

# ANNUALS

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of Catholic Culture



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# ANNALS AUSTRALASIA

*Journal of Catholic Culture*

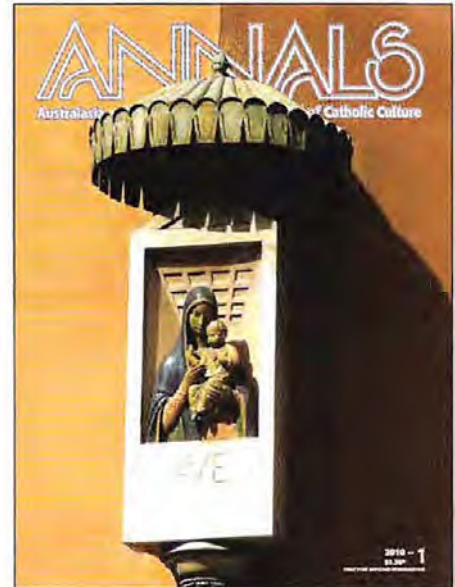
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*Australia's Oldest Catholic Magazine*

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- 3 **Bridging the Abyss [III]**  
EDITORIAL
- 11 **Trauma and Psychological Politics**  
WANDA SKROWONSKA
- 16 **Catholicism, Conservatism and Continuity**  
GILES AUTY
- 19 **Forgotten Treasures**  
BRIAN POLLARD
- 23 **William Wardell 'Si Monumentum requiris ...?'**  
TONY EVANS
- 26 **Rupert Bared**  
JAMES MURRAY
- 32 **Not a Job Application**  
MICHAEL O'CONNOR
- 35 **The Indian Tribe**  
LESLIE RUMBLE, MSC
- 44 **Forty Years on: *Arpanet and Internet***  
SAM SIMMONDS



*Front Cover:* Shrine to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, on the corner of a building on the Corso di Rinascimento, Rome a few steps away from the MSC Church of our Lady of the Sacred Heart which backs onto the Piazza Navona, scene of the martyrdom of St Agnes and St Emerentiana under Diocletian in the early years of the 4th century. Built in 1440 by Don Alfonso Paradinas, bishop of Rodrigo in Spain, and originally dedicated to St James [Santiago], the Church fell into disrepair in the 1800s. It was entrusted to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in 1878 and then dedicated to the Virgin Mary under the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

*Back Cover:* A selection of booklets published by Chevalier Press. They are ideal as Christmas or birthday gifts for relatives and friends interested in the Catholic Faith, for RCIA groups following catechism courses in preparation of baptism, or as school prizes.

Cover Photo: Paul Stenhouse

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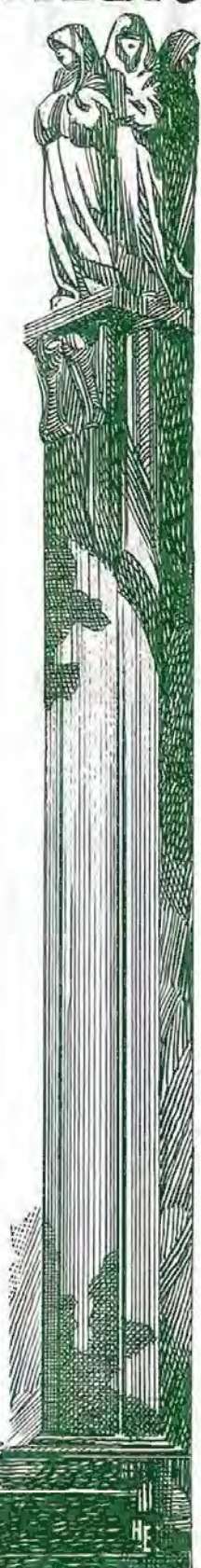
**DO** not have Jesus Christ on your lips, and the world in your heart.

- St Ignace of Antioch, Martyred in 107 AD, in the Colosseum in Rome.



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

## ONLY BELIEVE



**I**F ONLY you believe that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. He who gave a home in paradise to the thief will give you a home there also. Do not doubt the truth of what I say: after only brief moment of faith the Lord saved the thief on our holy hill of Golgotha; he will save you, too, if you believe.

- St Cyril of Jerusalem, 315-387, [Cat. 5,10-11]. From the *Roman Breviary*, Second Reading at Matins for Wednesday of the 31st week of the Year.

## A HYMN TO THE HOLY NAME JESUS

**S**ING the name which none can say,  
But touch'd with an interior ray;  
The name of our new peace, our good,  
Our bliss and supernatural blood:  
The name of all our lives and loves.

Oh, that it were as it was wont to be!  
When thy old friends of fire, all full of thee,  
Fought against frowns with smiles; gave  
glorious chase,

To persecutions; and, against the face  
of death and fiercest dangers, durst,  
with brave and sober face, march on to  
meet a grave.

On their bold breasts about the world  
they bore thee,  
And to the teeth of hell stood up to teach  
thee;

In centre of their inmost souls they wore  
thee,  
Where racks and torments strived in vain to  
reach thee.

---

– Richard Crashaw (1616-1650), English poet and convert to Catholicism; much loved by all who knew him. He lived and died in Italy, in exile from his native England. Abraham Cowley [1618-1667], a Protestant poet and friend, wrote of him:

'Poet and saint – to thee alone are given  
The two most sacred names in earth and heaven.'

*Don't Plaster Over the Cracks*

## BRIDGING THE ABYSS [PART III]

By Paul Stenhouse, PhD



MAy I be permitted, following St Thomas Aquinas's methodology, to present what appears to be a good reason for doubting what I take to be a self-evident truth: that Christian unity can be achieved and the authority of the Pope restored in a world grown accustomed to religious divisions and generalizations?

Papal authority and, with it, the authority of the Catholic [and, as later events were to show, the Protestant] bishops, had been usurped by king and court for only 24 years when Catholic Queen Mary came to the throne of England after the death of her young brother Edward VI in 1553.

Despite the now generally admitted fact that most Englishmen alive at the time wanted to see the Mass restored, the restoration of the authority of Peter's See – which had been insulted, defamed and subjected to unprecedented incessant hostile attacks since 1529 – proved difficult.

Very few of the people in power wanted to see England return to its pre-1529 state. They and their families had waxed fat from the depredation of the monasteries, abbeys, convents, guild halls, shrines and churches that were confiscated, plundered of their endowments, religious ornaments and possessions, and sold or given away as favours to the king's new aristocracy.

Pope Julius III decreed, in a conciliatory gesture generally unacknowledged by detractors of papal authority, that the new possessors of these properties pillaged from the Church in England during Henry's reign of terror, would not be dispossessed.<sup>1</sup>

Even if the Queen had succeeded in restoring pre-Henrican and Edwardian England, historian Philip Hughes questions whether she would have been able to restore 'the Catholic mentality'.

### True Notions of Faith

After such a spate of Anovelities—let loose upon the nation almost without protest from bishops and clergy—religious State propaganda, as nothing had ever been so brought home before, and all in the short space of thirteen years (1533-1546), what would the belief of the average English Catholic, twenty years of age, let us say, in 1534, be like by January 28, 1547, when Henry VIII came to die? Amid the riot of contending private judgments in the episcopate—where all that differentiated the apostate prelates, one from another, was the variety of their attitude to the new Continental heresies—what would our average Catholic have retained, by that date, even of the true notion of faith, namely, that faith is an acceptance of a thing as true on the word of God revealing that thing, a believing of God revealing, the fact of God's revealing it being certified to man by the testimony of God's Church?

— Philip Hughes, *The Reformation in England*, London, Burns & Oates, 1962, p.188.

If the average Catholic had been none too well informed about his faith in 1529, i.e. about its doctrines, and about the divinely appointed role of the one true Church as the medium through which the Christian takes hold of the truths of faith, what was his condition likely to be by the time Henry VIII died, eighteen years later, in 1547?<sup>2</sup>

Over this period papal authority had been pilloried, good works had been denied any religious value, many of the Sacraments had been rejected, ambiguities and heresies from the Catholic point of view abounded in royal edicts on matters and religious and monastic life had been vilified by myriad anti-Catholic religious publications that mocked asceticism and ridiculed celibacy.

A vernacular bible edited for the purpose of weaning populations from their Catholic roots was offered to each and all, for them to make their own mind up about its meaning, under the guidance of the Spirit, 'independently of any teaching from professional theologians'.<sup>3</sup> In those heady days of *private judgement*, how many Catholics still felt their need for a divinely appointed guide, which was what the Catholic Church had claimed to be since long before Pope St Clement I wrote his letter to the people of Corinth fifteen hundred years before?

With the English bishops bickering and confused about what was happening among Lutherans and Calvinists on the Continent, how was the average Catholic layman to have a true idea of faith as the acceptance of something as true on the word of God revealing it; and the fact that God did reveal it, being something that was guaranteed to us by the Catholic Church which had been founded for

that purpose? How would the English come again to appreciate the fact that the heart of Christianity is the Catholic Church, divinely established to teach the Truth that was revealed through Jesus, when the Church was daily preached against, defamed and held up to ridicule throughout the realm?

If such was the situation in England after only 23 years of constant anti-Catholic and anti-Papal propaganda,<sup>4</sup> what hope, some may well ask, is there for the restoration of Catholic Unity to a riven Church, after 480 years of almost constant attack and abuse?<sup>5</sup>

To such as consider this type of reasoning cogent, I reply in the words of Jesus: 'With men it is impossible; but with God, all things are possible.'<sup>6</sup> And as unity among his followers was fervently desired by Jesus who prayed 'that they may be one, as we, Father are One,'<sup>7</sup> I press forward, convinced that unity is both desirable and possible.

### Unity and Salvation

The early Christians were convinced of the truth of Christ's message, just as they were convinced of their need for the salvation that he brought.

They clung tightly to the Catholic Church because they recognized that outside it was the falsity and hopelessness of the pagan world they had turned from when they were baptized; and the confused voices of the myriad Christian sects – the very titles of which, by the middle of the 4th century 'would fill an immense volume' – that had separated themselves from their 'Christian Head'<sup>8</sup> since the beginning of Christianity.

Even the anti-Catholic north-African sect the Donatists, who were such a thorn in the side of St Augustine [354-430 AD], realized that communion with the See of Peter was necessary if their claim to be orthodox Christians was to be credible. They sent one of their 'bishops,' Victor of Garba, to Rome as antipope, so that they could claim to be 'in communion' with the See of Rome."

The nineteenth-century watering-down of a sense of sin among young and old alike [on the grounds that it induces harmful complexes about guilt, the body and the 'self'] has inexorably led to massive psychological and spiritual harm, and has bequeathed

## England's Unacknowledged Cultural Revolution

THESE HISTORICAL remains in one of England's oldest towns tell their own story of the nature of England's past. They are replicated in many other English towns and villages, like nearby Fairford where the Church of St Mary the Virgin has the only complete set of medieval stained glass windows in England, setting out the Christian faith in pictorial form. Later we visited the county city of Gloucester, dominated by its superb cathedral which has been a site of community and worship for 1300 years, bespeaking stability, continuity and permanence to the human mind. Here again is a soaring Norman tower which is regarded as one of the finest in western Europe, and the harmony of design, light and colour of the Lady Chapel is crowned by the magnificent medieval stained glass of the great east window.

One of the most obvious signs of some drastic change in the past is the disappearance of the old abbey at Cirencester and the monastery at Gloucester. The elegance of the ruined remnant of the Augustinian gatehouse and the still beautiful Benedictine cloisters reminded us – as did the broken, defaced reredos in the superb Lady Chapel at Gloucester – of the countless treasures of art and architecture which were destroyed during Henry VIII's 'Reformation' and are now much lamented by cultural historians. It gives some perspective to the scene when we remember that, just as in so many other places in England, the great Cathedral itself was just the monastic church of the Benedictine community at Gloucester until the monastery was destroyed in 1540.

– Edwin Jones, *The English Nation, The Great Myth*. Sutton Publishing, 1998. Introduction, pp. vi-vii.

scepticism and religious indifference to successive generations. Complexes have proliferated and mental health has become a [the?] major department in many of our hospital systems.

We are drowning in a sea of pseudo-science, sects and new-age religion.

Illogic, and a sense of hopelessness, in this realm of godless secularism, is king.

It is customary, in ecumenical circles, to stress the positive: points of doctrine and practice that Catholics and their 'separated brethren,' hold in common. This has been the methodology followed since the first Ecumenical gatherings between Catholics and Protestants took place in 1921 and 1925 under the Presidency of Cardinal Mercier of Malines,

Belgium, and with the blessing of Popes Benedict XV and Pius XI.

Speaking realistically, in the light of the minimal progress made at grass-roots level towards Christian unity since then and especially since the ecumenical efforts post-Vatican II, one is tempted to agree, *mutatis mutandis*, with Augustine Birrell, the Quaker Essayist, who writes:

The region of speculation is the region of opinion, and a hazy, lazy, delightful region it is; good to talk in, good to smoke in, peopled with pleasant fancies and charming ideas, strange analogies and killing jests. How quickly the time passes there! How well it seems spent! The Philistines are all outside; everyone is reasonable and tolerant, and good-tempered; you think and scheme

and talk, and look at everything in a hundred ways and from all possible points of view; and it is not till the company breaks up and the lights are blown out, and you are left alone with silence, that the doubt occurs to you, What is the good of it all?<sup>18</sup>

Our 21st century world is different, as James Gairdner never tires of reminding us, from the Elizabethan world. It is also radically different from the world that existed before the 1914-1918 war; and before all the subsequent wars, political upheavals and human tragedies that were to deform human existence and the planet itself by the end of the 20th century.

Granted these monumental social and religious changes and granted the grave scandal that is Christain disunity, it seems more prudent to place on the table at any ecumenical discussion, not those points upon which we agree – which seem to be leading nowhere – but those teachings and practices upon which we differ.

### The Catholic 'Way'

Catholicism, the 'Christian Head' referred to above by Saint Pacianus, requires conscientious assent on the part of those who claim to be 'followers' of the 'Way'. This 'Way' has been well mapped, and its path – though narrow – is brightly lighted. She who is the Guide down this path shuns all attempts to simulate or dissimulate beliefs and practices.

She respects the right of non-Christians and non-Catholics to follow their consciences and to think and behave differently from those who claim to be Catholic. These latter, if they are genuine in their Catholicism, accept and promise to 'keep safe' what St Paul called our Christian 'Trust' – the sacred *depositum*<sup>11</sup> – the *Deposit or Trust* of Faith, as understood by Catholic Tradition. This is a *sine qua non* of Catholic Faith.

This *Deposit* of Catholic Faith entrusted to us, includes belief in Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God and belief in the Church – which St Paul called 'Christ's Body'<sup>12</sup> – whose Head on earth is the Bishop of Rome, successor of Peter, Prince of the Apostles; in its seven sacraments; in its oral and written traditions, and in its credal



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formularies elaborated by Church Councils.

The Catholic Church insists that those who profess their belief in this *Deposit of Faith* should treat it with reverence and hand it down intact to succeeding generations. Not as if it were some dead thing, likely to crumble to pieces if we handle it, but because it is a living thing, with power to transform lives, and reveal Mystery to genuine searchers after Truth.

It is, of course, the *treasure* that we carry, as St Paul reminds us, in 'frail vessels'.<sup>13</sup> However, the *frailty* of the vessels must always be acknowledged,

else the treasure will not be preserved and passed on, intact.

Today, 'frail' vessels are being sent out from schools and homes unprepared for the rough treatment to which they will be subjected throughout life; weighed down by the excessive loads they will be asked to carry; unskilled in dealing with the dilemmas they will face.

The peace which is the bond of unity, according to St Paul, can be achieved only by confronting reality; and the reality, the truth, is that there are important differences between Catholic and Protestant, between Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox, and

between the various Protestant groups themselves. Setting aside personalities, these differences need to be traced back to their origins, and what there is of truth in them needs to be sifted out meticulously. Hard decisions need to be taken, in a spirit of Faith.

If Christian unity is to be restored – and restored it must be – this does not mean, nor did it ever mean, 'uniformity'; but it does mean 'unanimity'. The single-mindedness, the open-heartedness that it calls for must be based on respect for the Truth. If this is exercised with Mercy and Justice it will lead unerringly to Peace.

In 1569, in the full bloom of Protestantism in England, the wardens of Ludlow reportedly recorded that they paid "Higges wief" [Higg's wife] tuppence to unpick the sign of the cross from a Catholic altar-cloth which was still in use for the Protestant communion table. In the following year they paid fourpence to a workman to break down the stone pedestals on which the images of St Margaret and the Virgin Mary had once stood.<sup>14</sup>

It will cost much more than 'tuppence' to restore the seamless garment that was once the unity among Christian believers.

Whatever the price, it must be paid. Like St Paul we must all go, sooner or later, to Peter, James and John to ensure that our race be not run 'in vain'.

## Papacy defies Categorization

IF IT BE TRUE that 'absolute power corrupts absolutely' we cannot deny that the Papacy, like other institutions which have acquired such power, has not escaped the consequence of its acquisition. Yet in spite of the occasional failure of individual popes to uphold a morality consistent with the demands of their high office, it is a strange form of historical blindness which is unable to perceive in its long and remarkable history a supernatural grandeur which no mere secular institution has ever attained in equal measure. Its strange, almost mystical, faithfulness to type, its marked degree of changelessness, its steadfast clinging to tradition and precedent, above all its burning zeal for order and justice compel us to acknowledge that the Papacy must always defy a categorization which is purely of this world.

Of the future it is not our purpose to speak. If our conclusions are correct, the perfect integration of the idea of the Papacy with the doctrine of the Church, more particularly with episcopacy, has yet to be accomplished, and can be effected only in the light of a fuller knowledge of God's purpose than we can claim to possess at the present time.

Meanwhile it must remain the constant and ineluctable duty of all Christians in their separate groups so to seek by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost better to understand the outlook of others, that when the day of reconciliation is at hand, no ignorance or ill-founded prejudice may be found to hinder the fulfilment of the will of Him who prayed 'that they may be One'.

– *The Church and the Papacy*, Trevor Gervase Jalland, London, 1944 pp. 542, 543. Jalland was an Anglican.

1. See James Cairdner, op.cit. vol 1, p.325.
2. *The Reformation in England*, London, Burns and Oates, 1962, p.187.
3. See James Cairdner, op.cit. p.367.
4. 'Yet when all is said and done, the Reformation was a violent disruption, not the natural fulfilment, of most of what was vigorous in late medieval piety and religious practice.' – *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional religion in England 1400-1580*, Eamon Duffy, Yale University Press, 1992 p.4.
5. *Mutatis mutandis*, the above section owes much to Philip Hughes' *Reformation in England*, ed.cit. Part III, Chapter 1, pp 186-191.
6. St Matthew 19:26.
7. St John, 17:11.
8. 'Tantae enim a Capite Christiano haereses exstiterunt ut nominum ipsorum sit volumen immensum!' See St Pacianus, fourth century bishop of Barcelona. *Letter 1 to Symponianus Novatianus*, Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. xiii, p.1053.
9. See Adolf Harnack. *History of Dogma*, 7 vols, 1894-199, vol. 5, p.155. For a list of the Donatist anti-popes after Victor see *The Works of St Optatus*, translated with notes by O.R.Vassell-Phillips. Longmans, London, 1917, pp.71-72.
10. *Collected Essays and Addresses*, London, J.M. Dent & Sons, vol. 3, p.10.
11. 1 Timothy 6:20; see also 2 Thessalonians 2:15: 'hold fast to the traditions which you have learned from us by word or by letter'.
12. 1 Cor 12:27.
13. 11 Corinthians, 4:7.
14. *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional religion in England 1400-1580*, Eamon Duffy, Yale University Press, 1992, p.585.
15. Galatians 2<sup>1</sup>.





W H E N people ask for proof for the existence of God, it

is difficult to know what it is they are asking for, so it is always wise to ask what it is for them that would constitute just such a proof. More often than not, in my experience at least, most cannot answer this for when they think upon it they realise that what they thought would prove God would do no such thing.

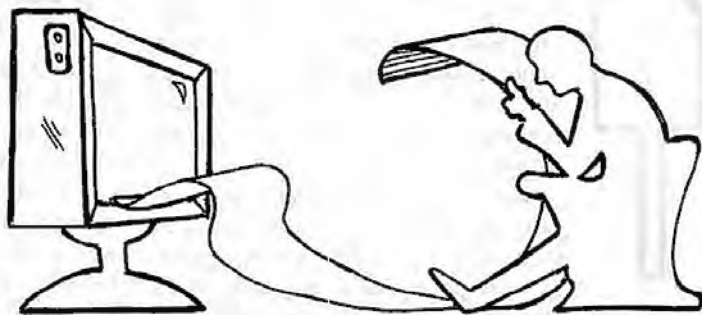
For example, a miracle would only prove that we do not understand everything that happens in our cosmos. As for God making an appearance, say as an amazing radiant giant, glowing with power and majesty, well how does one know that it *is* God and not an alien, a demon, or a creation of some super-secret military unit?

This does not mean that the existence of God cannot be *proved*, it simply expresses the principle that a proof must be commensurate with what it is that is being proved. Though there are obsessive loonies who would argue otherwise, you cannot prove a work of art is great through mathematics. Nor can you prove water is of a certain chemical composition by submitting it to socio-political and cultural analysis, though some theorists might try. The proofs for the existence of God are high proofs; they have a lot to do with proofs for the reasonableness of reason. To put it another way, proofs for the existence of God have to do with proof for the validity of proof. But this is not our topic.

In his book *The Lightness of Being* (2008), Frank Wilczek explains something of the modern understanding of how quantum physics and the cosmos behave. He does this in an affable and easy style, and he must know something of this subject for he won the Nobel Prize for physics in 2004.

But there's a problem. Too often brilliance in one field can prove to be a positive impediment in understanding another field, not least because one thinks that the methods one has mastered apply to other areas of study and research. Simply, one forgets that proofs must be commensurate with what it is one is proving.

Early on in his book, Wilczek recounts how he grew up to love science, he "loved the idea that great powers and secret meanings lurked behind the appearance of things" (p.6). This led him to become fascinated with the Catholic faith, for he



## THE PROOF OF GOD AND MEN

By ROBERT TILLEY

had been informed that there were "great powers that can be swayed by prayer and ritual." He found, however, that the "power of faith and prayer" were "unreliable" compared, that is, to scientific technology (p.7). When he put religion and science to the test, he found the latter more successful than the former. No surprise there, for if I set out to prove which is greater, art or mathematics, and I do so by reference to algebra and calculus, then I must be a bit of an idiot

to not know which one will win even before I put them to the test.

If Wilczek *had* found faith and ritual to be the means of tapping into and manipulating power such that he could get the things he desired; if he *had* found them to be more effective in this regard than technology, then he would not have found the Catholic faith, he would not have found religion proper, *he would have found magic*. For magic is religion debased, brought down to the level of a technological science. The physical sciences are good in their place, but when the methods and proofs appropriate to them are applied to higher subjects, such as theology, philosophy, the arts, or politics, then all manner of confusion results. Indeed, all manner of evil results, not least because, as Wilczek's example demonstrates, one sets out to prove something by reference to utility and pragmatism. By reference that is, *to power*. Which is why science applied to religion ends in magic, for magic is about tapping into divine power in order to extend the reach of one's will. And, one's will is to fulfil one's desires.

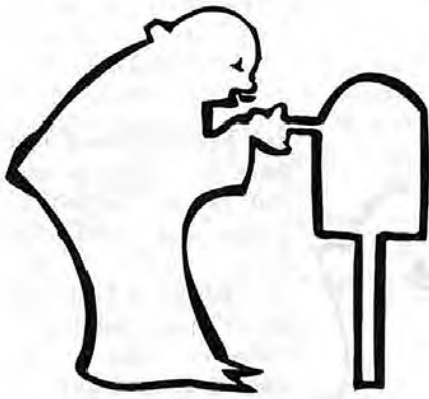
The founder of modern science, Francis Bacon, coined the now famous aphorism "Knowledge is Power," and he and other like-minded scientists extended this to the area of culture and politics, with the result that many scientists have been in the forefront of debasing the value of human life by submitting it to the dictates of utility and pragmatism. Thus, when many scientists ask for proof of God they are asking that God, like humanity, be subject to their knowledge and methods, and, thereby, to *their* power.

But they prove only one thing, that the Devil still tempts Dr Faustus.

ROBERT TILLEY is a regular contributor to *Annals*.



## LETTERS



### Crosswords

One thing I have never noticed in the *Annals* letter pages is a comment on the crossword puzzles. I, for one, think they are excellent, especially the cryptic puzzle, which keeps getting better. Many magazines with far greater budgets could not boast such high-quality puzzles.

STEPHEN HITCHINGS

### Bomber Command

Thank you once again for *Annals*. I found the article 'Bomber Command' [*Annals* 7/2009] interesting. As a guide at the Australian War Memorial I am familiar with a lot of material on warfare.

Australians flew many other types of aircraft in all of the RAF roles. My father was one of those pilots; he flew twin engine Wellingtons with 70 Squadron RAF. He joined the Odd Bods Association, made up of aircrew who flew with non-RAAF squadrons in WWII. They are based in Melbourne and I too am now a member of the Odd Bods.

The Role of Honour at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra lists 3,486 Australians who died with the RAF's Bomber Command. They are included in the nearly 5,000 who died flying with all RAF squadrons. As I tell people on tours of the War Memorial, the place not to be in World War I was in the trenches; in World War II it was flying with Bomber Command.

Wanniassa ACT 2903

ALASTAIR BRIDGES

### Freezing out the Global Warmers

I never know whether to be frustrated or amused when Global Warming disciples claim that the freezing temperatures currently being experienced in the Northern

Hemisphere are a result of Global Warming. No matter what the weather, boiling hot or freezing cold, our side can't win a trick, as the true believers blame global warming for everything and always come up with some convoluted theory to prove it – if only to themselves.

But why should we believe them? After all, besides the East Anglia fiasco, there was that heart rending photo Al Gore produced of two polar bears, allegedly stranded on a block of ice as the Arctic Circle melted. It must be taking its time, because he forgot to mention the photo, taken by marine biology student Amanda Byrd, was snapped in mid August 2004, at the height of the Northern summer, when the fringes of the Arctic Circle always melt.

My belief is that the current Northern Hemisphere freeze, which kicked in to coincide with the Copenhagen non-event and is still extending, is God's way of showing the likes of the Obama/Gore and the Rudd/Wong factions that they are not in control of this world. He's running

## Underrating Humanity

Deep ecology's emphasis on bio-centrism denies the anthropological vision of the Bible, in which human beings are at the centre of the world, since they are considered to be qualitatively superior to other natural forms. It is very prominent in legislation and education today, despite the fact that it underrates humanity in this way. The same esoteric cultural matrix can be found in the ideological theory underlying population control policies and experiments in genetic engineering, which seem to express a dream human beings have of creating themselves afresh. How do people hope to do this? By deciphering the genetic code, altering the natural rules of sexuality and defying the limits of death.

– *Jesus Christ The Bearer of the Water of Life*, an examination of New Age theory and practices, by the Pontifical Council for Culture, and Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Rome. St Paul's Publications 2003, p.36.

the show, including all weather details.

*Petrie Qld 4502*

FRANK BELLET

### Pope Pius XII, the Nazis and the Jews

Re your item 'Pius XII, the Nazis and the Jews' [*Annals* 7/2009] I recall that as an 11-year-old in 1939 I biked one Saturday as usual the two miles to our local country Post Office for the newspaper and mail. The post Office was managed by a good Presbyterian lady, Mrs Patterson, at her home. The Pattersons had a short-wave radio and got the news from the BBC.

At that time the horrors of WWI were fresh in the minds of every adult and there was mounting apprehension at the trend of events in Hitler's Germany. As I was leaving Mrs Patterson said to me, "When you get home tell your mother and father that Cardinal Pacelli has been elected Pope." I still remember the note of fear in her voice when she added, "Oh, Hitler will be wild".

My point is that even in an obscure country place on the West Coast of the South Island of New Zealand, Cardinal Pacelli's outspoken opposition to Hitler was public knowledge.

Reefton, NZ

J. R. O'REGAN

### From the Land of the Ashes

There is a quote, from the *Annals* of Tacitus, which is well known: [*Annals* I, 1]: *inde consilium mihi ... tradere ... sine ira et studio, quorum causas procul habeo*. 'Hence my purpose is to relate ... without either anger or partiality, from any inclination to either of which I am far removed.' This seems apposite as this humble reader in the U.K. finds that the modern Aussie *Annals* – as a Journal of Catholic Culture – avoids political correctness, or religious pandering, and tells it straight ... in a challenging way. Keep up the faithful work. Many thanks! Best wishes from the land of the Ashes.

Sutton, UK

NEVILLE KYRKE-SMITH

### Peter Singer and the Right to Life

Frank Mobbs review of Peter Singer's book *The life you can save: Acting now to end world poverty* ('A different tune', *Annals*, Nov/Dec 2009) is very fair, but I wish Peter Singer could adopt the

same ideals in regard to babies in the womb as he does about the poor.

As I understand his thesis, Singer says that if we can save, without risking our own lives, those whose lives are threatened by starvation and/or illness, we have a moral obligation to do so by donating money to provide food and medical treatment.

But why doesn't Singer apply the same principle to unborn children? A woman whose life is actually threatened by a pregnancy (although this rarely happens) may be considered by some to be entitled to terminate that pregnancy, but most abortions are done for convenience or social reasons.

Singer suggests five per-cent of GDP should be made available to provide for the starving in Africa and elsewhere. What percentage of GDP would he suggest be made available to enable pregnant women in Australia to carry their babies to term without undue hardship? I suspect he would not recommend a cent because he considers the unborn are not sentient and therefore not worth saving, i.e. their mothers' convenience is more important than the lives of babies in the womb.

Toorak, Vic. 3142

BABETTE FRANCIS

## The Pathos of War

I am temporarily running Father Tony Glynn's old Parish. The Japanese still speak fondly of him though he died here 15 years ago. Since ex-Army padre Marsden, POW of the notorious Burma-Thailand Railway, began the Marist Japanese Mission, reconciliation between Pacific war enemies has been a key element.

Tony was an energetic trailblazer in this. At one of our reconciliation Anzac Days in Sydney, Toyoko Okade came down to Australia and read several last letters from kamikaze pilots to their parents, that highlighted for her the pathos of war.

Before their one-way flight to try to dent the steel trap that the U.S. Navy ringed around vital Okinawa, many kamikaze Japanese pilots came to pray at Ise's 2000-year-old Shinto shrine.

Some stayed the night in her parents Inn. Five-year-old Toyoko wondered why these young men were served such fine meals when most of Japan half starved on meagre rations. She was also surprised when these young pilots did

the then un-Japanese thing – suddenly and impulsively picking her up and hugging her as they left.

She now understands their pain, knowing they would never have children.

This Christmas she will travel through the wintry darkness to join in our Mass though she is a Shinto believer. At the offertory procession she will carry a kamikaze pilot's last letter and place it at the feet of the Christ child in the Christmas crib. It will be her gesture to remind us of the tragedy when armed men set out to kill each other, and her prayer that erstwhile Pacific War motherlands never try it again.

Naka-Tonigauka Niara City, Japan PAUL GYNN SM

## Islam and the West

'The Ambiguity of Islam' [*Annals* 9-10/2009] so whetted my appetite that I now have obtained the book *111 Questions on Islam* from Ignatius Press. Your review 'Islam and the West,' of the same book by Father Samir Khalil Samir, in the Catholic Weekly – and your article in *Annals* 9-10 on 'Malaysia's Islamist Goals – like all your articles, again alerted readers to a major threat to our way of life.

My main contact with Islam was in Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan, and over a number of years. Because I last travelled to those countries in 1994, my personal observations are of limited relevance, being now 15 years out of date. Your articles have been essential to my gaining a better understanding and sound knowledge of more recent developments.

Anti-Catholicism is never far below the surface in the business community, and the article by Archbishop Dolan in the same issue of *Annals* could well be about Australia, rather than America.

St Ives, NSW 2075

JOHN FLETCHER



## Only 'canonical obedience'

I write in response to the article in *Annals* (October 2009), where you seem to misunderstand my words that you correctly quote. My point was that the governance of the Roman Catholic Church is hierarchical, where priests must obey their bishops and likewise the Pope. In many parts of the Anglican Church of Australia, and certainly in the Diocese of Sydney, once a priest holds the appointment of rector in a parish he has tenure. The bishop cannot remove him except through a tribunal proving immorality, bankruptcy or madness. Anglican priests only subscribe "canonical obedience," not obedience to any command, whim or attempt at interference. I hope this clarifies the point that I was making.

Sydney, NSW 2000 THE RT REV DR GLENN N DAVIES  
BISHOP OF NORTH SYDNEY

## Theology and Sanity

As you may surmise, I read and reread and reread *Annals*, particularly your editorials. They are so good I think editorials should have an initial capital. So it will be – 'your Editorials'.

I have owned, without reading, a book which I latterly took up and couldn't put down. 'Theology and Sanity' by Frank Sheed should, in my opinion, be required reading in all Catholic schools. I am enthralled by the clarity of his points, the beauty of his prose and the sequential nature of his thoughts. I suggested to my managing director (wife) that she should read it. She too is delighted and we have fruitful discussions over every point.

Any intellectually honest, genuine truth seeker, having read *Theology and Sanity*, would have no rational alternative to acceptance. I and my Margaret could deny not a single point. You may consider a series of Editorials or articles for future issues of *Annals*.

Babinda North Queensland 4861

ERROL WILES

[An article by Dr Brian Pollard in this issue discusses the relevance of *Theology and Sanity* to today's Catholics. See page 19 'Forgotten Treasures'. Ed.]

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

*St Augustine of Hippo [354-430 A.D.]*

## ON HAVING RESPECT FOR CUSTOM

**T**here are other things, however, which are different in different places and countries: e.g., some fast on Saturday, others do not; some partake daily of the body and blood of Christ, others receive it on stated days: in some places no day passes without the sacrifice of the Mass being offered; in others it is only on Saturday and Sunday or it may be only on Sunday. In regard to these and all other variable observances which may be met anywhere, one is at liberty to comply with them or not as one chooses; and there is no better rule for the wise and serious Christian in this matter, than to conform to the practice which he finds prevailing in the Church to which it may be his lot to come.

I think you may have heard me relate before, what I will nevertheless now mention. When my mother followed me to Milan [in 381 A.D.], she found the Church there not fasting on Saturday. She began to be troubled, and to hesitate as to what she should do; upon which I, though not taking a personal interest then in such things, applied on her behalf to Ambrose, of most blessed memory, for his advice. He answered that he could not teach me anything but what he himself practised, because if he knew any better rule, he would observe it himself.

When I supposed that he intended, on the ground of his authority alone, and without supporting it by any argument, to recommend us to give up fasting on Saturday, he followed me, and said: "When I visit Rome, I fast on Saturday; when I am here, I do not fast. On the same principle, do you observe the custom prevailing in whatever Church you come to, if you desire neither to give offence by your conduct, nor to find cause of offence in another's." When I reported this to my mother, she accepted it gladly; and for myself, after frequently reconsidering his decisions, I have always esteemed it as if I had received it by an oracle from heaven.

For often have I perceived with extreme sorrow, many disquietudes caused to weak brethren by the contentious pertinacity or superstitious vacillation of some who, in matters of this kind, which do not admit of final decision by the authority of Holy Scripture, or by the Tradition of the universal Church, or by their manifest good influence on manners, raise questions, it may be, from some whim of their own, or from attachment to the custom followed in one's own country, or from preference for that which one has seen abroad, supposing that wisdom is increased in proportion to the distance to which men travel from home, and agitate these questions with such keenness, that they think all is wrong except what they do themselves."

---

- St Augustine [354-430 A.D.], Letter to Januarius, dated 400 A.D.

*If certain trauma-causing events, such as war and abortion, lead to long term psychological damage, then what responsibility do governments have in not preventing that damage?*

# TRAUMA AND PSYCHOLOGICAL POLITICS

*By* Wanda Skowronska



ANY use the term 'trauma' to describe the psychological after-effects of extreme human experiences.

Few are aware, however, of the strange history surrounding the word and what it refers to. The use of the expression 'Post Traumatic Stress Disorder', or PTSD, is a relatively recent phenomenon. It was included in DSM manuals (the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) only in 1980. Since then, there has been an explosion of research into trauma in its various forms, with no lack of traumatising events to study and new international associations have focussed on this subject alone. However, it was not always so.

While symptoms of trauma have been recorded from Herodotus onward, they were downplayed throughout history, as if revealing human vulnerability might reduce the glamour of the battlefield. Strangely enough, it took the development of the railways in the nineteenth century to change things.<sup>1</sup> Where there were railways, there were accidents, and the shock suffered by accident victims was inventively labelled 'railway spine'. English surgeon Erich Erichsen attributed the trauma following such accidents to organic causes while his contemporary Herbert Page disagreed and said it was mainly psychological in origin.<sup>2</sup> This distinction persisted in all future investigations, though organic causes of trauma were more acceptable initially. Where combat soldiers were concerned, as this gave an 'honourable' explanation to the phenomenon and

exonerated battle commanders who might otherwise be guilty of exposing soldiers to overwhelming experiences. Later terms such as 'traumatic neurosis', 'traumatic neurasthenia' and 'irritable heart' continued to link trauma to *physical* damage. However, French psychiatrists Jean Charcot, and Pierre Janet challenged this *status quo* in noting that the symptoms of 'hysteria' (that popular nineteenth century diagnosis) often had origins in an earlier trauma. Janet, prefiguring much future research, said that people experiencing trauma had memories which they could not integrate into

a personal narrative. They become either too attached (Freud would say 'fixated'); or alternatively, they try to distance or 'dissociate' themselves from them (which is the basis of Dissociative Identity Disorder – commonly known as Multiple Personality Disorder). Until the traumatic experiences are integrated into a personal narrative, Janet said, personal development is impeded and 'split off' personalities might develop. However, Janet's insights fell into oblivion for almost half a century.

World War I forced new realities on the psychiatric profession. Samuel Myers, a British military psychiatrist

## Faith, not Force

AT the time of the Muslim incursions into Europe before the first Crusade in AD 1096 the main preoccupation of the European Catholic nations was the Normans. Both State and Church feared and dreaded the Normans – yet in time the Normans came to live in peace with their neighbours. Force proved to be of little avail as a response to their aggression. The Normans were finally transformed under the influence of the civilizing power and beauty of Catholic faith and culture; and their spiritual and artistic contribution to this Catholic culture still amazes us today. Islam on the other hand also proved impervious to military might. But, because of the distance separating mediaeval Muslims from Europe, and because of the flawed teaching of Muhammad, and the often poor examples of Christian faith presented by many westerners with whom they were in contact, they were seldom exposed to the influence of true Catholic culture and belief. When they were, they were moved: compare, to take but one example, the courteous response of the Ayyoubi Sultan al-Kamil — Salah ad-Din's nephew — to St Francis of Assisi when they met in 1219/1220, with Salah ad-Din's merciless and bloody response to the crusader knight Raynald de Chatillon, whom he personally slaughtered in 1187.

– Paul Stenhouse, msc

first used the term 'shell shock' to describe traumatic reactions in soldiers and noted that it could occur in those who had *never* been exposed to direct gunfire, as well as to those who had – indicating that there might be psychological factors involved in trauma after all. This observation too fell into benign neglect until World War II generated anew unspeakable horrors for millions of soldiers and civilians. Several US studies were done on survivors of German and Japanese concentration camps, noting long-term effects, even personality changes following exposure to trauma. The psychoanalyst Henry Krystal and other colleagues (some of whom were concentration camp survivors themselves) found that after an initial hyperalertness to all stimuli in traumatised people, there was a subsequent blocking out of emotions.<sup>3</sup> The blocking out was an attempt to avoid the overwhelming panic that reminders of the trauma might induce – it being better to feel nothing than to feel anything at all.

From these observations arose studies of trauma within other groups of people – children, victims of torture, groups of women – but again these faced benign neglect. And then came the Vietnam War. The institutional propensity to turn away from

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acknowledging the effects of trauma finally met its nemesis in US war veterans. Like the ancient mariner, they would not desist from telling their tale – that certain events, such as war, force us beyond protective psychological boundaries and can have irreversible effects. The Vietnam vets, not to mention the Vietnamese victims of war, knew too much, having had their lives forever shaken by unimaginable horrors. Using the World War II studies as a basis, mental health professionals,

faced with thousands of traumatised soldiers, distilled the symptoms that would form the basis of the first ever diagnostic category based on trauma. It had taken thousands of years, but finally the effects of trauma had been officially acknowledged.

The PTSD diagnosis included some or all of the following symptoms: firstly, reliving the situation – in nightmares, disturbed sleep and/or flashbacks; secondly, an avoidance of reminders of the situation in an attempt to numb the emotions, often leading to depression; and thirdly, a tendency to hyperarousal, an unusual startle response. Also considered was the 'significant impact on a person's life'. A distinction was made between a one-off 'acute' reaction to stress and a chronic reaction. If the symptoms lasted less than three months it was 'acute stress disorder'. If they lasted longer than three months, post traumatic stress disorder was diagnosed which was then categorised as resolved or unresolved.

These features have remained central to the understanding of traumatic stress as has the idea that affected individuals lose an 'internal barometer' for regulating emotions – a barometer advising us how to react to a situation. Traumatized people go to heart pounding 'fight or flight' mode very quickly in response to minor events. While we may flinch at a louder than usual noise, the traumatized person will be leaping out a window or 'hitting the roof'. The world remains an irremediably unpredictable place for them. Treatment of the various symptoms – somatic states, depression, grief, anger and flashbacks, might take years but the diagnosis itself gives many sufferers relief, as it makes some sense out of what previously made no sense at all.

After PTSD hit the psychological stage, the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies was formed in 1985 and has had ever expanding conferences to unite professionals dealing with trauma. Given the sad reality of contemporary disasters, genocidal wars and terrorism there have been plenty of opportunities for research. For example, the study of the psychological effects of the 1994 Sydney bushfires on school children became a significant piece of

## Original Thoughts on Sin

**D**ENIAL of original sin leads to elitism: Take, for instance, the duchess who simply refuses to believe that she shares a common nature with the unkempt commoners of field and street, or the self-righteous people who believe that they can make themselves good by stacking up a higher pile of good deeds than of bad ones. Their underlying assumption is that some people have exempt status, or higher virtues, or brighter minds, that others lack; plainly speaking, that some people (usually us) are better than other people (them). Original sin, on the other hand, is egalitarian because it means that everyone is alienated from God and has an innate tendency to sin. Equally egalitarian is the belief that Christ died in order to give everyone the liberty to escape sin. No one person can dare to consider himself or herself better than others, and no nation or race should dare to do so either. Jacobs offers this fascinating angle on the age-old debate in a splendid book.

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

international trauma research and the basis of the NSW Health Department's 'Disaster Mental Health Response Handbook'

Not only has trauma been officially recognised but its significance in human history is increasingly being reflected upon. The insightful study of Bessel Van der Kolk and Alexander McFarlane, *Traumatic Stress* (1996), begins with the words:

Experiencing trauma is an essential part of being human; history is written in blood ...

They draw on literature, history and psychiatry in their wide-ranging examination of the subject and even quote poetry on occasion, such as the following lines of WH Auden:

Truth, like love and sleep, resents Approaches that are too intense'

They observe that not everyone will experience similar reactions to traumatic events - much depends on constitutional vulnerability, prior stresses and the nature of the stressor. People react differently and recover at different rates.

**'Every woman, whatever her background, has a trauma at destroying a pregnancy ...'**

Of course, the very existence of PTSD is not welcome in all quarters - there is fear of charlatans claiming stress at tripping on a pothole, but even more significantly, there is still an age-old reluctance to acknowledge human vulnerability and institutional reluctance to acknowledge responsibility for acts that have psychologically impaired people. There are still those who prefer not to know, even ironically, *within the psychiatric profession itself*. It appears now that some trauma producing events are more politically correct than others - namely, abuse, wars and natural disasters - but not, so it seems, *the traumas following*

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*abortion*. Since abortion became widespread, many women have suffered severe psychological consequences. Dr Julius Fogel, an American obstetrician who performed many abortions from the 1970s onwards, was honest enough to observe:

Every woman, whatever her background... has a trauma at destroying a pregnancy...it is not as harmless and casual an event as many in the pro abortion crowd insist.<sup>5</sup>

Just as the Vietnam veterans fought to have their all too real traumas officially recognised, now women are fighting a battle for recognition of Post Abortion Syndrome (PAS) which appears to have many similar features to PTSD. If it is generally accepted that one can be traumatised by a severe

threat to oneself or a close family member, then it is understandable that women who regret their abortions suffer a range of traumatic reactions. However, part of the official denial asserts flimsily that if the fetus is not a human being, then there can be no traumatic grief after an abortion. And yet warning signs on tobacco packaging warn of the effects of smoking on the unborn child. Also, some inheritance laws in the US treat the unborn child as a *person*. In some countries, laws prevent any pregnant woman being subjected to capital punishment because her *unborn child is a person innocent of any crime*. George Orwell would have a field day with this doublespeak where an unborn child

who can be a person in one place and a non-person in another

There have been attempts to counter the denial – in the 1980s an American woman, Nancyjo Mann, started the organisation called Women Hurt by Abortion in response to her doctor's indifference to her abortion trauma. There has been a sad 'growth industry' in counselling groups for women suffering post abortion grief – some in Australia including Project Rachel, the Abortion Grief Counselling Association and Victims of Abortion, the latter established in Melbourne by Anne

Lastman with the assistance of then Archbishop Pell.

Like the Vietnam vets, women are telling the world what it does not want to hear – that abortion profoundly harms women, their families and society. In *Giving Sorrow Words* (2000), a collection of harrowing stories of women who regretted their abortions, Melinda Tankard Reist writes, 'This is a book about women who do not exist'. It is even more counter-cultural to assert, as counsellor Anne Lastman does in *Redeeming Grief* (2007), that it is not only 'psychological' counselling

that is needed for abortion trauma but also deep spiritual healing. Pope John Paul II went beyond the therapeutic in addressing suffering women with the following words:

The Father of mercies is ready to give you his forgiveness and his peace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. You will come to understand that nothing is definitely lost and you will be able to ask forgiveness from your child, who is now living in the Lord (*Evangelium Vitae*, 1995, #99)

One of the darkest of dark ironies in this whole situation of post abortion trauma, is the fact that feminists themselves, who have insisted on the need for women to be heard, *have not listened to the stories of women who have had abortions*. Not having their suffering validated by others leads victims of trauma to suffer what is called 'the second injury,' that of being shunned or silenced by others, and this is as true for women with PAS as for war veterans.

However, as the X-files motto says, 'The truth is out there' and great pain eventually forces a response. The uncomfortable question remains – if certain trauma-causing events, such as war and abortion, lead to long term psychological damage, then *what responsibility do governments have for not preventing that damage?* The answer to this may be a long time in coming. Ultimately, many of those who have suffered trauma, have come to understand that 'it is better to trust in the Lord than to trust in princes'. For those whose 'bones have been crushed', the broken-hearted and those who have endured horrors beyond measure, there is the consolation that 'every tear will be wiped away' and that 'their blood is precious in his sight'.

## Father of New Age Polytheism and Uncritical Relativism

THROUGH YEARS of reflection on Jung's considerable impact on the culture and spiritual landscape of the twentieth century, I have come to the conclusion that, as an individual, he ranks with the Roman emperor Julian the Apostate (fourth century AD) as one who significantly undermined orthodox Christianity and restored the polytheism of the Hellenistic world in Western civilization. I realize this is quite an incautious statement, reflecting the hubris of the historian who succumbs to the fantasy of being a demiurge. Nevertheless, I believe that, for a variety of historical and technological factors – modern mass media being the most important – Jung has succeeded where Julian failed. For the first sixty years of his life – the period of his "secret life" largely lost to history – Jung was openly hostile to Judeo-Christian orthodoxies, particularly Judaism and Catholicism. Contemporaneously, the patriarchal monotheism of the orthodox Judeo-Christian faiths has all but collapsed. Filling that void, however, we increasingly find Protestants, Catholics, and Jews adopting alternative, syncretic belief systems that often belie a basis in Jungian "psychological" theories. I place the term "psychological" in quotation marks because I believe – and argue in this book – that this twentieth-century mask was constructed deliberately, and somewhat deceptively, by Jung to make his own magical, polytheist, pagan worldview more palatable to a secularized world conditioned to respect only those ideas that seem to have a scientific air to them. I make this judgment about Jung without being either Christian or Jew or Moslem – or Freudian. From the perspective of the history of religions, I find Jung and Jungism a remarkable phenomenon – that is all. Not surprisingly, Jung's polytheism and extremely uncritical relativism have made him the perfect source of quotations for a new generation of postmodern literary critics and classicists.

- Richard Noll, *The Aryan Christ*, Random House New York, 1997 p.xv

1. Van Der Kolk, B & Mc Farlane, A. *Traumatic Stress* Guilford Press 1996. p 48.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Krystal, H. (1968). *Massive Psychic Trauma*. New York: International University Press.
4. [http://www.nswiop.nsw.edu.au/Resources/Disaster\\_Handbook.pdf](http://www.nswiop.nsw.edu.au/Resources/Disaster_Handbook.pdf)
5. Van Der Kolk, B & Mc Farlane, A. *Traumatic Stress* Guilford Press 1996. p3.
6. *Ibid.* Introduction.
7. Fogel, Julius Dr quoted in *Aborted Women Silent No More* (Ed Reardon, David) Loyola University press 1987. p 141.

WANDA SKOWRONSKA is a registered psychologist who works as a counsellor in inner city schools in Sydney. She has done voluntary work for the Catholic pro life organisation Family Life International, and is a regular contributor to *Annals*.



*Adults should switch off the laptop sometimes and do some real writing*

## CHILDREN WRITE BETTER WITH A PEN

*By Carolyn Moynihan*

**P**lunking a child in front of a laptop may not be the right solution for those who have difficulty writing down their thoughts, according to a new study. And it shows that even children without any specific transcription difficulty benefit from using a pen rather than a keyboard, at least some of the time.

I recently heard a report of a primary school that had completely done away with paper and pens. Wrong move, says Virginia Berninger, a University of Washington professor of educational psychology who studies normal writing development and writing disabilities. Her study of second, fourth and sixth grade children showed that they consistently did better with a pen when they wrote essays.

Only for writing the alphabet was the keyboard better than the pen. For sentences results were mixed. But when using a pen, the children in all three grade levels produced longer essays and composed them at a faster pace. In addition, fourth and sixth graders wrote more complete sentences when they used a pen. The ability to write complete sentences was not affected by the children's spelling skills.

The research also showed that many children don't have a reliable idea of what a sentence is until the third or fourth grade.

(And some, well beyond that stage of their schooling.)

"Children first have to understand what a sentence or a complete thought is before they can write one," Berninger said. "Talking is very different from writing. We don't talk in complete sentences. In conversation we produce units smaller and larger than sentences."

The professor points out that schools often allow children to use laptops to bypass handwriting and spelling problems, but that may not be enough. "Children with this disability also need appropriate education in the form of explicit transcription and composition instruction."

Not enough is known yet about the process of writing with a computer, she says, and children need to become "bilingual writers," using both pen and keyboard.

"But we don't want to lose sight of the fact that it is important for developing writers and children with transcription disability to be able to form letters by hand. A keyboard doesn't allow a child to have the same opportunity to engage the hand while forming letters – on a keyboard a letter is selected by pressing a key and is not formed. Brain imaging studies with adults have shown an advantage for forming letters over selecting or viewing letters. A brain imaging study at the University of Washington with children showed that sequencing fingers may engage thinking. We need more research to figure out how forming letters by a pen and selecting them by pressing a key may engage our thinking brains differently."

So even adults probably should switch off the laptop sometimes, get out a nice pen and paper, and do some real writing.

---

- Source: *Family Edge*, September 14, 2009

*If capitalism were generally conducted in societies which valued integrity, responsibility and charity more highly, its benefits could be greater and more widespread*

## CATHOLICISM, CONSERVATISM AND CONTINUITY

By Giles Auty



**B**EFORE coming to work in Australia I must admit I had never spent time in any country where the description 'conservative' was looked on as a legitimate term of scorn and abuse. Indeed, to confirm that this statement is not merely a personal impression I need go no further than reach for *The Oxford Companion to Australian History* (Oxford University Press, Australia 1998) and look up its lengthy but tendentious entry on Conservatism.

Here is some of what it says:

"Conservatives have defended cultural traditions, ancient institutions, established churches and ruling elites, but Australia does not possess these. Conservative pessimism about human capacity could not find purchase while Australian society was believed to be young and new, and politics was concerned with material progress and nation-building. Liberals and radicals in the nineteenth century and Laborites in the twentieth century have routinely called their opponents conservatives as a term of opprobrium, to cast them as irrational opponents of what must be the natural law of new societies: progress. They have then been puzzled that these 'conservatives' can on occasions command the support of the majority of the population. They would have been less puzzled if they had noticed that their opponents did not call themselves conservatives or comport themselves like conservative parties in Britain and Europe."

As someone who served on two committees for conservative governments in Britain I would argue here that John Howard, for

instance, not only regarded himself as a conservative but showed open admiration for conservative governments in Britain and Europe.

However, that is not the point I seek to raise here but rather to draw attention for a moment to the traditional links which have long existed in Europe especially between Right and centre-Right political parties and the Catholic Church.

In most of such cases, Catholics and Catholicism have provided a solid and necessary bulwark against the politics of the militant Left - politics which are founded generally in Marxist and neo-Marxist ideology.

### Tribalism versus Democracy

**U**nder our present system the political leader has practically no freedom of action. He is fettered, on the one hand, by the party machine, and on the other by the still more elaborate mechanism of departmental bureaucracy. ... the pressure of departmental business gives the Cabinet no chance to consider questions of high policy, and any minister who attempts to initiate such a discussion is regarded as Public Enemy No. 1 by the ministers who are only intent on pressing the claims of their own departments.

- Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State*, London, Sheed and Ward, 1935, pp. 39-40.

Australia's history in such a regard is not only very different but possibly unique. This is because the initial support base for Catholicism here stemmed not from an established middle-class but from the poorest and least advantaged section of our immigrant society: the Catholic Irish.

The Catholic Church and at least some of its more notable prelates were thus inevitably involved from the outset here with the economic and social rather than just the political and nationalistic causes of an underprivileged workforce.

With the outbreak, in the early years of the 20th century, of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, the Catholic Church here thus soon found itself competing for the souls of at least some of its parishioners with advocates of international, Soviet-style revolution which regarded not just capitalism, however, but all forms of religious belief, as its sworn foes.

This was the anomalous and in the long term untenable position that the late B.A. Santamaria inherited in the 1930s, a position exacerbated by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.

Poor Catholics in Australia may have shared Santamaria's socialistic distrust of modern industrialised capitalism but could not, in most cases, embrace a form of socialism which was increasingly influenced and infiltrated by anti-Christian communist ideology.

More than half a century later, the toxic clouds of venom released by the resultant Labor party 'Split' of 1954 have still not dispersed entirely, yet the world Australians inhabit today is virtually unrecognisable from that distant society of the 1950s.

It is for that reason that I find the continued use of the description 'conservative' here as an expression of opprobrium inappropriate and unworthy, and the mark of a society which refuses to think beyond its immediate boundaries, or to grow up.

Catholicism and conservatism share a vital characteristic in the value each attaches to tradition and continuity. For at least some Catholics I know, it is the philosophic conservatism of their faith which attracts and reassures them, especially when compared with the increasing radicalism of some Protestant faiths.

By contrast, both in Catholicism and conservatism properly understood, the fundamental nature of human virtues and vices does not mutate continually, or at all.

Over 2,000 years ago it was Cicero who remarked that "only a madman could maintain that the distinction between honourable and dishonourable, between virtue and vice, is a matter of opinion, not of nature" a comment which remains no less apposite today.

I am unashamed in my belief that capitalism, however imperfect, is the best economic system human ingenuity has yet devised not least because it rewards intelligence, initiative and hard work. If capitalism were generally conducted in societies which valued integrity, responsibility and charity more highly, its benefits could be greater and more widespread.

By contrast, increasing control by the state of any and every aspect of our lives tends to create a self-righteous rather than a genuinely caring or independently-minded society.

It does not take a sage to note that state-imposed, post-modernist 'virtues' such as political correctness are not only false and unnatural but are not virtues at all.

Seldom has the need been greater than at the start of 2010, for political and other prophets to lead us from a wilderness we have created for ourselves.

Giles Aury 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. He continues to devote himself to his original love -- painting.



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*Peter – Centre of Unity*

## CATHOLIC UNITY

*Pope Gelasius [492-496 A.D.]*



THE unity of the Catholic Church spread through the world comes from Christ. The holy Roman Church has been placed before the other churches by no synodal decrees, but has obtained the primacy by the evangelic voice of our Lord and Saviour, saying "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church", etc.

To it was given the fellowship of the most blessed Apostle Paul, that chosen vessel who not at a different time, as heretics claim, but at one time and on one and the same day by a glorious death, was crowned together with Peter in agony in the city of Rome under the Emperor Nero. And they equally consecrated the said holy Roman Church to Christ and placed it over all the others in the whole world by their presence and venerable triumph.

Therefore the first see of Peter the Apostle is the Roman Church, not having any spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

The second see was consecrated at Alexandria in the name of the blessed Peter by Mark, his disciple and the evangelist. He himself, having been directed by the Apostle Peter to Egypt, preached the word of truth and consummated a glorious martyrdom.

The third see of the same most blessed Apostle Peter is held the see of Antioch, since he held that before he came to Rome, and there the name of Christians arose.

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- Decree *De Libris recipiendis et non recipiendis* - Concerning the Canonical and Apocryphal Books of Scripture.

*Discovering that sanity means living in the real world made by God, for His reasons*

## FORGOTTEN TREASURES

By Brian Pollard



HERE is a gentle challenge to anyone who may be reading this. Suppose you heard someone say 'If you were so inclined, it would be very easy to kill a man,' to which someone else replied 'That is not true. In fact, in a very real sense, it would be impossible.' The challenge of which I spoke is to discover whether the second view could be correct and, if so, how.

Did you conclude that, as every well-instructed Christian knows, while a man can have his *earthly* life ended, his soul is made for eternity and will one day be reunited with his risen body and so, it is therefore not possible, in that real sense, to kill *him*?

But let me tell you that you would almost certainly have found the challenge easy if you had recently read Frank Sheed's book *Theology and Sanity*. This must be one of the most remarkable books ever written, remarkable because of its ability to discuss with such clarity aspects of religion that most find so difficult that they tend to avoid them. Before proceeding to discuss it, I should tell you a little about the author as

many readers may never even have heard of him.

Frank Sheed (1897-1981) was an Australian who, after graduating in Law from Sydney University, moved in the early 1920s to London to decide how best to spend the rest of his life. He had already done extra study and acquired a deep knowledge of history and philosophy, as well as learning Latin, French, and Greek. In London, at a meeting of the Catholic Evidence Guild he met, and later married, Maisie Ward, a member of a staunchly Catholic family of writers and editors, whose brilliant mind was a match for his. They later founded the Catholic publishing house of Sheed & Ward.

Known for his sharp mind and clarity of expression, Frank became one of the most famous Catholic apologists of the last century and had an outstanding career as a street-corner speaker. In 1957 he received a doctorate of Sacred Theology *honoris causa* from the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities in Rome.

He wrote several books, the best known being *Theology and Sanity*, *A Map of Life*, *Theology for Beginners* and *To Know Christ Jesus*. His writing

possessed a rare erudition, a strong philosophical knowledge, and a comprehensive grasp of Catholic doctrine and its Scriptural basis.

Sheed's star has faded in Australia but, fortunately, he has been well received in America, where he spent his last years, and where many of his books have been republished, to keep his deserved reputation alive.

Do not be put off by the title *Theology and Sanity*, seeming to promise only difficult, dry and obscure reading. As the author explains in his foreword, some theology is the indispensable minimum that every man needs if he is to live mentally in the real world, which is what sanity implies.

Sanity does not mean living in the same world as everyone else, it means living in the real world made by God, for His reasons; and it is theology's business to study some of the most important elements in that world which can be known only by God's revelation.

The book was written by a Catholic for Catholics and non-Catholics, to help them understand why the Catholic Church is the sole, effective depository of all Christian truth.

Following a preliminary section which addresses the relationship of religion, the intellect and the truths about God which reason can discover, the three main sections are titled God, Creation and Oneself. Because of the wide range of issues discerned and their importance, it would be almost impossible to do justice here to this magnificent book with its abundance of Sheed's insights and so, in large measure, I will try to commend and recommend it as strongly as I can by letting it speak for itself.

In its introductory section, we are reminded of the basic fact that God created everything in the Universe from nothing, ourselves included, and that everything continues to exist only

### Europe's Debt to Christianity

No doubt European civilization, even when secularized, still retains the mark of its spiritual origins. The new social ideals and secular forms of cultures themselves represent partial and one-sided survivals of the Christian social tradition. Nevertheless, the spiritual forces that owe their existence to Christianity have turned against it and have become the centres of anti-Christian revolt. Nationalism owes to Christianity its high and almost mystical conception of the nation as a spiritual unity—a sacred community for which the individual will gladly sacrifice his life; yet, divorced from Christianity, this conception becomes a principle of hatred and destruction.

—Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State*.  
London, Sheed and Ward, 1935, p. xxl.

because He wills it so at every moment. Reality consists in seeing everything as God sees it and not simply as it may appear to our senses.

The Church's vision for man in this real world encompasses God, infinite and eternal, Trinity and Unity, and humanity - finite, created in time, fallen and redeemed by Christ; each individual born into the life of nature, reborn into the life of grace, united with Christ in the Church which is His Mystical Body, aided by angels, hindered by devils, destined for heaven, in peril of hell.

One practical consequence is that there are moral laws that are the natural and obvious laws of this real world while, in the twilight world in which we live, they often seem odd and unreasonable, which does not make our obedience any easier.

In the section on God, we are reminded that, since we are all made out of nothingness by His omnipotence, to omit Him from the consideration of anything or everything is to omit the reason why anything exists and to make everything forever unexplainable.

Being aware of God's presence at all times is no more a matter of sanctity than being aware that the sun is there. Both are a matter of sanity.

Since God is infinite, He must contain in Himself all the perfections we find in things. Thus, since knowledge and love are found in created things, they must be in God. God must know and love. And that is the bare minimum we mean when we speak of God as personal; a person is a being who can know and love. Human language is not adequate to encompass God but it is all we have. God is Someone; He, not It.

Saying a being is spiritual means having no parts, that is, is an indivisible spirit who exists outside of time. Time is a human concept, contrived to help understand the constant changes occurring in the universe; time began with the universe and will end when the universe ends. Thus, the phrase 'before the universe was created' has no meaning at all. God's activity is a life of knowing and loving, knowing infinitely and loving infinitely. It is not being frivolous to say that running the universe is God's hobby, not His real life.

Of all the revelations Christ brought

## Peter – the Rock

**I**N THE LANGUAGE of Holy Scripture, to be called anything by Almighty God is to be what we are called. The word of God is a creative word. We may, therefore, be sure that Peter would be what he was called, i.e. a rock. 'He was,' says S. John Chrysostom [AD 347-407], 'a rock in name and in deed.' In speaking of the call of S. Peter in S. John i., S. Gregory Nyssen [330-395] says, 'by means of the change of his name, he is transformed into something more divine: instead of Simon, being both called and having become a rock (Peter).' And so S. Cyril of Alexandria [died 444] on the same text in S. John says: 'With allusion to the Rock He transferred His name to Peter, for upon him He was about to found His Church.'

- Luke Rivington, *A Plain Reason for Joining the Church of Rome*, London, 1890, p.17. The dates have been added to the text. Ed:

to us by word and action about the nature of God and our duty to obey His word, some may have been available to the more clever among us by exercising their intellects, but none could ever have reached unaided any concept of God as being both One and Triune. This is the Mystery about God that has baffled humanity since it was first revealed and has been usually left to someone of the calibre of Saint Augustine to attempt to explain.

In this section of his book, however, Sheed sets out what one reviewer described as 'the clearest explanation of the Trinity ever put on paper'. I can only say that his explanation makes an appeal to the intellect which is as well founded in reason as one could wish, and may even be the nearest a human may hope to come to the truth about God. Sheed sees a divine "mystery" for what it is: not something we can know nothing about, but something we can't know everything about.

In the section on Creation, the divisions of spirit and matter are discussed at length. I recently read, in a report from the US, of a person who wrote that 'in this day and age, people can still be found who believe in angels'. That provides an opportunity to give an example of Sheed's approach by citing some of his words.

'Perhaps the feeling that angels and science do not fit is merely a sense that angels would be too marvellous or mysterious in the prosaic world that science has analysed for us. But that will not do. Science has shown us a world at once fantastic and mysterious. Angels are no more incredible than atoms and a great deal more comprehensible. There is no iron law that only one kind of person can exist. Science is not equipped to answer the question about angels but that does not stop it from being a question. The answer is not less important because science cannot provide it. The answer is not less certain because God has provided it. God has told us that angels exist.'

He then devotes several pages to the scriptural evidence for his claim and for the known history of angels and their fall. This naturally leads on to his treatment of that other 'myth' of our age, the reality of Satan and his cohorts, followed by the implications for man of Adam's fall. There is a particularly helpful discussion of the difficulty in understanding how Adam's sin was not simply personal but was to have repercussions for all subsequent humanity.

Also in this section are a broad range of topics of fundamental importance, including the fulness of Christ's mission, His redeeming sacrifice, the Kingdom, the life of the Church and its many public failings, the Mystical Body, life after death and the end of the world. Here, as in the rest of his book, the author has perceptive insights which are not commonly encountered but are made readily accessible by his clarity.

In the final section on Oneself, the ways in which all the foregoing material is incorporated into man's religious and social life are spelled out. Maturity is now seen as the readiness to accept reality, not kick against it; not the reality that just happens to be, but only the vast framework of reality which is what it is by God's will. The mind that is really aware of the splendour of

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creation cannot but feel how superb must be the infinite Being.

Man must grasp that man is extraordinary, more extraordinary than other creatures both by what God has made him and by what he has made of himself. We are made from nothing, but will never return into nothing. Without God, we would be nothing, but we are not without Him and will never be without Him.

Spiritual and immortal, made in the likeness of God, redeemed by Christ, we are clustered by splendours. We are the only creatures in the universe who can choose or refuse God. All the excitement of our universe is centred in man. Not to know what an angel is, is a misfortune; not to know what a man is threatens sanity.

Without knowledge of God, man is doomed to live in a meaningless universe. He does not know what he is; equally he does not know what he is here for, where he is supposed to be going or how to get there.

Any impression of mastery over nature is seen as illusory. One's hold on life is pretty precarious when men are living only for lack of any specific reason for dying.

Finally, there is a long treatment of that baffling but unavoidable facet of life, suffering. Sheed offers no easy answer but he maintains that, without God, there is no answer at all.

At 460 pages, *Theology and Sanity* requires commitment of any reader but the rewards are great. Frequent pauses are necessary to absorb its spiritual treasures because much of its content will be found novel, since it has previously been unavailable to a lay reader in such accessible form. Although presented as a logical progression, with attractions which gently lead a reader to want more, it could as easily be used to become better informed on any particular point where the ways of God and man interact. It was republished in 1993 by Ignatius Press in the US and can be obtained by phoning Freedom Press in Melbourne, their Australian agent, on 03.9816.0888 or through the internet.

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.

*A complete vision of Christian Doctrine*

## THE 'SENTENCES' OF PETER LOMBARD

Pope Benedict XVI focused his catechesis during the last general audience – December 30 – for 2009, on the Catholic theologian Peter Lombard, author of the 'Book of Sentences' which was used as a standard text by schools of theology for many centuries.

Lombard, the son of a poor family, studied in Bologna, Reims and Paris where, in 1140, he became a professor at the famous school of Notre-Dame. In 1159, almost at the end of his life, he was appointed archbishop of Paris.

The Pope explained how this theologian's particular merit was that of having drawn not only on biblical texts but also on those of the great Church Fathers and of other important Christian thinkers, arranging them into 'a systematic and harmonious framework.

'In fact', he added, 'one of the characteristics of theology organising the heritage of faith in a unitary and well-ordered fashion' so that 'the individual truths of faith may illuminate one another' and thus 'reveal the harmony of the plan of salvation of God and the centrality of the mystery of Christ'.

Benedict XVI continued his remarks by inviting theologians and priests 'always to bear in mind the entire vision of Christian doctrine, so as to guard against the modern-day risks of fragmentation and undervaluation of individual truths. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the Compendium of the Catechism, supply us with precisely this complete picture of Christian revelation', he said. In the same vein, he encouraged 'each member of the faithful and Christian communities to draw profit from these instruments in order to gain a deeper knowledge of the contents of our faith'.

Another fundamental aspect of Peter Lombard's work is his view of 'the essence of the Sacraments' as being 'the cause of grace and having the true capacity to communicate divine life. Later theologians never abandoned this view and utilised the distinction between material and formal elements introduced by the 'Master of the Sentences', as Peter Lombard was called, said the Holy Father.

And he explained: 'The material element is visible sensory reality. The formal element are the words pronounced by the minister. Both are essential for a complete and valid celebration of the Sacraments'.

'It is important to recognise how precious and how indispensable sacramental life is for each Christian', said the Holy Father. 'In this Year for Priests, I exhort the clergy, especially those who minister to souls, to cultivate an intense sacramental life of their own in order to be able to help the faithful'.

Pope Benedict expressed the hope that 'the celebration of the Sacraments may be dignified and decorous, that it may favour personal prayer and community participation, the sense of the presence of God and missionary zeal.

'The Sacraments', he added in conclusion, 'are the great treasure of the Church and it is up to each of us to celebrate them that they may bring forth spiritual fruit. In them, an ever new and surprising event touches our lives: Christ, through visible signs, comes to meet us, He purifies us, transforms us and allows us to participate in His divine friendship'.

At the end of the audience, the Holy Father wished people a happy New Year, expressing the hope that the friendship of Jesus Christ may be a daily 'light and guide' for everyone.

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–Source: Vatican Information Service [VIS] Press Release



*In search of the remains of Australia's finest 19th century Catholic Architect*

## 'SI MONUMENTUM REQUIRIS ...'

[IF YOU SEEK HIS MONUMENT, LOOK AROUND YOU]

*By Tony Evans*



CHRISTOPHER WREN'S SON - also named Christopher - wrote those well-known lines (originally in Latin),<sup>1</sup> as the epitaph for his father:

'If you seek his monument, look around you,' suggesting that his father's true memorial was his great and very public works.

Wren senior, who had been described as the 'most famous architect in all of Europe,' was buried with due ceremony on 5th March 1723, in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral which he designed and built. The memorial stone marking the grave was suitably inscribed and has since become a place of pilgrimage for tourists, historians and architects.

Sadly we note that similar recognition has not yet been paid to one of Australia's most important architects and Cathedral builder of the 19th century, William Wilkinson Wardell.

The two great cathedrals that he spent his life in Australia designing and perfecting - St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney, and St Patrick's in Melbourne - and the many other public buildings that he designed or inspired, are indeed his

'monument,' but too few of those who attend Mass in them or visit them as tourists would recognize even his name.

One of the first tasks of any biographer is to obtain copies of

certificates of births, marriages and deaths, not only of the subject of the biography, but also of the spouse and each of the children. These certificates are the foundation of a good biography; they confirm much more than dates - as important as

valuable insights and this, together with newspaper reports at the time of the funeral, sent me on a pilgrimage to find his grave in the Gore Hill Memorial Cemetery on Sydney's North Shore.

Bordered on the west side by busy Pacific Highway and surrounded by

high-rise blocks, soulless University of Technology and North Shore Hospital buildings, the peaceful wilderness of the historic section of the cemetery is a welcome refuge from the noise and speed of the modern city.

Many of the mostly 19th century graves are over-shadowed by trees and some are hidden by straggling bushes, others overgrown with rough grass. The stone monuments are often discoloured and the inscriptions worn. There is a sad air of neglect as is usual in most ancient graveyards where there are no longer surviving family descendants to tend the graves.

On my first visit I could not locate Wardell's grave, confining my search to those graves which were marked by a suitable memorial or headstone. After all, had not the architect William Wardell throughout his career designed several elaborate tombs and memorials for

friends and clients? Surely a man so important in the history of Australia would have an easily identifiable resting place? But no, after an hour's search and deciphering of barely legible



St Mary's Basilica, Sydney NSW

dates are - but open up a whole range of information concerning the family and relationships and locations; and in the case of death, a doctor's diagnosis. Wardell's death certificate is full of such

inscriptions on likely memorials, I was forced to conclude I had been mistaken in the location. Perhaps he had not been buried in this place?

After contacting the Cemetery Board at a later date, I was persuaded to return to Gore Hill and search again. With more precise information to hand, to my utter surprise and disappointment – and a feeling of sadness – I found what I had been looking for.

Wardell's grave was revealed as a simple, cracked concrete slab slightly below ground level, unnoticeable, discoloured, and nondescript; its actual inscription worn and only partly legible. It was so inconspicuous that there was little wonder that I missed it on my first visit.

Was this, I thought, a suitable memorial to one of the great 19th century architects of Australia, one who had designed not only two of the world's finest Gothic Revival cathedrals, but many other churches, Government House in Melbourne and, as Supervising Architect of Victoria's Public Works Department, had guided and influenced the design of many of the gracious public buildings that are the glory of that city? Surely we, his heirs and beneficiaries, can do better than that, I thought.

William Wilkinson Wardell had died at his home in North Sydney on Sunday

19 November 1899. By then he had reached the age of 76 and had become recognised as the grand old man, the patriarch, of architecture not just in Sydney but throughout Australia.

His funeral took place on Tuesday 21st; his family planned it to be a small private affair. When Cardinal Moran was informed of his death he suggested a Pontifical Mass and burial from St Mary's but the family, faithful to Wardell's wishes apparently, declined the offer.

Wardell's passing had affected many people, not only his family but many friends and admirers, members of the clergy, his clients and colleagues and the general populace. The passing of such a man could not be ignored. As a result the funeral attracted a much larger gathering than expected.

The Cardinal was represented by his secretary, Dr O'Haran, and several priests from the Cathedral. The coffin was carried to the graveside by four of Wardell's closest associates: the then Government Architect and former business partner, William Vernon; Wardell's close friend, architect J. Horbury Hunt; John Reid, Clerk of the Works at the Cathedral; and Thomas Loveridge the Building Contractor.

Expansive obituaries followed in all the papers. Perhaps the best summation of his life appeared in the Irish Catholic

paper, *The Freeman's Journal*: 'He closed his life of noble labours, a life crowded with artistic triumphs in a manner in keeping with his modest gentleness which marked his whole career. His name will go down in history as the man who designed and directed the erection of two great cathedrals making him a truly remarkable figure among architects not of Australia alone, but of the world.'

As we re-read these words now, and visit his two great cathedrals, St Mary's, in Sydney and St Patrick's in Melbourne, we are bound to ask whether this weather-worn old cracked stone which serves as a covering to his grave in Gore Hill Cemetery, is a suitable memorial to Australia's most illustrious nineteenth century Catholic architect.

A few steps from Wardell's grave is a memorial garden to Australia's first *Blessed*, Mother Mary MacKillop. The inscription reads that her remains were exhumed and re-buried in her shrine at the Convent of the Sisters of St Joseph in North Sydney – also a few steps from Wardell's old family home in Edward Street. They were contemporaries. Wardell, a neighbour, must have known her.

Could this be the time for a more suitable monument to be erected over the mortal remains of one of Australia's most distinguished architects, whom the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* declares to be unsurpassed as a sensitive and scholarly interpreter of Gothic Revival; and whose cathedrals and churches, notable for purity of expression and richness of symbolism, rank among the greatest buildings constructed anywhere in that style?

Perhaps future visitors to St Mary's or St Patrick's may include in their itinerary a visit to a memorial dedicated to William Wilkinson Wardell and be made aware of the debt Australians owe to the architect whose faith and artistic genius produced the magnificent cathedrals towering above them.



Wardell's grave at Gore Hill, NSW, cemetery

A.C. (TONY) EVANS was a producer with the ABC for many years and is now a freelance writer living in Western Australia. He has published three historical biographies, the latest being the very popular *C.Y.O'Connor, His Life and Legacy*, published by UWA Press. His *Building with Conviction*, the first biography of William Wardell, is to be published by Connor Court in February. Details can be found on the publisher's web site, [www.connorcourt.com.au](http://www.connorcourt.com.au).

*Only three in every hundred murders are investigated*

## IS ANYONE SAFE IN GUATEMALA?

### Special ACN Report

Guatemala is being crippled by lawlessness with up to 20 murders taking place in this Central American country every day.

These are the findings of an investigation carried out by the Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need, which states that the average number of killings today is greater than during the country's 1960-1996 civil war.

The report, which follows an ACN fact finding and project assessment trip to Guatemala, identifies several causes for the breakdown of law and order including poverty, social exclusion, crime, the proliferation of gangs and drugs trafficking.

The investigation findings go on to emphasise the "the absence of justice that permeates the country".

ACN, which supports persecuted and other suffering Christians, reports Bishop Victor Hugo Palma of Escuintla as stating that only three in every 100 murders are investigated by the authorities.

According to information received by ACN in Guatemala, there are 6,000 people behind bars out of a total population of 14 million.

Bishop Palma told the charity: "In a country where there are 18 deaths every day, where is the follow up to each case? Where is the police investigation?"

ACN reports that the Guatemala police are often accused by the public of "looking the other way" and are more concerned with protecting their own lives than enforcing the law.

Fr Prudencio Rodríguez, a Spanish missionary who has been in the country since 1973, is reported by ACN as saying: "Drugs trafficking, poverty, discrimination, racism, illiteracy, prostitution, all take place in Guatemala."

Fr Rodríguez also highlighted the role of the media in causing the country's problems.

He said: "We are not an isolated people, we are a people very much connected to the world and the role models that come to us via the so-called mass media... are not in keeping with ours.

"They make us wish for and dream of easy money at any cost, money made through extortion, through selling drugs, through other such things... all of which have brought tremendous violence to our society."

The ACN report also describes the contribution made to the country by the Church's social work, but also stresses that priests and religious working with the poor have suffered alongside them.

It mentions the death of U.S. priest Fr Lorenzo Rosebaugh, 74, who was murdered in May, near Lake Lachúa.

He was travelling to Cantabal with four other priests when the car that they were in was intercepted by two masked men, who opened fire on the occupants.

Fr Rosebaugh died and another of his fellow priests was wounded.

According to his congregation, the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate: "[Fr Lorenzo Rosebaugh] threw himself into visiting the communities in the years prior to peace being signed when the communities were threatened by heavy repressive violence during the internal armed conflict in Guatemala".

According to Guatemalan priest Erasmo Vásques, Fr Rosebaugh's death "is part of the violence that we live with here".

Highlighting the problems the country faces, the Bishop of Escuintla mentioned the case of Rodrigo Rosenberg, a Guatemalan lawyer, who was shot and killed recently while riding his bike in Guatemala City.

Mr Rosenberg predicted his own murder two days before he died.

In a video message, Mr Rosenberg said Guatemala's president, Álvaro Colom, had sanctioned his murder and that the killers were the premier's private secretary, Gustavo Alejos, and his partner, Gregorio Valdez.

Founded in 1947 by Fr Werenfried van Straaten, whom Pope John Paul II named "An Outstanding Apostle of Charity," Aid to the Church in Need [ACN] is now at work in about 145 countries throughout the world.

- For more information about Aid to the Church in Need in Australia and the Pacific, contact Phillip Collignon, ACN Director, P.O. Box 6245 Blacktown DC NSW 2148. Phone [Fax] 02-9679-1929. Email: [info@aidtochurch.org](mailto:info@aidtochurch.org) Web: [www.aidtochurch.org](http://www.aidtochurch.org)

*Vanity* author etches portrait in acid

## RUPERT BARED

Reviewed by JAMES MURRAY



NOT a title, more the kind of cover-line that might appear on the front of *Vanity Fair* magazine for which Michael Wolff writes.

He should have called in a sub-editor; *secret world* is a stale onion of a phrase especially about someone like Rupert Murdoch, around whom a cottage industry of biographies has grown.

Wolff cites more than 20 of these in his bibliography. But with typical New York chutzpah he doesn't appear to make much use of the best of them. On Murdoch's inheritance from his father, Sir Keith Murdoch, he goes with the received wisdom.

No mention of Neil Chenoweth's *Virtual Murdoch* and its graphic account of *Herald and Weekly Times* executives supervising the Sunday-morning jack-

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*The Man Who Owns the News: Inside the Secret World of Rupert Murdoch*  
By Michael Wolff, Random House,  
rrp \$39.95

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hammering of a Melbourne strongroom, seeking evidence that Sir Keith had used his executive position to further the building of his private business estate.

Wolff criticises the blokishness of Murdoch's executive entourage. No mention of William Shawcross's *Rupert Murdoch* and its account of Ann Lane who kept her head when all about her were losing theirs during Murdoch's personal, global financial crisis in 1990.

Perhaps Wolff's worst dereliction is in his treatment of Sir Keith Murdoch prestige as a foreign correspondent. True, he gives a sparse account of Gallipoli and Sir Keith's celebrated letter. No mention, however, of the

way Sir Keith in concert with others, including the official war historian CEW Bean, tried to block the promotion of John Monash to command of the Australian Corps.

Hard to believe that American readers would not be interested in a citizen soldier like Monash: Jewish, a lawyer, an engineer, a linguist and a musician who also commanded US troops in battle.

Wolff makes passing reference to 'secondary military struggles'. Well, yes, from the Wolff perspective all such struggles were secondary until the US in both world wars took part decisively but belatedly.

Wolff's unfairness is balanced and includes his subject. He fixates on the fact that Murdoch wears shirts through which his singlet can be seen. As for what were presumably the direct quotes Murdoch gave him in interviews, he treats them like a Manhattan panhandler examining his tin for duds.

Intriguingly Wolff is a succinctly incisive magazine writer. In this biography he adopts a sidling style, a crab, claws raised to strike, describing Murdoch as a mumblor and preferring to put quotes into indirect speech

He does provide valuable insights into Murdoch's ultimate take-over of Dow Jones and *The Wall Street Journal*, making it clear how dumb the great and good can be when an outsider waves a wad of cash which is higher than the market price.

Correction: not the ultimate take-over. Wolff emphasises that Murdoch's ultimate take-over will be the one he makes before he is confined, possibly *The New York Times*. Wolff also provides shrewd insights into the position of Murdoch's third wife, Wendy Deng, and their two daughters (IVF Wolff says, and destined to have an equal share in the Murdoch trust with other offspring but no voting rights).

### The Old Stone Cross

A statesman is an easy man,  
He tells his lies by rote;  
A journalist makes up his lies  
And takes you by the throat;  
So stay at home and drink your beer  
And let the neighbours' vote,  
Said the man in the golden breastplate  
Under the old stone Cross.

Because this age and the next age  
Engender in the ditch,  
No man can know a happy man  
From any passing wretch;  
If Folly link with Elegance  
No man knows which is which,  
Said the man in the golden breastplate  
Under the old stone Cross.

- 'The Old Stone Cross,' *The Collected poems of W.B. Yeats*, Macmillan and Co, London, 1950. The 'man in the golden breastplate' is a symbol of an age of chivalry and common-sense from which we would do well to learn.

What emerges most clearly from this biography, to echo Paul Keating's phrase, is that Murdoch is a Prince of Print rather than a Queen of the Screen or indeed a Tzar of the Internet in all its forms.

From somewhere in the biography comes a picture of a boy playing with a Bulldog printing set, and of a mogul playing with mightier, transglobal equivalents, a lonely boy whose beloved father is a workaholic and whose beautiful mother, Elizabeth, is strict.

The consequence, possibly unintended, is that one starts to feel sorry for the adult Rupert Murdoch, the mumblor in non-opaque shirts, who has kept multitudes of hacks, sober and less sober, in pot-boiler cheques as well as munificent executive packages, this reviewer being the freelance recipient of the former not the latter.

Yet Rupert Murdoch is more; he is a Lear beset by lawyers who has compounded his family worries like the victim of a sting in *The News of the World*; his Cordelia is Prudence, the child of his first wife, 'an air hostess' according to Wolff, scornful of the 1950s glamour of that avocation.

Another Shakespearean reference is inspired by a comparison of Wolff's dustjacket photograph and photographs of Murdoch. Wolff is a Caliban who resents the advent of Prospero Murdoch on that magical island, Manhattan.

Those shirts, that royal purple hair, the prostate problem. New York condescension may be the key to the biography's deficiencies. No one, not even a Sydneyite born at Luna Park, is as parochial as a New Yorker. Thus all Murdoch's pre-New York coups are chump-change efforts.

Necessarily Wolff's work has an interim feel; he may, like others, be positioning himself for the definitive biography which will surely be published after Murdoch's death.

Nonetheless, the conviction grows that Rupert Murdoch cannot be captured in a factual biography. Fiction is needed. And a fiction writer is available: Anna Mann (nee Tory), once Murdoch's second wife, underestimated by Wolff as 'Catholic Estonian.'

Not so. Scots-Estonian Catholic, a tougher mix who knows Rupert Murdoch's secret as he knows hers.



## The fabulous Wenlock Jakes

**S**YNDICATED all over America. Gets a thousand dollars a week. When he turns up in a place you can bet your life that as long as he's there it'll be the news centre of the world. Why, once, Jakes went out to cover a revolution in one of the Balkan capitals. He overslept in his carriage, woke up at the wrong station, didn't know any different, got out, went straight to a hotel, and cabled off a thousand word story about barricades in the streets, flaming churches, machine guns answering the rattle of his typewriter as he wrote, a dead child, like a broken doll, spreadeagled in the deserted road, war below his window – you know.

Well, they were pretty surprised at his office, getting a story like that from the wrong country, but they trusted Jakes and splashed it in six national newspapers. That day every special in Europe got orders to rush to the new revolution. They arrived in shoals. Everything seemed quiet enough but it was as much as their jobs were worth to say so, with Jakes filing a thousand words of blood and thunder a day. So they chimed in too. Government stocks dropped, financial panic, state of emergency declared, army mobilized, famine, mutiny and in less than a week there was an honest to God revolution under way, just as Jakes had said. There's the power of the press for you.

They gave Jakes the Nobel Peace Prize for his harrowing descriptions of the carnage – but that was colour stuff.

– *Scoop, A Novel about Journalists*, by Evelyn Waugh,  
Chapman & Hall, 1933



# MEDIA MATTERS

By JAMES MURRAY

## Depopulate or cherish

Prime Minister Plenipotentiary Kevin Rudd can be cutting. So he should excise 'ageing population' from his lexicon. Unless, that is, he is prepared to put it into context. Populations by definition are always ageing. This does not matter as long as they are continually refreshed by births as a first option, immigration as a second.

There lies Australia's problem – and Britain's, France's, Italy's and Japan's to name a few. Their birth rates in the long term are below national replacement level for a variety of reasons, not least the contraceptive pill, introduced locally in the 1960s on the watch of arch-conservative Robert Gordon Menzies.

Within this context of imbalance, the cohort of the ageing population that needs primary cherishing is not the retired but the cohort whose nine months of ageing in the womb is too frequently terminated prematurely and with extreme prejudice.

In short, abortion which comes to be linked through euthanasia with the cohort of the economically burdensome, the retired. Call it ultimate utilitarianism.

## Target Abbott

Australia – admirably before the US and the UK – has had a formidable number of top, political leaders whose background was Catholic, mostly Labor and relatively unremarked. The targetting of Tony Abbott, Liberal leader,

because of his Catholic faith is, therefore, remarkable.

Also remarkable is the way in which Abbott gets the full appellation 'Roman Catholic'. Its use reminds your correspondent (then with *The Catholic Herald*) of the Reverend Ian Paisley's derogatory growl down the telephone line from his place of enlightenment in Belfast 'You mean

The Roman Catholic Herald.'

Well, yes. But use of the pejorative appellation in print recalls the time when some newspapers, in common with other businesses, exercised anti-Catholic employment policies.

Why has Abbott copped treatment that would not be given to a politician of Jewish or Muslim faith or indeed of Rational Atheist Humanist unfaith?

First, Abbott is not a trimmer. He speaks and acts in a general awareness that the Emancipation Act restored to Catholics (and Protestant Dissenters) full rights to take part in political, legal and academic life. The act was passed after the Duke of Wellington cast his decisive prime ministerial

vote in favour, citing the valour of his Catholic soldiers during his Iberian campaign. The act was passed in 1829 only 40 years after British settlement here. Was its relevance somehow missed in the excitement of the era? Is it still being missed?

Second, Abbott (as noted before) is a parliamentarian in the tradition of Edmund Burke who told his Bristol electorate: 'Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but

## Islam and Democracy

The allure of Islam ... owes much to its confidence. And that confidence has been bolstered during the past week. On Monday's Newsnight, Anjem Choudary of al-Ghuraba - the group that organised Friday's rally [in London] - showed in a series of furious outburst how empowered extremists feel by the impunity they have enjoyed. In response to Jeremy Paxman's point that he might be happier in a country where Shari'a law was in place, Mr Choudary raged: 'Who said that you own Britain anyway? Britain belongs to Allah'.

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

his judgement, and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion?

### Ruptured Appendix

Among hacks anti-Catholicism has an odd, little appendage. It consists of inserting into copy or commentary throw-away lines about drinking sacramental wine as an altar boy, the whiff of pious incense or the strict rattle of nun's rosary beads. The aim is to signal that you never really took your ancestral faith seriously, that you, too, are up with the spirit of the times.

It may work. It can also leave the impression of a once kicked pooch rolling over hoping to be tickled by its kicker.

### Googling Rupe

Google's battle against the People's Republic of China for Internet freedom has received trenchant coverage in *The Australian*. One aspect has been missed; the newspaper's boss Rupert Murdoch, no mean correspondent, can rectify the omission.

It comes down to the question: did China's authorities get the impression that western outlets would kow-tow given Murdoch's decisions to excise from his Star TV feed, BBC material and from his HarperCollins list the memoirs of Hong Kong's last governor Chris Patten?

### Digging in

Intriguing to read of the News Limited move to make a separate division to enfold *The Australian*. Even more intriguing to read that Lachlan Murdoch was shifting digs from Bronte Beach to Bellevue Hill (the Toorak/North Adelaide of Sydney).

In *Packer's Lunch*, Neil Chenoweth, the Samuel Pepys of high and low finance, relates how Lachlan Murdoch once wanted to live in Balmain. According to Chenoweth, Rupert Murdoch told Lachlan: 'People like us don't live in suburbs like that.'

No doubt Murdoch senior had Paul Keating's 'Basket weavers of Balmain' in mind. But people like the Murdochs do live in Bellevue Hill, long the domain of Fairfaxes and Packers. Young Murdoch's shift there surely means that *The Australian* division is to be his.

Maybe this will mean an increased quota of *The Australian* in Bellevue Hill. Too often your correspondent finds it has sold out at his local newsagent.

Apropos, a distinguished writer confided that he read *The Australian* only on Monday. Why? On Mondays it has all the best syndicated copy from *The Sunday Times*, London.

Add to that, the best syndicated copy every day from *The Wall Street Journal*. Presumably *The Australian* pays syndications fees to both newspapers. In the accounts, these must help to defray highly geared purchase costs.

### Strung along

Attacks on Indian students in Melbourne (or anywhere else) are an absolute disgrace. No question. No cavil. No equivalency. Coverage of any such attacks could, however, be cooler particularly when police investigations are ongoing.

The ABC *Breakfast* programme, for example, failed to analyse sources. India has a free and lively combination of radio, television and newspapers including its own thunderer *The Times*

*of India*. It also relies on Australia-based stringers as well as staff correspondents.

Where a stringer also controls, or works for, a local news outlet, this should be made clear. Stringers tend to file copy that will have maximum impact on foreign news editors. The tendency is increased when the stringer has an affiliation with a local publication.

Debatable? A comparison of any affiliated stringer's filed copy with his or her locally

## US Embassy to the Holy See

Lincoln was convinced that ever since the tide of emigration set in upon the continent of America, 'the head of the Roman Church and States has freely recognized and favoured the development of this principle of political freedom on the part of the Catholics of this country, while he has never lost an opportunity to express his satisfaction with the growth, prosperity and progress of the American people. It was under these circumstances that the Government, in 1848, wisely determined that while it maintained representatives in the capitals of every other civilized State and even at the capitals of many civilized States which reject the whole Christian religion, it was neither wise nor necessary to exclude Rome from the circle of our diplomatic intercourse. Thus far the new relation then established has proved pleasant and beneficent [sic].'

- American Archives, State Department. Seward to Blatchford, quoted in *Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1929, p. 501

published copy would be pertinent. This is not to put down stringers. One of the most notable, Alfred Deakin, was simultaneously Australia's prime minister. (Disclosure: in the 1970s your correspondent was a stringer (freelance) for *The Daily Mirror*, London).

### Called to account

In his first State of the Union speech, President Barack Obama clarified his attitude to financial institutions post the Global Financial Crisis or more exactly Global Bail Out, a climacteric of corporate welfare.

Implicitly, Obama also echoed a powerful line the American people once urged upon President Harry Truman: 'Give 'em hell, Harry.'

Bank bashing? Obama's words could be so construed if banks were not armour-plated in arrogance. Easier to bash an Abrams battle tank than a bank. And bank spinmeisters go for blitzkrieg counter-offensives in the confidence engendered by the fail-safe capitalism innate in the bail out but contrary to free-market economics.

Of the Bourbons in their downfall it was said they had learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. For *Bourbons* read *bankers*.

### Steve's apple

The latest gizmo from Apple Mac's Steve Jobs makes personal computers sound as if they were designed by Barney Rubble and programmed by Fred Flintstone. But the gizmo's name 'iPad' has been criticised. Some suggest an association with sanitary pads. Others suggest a name change.

On the basis that the criticism is not a marketing ploy, there's always the Latin name for a writing pad: tabula. It is feminine gender. Uh-oh. This could incur criticism as sexist. The

tabula was made of wax for easy erasure. Again uh-oh: exploitation of bees.

### Parish pumpery

Those lucky enough to live in other cities know Sydney for its pretensions. Occasionally its essential parochialism is revealed as in coverage of newish Premier Kristina Keneally's American accent.

Other times, other attitudes. King O'Malley was Canadian. No one is one record as decrying his accent. Nor did anyone decry the accents of the Californian Revolver Brigade during the Eureka Rising. Ditto for the American Chaffey Brothers, George and William, who brought irrigation to much of Australia. Ditto for the Americans who did their little bit to help Australia defeat Japan during World War II.

What makes the Sydney attitude doubly funny is that many local actors have come to fame and fortune by taking on American accents. Pressure of space prevents listing them.

### Tasty notice

Holiday reading included *A Celebration of Food and Wine* by Eric Rolls, published in 1997; it is not a narrow, recipe book, more, compendium of quirky bits and pieces.

These include the notice Rolls spotted while

driving in Tasmania:

- 'Chickens \$2/kg
- 'Turkeys \$5/kg
- 'NO EGGS AT ALL AT ALL'
- 'On the mailbox, irregular lettering stated
- 'C.W. Donnelly
- 'Catholic and Labor'

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## Learn from St Andrew

There is no indication in the Gospels or in the Acts of the Apostles that St. Andrew ever felt any envy towards St. Peter or questioned his primacy. It is because we would justify the claim of Russia to be the Church of St. Andrew that we shall try to imitate his example and to conceive the same spirit of goodwill and religious harmony towards the great Church which is especially connected with St. Peter.

This spirit will preserve us from local or national egotism, the source of so much error, and will enable us to examine the dogma of the Rock of the Church in the light of the very essence of the revelation of the God-Man, and so to discern in that revelation the eternal truths which this dogma expresses.

— *Russia and The Universal Church*, Vladimir Soloviev [1853-1900] translated by Herbert Rees, London, The Centenary Press, first published 1948



*Human rights abuses “can’t interfere” with more important things—like “the global economic crisis, the global climate change crisis and the security crisis.”*

## SOME THINGS NOT FOR SALE

*By* Chuck Colson

Many were shocked last February when Secretary of State Clinton said that pressing China about its human rights abuses “can’t interfere” with more important things—like “the global economic crisis, the global climate change crisis and the security crisis.” Even the Washington Post was shocked; its editors said Clinton’s comments were “misguided.” But now it seems that Clinton was only stating what was to be official Obama administration policy.

We saw this same attitude last month when Barack Obama declined to meet the Dalai Lama. The snub was an apparent effort to curry favor with Chinese leaders—leaders who deny religious liberty and human rights, not only to their own citizens, but also to Tibetans.

Obama’s refusal to meet the Tibetan spiritual leader reminded me of when President Ford wrongly refused to meet Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the heroic Russian dissident. Obama and his aides have also reportedly refused to meet a representative of Iranian opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi.

And now we learn that the President has been quietly cutting off aid to groups that monitor human rights abuses and fight on behalf of human freedom—especially in Iran. In the Wall Street Journal, David Feith and Bar Weiss write that the administration has eliminated millions of dollars in funding for the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center, Freedom House, and the State Department’s Iran Democracy Fund.

These actions go against everything America stands for. Our worldview is largely informed by our Christian heritage—one that puts human dignity first. Has this administration forgotten that human rights have always been America’s greatest export? We believe that all humans are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, as our Declaration of Independence says. We can’t just write off these rights for the sake of climate change or the economy; they’re central to who we are.

I knew this before I became a Christian. In 1973 President Nixon sent me to Moscow to negotiate for the release of Soviet Jews. I told Vasily Kuznetsov, the hard-line Soviet negotiator, that if the Soviets did not loosen their restrictions, Congress would not pass the trade treaty, which the Soviets desperately needed. Release the Jews, I said—or kiss American grain goodbye.

Kuznetsov pounded the table and shouted. “You have no right to interfere in our internal affairs!”

“These aren’t your internal affairs,” I replied. “Human rights are not conferred by government; they cannot be denied by government. They are God-given. We call them ‘inalienable.’”

Kuznetsov finally agreed to release the Jews—and America shipped its grain.

I can’t take credit for that; it was the U.S. Congress and the American people who freed those captives. And it will take the same pressure from Congress and the American people to free captives in China, Iran, North Korea, and anywhere else people are denied their God-given rights.

I hope you’ll contact the White House, Hillary Clinton, and your representatives with a strong message—one loud enough to be heard by people languishing in prisons around the world: The principles that guided us throughout our history are not for sale.

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— Source: Break Point November 6, 2009.

*An engaging look at a prominent national figure who is not shy about admitting his faults'*

## NOT A JOB APPLICATION...

Reviewed by MICHAEL O'CONNOR



**I**N the Postscript of this first edition of his book, Tony Abbott asserts that "it's not a job application..." Maybe not but it must be the most successful non-application in recent history. So successful that the book has been revised in a new edition that presumably excludes that sentence.

After the tragic death of prime minister Harold Holt, the Liberal party changed leaders with monotonous regularity – from Gorton to McMahon to Snedden – all in an ultimately vain attempt to keep Malcolm Fraser out of the leadership. Similarly, the campaigns against John Howard's leadership when in opposition all bespoke an attempt to exclude not only a known conservative but also a forceful leader from the party's top job. It was as if they didn't want to win. Even further back, there was a battle to stop Menzies after the death in office of prime minister Joe Lyons. More recently, the failed experiments with Brendan Nelson and Malcolm Turnbull seem to suggest a desire to keep Tony Abbott out of the leadership.

*Battlelines* is Abbott's manifesto. It is also an engaging look at a prominent national figure who is not shy about admitting his faults. Unlike most political manifestos, it is at once modest and enthusiastic. Abbott does not shy away from the reputation he has acquired from an almost universally hostile media and the political left. In fact, he seems to enjoy the somewhat abusive (in context) tag of 'Captain Catholic' perhaps because he believes that in the wider electorate it is no handicap. There is a political orthodoxy that Abbott does not appeal to women. With good

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Tony Abbott *Battlelines* 2009, Melbourne University Press, 206pp, \$34.95rrp

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reason, this is certainly true of the vocal pro-abortion crowd but is much less certain among mainstream women. Time and the ballot box will tell but one can be certain that Abbott will not compromise his beliefs to what he would judge to be a minority anyway.

He also enjoys his combative image and his tendency to emphatic language. This has got him into political trouble and, indeed, the book's cover has a photograph of Abbott clutching his

brow as if wondering 'what have I done now!' For years now, Abbott's character has been on view for all the world to see and, in case anybody missed it, it's here in the book. Like it or not, what you see is what you will get.

But the book is less about Abbott than his political beliefs and objectives. It reflects a view that Liberal politicians do not write about their beliefs and that they should. It is very much a strong and compelling defence of the Howard government in which, of course, Abbott was a senior minister. It contrasts the record of that government with its successor, not

## Obstacles on the Road to Truth

**O**NE THING particularly is a source of annoyance to me ... that (these writers) follow one another like so many cranes. For one always says what the other says .... They have, to my mind, understood very badly Aristotle's second book of the *Metaphysics* where he shows that these two things, fear and love, are the greatest obstacles on the road to the truth. Let them give up such friendship and fears, 'because while Socrates or Plato may be a friend, truth is a greater friend.' Truth is a holy thing and worthy to be honoured above everything else.

– The French physician Guy de Chauliac, perhaps the greatest of the medieval surgeons and doctors. He first took his doctorate in medicine from the famous school of Montpellier and then went down to Italy for post-graduate work. His descriptions of various surgical operations, especially in regard to the skull, thorax, and abdomen were remarkable. He discussed the use of anaesthesia for amputations and was aware of the necessity of antiseptics in surgery. His emphasis on the use of stronger wine as a dressing, and on cleanliness during the operation, made possible the success of surgery that would have been fatal otherwise. Unfortunately, the importance of these observations was not recognized, and other doctors turned back to the theory of "laudable pus" and the necessity of provoking it for a healing process. Guy spent the last twenty-five years of his life as papal physician at Avignon for Clement VI (1342-1352), Innocent VI (1352-1362), and Urban V (1362-1370). He was present in Avignon when the Black Death struck, and he remained with heroic courage to tend the dying. While denouncing those doctors who fled the city, he admitted with characteristic humility that though he stayed and risked his life, he was ever in fear of the disease. [Source: The Mediaeval University, L.J.Daly, Sheed & Ward 1961 pp.98-99], *Ed.*

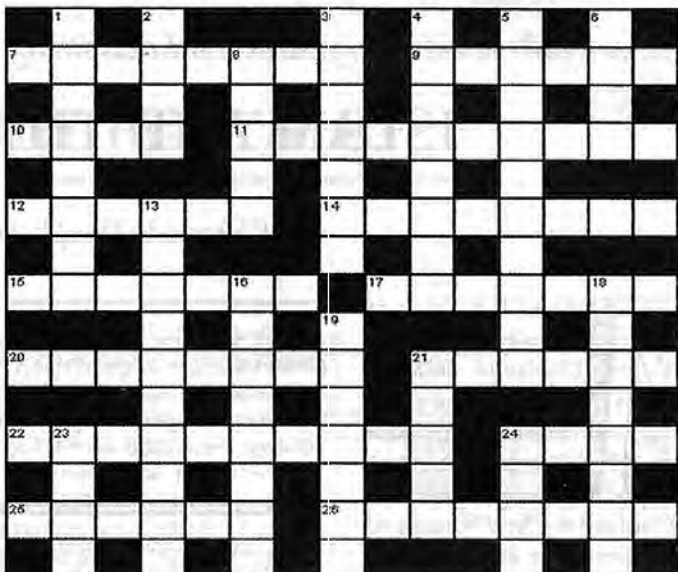
surprisingly to the former's benefit but the comparison is reasoned and moderate rather than strident. It has been said that the book is a hard-line conservative manifesto but it is not that. Abbott has some radical proposals especially in the context of Federal-State relations. He will seek to have a greater takeover of State powers enshrined in the Constitution because he believes the Constitution is not working and the States generally are performing their functions badly.

There is nothing new in this. What is new is Abbott's draft constitutional amendment, which forms an appendix to the book. If agreed, this would allow the Commonwealth on its own initiative subject to some limits to take over responsibility for a function from the States without their agreement as is currently required. Abbott clearly believes that the States can no longer claim the status they enjoyed at Federation and that State loyalty no longer has the hold it did in the past. This is not an untypical view in metropolitan areas of New South Wales or Victoria but it may not be so valid for the rest.

Much of the policy discussion focuses upon health and welfare issues. This is perhaps understandable. Not only are these issues those with which Abbott is most familiar but they are also those, which attract most public attention and the vastly greater amount of public funding. Abbott would seek to reduce their complexity and simplify their administration, in themselves very worthy objectives. What he like most politicians does not seem to understand is that complexity is often deliberately built in by an administration, which has a vested interest in gaining the resultant benefits accruing from more staff, rewards and status as well as the ability to bamboozle ministers.

On climate change, Abbott shows himself as something of a sceptic but more in the context of how to minimise man's impact on climate. Against the evidence of Ian Plimer whom he quotes approvingly, he seems to accept that human activity is having a deleterious effect on climate but is unsure of how to deal with it. That part of the book will not be very persuasive and suggests that Abbott needs to do

### ANNALS CRYPTIC CROSSWORD No. 18



**ACROSS CLUES**

7. Alms Eric distributed for wonderful events (8)
9. In favour of heavyweight with a positively charged particle (6)
10. Send out to extremities (4)
11. Fit ice mixture into sand to become holy (10)
12. Concur it's a long time to have heartless rogue inside (6)
14. Chief support for water pipes joining Scottish river (8)
15. First Christian martyr returns pets to egg producer (7)
17. Roman general Marcus Vipsanius has a strong hold on father (7)
20. To cancel debt offer wit some change (8)
21. Leading nurse is indoors with blood suppliers (6)
22. Semi ran back to Ian, a trainee priest (10)
24. Some cream boiled over pulpit (4)
25. Tiling repeatedly (without fish) to supply New Zealand grass (6)
26. Medical officer, with pig meat, partly shamed Muslim prophet (8)

**DOWN CLUES**

- 1&2 down. "C" crowd heard around Christmas time? (8,4)
3. Suit man altered with a very big wave (7)
4. Catching sight of leading samurai pocketing billiard balls (8)
5. An admission of being guilty if noses are tweaked after study (10)
6. Said to wander around city (4)
8. Young lady, taking in the centre of Britain, stays the course (5)
13. Banish former Irishman, terribly irate (10)
16. For example, Naomi is crazy with a love for oneself (8)
18. Average sailor with the French moral stories (8)
19. Certifies a firm's taking in financial head (7)
21. Raised hand holds first Israeli daughter of Leah (5)
23. Creek god in outer Osaka (4)
24. Donations obtained by Gore manuscript (4)

**SOLUTION TO CRYPTIC NO. 17**

J	K	B	D	S	B									
B	O	N	I	F	A	C	E	C	R	A	C	O	W	
R	E	L	A	H	N	N								
D	A	V	I	D	C	H	U	D	O	A	M			
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D	O	M	I	N	I	C	I	R	I	S	H			
I	E	U	U	A	N	R								
S	C	A	R	A	B	S	A	N	G	R	A	L		
T														

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much more research and thinking for himself.

That this book was not intended as a job application is, to me, evidenced by the failure to discuss international issues of foreign policy, trade and defence. This may be a weakness in his political outlook because they are not fields that a putative – or indeed an actual – prime minister can leave to others. In that sense, the book is too narrow in its scope.

Despite these reservations, this is an important book the more, so for

the success of the author's non-job application. It gives the reader an insight into the mind of Tony Abbott, an important political figure who could become prime minister. As a politician whose convictions are based on solid principles as well as considerable experience, he has the essential qualities of leadership that are not always so evident in Australian politics.

MICHAEL O'CONNOR is a former patrol officer in Papua New Guinea. He also served in the Royal Australian Navy as an intelligence officer.

*A visionary 'universal democracy,' and its antidote*

# ISLAM AND THE WEST

By Jude P. Dougherty



MONTHS before his death in 2004, Jacques Derrida participated in a free-ranging, public discussion with Mustapha Chérif on

the topic "Islam and the West." Organized by Chérif, a professor of philosophy and Islamic studies at the University of Algiers, the discussion took place in Paris at the *Institut du Monde Arabe*. We have in book form Chérif's account of the conversation, with some direct quotations, but not a verbatim transcript of the discussion.

Although diagnosed that same day with terminal illness, Derrida honoured his commitment to the dialogue with Chérif. He had many reasons for doing so. Derrida, like Chérif, was a native of the Maghreb. Born in Algiers in 1930 of Jewish parents, Derrida lived through the tremulous years of the French disengagement and later, after studying in France, became a public intellectual, with considerable influence in France and perhaps even greater influence in North America. Derrida is associated with the post-modernist, literary movement known as "deconstruction" and is acclaimed both as its founder and chief proponent. One will look in vain for a simple coherent definition of deconstruction. Although rooted in linguistics and in the study of how words convey meaning, it may reflect more of a mood or of an attitude than a rational methodology. However defined, it is a thoroughgoing critique of the certainties that have animated Western culture since antiquity. Not only sceptical of received wisdom, it is sceptical of all authority, civil and ecclesiastical, and even of the possibility of truth, given that there can be no objective understanding of reality.

In the course of the dialogue, Chérif tells us that Islamic scholars, unlike Samuel P. Huntington and Bernard

Chérif, Mustapha. *Islam and the West: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, originally published as *L'Islam et l'occident*, trans. by Teresa L. Fagan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. xxii + 114 pp. Cloth, \$19.00.

Lewis, reject the notion that there is a clash of cultures between Islam and the West. The eradication of the opposition between Islam and the West, especially within the divided unity of Mediterranean civilization, is one of Derrida's abiding objectives. With Chérif, he speaks of the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean basin as two halves of a geographical, ethnic, and cultural unity. Chérif insists that what is called the classical West is properly understood as Judeo-Islamic-Christian, not Greco-Roman or Judeo-Christian. He goes on to say that Islam is not a culture but a religion. The silent majorities of moderate Muslims, he is convinced, condemn the use of religion for political purposes and are opposed to the misguided and fanatical extremists who act in the name of Islam.

The conversation moved from a discussion of Islam to broader questions

of secularism and democracy, to politics and religion and how the former manipulates the latter. Derrida is at the forefront of a movement that calls for "universal democracy," a democracy that is not connected to citizenship, to territory, to a nation, to a state, or to religion. He calls for new international law and international institutions capable of imposing their decisions. The transformation of international law obviously implies a revision of the traditional notion of sovereignty. Given Derrida's idealized version of universal democracy, there would no longer be any sovereign nation-state. In his proposed universal civilization, technical and economic transformation would follow the political, becoming the exclusive property of none. The universal democracy Derrida seeks, since it is not connected to citizenship or to territoriality, would remove a xenophobic exclusion of the "different other." Such he believes is the necessary condition for freedom of speech, for exchange, for dialogue, for mutual understanding.

In keeping with the thrust of deconstruction, Derrida conveniently ignores the Hellenic and Christian sources of Western democracy and the culture that supports it. Chérif, for his part, is obliged to ignore the history of Islam and the texts in the Koran and in the Hadiths that through the centuries have inspired the jihad and the violence that Chérif so rightly condemns. Although Pierre Manent probably did not have Derrida in mind when he published *Democracy without Nations? The Fate of Self-Government in Europe*, that book serves as an antidote to the visionary universal democracy proclaimed in this volume.

PROFESSOR JUDE DOUGHERTY is Dean Emeritus of the Philosophy Faculty, Catholic University of America. Editor, *The Review of Metaphysics*, and General Editor, *Series Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy*, Washington, D.C.

## Fear the revolutionary

'It is time to learn to accept and exult in every act of revolt against oppression ...

Not until we do create this spirit will the revolutionists ever be feared or even respected in America.'

- Margaret Sanger, the propagandist for birth control, abortion and Eugenics, praised three would-be terrorists who were blown up by their own bomb as they prepared to assassinate John D. Rockefeller in July 1914. See *The Woman, Rebel*, 'Tragedy', July 1914, p.33, quoted in Daniel J. Flynn, *Intellectual Morons: How ideology makes Smart People fall for Stupid Ideas*, Crown Forum New York, 2004, p.147.

*Bilocation, and the strange case of the discalced Franciscan Sister Mary of Jesus*

## THE INDIAN TRIBE

By Leslie Rumble, MSC



IN 1623, Isleta was quite a small Indian settlement in New Mexico, some twenty-five miles south of Albuquerque. The Franciscan Fathers had established a mission there, dedicated to St Augustine, and they had built a typical adobe church of sun-dried bricks which was the pride of their handful of Indian converts.

The Catholics were only a handful, for at the time of the events to be described the missionaries were only just beginning their work in those parts.

James I was then King of England. The Mayflower had just landed the first English settlers in America on the coast over fifteen hundred miles to the north-east from Isleta; and of course they had no idea of the labours of the Spanish missionaries in the very heart of the continent. Those missionaries had been evangelising the South American States, Mexico, and California during nearly a hundred years before the arrival of the Mayflower] But the extension of their work to New Mexico was, at this time, a fairly recent venture.

One day, in the year 1623, as Father Alonzo de Benavides, O.F.M. was leaving the church-building at Isleta, he was met by five Indians. They said they had come from a tribe beyond the River Pecos, nearly a hundred and fifty miles to the east. No missionary priest had ever visited them, but they themselves wanted to be baptised, and to take a priest back with them to baptise the rest of the tribe.

Father Benavides explained to them as gently as he could that he could not baptise them until they were instructed in the faith. They replied, however, that they were fully instructed, and that a strangely-dressed lady had visited them almost daily for over a year. Where she lived and how she came they did not know; but she had converted and

DR LESLIE RUMBLE was, in his day, one of the most widely-known priests in the English-speaking world. His two-volume *Radio Replies* sold many millions of copies world-wide, as did his numerous pamphlets on aspects of Catholic faith and doctrine and on various non-Catholic Churches and sects. He died in 1975. In response to many requests we print the second of his fourteen articles on psychic phenomena which first appeared in *Annals* in 1958. The remaining articles will appear in subsequent issues.

instructed their whole village, telling them to get a priest to come to them from Isleta.

Speechless for a moment with astonishment, Father Benavides at last asked them: 'What was this lady like?'

They said they had never seen anyone like her before; but from the minute description they gave of her appearance and dress, he felt sure that the lady was a Spanish nun.

Having a picture of a nun belonging to the Discalced Franciscan Sisters in Spain he showed it to them, and they at once recognised the habit as identical with that of their visitor, but said that the face was not that of the lady who had come to them. They then gave him an animated description of her features as best they could.

Father Benavides examined them in Christian doctrine, found them indeed well-instructed, and baptised the five of them. Then he set out with them and after three or four days' travelling came to their village. Finding all the adults there equally well-instructed, he baptised them all, together with their children, and promised that a priest would come, build a church, and stay with them.

Seven years later, in 1630, Father Benavides was back in Spain, staying for a time in Seville on business for his New

Mexico missions. While there he met Father Bernadine of Siena, the Superior General of the Franciscan Order. When he told Father Bernadine of the miraculous conversion of the Indian tribe from beyond the Pecos River, and said that he wanted if possible to trace the Spanish nun who had instructed them, the Father General seemed in no way astonished.

'I think I know her,' he said quietly. 'Back in 1622 a Discalced Franciscan Sister told me that often when at prayer she seemed to lose consciousness of all around her and to find herself in New Mexico, instructing people there in Christian doctrine. She lives in the Community at Agreda, and is known as Sister Mary of Jesus.'

'Could I see her?' asked Father Benavides.

'She belongs to an Enclosed Order,' replied the Father General, 'but I will give you a letter to her Superiors requesting permission for you to interview her. I have no doubt that they will grant it.'

The Superior of the Community at Agreda, having been shown the letter of the Father General, not only allowed Father Benavides to speak to Sister Mary of Jesus, but permitted the curtain behind the grille to be drawn aside so that he could see her. Moreover, she commanded her under obedience to give him all the information he sought.

The moment the priest set eyes on her he saw that she was the replica of the lady the Indians had described to him.

With complete frankness, yet humility, the Sister told him all. She 'had long been accustomed to offer her prayers and mortifications for the conversion of the American Indians, especially those of New Mexico, where missionary efforts had lately commenced. Throughout 1622 almost daily God had seemed to carry her out



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of herself during times of prayer and she felt as if she had been transported to the mission itself. There she taught Catholic doctrine to strange people who, although she spoke in Spanish, seemed to understand in their own language every word she said.

Father Benavides then questioned her about New Mexico. She gave him an exact account of the locality, mentioning landmarks only one who had been there could have known. She knew the Indian names of the surrounding hills and valleys and streams, and many other details the accuracy of which Father Benavides recognised from his own first-hand experience of the country.

'Tell me, Sister,' asked the missionary, 'were you there personally; I mean physically?'

'Father,' she replied, 'I haven't the slightest idea of how these things happened. Although I am not a St Paul, I can only say with him: 'Whether I was in the body or out of the body, I know not.' I remember, however, that on one occasion I had a vivid impression of distributing rosaries while in a state of prayer to which God had lifted me; later, when I looked for the supply I had in my cell which I had been making for the missions, all the rosary beads were gone.'

'But what do you yourself think the explanation of all this would be?' persisted Father Benavides.

'I can only think' she replied, 'that an angel was sent from heaven to these

people, as the angel Raphael appeared in human form to the young Tobias and guided him to the city of the Medes. Only this angel assumed my form and instructed the people, while God let me see during my prayers all that had happened there.'

Father Benavides had to content himself with that. Further probing on his part was fruitless.

Beyond the facts given and an explanation which was no more than conjecture, Sister Mary of Jesus could throw no additional light on the whole mysterious affair. But so much as he had been able to ascertain Father Benavides published in Madrid in that same year, 1630, in the form of a 'Memorandum' concerning the Pecos River mission in New Mexico.

But it would not be fair to the reader to pass over the rather chequered history of the Cause of the Canonisation of the Venerable Mary of Agreda.

She was born in 1602 and died, as a Discalced Franciscan nun, in 1655. She



wrote one very long book on spiritual matters called *The Mystical City of God*, which proved to be the great obstacle later to her Beatification.

There can be no doubt whatever concerning the heroic virtue, lofty states of prayer, and high degree of union with God attained by Sister Mary of Jesus. But it is one thing to have a fervent heart and generosity of will; quite another to have a well-informed intelligence and a balanced judgment.

It seems that Sister Mary of Jesus was never able to sort out what was of divine origin and what was the product of her own mind in her 'dissociated state' during her ecstasies. She set down what she claimed to be the exact words spoken to her by Our Lord or by Our Lady, expressly saying that her least 'revelations' were directly inspired from heaven and that it would, therefore, be a 'sin' to question them, a sin which would be punished both in this life and the next!

Not for a moment did the humble nun think that she personally had any authority. Nor did she wish to usurp that of the Church. In her simplicity she thought she was vindicating the authority of Our Lord and Our Lady. But she was quite mistaken.

She even imagined it had been revealed to her that the diameter of the earth is 2,502 miles (its equatorial diameter is 7,927 miles!), and that the time from the Fall of our first parents to Our Lord's birth was 5,199 years to a day – although it is geologically certain that at least twenty thousand, possibly hundreds of thousands of years intervened between the beginnings of the human race and the coming of Christ.

Because of her undoubted and extraordinary holiness of life the Cause for her Canonisation was introduced at Rome; and she is entitled to the usual description of her as the Venerable Mary of Agreda as well as to the esteem of the faithful for her personal goodness.

But because of the manifest errors and her mistaken claim to divine inspiration in all she wrote, Pope Clement XIV, by a Decree dated March 12, 1771, forbade all further steps towards the next stage in the process, that of her Beatification.

Although the Venerable Mary of Agreda may never be Beatified, let alone

Canonised, it does not follow that she is any the less holy for that. Nor does it follow that everything narrated of her is unreliable.

Certainly the visit of the Indians from beyond the River Pecos to Father Benavides at Isleta and his own experiences were of the real world, and not merely of any dream-world in the mind and imagination of the Spanish nun of Agreda in Spain.

As for the transfer of the rosary-beads from the cell of the contemplative far across the seas to New Mexico, well, I just give up. Father Thurston, S.J., doubts the authenticity of the incident, noting that while the Venerable Mary of Agreda was convinced that the beads had disappeared from her cell, Father Benavides himself made no mention of the Indians having rosary-beads when he first met them.

But while there is room for doubt here, no one can say it could not have happened and did not happen. In any case, one mysterious incident more or less is of little importance in the presence of so much that we seem compelled to admit as true, and for which there is no explanation other than by admitting the intervention of God.

When Frederico Villasenor, the Spanish explorer, returned to Spain from America in 1748, he included in his book *Teatro Americano* a brief account of the Indian tribe which owed its conversion to 'a zealous Spanish missionary nun whom none of the Fathers there had ever seen.'

Later, the scholarly French Benedictine Dom Gueranger, 1805-1875, gave a more extensive account in *Marie d'Agreda et la Cité Mystique de Dieu*, while Dr John Cilmery Shea, 1824-1892, a most careful historian, in his *History of the Catholic Missions Among the Indian Tribes of the United States*, 1529-1854. New York. Arno Press, 1969. ranks the missionary influence of Sister Mary of Jesus as one of the contributing factors towards their success.

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- Editor, *Annals*

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## Bran Nue Dae

Director Rachel Perkins and co-writer Reg Cribb retain the generous humour of Jimmy Chi's 1980s stage musical.

Geoffrey Rush overdoes drollery, playing Father Benedictus, a German Pallottine by his accent, headmaster of the boarding school to which Willie (Rocky McKenzie) is sent by his mother Theresa (Ningali Lawford-Wolf) who wants him to become a priest.

Jessica Mauboy plays Rosie, Willie's sweetheart, drawn to fame by guitarist Lester (Dan Sultan). Slippery (Tom Budge) and Annie (Missy Higgins) provide the laugh-powered Kombi chariot that conveys Willie homewards with his Uncle Tadpole, Ernie Dingo reprising his stage performance.

Dingo's is a virtuoso turn although there are moments when he seems to have strayed in from *Porgy and Bess*. The sense of *pastiche* is strengthened by Pastor Flakkon (Stephen Baamba Albert) in Yankee hot-gospel mode among west coast Aborigines once accustomed to Plain Chant Latin Mass.

When Chi wrote *Bran Nue Dae* more than 20 years ago, he was writing nostalgically and from a potent Broome mix of bloodlines: Scots, Chinese, Japanese and Aborigine.

Rachel Perkins may have been tempted to include material from later times when, broadly, Whitlam-era bureaucrats replaced missionaries with consequences that include dire headlines. Commendably she preferred not to, keeping the running time to 85 minutes.

PG★★★SFFV

## Nine

Start over the top and what do you do next? If you're director Rob Marshall you keep going over the top. And he has a constellation of stars – Judy Dench, Nicole Kidman, Marion Cotillard, Sophia Loren, Penelope Cruz, Kate Hudson and Fergie (not the royal duchess), ready, willing and able to join him.

Like Marshall's take on *Chicago*, this is an unconventional musical: solos linked through an Italian film director Guido (Daniel Day-Lewis, haunted by the ghost of Marcello Mastroianni in Federico Fellini's auto-memoir *8 1/2*).

Dench, conspicuously cast against type

## MOVIES

By JAMES MURRAY

plays a smokey, Germanic cabaret singer. So, too, is Kidman, mischievous in shadowing Anita Eckberg, buxom star of *La Dolce Vita*. Cotillard is devastatingly charming, Cruz killingly funny and Hudson plays the kind of tough-fem journo who, of course, does not exist in real life.

Unfortunately the stars tend to sound as if they'd all been dubbed by the same singer. The choreography comes down to slithering and cavorting in the style of *Adelaide Tonight* circa 1963.

The lyrics are not singable either. Even Cotillard can do little with a line like: 'My husband makes movies' which has the lyricism of a press handout.

Day-Lewis? He may well be the greatest actor of his generation. But he does act a lot. Watch this twitch, folks. See my likeable grin. Regard my cigarette smoking technique.

M★★★NFFV

## In the Loop

Director Armando Iannucci's debut movie is a black pudding laced with satirical arsenic which cuts between London and Washington during the spin prelude to Gulf War II.

In it he gives fellow 'Jock wop' Peter Capaldi the lead as spinmeister Malcolm, a surrogate for Prime Minister Tony Blair's henchman, Alistair Campbell (ex-*Daily Mirror*, London) still a smiler with a bloodstained pen.

Capaldi as Malcolm Tucker, bit between foul-mouthed teeth, carries on like an unbreakable horse. He does, however, refrain from trying to out-do Campbell by playing the bagpipes. So no lament for those who died in the war Campbell helped spin into existence.

James Gandolfini does an ex-front line soldier risen to general reluctant to go to war, possibly inspired by Colin Powell. Tom Hollander personifies haplessness as cabinet minister harried by Malcolm and by a local constituent with a backyard problem (skilful turn by Steve Coogan).

Not even a cameo Tony Blair who as the movie went into release was before other cameras in London giving evidence to an inquiry about the war.

The movie has another omission; its focal point takes no account of those who whipped up the war through dubious intelligence: Iraqi exile politicians eager for the US to return them to power.

Comparisons between Iannucci's savage approach and the gentility of Tony Jay's *Yes, Minister* have been made without mentioning an unintended effect: the impression that they are reformist.

Rather they create a kind of anarchic nihilism, poor defence, obviously, against resurgent fundamentalist Islamists certain they holds the key to a global theocracy.

MA15+★★★NFFV

## Avatar

Rises on sci-fi whizbangery and falls on the neo-pagan notion of the pan-sentient earth-mother, Gaia, here a computer generated fantasy planet.

In his previous movie *Titanic*, writer/director James Cameron made a billion-dollar hit. In this one, he has already topped that take to the further benefit of 20th Century Fox, Rupert Murdoch, his execs and his hacks.

But in neither movie has Cameron been completely original. It would be possible to play trivial pursuit about borrowed cinematic elements in *Avatar*: *Star Wars*, *Dances with Wolves* and any number of sci-fi epics about corporate exploitation in outer space.

Originality does lurk in the sub-text. Cameron is a Scots Canadian. Few have more vivid memories of The Clearances under which Gaelic speaking 'Aboriginals', as some called them, were exiled in the 1800 from the Highlands of Scotland to Canada, an early example of economic rationalism, sheep being more profitable than humans.

Thus the N'avi in *Avatar* speak a substitute for Gaelic. Thus they are grouped in clans. Thus they are a warrior people. But Cameron avoids the deepest wound. Among the Scots some were sold out by their chieftains, the N'avi are not. Instead Cameron inserts another notion: the Noble Savage. Cheeky. No credit to Jean Jacques Rousseau.

All this means the actors do it tough. Sam Worthington shoulders the heavy pack as Jake Sully, wheelchair bound ex-US Marine linked to a N'avi



surrogate, who decides to fight for the N'avis.

The Cameron war cry in English was: 'Sons of dogs, come and I will give you flesh.' In *Avatar*, Cameron render this as: 'Movie-goers come and I will give you flash-trash - popcorn and 3-D specs extra.'

M15+★★★NFFV

### Invictus

Who'd ha' thought it? A Hollywood movie about the South African Springboks winning the rugby union world cup in 1995 to fulfil President Nelson Mandela's idea of the code as a binding force between his black and white compatriots.

Master director Clint Eastwood, after a nudge from Morgan Freeman, thought it. He has put together an epic sports movie with fleeting yet effective glimpses of Mandela's imprisonment and private life.

Freeman has the time - and role - of his life as Mandela, who turned a life sentence into a long - and winning - presidential campaign. Matt Damon makes a strong fist of Francois Pienaar, the Springboks captain who led his team to victory against the New Zealand All Blacks.

The lines from *Invictus* - 'Unconquered' - : 'I am the master of my fate/The captain of my soul' are recited as being inspirational to the imprisoned Mandela. Their provenance is not made completely clear. *Invictus* was written by WE Henly (1849-1903), poet, playwright, critic and editor. As a boy in Edinburgh, he had a leg therapeutically amputated. Later his friend, RL Stevenson, made him the model for Long John Silver.

More might have been made of the real way South Africa's great national anthem was introduced. It was not initially proffered by Pienaar and rejected. Three of the hardest Africaaners in the team sang it so beautifully they persuaded the others to sing: *Nkosi sikele Afrika* - God bless Africa.

PG★★★★SFFV

### It's Complicated

Writer/director Nancy Meyers provides another of her marital-puzzle comedies. Meryl Streep is Jane, a baker in the jungle of divorcedom. There she

## 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.

encounters not one but two would-be Tarzans; her architect Adam, (Steve Martin), and her ex-husband Jake (Alex Baldwin) who has remarried a younger woman Agnessa (Lake Bell).

Irony is the yeast in Meyer comedy. Streep's Jane looks scrumptiously younger than the younger woman. As suitors, Martin and Baldwin, not quite into their Zimmer-frames, are frantic in pursuit of Jane and happiness in accord with their inalienable rights under the US Constitution.

Time was when poets were the unacknowledged legislators of humanity. Movie makers have displaced them. In her denouement Nancy Meyer implies that while marriage may be disposable, divorce is indissoluble, her ultimate irony. Or is she under the influence of Dr Sam Johnson remark that re-marriage is the triumph of hope over experience?

M★★★★NFFV

### The Last Station

Writer/director Michael Hoffman has created a duet for virtuosos: Christopher Plummer and Helen Mirren playing Leon Tolstoy and his wife Sofya. The film is both idyll and elegy: the idyll, life on the Tolstoy estate, the elegy for a way of life shifting from the impact of revolutionary ideas.

These are embodied in Vladimir Chertkov (Paul Giamatti) intent on securing royalties from Tolstoy's works such as *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace* for propagation of Tolstoyan ideals

on peace and common property. Sofya, thinking family inheritance, is opposed.

Set against the old romance is the passionate affair between Tolstoy's naïf secretary Valentin Bulgakov (James McAvoy) and the beautiful Masha (Kerry Condon).

Resolution is played out, as it was in life, at a railway station under the eyes, and early movie cameras, of journalists taking part in a prototype stake-out.

The final beneficiary of the royalties is noted in the end credits. These also use archival footage. There he is, the old master Leon Tolstoy toddling in the snow like a child. And of such is the kingdom of heaven.

M★★★★SFFV

### Separation City

Director Paul Middleditch, working from co-producer/writer Tom Scott's script, has created an extraordinary comedy of manners, sexual and political.

Middleditch/Scott assemble a group of thirty-somethings, high on careers, less high on family life. Okay, two of them are dubious: press-gallery hacks turned ministerial minders.

Simon and Harry (Joel Edgerton, Les Hill) have bitter fun. Opposite them are their respective wives. In Simon's case, there is also the cellist Katrien (Rhona Mitra), estranged from her ratty-artist husband Klaus (Thomas Kretschmann).

They, and the rest of a marvellous cast, make for intense ensemble playing, especially in scenes involving a Men's Group. As Simon, Joel Edgerton also supplies the voice-over narrative which tends to the cumbersome.

By coincidence your reviewer read an obituary of Eric Rohmer, French master of moral tales (*Clare's Knee, My Night at Maude's*), before previewing the Middleditch-Scott work.

The latter do not share the former's gift for subtlety. Too often Middleditch/Scott go for the blatant in sex scenes, seemingly unaware that blatancy connotes banality.

In the bygoing, Middleditch and production designer Iain Aitken have made a star: Wellington. Not only does the city, and its surroundings, provide wonderful locations, it doubles for Berlin.

Smart, smooth, potent but tasteless. Like vodka on the rocks.

TBA+★★★★NFFV

## Fish Tank

Not a pretty picture, desolate rather: Mia (Kate Jarvis), 15, scrapes by on a council estate somewhere south of London amid car-wrecker yards, common land vestiges and sea marshes.

Mia's only grace seems to be in hip-hop dancing to CD music. Writer/director Andrea Arnold draws from Jarvis, slim as a willow wand, a performance of winsome toughness as she deals with her single mother (Kierston Wareing) who has made a drinking den of their flat. Conor (Michael Fassbinder) is the wandering stranger who comes into their lives.

Hip-hop hopeless? Not quite. Mia tries to rescue a rawboned horse tethered in wasteland which leads to meeting with a lad and a decision to leave for where else but Ireland?

MA15+★★★NFFV

## Precious

The material is raw, the acting so compelling that the movie has a bare-knuckle documentary impact. Yet it is fiction: directed and co-produced by Lee Daniels, scripted by Damien Paul from a novel by Sapphire, pseudonym for a writer who has worked in Harlem teaching illiterates how to read and write.

The title role – full name Claireece Precious Jones – is played by Gabourey 'Gabby' Sidibe in style to evoke pity for an overweight child-mother, target of incest by her father and of her own mother's jealousy and scorn. Mo'nique plays the mother with a savagery that is at once monstrous and forlorn.

As Precious's teacher Ms Rain, Paula Patton provides a startlingly civilised contrast, a keynote performance. In a movie of brutal astonishments, Mariah Carey plays Mrs Weiss, a gentle counsellor. She is devoid of her signature glamour. Through a brilliant directorial twist, the Carey style inspires much of Precious's fantasy life.

Director of photography Andrew Dunn shoots to nail the sombre squalor. This includes always-on TV and a replay of Vittorio De Sica's neo-realist classic *Two Women*, starring Sophia Loren. On it, Precious superimposes her own version, inevitably foul-mouthed.

Daniels and her team draw the movie to a conclusion in which it is

made admirably plain that e-education – leading out – is the prime hope for the seemingly hopeless in Harlem or elsewhere. She lights at least a reed of hope: Precious, able to read and write, takes her children and goes forth to life.

Perhaps best seen when you are already melancholic from watching television.

MA15+★★★NFFV

## Welcome

The bleak, floodlit security area round the port of Calais is a focus for those willing to risk their lives for a chance to make it across La Manche to that demi-paradise of fish, chips and freedom: England.

Writer/director Phillippe Lioret uses the area uncompromisingly as a location for a drama played out between a veteran swimming instructor Simon (Vincent Lindon) and a teenage Iraqi Bilal (Firat Ayverdi) who has thought of a basic way of making it to England.

To add further edge, Simon is in the midst of divorce and Bilal is seeking re-union with his girlfriend.

Lioret twists these plot elements into gripping, unexpected denouement in a movie (franglais as to language) which is as tender as daisy chain and as tough as a sabot.

M★★★★NFFV

## The Edge of Darkness

Tom Craven is a detective whose routine dedication is honed to killing point when his only child Emma is shot dead on his front porch in Boston.

Was the bullet meant for him? Or was it connected to her work as a nuclear scientist?



Director Martin Campbell with writers Andrew Bovell and William Monahan re-mine the original BBC series by Troy Kennedy Martin which Campbell also directed.

As Craven, Mel Gibson makes a starburst return. Okay, there are moments when he behaves like Riggs, his cop character from the *Lethal Weapon* four-part franchise. But this is not *Lethal Weapon Four and a Half*.

Gibson invests Craven with the sadness of a father bereft, visibly shrinking into himself as he follows routine while haunted by memories of his daughter (Bojana Novakovic).

Danny Huston plays Jack Bennett, smooth master of nuclear skulduggery. Ray Winstone is a mysterious enforcer, Darius Jedburgh. Whose rule does he enforce?

Oddly when the original BBC series was broadcast 20 years ago nuclear pollution was the perceived world threat. Today the perceived threat is global warming for which nuclear energy is an optional cure.

The movie memorialises Troy Kennedy Martin, a formidable writer, who died last year (RIP).

MA15+★★★NFFV

## My One and Only

Period movie. Not Jane Austen. Her words can, however, be paraphrased to cover the theme: 'It is a truth universally observed that in cinema story-lines a woman of a certain age in need of a new husband hits the road.'

The woman is Ann Devereaux (Renee Zellweger), her unsatisfactory husband being philandering band-leader Dan (Kevin Bacon, looking as if he's never fried a fattening rasher in his life).

The period is the 1950s before generalised dishevelment overtook decency. Or at least the memory of decency. Clothes are elegant. Courtesy exists. Ann's vehicle is a Cadillac Coupe de Ville, driven by one teenage son George (Logan Lerman) while the other Robbie (Mark Rendall) does needle point.

The Cadillac is in mint condition; Ann is dented, a Southern belle who no longer rings as alluringly as she did.

Inconsequential fluff? Zellweger – pouting, smirking, grimacing, sashaying – charms it together. Lerman, dry,

deadpan, catalyses her performance. (And was born to play Holden Caulfield in *Catcher in the Rye* now that the death of its author JD Salinger has put it in play).

Writer Charlie Peters based his story on the anecdote of actor George Hamilton (who prefers a white Rolls Royce and gets an executive producer credit). Richard Loncraine directs with an apt lightness for a witty soufflé risen from an old Hollywood pot.

PG★★★★SFFV

### Law Abiding Citizen

Gerard Butler is Clyde Shelton, a technical whiz, witness to the murder of his wife and daughter during a brutal, two-handed home invasion. Jamie Foxx, plays Nick Rice the prosecutor who brings the perpetrators to justice: inadequate justice.

Violent. Abhorrently violent. Shades of Charles Bronson's lone avenger movies and Anthony Hopkins's Hannibal Lecter haunt scenes.

At once facile and obscene, the violence dulls the movie's dynamic point; it is a satire on the US legal system which has evolved as an all-snaring organisation from the adversarial Common Law system the US, like Australia and New Zealand, inherited from England.

Director F. Gary Grey and writer Paul Warner emphasise their satire by locating the movie in Philadelphia – city of fraternal love, formerly the US capital.

MA15+★★★★NFFV

### Where the Wild Things Are

So much (101 minutes) from so little sums up director Spike Jonze's take on Maurice Sendak picture book a classic of vivid brevity.

Max Records plays Max whose dreams take him voyaging to the island where the wild things dwell, projections of Max's feelings.

Jonze chose not to use computer generated image. His actors, including James Gandolfini and Forrest Whitaker, appear in full costume based on Sendak's hairy illustrations.

Catherine Keener, is finely cast as Max's mother. Jonze, and his co-writer Dave Eggers, following Hollywood's strict neo-conventions on single

mothers/widows, add a suitor not remembered from Sendak's book, an addition Jonze appears to have regretted.

The suitor, played by Marc Ruffalo, survives only as a peek-a-boo cameo. The production was Melbourne based. Victoria's land and seascapes are used with great effect for Sendak's timeless locations. Classic from a classic.

PG★★★★SFFV

### The Road

Figures in a landscape have for epochs been part of visual art. Director John Hillcoat and scriptwriter Joe Penhall working from Cormac McCarthy's novel project the figures into a landscape of utter desolation, result of nuclear or natural catastrophe or both.

Skies thunder. Fogs roll down. Trees burnt bare stand starkly. Or crash down randomly. Ashes are in the air and underfoot. Through the camera of Jose Aguirresarobe we see an Adam expelled from his Eden with only memories of his Eve (Charlize Theron) for solace.

No fig leaf for this Adam, ragged clothes held together with filth. He is accompanied by an Abel. And many a Cain rampages in the cannibal wilderness.

Viggo Mortensen and Kodi Smit-McPhee play the Adam and Abel. And do so with superlative, stoic resignation pushing a trolley or pulling a handcart to an unknown destination.

Along their way they meet a fellow tramp played by Robert Duvall. Such is Duvall's minimalist eloquence

we know that no longer is there a Statue of Liberty, no longer is there an inscription, 'give me your huddled masses yearning to be free.'

Adam is dying. His Abel possesses a loaded revolver. Hopeless. See it and find out, remembering that a dog, an uneaten dog, sole fragment of sentimentality, is a man's best friend.

MA15+★★★★NFFV

### Away We Go

Director Sam Mendes again turns his cool, suburban English eye on American scenes, tracking Burt (John Krasinski) and Verona (Maya Rudolph) while they seek a pattern among their friends for a sudden, parental future after a long period in barren, late-model hippiedom.

Scriptwriters Dave Eggers and Vendele Vide gives Mendes ample scope for satirical comedy. Krasinski is brilliantly bemused as a male realising the power of a female's nesting instinct. Rudolph counters his bemusement with edgy practicality.

Maggie Gyllenhaal scores a high Laughter Quotient as a maternal academic, Ellen (aka LN), intent on bringing up her bright offspring, but not her slothful partner (Josh Hamilton), with due reverence for post-Spockian practice. The scene where Burt tempts her son into a pusher has the hilarity of silent movie comedy.

The real-estate solution to Burt and Verona's problem is shonky. But the movie is worth seeing as another episode in the Mendesisation of the American suburb.

M★★★★NFFV

## The Early Wars of Islam

One should not imagine the earliest Arab conquests to be completely disorderly raids on the part of hordes emerging from the desert. Conflicts between small groups, usually no more than robbers' raids, may have been of this nature. Such tribal raids constitute the background of bedouin self-glorification in ancient Arab poetry with its exact inventory of the Bedouins' implements of war. But even here there are traces of foreign influence; the swords most sought-after are Indian sabres, and trade undoubtedly made known many other foreign types of arms from the Byzantine empire and from Persia. From descriptions of the bigger battles, however, which already occurred under Mohammed, there clearly transpires a knowledge of certain military tactics, as applied e.g. by Khalid, in the battle of Uhud.

– J. H. Kramers, 'In the Shadow of Allah,' in *Analecta Orientalia* of J. H. Kramers, Brill, Leiden, 1956. p. 298.

## The Lovely Bones

Rawness and velvet: the rawness of child murder, the velvet of a fantasy limbo from which the child observes family and police reaction.

Director Peter Jackson's mix makes for a discomfiting movie despite a strong cast and a performance of brave innocence by Saoirse Ronan as the child and ultimate creepiness by Stanley Tucci as the murderer.

The movie is based on Alice Sebold's best-seller. Your reviewer has not read it but has been told that in the novel the murderer's dug-out is on wasteland. Jackson places it in a cornfield, making for multiple implausibilities.

Not to worry. When implausibilities occur, Jackson covers them with fantasy sequences. Individually these are of enthralling beauty. But as part of a murder mystery, they do not work.

This may be Jackson's lovely problem. As director of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, he re-mastered Tolkien's fantasy through the use of computer technology. Now he has a career to continue. Perhaps he should follow Graham Greene, who divided his entertainments from his more serious works, and go for fantasy or reality.

M★★★NFFV

## The Princess and the Frog

Old-style Walt Disney cartoon rather than a Disney Pixar effort. But, directed by Ron Clements and John Musker, it is not at all feeble. It takes us across the colour line. Its princess Tiana (beautifully voiced by Anika Noni Rose) is the child of a black housekeeper in a white mansion. The mansion owner is voiced by John Goodman. Others in the voice cast include Oprah Winfrey and Jennifer Lewis.

New Orleans voodoo and jazz predominate amid the bayous of Louisiana as Tiana lives the folk-tale of the princess who kissed a frog. In this version, the prince (voiced by Terence Howard) is a guitar dude.

G★★★SFFV

## Did You Hear about the Morgans?

Clumsy title for an adroit comedy involving Hugh Grant and Sarah Jessica Parker as an uncoupled couple, brought

together when they witness a murder in Manhattan and are exiled to Wyoming for their own safety.

Writer/director Marc Lawrence works to its limits a variation on movies going back to *The Egg and I* (1947): city folk adapting to smalltown life.

Parker began as a child trouper. She is still a trouper. Grant? His technique is beyond the Method. He can sleep-walk through parts while displaying a broad spectrum of animated twittishness that makes him appear to be up for the part of Bertie Wooster in a new PG Wodehouse series.

PG★★★SFFV

## The Fantastic Mr Fox.

Absolutely. The voice cast includes George Clooney and Meryl Streep as Mr and Mrs Fox, Bill Murray as Badger, the lawyer, and William Dafoe as a flick-knife, flick-tongued rat. They enhance Roald Dahl's original story as interpreted through computerised stop-motion puppetry by director Wes Anderson and co-writer Noah Baumbach.

Quibble 1: the interpretation has

## Christianity no State Religion

Christianity always ... distinguished itself from the state. It was willing to pray for the emperors but not to sacrifice to them. On the other hand, it has always publicly claimed to be more than mere subjective feeling ... a truth that is spoken publicly establishes public criteria, and ... in a certain measure also binds the state and the powerful of this world. I think that ... the development of modernity brings with it the *negative* aspect of subjectivization. The *positive* side of this is the opportunity for a free Church in a free state, if one may put it like that. Here are opportunities for a more vital, because more deeply and more freely grounded, faith, which, however, must fight against being subjectivized and which must continue to try to speak its message publicly.

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

over-Americanised the original, making it a wise-guy comedy for adults rather than a smart update for children in the style of Kenneth Graham's *The Wind in the Willows*.

Quibble 2: the re-interpretation stretches the original material to feature length by using a surfeit of popcorn padding.

PG★★★SFFV

## Sherlock Holmes

Director Guy Ritchie hit fame with the Cockney caper, *Lock, Stock and Smoking Barrels*. In his take on Arthur Conan Doyle's most celebrated character, Ritchie increases his reputation for melodrama as carefree mayhem.

There is also as much Dan Brown conspiracy hokum in it as Doyle ingenuity. Indeed moments when Holmes wields a primitive electric wand inspire the notion that JK Rowling's Harry Potter grew up to be Sherlock Holmes. The Brown-Rowling stuff combines in Lord Blackwood (Mark Strong), member of a Masonic-style secret society and seemingly related to Lord Voldemort.

That said, Strong delivers a ferocious amount of dark energy per frame. Robert Downey Junior and Jude Law as Holmes and Dr Watson (the first odd couple), go for laddish insouciance. Yet it is Rachel McAdam, as the mysterious Irene Adler, who tucks the movie under her bustle and runs away with it.

Ritchie, after working up to a tremendous climax, appends an epilogue, the movie's most dreadful element: a franchise is on the hotplate.

M★★★NFFV

## Old Dogs

Dan (Robin Williams) and Charlie (John Travolta) are business pals. Into their lives comes one of Dan's ex-wives Vicki (Kelly Preston). She has two children (his) and a prison sentence to serve. Belatedly Dan takes on paternal duties while he and Charlie try to conclude a sports equipment deal with a Japanese company.

Williams is a master clown. Travolta can be funny. But the laughs are as few as whalemeat burgers in the Greenpeace navy. Some may think the movie a flaccid variation on the sub-genre Neil Simon invented with *The Odd Couple*.

PG★★★SFFV

# 15,000 Seminarians Need Your Help!

With the 150th anniversary of the death of the Curé of Ars, St John Vianney - the patron saint of priests - Pope Benedict XVI invites all Catholics to celebrate the Year for Priests which began on the 19th of June 2009.



Seminarians at prayer in Sudan

A unique way to support this cause would be to help with the training of our future priests from countries where the Church is poor, persecuted or threatened. Over the past 10 years Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) has helped one diocese in every six around the world, and supported every seventh candidate to the priesthood. In today's economic crisis many seminaries are struggling to survive. The poverty is great and often means suitable candidates being turned away, since neither their families nor their bishops have the funds to support their training. Meanwhile for the ones who are accepted into the seminary, it is a journey of great sacrifice; food and books are scarce with several students often sharing small rooms in dilapidated and unheated seminaries.

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*A new rosary has been designed by the Vatican's Rosary Makers for the Year for Priests. The centerpiece features the hands of the priest during the Consecration with the reverse side beautifully depicting the Merciful Jesus by St Faustina Kowalska. The Cross takes inspiration from the Gospel story about the call to Priesthood where Christ says "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few..". The labourers are those who work in the vineyard of the Lord. In our time it refers to our priests.*

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*ARPANET, the true ancestor of today's Internet, came into being in 1969.*

## FORTY YEARS ON

*By Sam Simmonds*



FOR many of us 1969 was an *annus mirabilis*. For some others it was perhaps rather more of an *annus horribilis*. But for those in both camps it was certainly memorable.

For example, in 1969 The United States' National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), in fulfilment of the late President John F. Kennedy's commitment to send a man to the moon and to return him safely to Earth within the decade, did so – not once but twice. Both the Apollo XI and XII missions were triumphantly completed between July and November of that year.

On the debit side of the ledger, the year also witnessed the Manson murders, with all those attendant horrors. Incidentally, for the record, it may be of interest to recall that in one week of December, in the United Kingdom alone, almost 300 people died from (ordinary, boring, seasonal) influenza, a statistic that barely made the news, let alone a headline.

What may not be so well known is that, within those same 365 days, an enterprise was born which at that time would have seemed a lot less noble than the Apollo Space Program, but which was destined to have a far greater influence on our consciousness and our way of life than either the moon landings or anything Charles Manson's 'Family' and their drug-induced, inhuman and morally bankrupt homicidal butchery could have produced. And the obscure beginnings of this enterprise foreshadow none of its later predominance in global culture.

The United States Department of Defense (sic) is not an institution whose name automatically (or even readily) springs to mind when one considers fundamental advances in human behaviour or consciousness. Yet there can be no doubt that that is just what it promoted, albeit inadvertently, when, in response to the Soviet Union's 1957 launch of Sputnik, the world's first artificial satellite, the Department decided to form the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), a

purely military construct, with a brief to research how best to use the USA's massive investment in computers.

ARPA was to be led by someone whose vision was to make these primitive electronic beasts (mostly 'in-house' processors of punched cards, producing results a day or more later) interactive, as part of an electronic 'community'. Without getting too technical, after establishing an Interface Message Processor (IMP), and the protocol by which IMPs could 'talk' to each other, an entity called ARPANET was born in 1969. So, while a very great deal was to occur to develop the system over the next three years, the true ancestor of today's Internet came into being then. Yes, incredible as it may seem, the Internet was 40 years old last year.

As with most human endeavours, this computer network did not remain unique for long. Other networks sprang up, including those in Britain and France, fundamentally similar technologically but radically different both from one another and from anything devised by the U.S. Government.

Then, of course, human nature being what it is, the original serious purposes of the U.S. military were, to some extent, subverted by operators using it for more frivolous purposes, like talking to each other. But we human beings are like that. We are social animals and if we chance upon a medium of communication that is new, immediate, and run and paid for by someone else, we are fond of converting it to our own use.

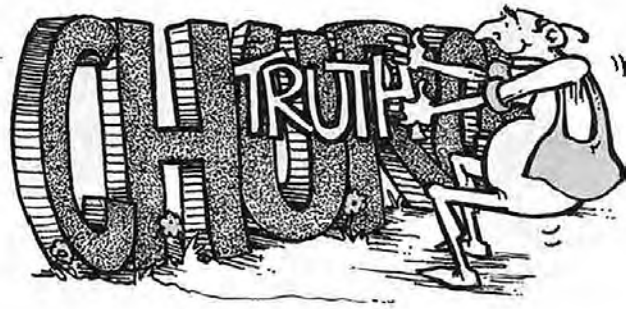
Very soon some pioneers were wondering how it might be possible to make a network of all the networks – an 'inter-network', in fact.

And here's where the hugely revolutionary idea came in. Designing a network that would persist and survive, despite what the future might bring, and

### I want God, I want Poetry

ONE of the ways that the humanities can indeed save us – if they can recover their nerve – is by reminding us that the ancients knew things about humankind that modernity has failed to repeal, even if it has managed to forget them. One of the most powerful witnesses to that fact was Aldous Huxley, whose *Brave New World* (1932) continues to grow in stature as our world comes increasingly to resemble the one depicted in its pages. In that world, as one character says, 'everybody's happy, thanks to endless sex, endless consumer goods, endless youth, mood-altering drugs, and all-consuming entertainment. But the novel's hero, who is named the Savage, stubbornly proclaims 'the right to be unhappy; and dares to believe that there might be more to life than pleasure: 'I want God, I want poetry I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness.'

– 'The Burden of the Humanities,' Wilfred M. McClay,  
*The Wilson Quarterly*, Summer 2008, p.41



that would work for applications as yet unvented, demanded a solution with two main characteristics: nobody would own or control it, and it would work for any application. Simple and dumb, it would do only one thing: take in data packets from one end and deliver them to the other. The contents of those data packets would be irrelevant. Thereby your dumb network leaves all the intelligence to the network's extremes; if somebody is clever enough to convert a possible 'message' into data packets, then the Internet would deliver it for them, no questions asked.

There are those (and there are many of them) who are uncomfortable with this state of affairs. While a vast and growing majority of users enjoy the convenience, immediacy and economy of electronic mail (which we all now refer to as e-mail), the research opportunities afforded by the World Wide Web (itself 20 years old last year, half as old as the Internet itself), and rejoice in the freedom of file sharing and music sharing (sometimes to the chagrin of the music industry, which is trying hard to regroup and regain control!), the other side of the coin includes a gargantuan pornography industry, malicious software (and 'malware'), computer viruses, 'worms' and 'Trojan horses'.

For passengers are what all this traffic represents. The Internet is merely the track, the points and the signals of this global railway - its infrastructure - and is far more important than anything that runs on it.

However painful to our sensibilities those 'undesirable' passengers may be, however punishing to our pocket the 'bugs' that infest the system can prove to be, it is as well to remember that all this, good and bad, is simply a reflection, a microcosm, of human nature itself, a 'virtual reality'. As already stated, we are social animals and, even if 'converting' it to our own use is interpreted by some as 'perverting' it, then so be it.

Maybe our anger at finding such disquieting fellow-travellers on 'our' railway line is, as described by one of Oscar Wilde's characters, 'the rage of Caliban seeing his own face in the glass'.

SAM SIMMONDS is a writer, broadcaster and film and video producer. Sam has worked in all aspects of media in the UK and Australia and runs a media consultancy, Simmonds Media (Australia).

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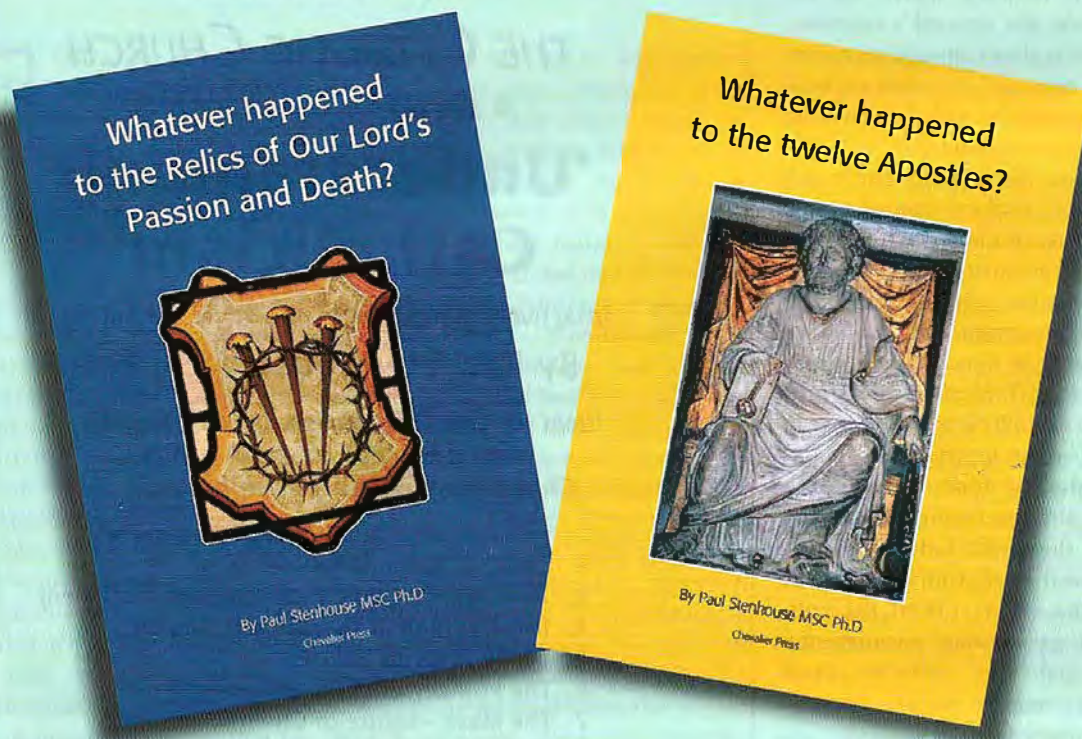
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