

# ANNALS

Australasia

Journal of Catholic Culture



2009 - 3

\$3.30\*

PRINT POST APPROVED PP255003/01005



# ANNALS AUSTRALASIA

*Journal of Catholic Culture*

Volume 120, Number 3 April-May 2008

[Sunday Year B/weekdays Year I]

*Australia's Oldest Catholic Magazine*

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

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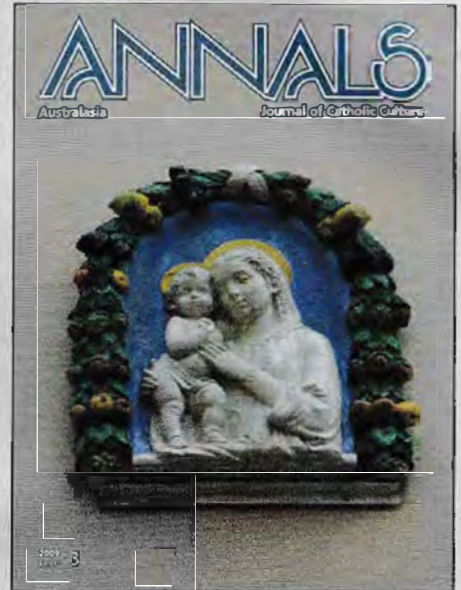
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*From Cover:* This ceramic image of our Lady and the child Jesus is but one of myriad similar images, ancient and modern, that adorn the external walls of churches, monuments, shops and residences in Rome. It is set in a wall adjacent to the Basilica of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, well-known to visitors for the marble elephant supporting a small Egyptian obelisk that sits in the tiny square outside it. The obelisk is from the 6th century BC and the elephant was the idea of Gian Lorenzo Bernini, but sculpted by Ercole Ferrata in 1667. The Church, built on the site of a temple to the pagan goddess of wisdom, was begun in 1285 and completed in 1370. Under the high altar lies the incorrupt body of St Catherine of Siena [died 1380]. The Church contains the tomb of Fra Angelico [died 1455] and a beautiful statue of our Lord attributed to Michelangelo. On the opposite side of the square, and side-on to the Church, is the Pantheon, the famous rotunda, one of the best preserved architectural wonders of the ancient world.

*Back Cover:* Act of Consecration of the Family to the Sacred Heart of Jesus with artwork by the late Kevin Drum. This beautiful prayer of consecration is available from Chevalier Press both in A4 and A3 size. These may be obtained for 50 cents each if postage is not required. Orders not exceeding three copies and that require postage will cost an additional \$5 to cover the cost of a cylinder and postage. If more than three copies requiring postage are ordered, please ring Chevalier Press to check the cost of postage.

Cover Photo: Paul Stenhouse

**Executive Editor** *Chevalier Press*: Editor *Annals Australasia*: Paul Stenhouse, MSC Ph.D; **Layout and Design**: Paul Stenhouse MSC. **Administration**: Peter Macinante; Hendrikus Wong. **Subscription**: Bank/Visa/Master Cards accepted. Please make cheques, money orders payable to The Manager, *Annals Australasia*, 1 Roma Avenue (P.O. Box 13), Kensington, NSW Australia 2033. **Correspondence**: The Editor, P.O. Box 13, Kensington NSW Australia 2033. **Phones**: (02) 9662 7894/9662 7188 ext. 252. **Fax**: (02) 9662 1910, **Email**: annalsaustralasia@gmail.com. **Unsolicited material**: We regret that unsolicited material cannot be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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‘Lord Jesus  
L... help  
us to bring  
your Salvation  
and Joy to the  
whole world’

– Post Communion Prayer  
from the *Roman Missal*,  
Mass for the 5th Sunday of  
the Year, Ordinary Time.


Printed by Blue Star Print, 22 Pirie Street, Fyshwick, ACT 2609, Phone: (02) 6280 7477.

Colour Separation Digital Graphic Communications Pty Ltd, Suite 5, Level 2, 51-53 Bourke Rd, Alexandria 2015. Phone: (02) 9669 6144.


ABN 40 938 805 168 Dewey Number: 248-88 ATISSN 1444-4178. Recommended Retail Price only.

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



**B**lessed are they  
who give the flower of their days,  
and their strength of soul and body  
to Him; blessed are they who  
in their youth turn to Him  
who gave His life for them.  
Blessed are they who resolve  
– come good, come evil, come  
sunshine, come tempest,  
come honour, come dishonour  
– that He shall be their Lord  
and Master, their King and God!  
They will come to a perfect end,  
and to peace at the last.

– John Henry Cardinal Newman, 1801-1890





*God and the Non-believers*

## LEARNING FROM DISBELIEF



SURE, God could be an invention. Then again, absence of God could be an invention – by scared and threatened people who are too weak to follow His laws and are terrified of judgement. Be careful with the notion that knowledge means wisdom. 1930s Germany was one of the most educated and sophisticated cultures in human history. There are twits who do not believe, geniuses who do, and vice versa. It signifies nothing. It was popular among rationalist thinkers in the late 19th century to assume that advances in textual analysis, archaeological discovery and scientific breakthrough would disprove the Bible. Not quite. Virtually every time we find out something new in these fields it supports rather than challenges Scripture.

What became apparent to me was that the opposition to faith was as unappealing and bland as faith was appealing and thrilling. I read, prayed and thought myself into faith more than 20 years ago. It was gradual but inevitable. Miracles occurred but they need not have. I do not need a miracle to remind me that water quenches my thirst. Christ was there in my life, with me and in me and around me. Atheists showed me the way. God bless the little devils.

Then, just recently, the tarnished old arguments from the flimsy and trendy were re-published in new editions by the likes of Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins and we were all supposed to run away and hide. So I read them. Then began to laugh. It's the emperor and his new clothes. Naked, quite naked. Nothing new here. Nothing clever or challenging, either.

Busting with errors, hysterical, clumsy, nasty and obviously incredibly frightened. Suddenly, I realize what's going on. It's that God again, helping to strengthen my faith. "The best they can do," He's saying, "is blast you with the same old nonsense they threw at you when you first thought of coming my way."

Clever old God. Must remember to thank Him next time on my knees. Thanks for the non-believers, the God-haters, the atheists and all of their kind. Yes, the greatest joke of all.

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– Michael Coren, "Their disbelief is my strength," copyright © 2007 *National Post*. He is a Canadian columnist, author, public speaker, radio host and television talk show host. He became a Catholic in 2004.



*Critics should give some indication of the 'measure' they are using*

## STANDARDS AND MOVIES

By Paul Stenhouse, MSC



It was refreshing recently to be asked for 'the *criteria* you use' in judging a movie. No one doubts that protocols, principles, criteria and laws must be followed in maths and science, but these days one is more likely to hear something like, 'Hey, man! What have rules and criteria got to do with the "Arts"?'

Criteria *are* standards, rules, principles, laws of a kind and protocols according to which we *measure* or *evaluate* whatever it is we are judging. So our indignant 21<sup>st</sup> century protester is not wrong in thinking that appealing to them poses some threat to random, whim-filled, 'value-free' artistic expression.

Whether or not critics or those in the industry, are comfortable with this, critics *are* evaluators, weighers, measurers. And usually, to be fair to the reader who – if wise – is going to have to evaluate the evaluation, critics should give some indication of the measure they are using. And why.

It is stating the obvious to say that criticism – whether of film, art, music or literature – in our relativistic society, is a hazardous occupation. Critics themselves come in for a lot of criticism. Much of it personal and rarely objective.

Critics can flounder about in a relativistic world of art and culture, where we are conscious of almost drowning along with our – often subjective – standards in the political

correctness of mercurial artistic 'values'. We find ourselves bedazzled by the multiplicity of angles from which we can judge a work.

Before coming to *criteria*, at least three areas principally interest this writer:

[1] Technique: Whatever else one may say, the majority of mainstream films these days is competently made. High quality professional movie-making techniques, with all their technical subtleties and infinitesimal variations, are a 'given'. It is usually a question of a director's doing 'better,' of pushing expertise beyond limits, than of doing merely 'well'. Most directors have no excuse for poor lighting, camera-work, sets or special effects – because skilled technicians who can supply these are readily available: provided you have the money.

[2] The viewer has a right to know what the director intends the film to be and say. A youngish female TV producer was being interviewed on radio not long ago and the interviewer commented that the programmes she produced bore out the adage that 'art reflects life'. 'Not at all,' she retorted, 'I make them because I want life to reflect my art.'

What the movie *appears* to be saying about politics, religion, individuals, values, morality, is probably what it *is* saying; and what the director wants the viewer to believe and take away from the screening. Films are seldom just entertainment. They can be propaganda tools, social engineering devices and marketing exercises. International and domestic political and economic power brokers and lobby groups all take a keen interest in the medium. Not all religious or social groups that employ film as a promotional vehicle are benign.

## Faith and Understanding

**G**ENUINELY and greatly esteem your ability to reason. For while the Sacred Scriptures themselves give priority to faith ahead of understanding in the wondrous things they recount, nevertheless, if you have not understood them correctly the Scriptures can be of little help to you. For all heretics who use the Scriptures as their authority and appear to themselves to be following them, are rather following their own erroneous thinking. They are not heretics because they hold the Scriptures in disdain. They are heretics because they do not understand them.

*[Intellectum vero valde ama; quia et ipsae Scripturae sanctae quae magnarum rerum ante intelligentiam suadent fidem, nisi eas recte intelligas, utiles tibi esse non possunt. Omnes enim heretici, qui eas in auctoritate recipiunt, ipsas sibi videntur sectari, cum suos potius sectentur errores; ac per hoc non quod eas contemnant, sed quod eas non intelligant, heretici sunt.]*

– St Augustine of Hippo [354-430 AD] Letter to Consentius, in *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi Opera Omnia, Migne Patres Latini, vol. xxxiii, col. 459, 13. Translated by Paul Stenhouse.*



[3] The effect on the viewer. This follows from [2]. Not all viewers are mature. Not all are well-educated, with well-honed critical faculties that will protect them from assaults on their minds and beliefs. If movies had no effect on viewers, they would not be made, though the contrary is still asserted by some child-psychologists. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, commenting on lending libraries, begs to differ. His words apply also and especially to modern cinema and the internet:

'Madam, a circulating library in a town is as an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge: it blossoms throughout the year, and depend upon it ... they who are so fond of handling the leaves will long for the fruit at last.'

There are pharmaceutical standards, and standards for storing and preparing food. Testing how healthy or toxic the cinema 'fruit' is can be an onerous task.

As the writer is a Catholic priest, he cheerfully declares this up front. St Augustine tells us that 'faith has eyes'<sup>2</sup>; and St Paul tells us that 'reason' too 'has eyes'<sup>3</sup>. Bearing that in mind, when I see a film, whether for review, or simply for enlightenment or entertainment, I take my three sets of eyes along to the screening, and compare their findings.

Each of these separate 'senses' has criteria special to itself which enable an overall evaluation to be made that should be fair, reasonable, and above all open and honest about the work that is being evaluated. *Faith* measures the movie against criteria described in detail by St Paul in Galatians 5,22. *Reason* seeks truth, intelligibility and logic in the movie, especially in what it claims to be and do, and what it actually is and does. *The human eye* looks for the aesthetically satisfying, and judges the skill and cunning with which the movie achieves its aim. The evaluations of all three 'eyes' are harmonised so that a balanced critique can be given. No one expects a non-believing or irreligious director to satisfy the demands of faith, though if these are not met, the reader has a right to know. Reason, however, can make legitimate demands of the director, as can aesthetics.

*'A smouldering wick he will not extinguish...'*

## In his Name the Gentiles Will Hope

I wish to open my mouth, my brethren, to speak to you concerning the exalted subject of humility. And I am overcome with fear, like a man who realizes he has to speak about God in the language of his own thoughts. For humility is the adornment of the Godhead. By becoming man the Word invested himself with it. With it he lived bodily among us. And whoever is girded with it has become in truth like the One who came down from his high dwelling place and clothed his greatness and glory with humility so that creation should not be consumed at the sight of him. For creation would have been unable to look at him if he had not taken humility upon himself and so lived in its company. There would have been no encounter with him. Creation would not have heard the words of his mouth...

That is why, when creation sees a man clothed in the likeness of its Master, it reveres and honors him like the Master it saw, clothed in humility, living in its midst. Indeed, what creature is there that is not moved at the sight of the humble? Yet, so long as the glory of humility was not revealed to all in Christ, this sight so full of holiness was rejected. Now, however, his greatness has broken on the world's eyes. It has been granted to creation to receive the vision of its Creator through the mediation of a humble man. Hence the humble are not despised by anybody, not even by the enemies of the truth. Because of it, anyone who has learned humility is honored as though he wore the purple and the crown.

— Saint Isaac the Syrian (7th century), monk at Nineveh, then at Mosul in present day Iraq. *Ascetical discourses, 1st series* no 20

Movie-making technology is progressing so fast that film is relying less on skilled actors to get across its message. Digitalised, computer-generated characters and special effects abound. We are witnessing the merging and mutation of visual media: film, internet and computer. Electronic games, and hand-held computers with access to the internet have invaded homes and classrooms. The demise of movie studios is not inconceivable — with the consequent spectre of low-budget and potentially poor

quality 'films' distributed over the internet with almost limitless access to world markets. In this situation humanity will have even greater need of informed and courageous critics of the visual media who will put their skills at the disposal of the community, and point the way forward for an artistic medium whose potential for good remains largely untapped.

1. Richard Brinsley Sheridan. *The Rivals* [1775].
2. Epistola cxx Migne PL vol. xxxiii col. 456, 8: 'Habet namque fides oculos suos'.
3. Ephesians 1,18: 'the eyes of your understanding'.



*The life of a priest on the coral atolls of the Central Pacific*

## SICK CALLS ON KIRIBATI

By Albert Yelds, MSC



**A** GREY-HAIRED old lady knocked on the door as I put my cup of tea on the table before going to bed. She had only one eye. She was worried about her daughter who had had a heart attack.

She took me to the far end of the parish. Her daughter – also with grey hair – was sitting in a hut on the floor between her young son who was asleep and her husband. The pain had doubled her up, and I asked whether she wanted to go to confession and to receive Holy Communion.

Then I asked if she wanted me to take her to the hospital, and she agreed. The husband rolled up a mat and a couple of pillows and climbed in the back of the ute; one of the women followed, grey hair and with only one eye, so I stood and waited for the sick one.

I waited a long time, and a neighbour brought me a cup of toddy, and asked if I wanted something else: “No, I’m waiting for the sick woman,” I said. Then the husband climbed out and brought a basin of food for the stay in hospital. The neighbour came back again and said: “The sick woman is in the back of the ute.” only then did I realise that both mother and daughter had only one eye.

At the hospital the nurses thought that she was seriously ill, and while they arranged to get her out of the ute, I gave her absolution; and she was at peace.

The next night a phone call woke me and I was asked to visit another sick woman. I put my glasses in my pocket, and took a big torch and the sick-call kit.

I drove seven kms to the broken bridge at Buota, took the bike out of the ute and lifted it across the earth

barricade, and over the bar that stopped access to the bridge.

The bike kept slipping on the tilted metal, and as I was carrying the torch and the sick-call set in the other hand, I was slipping too, until the angels steadied me: fortunately they hadn’t signed off for the night.

I rode the bike three kms over a broken road, past houses with no fences, just dogs. Some of these chased me, some just woke up and barked.

At the passage between the ocean and the lagoon, I dropped the bike among the concrete blocks of a sea wall, and headed through the water to a distant light.

I didn’t recognise this part of Abatoa, so I woke a young man to lead me to the catechist’s house. He had kept a big fire burning, and was facing the water expecting me to come by dinghy. But the tide was low and if I had dragged the boat to the water, the coral would have holed the aluminium.

We walked north, past a young man sleeping in the grass, drunk from sour toddy.

The hut of the patient was lit up, and crowded by friends who were massaging her. The children had crowded to watch a person dying. I climbed onto the sleeping platform: here was a woman whose husband had left her these last six months. I gave her all the sacraments of the dying, and the people asked for Holy Communion too, so that they could ask God to help her.

Afterwards the catechist and a friend walked me to the passage, and led me back into the water. But as tide was pouring in, so at the half way point I told them that it was safer to go back. I did this but came out at a different part of the sea wall, and began searching through the bushes to find a landmark.

Fortunately the two men had been watching my light, and they returned. I told them where I had entered the passage and they led me back there, and we found the bike.

I had disturbed many people, and then a car arrived – there were perhaps only four cars left on this part of the island when the bridge collapsed.

The driver set off for the bridge, while the catechist hoisted the bike above his head and waded into the water to return home. It is waiting at his house until I come back to say Mass.

### Against Political Correctness

**D**O not conform yourselves to this age. Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

– St Paul, Letter to the Romans, 12:2

FATHER ALBERT YELDS has been working among the people of Kiribati for the past twenty years. Kiribati, formerly the Gilbert Islands, consists of three widely separated main groups of southwest Pacific islands: the Gilberts on the equator, and the Line Islands farther east. Ocean Island, producer of phosphates until it was mined out in 1981, is also included in the 2 million square miles of ocean. Most of the islands of Kiribati are low-lying coral atolls built on a submerged volcanic chain and encircled by reefs. The population in 2006 was 105,000. 55% of the people are Catholic. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart have charge of the diocese, under Bishop Paul Mea. MSC. Father Albert Yelds an Australian MSC priest, has been there since 1989.



*Father Kolbe died as Catholics in lands to the East were beginning the Vigil Mass of Mary's Assumption into Heaven, his favourite feast day.<sup>7</sup>*

## MARTYR OF CHARITY

By Paul Glynn S.M



RAYMOND Kolbe was born in Poland in 1894. At the age of 13 he decided he wanted to be a priest, and three years later became the novice

Brother Maximilian at the Conventual Franciscans friary. At the completion of the Novitiate he took the temporary vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and began the three-year philosophy course. His teachers soon discovered he was a brilliant student and in 1914 sent him to the Gregorian University in Rome, where he completed his philosophical studies and took the three religious vows for life. A year later he submitted his philosophy thesis and was awarded a Ph. D. In 1918 he completed his four-year theology course and was ordained a priest. The following year he defended his thesis successfully and was awarded a doctorate in theology, aged 25.

Returning to Poland he began teaching in the Conventual Franciscan major seminary at Krakow. However before very long he collapsed with tuberculosis, a very common and feared disease in those days before the discovery of the drug streptomycin. He was in a T.B. sanatorium for two painfully slow years, but during that desert experience he prayed and formulated a bold plan – for a new-approach monthly magazine, explaining Mary's role in 20th Century Catholicism. Discharged from the sanatorium in 1922, he received his superior's permission to begin writing, editing and publishing the "Knights of the Immaculate." The magazine went well and by 1925 had a monthly circulation of 30,000. Tuberculosis struck him again the following year, necessitating another year in a T.B. hospital. However he was back

running the magazine in 1927 and the circulation soon shot up to 60,000 monthly. That year one of the growing number of supporters who were fired by his vision gave him a large property south of Warsaw. Despite his youth and history of sickness, his superiors had great confidence in him and agreed to his plan to build and run the Knights of the Immaculate Monastery on the new property.

Travelling by train one day he met Japanese university students and gave them medals of Mary Immaculate – but was shocked to discover they did not know who Mary was! After much prayer he believed the Lord was calling him to go to Asia to tell the multitudes of non-Christians about Jesus and His Mother. In another amazing show of confidence his superiors allowed this young man with dodgy health to go off

into the totally unknown, taking four fellow Franciscans, to pioneer a mission foundation, "somewhere in Japan." Before leaving for the East Father Kolbe led the little group on a pilgrimage to Lourdes, where they dedicated their future to Mary Immaculate. On the boat they studied rudimentary Japanese via a skimpy book rushed into print by the Russian Army when war broke out with Japan in 1904. The boat landed them in Nagasaki in April, 1930. The bishop welcomed him and asked him to teach philosophy and Latin in the diocesan seminary.

To everyone's amazement, Father Kolbe had the first Japanese language issue of his magazine, 'Knights of the Immaculate' on the streets of Nagasaki just one month after arrival – having persuaded some university professors and seminary students to translate articles he had done in Polish and Latin. No grass ever grew under Father Kolbe's feet. Keen to set up a monastery to house his little band of religious and the all important printing press, he quickly decided on land about 6 kilometres away from Catholic Nagasaki, even though he had been warned it was too far away and isolated to attract anyone. What moved him to buy was the side of a mountain included in the property. He decided he could build a beautiful Lourdes shrine on it. "If we look after Our Lady," he responded to his critics, "she will look after us." In addition, the land was very cheap, having once been the execution ground for criminals. People feared the place, saying ghosts were there. Actually, when the foundations for the monastery were dug, they discovered a 16th century crucifix, possibly belonging to one of the many Catholics executed in 16th century Nagasaki. This unexpected find was very meaningful for Father Kolbe.

### Act Justly

**M**Y BROTHERS, do let us have a little humility; let us forget our self-assertion and braggadocio and stupid quarrelling, and do what the Bible tells us instead. The Holy Spirit says, The wise man is not to brag of his wisdom, nor the strong man of his strength; nor the rich man of his wealth. If a man must boast, he should boast of the Lord, seeking him out and acting with justice and uprightness.

– Pope St Clement I, *Letter to the Corinthians*. From the *Roman Breviary*, the Second Reading at Matins for Ash Wednesday.



## Do not be Afraid

**D**EATH in this sense is a pilgrimage, a lifetime's pilgrimage which none must shirk, a pilgrimage from decay to imperishable life, from mortality to immortality, from anxiety to unruffled calm. Do not be afraid of the word death; rather rejoice in the blessings which follow a happy death. What is death after all but the burial of vice, the flowering of goodness? Hence the words of scripture, 'Let my soul die in the souls of the just,' that is, let it be buried with them and so slough off its own vice and be clothed in the grace of the saints who carry round the mortification of Christ in their own bodies and souls.

- St Ambrose, On the Blessings of Death 3,9;4,15. From the Roman Breviary, Second Reading at Matins for Saturday of the 31st Week of the Year.

Because the monastery he built there was far from the city proper, it was one of the few Catholic buildings in Nagasaki to survive unscathed after the A-bomb on August 9, 1945!

Father Kolbe always attracted people. Japanese Catholics began applying to join his monastic community but one new recruit was different! He had been sent by the now powerful Japanese Militarists, convinced these Polish foreigners would be spying for foreign agents, maybe their old enemy, the Russians. The pseudo-monk was eventually so moved by the cheerful, prayerful and dynamic lives of these monks living in real poverty, that he confessed his true identity, studied the catechism and was baptised!

Father Kolbe had erected a large and prominent statue of Mary on the site. A young woman whose poverty-ridden parents had sold her into prostitution, despairing of a meaningless future, escaped from the brothel and fled to the area to commit suicide in the large lake near the monastery. She would fill the voluminous sleeves of her kimono with stones to get the drowning over with quickly. As she climbed up the hill towards the lake she saw the statue of Mary, and was deeply moved. Father Kolbe noticed her staring up at it, and went out to meet her. Soon guessing what she was contemplating, he began telling her of the God of love and the beautiful message His Son had brought to the world. She became another monastery convert.

In 1936 Father Kolbe was recalled to Poland for the Provincial Chapter. By then his Japanese monthly had a circulation of 60,000, Japan's most widely read Catholic periodical, which it still is. It has brought Japanese many into the Faith. His Japanese monastery was flourishing and could carry on without him. His superiors in Poland now asked Father Kolbe to run the monastery he had pioneered in 1927. He accepted the request and soon turned the Polish monastery into an amazingly active centre of spirituality, attracting a huge number of new candidates. Father Kolbe was convinced that the Church must reach out to modern society via the very best that the media had to offer. Before long the monastery was putting out two magazines with a combined monthly readership of 930,000, and 130,000 copies of a daily newspaper. Next he set up a radio station, broadcasting religious programs across the whole nation. Deciding that an airplane could help speed up their work he sent two monks off to gain

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Please pray for all our benefactors.  
- Editor, *Annals Australasia*.

a flying licence and mapped out a monastery airfield. But heroic Poland's dark Gethsemane was about to begin.

On September the first, 1939 the huge Nazi blitzkrieg overwhelmed Polish border defences. Hitler had decided on a "final solution" for Poland. His long-term plan was to liquidate leading Poles, enslave the workers and eventually turn Poland into the Third Reich's farmland for growing all the wheat, oats, corn etc. Germany needed! For that reason the Gestapo commenced rounding up Poles in positions of leadership and imprisoned them in concentration camps. Father Kolbe's name appeared on the files when the Nazis discovered he had brought 1500 displaced Jews to live in his monastery, even providing a temporary synagogue where they could hold Jewish religious services. Then Father Kolbe published a powerful article entitled "Truth" which settled his fate. The Gestapo closed the 'Knights of the Immaculate' magazine after the last issue went out in 1940 on December 8, a feast day he loved dearly. He was imprisoned and jailed in Barrack 12, Auschwitz. All religious objects had been confiscated by the Nazi guards, but Father Kolbe had an artist inmate draw a postage stamp size image of Mary, which he hid in his clothing. Under the atrocious living and working conditions Father Kolbe's tuberculosis flared up again. He became so sick that he could barely raise his voice above a hoarse whisper.

After the war Poles who had survived Auschwitz testified to Father Kolbe's heroic sanctity. One was Dr. Joseph Stemler. He said: "One night I crawled over to Father Kolbe's side... With the priest's encouragement, I received the sacrament of Confession ... Discouragement and doubt had been threatening to overwhelm me. He helped me to strengthen belief in the final victory of goodness. 'Hatred creates nothing. Only love can create,' he said. His reflections on the mercy of God went straight to my heart. His words to forgive the persecutors, to overcome evil with goodness, kept me from collapsing into despair."

At the end of July 1941, a prisoner on outside farm work escaped. As punishment Commandant Fritsch selected 10 victims for the underground starvation cell, assuring them and the



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- Editor, *Annals*

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assembled inmates of Barrack 12 that they would receive neither food nor water "until they dried up like tulip bulbs." One of the 10, Francis Gajowniczek, wailed: "Who will take care of wife and little children?" Father Kolbe stepped forward, said he had neither wife nor children, and asked to take the man's place. So on July 31, in Poland's fierce midsummer, the 10 were stripped naked and incarcerated in the death cell.

Prisoner Bruno Borgowiec had the grisly job of going down into the cell daily to check on the 10. After the war he testified: "The cell, with only a ceiling-level window, had nothing in it but a single bucket for their toilet needs. The stench was overwhelming. Father Kolbe never complained. He prayed aloud and his fellow prisoners would join in. ... When a fellow prisoner began to writhe on the floor in agony and beg for a drop of water, Father Kolbe would calm him down, inspiring him to persevere. ... From the cell would come the sound of the men praying, and men in other cells would join in ... and hymns to the Virgin Mary would reverberate through the whole underground building. When Father Kolbe started a hymn, all joined in. ... Sometimes the condemned 10 would be so absorbed in prayer that they would not realize when the guards came on daily inspection and unlocked the door. Only when the SS began shouting at them would they stop praying."

The men died one by one and a fortnight later, on August 14 only four were still alive. "Father Kolbe sat serenely on the bare floor", Dr. Bork finished them off with a carbolic injection - the Nazis needed the cell for more prisoners. Father Kolbe died as Catholics in lands to the East were beginning the Vigil Mass of Mary's Assumption into Heaven, his favourite feast day. His body was thrown into a crematorium August 15. In 1972 Pope Paul VI beatified him. John Paul II canonised him in 1982, with the title "Martyr of Charity." The Holy Father chose October for the beatification ceremony - the month of the Rosary that was so dear to Father Kolbe.

FATHER PAUL GUNN, spent 25 years as a missionary in Japan. Author of *A Song for Nagasaki* and *Healing Fire From Frozen Earth*. Father Gunn is stationed at Villa Maria, Hunters Hill, NSW.





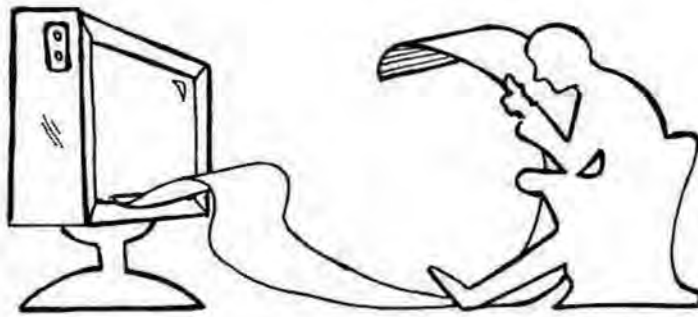
ne of the mysteries of human nature is the way in which we persist

in thinking that a person who is wicked will actually look wicked. As if no matter how evil a person might be they will always be honest. By the age of three all of us have, in some way or another, learnt the awful truth that wicked people lie, that they do so by pretending to be trustworthy and ethical. Yet we forget this.

With this goes another mystery: we keep thinking that people who do evil do it all the while telling themselves that they're doing evil, rather than telling themselves they're doing good. Surely we all know that just as a wicked person lies to others they lie to themselves, telling themselves that they're doing good. Call it self-justification, self-deception, or, as the Fathers did, call it pride, but whatever we call it, it's the source of all sin. It's also the essence of idolatry. To believe in an idol you have to forget what you know; that there is only one God. Thing is, there are benefits in forgetting. Benefits, we might say, in blindness.

The problem is that if we acknowledge these insights in respect of others then we might have to acknowledge them in respect of ourselves. Perhaps we too do evil things telling ourselves we are doing good. Better to shroud it all in a mystery. Which mystery is little more than an unspoken contract: if you don't look too closely, I won't look too closely. Idols just happen to be the concrete expressions of this contract.

The more effective form of idolatry is that which bases itself upon the assertion that God is a total mystery: God is unknowable; His will is obscure; we cannot be sure that He has really spoken; therefore the Church has no authority to speak truly of Him. We live in a pluralistic world, there are so many religions, can only one of these be right? By multiplying religions we think we can multiply our doubts and, thereby, justify ourselves in not listening to God, who is, anyway, a total mystery. It's a ruse as old as the biblical prophets. Read Jeremiah and Isaiah and you'll hear some familiar voices.



## IDOLATRY AND ETHICS COMMITTEES

By ROBERT TILLEY

We can justify our idolatry by calling it tolerance, and tolerance is a good thing, only we ought to ask, tolerance of what exactly? Of injustice, perhaps?

The prophets saw that idolatry and injustice went together, they were both identified with what was often a legal and judicial exploitation of the weak and vulnerable. That is, of the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the stranger in the land; those who have no political or social clout, who cannot afford the right barristers, who

do not have prestige enough to sway the judge. In short, those who cannot play the system to their benefit.

God is angry at this? How can we be sure of that? There are so many gods saying so many different things. Let all of them have their say and see if we can find a consensus. Perhaps Moloch is the true god? Such is the mystery of divinity!

But again we all know there really is no mystery: simply put, we all know that idolatry and pragmatism go together. If nothing is sure then one might as well play the game, go with what works. And pragmatism is remarkably tolerant, of anything that gets results that is, including injustice. Just as long as it is done through the courts such that civil order is preserved; as long as things are done ethically!

And we live in a very ethical age for ethics committees abound, guiding both government and business. Like the idols of old they multiply. Whenever there's a moral issue to resolve, experts in ethics are summoned. A call goes out for submissions; the committee examines them and finds that there are many different even opposing viewpoints. Tolerance dictates that there will have to be more debate; in the meantime, however, a consensus of sorts has been found so the project will go ahead,

albeit with some checks. These checks will be reviewed in the near future. Business is pleased and soon it's full steam ahead for blending babies to make a puree that will serve to revitalise Moloch's wrinkled skin.

It's easy to get an idol to turn a blind eye, you turn its face to the wall. More difficult though with the one, true, God.



ROBERT TILLEY is a regular contributor to *Annals*.



*Mother of Fourteen Becomes Media's "Octomom"*

WHERE'S THE DIGNITY?

By Helen Alvaré



HE headlines blared "Octomom fell fast from miracle mom to punch line," and "Octomom erupts." The stories were referring to a woman, Nadya Suleman, who had given birth to eight living babies by means of in vitro fertilization using donor sperm. The search for the identity of the father was not long in coming: "Man Gave Sperm 5 Times, Believes He May Be Octuplets' Dad" (followed by the subheading: Tune in to ABC News' "Good Morning America" Monday Feb. 23 to learn the identity of the man who possibly fathered the Suleman octuplets.) This was followed by the response headline: "Octo-Mom: He's Not the Dad" a story which ended with the observations "But it looks like his 15 minutes of fame are over before they began!" Social networking websites are hosting "clubs" supporting or bashing Ms. Suleman, and a YouTube music video features a Suleman impersonator spewing babies while a doctor catches them in a baseball glove.

Where's the dignity of new life in this story? Where's the dignity of motherhood and of the family? Surveying the media carnage, there doesn't seem to be a shred of dignity left to anyone involved with this story. We have an impoverished, multiparous, single mother with a baby-fetish, in an impoverished extended family, who meets up with an irresponsible fertility doctor willing to implant more embryos than can ordinarily safely develop or be carried to term. If you think about the scenario a bit more deeply, it is not difficult to conclude that once law and society allow human conception to take place in a retail setting, outside of an intimate marital relationship, and thus vulnerable to the tender mercies of the "laws" of the market and of fallible human desires, it's not at all surprising

that mothers and their children so conceived would be treated as legitimate objects of public commentary, scrutiny and even scorn. Decisions about how many children to have, whether to bear them serially or all at once, how to conceive them, who will be the daddy, and whether or not to get married first, all become like "preferences," any of which can be acted upon legally, and each of which might alternatively appeal to or disgust different onlookers.

In the United States, state and federal lawmakers have contributed importantly to this state of affairs by deciding *not* to decide. They have not taken the trouble discern or to form any social consensus about the wisdom of any of these "preferences." Unlike their behavior in other areas of the law involving children, they have not even mandated a floor below which adults' behavior may not fall; a floor ordinarily called the "best interests of the child." All has been left to the market to decide. And not

surprisingly, the adults who constitute and run the market: and who influence the lawmakers -- have decided both that they want babies technologically if they have difficulty bearing them naturally, and that there is a boatload of money to be made providing babies to would-be parents. Experts estimate the size of the U.S. fertility industry to be in the billions of dollars. [see Debora Spar. *The Baby Business: How Money, Politics and Commerce Drive the Science of Conception* (2006)]. Thus no state has any law restricting the use of assisted reproduction to married versus single persons, or restricting the number of embryos that may safely be artificially implanted into a woman. All of this has brought us to the question with which I began this article: "where's the dignity?"

The short answer is that human dignity cannot be destroyed. We are made in God's image and likeness and can never become in essence "contemptible." Nadya Suleman and her children are human beings made in God's image and likeness. But indeed their dignity has sadly been obscured. In the case of the children, it has been assaulted from the beginning of their very existence.

The Suleman story and the public's vociferous response helps us understand quite clearly why the Vatican's recent instruction (December 2008) about technological interventions upon nascent human life, was entitled *Dignitatis Personae*. On the Dignity of the Human Person. What is at stake is nothing less when technology intervenes in human procreation. The instruction reminds us that the dignity of every human person is real but fragile. So fragile that it is very easy for even a brilliant scientist or loving, would-be parents, to misunderstand or ignore it. Humanity's capacity for moral understanding, and for love and disinterested sacrifice,

Therapeutic Spirituality

MAYBE the greatest threat to the church is not heresy, not dissent, not secularism, not even moral relativism, but this sanitized, feel-good, boutique, therapeutic spirituality that makes no demands, calls for no sacrifice, asks for no conversion, entails no battle against sin, but only soothes and affirms.

- Archbishop Timothy Dolan - newly named Archbishop of New York by Pope Benedict XVI



images but cannot equal God's.

Which is why social practices and laws need to work hard to affirm and promote this dignity. Particularly to recognise the demonstrable fact that children's and parents' dignity is naturally upheld when procreation takes place by an act of love between committed, married parents. Consider just three aspects of this dignity that are naturally upheld when the latter situation obtains: the children are "made by love," the only fit beginning for a human being, and within a setting naturally inclined to provide them the long-term and intensive care that human infants require. The child knows both of his or her parents, and has before him or her, an example of committed love by which to understand God's love and to learn how to love others in the world. Finally, natural conceptions result usually in one or several children who can be carried safely to term. Questions about how many children parents decide to have, the "safety" of the method of conception for both the child and the parents, and the desirability of the "family form" into which the child is brought are almost never troubling. The law responds to this by easily leaving these matters to the natural and private choices of the parents. The parents' and children's dignity is almost never called into question by outsiders.

Now contrast this setting with laboratory assisted conception. The latter setting raises red flags at every turn. For example, the twin rate for assisted conception patients in the year 2000 reached 444.7 per 1000 live births; the triplet rate in 2000 was 98.7 per 1000 live births. [see Trends in Multiple births Conceived using Assisted Reproductive Technologies, United States: 1997-2000, *Pediatrics* vol. 111, 1159 (May 2003)] When the number of unborn children conceived artificially is sufficiently high, doctors will recommend, even insist upon, "selective reduction" (abortion of one or more of the gestating children) Doctors encourage women to accept the implantation of multiple embryos so that the fertility clinics' "success rates" will appear high. But multiple conceptions are dangerous for the babies involved and for their mothers, and raise the question of parents' entire original disposition toward these

## Ideas and Bludgeons

**W**E deny the snobbish English assumption that the uneducated are the dangerous criminals. We remember the Roman Emperors. We remember the great poisoning princes of the Renaissance. We say that the dangerous criminal is the educated criminal. We say that the most dangerous criminal now is the entirely lawless modern philosopher. Compared to him, burglars and bigamists are essentially moral men; my heart goes out to them.

-G.K.Chesterton, *The Man who was Thursday*

new lives they are carrying. Recent findings indicated that even "singleton" pregnancies by IVF carry higher risks for the child's well-being as compared with natural conceptions. (See Gina Kolata, *Picture Emerging on Genetic Risks of IVF*, *New York Times*, February 16, 2009) Finally, childbearing outside of marriage is closely associated with difficulties for mothers and children. It is robustly correlated with poverty and with emotional and educational difficulties for the children. Planned single-parenthood, costing thousands of dollars (millions in the case of the Suleman octuplets; see Kim Yoshina and Jessica Garrison, *Octuplets could be costly for taxpayers*, *Los Angeles Times*, Feb.11, 2009) and months of efforts, seems even more quixotic, more apparently adverse to the children's best interests in the eyes of many.

Is it any wonder then that a pregnancy that began without due respect for the dignity of the lives involved would come to be associated with a most undignified media circus. Or that the public felt free to question whether a person who appeared to act like a "consumer" respecting children, made the right "consumer decisions?" They asked whether she had a right to have so many children in a world of limited resources, whether the children should receive any public monies, and whether the medical provider had a right to offer such services? Because human procreation has been reduced to a commodity for purchase, questions, particularly about the number of children per family, can almost appear reasonable.

*Dignitatis Personae* urges us to

"recognize the legitimacy of the desire for a child and understand the suffering of couples struggling with problems of fertility." But it reminds us that "[s]uch a desire... should not override the dignity of every human life to the point of absolute supremacy. The desire for a child cannot justify the "production" of offspring..."

The Suleman saga makes manifest the assault on the dignity of human life brought about by assisted reproduction. It allows us to see clearly the risks of abandoning the natural protections for dignity offered by marital procreation. It alerts us to the inadequacy of our current laws and policies for shielding fragile human dignity. Lawmakers may respond to this current saga with proposals for restricting the simultaneous creation of high numbers of embryos, or limiting the numbers of embryos which may be transferred into a woman's uterus, or even restricting such technology to married or working parents (though I seriously doubt the latter). Such a response would be useful, but inadequate for protecting the full measure of dignity granted by God to each human person, but it would be better than this sorry state of affairs. Human beings deserve always to be brought into existence through a personal act of marital love.

HELEN ALVARÉ, J.D. is an Associate Professor of Law at the George Mason University School of Law in Arlington, Virginia. There she teaches and publishes in the areas of property law, family law, and Catholic social thought. She is a consultant to ABC News and to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Marriage and Pro-Life Committees. In 2008, Pope Benedict XVI named Professor Alvaré a Consultant to the Pontifical Council for the Laity. Professor Alvaré is Senior Law Fellow of the Culture of Life Foundation.



*Intellectual and Psychological Schism*

## ARROGANCE AND INSULT IN RESPONSE TO POPE

By George Weigel

**T**HAT ONE of the Lefebvrist bishops, Richard Williamson, is a Holocaust denier and a promoter of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* has drawn considerable attention and commentary, particularly from Jewish scholars and religious leaders who have made large investments in Jewish-Catholic dialogue since Vatican Council II. Their concern is entirely understandable, although it has to be said that the lifting of Williamson's excommunication in no way constitutes a papal endorsement of Williamson's lunatic view of history, or a retraction of John Paul II's 1998 statement deploring the Holocaust, or a revocation of Vatican Council II's teaching on the sin of anti-Semitism. At the same time, it ought to be recognized that Williamson's Holocaust denial and his embrace of a crude anti-Semitic canard like the *Protocols* is not all that surprising, given that Lefebvrist political ideology grew out of the same French fever swamps that produced the anti-Dreyfusards. (Even as it ought to be recognized that the hypersecularists of the Third French Republic hated Catholics as much as some anti-Dreyfusards hated Jews.)

Williamson's inanities, while deplorable and disgusting, are something of a sideshow, however. For the highest stakes in this drama hove into view when Bishop Bernard Fellay, the current head of the Lefebvrist movement, issued a Jan. 24 letter on the lifting of the excommunications to the movement's faithful. It is an astonishing document, declaring as it does that "Catholic Tradition is no longer excommunicated" and that the Lefebvrists constitute those "Catholics attached to Tradition throughout the world." The letter goes on to affirm "all the councils up to the Second Vatican Council about which we express some reservations." And it implies that the talks that will now commence between the Vatican and the Lefebvrists, now that the excommunications have been lifted, will focus on those "reservations."

Responsible canon lawyers have raised questions about whether this arrogance on the part of Bishop Fellay does not cast into question his fulfillment of the canonical requirements for a lawful lifting of his excommunication. In any event, non-canonists will read his letter as Fellay's unilateral declaration of victory: the Lefebvrists have been right all along; the Holy See has finally recognized the error of its ways; the only things left to discuss are the terms of surrender. Ironically, but hardly coincidentally, the Catholic left (which has been clever enough to avoid formal schism while living in intellectual and psychological schism since Pope Paul VI's 1968 encyclical on family planning, *Humanae Vitae*) has welcomed Benedict XVI's canonical rescue of the Lefebvrist bishops, with numerous left-leaning Catholic dissidents now saying, in effect, "Where's my bailout?" Benedict XVI undoubtedly intended this lifting of excommunications as a step toward healing a wound in the church. Bishop Fellay's letter, in response to the pope's gesture, suggests that the healing has not taken place. Moreover, Fellay's letter raises the stakes for everyone, and to the highest level. For what is at issue, now, is the integrity of the Church's self-understanding, which must include the authenticity of the teaching of Vatican Council II.

- George Weigel, "Rome's Reconciliation," *Newsweek* (January 26, 2009).



*Rabbie Burns and Bishop John Geddes*

## CUP OF KINDNESS FOR AULD LANG SYNE

*By John Cairney*



AS A freemason in the first years of his rise to fame in Edinburgh, Robert Burns had many friends in all walks of life, but none more unlikely than Bishop John Geddes, Vicar Apostolic and the Pope's representative to the Lowland Vicariate of Scotland.

Amid the worldwide celebrations marking the 250th Anniversary of the birth of Burns, it is a friendship deserving of remembrance.

Bishop Geddes and Burns met in 1787 at 13 St John Street, home of the noted judge and Hellenist, Lord Monboddo, who presided over garlanded 'learned suppers' where the cream of the intelligentsia were encouraged to show off their wit and knowledge. Burns excelled at these discursive meals, astounding his listeners, with his conversation and the evidence it gave of wide reading. However, he in turn was similarly impressed by a gregarious Catholic clergyman, who seemed to be just at home among the *literati*, Dr Geddes.

As Burns said, in a letter later that year to his correspondent, Mrs Dunlop of Dunlop, '...nor do I know any more than one instance of a Man, who fully and truly regards all the world as a stage, and all the women as merely acting their parts in life, and that man is Professor Dugald Stewart of Catrine. To him, I might add another instance: a Popish Bishop Geddes; but I have outraged that gloomy Fury, Presbytereanism (*sic*) enough already, although I don't spit in her lugubrious face by telling her that the first (*meaning the finest*) Cleric character I ever saw was a Roman Catholic.'

Burns and Geddes had hit it off at

once at the table but not only because of mutual erudition and a gift for repartee. Geddes was a Scot from the north-east, just as Burns's father had been. Born in Banffshire, nearly 25 years before Burns, and like him, the future Bishop spent his boyhood and youth on the land among farmers. He had been ordained priest in Rome on St Andrew's Day 1759, (the year Burns was born) and returned to Scotland to serve as a missionary priest at Glenlivet.

His calibre being quickly noted, he was then sent off to Spain to rebuild the Scots College at Valladolid, for the training of young Scots for the priesthood. That task completed, and by now titular Bishop of Morocco *in partibus*, and also fluent in Italian and Spanish, he returned to Edinburgh in 1781 to become a co-bishop with Bishop George Hay in Aberdeen, whose responsibility was for the Highlands and Islands.

George Scott Moncrieff, a modern Catholic scholar, was to write in 1960:

'More than any other individual, John Geddes prepared the way for the support that was given by the more humane and better-educated Scots of the time to move for the removal of the penal laws against them [Catholics]; for in him they saw a man who, while his whole life and strength were vested in his religious belief, sustained a lively interest in history and scholarship, and a keen and practical interest in poetry and the arts...'

So much so, that Dr Geddes persuaded five Scots Colleges in Europe to subscribe towards Burns's Edinburgh 1787 Edition, praising the poet highly to colleagues in Rome. Geddes himself is not among the list of Edinburgh subscribers but he did own an original Kilmarnock edition. He later obtained a copy of the Edinburgh edition, which he had rebound with blank end-papers. This was the copy

### Chartres

CHARTRES is the epitome of the first great awakening in European civilisation. It is also the bridge between Romanesque and Gothic, between the world of Abelard and the world of St Thomas Aquinas, the world of restless curiosity and the world of system and order. Great things were to be done in the next centuries of high Gothic, great feats of construction, both in architecture and in thought. But they all rested on the foundations of the 12th century. That was the age which gave European civilisation its impetus. Our intellectual energy, our contact with the great minds of Greece, our ability to move and change, our belief that God may be approached through beauty, our feeling of compassion, our sense of the unity of Christendom – all this, and much more, appeared in those hundred marvellous years between the consecration of Cluny and the rebuilding of Chartres.

- Sir Kenneth Clarke, *Civilization*, 1971 ed. With thanks to Roger Sandall.  
[http://www.rogersandall.com/Spiked\\_By-the-Skin-of-our-Teeth.php](http://www.rogersandall.com/Spiked_By-the-Skin-of-our-Teeth.php)



## Surviving the Storms

One of my duties in the office of the State Climatologist is to inform developers and industries of the potential climate risks and rewards in Alabama. I am very frank in pointing out the dangers of beachfront property along the Gulf Coast. A sea level rise of 6 in. over 100 years, or even 50 years, is minuscule compared with the storm surge of a powerful hurricane like Fredrick or Camille. Coastal areas threatened today will be threatened in the future. The sea level rise, which will continue, will be very slow and thus give decades of opportunity for adaptation, if one is able to survive the storms.

The main point I stress, to state and local agencies as well as industries, is that they invest today in infrastructure that can withstand the severe weather events that we know are going to continue. These investments include extending floodway easements, improvement in storm water drainage systems and avoiding hurricane-prone coastal development, among other actions."

— John Christy, Alabama state climatologist, testifying [May 13, 2003] before Congress quoted *Unstoppable Global Warming*, S. Fred Singer, Dennis T. Avery, Rowman and Littlefield, 2008, p.160-161.

Burns borrowed for his Highland tour, promising to write in the book any lines that came to him on his travels. He did not do so until he was settled at Ellisland, hence his delay in returning it to Geddes.

On 3rd February 1789 Burns finally wrote to the Bishop, saying he was 'at last, stationary in the business of life, and now free to attend to those great and important questions, what I am, where I am and for what I am destined.' *What he was* was a married man with a family, having finally married his Jean, and about to start training in the Excise and Customs. *Where he was* was at Ellisland on a farm and *what he was destined for* was a period of deep creativity which produced some of his greatest songs and what he called, 'my finest performance in the poetic line', the epic *Tam o' Shanter*. Surely evidence enough, as he wrote to his 'Reverend and much honoured Friend' – 'that my characteristic trade is not forgotten. – I am, if possible, more than ever an enthusiast to the Muses. ...'

He could never forget, he was a poet. He went on. 'You will see in

your book, which I beg your pardon for detaining so long, that I have been tuning my lyre on the banks of the Nith. – ' In the blank pages he inserted in his own hand twelve poems and songs, something he did only for friendships he valued. There were elegies to Sir James Hunter Blair, Lord President Dundas, lines on Bruar Water, the Falls of Fyers, Friars Carse hermitage as well as verses addressed to his Excise mentor, Robert Graham of Fintry. None of these was of exceptional literary merit but he did hint that *Tam o' Shanter* was in the making saying, 'Some larger poetic plans that are floating in my mind, or partly put in execution, I shall impart when next I have the pleasure of meeting you. ...'

Unfortunately, they did not meet again. Burns was ill the whole winter of 1790 – 'An incessant headache, depression of spirits and all the truly miserable consequences of a deranged mental system. ...'

Geddes, on the other hand, a man so much his senior, was at the same time undertaking a walking tour of Scotland from Glasgow to Kirkwall, in

the Orkney Islands. The indefatigable prelate had always walked whenever he could, even in Italy and Spain, reading his breviary, thinking his thoughts, talking to everyone he met on the way, and knocking on doors each night to find a bed. He was never refused. As his Autobiographical Notes tell us, his motto was 'Ambula coram Deo et esto perfectus' – 'Walk before God and be blameless'.

However, his ambulatory inclination, however worthy, took its toll, and from 1893, he took to spending his summers in the seminary school at Scalán in Banffshire and his winters in Aberdeen, where he devoted his time to writing until a series of strokes meant he had to dictate to a secretary. He would surely have heard of the death of Burns in Dumfries in 1796, but no letter exists to the poet's family. Geddes himself died in Aberdeen in 1799.

His famous Burns volume, annotated by the poet's own hand, passed to his sister, Margaret Geddes, who left it to her daughter, Margaret Hyslop. She, in turn, gave it to Dr Henry Goadly, an English anatomist, when he left for America in 1838. In 1863, a Nairn man, James Black, then living in Detroit, bought it from Goadly's widow and sold it to an American collector, W.K. Bixby, President of the St Louis Burns Club.

Bixby had the volume reproduced 'by lithographic and gelatine process' in a special edition of 473 copies which was distributed to members of the Bibliophile Society of Boston. The original Geddes-Burns is now in the care of the Huntington Library in San Marino, California – priceless result of a friendship that proves the enduring validity of the Burns lines:

'For a' that, an' a' that,  
'It's comin' yet for a' that  
'That man an' man the world o'er  
'Shall brothers be for a' that.'

JOHN CAIRNEY is a graduate of the Glasgow College of Drama. In his long career, he has played in theatre, radio, television and film. In 1989, he gained an M Lit from the University of Glasgow for *A History of Solo Theatre*. In 1994, he was awarded a PhD by Victoria University, Wellington for his thesis on the plays of Robert Louis Stevenson. John Cairney has played both Robert Burns and Robert Louis Stevenson in solo performances worldwide. Among his books are *The Man Who Played Robert Burns* and *The Quest for Robert Louis Stevenson*. (c) John Cairney (2009)



*Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Hera, East Timor, appeal for help*

## MONASTERY IN DANGER OF COLLAPSE

*By Paul Stenhouse, MSC*

**I**N November 2008, I visited the Carmelite nuns' monastery at Hera in East Timor. The nuns are strictly enclosed – the only contemplative Order in East Timor – and live about an hour to the east of Dili. The monastery buildings are quite close to the sea on the northern side, with the high hills of the hinterland of the central mountain range that runs the length of the island looming over them on the south.

For most of the year there is frequent heavy rain, which cascades down the sides of the nearby hills into rivers and creeks that are close to the monastery, and that flow into the sea nearby.

There are fifteen professed nuns in the community – ten Indonesian and five East Timorese – and five Timorese aspirants of whom one is in Indonesia.

The survival of the monastery building is in doubt, owing to poor workmanship when it was first constructed, and the fact that the Indonesian authorities in the period before Independence [1975-1999] built residences for some of their military personnel on the western side of a creek that ran a few hundred metres parallel to the monastery wall.

The Indonesian military diverted the creek-bed to prevent inundation of their dwellings, and in the process moved the creek closer to the convent wall.

When I first visited the monastery in 2001 it was a soggy mess, with mud and water lying everywhere, furniture throughout the buildings ruined, and moisture in the humid atmosphere of the overflowing creek fetid and debilitating.

Aid to the Church in Need [ACN] provided funds for a wall to be built to ensure that the huge volume of water that flowed down the mountainside and was diverted from the original creek bed, not reach the monastery walls and enter the buildings.

Over the intervening period the water has found its way under the wall. The nuns have again been inundated, and, if anything, their condition has worsened. This time by water rising from the ground under the convent and seeping through the building. In addition a small section of the wall that ACN had helped to be built, collapsed.

The conditions in which the nuns live are unhealthy and dangerous as sections of the roof have collapsed. Many of the nuns suffer from rheumatism and other ailments caused by the diversion of the creek, and they desperately need to re-locate.

They have found a more suitable site on higher ground, four hectares in area, not far from the present building and at a safe distance from the creek – but have no means of acquiring it.

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- Donations may be sent to Mother Prioress, Carmelite Monastery, Ormiston, Queensland, +163.

*'At 1cm in length, head, arms, legs, fingers, toes and feet are present and the face is identifiably human'*

# THE TRUTH ABOUT ABORTION

*By* Brian Pollard



WHEN considering any important and contentious issue, it is necessary to have the facts right before a reasonable conclusion can be reached. Unfortunately, abortion is a subject where misinformation, ignorance and outright deceit are so frequent that it is becoming rare to find any accurate discussion of it in the media. This is particularly regrettable, since many people lack the resources to educate themselves further on abortion and need to rely on the media for all their information.

### How new human life begins

When the head of a male sperm embeds itself into a female oocyte or egg, a single new kind of cell is formed, which will go on, if nothing untoward happens, to become a new human being. Its genetic content derives equally from the mother and father. Already encoded in the DNA of the new entity is everything that will determine the character of each physical detail in its whole body and no added genetic influence will be added throughout its whole life. Barring illness or accident, all that is further needed for it to reach adulthood is proper nutrition and the right environment.

About sixteen hours later, the single cell divides in two for the first time and thereafter, all subsequent cells divide and go on dividing until physical growth is complete, usually during adolescence. The ball of cells soon starts to differentiate, that is, they start to constitute different kinds of tissue. Some of them will form the different parts of the embryo's body, some will form the membrane in which it will lie in the womb, filled with fluid until birth, and

some will form the placenta, the structure that attaches to the inside wall of the womb. In it, the mother's circulation and the embryo's circulation come into close contact, allowing exchange of nutrients and waste chemicals. Well before a woman knows she is pregnant, the embryo secretes hormones which induce the mother's body to accept the new resident and prepare for pregnancy in many ways.

Most people have a fairly primitive idea of what a human cell is, often thinking it is a kind of jelly-like mass with no particular structure. Only in recent times have new technologies permitted scientists to understand its complexity, but still without full understanding. In 1985, Dr Michael Denton, a scientist, wrote that, if we could enter a single living cell, 'we would see nearly every feature of our own advanced machines: artificial languages and their decoding systems, memory banks for information storage and retrieval, elegant control systems regulating the automated assembly of parts and components, error fail-safe and

proof-reading devices utilized for quality control and assembly processes involving the principle of prefabrication and modular construction. Additionally, it has one capacity unequalled in our own machines - it is capable of replicating its entire structure within a matter of a few hours'. The more we know, the more amazing it gets.

About 24 days after conception, the heart starts to beat, circulating the embryo's own blood throughout its body. At 1cm in length, head, arms, legs, fingers, toes and feet are present and the face is identifiably human. The embryo is undeniably alive, with its own human life, dependent only on its mother for nutrition, warmth and protection. By three months, the child is sensitive to pain, touch and sound, moves, makes a fist, sucks his thumb, turns his head and opens and closes his mouth. From the single cell stage onwards, the new child is following the normal sequence of events already experienced by every person who has ever existed. Size is irrelevant to the implications of what is at stake at every stage, as time passes.

## Not Life but the Control of Life

It is, however, useless to look for help to the State, for the State is not concerned with life but with the ordering of life and will always be on the side of law and order, of organization and control. The real ally of life and the only true source of spiritual power is to be found in religion. All genuine forms of religious experience and religious action - repentance, asceticism, sacrifice; prayer, contemplation, communion, ecstasy - are vital acts and experiences. They are a turning away from external centrifugal non-vital activity to the heart of life and the source of spiritual power. This is the case with primitive religion which is essentially a cult of the forces of life in nature and man and a consecration of the social order and the work by which men live to the divine powers that rule the world. But it is still more the case with Christianity, which transcends the sphere of nature and brings human life into immediate contact and communion with the divine source of supernatural life.

- Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State*, London, Sheed and Ward, 1935, pp. 111-112.



It is often asserted that the claim that human life begins at conception is based on a religious viewpoint, but that is not so. Medical textbooks on embryology have consistently stated that life begins at conception, as a scientifically established fact.

### The child

Bearing these facts in mind, now let us consider some of the comments one reads or hears commonly in the media, most often from those who favour abortion, which is the intentional destruction of the developing child.

'It is only a blob of cells - it's not really human'. Left alone, it is not going to become a cat or a cabbage, it is a developing human being, from the first cell onwards. Its cells are not, and never were, a 'blob' of anything - by the time pregnancy is confirmed, they are already highly organised into developing structures.

'It's my body and no-one is going to tell me what I can do'. Abortion is about the child's body, not the mother's. Note that, as already mentioned, everything inside the womb during pregnancy has developed from the child's cells, not the mother's. If the child were part of her body, no one could explain how in half the cases it could be of a different sex, with its own unique DNA and fingerprints and have a different blood group. This is simply ignorant bluster, like shouting.

'It's my decision what happens to my body'. Correct but irrelevant, since the decision is about the fate of her child, not her. What is being decided is whether her developing, healthy child will be intentionally destroyed by a most barbaric method. No genuine human right would allow any person to intentionally deprive another innocent person of their life and the developing child has the same right as any other human being to the integrity of its own life.

In an abortion, the body of the growing child is destroyed by using a sharp surgical instrument, called a curette, inserted into the womb, and with scraping movements, it is dismembered and the parts flushed out. If the abortion is performed about or after the age of three months, which is common, the child experiences pain. Sometimes, the child is not killed at once and emerges

whole. Abortion clinic staff report seeing the small body writhing in the bucket until it dies. It is small wonder that the staff turnover in such clinics is high.

What might the child have decided about its future, if given the opportunity? Though we don't know, it would be arrogant beyond belief to suppose that the child would have chosen to be killed. In any other circumstance, who would be so presumptuous as to deny anyone the chance to decide their own mortal fate? Considering that the child is totally defenceless and voiceless, abortion is the ultimate in cruelty and oppression.

Those in favour of abortion describe themselves as 'pro-choice' and those who oppose abortion say they are 'pro-life'. Mere fudging. Both sides are making a choice, one choosing to destroy life and the other choosing to protect it. Simply claiming to be 'pro-choice' is meaningless as the value of a choice may only be judged by what is chosen.

When it is thought there may be some risk of abnormality in the developing child, an ultrasound is commonly urged on the parents. There can be only one reason for doing this at an early stage, even though such tests are known not to be completely reliable then, namely to offer or to recommend abortion if any abnormality is found or suspected, even when it is one that would be compatible with a happy life. Staff are advised to turn the ultrasound screen away from the mother's view because those who think such children should not be born don't want the mother to see her child for the first time as a child, as they know she will then be less likely to want to proceed with termination. In every other area of medicine, where there is a heavy obligation on doctors to supply their patient with all the information necessary to make a rational choice before any procedure is carried out, including explaining all the risks and their likelihood, this deviance would quite properly be regarded as malpractice.

In some places, abortion is allowed where the pregnancy has resulted from rape or incest or poses a grave threat to the mother's life. In Australia, it is estimated that the total of these three sets of reasons would account for less than one per cent of all the abortions currently carried out on healthy babies, numbering about 90,000 per year. This is more than one abortion for every three

live births. The unborn child is not there by its own choice, it is not an aggressor and its presence is in no way abnormal. The child is simply unwanted for one or more of a variety of reasons, not all of which may have been the mother's responsibility. The most unsafe place for an unborn child in Australia now is in its mother's womb.

From an objective standpoint, what is involved is the crime of homicide, a criminal offence. Why is it not regarded and prosecuted as such? Because of a fiction in the law by which the child is not defined as a person with defined and protected rights, whose life must be preserved. While the unborn child has no defined *legal* rights, in abortion it is quite clear that it is being denied *natural* rights. It is now common to encounter a confident reference to a woman's right to abortion but is there really such a right? The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that the right to the integrity of one's life is the basis of all human rights and one that is owed equally to every person and that no one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Though certain powerful international bodies, influential at the UN, are leading the push to have a right to abortion recognised, this is really an unwarranted attempt by unelected bodies to unashamedly circumvent international democratic processes. There can be no genuine right of women to have their unborn children destroyed.

The view that the unborn child is not yet truly human is currently under challenge in certain parts of the world, where an attacker has caused the death of such a child by intentional violence to the mother's abdomen, and is then able to escape the law's penalty. This is increasingly seen as an injustice which ought to be corrected. Current law is also using a fiction to protect abortionists, who are murderers by objective definition. They intend to, and then act to, take innocent human life.

### The mother

Aspects which concern the mother rather than the child are often either ignored or played down. First is the fiction that the mother herself suffers no penalty for having instigated this event, and this may be true for some. For a significant number of others, those



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who have not managed to succumb to the 'free market rhetoric about abortion', there will be the women who were 'desperate, pressured, harangued, bullied, pulled, shoved, cornered, abandoned, cheated, and left damaged and desolate'. For these reasons, it would be both unhelpful and wrong to describe as murderers those pregnant women who seek abortion. Only relatively recently has the extent and detail of this tragic situation been recognised and documented by the victims themselves when given the opportunity.

Second is the call by some, including women, to have abortion removed from the domain of the law, by regarding it as no more than a private decision between a woman and her doctor, which it is said should be nobody else's business. This call amounts to support for widespread homicide to be exempted completely from the overview of the law, for reasons of convenience, even as we know that the practice is associated with the abuse of women, at a particularly vulnerable time for them. What they really need, but are not offered, is human support, understanding and, for many, protection.

We are thus faced with the paradox of some women claiming to uphold the so-called rights of other women by wanting greater freedom for abortion, while expressing little if any concern for the physical abuse and destruction of all the aborted babies (half of whom are female) and the emotional abuse of an unknown proportion of the mothers. They cannot confront the challenging reality in the description of abortion as: 'One dead and one injured'. This indifference has been entrenched in one major Australian political party by adopting an initiative from the United States and establishing what is called Emily's List. This is the recruitment of women into parliament specifically because they are in favour of abortion, to help implement that party's objective of legal abortion, as stated in its published policy manifesto. About this, one commentator observed 'There's a new breed of "pro-life feminists" who rue the day Emily's List feminists distorted the feminism of early suffragettes such as Susan B Anthony, who referred to abortion as "child murder" and Elizabeth Cady Stanton who famously stated "When we consider that women are treated as property, it is degrading to



women that we should treat our children as property to be disposed of as we wish."

In the issue of *Annals*, June 2008, there was an article describing how recent evidence has been published to indicate that a woman, who has an abortion before she has had a full-term pregnancy, has an increased chance of developing breast cancer later in life. Although it is widely accepted that there has been a large unexplained increase in the incidence of this cancer in recent decades throughout the Western world, no agreed cause has been found. One group of researchers is convinced that a link between abortion and breast cancer is the only one that would satisfactorily explain why this should be so, as described in that article.

Dr. Priscilla Coleman, a research psychologist at Bowling Green State University, Ohio, conducted studies in 1996 which showed that "When women feel forced into abortion by others or by life circumstances, negative post-abortion outcomes become more common." She added: "Adolescents are generally much less prepared to assume the responsibility of parenthood and are logically the recipients of pressure to abort." She pointed out that, while having a child as a teen can cause problems, "the risks of terminating seem to be even more pronounced." Other studies comparing outcomes for abortion versus delivery of unintended pregnancies have found higher rates of clinical depression, anxiety, and substance abuse among women who abort, while studies that did not look only at unplanned pregnancies also find that women who aborted are at increased risk for suicidal behaviour, psychiatric problems, symptoms of post-traumatic stress, and sleep disorders, which are often linked to trauma. Virtually none of this information is given to women at abortion clinics. The abortion rate would certainly decline if it were.

Finally, there is yet another, even more gruesome, story to be told about what is called late-term abortion (LTA) or partial-birth abortion (PBA). These are abortions sought late in the pregnancy, when the healthy baby would survive if born naturally, that is, some time after the 26th week. While these are only carried out by a few abortionists, there will always be

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some who will oblige. Without giving full detail, the procedure requires that the doctor delivers the baby's body first while leaving the head within the birth canal, then kills it in an almost unbelievably cruel way, without anaesthetic. The dead body is then fully delivered. This is reported by the doctor as a stillbirth, for which the government handsomely rewards the abortionist at the taxpayer's expense. This is not only undoubtedly murder, but murder most foul. Indeed, it may be asked why Australians should ever be compelled to pay to assist in the destruction of tens of thousands of young Australians each year, children who, as the unlikely Bob Ellis so poignantly reminded us, 'would have grown to love us'.

The separate reason for mentioning this practice does not concern the act itself, but is to direct attention to the

way in which this procedure is now being publicly approved, here and elsewhere. I suggest any normal person would be repelled by the awfulness of this act and if in a position to do so, would repudiate and outlaw it by all possible means. Yet many support it. They are people who want abortion to continue to be available, as it is now, but fear that by allowing LTA to be outlawed, many may come to see, on close examination, how all abortion is repugnant and then may want all abortion outlawed. They so desperately want the present practices to continue that they will knowingly defend the indefensible, no matter how horrible. This is what happened in relation to the *Abortion Law Reform Act 2008* in the Victorian Parliament in recent months which not only legalised abortion but denied health professionals their right not to cooperate for any reason, including those of soundly based ethics.

The recently re-elected Queensland Labor Premier, Anna Bligh, on *Emily's List*, promised to legalise abortion if re-elected, while Stephen Smith, a Labor Minister in the federal parliament who is also a Catholic, wants to introduce law to allow the federal funding of abortion outside Australia though no request for such aid had come from any other country.

The global battle over abortion looks certain to escalate significantly soon. The new US president, Barack Obama, the most pro-abortion president ever, has started his term ominously. Every one of his nominees for the judiciary and high political office, including deputy Attorney-General and the Office of Women, is pro-abortion. He rapidly reversed the stance of the previous administration, so that US funds could again flow to support abortion in developing nations. The promised introduction of the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) is likely soon, a law that would override any current federal or state law against abortion, would make abortion legal across the US, and make compliance mandatory. All Catholic hospitals, nurses and doctors may then be under siege.

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

*The Ambrose Institute for Religious Liberty*

## A NEW FORCE TO PROTECT YOUR RELIGIOUS RIGHTS

*By Peter Day*



debate over whether Australia should have a national law criminalising religious 'vilification' along Victorian lines has been slowly coming to the boil since late last year. That was when the Rudd Government quietly let it be known that it was considering enacting some kind of national Australian charter of 'rights'. While the outlines of such a possible charter have been kept deliberately vague, it has generally been assumed that the 'right' to be free of 'vilification' would be up for inclusion.

At first blush, it might well be thought that religious leaders would be in favour of such a law. Religious people in Australia, after all, have for decades had to put up with an ongoing carnival of media and entertainment mockery of their traditional morality – not to mention a news 'spin' which often seems deliberately intended to vilify believers. But in practice the Victorian 'religious vilification' laws have notoriously served to constrain people of religious persuasion in the robust expression of their views – and rarely, it seems, their secular vilifiers. Needless to say, this state of affairs is widely seen as a most alarming harbinger of what may well lie in store for religious freedom on the federal front.

One indication of a growing concern at the trend toward a narrowing of the rights to religious expression was a most unusual gathering in late April in the Strangers Room of the NSW Parliament. Here a remarkably diverse coalition of religious leaders and other public figures (as well as your *Annals* reporter) met to publicly affirm their rights to freedom of religious expression – and to launch, for that purpose, a new not-for-profit organisation to be known as the Ambrose Centre for Religious Liberty.

The Centre is not to be mistaken for

one of those 'think tanks' whose purpose is to provide participants with a warm inner glow by putting out a newsletter and holding scholarly talk fests. Well, it may do some of that – but much more important is the service that it will now make available to any Australian who feels that their rights to show their religious beliefs are being restricted. Anyone who meets that description – or who knows someone in that position – is invited to contact the centre to seek advice and assistance. (Contact details are available at [http://www.ambrosecentre.org.au/contact\\_us.php](http://www.ambrosecentre.org.au/contact_us.php).)

The Ambrose Centre is clearly an organisation worth watching. The array of religious and lay leaders, including politicians and legal mavens, in attendance at its launch was evidence of the remarkable organizational prowess of the Centre's founder and chairman, Catholic lawyer Rocky Mimmo. They included representatives of most of the major Christian denominations as well as Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu and Jewish communities.

The tone of the event was well exemplified during the formal proceedings by the irruption of a startling difference of opinion between the Master of Ceremonies, Hindu leader Gambhir Watts, and the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Dr Peter Jensen. After Mr Watts spoke at some length about Mahatma

Chandi as a powerful religious example, Dr Jensen began his address with the announcement that he completely disagreed with almost everything Mr Watts had said. He immediately went on to make the point that the single principle that united all those present was precisely their right to disagree with each other – and to do so as strongly as they liked.

Following Dr Jensen came Cardinal George Pell, who kept the issue in useful perspective by noting that the challenges to religious freedom in Australia were 'not as strong or as fierce as they have become in other places,' and that 'many forces, including especially the good sense of the Australian majority, and the Ambrose Centre... will help to ensure that this situation continues.'

Cardinal Pell also insisted that religious freedom is not simply a right to toleration. He pointed out that 'it is the fundamental right of religious organisations and individuals, as full participants in the wider society around them, to practise and manifest their beliefs freely in the services they provide.'

Others who assisted with the launch included Dr My-Van Tran, an academic and Buddhist of Vietnamese background; Haset Sali, honorary legal adviser to the Australian Federation of Islamic Council; former Federal Labour minister Con Sciacca; the NSW Leader of the Opposition, Barry O'Farrell; Sydney QC Terry Tobin; and former deputy PM John Anderson – who formally launched the centre.

Near the close of proceedings, all the main participants came together to light candles. But no one should expect to see too much New Age 'harmony' at the Ambrose Centre – wrapping up, Mr Watts still wanted to have it out with Dr Jensen. Most refreshing.

PETER DAY is a former New York and Washington correspondent for *The Australian*.





*'Wicked 'unregulated' Capitalism was not the villain after all'*

## UNINFORMED BLAME

By Giles Auty



FOR those of us who are not economists, the genesis and nature of the current world economic crisis seems like that elusive bar of soap in the bathtub:

hard – if not impossible – to grasp.

Precisely why, for example, are so-called 'stimulus' packages and very low interest rates proposed as universal remedies which will head off the worst effects of a recession?

For some, at least, such as self-funded retirees, low interest rates will do no such thing.

In short, those who may have been prudent with their capital and who have sensibly eschewed the lottery of the stock-market are likely now to find themselves severely disadvantaged in terms of income through low interest rates.

As we are frequently reminded government initiatives in Australia are designed expressly to help so-called 'working families' which, as a substantial section of the electorate, will clearly play a significant role in electing or re-electing future Australian governments.

Foreseeably, a number of prominent commentators have tried to turn the present economic crisis to their

political – and even moral – advantage by pointing the finger at excessive or unrestrained capitalism as the cause of the present financial meltdown and recommending greater government intervention into the workings of the market-place as a surefire future remedy.

For those who are young or naïve and who have never travelled outside this country such a remedy probably sounds attractive and plausible.

To pick three recently published articles from a number available which clearly propose the superior morality of greater government regulation of market forces one might take Kevin Rudd's 7,000 word essay *The Global Financial Crisis* (*The Monthly* February 2009), Robert Manne's *Neo-Liberal Meltdown* (*The Monthly* March 2009) or speechwriter Dennis Glover's *In the market for a new morality* (*The Australian* 13 April 2009). In his article, Glover gleefully consigns a phenomenon he describes as 'neo-liberalism' to the "wheelie bin of history". All good, rabble-rousing stuff.

Neo-liberalism, our mentors tell us, was the prevailing economic orthodoxy of the past 30 years but that this has now – due to the present world economic crisis – manifestly failed.

Among philosophical proponents of the 'failed' economic orthodoxy of

neo-liberalism we are encouraged to point the finger at monetarists of the Viennese school such as L.von Mises and F.A.Hayek and international figures of more recent vintage such as Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan.

Is such an accusation just or otherwise?

Prior to the last federal election in Australia, the present prime minister Kevin Rudd described himself to the electorate as 'an economic conservative' – a category which would seem to put him in the same boat as Thatcher and Reagan.

Now, with what many may see as the wisdom of hindsight, Mr Rudd sees 'big government' and 'social democracy' as the necessary remedies to free-market capitalism.

Whoever and whatever is genuinely to blame, average uninformed Australians who are not noted for their knowledge of international – or even national – history, feel extremely aggrieved about the knock-on effects of the global economic crisis here. They are happy, in short, to blame anyone or anything for their plight irrespective of whether such blame is justified.

Almost certainly very few, if any, will have read an article by Claudio Veliz in the April edition of the excellent Australian monthly magazine *Quadrant* which patiently explains to anyone who will listen that the true origin of the current world economic crisis was due to an excess of interference by some recent American governments in the normal workings of the marketplace rather than the reverse.

This is the best and clearest explanation of this subject I have encountered thus far and should be made available to every household in Australia to prevent a gross misapprehension taking root here.

What Veliz explains is the powerful pressures placed by American

### Difficulties of Being Pope

I am forced to consider questions affecting churches and monasteries and often I must judge the lives and actions of individuals; at one moment I am forced to take part in certain civil affairs, next I must worry over the incursions of barbarians and fear the wolves who menace the flock entrusted to my care; now I must accept political responsibility in order to give support to those who preserve the rule of law; now I must bear patiently the villainies of brigands, and then I must confront them, yet in all charity.

- Pope Gregory the Great (AD 590-604), Homily on the Book of Ezekiel 1, ii, 4-6.

governments on financial institutions to provide housing loans to the very sort of people least able to service or repay these. Banks unwilling to succumb to such sanctimonious and financially irresponsible pressures were then subjected to damaging sanctions in the event of non-compliance. In short, wicked 'unregulated' capitalism was not the villain after all.

In Veliz's own elegant words: "It was mainly with this anomaly in mind that the 1977 Community Reinvestment Act was passed, specifically to mandate "depository institutions to meet the credit needs of lower-income neighbourhoods" in the districts in which they operated and from which they derived most of their deposits. This Act was then joyfully signed into law by President Jimmy Carter on October 12 1977, but as banks tended to remain unmoved by politically inspired exhortations to make their clients' money available in the form of mortgages unlikely ever to be repaid, a number of revisions were subsequently aimed at strengthening the enforcement authority of the state regulators. It then became possible formally to deny a bank's application to expand operations, consolidate branches or merge with other financial entities unless it fully complied with the requirements of the Act.

Under President Clinton, in 1999, this assessment became simply numerical, based strictly on the total number and amount of mortgages extended to applicants rated according to race, income level and neighbourhood: the bigger the amount mortgaged to the least credit-worthy applicants, the better for the bank's prospects of being favourably viewed by the state financial regulators".

In spite of the claims of Gordon Brown, Barack Obama and Kevin Rudd that they are instruments of a new and 'fairer' world order it was, in fact, a misplaced and financially catastrophic attempt at egalitarian social engineering that hurled the world into its present crisis.

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GILES ALTY 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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*Pressure on Catholics to convert to Hinduism*

## HINDU TEMPLE BEING BUILT ON RUBBLE OF CATHOLIC CHURCH

*By Nirmala Carvalho*

**T**HE FOUNDATIONS have been laid for a Hindu temple on the rubble of the church in Batticola, in the district of Kandhamal (Orissa). And the Christians returning to their villages are being pressured to convert to Hinduism. This information comes to *AsiaNews* from Sajan George, president of the Global Council of Indian Christians, who has received eyewitness testimonies from the northwestern state.

The church in Batticola was razed to the ground and burned last August, at the beginning of the violence against Christians. Now, a foundation about one meter high has been laid in order to build a Hindu temple there. "On Feb 2nd around 12 noon, about 17 people, mostly men, left the G. Udaygiri relief camp to check on conditions at the Dokewadi hamlet in Jhimangia village before returning there. These Christians were surrounded by the Hindu villagers and given a dire warning: if they wanted to come back to the village, they had to convert to Hinduism."

Batticola is one of the primary targets of the anti-Christian campaign. Sajan Geogre says that last October, a Hindu fundamental group released a falsified document purported to be the minutes of a Batticola Catholic parish council meeting on May 25 that allegedly conspired to assassinate 85-year-old Swami Laxamananda Saraswati. The killing of the swami last August 23 was the spark that ignited the series of attacks that killed at least 500 people, destroyed thousands of homes, burned hundreds of churches, and made more than 50,000 Christians flee.

The text of the minutes falsified by the extremists depicted the Christians as wanting to "offer sacrifices" against the "Satanic activities that stand opposed to the expansion" of the parish. The only problem is that the ritual words used in the document – in the Oriya language – belong entirely to the Hindu tradition, not to the Christian tradition, leading to the suspicion that the document is a complete fake.

This news from Batticola is a sign that the situation on the ground is not calm, although the government continues to give assurances that the danger has passed, and is closing the refugee camps, sending Christians back to their ruined homes.

Other sources say that some Christians who have gone back to Batticola have faced constant humiliation and discrimination. The Hindus in the village have instituted 15 unwritten rules against the Christians. One of them is that Christians should always give way to Hindus in the street; that in the public baths, the Christians should bathe last; etc.

All of this – the sources say – is very strange, because until recently "these people have lived together, celebrated festivals together, and basically a communitarian spirit prevailed, and yet there is a perverted sense of superiority and crushing the dignity of the Christians."

The Catholic church in Batticola was blessed in 1995. The Hindu radicals, under the leadership of Swami Laxamananda, tried to raze it to the ground in 2000.

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- Source: *AsiaNews*.

*Reflections upon reading Paul Davies*

## “THE GOLDBLOCKS ENIGMA”

By James McCaughan



IN MY FIRST visit to Westminster Cathedral in London in 1963, the whole congregation sang the Gregorian chant response to the priest intoning *Credo in unum Deum* at Sunday mass. The response began: *Patrem omnipotentem factorem caeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium* and so it is with all Christian creeds: God is the creator of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. It is a dogma that God, our Creator and Lord, can be known with certainty, by the natural light of reason from created things as well as being an object of supernatural faith. Likewise it is dogma that he created everything out of nothing; that the world had a beginning in time (known by faith only); that God keeps all created things in existence. It is also essential to the faith to believe that God created the world free from exterior compulsion and inner necessity; that God was moved by his goodness to create the world; that God, through his Providence, protects and guides all that he has created. It is also certain that God was free to create this world or any other<sup>1</sup>.

That visit to London was followed by my first visit to Rome, where the Second Vatican Council was in its first recess. St Peter's, with the stands used for the Council in the nave, and the blessing of Blessed John XXIII in St Peter's square, fired my faith. Now, forty-six years later, the foundations of that faith, as listed above, are under attack by members of my own profession of physics, such as Paul Davies, a theoretical physicist turned science populariser and Templeton Prize winner for his efforts. What is more these attacks are making headway among the faithful since the teaching of the faith and its rational defence has been severely weakened in

Catholic institutions in Australia in the years following the Council.

Davies' recent book "The Goldilocks Enigma," subtitled "Why is the universe just right for life?"<sup>2</sup> tackles the unexpected evidence from nature that a number of measured parameters are so finely tuned that only a tiny variation in their values would make life anywhere in the universe impossible. To a believer this is great news. This "just right for life" shows that life is not just an accident that happened to arise after myriads of random processes by blind chance, but was built in from the beginning of the universe; we are meant to be here.

Believers already had another piece of great news: the evidence from nature that the universe began in (better *with*) time. *A priori* there was no necessity for this evidence to be there. But the manner of the origin and the laws that govern the development of the universe left the history of its development written in the

heavens. Currently understood under the title "The Big Bang", the science of the origin of the universe complements faith that the universe was created by God from nothing in time: it is a disputed question whether beginning in time can be arrived at by reason<sup>3</sup>.

When one talks about reason one is not talking about science. For a believer faith and reason go together<sup>4</sup>. Faith purifies reason and reason deepens faith<sup>5</sup>. The reason referred to is philosophical, being the only discipline that addresses ultimate questions like why is there something rather than nothing; why is there change; what is truth? Science is not included here because it has to take the existence of the universe for granted before it can begin to investigate how (not why) it ticks and to look back in time till about 380,000 years after it came into existence. In coming to understand its mechanism a scientist uses his creative imagination. In the method favoured by Paul Davies and almost all theoretical physicists, scenarios are imagined that could lead to the reproduction of what we observe in nature. It is often referred to as the hypothetico-deductive mode of reasoning. Agreement with observation establishes the validity of the scenario, not its truth. In other words it establishes the scenario as a successful *fake*. [This is not to suggest that a deliberate deception is being perpetrated, but that this may be the best we can do for the time being. That we can fake it all, let alone discover how nature is actually doing it, is often a great achievement]. From the point of view of reason this method of doing science does not form a syllogism<sup>6</sup>. The truth of its conclusions cannot be established. It matters not a whit that the deductive part is commonly mathematical. Even the mode of operation of the scientist and philosopher differ strikingly: if you want to praise a scientist, praise

### Abuse of the Law

Then the laws that are made against malefactors shall they make, as an old philosopher [Plutarch] said, to be much like unto cobwebs, in which the little gnats and flies stick still and hang fast, but the great bumble bees break them and fly quite through.

And then the laws that are made as a buckler in the defence of innocents, those shall they make serve for a sword, to cut and sore wound them with, and therewith wound they their own souls sorer.

- St Thomas More A Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation [written in the Tower of London, in 1534, while awaiting execution] London: Thomas Baker, Soho Square [undated] page 232



his imagination: but the hallmark of a philosopher is his lack of imagination. Science uses reasoning but depends on the imagination. Reason does not depend on the imagination.

How can a believer, knowing what he knows, do science? One puts this certain knowledge from faith, into scientific doubt, but not real doubt; certain because it comes from God revealing it. One suspends this knowledge to allow science to work through its own proper methods and reach its own conclusions. One runs the risk of science getting it wrong. To impose the answer from faith on science is to destroy science. However a believer is full of confidence that science, true to its proper method, cannot fail to corroborate faith and reason, as God is the author of revelation and nature and is truth itself. There cannot be contradiction between revelation, reason and nature since the truth is one. A search for the truth, wherever it is to be found, is a search for God. It must also be understood that God is the author of nature but not science. Man is the author of science and therefore science is fallible; he can also misuse his reason.

Science as a self-sustaining enterprise started in the Christian West in the late Middle Ages. Stanley Jaki has thoroughly explored the historical reasons for why it was the Christian West and not other ancient civilisations that was successful. The Christian civilisation that was beginning had a clue that gave them the confidence to pursue in a systematic way the arduous task of discovering the ways of nature. That clue was that God "arranged all things by measure, number and weight".

The most celebrated clash between philosophy and science occurred in the "Galileo affair". [The science is the hypothetico-deductive method preferred by Davies and his theoretical colleagues]. The one and perhaps the only one at the time that understood what was at stake was St Robert Bellarmine. In his letter to Foscarini, a disciple of Galileo he puts it this way<sup>10, 11</sup>.

"----- First I say that it appears to me that Your Reverence and Signor Galileo did prudently to content yourselves with speaking hypothetically and not positively, as I have always believed Copernicus did. For to say that assuming the earth moves and the sun stands still saves all the

## Looking Bad

Beauty is a fragile and vulnerable quality, and moreover one that is difficult to achieve; ugliness, by contrast, is unbreakable and invulnerable, and very easy to achieve. (How easy it is to look bad, how difficult to look good!) By espousing the ugly, we make ourselves invulnerable too; for when we espouse the ugly, we are telling others that 'You can't shock, depress, intimidate, blackmail, or browbeat me.'

— Theodore Dalrymple, 'Beauty and the Best' *The New English Review*, January, 2009.

appearances better than epicycles is to speak well. This has no danger in it, and it suffices for mathematicians. -----" [italics mine].

Bellarmino grasps that the Ptolemaic (Earth at the centre of the solar system) and Copernican (Sun at the centre of the solar system) representations of the heavens are mathematical constructions. The construction enables a correct prediction to be made for the motion of the heavens. It does not thereby prove that this is how nature does it. Three and half centuries earlier St Thomas Aquinas had understood this and wrote in several places words equivalent to this quote:

"The suppositions which astronomers have imagined are not to be accounted necessarily true. Although these hypotheses seem to save the appearances, we must not say that they are thereby proved to be facts, because perhaps it would



be possible to explain the apparent movements of the stars by some other method which men have not yet excogitated."<sup>12</sup>

Bellarmino goes on to say:

"----- Further I say that if there were a true demonstration that the sun is at the centre of the universe and that the sun does not go around the earth but the earth goes around the sun, then it would be necessary to be careful in explaining the Scriptures that seemed contrary, and we should rather have to say that we do not understand them than to say something is false. But I do not think there is any such demonstration, since none has been shown to me. To demonstrate that the appearances are saved by assuming the sun at the centre and the earth in the heavens is not the same thing as to demonstrate that in fact the sun is in the centre and the earth in the heavens. I believe that the first demonstration may exist, but I have very grave doubts about the second." [italics mine].

"The appearances are saved" not that this is the way nature does it. That evidence was entirely lacking. In other words the Ptolemaic system, which was shown by Galileo to be a defective fake, should be replaced by the Copernican, which was a more successful fake at that time. The clash occurs here between the philosophy, that the Copernican system was no more than a successful fake, and Galileo, who believed the Copernican construction to be genuine. This is not a reasonable argument. Galileo is not content to leave the Copernican system as a construction, which is reasonable, but insists that it is the way nature is doing it. He fails to provide the evidence from nature, which of course is unreasonable.

That this clash later became to be between science and religion (long after Bellarmine's death) is what is remembered and the seeds of that clash can be seen in the reference to explaining the Scriptures in the second quote from Bellarmine's letter above. This was a most unfortunate development as neither side had a reasonable position. Galileo's position had not changed, but the majority of the consultors to the inquisition were provoked by Galileo and his followers to defend the understood faith from the emerging scientific method, by imposing it. "The Bible tells us how to go to heaven, not how the heavens

go" quipped Cardinal Baronius of the Vatican Library echoing St Augustine. As Cardinal St Robert Bellarmine had warned, if the evidence from nature was that the earth moved, then the Scriptures were misunderstood. That the earth was the immobile centre of the heavens never was Catholic dogma. That is why Galileo was condemned as "vehemently suspected of heresy" not straight out heresy in the judgment of the Inquisition<sup>11</sup>. Simply, if God is the author of revelation and nature, and nature contradicts revelation, then it is we who have misunderstood the revelation since the truth is one. Davies has done no homework on this celebrated case nor the historical foundations of science as the little bit of folklore repeated on p147 reveals.

Is science then only about faking it? No. Science has its empirical side. Systematic investigation of nature: if this, then that, produces rules that nature follows. As the investigation of nature deepens beyond what is directly accessible, models of what underlies the phenomena are produced. It is here that faking appears with models, like the Bohr for an atom for example, which is a miniature solar system. Vigorous efforts are made to tie down the requirements of the models by testing them against nature for their consequences. Quantity, measurement and mathematics play essential roles here.

There is another way of faking it by starting with ideas like Einstein's two postulates or axioms of Special Relativity. The scenarios of the beginning of the universe are in this category. The "Big Bang" enjoys favour because it has passed several tests, but it too may be a successful fake.

The question arises: what is the role of mathematics in science? Two different answers are usually given, which Davies neatly describes as prescriptive or descriptive (pp13-14). The prescriptive is part of the broad agenda of that philosophical system called idealism and the descriptive is defended by realism, the philosophy of common sense. Davies labels the opponents to the prescriptive view as philosophers and the prescriptive camp as occupied by physicists working on fundamental topics. This won't do. Davies is trying to throw the mantle of science over idealism. This allows him to articulate strictly philosophic attitudes as

## Listen to the Unborn Babe

I think that  
if they gave me leave  
within the world  
to stand,  
I would be good  
through all the day  
I spent in fairyland.

— G K Chesterton,  
from *By the Babe Unborn*

scientific throughout his book. Physics is a methodology informed or deformed by every philosophical position. At base the argument is not between science and religion, but between philosophies where it is rational. Davies candidly reveals that the motivation of many scientists struggling to construct a comprehensive theory of the physical universe is to get rid of God (p16). These scientists are doomed to failure as they are trying to answer philosophical questions based on reason by the imagination.

Davies' whole book is sourced in idealism and the imagination. The prescriptive mathematics lives Platonic like in an idealised world separate to the physical world (p15). [Aristotle condemned this idea of Plato's<sup>12, 13</sup>; who has ever seen mathematics existing apart from a mind?] That way it can pre-exist the real world and somehow cause its existence. Davies' whole position founders at this point. Plato, beside the world of Ideas had eternal matter and a demiurge to translate the Ideas into the matter. Now Davies has to bring the matter into existence, translate the ideas into that matter and all without a demiurge. "What breathes fire into the equations?" was asked by Stephen Hawking in his widely disseminated book "The Brief History of Time"<sup>16</sup>. This was echoed by Davies immediately after in his book "The Mind of God"<sup>17</sup>, picking his title from Hawking's closing sentence. "The Goldilocks Enigma" is billed as the sequel to "The Mind of God" and Davies still repeats the same question without seeing the need to put his pen down and cease writing (or switch off his word processor) as the whole project is without rational foundation. He won't contemplate locating the 'mathematics' in the mind

of God who has the power to bring the space and matter into existence governed by all the laws of which the quantitative part, describable by us by mathematics, forms a part.

Before examining why Davies won't remove his stumbling block, there is the matter of the detrimental effect idealism has had on physics in the 20th C. Einstein developed Relativity (1905-1916) from axioms or clear ideas of what founds the theory. It is a remarkably successful fake as all theories founded on ideas and not nature at best can be. However, its success comes at a price. It is replete with paradoxes, contradictions and false reasoning. Quantum Mechanics (1925-) developed by rejecting models of micro nature, then proceeded by mathematical formalisms alone. Mathematics is to nature as a blueprint is to a building. To breathe fire into the equations one has to have the material from which a building is built (material cause), a builder (efficient cause) to put the form from the blueprint (extrinsic formal cause) into the matter (intrinsic formal cause) and the whole brought over to execution for an end (final cause). The mathematics of Quantum Mechanics in the absence of all the other causes has spawned a plethora of interpretations, some of them quite bizarre. All accepted because they are consistent with the mathematics.

Idealism completely dominates the teaching of physics at university with mathematics controlling all explanation despite the fact that it can do no more than predict. It cannot tell what the efficient cause in nature is because it substitutes the extrinsic formal cause of the mathematics for the efficient with not the slightest concern for its irrationality and consequent sabotaging students' ability to think rationally. It is like looking at a beautiful lierne vault ceiling of an English gothic cathedral and not knowing which of its many ribs are decorative and which are structural or in other words which are supporting the roof and which are not.

Now we can say something in defence of Galileo. He wins our admiration in this respect: for wanting to defend realism against idealism. It is possible to discover how nature is actually doing it, not condemned to be forever faking how nature does it. We badly need another Galileo today.



Perhaps an analogy will help in understanding the role of mathematics. Suppose we intend to fly from Sydney to Melbourne and describe the terrain flown over. It is possible to fly following the landmarks along the route and arrive safely at Melbourne. But if it is thick cloud cover to ground level all the way, modern navigation allows flying by instruments to again arrive safely. Mathematics is the instrumental route; it will get you there just the same. But in answer to what the terrain flown over looks like can only give the height flown, wind speed, plane speed, direction and correction to direction, air temperature etc. This is no answer at all to this question, but is what modern theoretical physics gives as the answer. It does not know what nature is doing in going from one observation to another.

Why won't Davies remove his stumbling block of "what breathes fire into the equations?" by invoking the mind of God? One is better prepared to answer this question by having read "The Mind of God". There we find three theses sequentially developed: First, *God's mind was not involved*. Cause for physics means that for every phenomenon there is an antecedent phenomenon. [There is only one cause, the efficient. It has nothing in common with the four causes of realist philosophy, where cause and effect are simultaneous. It has a lot in common with the philosophy of David Hume<sup>18</sup>].

- God was not required to bring the universe into existence, as there was no prior event to the universe's existence; it was an uncaused event. [From nothing, nothing comes has been understood since the time of Parmenides. Davies does not believe it is an uncaused event, because the equations somehow, which he does not know, bring the universe into existence. Davies holds that it is an uncaused caused event. This is totally irrational]. As Aristotle has shown that the Ideas cannot exist separately<sup>19</sup>, science has come to an end here. There can be no science of what does not exist.

- Quantum fluctuations, which Davies holds to preexist as Platonic Ideas, are uncaused events. [This is a fallacy of equivocation. Fluctuations just signal that we cannot determine what the cause is, not that it is uncaused. In reality something must first exist before it can fluctuate; one cannot have a fluctuation of what does not exist].

- When the universe is sufficiently small, quantum fluctuations can be expected to govern its behaviour. [This is just an idea; of course there is no evidence from nature for this.].

- Therefore quantum fluctuations brought the universe into existence--from nothing! The "Big Bang" is a fluctuation! A fluctuation suggests a departure from some existing mean value. This is from nothing at all to all the energy of the universe. Surely even as an image this is false. Davies own question, "What breathes fire into the equations?" is conveniently ignored here.

This argument in the form of a syllogism is false at every step.

Second, *God was out of his mind*. The concept of God is impaled on the horns of a dilemma: As a necessary being he must necessarily create, or if free then the universe is arbitrary. [This is the opinion of a Keith Ward, whom Davies continues to invoke in "Goldilocks", St Thomas Aquinas dealt with all this<sup>19</sup>, but Davies, by his own admission, can't follow demanding philosophical argument (p231)]. Then God does not know what he is doing and therefore out of his mind. Third, *God has no mind at all*. The Platonic ideas replace God.

Davies runs with the same ideas in "Goldilocks" but does not spell them out. Viz. the universe as an uncaused event through quantum fluctuations does not need a creator (p226). He is completely under the self-deception that philosophical questions can be decided by science by virtue of the fact that if a particular philosophical stance, the idealist one, is adopted by most theoretical physicists, then it scientific. He comes a little closer to dealing with the Christian position in considering a God who had free choice in his creation but cops out by asking, "who made God?" (p228). It is hard to believe that so basic a question that is central to all of St Thomas's five ways could not be known by Davies. Davies can generate

endless scenarios from his or other's imaginations as to the origin of the universe: it is pointless to discuss them, as they are ways in which one might be able to fake it. There doesn't appear to be any of them that are subject to reason or testing in science. They are literally science fiction.

There is one idea about the origin of the universe that is new this time around in "Goldilocks" that at first sight seems to have scientific merit: the concept of the multiverse. One scenario is that multiple universes are possible but only a tiny fraction of these are life friendly. The dark energy of our universe is ten to the power 120 less than what it should be, so we are told. What it should be obtained by guessing that quantum zero point energy is what gives rise to it and the calculation for the value it should be determined by a cut off in wavelength at some suitable point, which looks no more than an educated guess, otherwise the calculation goes to infinity. Then to be life friendly this value has to be severely reduced. [Unless they are wrong about the quantum zero point energy being the dark energy]. Now there should be more universes just possible for life than those where it is, say, ten times more friendly for life than it need be [assumption]. Then if it is confirmed [by yet more theoretical calculation] that our universe is ten times more friendly than it seems to be at present then it will be conceded that it looks too "fishy" to have been produced by chance. So design wins. The advantage of the multiverse is that all values are possible (therefore not chosen by anyone, especially God) so being in a universe friendly for life is winning the cosmic lottery.

First the mathematics controls all this, so it is postulated to exist Platonic like [a contradictory position as Aristotle showed<sup>14</sup>]. Second there is nothing to "breathe fire into the equations". Third there is no guidance for the statistical weight to be given to each of these universes. Some form of random distribution is supposed in the scenario to make the too good for life seem "fishy". This is pure assumption; any number of non-random distributions are possible here since there is nothing to rule them out. Fourth the numbers are mainly guesses. Even if the calculations could be redone to show that there is

## Not for Comfort

THE ways of the Lord are not comfortable, but we were not created for comfort, but for great things, for the sake of the good.

- Pope Benedict XVI

nothing "fishy", all that will be achieved is a successful fake of one number. Yet this, according to Davies, is how science would get rid of God! As Darryl Kerrigan of "The Castle" fame would say: "Tell him he's dreaming!"

There was a saying: "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damn lies and statistics"<sup>40</sup>. Can statistics be used to discover genuine truth or are they just used as a mask for ignorance or worse in science? Years ago my research field was Cosmic Radiation. The arrival in time at the earth of these bare atomic nuclei from outer space and their energy could never be predicted. Nevertheless the empirical data showed that their energy was subject to a negative power law: the more energetic were far less frequent than those of lower energy; they were not distributed randomly. Statistical analysis determined the accuracy with which the power law could be determined. Statistics very much assisted the way forward.

An example of where statistics are used to disguise the truth comes from a problem given to first year university physics students: Suppose there is a box containing nitrogen at normal temperature and pressure. The volume of the box is one cubic metre. What is the probability that all the molecules will be found in a volume of one cubic centimeter in the corner (say)? The answer is 1 in 10 to the power 6 times 10 to the power 25. C.f. the biggest number that Davies talks about occurs in the context of imaginary universes (p 95) and is 10 to the power 10 to the power 10. The first year number, which applies on a human scale, is very much smaller than Davies' is large and so small that one could wait for the age of the universe at a change rate of 10 to the power of 9 per second and still not be close to observing one event. But the answer from nature is that it happens as often as you want: reduce the temperature of the walls till the gas liquefies; tilt the box for the liquid to run into the corner. What the statistics disguise is the existence of goal directed forces in each molecule. The molecules are not independent of one another: that they be independent is an essential assumption behind the use of the statistics. Once the kinetic energy of the molecules has been reduced by lowering the temperature, the molecules can capture one another since the forces are attractive and directed to each

## Spot the Totalitarian Strate

WE find Christian Nationalists, like the Deutsche Christen, attacking Marxism as the embodiment of antichristian secularism, while they appear to be entirely oblivious of the dangers to spiritual freedom and to Christian moral ideals involved in the Nazi cult of the racial state. And in the same way we find Christian Socialists in this country who are determined to destroy Militarism and Capitalism and Nationalism as the enemies of the Kingdom of God, but who do not realise that Socialism itself is capable of becoming just as dangerous to spiritual freedom. It is easy for us to denounce the unchristian behaviour of the Nazis, because we have no temptation to behave as they do. Nobody supposes that the Y.M.C.A. or Toc H are likely to start hunting down pacifists or trying to beat up Lord Melchett or Mr. Lansbury. Our temptations are more subtle, but no less real. It may be harder to resist a Totalitarian State which relies on free milk and birth-control clinics than one which relies on castor oil and concentration camps. The latter offends all our humanitarian instincts and traditions, the former appeals to those very instincts and allies itself with the movement for social reform which is so intimately connected with modern English religion.

— Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State*, London, Sheed and Ward, 1935, pp.106-108.

molecule. This capture forms the liquid. Goal directed forces eliminate blind chance.

In following David Hume, scientists have removed goals or ends from science. This has not eliminated them from nature but left them unrecognised. Blind faith in blind chance just leads to intellectual blindness.

There is nothing in "The Goldilocks Enigma" that satisfies reason as to the origin and life friendliness of the universe. The book is a good read for what are the current ideas in physics and astronomy and where the frontier of research is. However readers would be better able to withstand imagination posturing as reason by having a good dose of a realist philosophy now thankfully available in a very accessible form in John Young's "The Scope of

Philosophy" available from Warrane College University of NSW.

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1. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, (Tan, Rockford Ill. 1960), pp 13-17, 79-87.
2. Paul Davies, *The Goldilocks Enigma: Why is the Universe Just Right for Life?* (Penguin/Allen Lane, London, 2006).
3. Ludwig Ott, *ibid*, p 85.
4. Ludwig Ott, *ibid*, p 16: "Kant's philosophy exercised a decisive influence on the Protestant theology of the 19th century. From the standpoint of the Kantian doctrine of cognition it rejected the rational foundation of religion, and with it the intellectual proofs of the existence of God, and taught that religious truths must be perceived not by reason, but through religious feeling, which affirms the existence of God and by which we live in God. They claimed that it is on this subjective religious experience that Faith is founded. The consequence is a sharp separation of the spheres of knowledge and of Faith." This conclusion of Ott's I have verified in practice in that my Protestant colleagues affirm their faith without rational defence.
5. Pope John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* (Vatican, 1998).
6. Owen Gingerich, "The Galileo Affair", *Scientific American*, August 1982 p 123.
7. Stanley L. Jaki, *Science and Creation*, (Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh, 2nd Ed. 1986).
8. The Book of Wisdom, 11:20; Stanley Jaki, *ibid*, pp 154, 181, 221.
9. Owen Gingerich, *ibid*, pp 119-127.
10. James Broderick S.J., *Blessed Robert Bellarmine* (Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd, London 1928), Vol. 2 pp 358-360. This has the full text. Gingerich (*ibid*) has an extract.
11. Arthur Koestler, *The Sleepwalkers*, (Penguin, Ringwood Vic. 1964), p 454.
12. James Broderick S.J., *ibid*, pp 330-1, C.f. St Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* 1 q.32 a.1 ad.2.
13. Arthur Koestler, *ibid*, p 508.
14. Aristotle *Metaphysics III*, 1003<sup>a</sup> 7-17. Great Books of the Western World (Enc. Brit. Chicago 1952), Vol. 8 p 521. The discussion is pursued in many of the books of the *Metaphysics*; the reference gives succinctly a key point, viz. if the ideas are separate then they are a substance and indicate a "this". As such they cannot be universal, which indicate "such". St Thomas below agrees with this.
15. St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1 q. 15 a.1 ad. 1.
16. Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (Bantam, Sydney, 1989).
17. Paul Davies, *The Mind of God, Science and the Search for Ultimate Meaning*, (Simon & Schuster, Sydney, 1992).
18. "For as our idea of efficiency is derived from the constant conjunction of two objects, wherever this is observed, the cause is efficient; and where it is not, there can never be a cause of any kind"; David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1, 3, 14. Quoted by Fredrick Coppleston S. J., *A History of Philosophy*, (Burns and Oates, London, 1968) Vol. 5, p 285.
19. St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1 q.19 a.3: "Whether whatever God wills, he wills necessarily?" *Objection 6*: "Further whatever God knows He knows necessarily. But as His divine knowledge is His essence, so is the divine will. Therefore, whatever whatever God wills He wills necessarily." *Reply Objection 6*: "As the divine existence is necessary to itself so is the divine will and the divine knowledge; but the divine knowledge has a necessary relation to the thing known, not the divine will to the thing willed. The reason for this is that knowledge is of things as they exist in the knower, but the will is directed to things as they exist in themselves. Since then all other things have necessary existence in as much as they exist in God, but no absolute necessity so as to be necessary in themselves, in so far as they exist in themselves, it follows that God knows necessarily what He knows but does not will necessarily what He wills."
20. Attributed to Distracti in Mark Twain, *Autobiography*, (1924) Vol. 1, p 246.



*A growing lack of respect for the rules of the various  
Geneva Conventions and their symbols'*

## A CLASH OF SYMBOLS?

*By* Paul Stenhouse

**I**N AN EDITORIAL last year [7/2008] we reflected on the use of the Christian Era in designating dates while substituting *Before the common era* [BCE] and *After the common era* [AC] for the more familiar *Before Christ* [BC] and Anno Domini, 'the Year of our Lord' [AD].

This *Clash of Eras*, as we named it, is a further stage, if I may be permitted to coin yet another phrase, of an earlier *Clash of Symbols* when the Ottomans [and later the Israelis] objected to the use of the term and symbol of the 'Cross' in the 'Red Cross' in Turkey and Israel. It was argued that the cross in the title was offensive to Muslims in Turkey and to Jews in Israel.

The 'Red Cross' is a well-known non-religious international humanitarian organization. Its name and symbol is derived from the inverse of the national flag of Switzerland, which is a white cross on a red background.

Its title and symbol is *secular* not religious. If it were religious one wonders how the 'Red Cross Society' could exist in religiously sensitive Hindu-dominated India, or in Shintoist Japan, or in Communist China.

The Red Cross was eventually replaced in Turkey [1929] and in Israel [1954] by two *religious* symbols and titles: the Red Crescent and the Red Star of David – representing the religions of Islam and Judaism respectively. The equivalent Society in Iran until the advent of Ayatollah Khomeini was the Persian Royal symbol of the Red Lion and Sun; it is now the Red Crescent.

A curious effect of the changes in nomenclature has been the fact that since 1949 the Red Star of David has been refused affiliation with the International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC] now known as the 'International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Services'.

In 2006 the ICRC attempted to resolve the impasse with the Jewish Star of David by approving the use of a third allegedly neutral but familiarly *New Age* symbol – the so-called *Red Crystal*, a red square on a white background – which could be used in combination with the Cross, Crescent or Star of David.

The original motto of the Red Cross was undoubtedly Christian in inspiration: *Inter Arma Caritas* [Charity in the midst of warfare]. This has been changed in 1961 to the vaguer if more politically correct motto *Per Humanitatem ad pacem* [Peace through humanity].

Before 1929 the ICRC was affiliated with no religious group. It is now closely linked to the Red Crescent Society which is an overtly and uniquely Muslim group. The ICRC remains ambiguous about its relationship with the Red Star of David.

In the 1990s, more Red Cross personnel lost their lives than at any point in its history, especially when working in local and internal armed conflicts. These incidents often demonstrated a lack of respect for the rules of the various Geneva Conventions and their *symbols*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Committee\\_of\\_the\\_Red\\_Cross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Committee_of_the_Red_Cross). This link also lists those Red Cross personnel who were killed since 1992 in the line of duty.



# MEDIA MATTERS

By JAMES MURRAY

## Peking Ducks

Historic is the word for the latest Defence White Paper, historic in that it simulates early Elizabethan economics. As Sir Francis Drake and his crew took Spanish gold which went to build English galleons, Prime Minister Plenipotentiary Kevin Rudd and his crew are using Chinese yuan to build Australian warships.

No wonder the Chinese are offended. They know what happened to the Spanish Armada.

## Tick Ackland

The 20th anniversary of *Media Watch* was celebrated on ABC television with a fair apportioning of its scoops, bloopers and scandals. No selective assessment of anchors.

Here goes. By far the best of them was Richard Ackland. To the role he brought not only incisiveness but a lack of smugness that showed he too was a hack who might slip on inky truth.

The bravest? Current incumbent and ex-executive producer of *Four Corners* Jonathan Holmes who assessed that programme's re-examination of the case against convicted political assassin Phuong Ngo.

The re-examination was conducted by reporter Debbie Whitmont and producer Morag Ramsay. Politely but firmly, his tone hinting this is hurting me more than you, Holmes gave the programme a thumb that was not up.

Holmes must also be credited with revealing that ABC executive Paul Chadwick planned to have British and Canadian TVniks appraise the performances of Kerry O'Brien and Tony Jones:

Daft plan indicating that the C in ABC stands for cringe. O'Brien is a redoubtable veteran who continues to ignore the free advice of the great cross-examiner, Tom Hughes; ask only one question at a time. Jones is also redoubtable but inclined to grizzled eco-nuttiness, witness his hectoring Environment Minister Peter Garrett into saying sea-levels would rise six metres, Jones's

residence in Sydney's Woollahra stands at the seven-metre level (Wildpeace computer projection).

## Fitz Chaos

The title of Anthony Jay's television show, *Yes, Minister*, has passed into the language. Unfortunately laughter tended to drown its satirical – and deeply serious – message: the ostensibly civilized behaviour of permanent civil (read public) servants dealing with transient, elected politicians is both the strength and the greatest weakness of the Westminster System.

Anyone doubting the proposition has only to consider the escalation of the China Gifts Syndrome in which the

Minister of Defence, Joel Fitzgibbon, has found himself idiotically at odds with his own memory on presents received from the entrepreneur Helen Liu, whose friends also include the elite cadres of the Communist Chinese regime.

Early use by the Opposition of the phrase, 'The Minister has lost the confidence of his department' indicated glib prejudice against traditional views on the Westminster System.

More apt to say the Minister had lost confidence in his department given his earlier

## Humanitarianism

THE EARLY reformers' struggle with industrialised society illustrates what I believe to be the greatest civilising achievement of the nineteenth century, humanitarianism. ... Nowadays, I think we under-estimate the humanitarian achievement of the nineteenth century. We forget the horrors that were taken for granted in Victorian England: the hundreds of lashes inflicted daily on perfectly harmless men in the army and navy; the women chained together in threes, rumbling through the streets in open carts on their way to transportation.

– Sir Kenneth Clarke, *Civilization*, 1971 ed. With thanks to Roger Sandall. [http://www.rogersandall.com/Spiked\\_By-the-Skin-of-our-Teeth.php](http://www.rogersandall.com/Spiked_By-the-Skin-of-our-Teeth.php)





criticisms of its failure to keep him informed on a range of matters including wages due to Special Air Service Regiment personnel.

The Opposition's quest for Fitzgibbon's scalp has been predictable while failing to take account of episodes where its own ministers were given Defence Department mushroom treatment or, to vary the botanical metaphor, the rough end of the pineapple.

Such treatment is intrinsic to the Westminster System. Its most memorable example occurred in the UK when Leslie Hore-Belisha as Secretary of State for War pushed through a programme to modernise the British Army. Elements within the War Office made his tenure - 1937-40 - shorter than it might usefully have been as World War II shifted from phony to real.

For Hore-Belisha can we read Fitzgibbon? Well, the latter still has, at this writing, carriage of the defence reformist agenda. Unlike Hore-Belisha, a barrister, Fitzgibbon has not, however, kept his brain in gear with his tongue or the facts of his gifted life.

Uniformed and civilian echelons were part of the Hore-Belisha War Office as they are of the Fitzgibbon Department of Defence. The major difference is that the latter has a bewildering number of PRs. Or is that bewildered?

One potential cure: the national broadcaster the ABC should appoint a full-time defence correspondent, preferably one who has been at the sharp end, rather than the thesis end, of war.

### Beyond Bond

The most notable remark attributed to the unsinkable Alan Bond was: 'If you owe the bank \$500, that's your problem. If you owe the bank \$5 million that's the bank's problem.'

Up-dating is necessary in the context of the Global Financial Crisis: 'If the bank is down

\$5 billion, that's your problem again, you the taxpayer, that is.'

### Up There

On form, Barry Oakley is a dazzler - a Keith Miller of wordsmiths. He showed this in his review of John McLaren's biography of Vincent Buckley (Australian Scholarly Publishing) by incorporating in it an elegy for the Catholic intellectual of the 1950s.

Okay, premature elegy. As long as the Faith prevails, there will be Catholic intellectuals, including Oakley, whose plays such as *At the Feet of Daniel Mannix* and *A Salute to the Great McCarthy* deserve a revival.

The Genesian Theatre in Sydney should offer re-runs to demonstrate to larger enterprises, suffering from late-onset cultural cringe, how well wrought they are.

Oakley in his review debunks the phrase, 'cultural Catholic'. Your correspondent had not heard it used in the UK or the US and first saw it printed under Gerard Henderson's byline, which suggests an Australian coinage.

In any case, isn't a 'cultural Catholic' one who has thrown out the baby (Jesus) and kept the bathwater?

### Flack Bias

Coverage of Pope Benedict XVI's response to a French hack's question in Africa about the effectiveness of condoms against HIV/AIDS could scarcely have been more biased had it come from a PR company in search of a bonus.

Despite this, there was a modicum of balance. *The Week* quoted scientific evidence from the US supporting the papal view. In *The Australian*, Christopher Pearson cited similar evidence.

Oddly, when the same newspaper covered Cardinal George Pell's Eastertide reinforcement of the papal response, this evidence was not included in John Stapleton's report.

## Quibblers with words?

WHERE the Church is, there also is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there also is the Church and every grace. But the Spirit is Truth (1Jn 5,6). Hence those who turn away from it are not nourished at their Mother's breasts either, so that they might gain life, nor do they have any share in the clear spring flowing from Christ's body (Jn 7,37) but «have dug for themselves leaky cisterns» (Jer 2,13) ... Strangers to the truth, inevitably they slide into error and are tossed about by it, nor do they ever possess a firmly established teaching since they prefer to become quibblers with words than disciples of truth. For their foundations are not on the one Rock but on sand.

- Saint Irenaeus of Lyons, AD130-208, Bishop, theologian and martyr. *Against the heresies* III, 24, 1-2.





In the same issue's *Streuth!* James Jeffrey went for Pell: 'It just doesn't seem like a proper religious holiday without some senior member of the Catholic Church popping up to say something on condoms. Indeed waiting for an ecclesiastical prophylactic proclamation fills *Streuth!* with the same sort of excited anticipation reserved for the Easter bunny and the big bloke from the North Pole. So a big *Streuth!* thank you to Sydney's Cardinal George Pell who has carefully explained why the Pope is right to say that condoms help spread AIDS...'

No previous examples of senior members popping up were included. What needs to be explained to Jeffrey is that the Pope did not say, 'condoms help spread AIDS'. The relevant part of his response was, 'I would say that this problem of AIDS cannot be overcome merely with money, necessary though it is. If there is no human dimension, if Africans do not help, the problem cannot be overcome by the distribution of prophylactics, on the contrary, they increase it.'

In his abrupt paraphrase, Jeffrey showed he is not one to hide his bias under his hyperbole. Having had a dig at 'Anglican Archbishop Peter Jensen for confirming that Barack Obama is not the messiah', Jeffrey added a final parenthesis, '(please do not feel free to insert a *Life of Brian* gag here, oh, go on then).'

How twee. Yet Jeffrey, like Yorick, is a fellow of infinite jest. He does not need cheap shots to hack out a living.

### Sensitive Soles

The sight of politicians tip-toeing round the words 'recession' and 'depression', like Dr Bowdler avoiding Shakespeare's wilder verbiage, has a vintage irony.

The acrid truth is that most of the world's peoples live in a constant state of recession

and/or depression, particularly China's people, thanks to whose pittance lives its Communist regime can bail out developed but mismanaged (Greenspaned?) economies.

Is laissez-faire capitalism dead? The truth is it has never more than parasitic on the ideal of sharing communities disrupted when Henry VIII had a marital difficulty and contrived to put opportunists in the way of community wealth.

No tip-toeing for the mogul's mogul, old China hand Rupert Murdoch. He has set out his view that fiscal stimulation to cure debt carries the risk of inflation. When the Merlin of debt management says such a thing, time to plant the window boxes with potatoes, carrots and peppers and keep chooks in the en suite.

### Down Undered

Reportage on a study of global life styles in *The Australian* (syndicated from *The Wall Street Journal*, May 6) made no mention of Australia. On the same date a report on the study in *The Sydney Morning Herald* duly mentioned Australia.

Has Peter Thomson, top editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, failed to inform its fact checkers he is an Australian and that its principal proprietor Rupert

Murdoch is Australian-born?

### Off-shore Shelters

The United States and the European Community seem to have agreed that something must be done about tax havens in their respective jurisdictions. Follow-ups in local newspapers and on radio and television cannot be discounted.

### Non Starters

Budget eve. But no guesses here. Everyone's had enough of Hackdom's standby dishes: Leak Soup, Parrot Goulash and Spinach Pie.

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## Tell that to General Custer

In a conversation with an intelligent, young proponent of the school of deconstruction, I used the word 'truth.' She immediately replied, 'Oh, I never use the word truth anymore. For me things are either interesting or uninteresting.' She had no response when I asked her if Custer thought it was interesting that Crazy Horse was riding right at him with a loaded rifle.

- Joseph Grange, 'The Generosity of the Good,' in *The Review of Metaphysics, A Philosophical Quarterly*, vol xxlii Sept. 2008, p.112. [Custer was the impetuous 37-year-old US General killed at the Battle of Little Bighorn in 1876.]





*Neither Angels nor Demons*

**TRUTH MATTERS - EVEN IN FICTION**

By Al Kresta



LAST week I screened Ron Howard's film version of Dan (Da Vinci Code) Brown's *Angels and Demons*. The movie won't turn you into either. But it will lay another dirty veneer over the popular media portrait of a corrupt Catholic Church menacing human progress and obstructing scientific discovery.

*This is the only issue I'll deal with in this column.* I am not writing a movie review. Nor am I denying the film's wealth of talent and fine production values. I am also ignoring the film's outrageous claims about the Illuminati, the bizarre invention of a Galileo code which riddles the world with secret messages and clues to the combat between science and faith, or the claim that the Church hunted down and killed scientifically progressive souls.

I am deliberately avoiding all of the above nonsense and irrelevancies so I can focus on the most important problem with the film: *its monstrously unjust portrayal of the Church's relationship to scientific investigation.* This one thing I do.

First, an exhortation: Get ready to do some historical apologetics. Let's establish the Church's reputation as the greatest single contributor to the rise of modern science. I will equip you to make that claim. When you finish reading this column and its forthcoming sisters, you will know more about the Catholic Church and the rise of science than ninety percent of those who will see the movie. So seize the evangelistic day. Embrace the movie's release as a great opportunity to reveal the work of Christ through His Body, the Church. Okay. I'll show my age. Sing it: *Shine Jesus shine.*

Second, a warning: Don't be put off by the excuse that *Angels and Demons*

is just fiction or that the movie isn't as anti-Catholic as the book or that Ron Howard's climax pulls its punch against the new pope. Would you applaud a segregationist just because he's not with the KKK? Would you shrug off as harmless a movie that presents the International Red Cross as intentionally poisoning millions of those it claimed to be healing?

Third, the thesis: Hear me clearly, the problem with *Angels and Demons* is not that it criticizes the Catholic Church or takes artistic liberties with sacred materials. No, the problem is that its premise runs directly counter to the truth. What is the key truth suppressed here? *That the Catholic Church has consistently advanced - not obstructed - the cause of scientific investigation - not perfectly but consistently, reliably, predictably and benevolently!* There isn't another competitor in Her league because Jesus does all things well.

You needn't take my word for it. Hear Oxford researcher and American

Historian of Science John Heilbron's prize winning study, *The Sun in the Church: Cathedrals as Solar Observatories (2001)*. "The Catholic Church gave more financial and social support to the study of astronomy for over six centuries, from the recovery of ancient learning during the late Middle Ages into the Enlightenment, than any other, and, probably, all other, institutions."

Let me break the news gently to Dan Brown and Ron Howard. The Galileo case is the exception that proves the rule. We deceive ourselves and others when we take this complex case and use it as the grid through which all other church/science conflicts can be assessed. [See Donald Demarco's excellent exposition of the Galileo Affair <http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/science/sc0043.htm>). For a broader look see Lawrence Principe's *Science and Religion*. Lectures 2-6 are especially on point.]

Fourth, truth matters - even in fiction. Good fictional as well as good non-fictional storytelling is expected to

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## Princely Fortunes

In England, where our writers boast of the orderly manner in which the change of religion was carried on, it nevertheless may be said to have most unjustly and sacrilegiously seized upon and destroyed in the reign of Henry VIII six hundred and forty-five monasteries, ninety colleges, and one hundred and ten hospitals; and under Edward VI or rather his profligate uncle, two thousand three hundred and seventy-four colleges, chapels or hospitals, in order to make princely fortunes for that uncle and his unprincipled comrades, who, like banditti, quarrelling over their spoils, soon brought each other to the block.

- *The End of Religious Controversy*, John Milner, James Duffy & Co Dublin, 1886 ed. p. 159

fiddle with the facts to achieve dramatic effects. Think of the following Sports films: *Cinderella Man*, *Sea Biscuit*, *Rocky Balboa*, *Remember the Titans*, *Bring It On*, *Karate Kid*, *We are Marshall*, *Chariots of Fire*, *Rudy* are not judged as though they were documentaries like *Hoop Dreams*, *The Fight*, or *Spellbound*.

Ron Howard and Dan Brown probably don't see themselves as purveyors of violence. But their hostile re-invention of a community's factual background can only create frustration and frustration leads to aggression. When tellers of tales marginalize, stereotype and demonize various groups, they are reading a people out of history. When storytellers wildly distort, by commission or omission, the narrative of a neighborly charitable, educational and, (dare I claim it?), a Divinely established institution, it is just plain wrong regardless of the movie market's willingness to have its ears tickled with lies.

Fifth, Howard and Hanks know what they are doing. On the Catholic Church and science, even Hollywood should get it by now. The evidence is not unclear. *Angels and Demons* is not novelistic licence: it is exploitation. In spite of their talent, Ron Howard, Tom Hanks and Dan Brown are, in this instance, par with snake-oil salesmen trading on the credulity of an uninformed public desperate for healing.

Just how absurd is Howard's picture of the Catholic Church and science? What does it look like? Like a Barnum and Bailey circus program where the lion-taming act is followed by a march of the Missionaries of Charity swaying single-file like a family of dancing elephants, Mother Teresa at the lead. Nobody looks good in that parade... not even P.T. Barnum. The version of

history presented in this movie is so unfair that Church authorities denied Howard and company permission to film in the Vatican. Who can blame them? Why should Catholic pastors be party to a huge commercial plan that presents Christ's Bride as a centrefold?

Let's recall the premise of the movie. The film's Vatican administrator (camerlingo) sets it up: "Since the days of Galileo our Church has tried to slow the relentless march of progress sometimes with misguided means." Nonsense. There is no "Vatican's centuries' old reluctance to embrace science" as slop/pop TV documentaries put it. Real historians of science dismiss this legend as, at best, little more than a good yarn, an entertaining story pitting an authoritarian, hierarchical institution against free-thinking, progressive, democratic dissenters. This "yea-boo", "cheer-jeer" version of history never happened. You might even say it's the

angels vs. demons approach to the past. Tom Hanks reduces the Church's concern for truth to a disguise for guarding its own survival interests. "When it comes down to protecting one's turf... it's a very basic protagonist/antagonist dilemma. That's really important to *Angels and Demons*."

Sixth, how bad is the film's distortion? We need to get our proportions straight. Over-reaction can undermine our mission as much as apathy. So just how off-base is the Brown, Hanks and Howard version of the relationship between the Church and science? Hear Lawrence Principe, professor of History of Science, Technology and Chemistry at Johns Hopkins University. He is unambiguous about the scholarly opinion: "Let me be clear: the idea that scientific and religious camps have historically been separate and antagonistic is rejected by all modern historians of science."

Seventh, how do they get away with this? "History is bunk" said Henry Ford and many of us implicitly agree. But we're a little ashamed of ourselves. I mean we know that if we ignore the past we are more likely to be suckers in the present. But even the best of us don't really know very much outside our work and hobbies. Test yourself. (Trust me; I do have a point to the following questions).

- How many of the Founding Fathers of the United States can you immediately name? Washington, Franklin, Jefferson. Maybe Madison, Adams and Hamilton. If you can go beyond that, most of your fellow citizens would respect you as an operator in the "smart zone."
- How about Civil War generals? Definitely Lee, Grant, Sherman and Stonewall Jackson. For those who care more than the average bear, we remember Pickett, McClellan, Longstreet, Jeb Stuart, George Meade. Now if you grew up near Ken Burns in Ann Arbor, then maybe Hooker, Burnham, Nathan Bedford Forrest, A.P. Hill, Halleck. Don't feel bad: there were hundreds of generals you've never heard of.
- How about the women most responsible for securing the right to vote? I'll wager no more than two come to mind. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Did anybody also get Lucretia Mott? Probably not unless you've taken a Woman's Studies course or bothered to watch a PBS documentary.

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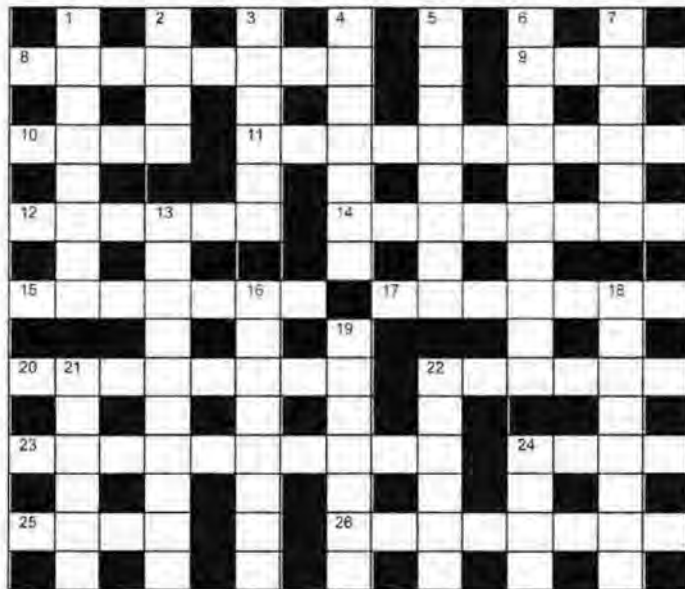
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## ANNALS CRYPTIC CROSSWORD No. 10



### ACROSS CLUES

8. Her Jamie gets upset with this Prophet (8)
9. Flairy one helps to make the sauce (4)
10. Look! Old Testament stolen goods (4)
11. Polish Saint has a last sinus operation (10)
12. Repeated words of Hinduism in Roman tradition (6)
14. Showed passion for then wrongly used (8)
15. Pull a face when I'm in grace (7)
17. To run over backward lad is a shame (7)
20. Make a fool of by cooking Ma's trout (8)
22. Newspapers, radio and television to cover new site of Muhammed's tomb (6)
23. Remission of sin for sailor with answer (10)
24. Wise men hugged by Hiroshima girls (4)
25. Brother leaves banner to grandmother's patron (4)
26. Current clergyman is faithfully describing the truth (8)

### DOWN CLUES

1. Dashing to only half debate on air (8)
2. Advanced money in fast time (4)
3. Seat is arranged for a little nap (6)
4. Swindled revolutionary devoured head of Dominicans (7)
5. The first Irish Saint I see with a belief in only one God (8)
6. Having a pleasing shape, bore converted (4-6)

7. Former Danish king finds mad aunt in Church of England (6)
13. Seen on graves where Tom's T-bones are barbecued (10)
16. Leading Cardinal has wild blue vestment (8)
18. Graduate, turning up on north-eastern entrance is to renounce pleasure (8)
19. Regarding moral values, California supports the wrong one (7)
21. Elegant Pope of first Crusades at end of rope (6)
22. Some Mormon I can accuse of concealing patron of widows (6)
24. Evaluate Gospeller (4)

### SOLUTION TO CRYPTIC NO. 9



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Modern Anatomy and Physiology?"

- Or Antoine Lavoisier, the "Father of Modern Chemistry"
- Or Blaise Pascal, the "Father of Hydrostatics?"
- Or Louis Pasteur, the "Father of Pasteurization?"
- Or Archdeacon Nicolaus Copernicus, "the Father of Heliocentrism?"
- Or Pierre-Duhem, "the Father of the History of Medieval Science?"
- Or Fr. George Coyne, the discoverer of asteroid 14429 Coyne?
- Or Dr. Martin Nowak, Harvard mathematics and biology where his discoveries in evolutionary dynamics argue that co-operation as much as competition has driven natural selection. "Genes co-operate in cells, cells co-operate in organisms, and individuals co-operate in societies."
- Or Guglielmo Marconi, "the Father of Radio?" and recipient of the 1909 Nobel Prize in Physics.

The thought "Catholic Church and science" produces "Galileo" with as much certainty as saying "tissue" and thinking "Kleenex." *Angels and Demons* is your chance to elevate your neighbours' understanding of the Faith by letting Jesus shine through His Church. Share some of this information and they will no longer be enslaved to longstanding cultural conditioning processes. No longer will they hear the ringing of the "Catholic Church and science" bell and then unthinkingly salivate "Galileo."

How did the Catholic Church's vital role in the development of modern science get obscured by the much misunderstood Galileo incident? We actually know and I'll tell you in the next column.

"Since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason on the human mind, God cannot deny himself, nor can truth ever contradict truth." "Consequently, methodical research in all branches of knowledge, provided it is carried out in a truly scientific manner and does not override moral laws, can never conflict with the faith, because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God." (CCC, 159).

AL KRESTA is a broadcaster, journalist and author who is, first of all, a missionary. *Kresta in the Afternoon* is broadcast on over 120 stations nationwide including the EWTN Global Catholic Radio Network and Sirius Satellite Radio. It is produced by Ave Maria Radio every weekday afternoon from 3-6 p.m. Eastern Time. *Kresta in the Afternoon* takes a closer, Catholic look at current events, issues and ideas.

So how do Brown and Howard get away with it? Very simply: the ignorance of their audience. When I say "Catholic Church and science", why does only one name come to everyone's mind? *Galileo*. Even though historians of science agree that the Galileo case is the exception not the rule. Yet it persists.

- Why does Galileo, the "Father of Observational Astronomy" dominate?
- Why not these other Catholics of varying degrees of devotion but still of exceptional intelligence and giftedness

and blessing to humanity?

- Why not Msgr. George Lemaitre, the "Father of the Big Bang theory"?
- Or Abbot Gregor Mendel, the "Father of Genetics?"
- Or Franciscan Friar Roger Bacon, the "Father of Scientific Laws?"
- Or St. Archbishop Nicolas Steno, the "Father of Geology?"
- Or Rene Descartes, the "Father of Modern Rationalism?"
- Or Fr. Marin Mersenne the "Father of Acoustics?"
- Or Andreas Vesalius, the "Father of

*Oz to Ostia: per vinum ad astra*

## NORTHWARD HO!

*Reviewed by* IAN MACDONALD



MORE than 30,000 Australians live in Italy, two-thirds of them dual passport holders. a number that entails a

potentially fascinating spectrum of views for this book. By far the most intriguing of these is Peter Howard's, *Australian Clergy in Italy after Vatican II*.

Writing of Propaganda Fide – formally the Pontifical Urban College – he provides an account of how

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*Australians in Italy: Contemporary Lives and Impressions*

Edited by Bill Kent, Ros Pesman  
Cynthia Troup

Monash University ePress: \$37.95.

---

Australian seminarians at the renowned institution mounted a campaign against the veteran rector Monsignor Felice Cenci during the early 1970s when the pendulum of the 1960s was still swinging.

The campaign focus was on the programme of *autoformazione* under which seminarians were required to work at understanding and structuring their own character.

The programme was carried out within a system of *cameratas*, groups of between 15 and 30 students drawn from different countries and year levels. Italian being their common language. Students from the same nations, regions or language groups were allowed to socialise for only a brief period on Sunday after lunch.

The Australians met in a group known as the 'Aussie Rec' although it also comprised New Zealanders, Tongans and Fijians – an intriguing example of one-upmanship about which Howard makes no comment. Odd. As odd as his remark mentioning only the Australians being refused permission to play cricket, 'on the grounds that they should only engage in sports in which all students could participate? What? No New Zealanders wanted to play cricket? Or were they refused rugby despite all-black soutanes?

By and large, Howard sees this as the Romanisation of seminarians, the centre against the perimeter as if ignorant that it is the centre that must hold. If it does not, as we know from the Irish soothsayer, WB Yeats:

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,

The blood-dimmed tide is loosed,  
and everywhere

The ceremony of innocence is  
drowned;

The best lack all conviction while  
the worst

Are full of passionate intensity

To others, who bear Yeats in mind, the *autoformazione* programme was about internationalisation of the seminarians as much as Romanisation, and a prescient order for global multiculturalism. Objections smack of

## Islamic Intolerance on the Rise

AFTER a series of particularly violent anti-Christian attacks in Mosul last October, leaders of the Catholic Chaldean church and other Christian denominations wrote a protest letter stating that "it seems that Iraq is one step closer to becoming an Islamic state intolerant to non-Muslims."

The Taliban last week threatened Pope Benedict XVI, whom they call "the most important personality in the Christian world," with violence over "stupid and irresponsible acts of proselytism" they contend are being conducted in Afghanistan by "crusader" missionaries. This followed edited footage aired on al-Jazeera that appeared to show the military's top chaplain in Afghanistan, Lt. Col. Gary Hensley, encouraging troops to "hunt people for Jesus." Unedited footage released later showed the chaplain discussing in detail what constituted impermissible proselytizing and cautioning the troops not to cross the line.

For the Taliban, the mere presence of Christians in their country – not to mention Jews, Hindus and others – is anathema. Under current Afghan law – which is under the regime the United States and other Western countries are expending blood and treasure to defend – converting to another religion from Islam is a capital offense. Afghan aid worker Abdul Rahman, who converted to Catholicism, was allowed to flee to Italy after his arrest in 2006 created an international outcry.

– Source: Editorial, *The Washington Times*, May 17, 2009



that derivative paean to ocker jingoism. 'Aussie! Aussie! Oy! Oy! Oy!'

Ironically, the brilliant doyen of Rome correspondents, Desmond O'Grady, broke the original story which led to a curtailment of Australians at Propaganda Fide. He could have provided an up-to-date perspective. But in his essay, he concentrates on the travails of being a journalist in Rome. He exhibits characteristic pertinence when he comments that Italy attracts less interest than it did 30 years ago. 'Australian newspapers have less space for analytical articles.

'These days the Australian press seem to want frothy pieces about Italy – something warm and human – but does not regard the country as interesting, as well it might on the grounds that it is grappling with the problems of modernity in its own way.

'At times contemporary Italy seems uncertain of its identity, almost bent on collective suicide and shaky about what constitutes the essentials of a human society.'

Brian Matthews, far-traveller of the groves of academe, recalls Bernard Hickey, etching his portrait in love, respect and wit. Hickey, a non-academic's academic, was responsible at Ca' Foscari – the University of Venice – for spreading Australian literature in Italy (anyone for Banjo Paterson billy tea and Vegemite focaccio?)

Transcending other contributions is that of Peter Porter in, *A Great Tradition Revisited*, his prose lucid, his poetry lustrous

It was a wonderful party to be at.  
We write our thank you letters  
In the world's far-reaching galleries.  
Who will clean up now? All the water  
In the reservoirs won't remove the  
stain  
From Golgatha. We think back instead.  
Little Andrea has drawn a sheep  
With a bright stone upon a smooth-  
faced rock.  
Lucky for him a Medici is passing.  
Soon the banquet will be set again.

This is work of rich information and insight. Too often, however, its scholarly apparatus lessens its general readability. It's like viewing a fine vessel at sea, sails set but with all its land scaffolding still attached. The solution is obvious. Like *Quadrant* magazine, Monash University ePress should print a note in its books

*The following is included in this issue of Annals under instruction from the Provincial Superior of the Australian Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.*

**A**NNALS is a publication of the Australian Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. It can now claim to be the oldest continuously published magazine in Australia. Over those years it has sought to help its readers to grow in knowledge of our Church and our world. In its quest to promote all that is Catholic, Annals has eschewed taking sides in the debates that have always been part of our Australian Church life. Instead it has tended to focus on what unites us and has striven to bring readers to an appreciation of the diversity and richness that constitutes our Catholic tradition.

In the divisive debates of the 1950's over the political stances attributed to the Melbourne and Sydney Church, and in which some MSC played significant roles, Annals avoided adding to the polarisation of its readers and continued to focus on what unites rather than what divides.

Sadly the March 2009 edition of the Annals departed from that tradition and published articles that disparaged the Catholic Church in Queensland – its people, clergy, religious and hierarchy. I apologise for this lapse and I assure readers that in future Annals will resume its efforts to highlight how wide and deep is our shared heritage of faith.

– [Father] Tim Brennan MSC, MAY 11, 2009

advising that a fully annotated version is available on-line. The general reader, buyer or borrower, does not need half-a-yard of references and the instruction: 'Cite this chapter as...'

The book's funniest joke, possibly inadvertent, belongs to Amanda Vanstone, one-time federal MP who for her celebrated tactfulness was appointed Australian Ambassador to Italy by PM John Howard, then at his most Liberal.

In her preface, Vanstone writes: 'A visit to the non-catholic cemetery in Rome reveals that a number of

people from Australia have been buried there over the years often after making a significant impact in their chosen field in Italy such as the arts, literature, diplomacy and business ...'

Why does this inspire the thought: you can take Amanda out of Adelaide but you can't take Adelaide out of Amanda? Adelaide, and South Australia, were the result of a proposal for colonisation envisioned in a London debtors' prison by Edward Gibbon Wakefield. Integral to the vision: no Catholics, no Jews need apply.

As against this, Kent, Pesman and Troup write in the introduction, 'a distinctive Australian presence in central Italy, that of the Carmelite nuns of Morrocco only sneaks in, as it were, because of the community's charming garden, although one suspects that the self-effacing sisters will think nothing of this neglect of their other achievements.'

Perhaps in the sequel...

IAN MACDONALD the pen-name of a prominent Sydney journalist and author.



## Morning Light

Disney - Roy E. of that Irish-American ilk - produces one of the finest sailing documentaries ever made. He focuses on 11 young sailors (down from a 15-strong final squad) selected from many applicants to take part in the TransPac: 2,500 miles from the US West Coast to Hawaii.

The crew-selected skipper of a 50-foot racing sloop is Jeremy Wilmot of the Australian sailing tribe. Training and heavy-weather sailing thrills are intercut with honest, deck comment and judicious on-shore analysis.

Must be seen by all voyagers even those whose sailing is confined to model boats in the bath-tub.

PG★★★★SFFV

## The Escapist

Frank Perry (Brian Cox) is in gaol for the term of his natural life under a regime dominated by Rizza (Damian Lewis) and Tony (Steven Macintosh), psychotic brothers in whom some may see the Krays of Cockney gangster legend.

Perry endures - until he a letter from his wife tells him that his beloved daughter is ill. Escape becomes his obsession. He recruits a crew to help him: Lenny (Joseph Fiennes), Brodie (Liam Cunningham) and Viv Baptista (Seu Jorge).

A new cellmate Lacey (Dominic Cooper) complicates matters when he becomes the object of Tony's desire and Rizza's vengeance.

Cox is totally convincing as the lifer on adrenalin drive to see his daughter. Lewis, all cobra insolence, aims to stop him.

Director Rupert Wyatt's thriller co-written with Daniel Hardy is as clever as it is confronting. By subtle, time-shift editing, it ascends out of the depths of brutality to a climax that is surprising, ethereally gentle and profoundly affecting.

Note: The movie was produced by the UK Film Council and Bord Scannan na hEireann/Irish Film Board. Its main location was Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin - the place where the ring-leaders of the Easter Rising of 1916 were executed.

MA15★★★★NFFV

## Is Anybody There?

A fine cast for starters led by Michael Caine playing Clarence, a conjuror

## MOVIES

By JAMES MURRAY

coming to the end of his tricks in a seaside, sunset home run by Mum (Anne-Marie Duff) and Dad (David Morrissey), their only child Edward (Bill Milner) providing the point of view.

Directed by John Crowley and scripted by Peter Harness, the tragic-comedy is reminiscent of a number of recent dramas which may well be a means for actors to supplement their pensions.

Caine can, however, still carry off a scene with Cockney aplomb and is aided by the likes of Rosemary Harris, Elizabeth Spriggs, Sylvia Syms, Peter Vaughan and the immortal Leslie Phillips.

TBA★★★★NFFV

## Gomorra

Unlike Hollywood mafia movies which overall have tended to domesticate if not gentrify the Sicilian criminal organisation in its manifestations, director Matteo Garrone's take on the Naples-Caserta Camorra spares no sordid cruelty.

Garrone, his director of photography Marco Onorato and writers Roberto Saviano (author of the work), Maurizio Braucci's, Ugo Chiti, Gianni Di Gregorio, Matto Garrone and Massimo Gaudioso provide a multi-faceted survey of a modernistic cluster of vandalised apartment blocks.

There, various clans of the Camorra deal drngs, arms traffick and loan-shark, mitigating their crimes by doles to the community. No holds are barred. Automatic weapons compound the anarchy. And dirty money is laundered through legitimate seeming businesses including toxic waste recycling.

Adding a savage authenticity the cast is made up of actors unknown here. They include: Toni Servillo, Canianfelice Imperato, Maria Nazionale, Ciro Petrone and Carmine Paternoster.

During the last 30 years, the Camorra has murdered 4000 people. Two ironies: First, Martin Scorsese gets a 'presented-by' credit although by comparison his *GoodFellas* mafia epic is positively genteel. Second, the Italian Cultural Heritage Ministry contributed to the realisation of this film.

ANNALS AUSTRALASIA 38 APRIL/MAY 2009

Roberto Saviano's courage means he lives under police protection similar to that afforded to investigative magistrates in Sicily.

MA15★★★★NFFV

## Closed for Winter

Writer/director James Bogle has created a brooding memory piece in which an empty beach (Semaphore, Adelaide) symbolises the disappearance of a young girl (Danielle Catanzariti, delivering another fine performance).

Natalie Imbruglia is Elise, the older sister returned to remember in a house where her mother (Deborah Kennedy), separated from her husband, has immersed herself in newspaper cuttings.

Martin (Daniel Frederiksen) is the boy friend who seeks to cut through the memory static, John (Tony Martin) the local doctor with knowledge of a factor in the disappearance.

Imbruglia's quiet intensity plus the eloquence of her beauty hold the story together. Wisely Bogle has remained true to Georgia Blain's original novel to create an austere local movie that might do well in Europe (where deservedly Imbruglia is a star) if the South Australian Film Corporation would subsidise appropriate sub-titles.

MA15★★★★NFFV

## Last Ride

Key (Hugo Weaving) is on the run. Chook (Tom Russell), his 10-year-old son runs with him, figures in an outback landscape at once idyllic and hostile, powerfully evoked by director of photography Greig Fraser.

Weaving copes with the difficulty of transcending the stereotypical unshaven, bush crim, moving from rough-diamond charm to psychotic rage to paternal care and back again while Russell remains stoic but forlorn.

Based on the novel by Denise Young, scripted by Mac Gudgeon and directed by Glendyn Ivin, the movie may well be enjoyed more by those who have not seen the versions of Darcy Niland's novel, *The Shiralee*, (starring Peter Finch and Bryan Brown).

MA15★★★★NFFV

## Camino

Those who base fiction on reality run the risk of banality, not the



banality of evil but the banality of incomprehension. It is a risk that writer/director Javier Fesser takes no steps to avoid.

As his departure point, Fesser uses the real-life agony of Alexia Consales Barros who died aged 14 in 1985 after displaying such heroic virtue while being treated for cancer that she is being considered for sainthood. Fesser transforms her into Camino (Nerea Camacho). Opus Dei is wheeled in to spin the situation as a religious mortification imposed on the child, her parents and her sister, a member of Opus Dei.

Too clerical, too rigorous, too obsessive, Fesser implies. Yet such endurance of agony for religious reasons was once relatively commonplace. Indeed it still is in the secular sphere under the rule: "No gain without pain."

Are we in Spain here, the Spain of St Terese of Avila and St John of the Cross? Or the Spain of St Ignatius of Loyola, the agony of whose war wounds inspired the Society of Jesus.

No, we in the Spain of Progressville where Fesser represents Camino's happier, alternative life through fantasy sequences ripped from the pages of *Dolly* magazine. And yet and yet, Nerea Camacho acts with such unerring grace that she saves Fesser from total banality.

M★★★NFFV

### The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas

As the fairy-stories of the Brothers Grimm toned down the dark, folk tales of Germany and were further toned down by Walt Disney. So, too, are memories of the Holocaust being transmuted.

The process began with Robert Benigno's, *Life is Beautiful*, and has continued more recently with *The Reader* and *Good*. Now, directed by Mark Herman, comes Irish children's writer John Boyne's tale of an SS officer's son Bruno (Asa Butterfield) who befriends the titular boy Shmuel (Jack Scanlon).

Sure, the final consequence, in which boyish naivete collides with horrific reality, is shocking. Nonetheless the general effect is to create a sense that the Holocaust was just another one of those things and not the evil climax of an unprecedented process of eugenic elimination that began with the mentally

### 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.

and physically crippled before targeting Jews and others deemed racially impure.

M★★NFFV

### What Just Happened

Producer Ben (Robert DeNiro) has ridden his ego to the top in Hollywood when Jeremy (Michael Wincott), an English director with an even more outrageous ego, puts him in jeopardy through the shock ending to his new thriller, *Fiercely*, starring Sean Penn (as himself).

All this in the context of an imminent premiere at the Cannes Film Festival while Ben juggles his other problem: two ex-wives and their children, particularly his second wife Kelly (Robin Wright Penn), his next movie starring Bruce Willis (as himself) and studio boss Lou (Catherine Keener).

Too much already? Yes and no. The movie, directed by Barry Levinson, is based on a memoir by producer Art Linson who scripted it and co-produced it.

DeNiro, himself a considerable producer, triple distils the angst and chutzpah of the craft. Sean Penn and Bruce Willis self-deride their star status. But it is Keener, the boss who prefers surgical-steel gauntlets to velvet gloves, who takes the honours.

Entrails are never a pretty sight. And Hollywood examining its own is gruesome leaving a mystery: how has a company town so venal and

meretricious put such a lock on the world's imagination not to mention its moral codes?

MA★★★NFFV

### X-Men Origins: Wolverine

Movies like this one share the term franchise with fast food. In the title role producer/star Hugh Jackman gives us what else but a Big Mac with Aussie beetroot. More, he adds subliminally to the dinkum nature of Wolverine by wearing a pristine white vest similar to Australia's greatest hero in war and peace: the one, the only, Chesty Bond.

With director Gavin Hood, Jackman has contrived a marketing coup. By taking us back to the childhood of Wolverine and his brother (Liev Schreiber), he has ensured that a new generation is hooked on junk cinema highly sauced with violence. The climax hints at what could be an endlessly lucrative stream: a sequel in Japan.

M★★NFFV

### Star Trek

Another franchise aiming to remarket itself to a new generation of image consumers. Writers Roberto Orci and Alex Kurtzman go to the boyhood of Captain James Kirk of USS Enterprise who aeons ago in the then youthful person of William Shatner used to shake the TV scenery of many fibreglass planets in outer space.

Christopher Pine plays the fresh, young Kirk, Zachary Quinto the fresh Spock. Eric Bana comes on as the villain Nero, not fiddling but mugging like mad.

Director JJ Abrams pushes the limits beyond anything imagined by the original creator Gene Roddenberry. He casts the very English Simon Pegg as the star ship's engineer Scotty. The irrepressible Pegg resorts to mixed mimicry of Billy Connolly and Harry Lauder.

M★★★SFFV

### Fast and Furious

Is a franchise that knows its onions and sticks to them. Its lead characters, Dom Toretto (Vin Diesel) and Brian O'Connor (Paul Walker), are twin carburettors in a constant state of overdrive and motorised mayhem.

Plot convolutions organised by

director Justin Lin and writer Chris Morgan reach their climax with Toretto in a bus heading for gaol. End of franchise? If only. But isn't that O'Connor coming up on the offside with the grim, determined look of an actor with a mortgage to pay off?

M★★NFFV

### A Film with Me In It

Compared with the franchise movies above, director Ian Fitzgibbon's black comedy is as cheap as chips. It is also as funny as a wagon load of monkeys driven by the Three Stooges.

Pierce (Dylan Moran), David (David O'Doherty) Mark (Mark Doherty, who also wrote the script) are a layabout trio living in the basement of a Dublin rooming house run by Jack (Kevin Allen).

All of them, including the house, are accident prone. As the accidents mount involving also girlfriend Sally (Amy Hubnerson) and Policewoman (Aisling O'Sullivan), Pierce and Mark are driven to ever more frantic efforts to conceal them, convinced no one will believe the multiple, fatal coincidences.

The cast and crew have created a comedy fit to be listed alongside: *The Trouble with Harry*, *Arsenic and Old Lace* and *Murder At a Funeral*.

M★★★★NFFV

### Tenderness

Relentlessness not tenderness marks this thriller directed by John Polson from a script by Emil Stern based on a Robert Cormier novel. Eric (John Foster) is released from the prison where he has been held for multiple murder: girlfriend and his mother and father.

Awaiting him, and ready to care for him, is his aunt (Laura Dern). A different kind of care awaits him at the hands of veteran cop (Russell Crowe) and a young girl (Sophie Traub) both in different ways fascinated by Eric's past.

Polson draws strong performances from the cast, Crowe, its anchor, being totally convincing as a nondescript detective, certain Eric has not reformed.

Even Crowe's talent cannot lift the movie above average because of a lack of moral clarity in a movie that overdoses on flashbacks where Christianity is a label not a belief.

M★★NFFV

### Synecdoche: New York

Caden Costard (Philip Seymour Hoffman) is a director stumbling between his work in a rat-trap theatre and life in a run-down apartment with his wife Adele Lack (Catherine Keener) and daughter Olive (child, Sadie Goldstein, adult Robin Weigert).

Lack is also an artist specialising in miniature paintings being mentored by Maria (Jennifer Jason Leigh) who wants to take her (and Olive) away from Costard.

He is tempted by his leading lady Claire Keen (Michelle Williams) and by the box-office girl, later personal assistant, Hazel (Samantha Morton). Tireless guy. He is also drawn to another assistant Tammy (Emily Watson) and celebrity psychiatrist Madeleine Gravis (Hope Davis).

So far Charlie Kaufman seems to have hacked his script from a showbiz gossip website. He shifts to originality by giving Costard a MacArthur genius award worth millions and having him become obsessed with recreating his life as theatre on a gigantic set in a warehouse (the synecdoche - part for whole - of the title).

Superlative cast. Charlie Kaufman, in his debut as director, melds them into the kind of ensemble he may wish to use again and again. Hoffman in particular heads for another Oscar: sick to death yet alive to inspiration, unkempt, delusional, charming.

Unfair to single out Hoffman? Absolutely. On this showing, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences ought to award Best Ensemble Oscars.

Overall the movie is constantly engaging, only intermittently entertaining. You cannot be sure, however, that this has not been Kaufman's intent. Or even more ambitiously that his aim is to debunk the notion that art can be a quasi-religious solution to life's ultimate question: death.

M★★★★NFFV

### The Baader-Meinhof Complex

Long (150 minutes). Not too long, however, every second is high intensity as director Uli Edel re-examines the psychology and actions of Germany's

most infamous terrorist unit. Make that civilian unit to allow for the military Gestapo-SS.

Andreas Baader (Moritz Bleibtreu) Ulrike Meinhoff (Martina Gedeck) and Gudrun Ensslin (Joanna Wokalek) are its principals, fighting a campaign against the West German Republic of the 1970s perceived by them as a Nazi-infected client of the United States.

Horst Herold (Bruno Ganz) is the hunter-cop who understands what they intend, knows he can defeat them in the short-term but not their legacy, which lingers in today's headlines.

Ganz and the rest of the cast dive so deeply into their roles that in their re-enactment of the Baader-Meinhof campaign, they create the impression of a documentary filmed with hidden cameras.

Baader-Meinhoff worked under the rubric: ends justify means. Truer to say means modify ends, distorting them insanely. Proof: the East German Communist state, a totally subservient and inhumane client of the Soviet Union. Strangely Uli Edel omits reference to life beyond the Wall and the filing cabinets packed with Stasi surveillance dossiers.

MA15-★★★★NFFV

### Salvation

Paul Cox is one of the few filmmakers who deserves the distinction auteur. Each of his movies is highly individual yet they form a continuum. Occasionally, as in his movies about the ballet dancer Nijinsky, the painter Vincent Van Gogh and the Dutch leper-priest Damien, they are touched with genius - clues to comprehending Cox.

He needs to have the inspiration of a great original. When he deals with common or garden odd balls, as he so often does, his movies become flaccid.

Like John Ford, Cox has gathered a repertory company of actors. Some of them are here. Wendy Hughes leads as a faded, suburban version of any number of American hot-gospeller from Aimee Semple Macpherson onwards. Bruce Myles plays her husband and Kim Cyngelell the musical director who dances to her tune.

Barry Humphries gets a creep-on part as a client and subverts the movie by playing him as Sir Les Patterson's shy brother. Against the generalised



flaccidity. Tony Llewellyn Jones, credited as co-producer with Paul Cox, displays a welcome sense of attack as an arts interlocutor.

M★★★NFFV

## 17 Again

Mick O'Donnell (Mathew Perry) was the star of his school basketball team until the need to marry his sweetheart Scarlet (Leslie Mann) derailed his scholarship prospects. Twenty years later, he works in a hated job, his marriage is in jeopardy and his teenage children despise him.

Enter a school janitor (Brian Doyle Murray) who looks suspiciously like Santa Claus from any number of Christmas movies. Mick regresses to teenhood in the person of the all-grinning, all-winning Zak Efron.

Director Burr Steers gets every split-second of pace from Jason Filardi's script which – surprise, surprise – ensures that the teen mends the past, aided by an old friend Ned Gold (Tom Lennon).

PG★★★SFFV

## Duplicity

Smoke and mirrors are essential in scam movies. But writer/director Tony Gilroy deploys too many, and aggravates the general opaqueness by shuffling time frames.

Claire Stenwick (Julia Roberts) and Ray Koval (Clive Owen), government agents gone corporate, bear up heroically under the burden of skulduggery in what used to be known as the ethical pharmaceutical industry.

Inevitably they are lovers. And when they kiss they do so with such seismic energy you are surprised to see their capped teeth surviving intact.

Nevertheless despite their star-power, the movie belongs to supporting actors Paul Giamatti and Tom Wilkinson, playing rival pharmaceutical bosses in a style manic enough to inspire recall of the pharmaceutical advice involving a Bex, a cup of tea and a good lie down.

PG★★★SFFV

## Bottle Shock

Odd. Or perhaps not so odd. As wine attracts increasing odium from neo-puritan scientists, movies involving viniculture become funnier and

funnier. Proof: director/producer/editor Randall Miller and co-writer/producer Jody Savin take a real-life episode and balance on it a magnum of sparkling comedy.

Steven Spurrier (Alan Rickman) is an Englishman who runs a bottle shop – Cave de la Madeleine – in Paris. Jolly chap? Dyspeptic rather with the rueful disdain of a connoisseur who has drunk too much acidic wine. Maurice Cantavale (Dennis Farina, flamboyantly overproof) is his French business rival and friend.

Together they distill a cheeky ploy to promote Californian plonk in France which means a trip to the Napa Valley vineyard run by Jim Barrett (Bill Pullman). Blended with this are family disputes, fisticuffs, romance and – incredibly – a switch by locals from sudsy, Yankee beer to decent plonk before Sparrier and Cantavale take Barrett's finest to a prestigious French contest, intent on winning.

Far out? The release of *Bottle Shock* was accompanied by reports that a relatively modest Australian wine under the Hanwood label had won France's Chardonnay du Monde Award

M★★★NFFV

## Mary and Max

Adam Elliot is the Cecil B. De Mille of Clay. From this unlikely material he produces miniature epics that mix sadness, mirth and satire through the patient technology of stop-motion.

His story is deceptively simple. Mary (voiced by Bethany Whitmore and Toni Collette) is a misfit in Melbourne who writes to Max (Philip Seymour Hoffman) a reclusive eccentric in Manhattan – a penfriendship which echoes one in Elliot's own life.



Barry Humphries relishes the narration as if it were a plateful of lamingtons. At 90 minutes the production is four times longer than *Harvie Krumpet* which won Elliot an Oscar. It is also blacker and ruder, throwing in references to alcoholism, condoms and prostitution, which makes it unsuitable for children.

PG★★★SFFV

## Friday the 13th

Think *The Blair Witch Project* – group of carefree youngsters trapped by a spooky force on a camping trip. Directed by Marcus Nispel, they are played in this variation by Jared Padalecki, Danielle Panabaker, Derek Mears and Amanda Righetti. Add multiple stabbings and buckets of gore. Remember recent local versions. Think again and don't bother to spoil a fine snack of pop corn.

R18+★★NFFV

## Elegy

Fine pedigree in terms of cast: Penelope Cruz, Ben Kingsley, Patricia Clarkson, Peter Sarsgaard and that durable reprobate Dennis Hopper. Then there's director Isabel Coixet working from a script by Nicholas Meyer based on Philip Roth's *The Dying Animal*.

So why is it such a mongrel of a movie, an absolutely dumb, boring mutt? Partly because Isabel Coixet cannot restrain her inner satirist. At intervals she has Kingsley and Hopper as academic David Kepesh and poet George O'Hearn appear in sweat-shirts on a racket-ball court.

We do not see them play a single shot. Instead they slump down against the wall to yabber about their love-lives, Kepesh being a woman hunter in the groves of academe. But ethical, you understandguy. He doesn't bed them until after they graduate.

Cruz is Consuela Castillo, a Cuban student, for whom Kepesh seems to ditch his ethics but not his inability to commit. When he played Gandhi, Kingsley was truly charismatic. Here he has all the charisma of a crow in a lovebird's cage.

Not entirely his fault Whether Roth knew it or not, in this story he was relating what happened to his character Portnoy and his complaint: it turned into geriatric satyriasis.

M★NFFV

## Politically Correct Slavery?

**S**LAVERY was taken for granted throughout Islamic history, as it was, of course, in the West as well up until relatively recent times. Yet while the European and American slave trade get stern treatment attention from historians [as well as from reparations advocates and guilt-ridden politicians], the Islamic slave trade, which actually lasted longer and brought suffering to a larger number of people, is virtually ignored. [This fact magnifies the irony of Islam being presented to American blacks as the egalitarian alternative to the "white man's slave religion" of Christianity.] While historians estimate that the transatlantic slave trade, which operated between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, involved around 10.5 million people, the Islamic slave trade in the Sahara, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean areas began in the seventh century and lasted into the nineteenth, and involved 17 million people.

— 'The Persistence of Islamic Slavery' by Robert Spencer,  
*FrontPageMagazine.com* | July 20, 2007.

### Inkheart

Meggie (Eliza Hope Bennett) loves being read to by her father Mortimer Foichart (Brendan Fraser). Unfortunately his literacy is inseparable from his gift of bringing characters from books to pursue their adventures in the here and now enhanced with special effects.

The conceit is Cornelia Funke's and she has parlayed it into a German bestseller. Director Iain Softley and co-writer David Lindsay Abair have brought it triumphantly to the screen.

If at times Fraser looks as if he has been chewing on too many fantasies, his fellow players provide correctives. They include, Paul Bettany as Dustfinger, desperate to be reunited with his wife, Jim Broadbent as Fenoglio, an author gleeful at viewing his characters off the page, and Helen Mirren as Elinor, a bibliophile not printed on acid-free paper. Fantastically clever.

PG★★★★SFFV

### Easy Virtue

Romantic comedy in which director Stephan Elliott and his co-writer Sheridan Jobbins rework a 1924 play by Noel Coward.

Jessica Biel dazzles as Larita, the Yank in the stately home of her younger lover John Whittaker (Ben Barnes), his

sniffy mater (Kristin Scott Thomas) and his woebegone pater (Colin Firth) waiting for his cue to tango.

Elliott rings all the Coward bells, adding some tricky camerwork. By inserting scenes that might have come from Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, he also raises an intriguing question.

Obviously Coward writing in 1924 could not have read Waugh's novel written in 1944. But did Waugh see *Easy Virtue* and adapt the idea of an interloper in a stately home?

PG★★★★SFFV

### Wendy and Lucy

Wendy (Michelle Williams) is heading north to Alaska to work in a salmon cannery when her car breaks down, leaving her stranded with her dog Lucy in a recession-hit Oregon town.

In this instance, so focused, so stalwart, so pitch perfect is Williamson that the dog (a charming, golden Labrador) does not steal all the scenes like sausages from the butcher.

Writer/director Kelly Reichardt shows us a life that reflects the quiet desperation of thousands. She avoids facile solutions to leave us wondering whether Wendy will make it to Alaska or slip between the cracks of life to be

lost, again like thousands.

Small movie but replete with power.

M★★★★NFFV

### Ruffo y Cursi

Writer/director Carlos Cuarón teams Garcia Bernal and Diego Luna as the brothers of the title whose fraternal love turns to sibling rivalry when talent scout Batute (Guillermo Francella) lifts them from the banana plantations to the football stadiums of Mexico City.

Sleek cars and sleeker women follow. Will they keep their promise to their mother to lift her from poverty? Or end up on the Mexican equivalent of the ABC's *Four Corners*?

MA★★★★NFFV

### The Boat that Rocked

Yeah, yeah, so did the Titanic. Not even the redoubtable Bill Nighy can keep this comedy afloat. Even plugging rival disc jockeys Philip Seymour Hoffman and Rhys Ifans into the holes and bringing on Emma Thompson does little to prevent that sinking feeling.

Kenneth Branagh aggravates as a short-back-and-sides civil servant, lumbered with the task of shutting the station down. There are laughs but not enough to prevent an apt ending, duly enacted in a storm of special effects.

Director Richard (*Notting Hill*) Curtis is untypically hapless, swamped in waves of nostalgia for the pirate radio ships of the Sixties and Seventies.

The most famous of these was Radio Caroline (named by Rohan O'Rahilly after Caroline Kennedy, daughter of President John F Kennedy). Now there's a comedy. When recently she sought political office she was undone by repetition of the Sixties phrase, 'You know?'

M★★★★NFFV

### Pink Panther 2

Haunted by the ghost of Peter Sellers, comedian Steve Martin returns to the role of Inspector Clouseau. Interludes of agile comedy, directed by Harald Zwart, are not enough to save the movie from its generalised egregiousness. This includes misuse of the Shroud of Turin and a sequence involving a look-alike Pope Benedict XVI.

PG★★NFFV

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# SOS! - Christianity in the Middle East

DEEPLY saddened by the crisis engulfing Christianity in the Middle East, Pope Benedict XVI has asked the Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) to provide urgent help.

In many parts of the land Our Lord Jesus Christ knew so well, the faithful now live in fear as increasing poverty and growing extremism threaten the survival of these ancient communities.

A mass exodus of Christians from the Middle East is now taking place. For some it is a question of escaping bloody persecution. In the Holy Land for example, the proportion of Christians has plummeted from 20% to as little as 1.4% in the last 40 years.

ACN is helping to keep faith and hope alive throughout the region by providing urgent aid to priests, religious and lay people, offering subsistence help to refugees and building and repairing Churches and convents. Please help us strengthen and rebuild the Church in the land of Christ's birth.

A beautiful, olive wood crucifix, handcrafted in Bethlehem, will be sent to all those who give a donation of \$20.00 or more to help this campaign.

Please tick the box below if you like to receive the little olive wood crucifix\*.



*"... Churches in the Middle East are threatened in their very existence... May God grant ACN strength to help wherever the need is greatest."*  
Pope Benedict XVI



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Made of olive wood from the Holy Land, this small crucifix is powerfully evocative of Christ's passion and death. The crucifixes are lovingly handcrafted by poverty stricken families in Bethlehem and your donation helps them survive. Comes in a display box with accompanying religious image.  
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*In 2008, around 50,000 Christians in Orissa, India, had their homes burnt down*

## PERSECUTED AND FORGOTTEN?

Reviewed by DENNIS MURPHY MSC



IN 2008, *Aid for the Church in Need* published a report with the title *Religious Freedom in the World*. The book reviewed here, produced by the same organization, narrows itself to persecution of Christians. Few people would be aware of how extensive this is. In a report to the United Nations' Human Rights Commission, the *World Evangelical Alliance* claimed there were around 200 million Christians suffering for their faith, many of them victims of violence and even murder. This is supported by other investigations. And a report from Canada, *Religious Tolerance*, adds a further 350 million Christians who suffer lesser forms of discrimination and restriction.

Based on a number of reports, John Pontifex and John Newton have collected the main features in 103 pages. The booklet is clearly written and well presented. An introduction of six

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*A Report on Christians Oppressed for their Faith 2007/2008*

Edited by John Pontifex  
and John Newton,

Blacktown: Aid to Church in Need.  
Second Printing, 2008.

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pages gives us a good overall view and sets the tone for the rest of the book; it avoids sensationalism and special pleading; it allows the facts to speak for themselves.

The text consists of an alphabetic presentation of 32 countries. This allows for easy consultation about any country we may be interested in. Though brief, the matter is presented in some detail and we are not left with a mere impression of numbers and statistics; real people emerge. Five longer 'profiles' intersperse the text and also help us keep in mind that when dealing with persecution we are speaking about real human beings.

In 2008, when around 50,000 Christians in Orissa, India, had their homes burnt down, and at times saw family members slaughtered before their eyes, they were not immune from suffering because they happened to be suffering for their faith. They were distressed and heartbroken like any human being. They are not merely statistics.

It would be a terrible mistake to think that this intolerance is typical of ordinary Hindus; it would be equally a mistake to fail to recognize that there are a minority of well-known, well-organized fundamentalist Hindu groups that are aggressively promoting it.

Various forms of restrictions and persecution of Christians are also found in Western Countries like Belarus, Cuba, Russia, Venezuela. Looking at the overall picture, however, the editors of *Persecuted and Forgotten?* admit that "the long-term outcome of such renewed pressure on Christians is unclear but what is beyond doubt is that across the Islamic world the Church is threatened as never before" (p.9).

In 2007, *Aid to the Church in Need* celebrated its 60th anniversary: Pope Benedict XVI's message on the occasion reminded the members that "Churches in the Middle East are today threatened in their very existence". Similarly the Pakistan Bishops in their June 2008 *ad limina* visit to Rome informed the Pope that attitudes towards the Church had changed beyond recognition in their country.

It would be a mistake to project this attitude on to Muslims in general, but it would be equally mistaken to fail to recognize that extremely well-known, well-organized fundamentalist Islamic groups, claiming to base themselves on the Koran, are actively promoting it and even influencing governments in various ways.

### Suffering has Meaning

THE LORD, our Saviour, raised his voice and spoke with incomparable majesty. 'Let all know', he said, 'that after sorrow grace follows; let them understand that without the burden of affliction one cannot arrive at the height of glory; that the measure of heavenly gifts is increased in proportion to the labours undertaken. Let them be on their guard against error or deception; this is the only ladder by which paradise is reached; without the cross there is no road to heaven.' When I heard these words I felt a great impulse to rush out into the street and shout at the top of my voice to everybody, no matter what their age, sex or condition; 'Listen, all you people; listen, all you nations. By Christ's command, using the very words which he uttered, I tell you most solemnly: no grace without suffering ...'

- St Rose of Lima. She was born in Peru in 1586 and took the habit of the Third Order of St Dominic. She died on August 24, 1617. From the *Roman Breviary*, the second Reading at Matins for the Feast of the saint, August 23rd.



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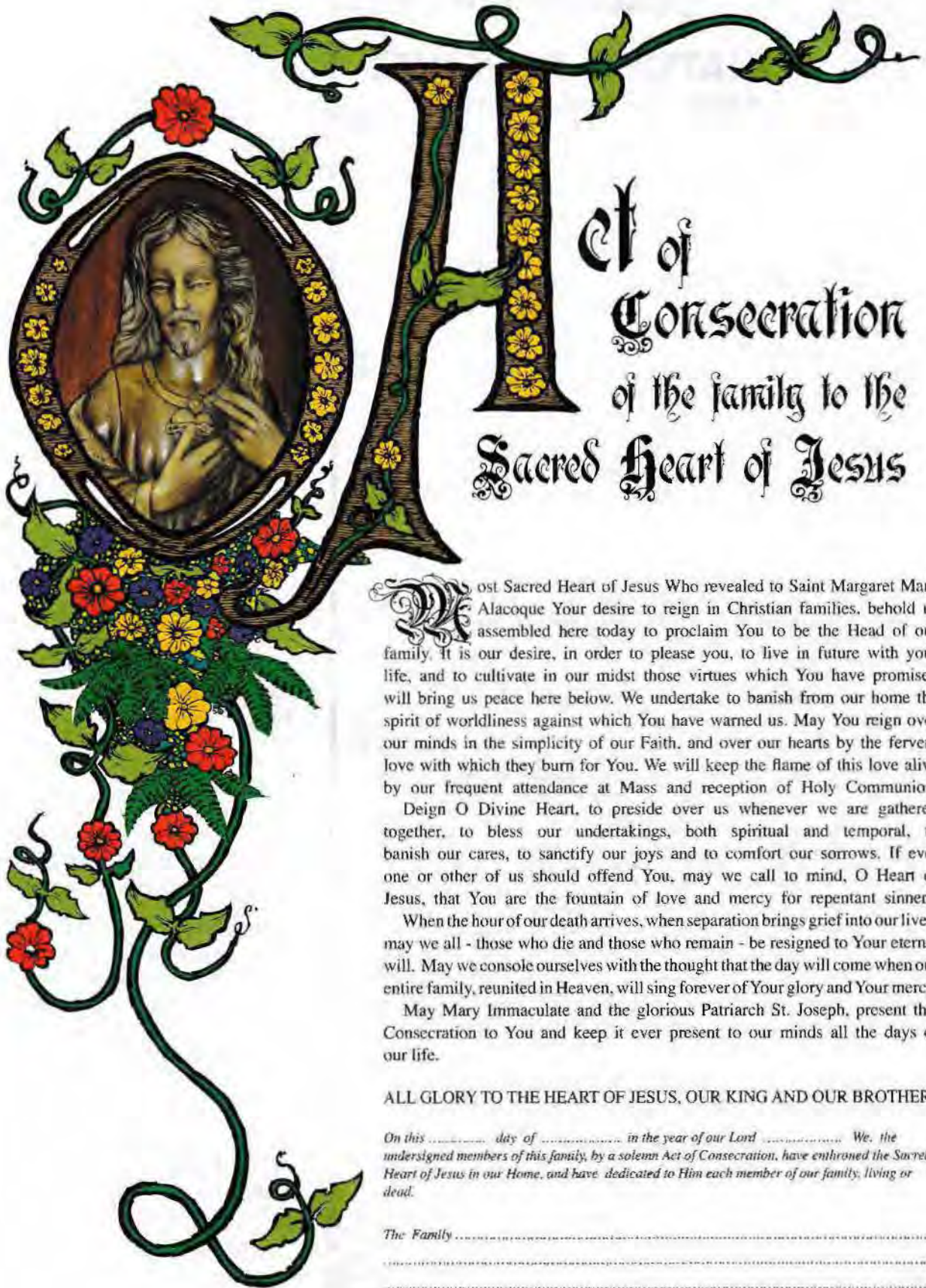
These issues arising from 'radical Islam' have to be faced squarely in inter-religious dialogue, not only because Christians are suffering, but also because Muslims who object about the intolerance, and who try to escape from Islamic fundamentalism and promote a more historically based, more liberal interpretation of the Koran can themselves face persecution in these same countries.

We too easily identify persecution with the history of the early Church; yet it has been with us always; our Lord himself warned us that this would be so. The Church today is certainly no less a victim than in the past: some of it is subtle, a lot of it is both open and brutal. The San Egidio group in Rome has a well-earned reputation for peaceful open inter-religious dialogue, but they would not have been surprised by the Pope's statement to them in early 2008: "This 21st Century has also opened under the banner of martyrdom".

In the early Church, martyrs were always automatically given special esteem in a variety of ways. Some years after Constantine's recognition of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, Damasus I - Pope from 366 to 384 - undertook the building of churches and the restoration of shrines in their honour. This was not merely a devotional hobby or sideline; he hoped that the witness of the martyrs' fidelity to their faith would inspire later generations to live that same faith more generously despite opposition. Without forgetting the martyrs of the distant past, we should obtain the same inspiration from those of recent years. Moreover, persecution is not a thing of the recent *past*; it is going on at this very moment.

*Persecuted and Forgotten?* is the sort of book that should be widely read by Catholics; it should certainly be available in school libraries. Copies are sent free of charge to anyone who donates money to help *Aid to the Church in Need* in carrying out its work.

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



# Act of Consecration of the family to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Who revealed to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque Your desire to reign in Christian families, behold us assembled here today to proclaim You to be the Head of our family. It is our desire, in order to please you, to live in future with your life, and to cultivate in our midst those virtues which You have promised will bring us peace here below. We undertake to banish from our home the spirit of worldliness against which You have warned us. May You reign over our minds in the simplicity of our Faith, and over our hearts by the fervent love with which they burn for You. We will keep the flame of this love alive by our frequent attendance at Mass and reception of Holy Communion.

Deign O Divine Heart, to preside over us whenever we are gathered together, to bless our undertakings, both spiritual and temporal, to banish our cares, to sanctify our joys and to comfort our sorrows. If ever one or other of us should offend You, may we call to mind, O Heart of Jesus, that You are the fountain of love and mercy for repentant sinners.

When the hour of our death arrives, when separation brings grief into our lives, may we all - those who die and those who remain - be resigned to Your eternal will. May we console ourselves with the thought that the day will come when our entire family, reunited in Heaven, will sing forever of Your glory and Your mercy.

May Mary Immaculate and the glorious Patriarch St. Joseph, present this Consecration to You and keep it ever present to our minds all the days of our life.

ALL GLORY TO THE HEART OF JESUS, OUR KING AND OUR BROTHER.

On this ..... day of ..... in the year of our Lord ..... We, the undersigned members of this family, by a solemn Act of Consecration, have enthroned the Sacred Heart of Jesus in our Home, and have dedicated to Him each member of our family, living or dead.

The Family .....

.....

.....

.....