to us.

As St Augustine argued, creation is beautiful because it defers to God for its very being. In its very essence created being witnesses to that which is other to it; in its very essence it sings of God. Its beauty ultimately belongs to God for created being is His reflection.



## AN APPRECIATION OF DECAY

By ROBERT TILLEY

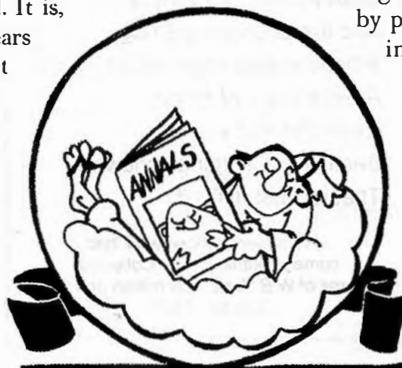
around, the more we place our faith in youth so that things are not allowed to age but are immediately torn down or renovated – the more we can lose our sense of metaphysical dependency.

The prouder we are the uglier we become, for the simple reason that we think we can stand on our own merit. We come to believe that in our very being we do not need to defer to God. Thus do we try to bottle beauty, but by doing so we ensure it shrivels-up and dies. This is the effect of idolatry.

And yet, old and discarded idols can evidence this beauty in the same way decaying industry does. Now that they are no longer loudly boasting, now that they seem weak and past it, worthless and of no use – now the grace of existence itself begins to shine through and something of the beautiful complexion of God can be seen. Here is the wonderful paradox at the root of created being: through temporality we can see what is eternal. Creation can truly reveal what it is not and, by doing so, reveal itself in all its proper beauty.

Be it in the area of industry or pretensions, the decay of things can serve to clear a place for the apprehension of true being, and, as being witnesses to God its creator, to an intimation of God. One might even argue that decay is a sign of God's grace this side of the Fall, for, by putting paid to our conceits, it helps us to intimate something beyond our bottled world, something other to a world that we've subjected to closure and to death.

In this there's an explanation of sorts for the mystery of that sad joy: we feel sadness at the pain of passing, and yet joy at the whisper of the intimation of what remains. We can hear creation singing.



ROBERT TILLEY is a regular contributor to *Annals*.

*Lady Devorgilla and the Abbey she founded in 1273 in memory of her husband*

## SWEETHEART ABBEY

*Reviewed by KIT CUNNINGHAM*



THAT I write now is directed at priests or relatives or friends of priests. The notion of a 'busman's holiday' is often something that pleases priests. It provides them with a venue for the celebration of Mass without having to search down little streets for the local Catholic church. Many priests do not care to celebrate Mass in hotel bedrooms. So the idea of having a chapel which is an adjunct to a house is rather appealing.

Such a place is the Thomas Bagnall Centre, New Abbey, Dumfries. It is five miles south of Dumfries, where the ruins of Sweetheart Abbey stand. The house, which is owned by the local parish, is in a diocese where the paucity of priests presents a great problem. The parishioners have this beautiful house and church, all built as one in 1824, just before the Catholic Emancipation Act. The church itself is hidden behind the house.

In 1824, Thomas Bagnall was the priest bringing the sacraments to the recusant Catholics, as others had through the penal times. As the flier says: "We, their descendants; are looking for men to do the same for us now ... We have newly decorated the house - it sleeps 10 if desired - and is available to priests who would like to holiday in this very beautiful part of Scotland. The house is in the domain of Sweetheart Abbey, dedicated to St Mary, now a beautiful ruin and still with the awe built into it by our ancestors in the 13th century."

Sweetheart Abbey is a reminder of the Cistercian Order's activity in the remote parts of Dumfries and Galloway, and was the last of 12 monasteries established in that area and named in honour of a remarkable lady, Devorgilla.

Priests interested in staying at the Thomas Bagnall Centre should contact John Hampson at the Old Post Office, Kirkbean, Dumfries DG2 8DW. Tel [44] 1387 880-201. E-mail bagnallcentre@aol.com.

In 1273, she dedicated the abbey to the memory of her late husband, John Balliol, the founder of Balliol College, Oxford. Their marriage had been a love match, and when he died, she embalmed his heart and carried it close to her. On her death 20 years later, she was laid to rest, with the casket containing the heart, in front of the high altar, and the monks paid her their own tribute, by naming the abbey Sweetheart.

It was all very romantic, but it was brought to ground with a thud when the Reformation did its ugly task. It is hard to imagine how beautiful the countryside could have been with its monasteries and parish churches. Virtually nothing has survived of the monastic outbuildings, having been used as a quarry for so many years.

The end of Sweetheart Abbey as an active religious community followed the Reformation, though the impact here was more gradual. The abbey was now under the protection of Lord Maxwell, a Catholic. With his assistance, the last abbot stayed on at Sweetheart, and lived the life of the Cistercian rule in defiance of the new Protestant regulations.

Modern facilities do, however, exist. Pretty well every country pursuit is in the area, including a golf course. And who should stay in the house is subject to endless permutations and combinations. It could be a retreat house, a small conference centre, a large family house, a parish house: but the underlying link with all these possibilities is the residence of a priest who will give Mass to this isolated group of Catholics. Try it and see.

Some years ago, I decided that I would say something at weddings about the lack of popularity of marriage, and of the importance of making a public commitment. It seemed that just so many young people, among them Catholics, were reluctant to make a lifelong bond. They didn't mind living together, but they did not want the benefit of Church or state.

For the state, it was a mere contract which was deemed useful for the health of society, but with the Church there was of course the added factor that marriage is a sacrament, which the couple give to each other in exchanging their vows.

### Dealing with Failure

NOW all the truth is out  
Be secret and take defeat  
From any brazen throat,  
For how can you compete  
Being honour bred, with one  
Who, were it proved he lies,  
Were neither shunned in his own  
Or in his neighbour's eyes?  
Bred to a harder thing  
Than triumph, turn away  
And like a laughing string  
Whereon mad fingers play,  
Amid a place of stone  
Be secret and exult  
Because of all things known,  
That is most difficult.

— "To a friend whose work had come to nothing". *The Collected poems of W.B. Yeats*, Macmillan and Co, London, 1950



*Delusional Thinking*

## RACE BETTERMENT AND ABORTION



DURING THE 1920S and '30s, a mass movement gained traction for the furtherance of "race betterment." Its charismatic leader called for putting millions of people in concentration camps. Those the movement deemed subhuman would be sterilized to protect future generations from the corruption of the gene pool.

The campaign would give special attention to racial minorities. The movement occurred in America, not Nazi Germany. The leader was Margaret Sanger, not Adolf Hitler. Idealism run amok fueled the international eugenics movement. Herbert Spencer, an early eugenics backer, declared that "all imperfection must disappear." Like Communism, eugenics – creating the well born, the biologically pure, the master race – is a utopian delusion. God had created a flawed world. Man would make things perfect.

The hominid god, however, proved an unworthy successor to the biblical God. The road to Eden always detours to Hell. The detours on the path to Immaculate Man led to the gas chamber, the concentration camp, and the operating table. Human perfection, an unattainable goal, relied on euthanasia, segregation, sterilization, and abortion to achieve its dream of the *ubermensch*. Margaret Sanger rejected putting the unfit to sleep, but she promoted aborting, sterilizing, and segregating them. She did this to make the world perfect. The pursuit of the loftiest goals condones the employment of the basest methods.

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- Daniel J. Flynn, *Intellectual Morons: How ideology makes Smart People fall for Stupid Ideas*, Crown Forum New York, 2004, p.150

*Casting doubt on the Integrity and Independence of the Judicial System*

## DEALING WITH SEXUAL ABUSE

*By Michael O'Connor*



THE constant obsession of much of the Australian media with sex coupled with what has been called the last socially acceptable bigotry, anti-Catholicism, led during the celebrations of World Youth Day to an utterly predictable but almost insane fixation by too many with the issue of sexual abuse by priests and religious. What has been missing in the discussion (to use a polite term) and management of the problem is a recognition that, like so many of their victims, the offenders are also psychologically sick people.

Surely no one doubts that such abuse has occurred and should be dealt with. Regrettably, too many in the Church here and overseas have tried to deal with offenders privately rather than allowing the civil law to take its course. There are three, perhaps four, levels at which individual cases must be handled. One, obviously, is through the confessional although this will not satisfy our secular society and, given the nature of many known offenders, will not always be satisfactory anyway. The second that has a bad record is through the Church's administrative procedures by removing the offender from the immediate temptation. In the case of those offenders with a serious disorder, this too as we have seen too often will rarely be successful. The third is for the victim to use the processes of the civil law from conciliation to litigation usually to gain some monetary 'damages' together with an 'apology' from the Church. Finally, there is the criminal law, which can punish severely by imprisonment.

Civil litigation tends to be unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. Apart from the fact that a number of dioceses and religious orders have been impoverished as a result of the acts of

a tiny number of individuals, even the victims cannot be said to have benefited. If their claims are true, a monetary payment, however large, can surely fail to repair the damage that has been done to their psychological health. Indeed, the evidence suggests the contrary, and also that the only beneficiaries have been in the legal profession. Too many Church institutions have been anxious to pay out, either from a sense of charity, from a recognition that their handling of the offenders has been inadequate, or in the hope that the problem will go away. As we have seen in the recent case involving Cardinal Pell, the sense

of injury – or perhaps the opportunity offered by a mistake in a letter – simply encourages further confected outrage, aided and abetted by outsiders – of which more later.

Where a priest or religious is accused of a criminal offence, he should be charged accordingly. He can claim no immunity from the ordinary criminal law. But the all too frequent scandals involving a tiny minority of priests and religious have unfortunately created a public perception of institutionally tolerated abuse that seems to have seriously damaged the operation of the criminal justice system. Invariably because of the delays in bringing cases to trial, the incidents and identity of the accused have been extensively covered in the media amidst a constant replay of the broader issue of clerical abuse. As such there is a risk that public acceptance of a widespread problem will taint any jury.

There is too a sense that the publicity may have affected the integrity of the justice system itself. Having recently sat through much of the trial of a priest accused of a range of sexual offences against adolescent boys, I was frankly appalled at the handling of the case by the police and prosecution. The case depended upon the uncorroborated accusations of events alleged to have occurred 30 or more years earlier. There was no evidence to support the accusations and, indeed, some significant inconsistencies as to time and place were glossed over by suggesting that the particular issue was insignificant and due to the lapse of time. You can't have it both ways; either the events occurred when and where it was claimed or maybe the accuser's memory betrayed him on more significant aspects. In the continuous process of police investigations, the taking of evidence and the repetition of interrogations, the capacity for a complainant to become

### Objectifying Children

WE never seem to learn [that] 'extend[ing] Man's power' can lead in some brutal directions. Recently the New York Times reported that Dutch police had discovered a ring of traders in child pornography 'whose images of abuse of even babies and infants were peddled over the Internet' to clients around the world. According to a psychologist consulting with police on the case, 'For professional reasons, I have seen a lot of such porn, but this left me speechless. It looks like the perpetrators are not dealing with human beings but with objects.'

– Bishop Charles J. Chaput, *Deus ex Machina: HOW TO Think About Technology*, CRISIS, 18, pp.18-22 (Oct. 1998).

confused is significantly enhanced. The prosecution depended for its case on coupling accusations by three different people spread over several years and parishes. There was a strong suggestion that where there was smoke, there was fire and the jury was duly impressed. Counsel for the prosecution attempted on a number of occasions improperly to introduce unrelated material and had to be pulled into line by the judge.

I have been a police officer and a magistrate as well as a juror in a serious case. My own view is that the charges should never have been laid on the basis of the evidence that was presented. The evidential value of recovered or repressed memory after so many years, although apparently accepted by the courts, is surely very risky. When in addition the complainant has been 'encouraged' by outsiders as well as investigators to remember in precise detail alleged facts, there is even greater danger in such prosecutions. In this case, too, the priest was not ably defended, having on legal advice been abandoned by his bishop, but even so, the doubts in my mind were so substantial that I could not as a juror have voted for a conviction. At the time of writing, the guilty verdict is subject to appeal.

The complainants in this case were encouraged, even directed, by that shadowy and bitterly hostile organisation, Broken Rites. There was evidence in this case that the complainants had been urged to go to the police by Broken Rites on the probability that, if successful, they could then sue for monetary compensation. Broken Rites' representatives were present throughout the trial and were seen to be coaching the complainants. These admittedly disturbed middle-aged men were manifestly being exploited by Broken Rites for that organisation's own purposes. If this case was typical, it casts no little doubt upon the hard-earned integrity and independence of the judicial system.

The purpose of Broken Rites according to their Web site, <http://brokenrites.alphalink.com.au/>, is to trawl for accusations of clerical abuse and advise victims. The heavily feminised organisation is bitterly anti-Catholic and admits that its view of the Church is based largely upon the Church's

## In defence of Catholic Symbols

THOSE who resisted the successful movement to have crucifixes put in the classrooms at Georgetown University argued that the presence of crucifixes would offend the sensibilities of members of the academic community who do not profess the Catholic Faith. A Georgetown undergraduate spoke on behalf of the campaign for crucifixes, identifying herself as a non-Catholic not even sure of the existence of God. She exposed the flaw in the multicultural argument against Catholic symbolism, saying that she realised on enrolling at Georgetown that she would be attending a Catholic university and expected its Catholic commitment to be made evident not least in the various symbols that reflect it. She added that to assume that non-Catholic members of the Georgetown community would be provoked by such symbolism at a university that calls itself Catholic, is offensive, for such an assumption inevitably implies that they are intolerant.

– Peter Ryan, S.J., 'Gateway to a Uniquely Georgetown Education,'  
in *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Quarterly*, 22[1999/2] p.15.

teaching on sexual morality. A subset is the demand for married priests and female priests. The tone of the Web site is hostile, unforgiving and triumphant. Despite disclaimers of poverty, the Melbourne-based organisation is clearly well-funded and organised, and lobbies extensively in government and the media. Clearly it nurtures friendly or uncritical journalists.

Given its purpose, background, policies and activities, there can be little surprise that Broken Rites played a prominent role in the vain attempts to diminish the impact of Sydney's World Youth Day celebrations. Indeed, their flag bearers have been prominent in the very modest public protests organised primarily as television events. On the other hand they have provided a focus for those elements in the community and the media for whom Catholic-bashing is a favourite sport. The hatred that was manifest in some of the public commentary and many of the media blogs has been disturbing.

The demand for the World Youth Day protests that the Pope not only apologise for the Church's mishandling of the sexual abuse issue but also set aside time to meet with the victims has no more than symbolic or propaganda

value. Such apologies by their nature fail to separate the guilty individuals from their parent organisations. They are a catch-all aimed directly at the Church itself – and, by extension, its Founder. In any event, like the incessant demands for apologies from Japan for its role in World War II, an endless series of actual apologies simply result in demands for more.

In large part, the campaign is directed at Cardinal Pell. Because of his forthright and fearless public defence of the Church and its teaching, the cardinal has become a focus for those whose motivation seems to be little more than unforgiving hatred and bitterness. Public apologies or meetings with victims are all but worthless; they simply become events to be displayed in the secular media and provide a base for ever more demands. Of course, the Church has no need for fear and, indeed, the comparison with the outpouring of joy and enthusiasm during World Youth Day will put the issue in a better public perspective.

Michael O'Connor is a former President of the Australian Defence Association. He was a patrol officer [kiap] in Papua New Guinea. He also served in the Royal Australian Navy as an intelligence officer.

## SEEING CLEARLY THROUGH THE STEAM

when the 'Kettle of War' is boiling

By Paul Stenhouse MSC



IT IS SAID that for many young men in Australia's outback communities, the outbreak of World War I was a clarion call to adventure. Dreams of escaping from the backbreaking and limited world of remote country towns, cattle-stations, drought, stockmen's camps, bush fires and failed crops seemed in 1914 suddenly attainable.

More than 20% of Australia's male population - 416,809 - volunteered. Of these, almost 60,000 young men never came home. They lost their lives and were buried with their dreams in named and nameless graves in France, Belgium, the Middle East or Turkey. Of those who survived, 213,000 returned home haunted by their memories, and wounded, either in body or mind.

Australians have yet to come to terms with the rationale behind that war - if there were one; we still argue over its causes. As I write, debate rages and media pundits play the blame game, over Australian military involvement in post-September 11 Iraq and Afghanistan. Politicians still quibble over the cost of the care that needs to be taken of those who risked their futures that we and others may live undisturbed by the horrors of Baghdad, Basra, Mosul and Kabul.

All this uncertainty and speculation about the recent past should make us hesitate to draw facile conclusions about periods and people in a far distant past, especially a past in which 'the kettle of war was boiling'.<sup>1</sup> I speak of the Crusades.

A book on the Qur'anic concept of war, published with a commendation from former Pakistani President Zia ul-Haq, says that the Qur'an 'gives a strategy of war that penetrates deep down to destroy the opponent's faith and render his physical and mental faculties totally ineffective'.<sup>2</sup>

## Good Health

FOR YEARS PHYSICIANS and medical investigators have noted that the French and other people of the Mediterranean basin, despite a diet rich in saturated fat (all those creamy sauces!), have a relatively low incidence of coronary artery disease. In 1992 Serge Renaud of INSERM (Institut National de la Sante et de la Recherche Medicale) in Bordeaux, France, reported the phenomenon - quickly dubbed the French paradox - on the basis of evidence obtained from a population and epidemiological study. He noted that light drinkers were less likely than nondrinkers to die of heart problems. Since then, numerous studies have failed to explain the effect.

In fact, no one is even sure that alcohol alone is responsible for the benefits. A team at the University of California at Davis focused on the antioxidant properties of phenolic compounds - alcohol - like chemicals whose structure includes a benzene ring-in grape skins. Edwin N. Frankel, a chemist in the university's food-science department and coauthor of the study ... thinks part of the credit should go to phenols.

Samir Zakhari, who is chief of biomedical research at the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, [in Haifa, Israel] suggests yet different amounts. 'For the sake of definition, one drink a day for a woman and two drinks a day for a man could be considered moderate'. For young people, say twenty-five or so, the relative risk of being involved in a vehicular accident may, outweigh any benefit to the cardiovascular system.<sup>3</sup>

Zakhari warns that certain people-including pregnant women, people with a family history of alcoholism and people taking medication, shouldn't drink at all.

- Levin Santos, 'Santé,' *The Sciences*, Jan-Feb 1996, p.11

The mobs of Indonesian Muslims who were whipped into a killing frenzy by ideological propaganda discovered this in 1965 when they massacred more than five-hundred thousand of their fellow-Indonesians who were Chinese. The victims were murdered allegedly because they belonged to the Indonesian Communist Party, but in reality the 'usual suspects' - ethnic,

economic, social and religious factors - also played a part.<sup>3</sup>

1. See the *Ta'rikh al-Tabari*, ed. Dar ibn Hazim, 1426 AH vol. ii, 'The year 165' AH, p.2665.
2. Brigadier S.K.Malik, *The Quranic Concept of War*, Adam Publishers and Distributors, Delhi, India, reprint ed. 1992, p.146.
3. Estimates of the number of people who were massacred in Indonesia from October 1965 to March 1966 range from five-hundred thousand to two million. See Robert Cribb, 'How many deaths?' in Ingrid Wessel & Georgia Wimhofer (eds.), *Violence in Indonesia*, Abera, Hamburg, 2001, p. 82.

*A life-line for those trapped in the swirling sands of fashionable, post-modernist thought*

## CONFESSIONS OF A CONSERVATIVE

By Giles Auty



WHEN I came to this country in 1995 to take up a newly-created post as national art correspondent for *The Australian*,

my feet had barely touched the tarmac at Sydney airport before an extremely hostile article about me appeared in *The Age*.

Among the accusations which flowed from people I had never met perhaps the most heinous were that I was "English, grey-haired and an arch-conservative".

Not long after this, a friend of mine was approached by an eminent ABC journalist to suggest names of interesting people she might interview on her long-established radio show. However, when my name was mentioned she threw up her hands in horror "...we don't want people *like that* on my show".

Since the conditions of being English and grey-haired are more or less incurable, I must assume it was my supposed conservatism that rendered me so intolerable to representatives of the Fairfax Press and ABC.

As the editor of this journal pointed out so eloquently in the last issue, Australia – which once credited itself with being the land of the 'fair go' – has, in recent times, become nothing of the kind. Admittedly, the instances he quoted of intolerance from the aforementioned sources concerned infinitely more important supposed conservatives than I: to wit senior figures in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church.

It seems axiomatic to point out here that without some degree of conservatism – or respect for continuity – the Catholic Church itself would not and could not have survived in any recognisable form. Indeed, it is precisely its historically rock-like stance – extending back appropriately to St. Peter

– which most offends those trapped in the swirling sands of fashionable, post-modernist thought whose habitual claim is that the Catholic Church must 'move with the times' in order to remain 'wanted' or 'relevant'.

Relevant to what or to whom?

Off-hand I can hardly think of a single instance of post-modernist thought with which I am in any agreement at all yet I prefer to think that this deeply unfashionable personal trait springs not from any 'innate' conservatism so much as from assessing each post-modernist argument – and its implications – solely on its merits. In intellectual activity of all kinds we neglect the implications and practical consequences of arguments at our peril.

In moments of occasional despair about the consequences of such neglect, I entertain myself by imagining conversations which take place in the households, say, of post-modernist academics.

Thus in a household where both parents advocate the existence of modish, 'multiple' truths, I like particularly to picture conversations with their children: "Which of you spilt all that honey on the kitchen floor? We want you to tell the truths".

In the brief list of institutions he accused of anti-Catholic bias in the last issue, the editor of *Annals* omitted to name the third and probably most significant force.

In fact, many of Australia's secular academic institutions are at least as fundamentally hostile to Catholicism as either the Fairfax Press or ABC. In essence this is because they have clasped most of the more fashionable arguments of post-modernism so enthusiastically to their collective bosoms.

It is specifically from Australia's seats of learning and supposed intellectual inquiry that the ripples of post-modernist dogma spread out – often swamping much of secondary and even primary public education in their wake – and finally disturb the dust even of the doorsteps of ordinary homes.

Where else do you think the man-made edicts of political correctness or multiculturalism sprang from?

Under their protective umbrella of 'anti-discriminatory' and 'tolerant' disguise, both of the latter phenomena consistently attempt to undermine or discredit Christian – and more specifically Catholic – faith and teaching. Unsurprisingly, a large measure of post-modernist dogma is basically Marxist in origin. Most intelligent people are aware by now of what happened to Christianity in all its manifestations under communist regimes. Any who are not so are urged to read *The Black Book of Communism* first published in English in 1999 by Harvard University Press.

In my own case, I initially learned first-hand about conditions prevailing in U.S.S.R from a Russian musician who escaped via China to Australia in the mid 1960s. Having won a violin competition here she ultimately resettled in England.

Communism unquestionably saw Christianity in any form as its enemy. Thus by 1936, after less than 20 years of communist rule, nearly three quarters of the Soviet Union's 56,000 Orthodox churches had been closed and virtually all traces of Catholic or Protestant Christianity wiped out.

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Historically anyone sympathetic to communist or Marxist causes can hardly claim tolerance, let alone generosity towards Christian beliefs.

At the conclusion of the recent World Youth Day, Pope Benedict XVI attacked the spreading "spiritual desert" of the modern world before an audience of 400,000 young worshippers.

Perhaps it is appropriate to reflect here that many of these would have been unable to travel to Australia – or anywhere else – as recently even as 20 years ago, before world communism ostensibly collapsed.

Here we may also muse a little on the profound influence that the election of a Polish Pope – John Paul II – in October 1978 had on such subsequent world events.

In his book *Modern Times: a History of the World from the 1920s to the 1990s* my former colleague on *The Spectator* and fellow, grey-haired English conservative Paul Johnson wrote: "The choice was now highly appropriate for Poland had become the heartland of Catholicism. First Hitler, then Stalin and his successors had done everything in their power to destroy the Polish Church. Hitler had closed its schools, universities and seminaries, and murdered a third of its clergy. When the Red Army imposed the Lublin government in 1945, they were confident the Church would disappear within a generation. Yet pre-war Poland, where the Church enjoyed special status, proved a less favourable environment for Catholicism than the post-war People's Republic, where it was actively persecuted. The new frontiers turned Poland into one of the most homogeneous states on earth: more than 95% of the population were now ethnic Poles, virtually all of them baptised Catholics. Catholicism became the focus of resistance to the alien Communist regime".

How many of those present at World Youth Day or in contemporary Australian society are fully aware of the debt we all owe to Poland?

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GILES AUTY was born in the UK and trained privately as a painter. He worked professionally as an artist for 20 years. Publication of his *The Art of Self Deception* swung his career towards criticism. He was art critic for *The Spectator* from 1984 to 1995 when he became national correspondent for *The Australian*. He now devotes himself to his original love - painting.

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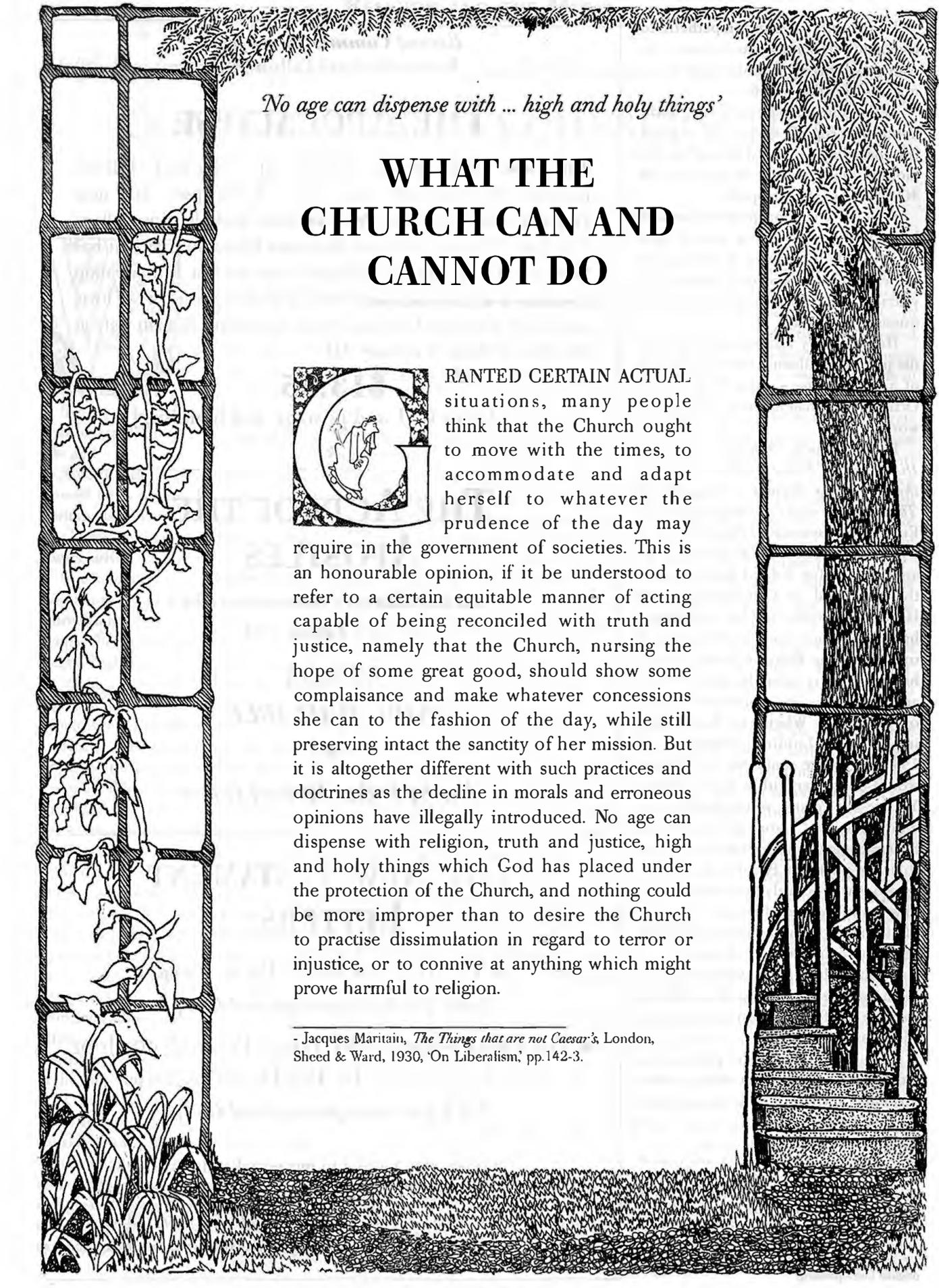
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*No age can dispense with ... high and holy things'*

## WHAT THE CHURCH CAN AND CANNOT DO

**G**RANTED CERTAIN ACTUAL situations, many people think that the Church ought to move with the times, to accommodate and adapt herself to whatever the prudence of the day may require in the government of societies. This is an honourable opinion, if it be understood to refer to a certain equitable manner of acting capable of being reconciled with truth and justice, namely that the Church, nursing the hope of some great good, should show some complaisance and make whatever concessions she can to the fashion of the day, while still preserving intact the sanctity of her mission. But it is altogether different with such practices and doctrines as the decline in morals and erroneous opinions have illegally introduced. No age can dispense with religion, truth and justice, high and holy things which God has placed under the protection of the Church, and nothing could be more improper than to desire the Church to practise dissimulation in regard to terror or injustice, or to connive at anything which might prove harmful to religion.

- Jacques Maritain, *The Things that are not Caesar's*, London, Sheed & Ward, 1930, 'On Liberalism,' pp.142-3.

*Familiar Myths part of the Arsenal of Modern-Day Muslim Polemicists*

# ISLAMISTS REWRITE HISTORY

By ROBERT SPENCER



ON Christmas Eve, the Guardian published an odd commentary piece by Ajmal Masroor, the director of Communities in Action. It was odd because Masroor was openly proselytizing for Islam, wondering why former British Prime Minister Tony Blair didn't convert to Islam rather than to Catholicism. One doesn't usually see such open proselytizing in a major newspaper. In any case, in the course of his piece Masroor said this:

According to Blair, Islam "extols science and knowledge and abhors superstition". I agree, but why has he embraced Catholicism with its history of hostility towards science and is embedded with superstition?

Why indeed? I can't and won't speak for Blair, but the idea that Islam extols science while Christianity is hostile to it is historically and conceptually false. And it's an important question, not only for science, but also for the defence of the West in general against the civilizational challenge posed by the Islamic jihadists. In my book *Religion of Peace?*, therefore, I discuss it in detail, beginning with an explanation of the importance of the question from none other than Friedrich Nietzsche, who once noted that "there is no such thing as science 'without any presuppositions'... a philosophy, a 'faith,' must always be there first, so that science can acquire from it a direction, a meaning, a limit, a method, a right to exist."

It may be jarring to those who are accustomed to believing that faith and reason are perpetually at odds with each other, and that religion is an eternal enemy to science, but it is nevertheless a matter of historical fact that modern science has derived a great deal of its direction, meaning, limit, method, and right to exist from Christianity. It is likewise true, and probably just

as jarring to those who assume that all religions are essentially identical in character, that Islam has not provided, either historically or in the present day, the same kind of impetus to its development.

At Regensburg, Pope Benedict XVI observed that "for Muslim teaching, God is absolutely transcendent. His will is not bound up with any of our categories, even that of rationality." The one hundred Muslim authorities who wrote an Open Letter to the Pope replied that "To say that for Muslims 'God's Will is not bound up in any of our categories' is also a simplification which may lead to a misunderstanding. God has many Names in Islam, including the Merciful, the Just, the Seeing, the Hearing, the Knowing, the Loving, and the Gentle... As this concerns His Will, to conclude that Muslims believe in a capricious God who might or might not command us to evil is to forget that God says in the Qur'an, Lo! God enjoins justice and kindness, and giving to kinsfolk, and forbids lewdness and abomination and wickedness. He exhorts you in order that ye may take heed (al-Nahl, 16:90). Equally, it is to forget that God says in the Qur'an that He has prescribed for Himself mercy (al-An'am, 6:12; see also 6:54), and that God says in the Qur'an, My Mercy encompasses everything (al-A'raf 7:156). The word for mercy, rahmah, can also be translated as love, kindness, and compassion. From this word rahmah comes the sacred formula Muslims use daily, In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Is it not self-evident that spilling innocent blood goes against mercy and compassion?"

Fair enough, although we have often seen the limitations within an Islamic context of condemning the spilling of "innocent blood": who is innocent? Under what circumstances? But aside from that, the authors of the Open Letter

seem to be contradicting the Pope's point about the Islamic view of God, but they do not actually do so. In attempting to refute the idea that Islam envisions "a capricious God who might or might not command us to evil," the writers offer a number of Qur'an quotes that assert that "God enjoins justice and kindness," and is merciful and compassionate. Yet in noting that in Islam, Allah's "will is not bound up with any of our categories" and quoting Ibn Hazm saying "Were it God's will, we would even have to practise idolatry," the Pope was not so much saying that in the Islamic view Allah would command his people to do evil, but that he might change the content of the concepts of good and evil. In other words, Allah would always enjoin "justice and kindness," but what constitutes "justice and kindness," just as what constitutes "innocent blood," might change.

This idea has extraordinarily important implications for the development of science. There is an odd passage in the Qur'an that sums up this perspective, and how it differs from the Judeo-Christian view of God: "The Jews say: Allah's hand is fettered. Their hands are fettered and they are accursed for saying so." (5:64). The Jews, in their wickedness, claimed that "Allah's hand is fettered," but in fact Allah's hand is not fettered.

It is unclear what Jewish concept the Qur'an is referring to in this case, but the indignant response to it is clear: Allah's hand being unfettered is a vivid image of divine freedom. Such a God can be bound by no laws. Muslim theologians argued during the long controversy with the Mu'tazilite sect, which exalted human reason beyond the point that the eventual victors were willing to tolerate, that Allah was free to act as he pleased. He was thus not bound to govern the universe according to consistent and observable laws. "He

cannot be questioned concerning what He does" (Qur'an 21:23).

Accordingly, there was no point to observing the workings of the physical world; there was no reason to expect that any pattern to its workings would be consistent, or even discernible. If Allah could not be counted on to be consistent, why waste time observing the order of things? It could change tomorrow. Stanley Jaki, a Catholic priest and physicist, explains that it was al-Ghazali, the philosopher that the authors of the Open Letter recommend to the Pope, who "denounced natural laws, the very objective of science, as a blasphemous constraint upon the free will of Allah." He adds that "Muslim mystics decried the notion of scientific law (as formulated by Aristotle) as blasphemous and irrational, depriving as it does the Creator of his freedom." Social scientist Rodney Stark adds that "it would seem that Islam has a conception of God appropriate to underwrite the rise of science. Not so. Allah is not presented as a lawful creator but is conceived of as an extremely active God who intrudes in the world as he deems it appropriate. This prompted the formation of a major theological bloc within Islam that condemns all efforts to formulate natural laws as blasphemy in that they deny Allah's freedom to act."

The great Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) explained orthodox Islamic cosmology in these terms:

Human intellect does not perceive any reason why a body should be in a certain place instead of being in another. In the same manner they say that reason admits the possibility that an existing being should be larger or smaller than it really is, or that it should be different in form and position from what it really is; e.g., a man might have the height of a mountain, might have several heads, and fly in the air; or an elephant might be as small as an insect, or an insect as huge as an elephant.

This method of admitting possibilities is applied to the whole Universe. Whenever they affirm that a thing belongs to this class of admitted possibilities, they say that it can have this form and that it is also possible that it be found differently, and that the one form is not more possible than the other; but they do not ask whether the reality confirms their assumption.

## Conquest by Stealth

**D**ESPITE its size, worldwide presence, and tremendous importance, Tablighi Jamaat remains largely unknown outside the Muslim community, even to many scholars of Islam. This is no coincidence. Tablighi Jamaat officials work to remain outside of both media and governmental notice. Tablighi Jamaat neither has formal organizational structure nor does it publish details about the scope of its activities, its membership, or its finances. By eschewing open discussion of politics and portraying itself only as a pietistic movement, Tablighi Jamaat works to project a non-threatening image.

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

They say that the thing which exists with certain constant and permanent forms, dimensions, and properties, only follows the direction of habit, just as the king generally rides on horseback through the streets of the city, and is never found departing from this habit; but reason does not find it impossible that he should walk on foot through the place: there is no doubt that he may do so, and this possibility is fully admitted by the intellect.

Similarly, earth moves towards the centre, fire turns away from the centre; fire causes heat, water causes cold, in accordance with a certain habit; but it is logically not impossible that a deviation from this habit should occur, namely, that fire should cause cold, move downward, and still be fire; that the water should cause heat, move upward, and still be water. On this foundation their whole fabric is constructed.

This odd theory was derived entirely from the Islamic conviction of the absolute sovereignty of Allah. Relatively early in its history, therefore, science was deprived in the Islamic world of the philosophical foundation it needed in order to flourish. Consequently, Jaki observes, "the improvements brought by Muslim scientists to the Greek scientific corpus were never substantial."

The consequences of this have been far-reaching. Jaki details some of them:

More than two hundred years after the construction of the famed Blue Mosque, W. Eton, for many years a resident in Turkey and Russia, found that Turkish architects still could not calculate the lateral pressures of curves. Nor could they understand why the catenary curve, so useful in building ships, could also be useful in drawing blueprints for cupolas. The reign of Suleiman the Magnificent may be memorable for its wealth of gorgeously illustrated manuscripts and princely paraphernalia, but for no items worth mentioning from the viewpoint of science and technology. At the Battle of Lepanto the Turkish navy lacked improvements long in use on French and Italian vessels. Two hundred years later, Turkish artillery was primitive by Western standards. Worse, while in Western Europe the dangers of the use of lead had for some time been clearly realized, lead was still a heavy ingredient in kitchenware used in Turkish lands.

Those technological differences were decisive at the Battle of Lepanto, which took place on October 7, 1571. The Holy League, comprised of the Papal States, the Republic of Venice, Spain, Genoa, and others, defeated the Ottoman Turks in a decisive sea battle that significantly diminished the jihadists' chances to subdue all of Europe at that time. Stark explains: "The European galleys not only had far more and far better cannons than did the Turks but they no longer had their forward fire zone blocked by a high ramming beak – since they meant to blow the Turks out of the water, not ram into them. Firing powerful forward volleys, the Europeans annihilated Ottoman galleys while still rowing toward them; the Turks had to stop and turn sideways to fire, presenting much larger targets."

In contrast to the dogmatic stagnation of the Islamic world, science was able to flourish in Christian Europe during the same period because Christian scientists were working from assumptions derived from the Bible, which were very different from those that Muslims derived from the Qur'an. In the Old Testament, says Jaki, "the faithfulness of the God of history is supported not only with a reference to another saving intervention of God into human affairs, but very often also by a pointed and

detailed reference to the faithfulness of the regular working and permanence of a nature created by God." For example, God refers to the regularity of day and night to emphasize the permanence of his covenant with the Israelites, telling the prophet Jeremiah: "If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne..." (Jeremiah 33:20-21). The Psalmist speaks of God having "fixed all the bounds of the earth" (Psalm 74:17), and of his word as fixed as well: "For ever, O LORD, thy word is firmly fixed in the heavens" (Psalm 119:89). In these and many other similar passages, there is a strong sense of the stability of creation – a sine qua non of scientific investigation.

Of course, the Qur'an contains similar affirmations: "The word of thy Lord doth find its fulfilment in truth and in justice: None can change His words: for He is the one who heareth and knoweth all" (6:115). However, even in the Qur'an itself Allah says that he does sometimes change his words: "None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something better or similar: knowest thou not that Allah hath power over all things?" (2:106).

If Allah's "power over all things" extended to the ability to replace his own words with something "better or similar" but in any case contradictory, since otherwise the replacement wouldn't be necessary, then Muslims would find it difficult to accept the Jewish and Christian understanding that that God created the universe according to reliably observable laws, and, whether or not he is bound to do so, freely chose to uphold the laws that he created. "Islam," notes Stark, "did not fully embrace the notion that the universe ran along on fundamental principles laid down by God at the creation but assumed that the world was sustained by his will on a continuing basis."

However, the idea that the universe did run "on fundamental principles laid down by God at the creation" gave a major impetus to the rise of modern science in Christian Europe. Christian mathematicians and astronomers knew

## ANNALS CROSSWORD No. 58

### ACROSS CLUES

1. Public official responsible for the investigation of violent, sudden or suspicious deaths (7)
5. Ceremonial staff carried by a bishop (7)
9. Book containing instructions on religious doctrine of the church (9)
10. The liturgical headdress of a bishop (5)
11. Capital of Portugal (6)
12. Martyr and saint, reported to have been burnt to death on a gridiron (8)
14. A member of a 16th century Protestant sect that rejected infant baptism (10)
16. Present (4)
18. A person who belonged to an ancient Christian church of Egypt (4)
19. A short prayer service (10)
22. Someone who abandons his religion, party, cause, etc (8)
23. City and port in Denmark (6)
26. Progeny (5)
27. Under an assumed name or appearance (9)
28. Fundamental nature (7)
29. Italian sculptor, architect of Saint Peter's in Rome (7)

### DOWN CLUES

1. Saint; patroness of church music (7)
2. Evaluates (5)
- 3 and 6 down. Saint, reputedly the original "Father Christmas" (8,2,4)
4. Downfall (4)

5. A feeling of pity for the suffering of another (10)
6. See 3 down
7. Aim (9)
8. Vote into office for a second time (2-5)
13. Adept at surviving in an urban, poor and often criminal environment (10)
- 15 and 20 down. Founder of the Redemptorists (9,7)
17. An inhabitant from a small group of houses in a country area (8)
18. Communion cup (7)
20. See 15 down
21. Scattered (6)
24. A small African antelope (5)
25. A fungal disease of plants: blackleg (4)

### SOLUTION TO NO. 57

T	A	T	C	S	A	S								
W	O	R	L	D	Y	O	U	T	H	A	Y			
I	R	R	L	N	R	J	D							
E	N	G	I	N	E	C	R	E	T	O	N	N	E	
G	V					U	A	U	N	E				
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that their investigations would lead to knowledge of the truth, because they believed that God had established the universe according to certain laws – laws that could be discovered through observation and study. St. Thomas Aquinas even goes so far as to assert that "since the principles of certain sciences – of logic, geometry, and arithmetic, for instance – are derived exclusively from the formal principals of things, upon which their essence depends,

it follows that God cannot make the contraries of these principles; He cannot make the genus not to be predicable of the species, nor lines drawn from a circle's centre to its circumference not to be equal, nor the three angles of a rectilinear triangle not to be equal to two right angles."

This is a far cry from Maimonides' depiction of Muslim philosophers envisioning elephants becoming snakes and fire turning cool. And to be sure,

## PILTDOWNISM

**D**ID Michelangelo sculpt in marble a 'sleeping Cupid' which was sent to Rome so that it could be buried, dug up and then sold as an antique? That is what Giorgio Vasari reports in his *Lives of the Artists* (1550). But Michelangelo's agency in this affair is uncertain, and the artefact itself has not survived. ... Piltdownism is named of course after the greatest scientific fraud of the twentieth century, which occurred in 1912 when a respected geologist, Charles Dawson, and an eminent palaeontologist, Arthur Smith Woodward, announced their discovery (in a gravel-pit near Piltdown in Sussex) of the skull of that 'missing link' between ape and human whose existence had been predicted in the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin and Thomas Ernest Huxley. The skull of the 'Dawn Man of Piltdown' (*Eoanthropus dawsoni*) turned out to have been fabricated from a human cranium and the jawbone of an orangutan.

- K. K. Ruthven, *Faking literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p.154

to a pious Muslim of Aquinas's day the idea that God could not do anything would have appeared as the highest form of blasphemy. It would have been equivalent to saying that "Allah's hand is fettered." But Christians did not consider it blasphemous in the least. "The rise of science," Stark explains, "was not an extension of classical learning. It was the natural outgrowth of Christian doctrine: nature exists because it was created by God. In order to love and honor God, it necessary to fully appreciate the wonders of his handiwork. Because God is perfect, that handiwork functions in accord with immutable principles. By the full use of our God-given powers of reason and observation, it ought to be possible to discover those principles."

The importance of this cannot be overemphasized. Stark concludes: "These were the crucial ideas that explain why science arose in Christian Europe and nowhere else."

Now wait a minute. Didn't modern science originate in the Islamic world?

If you have received a modern education in a Western country, you may find Stark's statement implausible. After all, didn't modern science begin in the Islamic world? Didn't Muslims invent algebra, the astrolabe, and the zero? Didn't Muslims preserve the classics of ancient Greek philosophy while Europe was blinded to their value by a narrow Christian dogmatism? Weren't the great Islamic empires of the past the bright lights of civilization, while Christian Europe was comparatively barbaric and primitive? "For while [the Caliphs] al-Rashid [786-809] and al-Mamun [813-833] were delving into Greek and Persian philosophy," according to historian Philip K. Hitti, "their contemporaries in the West, Charlemagne and his lords, were reportedly dabbling in the art of writing their names....No people in the early Middle Ages contributed to human progress as much as did the Arabs"

In fact, much of this has been exaggerated in regard to both Islam and Europe, often for quite transparent apologetic motives. The astrolabe was developed, if not perfected, long before Muhammad was born. The zero, which is often attributed to Muslims, and what we know today as "Arabic numerals" did not originate in Arabia, but in pre-Islamic India. Aristotle's work

was preserved in Arabic not initially by Muslims at all, but by Christians such as the fifth century priest Probus of Antioch, who introduced Aristotle to the Arabic-speaking world. Another Christian, Huneyn ibn-Ishaq (809-873), translated many works by Aristotle, Galen, Plato and Hippocrates into Syriac. His son then translated them into Arabic. The Syrian Christian Yahya ibn 'Adi (893-974) also translated works of philosophy into Arabic, and wrote one of his own, *The Reformation of Morals*. His student, another Christian named Abu 'Ali 'Isa ibn Zur'a (943-1008), also translated Aristotle and others from Syriac into Arabic. The first Arabic-language medical treatise was written by a Christian priest and translated into Arabic by a Jewish doctor in 683. The first hospital was founded in Baghdad during the Abbasid caliphate -- not by a Muslim, but a Nestorian Christian. A pioneering medical school was founded at Gundeshapur in Persia -- by Assyrian Christians.

In sum, there was a time when it was indeed true that Islamic culture was more advanced than that of Europeans, but that superiority corresponds exactly to the period when Muslims were able to draw on and advance the achievements of Byzantine and other civilizations. But when the Muslim overlords had taken what they could from their subject peoples, and the Jewish and Christian communities had been stripped of their material and intellectual wealth and thoroughly subdued, Islam went into a period of intellectual decline from which it has not yet recovered.

Certainly Muslims have innovated at high levels. Civilized people owe a debt to Muslim believers such as Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Musa Al-Khwarizmi (780-850), whose pioneering treatise on algebra, *Al-Jabr wa-al-Muqabilah*, gave algebra its name and enjoyed wide influence in Europe. (Al-Khwarizmi, of course, was following in the pioneering footsteps of Diophantus of Alexandria, who died late in the third Christian century.) Abu Raihan al-Biruni (973-1048) did groundbreaking work on calculating longitude and latitude. The Caliph Harun al-Rashid's son Abu Jafar al-Ma'mun (786-833), who became caliph in 813, established professional standards for physicians and pharmacists. Abu Bakr al-Razi, or Rhazes (865-925), wrote lengthy treatises on medicine and alchemy that influenced the development of medical science and chemistry in medieval Europe. The famous Muslim philosopher Avicenna (Ibn Sina, 980-1037) wrote a medical textbook that was pre-eminent among European doctors for five centuries, until the 1600s. The prolific scholar Abu 'Uthman 'Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz (776-868) wrote over two hundred books on a multitude of subjects: from politics (*The Institution of the Caliphate*) and zoology (the seven-volume *Book of Animals*) to cuisine (*Arab Food*), and day-to-day living (*Sobriety and Mirth; The Art of Keeping One's Mouth Shut*.) The mathematician Abu Ali al-Hasan ibn al-Haytham (965-1039) did early and influential work in optics.

However, Stark points out that "Islamic scholars achieved significant

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- Editor, *Annals*

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progress only in terms of specific knowledge, such as certain aspects of astronomy and medicine, which did not require any general theoretical basis. And as time passed, even this sort of progress ceased."

"1001 Inventions" describes itself as "a unique UK based educational project that reveals the rich heritage that the Muslim community share with other communities in the UK and Europe." It says that it is "a non-religious and non-political project seeking to allow the positive aspects of progress in science and technology to act as a bridge in understanding the interdependence of communities throughout human history" - and it does this by highlighting 1001 inventions that Muslims are supposed to have brought to the world. This exhibit is designed for maximum popular appeal: "1001 Inventions consists of a UK-wide travelling exhibition, a colourful easy to read book, a dedicated website and a themed collection of educational posters complementing a secondary school teachers' pack." It invites participants to "Discover Muslim Heritage in our World in seven conveniently organised zones: home, school, market, hospital, town, world and universe."

Many of these 1001 inventions involve things on the order of "the world's first soft drink," and the perspective of this enterprise's organizers comes clear from a section they include detailing astronomical revelations that can be found in the Qur'an. In a manner reminiscent of Khrushchev-era Soviet propaganda about everything from baseball to zoology to Russians, it frequently asserts that innovations and discoveries usually attributed to Westerners actually originated in the Islamic world. "Abbas ibn Firnas," we're told, "was the first person to make a real attempt to construct a flying machine and fly. His first flight took place in 852 in Cordoba when he wrapped himself in a loose cloak stiffened with wooden struts and jumped from the minaret of the Great Mosque of Cordoba. Though this attempt was unsuccessful, he continued working on improving his design." And a bit more seriously, "the Polish scholar and inventor Copernicus is credited as the founder of modern astronomy. Historians have recently established that most of his theories were based on those of Nasir al-Din

al-Tusi and Ibn Shatir. Ibn al-Shatir's planetary theory and models are exactly mathematically identical to those prepared by Copernicus over a century after him, which raised the issue of how Copernicus acquired such elements of information. The line of transmission lies in Italy where Greek and Latin materials that made use of al-Tusi's device were circulating in Italy at about the time Copernicus studied there."

Such assertions only highlight the discomfiture of those who make them. For if Muslims really did make innovations in aerodynamics, astronomy, and other fields long before Europeans did, what happened then? Why were the Europeans the ones who made use of these discoveries for technological advancement? Even if Copernicus (who came from a devout Catholic family and may have been a priest himself) was influenced by Ibn al-Shatir, which is not universally accepted, why didn't Muslims make use of the insights of Ibn al-Shatir the way Copernicus did? Ibn al-Shatir died in 1375, just under a hundred years before Copernicus was born in 1473. Yet in that century, and in the centuries thereafter, Islamic astronomers did nothing significant with their coreligionist's discoveries. If Islam contained the seeds of the high level of cultural attainment that the Islamic world enjoyed at its apex, why has it been unable to reverse its precipitous decline from those heights? Many Muslim and non-Muslim writers today answer this by blaming the West, but this just once again avoids the problem - for if Islam contains within it the means by which civilization can advance beyond anything the non-Muslim world has to offer, one would think that Muslims would be able to devise ways to circumvent the West's baneful influence.

Anyway, while an endeavor like "1001 Inventions" may have its merits, it is noteworthy that there is no corresponding project spotlighting inventions by Christians. Of course, the organizers of "1001 Inventions" would probably respond that this is because it is only Muslims whose civilizations and achievements are being denigrated, and so only Muslims need to remind the world of their forefathers' attainments. Also, it is generally assumed that the worldview and history of the dominant culture in any given area are generally

known. However, in this age of multiculturalism and a tendency toward suicidal self-incrimination in the West, that can no longer be taken for granted. With hatred for their own culture and history rampant among young people in the West, it is likely that few students in the West today are aware of the historical innovations for which Christians are responsible, including those which were not just incidentally developed in a Christian context, but which owed their existence in whole or part from Christian assumptions. Most people are likely unaware, for example, of the Catholic Church's pivotal role, which Woods details, in the development of the university, free market economics, and even secular legal codes. The Islamic world, of course, was among the beneficiaries of many of these Christian innovations, large and small. In the late fifteenth century, the Persian mystical poet Nur ad-Din Abd ar-Rahman Jami (1414-1492) said that his vision had become extremely poor, although "with the aid of Frankish glasses," he could see things clearly again. Could the fatalism that is deeply rooted in the Islamic consciousness have retarded the development by Muslims of aids to vision?

## Caving in to Bullies

**T**HE ALLURE of Islam ... owes much to its confidence. And that confidence has been bolstered during the past week. On Monday's *Newsnight*, Anjem Choudary of *al-Ghuraba* - the group that organised Friday's rally [in London] - showed in a series of furious outburst how empowered extremists feel by the impunity they have enjoyed. In response to Jeremy Paxman's point that he might be happier in a country where Shari'a law was in place, Mr Choudary raged: 'Who said that you own Britain anyway? Britain belongs to Allah'.

- Matthew d'Ancona 'Free Speech: Labour cares more about the Moslem vote,' in *The Daily Telegraph* [London] 08-02-2006, p.18.

Stark also details some of the innovations and discoveries of Christian Europe, principally advances in production methods, navigation and war technology, and concludes: "All of these remarkable developments can be traced to the unique Christian conviction that progress was a God-given obligation, entailed in the gift of reason. That new technologies and techniques would always be forthcoming was a fundamental article of Christian faith. Hence, no bishops or theologians denounced clocks or sailing ships -- although both were condemned on religious grounds in various non-Western societies." Indeed, clocks originated in medieval Catholic Europe, while in 1560, Ogier Chiselin de Busbecq, the Austrian ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, wrote that his hosts had "never been able to bring themselves to print books and set up public clocks. They hold that their scriptures, that is, their sacred books, would no longer be scriptures if they were printed; and if they established public clocks, they think that the authority of their muezzins and their ancient rites would suffer diminution." It was not until the mid-nineteenth century, time in which Islamic norms were on the defensive and in retreat, that the first public clock was installed in Constantinople; this may have been the first public clock erected in any Islamic country.

The effects of the Christian openness to innovation and the Islamic resistance to it reverberate in many fields. Even in medicine, while the Islamic world points proudly to many early physicians and medical theorists, it was not a Muslim, but the Belgian physician and researcher Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564), who paved the way for modern medical advances when he published the first accurate description of human internal organs, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* (On the Fabric of the Human Body) in 1543. Why was a Muslim not able to do this? Because Vesalius was able to dissect human bodies, while that practice was forbidden in Islam. What's more, Vesalius's book is filled with detailed anatomical drawings - but also forbidden in Islam are artistic representations of the human body.

Stark's reference to "the unique Christian conviction that progress was a God-given obligation" may strike

some as odd in light of the fact that the Catholic Church condemned Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), the “father of science” himself, as a heretic for saying that the earth moved around the sun. Galileo and the Scopes Monkey Trial generally form the Catholic and Protestant bookends of the case that Christianity is anti-science. However, historian Thomas Woods notes of the former: “The one-sided version of the Galileo affair with which most people are familiar is very largely to blame for the widespread belief that the Church has obstructed the advance of scientific inquiry. But even if the Galileo incident had been every bit as bad as people think it was, John Henry Cardinal Newman, the celebrated nineteenth-century convert from Anglicanism, found it revealing that this is practically the only example that ever comes to mind.”

The myth is that an obscurantist Church blinded by dogma, hounded and condemned Galileo because Church officials could not square the idea that the earth moved around the sun with Scriptural declarations such as “Thou didst set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be shaken” (Psalm 104:5). Reality was not quite so pat. In fact, Jesuit astronomers were among Galileo’s earliest and most enthusiastic supporters. When Galileo first published supporting evidence for the Copernican heliocentric theory, Cardinal Maffeo Barberini (1568-1644), the future Pope Urban VIII – the Pope of whom he was later to run afoul – sent him a letter of congratulations. When Galileo visited Rome in 1624, Urban VIII, who had become Pope the year before, welcomed the scientist, gave him gifts, and assured him that the Church would never declare heliocentrism heretical. This is odd behavior on Barberini’s part if he thought that Galileo was a heretic for teaching heliocentrism. In reality, the Pope and other churchmen, according to historian Jerome Langford, “believed that Galileo might be right, but they had to wait for more proof.”

What about the Biblical passages that seemed to teach that the Earth did not move? Cardinal Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) explained that “if there were a real proof...that the sun does not go round the earth but the earth round the sun, then we should have to proceed with great circumspection in

explaining passages of Scripture which appear to teach the contrary, and rather admit that we did not understand them than declare an opinion to be false which is proved to be true. But as for myself, I shall not believe that there are such proofs until they are shown to me.” And that was the ultimate source of Galileo’s conflict with the Church: he was teaching as fact what still at that time had only the status of theory. When Church officials asked Galileo in 1616 to teach heliocentrism as theory rather than as fact, he agreed; however, in 1632 he published a new work, *Dialogue on the Great World Systems*, in which he presented heliocentrism as fact again.

That was why Galileo was put on trial for suspected heresy and placed under house arrest; an order that he not be allowed to publish was not enforced. Historian J. L. Heilbron notes that from the beginning the controversy was not understood the way it has been presented by many critics of the Church since then. The condemnation of Galileo, says Heilbron, “had no general or theological significance. Gassendi, in 1642, observed that the decision of the cardinals [who condemned Galileo], though important for the faithful, did not amount to an article of faith; Riccioli, in 1651, that heliocentrism was not a heresy; Mengeli, in 1675, that interpretations of Scripture can only bind Catholics if agreed to at a general council; and Baldigiani, in 1678, that everyone knew all that.”

Speaking about the Galileo case in 1992, Pope John Paul II remarked:

From the beginning of the Age of Enlightenment down to our own day, the Galileo case has been a sort of “myth”, in which the image fabricated out of the events was quite far removed from reality. In this perspective,



the Galileo case was the symbol of the Church’s supposed rejection of scientific progress, or of “dogmatic” obscurantism opposed to the free search for truth. This myth has played a considerable cultural role. It has helped to anchor a number of scientists of good faith in the idea that there was an incompatibility between the spirit of science and its rules of research on the one hand and the Christian faith on the other. A tragic mutual incomprehension has been interpreted as the reflection of a fundamental opposition between science and faith. The clarifications furnished by recent historical studies enable us to state that this sad misunderstanding now belongs to the past.

John Paul also reaffirmed the fundamentally Christian foundations of modern science: “Those who engage in scientific and technological research admit as the premise of its progress, that the world is not a chaos but a ‘cosmos’ – that is to say, that there exist order and natural laws which can be grasped and examined, and which, for this reason, have a certain affinity with the spirit. Einstein used to say: ‘What is eternally incomprehensible in the world is that it is comprehensible.’ This intelligibility, attested to by the marvellous discoveries of science and technology, leads us, in the last analysis, to that transcendent and primordial Thought imprinted on all things.” In a 2000 address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, he observed that “the man of science...feels a special responsibility in relation to the advancement of mankind, not understood in generic or ideal terms, but as the advancement of the whole man and of everything that is authentically human. Science conceived in this way can encounter the Church without difficulty and engage in a fruitful dialogue with her, because it is precisely man who is ‘the primary and fundamental way for the Church’ (*Redemptor hominis*, n. 14).”

When modern science was in its infancy, openness to such exploration was common only in Christian Europe, and was conspicuously lacking from the Islamic world.

ROBERT SPENCER is the director of *Jihad Watch* and the author of two *New York Times* bestsellers on Islamic jihad. Spencer has written seven books, ten monographs, and well over two hundred articles about jihad and Islamic terrorism.

*Calling for a return to the tradition of the Apostolic Church*

## COMING HOME

*By Sandro Magister*

**I**N his address [to the Lambeth Conference] Cardinal Kasper recalled the 'ecclesiological arguments' that convinced the most famous of the 19th century converts, Cardinal John Henry Newman, to embrace Catholicism. And he expressed the hope that there might emerge in the Anglicanism of today a new Oxford Movement, the movement of return to the tradition of the apostolic Church inspired by Newman.

Since 1980, when the Church of Rome established rules for men ordained to the priesthood or episcopate in the Anglican Communion to enter the Catholic Church, it is calculated that more than 80 of them have taken this step, often followed by large portions of their respective dioceses and parishes.

The latest ceremony to welcome an Anglican minister into the Catholic Church took place privately, last December 1 in Rome, in the papal basilica of St. Mary Major.

On one side was the American cardinal archpriest of the basilica, Bernard Law. On the other was the former Anglican (or Episcopalian, as they are usually called in the United States) Jeffrey Steenson, former bishop of the diocese of Rio Grande, which covers New Mexico and part of Texas, accompanied at the ceremony by the Catholic archbishop of Santa Fe, Michael J. Sheehan.

Steenson, 55, married with three children, was ordained a priest in the Catholic Church, which does not recognize Anglican orders as valid. He will teach patristics at the seminary, a subject in which he is an expert.

About a dozen other Episcopalian ministers from the United States are waiting to be welcomed as priests into the Catholic Church. Three of them are bishops emeritus: John Lipscomb, of the diocese of southeast Florida, Clarence Pope, of Fort Worth, and Daniel Herzog, of Albany.

But within the Anglican Communion, there are many more who are sympathetic toward the Catholic Church than those who "cross the Tiber" and convert.

For example, these Anglo-Catholic sentiments were expressed in Sydney by the Anglican bishop Robert Forsyth, who last July 18, welcoming Benedict XVI to his city, described the Church of Rome as "a rock in the rapids." And he explained:

"Were it not for Rome's strong insistence upon Christ as the only Saviour of the world, upon the 'Catholic faith', the nature of the Triune God, the divinity of Christ, the importance of sacred Scripture and of the objectivity of Christian morality, then the life of other Christian churches would have been so much more difficult, certainly for us here in the West."

Another Australian, Archbishop John Hepworth, is primate of the Traditional Anglican Communion, a branch of Anglicanism that has made the formal proposal to the Holy See to enter into a "corporate reunion" with the Catholic Church. On July 25, the apostolic nuncio in Australia, Giuseppe Lazzarotto, delivered to Hepworth a letter from Cardinal William Levada, prefect of the congregation for the doctrine of the faith, pledging that the Holy See will examine the proposal with "serious attention." The Traditional Anglican Communion numbers about 400,000 members, in many countries.

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- 'At Lambeth, Cardinal Kasper calls for another Newman,' ZENIT Catholic News Service.

*Benedict XVI: not afraid to take young people out of their comfort zone*

# GENERATION Y AND THEIR POPE

*By Christopher Pearson*



A number of World Youth Day pilgrims over the last week have summed up the impact of the event to me by saying that, at least for the time being, they no longer felt as though they were an embattled minority. Surrounded by hundreds of thousands of like-minded people, the idea that they might be a last, dwindling generation of practising Catholics – as most Australian media tend to portray them – was no longer plausible.

The sociology of knowledge has a term to describe this sense of belonging: “being cognitively *entre-nous*”. It’s possible to feel quite at home with complete strangers when you know you share a world-view and a common ethos. In an atmosphere of trust, close friendships are more readily formed and high ideals are easier to live up to. Virtuous circles allow people to drop their guard without too much fear of the consequences and to be their best selves.

Last week the Pope assured Sydney’s huge crowds that the church was not old and moribund but, like them, full of youth and vigour. To a wider audience, especially in Australia, this may well have seemed counter-intuitive. However, from a global perspective it’s demographically accurate in the light of the church’s burgeoning growth in the Third World. It also captures the pilgrims’ shared sense of participation in a supranational movement with plenty of life left in it, regardless of the bleaker picture painted by local church attendance statistics.

One astute observer of the local scene is Geoffrey Jarrett, the Catholic bishop of Lismore in northern NSW. He has long been an advocate of regularly taking some of his flock abroad on pilgrimages. The obvious comparison is

with the old Left’s strategy of building up a *cadre*. Whether in groups of 20 senior students or school principals, and to Rome, Jerusalem or the Marian shrines of Mexico, the idea has been to give people a taste of Catholic culture in a place where it is the defining culture of the country.

It’s a miniature mirror-image of the WYD experience. Few kids from coastal NSW are likely to forget in a hurry the experience of sharing a cathedral with 10,000 exuberant Mexicans singing their hearts out or talking to the children

and grandchildren of Central American peasants martyred for their faith. The taken-for-grantedness of belief in such a setting and the universality of the church tend to put Australia’s militant secularism and the listlessness that so often characterizes parochial life and liturgies into a less oppressive perspective. Even the hedonism and narcissism that are said to characterize “the lucky country” lose some of their gloss.

Whether in-bound or overseas, there’s no doubt that the act of pilgrimage has the capacity to change people’s lives suddenly and profoundly. After the success of WYD, the question is whether the church in Australia has the collective resolve and the people to harness the renewed enthusiasm of its young. Will the proverbial seed fall on good soil and put down roots, or on stony ground and wither?

When the American preacher, Billy Graham first toured Australia in 1959, the evangelical churches were thoroughly prepared. Admittedly, Christianity commanded far more widespread respect then and was better organised. Even the least religious-minded products of state schooling were likely to be better grounded in the fundamentals than all but the most assiduously catechised of the under-30s these days. Mainstream Protestantism saw its chance for a mass revival and made the most of it. Sydney’s low church Anglicans in particular stepped up their lay evangelisation, youth outreach and regular teaching programs and have never really looked back.

Australian Catholicism is deeply divided on any number of theological and ideological fault lines and teetering on the brink of institutional collapse in Queensland and Tasmania. Yet the Pope remains a powerful symbol of unity within the universal church and attracts

## The State not a Sacred Power

The state is not itself the sacred power but simply an order that finds its limit in a faith that worships, not the state, but a God who stands over against it and judges it. This is the new element. This can naturally take different forms in the constitutions of society. In this sense, the development of the Enlightenment, with which the model of the separation of Church and state appears, definitely has a positive side. What is negative about it is that modernity at the same time reduces religion to subjectivity – and then there is again an absolutization of the state, such as becomes very clear in Hegel.

– Pope Benedict XVI, writing when Cardinal Ratzinger, in *Salt of the Earth: The Church at the End of the Millennium*, Ignatius Press, 1997, pp.239-240.

far more loyalty and affection from young Australians than any local prelate or ecclesiastical faction. Can the bishops' conference rise to the occasion and speak with one voice to the generation on whom its future largely depends?

While there's no accounting for providence, the odds are against it. What seems more likely is that the dioceses which are prepared to follow Benedict's lead, as witnessed in his preaching, teaching and liturgical example, will be able to provide the most convincing segues from the highlights of the last few weeks back to everyday life in the parishes. Elsewhere the mismatch will be a source of confusion and, for many, discouragement.

WYD in Sydney differed from previous events in several important ways. The added emphasis on catechesis, with teaching sessions from some of the world's ablest theologians and the Pope himself, was striking. Not many Australian Catholic clergy are especially well-versed in theology and some are vehemently anti-intellectual. The people in the pews have seldom had much access to sustained exposition of the faith, unless they took some sort of formal course in theology or church history. Too few of those who were capable of teaching them went out of their way to make the laity welcome in their classes.

Even in the recent past, in many dioceses lay people with an intellectual interest in religion have tended to be regarded as eccentric god-botherers or seen as a potentially competing source of authority to the clergy. For all that, the present Pope was a theology professor and he clearly believes that many people apart from priests and religious can benefit from studying it. He sees learning as a powerful bulwark of faith rather than a likely stumbling block, a view many eager Gen Y Catholics share. The best of them won't take no for an answer and if the bishops have any sense at all they'll accommodate them gladly.

As with teaching, so also with preaching. The diocesan seminaries over the last 40 years or so seem to have thought that instruction on preparing sermons was a relatively unimportant element of priestly formation. As a result, very few Catholics in this country any longer expect well-considered,

## The Pope and the Church

**T**HE Pope is not a foreign sovereign: he is the visible head of the mystical body, essentially supra-temporal, supra-political, supra-national, supra-cultural, of which Christ is the invisible head: he is, for the supreme control of doctrine and the government of that Body, the visibility, as it were, of Christ on this earth. His kingdom is not of this world, and, if he does possess a temporal sovereignty, it is as the minimum of body required precisely to assure the full liberty of the spiritual sovereignty peculiar to him; if he is sovereign of the Vatican City, it is precisely so that he shall be neither Italian nor American, neither French nor Chinese, so that he shall lose all human nationality, as Christ was destitute of all human personality, to belong exclusively to God.

- Jacques Maritain, *The Things that are not Caesar's*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1930, Preface, p.xx.

thought-provoking sermons. The visibly mesmerising effect of the Pope's preaching on so many of his listeners during his stay here attests to the novelty of the experience.

As has often been noted in the last fortnight, Benedict does his level best to encapsulate complex ideas and the mysteries of the faith in simple language and suggestive analogies. By the same token, he doesn't talk down to his audience or shy away from difficult subject matter. He expects people to try to understand him and to go back and re-read what he's said if necessary and ponder it. He's not afraid to make demands on young people's attention and to take them out of their comfort zone. My guess is that most of them like him all the more for it and will reward the bishops and clergy who take a leaf out of his book.

Another feature of WYD Sydney, especially in contrast to Toronto, was the marked improvement in the quality and performance of most of the music and the "high church" forms of the liturgy. It was all of a piece with the greater use than hitherto of sacramental confession on the Saturday evening at Randwick and the reverent silences during Eucharistic adoration and benediction. Twelve years ago those practices were as unfamiliar to most WYD pilgrims as they still are to most behind-the-times Australian Catholics.

Letters to the editor by baby-boomer grandparents notwithstanding, this generation is not put out by Mozart, Gregorian chant or Latin prayers. If, like many of their forebears, some of them smoked a bit of marijuana during the sleepover, like an earlier generation they seemed to enjoy a bit of incense and the Aboriginal smoking ceremonies too. Judging by their respectful behaviour, solemn ritual is taken as a given and doesn't offend them. Individually, they may be by temperament a rather democratically minded lot, but they don't seem in the least bit flummoxed by the primacy of the successor of Peter or the kind of sovereignty he exercises.

CHRISTOPHER PEARSON is a well-known journalist and columnist. This article first appeared in *The Australian*, July 26, 2008.



*Vindicating St Augustine on Original Sin*

## SOBER THOUGHTS ON HUMAN NATURE

By Jeffrey Burton Russell

**T**HE concept of original sin predates Christianity, Jacobs points out, citing not only Genesis 3, in which Adam and Eve eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and are expelled from Paradise, but also Psalm 51, which declares that humans are conceived in sin and born in iniquity.

‘The universality of sin,’ Jacobs concludes, ‘is certainly a Jewish belief’. He explains that the traditions of both Eastern and Western Christianity though varying in their details, have it that God created human nature intrinsically good, that goodness must entail freedom if it is not to be robotic, and that Adam and Eve freely chose their own will over that of God, thus committing original sin – an alienation from God common to all humanity. All humans participate in original sin, whether it is transmitted from generation to generation through time, or whether the entire human race chooses in one eternal moment to disobey God.

Jacobs efficiently defends Augustine (AD 354-430) against the many attacks against him as the author of original sin, demonstrating that doctrines of original sin similar to Augustine’s preceded him by at least two centuries in both the East and the West.

Jacobs quickly dismisses the still widely held belief that original sin was sexual ... Original sin is the initial assertion of human pride against God. Augustine did maintain that original sin, once it existed, was transmitted sexually through generations, in much the same way that today we understand genetic flaws are passed on.

Contrary to another common misconception about Augustine, he was adamant that the source of sin does not lie in the body but rather in the corruption of the will. In fact, he spent a great deal of his career denouncing the Manichean belief that the human body is essentially evil.

---

– Emeritus Professor Jeffrey Burton Russell, reviewing *Original Sin: A Cultural History* by Alan Jacobs [HarperOne] quoted *The Wilson Quarterly*, Summer 2008, pp 107-108.



# MEDIA MATTERS

By JAMES MURRAY

## Legal Right

Underlying coverage of sexual abuse allegations and scandals is the notion that the Catholic Church draws out legal action for as long as possible. How inordinate is the Church compared to other organisations?

The case of Dr William McBride is pertinent, particularly since he has begun a sequel to his memoir, *Killing the Messenger* (edited by your correspondent and published in 1994).

The sequel is likely to contain details of how long it took McBride to obtain legal redress from the ABC for the part it played in his downfall: five years by his reckoning, (terms of settlement confidential).

As to the other defendant, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, the case is still ongoing. McBride hopes to have another court hearing next year as the newspaper's lawyers continue their defence of a report that appeared to be basically the same material Dr Norman Swan had broadcast on the ABC *Science show*.

Exceptional case? In 1995, the ABC's *Four Corners* broadcast allegations about Everest climber Tim Macartney-Snape and the scientist-cum-cultist Jeremy Griffith. Lawyers for the ABC, fighting long and hard, claimed the defence of truth, qualified privilege and fair comment.

Only in August this year did the NSW Supreme Court make a finding: the ABC had to pay Macartney-Snape defamation damages of \$448,500. No damages were awarded to Griffith.

As your correspondent remarked in last month's issue: 'All organisations have a need

to defend their *raison d'être*, their essential integrity, not least the ABC.' Make that a need, a right and a duty to defend.

## Power Couple

Ben Bradlee of *The Washington Post*, friend of President John F Kennedy, enemy of President Richard Nixon is a legend of Camelot and Watergate. His wife (second) Sally Quinn outshone him in beauty and star-quality writing. They epitomised the power couple, and in the US were projected together without inhibition.

Intriguing to notice that Australia's Bradlee-Quinn equivalent: the editor-in-chief of *The Australian*, Chris Mitchell, and one of its writers described as senior (*sans* Zimmer frame), Christine Jackman, are not similarly feted.

Coverage of the launch of Jackman's book, *Inside Kevin 07* made no mention of her marriage to Mitchell.

And when she appeared on the ABC's *Q&A* (July 24) the omniscient Tony Jones alluded neither to her marriage nor to her mightiest coup: her Kevin Rudd profile in *The Australian Weekend Magazine*.

This was a pastel portrait rather than an acid etching which neglected to mention that Rudd is the godfather of the Mitchell-Jackman child.

As Jacqui Kennedy created the myth of Camelot, Christine Jackman's pastel begot the myth of Kevelot and has enhanced it through her book otherwise why would her subject launch it? Surely not just to get into print his wife Therese Reins on his *forgetry*?

## What happens at school?

IN recent years I have administered a dumbed-down quiz on current events and history early in each semester. ... Results have been, well, horrifying. Nearly half of a recent class could not name a single country that bordered Israel. In an introductory journalism class, 11 of 18 students could not name what country Kabul was in, although we have been at war there for half a decade ...

- Ted Gup, professor of journalism at Case Western Reserve University, in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 11, 2008, quoted *The Wilson Quarterly*, Summer, 2008.

He appears to have exhibited this on his Asian tour. There were reports of his laying a wreath at a war memorial in South Vietnam, none of a similar ceremony in South Korea where the 3rd Battalion The Royal Australian Regiment played a key role in stemming a divisional Chinese advance during the Korean War, arguably a more significant, if less filmed, conflict than Vietnam.

### Whitton Change

Geoffrey Robertson is a barrister almost as well known as Horace Rumpole of the Old Bailey. Like Rumpole, he is a proponent of Common Law and its adversarial court system.

Robertson's stance has, however, altered following the appearance of Radovan Karadzic in the dock at The Hague, charged with atrocities at Sarajevo and Srebrenica. As Robertson wrote (*SMH*, August 6): 'In this event, it may be necessary to abandon the Anglo-American model of adversary trial and shift instead to the European inquisitorial process..'

A Sydney-born high-flyer, Robertson might have mentioned the adversarial model is also Australia's. He might also have mentioned that the most formidable advocate of the inquisitorial process in Australia is Evan Whitton one of Australia's greatest journalists.

### Free Speech

Stimulating to read an advertisement from The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia under the headline, Christ or The Pope? It went on: 'Prime Minister Rudd seriously erred when he assured Joseph Ratzinger that he was a welcome guest for the wider Australian Christian Community..'

It quoted the founding document of Presbyterianism, The Westminster Confession of Faith: 'There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ: nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be the head thereof..'

The ancestors of those who put together the Westminster Confession in England took a different view of the Pope. Perhaps the most eloquent document in Scotland's history, *The Declaration of Arbroath*, was addressed in 1320 from the monastery there to Pope John XXII, not the most saintly of pontiffs. Nonetheless he was seen as a guarantor of Scotland's independence from England as the declaration's translation from Latin shows:

'To the Most Holy Father in Christ and Lord, the Lord John by divine providence Supreme Pontiff of the Holy Roman and Universal Church, his humble and devout sons..'

There follows a list of Scots barons ...' and the whole community of the realm of Scotland send all manner of a filial reverence with devout kisses of his blessed feet..'

Too long to print verbatim here. But a core passage states: 'It is in truth not for glory, nor riches, nor honour that we are fighting but for freedom – for that alone, which no honest man gives up but with life itself.'

'Therefore it is, Reverend Father and Lord, that we beseech your Holiness with our prayers and suppliant hearts inasmuch as you will in your sincerity and goodness consider all this, that, since with Him Whose vice-gerent (sic) on earth you are, there is neither weighing

nor distinction of Jew and Greek, Scotsman or Englishman, you will look with the eyes of a father on the troubles brought by the English upon us and upon the Church of God.

'May it please you to admonish and exhort the King of the English, who ought to be satisfied with what belongs to him since England used to be enough for seven kings or more. to leave us Scots in peace..'

Splendid stuff. The reference to the troubles brought by the English upon the Church of God can be taken also as prophetic of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

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## Use of Force is the Norm

THE dominant thread in Islam does see the extension of the faith ... as a legitimate reason for deploying force. This is the conclusion of serious Muslim scholars and the literature is vast. So, if in the Christian Just War tradition, there are criteria you have to go through – barriers in effect – to the deployment of armed force, in Islam you must search for ways to refrain.

– Jean Bethke Elshtain, professor of social and political ethics at the University of Chicago Divinity School, in *American Behavioural Scientist*, May 2008.

*Beware of kings in search of a throne*

## JAMES VI A FICKLE MONARCH

*By* EDWARD INGRAM WATKIN



WITH ELIZABETH I near to death, there were three candidates for the throne of England: James VI of Scotland the son of Mary queen of Scots, brought up a Protestant by Elizabeth [for whom Cecil was secretly working] who if chosen would continue the Protestant religion and the penal laws against Catholics; Arabella Stuart [favoured by the English Catholics] who would restore Catholicism but tolerate the Protestants along the pattern of Henry IV in France; and the Infanta Isabella, daughter of Philip II and Regent of the Netherlands [the Spanish candidate] who would reestablish Catholicism as the religion of England.

The Catholics approached James to find out his policy: he replied: 'As for the Catholics, I will neither persecute any that will be quiet and give but an outward obedience to the law; neither will I spare to advance any of them that will by good service worthily deserve it.' [*Correspondence of King James VI of Scotland with Sir Robert Cecil and others in England* (Camden Society) 1861 p.56].

When James was safely in possession of England, he famously remarked: 'Na, na, we'll no' need the Papists noo,' and enforced the penal laws with all their rigor against the Catholics.

- Quoted Hugh Ross Williamson in *The Gunpowder Plot*, Faber and Faber, p.60.

*AI Pushes Mexican High Court to Uphold Legal Abortion*

# NO AMNESTY FOR THE UNBORN

By Piero A. Tozzi and Juan Carlos Perez



GLOBAL human rights group Amnesty International (AI), which officially abandoned its neutrality on abortion in 2007, has authored a pro-abortion legal memorandum addressed to the Supreme Court of Mexico asking the high court to uphold liberal abortion in Mexico City.

The memorandum directly contradicts AI's previous position that "there is no generally accepted right to abortion in international human rights law."

AI's memo supports a liberalized first-trimester abortion law passed last year by Mexico City's Legislative Assembly that has been challenged by Mexico's Attorney General. AI cites several treaties signed by Mexico, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention Against Torture, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, claiming that they require the Court to uphold the legislation.

As AI had previously acknowledged, however, no such right can be found in any of the treaties mentioned in AI's legal brief. Human rights treaties are consensus documents negotiated by governments, many of which outlawed abortion at the time of ratification, and thus are silent on the subject of abortion.

To underscore that such treaties would leave their domestic laws unchanged, some countries made explicit formal interpretative statements and reservations at the time of signing protecting the rights of the unborn child.

AI's submission cites no treaty language in support of its argument that a failure to uphold the challenged law would "result in violations of Mexico's

international human rights obligations."

The Amnesty brief does, however, reference a report by a UN treaty monitoring body, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which pressured the Mexican government on abortion in 2006.

Such committees are composed of unelected members many of whom are drawn from pro-abortion non-governmental organizations. Such committees take it upon themselves to reinterpret treaties and then try to get governments to agree even though committee pronouncements are non-binding.

AI's new approach apparently mirrors strategy adopted by the pro-abortion Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR), which along with the International Commission of Jurists filed a third-party intervention in the Mexico City case.

In 2006, CRR had persuaded Colombia's constitutional court to overturn that country's pro-life laws based on the argument that by acceding

to various treaties, a sovereign nation must conform its domestic laws to subsequent treaty body interpretations of what constitutes its evolving obligations.

AI was founded in 1961 by Peter Benenson, a Catholic convert, to combat human rights abuses by totalitarian and authoritarian regimes.

Compared with more secular-oriented human rights counterparts, Amnesty International has historically drawn support from members of various religious denominations.

After decades of defending human dignity without compromising the rights of the unborn, its 2007 abortion policy switch alienated a number of its long-time supporters, including Scottish Cardinal Keith O'Brien, Bishop Michael Evans – a member of thirty years standing – and activist priest Daniel Berrigan, S.J., all of whom have withdrawn support from AI as a result.

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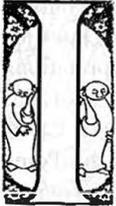
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*Theological 'Projectivism' and the alleged teaching of Vatican II*

## THE CHURCH CHRIST FOUNDED

*By Frank Mobbs, PhD*



IN A parish church I recently heard the priest homilist say, "It is time to catch up on the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. The Council teaches that everyone who believes in God is a member of the Church."

At lectures and seminars galore I have been told that the Council abandoned the traditional claim that the Catholic Church is the only one established by Christ, in favour of the doctrine that members of all Christian Churches make up the "one true Church".

Books by theologians repeat this as the Council's teaching. Fr (Professor) Richard McBrien's widely read *Catholicism* contains these words, "The Church, at once local and universal, embraces more than the Catholic Church. It is the whole body of Christ: Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans, and Protestants alike. This principle is to be found in the *Decree of Ecumenism* and in the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)*."

The Australian, Fr Anthony Kelly C.Ss.R, wrote in 1977, "But part of the reason for the breakdown of the clear juridical system is the express teaching of Vatican II. The Council no longer identifies the mystical body purely and simply with the Catholic Church".

Now you can see why the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) has published recently *Responses to some questions regarding certain aspects of the doctrine of the Church (Responsa)*.

This document tries, once again, to convince Catholics and others that the Council taught emphatically that the Church founded and authorised by Christ is identical with the Catholic Church.

I say, "once again" because Popes Paul VI and John Paul II have already

issued statements to the same effect. So has the CDF, as the footnotes in *Responsa* point out. Apparently these efforts have had no success. From my observations, the majority of Catholics who have any interest in the Council reject the interpretation of the popes and the CDF. So it is no wonder that the CDF is trying again to explain what the Council actually teaches.

The question it is answering is: What did the Council teach on this matter? That is the point at issue. The answer lies in only one place, namely, the documents promulgated by Vatican II and in the documents presented to the Council explaining the meaning of the wording. These are the very texts that *Responsa* quotes.

Before examining the texts of the Council, I ask you: Do you think it

probable that some 2500 bishops would suddenly turn 180 degrees and deny what they had been taught and what they themselves had taught? - namely that there is only one Church founded by Christ, the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church had been teaching this for at least 1800 years, so it was scarcely novel doctrine. Had anyone proposed the contrary, there would have been blood all over the floor of St Peter's basilica

As evidence of the bishops' beliefs let me cite one of the catechisms they authorised, that of the Australian bishops, published about 1950, and approved by Rome:

Question 72.

Who are the members of the Church?

The members of the Church are our Holy Father the Pope, and

### Good for the Gander and the Goose

The 'advertisement to the first edition' of *Rob Roy* (1817) ... presents what follows as 'a parcel of Papers' sent to the anonymous editor of them by an 'unknown and nameless correspondent' with a request that they 'be given to the Public'. When [Sir Walter] Scott reprinted *Rob Roy* in 1829, however, he confessed that 'the communication alluded to' in that advertisement had been 'entirely imaginary'. Such mock-provenances are a legitimate convention in fiction, popular because they allow novelists to distance themselves from their own narratives by presenting them ironically as someone else's. [Critics] find this procedure ethically suspect because it provides a *carte blanche* for literary forgers. If the title-page of *Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) declares that the book was 'written by a Citizen who continued all the while in London', then we have a right to expect an eye-witness account of events in 1665, and not something made up over fifty years later by a novelist called Daniel Defoe.

- K.K.Ruthven, *Faking Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p.43.

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with him all the bishops, priests and people who are baptised, and who acknowledge the Pope as the Vicar of Christ on earth and the visible head of the Church.

Now let us look at what Vatican II actually teaches. The *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)* is the document which says most on the subject.

The Church was founded by Jesus (art. 5), and is his mystical body (7). "In that body" the life of Christ is communicated by baptism and the eucharist. The Church is a visible organisation i.e. structured with hierarchical organs. One organ is a body of rulers, St Peter and the other apostles. *This* Church, the one "governed by the successors of St Peter

and by the bishops in union with that successor" (8) is "the unique Church of Christ which in the Creed we avow as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic."

*Lumen Gentium* has identified the Church founded by Christ with the Church governed by the Pope and the bishops in communion with him. That should answer our question. However, the document goes on to say that this Church "subsists in" (Latin *subsistit in*) the Catholic Church, "although many elements of sanctification and truth can be found outside her visible structure."

The words "subsists in" have produced a library of books and articles aimed at explaining the meaning. Too many have asserted that these words mean that the Church founded by Christ is to be found not only in the Catholic Church but also in other bodies of Christians. This common interpretation is attacked head on in the *Responsa* by reference to documents of the Council which make clear the meaning of the text.

However, there is no need to refer to these documents. What ever "subsists in" means it must agree with what the Constitution has already affirmed, namely, that the Church founded by Christ is the same as the one ruled by the Pope and the bishops. In short, the context tells you what "subsists in" means.

Further evidence lies in two other decrees of the Council. *The Decree on Ecumenism* begins: "Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only".

It identifies this Church with the one governed by the bishops and the Pope.

The *Decree on the Bishops* says: "Christ the Lord ... sent his apostles ... 'for the building up of the body of Christ' ... which is the Church. In this Church of Christ the Roman Pontiff .. has been granted by God supreme, full, immediate and universal power over the care of souls."

The identification is complete: Body of Christ=Church of Christ=ruled by the Roman Pontiff.

It is remarkable that the CDF has been obliged to confirm the clear teaching of Vatican II. Apparently there are people who form an opinion of the Council's teaching without reading the documents it promulgated.

*Setting Suns and Waning Moons*

## A DYING WORLD



THE WORLD ITSELF now bears witness to its approaching end by the evidence of its failing powers. There is not so much rain in winter for fertilising the seeds, nor in summer is there so much warmth for ripening them. The springtime is no longer so mild, nor the autumn so rich in fruit. Less marble is quarried from the exhausted mountains, and the dwindling supplies of gold and silver show that the mines are worked out and the impoverished veins of metal diminish from day to day. The peasant is failing and disappearing from the fields, the sailor at sea, the soldier in the camp, uprightness in the forum, justice in the court, concord in friendships, skill in the arts, discipline in morals. Can anything that is old preserve the same powers that it had in the prime and vigour of its youth? It is inevitable that whatever is tending downwards to decay and approaches its end must decrease in strength, like the setting sun and the waning moon, and the dying tree and the failing stream. This is the sentence passed on the world; this is God's law: that all that has risen should fall and that all that has grown should wax old, and that strong things should become weak and great things should become small, and that when they have been weakened and diminished they should come to an end."

— St Cyprian of Carthage [martyred 258 AD], *Ad Demetrianum*, c. iii.



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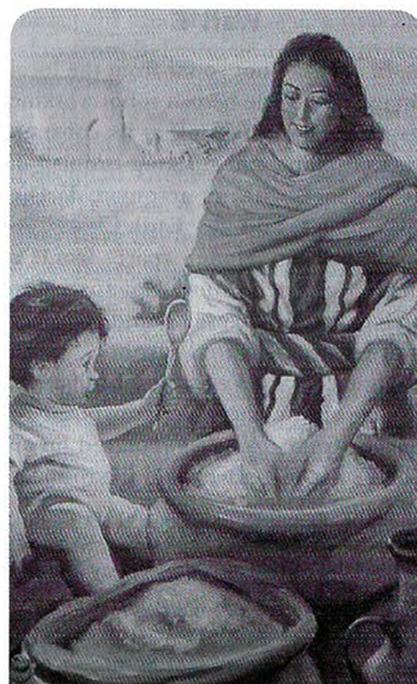
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## A Dream of what lay ahead

A JEWISH BOY sits by a workbench  
Where his Mother is kneading the bread

'What are you thinking little one  
Do you dream of what lies ahead?

'See the golden grain kissed by  
sunlight,  
Anointed to fulfill our need  
For sustenance now – and hereafter  
The bread for which we daily plead.

'The sinuous grapevine laden  
With fruit for the treading of wine  
A cup consecrated will one day  
Be changed to a substance divine.

'The wild briar ever unlovely  
Tangled and disfigured by thorn  
is growing a wreath which in mockery  
An innocent head will adorn.

'In the woods an immature sapling  
A jibbet is destined to make;  
Forlorn birds flee the full-grown tree,  
And, as it falls, their nests forsake.

'Long has mankind yearned for mercy  
Which you Son of God come to bring;  
Know, little one, with the anguish o'er,  
Forever you will be king'.

– Anastasia Cuddy – inspired by a painting  
of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart by Annals  
artist, the late Hal English.

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## Wall\*E

In a galaxy not so far from the local tip exists the title hero, a robot working its caterpillar tracks off at its constant task of baling and stacking rubbish in accordance with its acronym: **Waste Allocation Load Lifter Earth Class**.

Wall\*E is alone apart from a pet cockroach until a spaceship arrives and leaves behind another more sophisticated robot, EVE (**Extraterrestrial Vegetation Evaluator**). Their robotic romance is inspired by images from *Hello Dolly!* played on an old TV set. Together, amid the rubbish, they find a key to human life.

The fantastic ingenuity of Pixar Animation Studios shows why Disney made it an offer it could not refuse. Add to the ingenuity writer-director Andrew (*Finding Nemo*) Stanton's elan and you have what is possibly the finest computer animation cartoon yet made.

Beneath the cartoon fun is a telling parable about gluttony, waste and the future of planet earth, a parable for all.

Note: It is now a Pixar tradition to open programmes with a short cartoon. The short here is a variation on the conjuror, top hat and rabbit. Worth the admission price on its own.

G★★★★SFFV

## Up the Yangtze

The greatest hydro-engineering project in history, greater than the Tennessee Valley and the Snowy Mountains projects combined? Or an eco-catastrophe in the making that could tilt planet earth's axis?

These are questions being asked about China's Three Gorges Dam designed to harness the waters of the mighty Yangtze River. They are not questions asked by Chinese-Canadian documentary film maker Yung Chan. He prefers to show us the personal effects of the project on the lives of an illiterate, peasant husband and wife who live with a son and daughter by the river in a shack made of flotsam and jetsam destined to be engulfed by the dam's rising waters.

Their story is contrasted with life aboard a multi-deck, tourist river boat which their daughter joins as a kitchen hand. Among her instructions are not to talk to passengers about Quebec or Northern Ireland.

## MOVIES

By JAMES MURRAY

Surrounding the dyptich of shack and riverboard are vignettes of ineffable sadness: An old woman whose house is about to be demolished covers her head with a scrap of lace before kneeling before a cross to pray for help. A handsome, young product of China's one-child policy is criticised for his arrogance by his riverboard boss. And fired.

This is a classic Canadian documentary in the tradition established by the Scot John Grierson: economical in words, powerful in visuals and realising the inadequacy of both - at its end the screen fades to black - the black of an unknowable future.

M★★★★SFFV

## Son of Rambo

One tough school kid (Neil Dudgeon) is making a movie and bullies a nerdy schoolmate (Adam Godley) into being its star. The result is a deliberately hilarious take on the inadvertent humour of the Sylvester Stallone character, Rambo.

Writer/director Garth Jennings has a knowing eye for the complications of film-making and uses them to underline his comedy which mix fun and sadness for all ages.

PG★★★★SFFV

## Persepolis

Director Marjane Satrapi's cartoon is based on her best-selling graphic novel about a teenager, Marjane, born in Tehran into a liberal, left-leaning family. She recounts, or more exactly lives, the history of Iran from the fall of the Shah through the brief democratic interregnum to what has become the seemingly permanent regime of the ayatollahs.

Exile in Vienna, a return home to experience further horrors and permanent exile in Paris are also part of the story. Catherine Deneuve and her daughter Chiara voice Marjane's mother and Marjane. The immortal Dannielle Darrieux voices Marjane's grandmother.

At 12 hand-drawn images per second, Satrapi and her collaborator Vincent

Parannaud have produced a critique of Iran's fundamentalist Islamic regime that is as devastatingly pertinent as it is funny. And it is very funny. Salman Rushdie should have been so subtle in his fatwah-award novel *Satanic Verses*.

M★★★★SFFV

## The Sticks

(Bienvenue Chez les Ch'tis)

Phillippe Abrams (Kad Merad) is a post-office manager in Provence, paradise enough for most but not for his wife Julie (Zoe Felix). She wants him to wangle a transfer to the Riviera. Phillippe proceeds to wangle, is rumbled and posted northwards to the chill of Bergues near Lille, leaving Julie behind for fortnightly visits

The French can lay claim to have invented the comedy of manners. Director Dany Boon and his co-writers Alexandre Charlot and Franck Magnier enhance the comedy by adding odd food and the odder accent known as Ch'ti.

While Phillippe and his new colleagues, led by Antoine (Dany Boon himself a Ch'ti), have a high old time, Julie believes Phillippe is going through torture and to reward his courage welcomes him home warmly.

All is going as merrily as the carillon in Bergues until Julie decides to join Phillippe there. Boon must then ring the plot changes as skilfully as he plays the carrillon to bring his adroit comedy of bureaucracy to an unexpected conclusion.

Script, direction and cast made this France's top box-office hit. Deservedly. Not surprisingly Warner Brothers and Will Smith have picked up the remake rights. See the French version first.

M★★★★NFFV

## The Visitor

As he showed in *The Station Agent*, Tom McCarthy is a writer/director confident enough, like all notable yarn-spinners, to let his characters carry his story-line where they will rather than where he wills.

Walter Vale (Richard Jenkins) is a burnt-out widower teaching in a Connecticut college. On a rare visit to his New York apartment, he finds it occupied by illegal immigrants Tarek (Hiaaz Sleiman) from the Middle East and Zainab (Danai Gurira) from

Africa. Tarek is arrested and detained in a blank-walled, sterile centre. Walter is determined to rescue him and even more determined when Tarek's mother Mouna (Hiam Abbass) arrives.

Richard Jenkins is one of cinema and television's stand-out character actors. Here he takes his chances to display his mastery of under-playing, a mastery that his late, great British namesake Richard Jenkins (alias Burton) might have envied. As Mouna, Hiam Abbass (born in Nazareth) also underplays. Marvellous to see two fine players in a contest of subtle lobs before going for their emotional smashes.

Okay, there are echoes of that antique myth Rousseau's Noble Savage in the free-spirited Tarek teaching the inhibited, piano-tragic Walter how to play the *djembe* drum. Missing is any mention of why illegals are detained. At one point McCarthy introduces the holder of a Green Card. Cue for an explanation of how difficult it is to obtain this document legally in the context of so many wanting it? No way. This is a movie of sentiment not balance.

In his climax, having set up an expectation involving the Statue of Liberty, McCarthy enables Walter to end-run in a less obvious, indeterminate way.

M★★★★SFFV

### The Edge of Love

Before he became famous and died of it, the poet Dylan Thomas (Matthew Rhys) grubbed a living in the BBC, London talks department, and by writing scripts for World War II documentaries.

His marriage to Caitlin MacNamara (Sienna Miller) was hectic. According to this movie it became even more hectic when, over a Guinness in a crowded pub, he saw a childhood sweetheart Vera Phillips (Keira Knightley) a singer who entertains blitz crowds sheltering in the London Underground.

A morally ramshackle triangle results and is complicated by Captain William Killick (Cillian Murphy) who has fallen in love with Vera. Director John Maybury re-creates wartime London with meticulous nostalgia. In his most effective scenes, he intercuts a hazardous operation behind enemy lines in Greece with a birth at home in Wales.

## 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.

The movie's personal dynamism comes from Miller and Knightley, portraying rivalry and friendship. Murphy dominates the ending, a paratrooper back from war who hates what he finds on the home front: Dylan Thomas, as played by Rhys, is mean, moody and spiteful to the point of perjury.

Aspiring scriptwriters may take comfort from the fact that producer Rebekah Gilbertson and writer Sharman MacDonald spent four years persuading Maybury to read the script. He did so only after MacDonald's daughter Knightley coaxed him.

The movie is based on Gilbertson family lore. Difficult to believe it was not also influenced by John Malcolm Brinnin's memoir which depicted Dylan Thomas as dying after 18 whiskies when he was in reality what used to be called a two-pot screamer.

For a wittier, funnier version of Dylan Thomas borrow the DVD or video, *Reuben, Reuben*, based on the novel by Peter Devries and starring Tom Conti.

For the Dylan Thomas who will endure, listen to the Richard Burton recording of *Under Milkwood*. Or remember the line that epitomised Dylan Thomas's lyric inspiration: 'The force that through the green fuse drives the flower drives my green age..'

M★★★★NFFV

### In Bruges

Writer/director Martin McDonagh locates his thriller in Bruges, the

beautiful mediaeval town, a hop and skip from Belgium and the European Union's capital, Brussels.

He draws an immediate contrast between his leading characters Ken (Brendan Gleeson) and Ray (Colin Farrell), gunmen, and the town to which they have been sent by their London boss Harry (Ralph Fiennes) ostensibly to lie low.

Hidden agendas play out against a film within the film involving the work of Heronymous Bosch. Ken reads and takes in the sights. Ray engages with the locals, including the beguiling Chloe (Clemence Poesy).

From Gleeson and Farrell, MacDonagh elicits acting that is coruscatingly dark yet funny, the sizzling language seemingly cooked up by Gordon Ramsay. Think Oliver Hardy and Stan Laurel as foul-mouthed gunmen. And then think Lucky and Estragon in *Waiting for Godot*.

What Ken and Ray wait for is a brutal denouement and Harry to whom Fiennes gives a lethal, Cockney elegance that goes back to the great character actor, Stanley Meadows, in *Performance* (1970) in which the young Mick Jagger was also cast.

MA15+★★★★NFFV

### The Square

No mean streets in this noirish thriller only suburban dream houses built along the banks of a sunny, tidal river. Director Nash Edgerton gives his first feature a honed desperation through his leads Raymond Yale (David Roberts), a building contractor, and his lover Carla (Claire Van Der Boom) seeking new marriages by using a cache of criminal money belonging to her husband Greg (Anthony Hayes), who drives her as hard as he drives his tow-truck.

The script's co-writer with Matthew Dabner is the director's brother Joel Edgerton who says he used a how-to manual. Which makes this the best how-to movie of the year. As part of the plot he also plays an arsonist for hire whose craftiness is an accelerant to the mayhem.

A carols-by-candlelight concert in a riverside park is tensely intercut with the reactions of the characters as their plans go awry amid the certainties of Christmas.

David Roberts powerfully conveys the crumbling stoicism of a bloke digging, not his own grave, but the graves of others. Claire Van Der Boom is a Juliet for beauty and a Lady Macbeth for ruthlessness.

The rest of the cast, including Lucy Bell as Raymond's wife Martha, Peter Phelps as his offsider, and living, national treasure Bill Hunter as a corrupt heavy, display the ensemble assurance of actors directed by someone who learned his craft by doing (Nash Edgerton is also a stuntman).

The film's moral perspective is understated in a visual metaphor. From time to time a boxer dog swims the river to rendezvous with a poodle. On one of these excursions it disappears with a yelp. No sign of a shark, only a blossom of blood and the poodle whimpering.

Lust, not love, is Raymond and Carla's driving force, a moral distinction also understated by the other Raymond, surname Chandler.

MA15+★★★NFFV

## Tropic Thunder

Co-writer, co-producer, co-star and director Ben Stiller would not be human if he did not give himself strong scenes as a lack-lustre action star who has agreed to go on location to do a Vietnam-era war movie.

The movie within a movie format makes for a comedy thriller which satirises Hollywood trailers and the war genre, not least Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*. Despite his dominance of the credits, Stiller faces tremendous competition from co-stars and movie comrades (Jack Black, Nick Nolte), as well as an unrecognisable Tom Cruise, playing a megalomaniac film producer.

Robert Downey Jr tops them all by channelling Laurence Olivier's blackface turn in *Othello*, while playing (wait for it) an actor whose CV includes a role as an Aborigine tracker (Ernie Dingo in *Crocodile Dundee*). Steve Coogan plays a very English director whose blasphemy is appropriately punished.

Madcap is the word. It is also as needlessly foul-mouthed as chef Gordon Ramsay on television when someone uses a dirty saucepan in his presence. Appallingly funny bearing in mind Aristotle's dictum: 'Wit is the perception of incongruity that flashes upon us.'

MA15+★★★NFFV

## Where in the World Is Osama Bin Laden?

Through his documentary *Double Size Me*, Morgan Spurlock got McDonalds to change its policies on jumbo-size serves. To do this, he put himself in harm's way gastronomically with a sustained diet of fast-food tucker.

Once again, he puts himself in harm's way by leaving his pregnant wife in suburban America to traverse some of the world's most hazardous places and ask variations on the Simple Simon question: 'Can you help me find Osama bin Laden?'

Spurlock suggests he is aiming to win the \$25 million reward for bin Laden's capture. What he achieves is a wry, sly documentary at which even bin Laden might grin - especially the only incident of physical violence: in Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox quarter where a feisty, old gent in a frockcoat pushes Spurlock as if they were both kids back in the playground.

Apart from this, when his interviewees are not totally gobsmacked, they are surprisingly, amusingly and variedly opinionated. Nothing if not persistent, Spurlock kits himself out to penetrate the area where most say bin Laden is hiding: Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province.

## Pity the Minorities

WE are all aware of the sectarian violence that befell Iraq, the endless Shiite-Sunni violence, yet little reported was the plight of Iraq's non-Muslim minorities, the Assyrians and Mandaeans in particular, who have been driven out of Basra and Baghdad by both Shiites and Sunnis. Before 2003 Assyrians were estimated to be 8% of the population (1.5 million), now they are down to about 1 million. Of the refugees in Syria and Jordan, it is estimated that nearly 25-40% of them are Assyrians, though they only make up 8% of Iraq's population. This is no accident. They were driven out by the Islamists. The Mandaeans once numbered 60,000 in Iraq, now they are about 4,000. Most have fled the country because of Muslim persecution.

- Peter BelBasco, *FrontPageMagazine.com*  
Wednesday, August 13, 2008

To go further would spoil the ending. But think birth not death.

M★★★★SFFV

## Stop-Loss

Director Kimberly Peirce's debut movie was *Boys Don't Cry*. Instead of immediately surfing the fame its Academy Award brought her, she has waited almost ten years before making her second feature.

It is worth the wait. Her script, co-written by Mark Richard, turns on a little known peculiarity of the U.S. military code: stop-loss under which veterans can be compelled to serve again even after completing their enlistment time.

Sergeant Brandon King (Ryan Phillippe) is such a veteran. Having returned from the hazards of Baghdad, to his Texas hometown he finds himself being decorated for valour.

Parade time. Party time. Stop-loss time.

He deserts accompanied by Michele (Abbie Cornish) girlfriend of his closest comrade Sergeant Steve Shriver (Channing Tatum). Predictably road movie sequences through Texas intervene as they drive towards Washington hoping to persuade his local senator to intervene.

Peirce, however, is too talented to go for cliché sexual frolics. Instead she focuses on King's other temptation: making his desertion permanent by heading for Canada or Mexico.

Phillippe and Tatum make a neatly contrasting pair: one durably confident though haunted by a fatal ambush in Baghdad, the other full of swagger that cannot quite hide his trauma. As the woman between them Abbie Cornish does something difficult. She manages to dim her sunniness, to become like so many soldiers wives and fiancées: a woman waiting for widowhood.

In the fictitious urban warfare scenes cinematographer Chris Menges demonstrates the frontline skills he learned in Soviet era Afghanistan with Granada's *World In Action*.

Facile to say this is an anti-war movie. Rather it is movie about those who do what they perceive to be their soldierly duty, lions still led by donkeys - or in the case of *ex officio* Commander in Chief, President George W Bush, a Texas mule who kicks when goaded.

MA15+★★★NFFV

**New Book release by Marist Father Paul Glynn**  
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**“Like a Samurai”**  
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**PAUL GLYNN**

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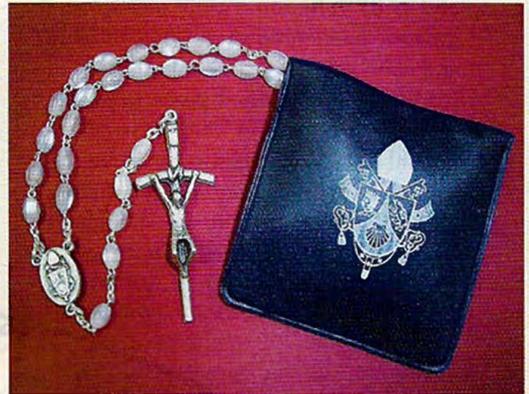
In this 185 page gripping book, illustrated with 71 fascinating photos, Fr Paul tells the life story of his brother Tony.

Schoolboy Tony Glynn excelled in rugby, track and field, boxing, cricket and surfing. He spent 42 zestful years in Japan, where he first built an Old Folks Home. Then, beginning from scratch he set up a parish plant including a thriving kindergarten, day nursery and an ever crowded church.

His effectiveness in healing Pacific War wounds brought him an unsought MBE, AO and Japanese Order of the Rising Sun. He helped thousands to forgive and get on with positive living. A multitude of people benefitted from his practical help.

Proceeds from this sixth of Marist Fathers Books go to Aboriginal and Sudanese education, and to Philippine’s clinics for the impoverished. Well over one million dollars have gone to the world’s poor from the five previous Marist Father’s Books.

Tony Glynn suffered much from cancer but ever lived that wise old saying: “Suffering is inevitable but misery is optional”. His parishioners said he died like a Samurai.



**We especially thank those who buy Fr Paul’s book for \$12.00 and who give an additional charity donation to help the suffering Church in Sudan\*.**  
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Heavenly Shepherds Watch their Flocks by Night

SILENT NIGHT

By JAMES MUHREN, MHM



**I**N good authority I am assured that in heaven all hymns and songs that are sent up from earth are registered properly. The Archangel in charge is Musichiel. He keeps careful track of all choirs and all gatherings at which faithful people sing religious songs. By far the most numerous in every language are the Christmas hymns and Christmas carols. Genuine hymns and truly religious carols narrate the greatest happening ever, when heaven and earth rejoiced exceedingly. 'Glory to God in the highest and peace to people of goodwill.'

And not to be forgotten by any of the angels are the time they spent in the sky above Bethlehem where the shepherds watched over their flock. They revere

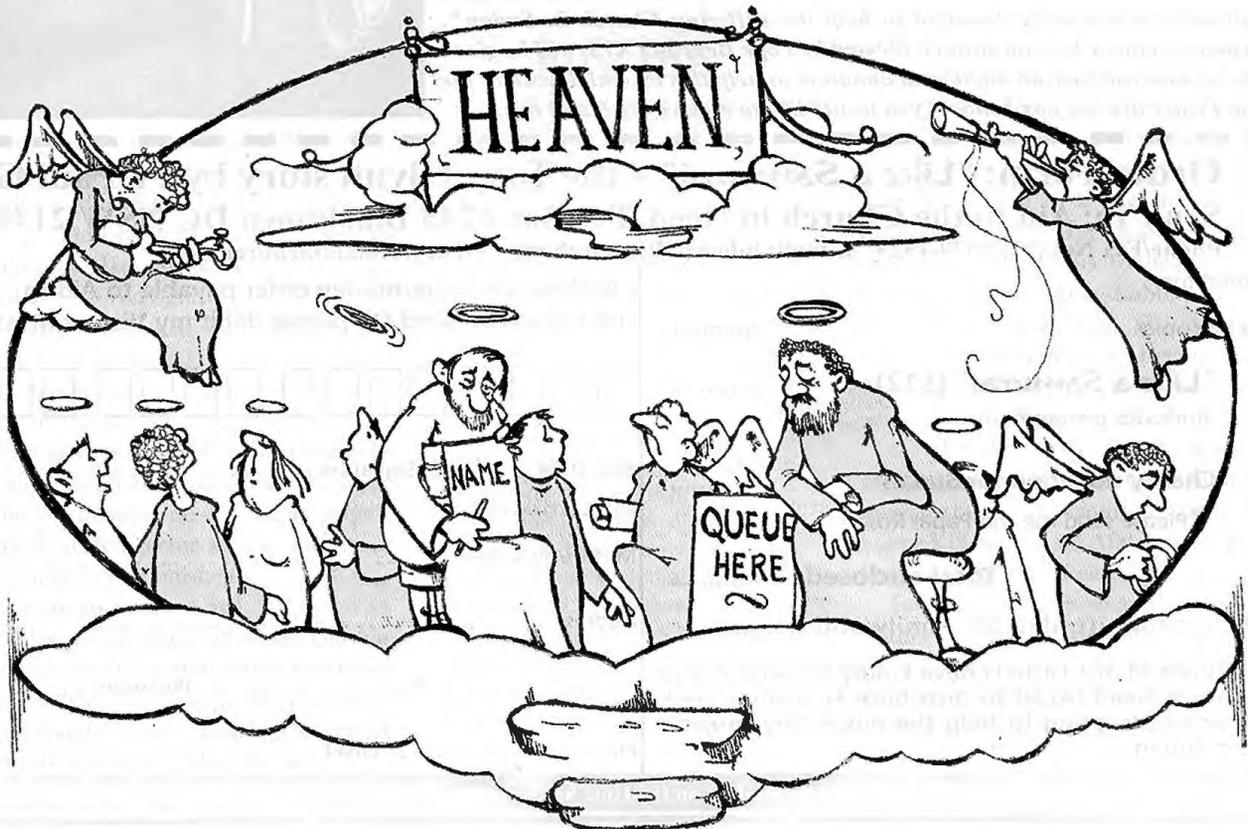


**T**Hese whimsies of Father James Muhren offer a refreshingly Catholic perspective on heavenly life. We may find theology with a dash of humour, as well as generous servings of faith, hope and charity – all the while drawing on the priceless treasury of Catholic tradition and imagination. *Ed.*

these moments so much that they have sent a deputation to the Blessed Mother and St Joseph to petition that a special 'Fields of Bethlehem cloud' may be assigned to them so that in perpetuity they may re-enact that glorious night

Their petition has been heard gracefully and has been granted. So now there are the Shepherds watching their flocks at night. The angels can come down any time and sing their multiharmonized songs as often as they wish.

From time to time when they are not too occupied with other obligations, the Blessed Mother and St Joseph also put in an appearance. Both of them also cherish those sacred moments of Jesus' birth and the wonderful happenings of the first Christmas night. They do not recall any more how cold it was and how hard the straw in the stable was.



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And how the ox and the donkeys had to provide some warmth. St Joseph cherishes his earthly mantle with which he covered the shivering baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in the manger.

Of special interest to those guardian angels is one of the shepherd boys who offered his own little lamb to the baby Jesus and the ones of the older shepherds. They all occupy a place of

honour in heaven.

The Archangel Musichiel is also in charge of the angels of the three wise men and their entourage. They number well over a hundred and they need to be kept under proper control, as some of them are rather rough camel drivers and pretty uneducated at that.

The three wise men are accorded all respect and love for they dared to follow the star; just on the mere thought that it

## Christ, 'Yes,' the Church 'No'?

LET us imagine that ten people were to say: "This institutional Church is of no interest to us; let's separate from it and found a charismatic and enthusiastic fellowship." At some point someone is going to have to announce: "We are meeting next Tuesday at 5 o'clock, and you my Spirit-inspired brothers and sisters must all be there." Then the problem will arise where to get the chairs and where to find the money. Finally, someone will have to be chosen treasurer just as it was with Jesus' community. In other words, it won't be very long before you have an institutional Church, that is, an organized Church with legal structures. It might well be that things will be run in a more familial and charismatic way in the one case and in a more bureaucratic one in the other. Fundamentally, however, there is no difference between them. From this point of view, in spite of anger and irritation in particular instances, I have no difficulty in accepting the existing institutional Church as the concrete form of the charismatic Church.

– Karl Rahner, *Faith in a Wintry Season, Conversations and Interviews with Karl Rahner in the Last Days of his Life, Crossroad, New York, 1991 p.146, 147*

would lead them to a new born king. They have narrated their wonderful trip countless times. Even now in heaven they are often surrounded by angels who were not privileged to be in the sky on that night of all nights. And they cannot get enough of telling all that happened. Angels and saints rejoice forever.

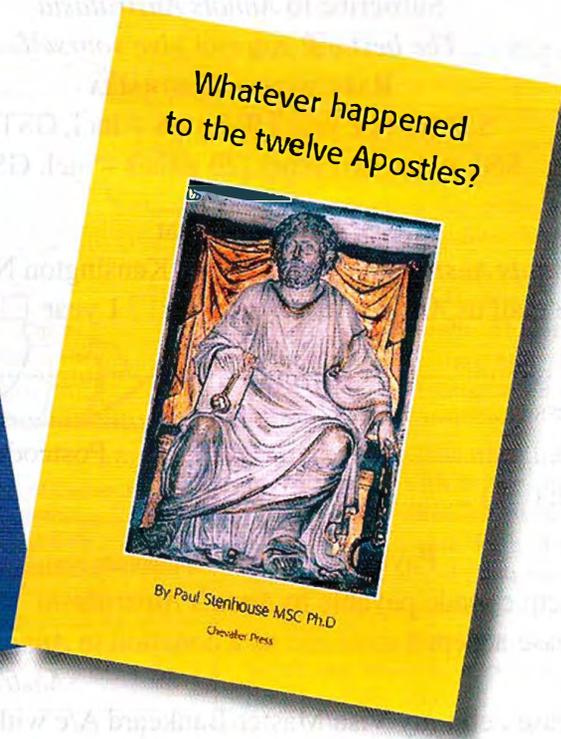
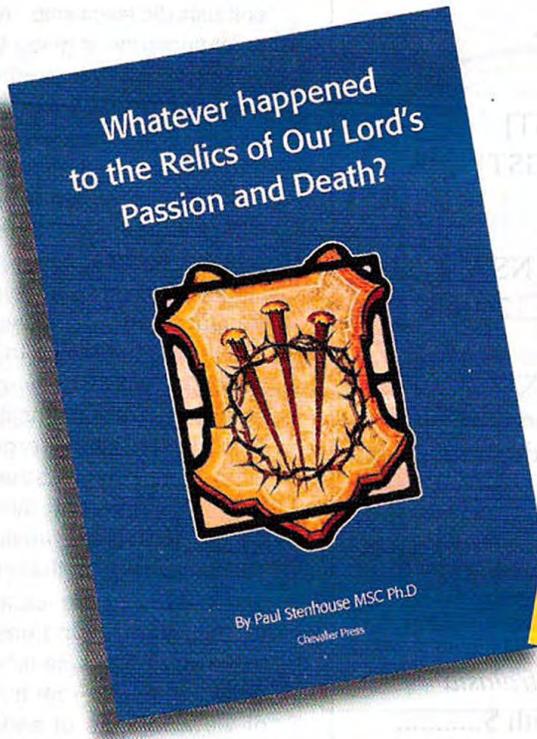
Wait till you get to heaven and you can pay a visit to the Fields of Bethlehem cloud and join in that happy chorus of praise and thanksgiving.

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

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