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Christians and Politics

Chris Maunder
Mary, Founder of Christianity?

Hosting Ukrainians
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Cover picture: *the Vatican's Synod Logo* by Isabelle de Senilhes

Comment

In this issue of *The Newman* we are featuring an adaptation of the talk on Synodality which Dr Greg Ryan gave to the AGM in Newcastle. In it he undertakes a very thorough analysis of the history and structure of Synodality in the Catholic Church. It is not, he concludes, just a buzzword. But we are all watching to see what will be the consequences of this possibly risky attempt to gather opinions from all levels of the Church.

The fundamental question is whether the Synod, which is due to publish its final conclusions in late 2023, though there may be a delay until 2024, will tackle the fundamental challenges which face the Church: the shortage of priests, the limitation of the role of women and the exclusion from the sacraments of the large numbers of Catholics who have divorced and remarried. Then there is the scant comfort and relevance that the Church can offer to sexually different groups and, indeed, to all unmarried young adults. Or will the outcome of the Synodal process be devoted to improvements in the life of parishes and schools, say, and in the development of liturgy?

The German hierarchy have attracted controversy by calling for radical changes including married priests and the ordination of women. The German bishops have already been struggling with the consequences of sexual abuse by clergy and they have become more radical in their approach to the Synod, so much so that they were called in for discussions with the Curia in Rome during November.

Census returns

There are strong pressures on the Church in Europe, highlighted here in the UK recently by the indication from the 2021 Census returns that the proportion of the British population professing Christianity has fallen below 50 per cent. Indeed, the proportion has fallen from 59 to 46 per cent since the 2011 Census. An important element in this decline of Christianity is that many European countries, including France and Italy, as well as the UK, are seriously short of priests. The Synodal process therefore threatens to highlight a global split within the Catholic Church as African and American bishops, who are generally much more conservative, express their alarm at the prospect of significant changes in doctrine.

It seems that in Europe Christianity has diminishing appeal and relevance. This poses the question of whether the Catholic Church should seek to change itself to become more popular or whether it should stick doggedly to the historical beliefs – the sacred Magisterium, the infallible, revealed truth – and accept that there is a danger of shrinking to become a minor and unimportant religious sect.

Three years ago the earlier Synod on the Amazon also confronted the problem of a shortage of priests, in this case on a local basis. There was much speculation in the press that married men might be ordained. In the event the issue was buried. It was not a change that Pope Francis was prepared to introduce. The Amazon region may have justifications for special treatment but it was not given any and nor will Germany be. It looks as though these daunting decisions will be passed on to the next pope, and his election will come after a formidable battle between progressives and conservatives.

Barry Riley

The Manchester Newman Lecture 2022

Fraternity

A proposal and a project for relations between Christians and Muslims*

By Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald

Summary: The aim of this lecture is to present the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* signed jointly by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Dr Ahmad al-Tayyeb, in Abu Dhabi on February 4th 2019. A word will be said about the antecedents of the document; its wide-ranging contents will be described; some difficulties it raises will be addressed. Finally, a brief reference will be made to the follow-up of the document. A version of this text was originally delivered at Hope University, Liverpool, on February 17th, 2022.

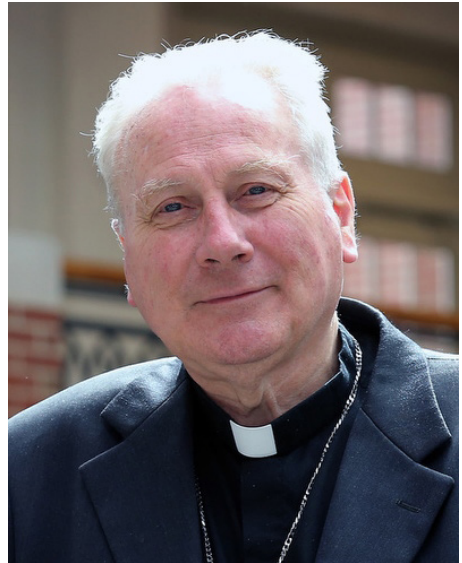
Introduction

In Abu Dhabi, on February 4th 2019, Pope Francis and Dr Ahmad al-Tayyeb, the Grand Imam of al-Azhar solemnly signed a document entitled *Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*ⁱ. To show that this event did not come out of the blue, I would like to call attention to its antecedents. Then, after examining the contents of the document, I will say a word about its follow-up.

Relations between the Holy See and al-Azhar

At Pentecost in 1964, even before the final approval in October 1965 of *Nostra Aetate*, the Declaration of Vatican II on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions, Pope Paul VI had established the Secretariat for Non-Christians [SNC] (later to become the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue [PCID]). The first years of this body were spent in laying the foundations for the work of dialogue, rather than in establishing relations with people of other religions, yet with al-Azharⁱⁱ contact was made right from the beginning.ⁱⁱⁱ

In March 1965 Cardinal Franziskus Koenig, Archbishop of Vienna, a renowned scholar of religions and one of the leading figures at Vatican II, delivered a lecture at the University of al-Azhar on *Monotheism in the Contemporary World* which was very well received.^{iv} In 1970 the SNC received a visit from representatives of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs of Egypt. In 1974 there was a return visit to Cairo by a



delegation from the SNC including the new President, Cardinal Sergio Pignedoli, the Secretary (Msgr Pietro Rossano) and the head of the office for Islam (Fr François Abou Mokh). Four years later a further visit to Cairo was made and, with the assistance of a number of local Catholics, conversations were held at al-Azhar. The wish of the SNC to maintain contact with al-Azhar is confirmed by the visits carried out by its next two Presidents, Mgr Jean Jadot in 1981 and Cardinal Francis Arinze in 1988. It is recorded that the latter had a meeting with Sheikh al-Azhar.^v

A decision was taken to set up an International Liaison Committee between the Holy See (represented by the PCID) and international Islamic organizations of a religious character. Representatives of al-Azhar were present at the meeting in Rome, in June 1995, where this new body was created, but al-Azhar was not included in the membership of the committee. The reason for this exclusion was that al-Azhar was considered not to be an international organisation but a national (Egyptian) institution, though with an international outreach.

This did not please al-Azhar, and after several years of negotiations, led with obstinacy by Dr Ali Elsamaan, a special agreement was signed between the PCID and al-Azhar in 1998.^{vi} It should be mentioned that during the intervening years a special office for dialogue with monotheistic religions had been set up in al-Azhar. Annual meetings followed, alternately in Cairo and in Rome. In 2000, as part of his Great Jubilee programme, Pope John Paul II visited Egypt, in the steps of Moses, and was warmly welcomed at al-Azhar.^{vii} The subsequent Al-Azhar – PCID meetings were, at the request of the Muslim side, programmed each year on or about 24 February, to keep alive the memory of Pope John Paul II's visit.

It should be mentioned that relations with al-Azhar have not been confined to the Catholic Church. The Anglican Communion has also been engaged in dialogue with this institution. In an address delivered at al-Azhar on 24 November 1999 the then Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, proposed "An Agenda for Action: Islam and Christianity in Today's World".^{viii}

After the discourse of Pope Benedict XVI in Regensburg in September 2006, which caused consternation in the Islamic world, there was a brief interruption of the dialogue with al-Azhar. But the annual meetings resumed, taking place from 2008-2010. A further suspension occurred following another discourse of Benedict XVI in January 2011, this time to the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See. Commenting on bomb attacks on a church in Baghdad and another church in Alexandria, the Pope said: "This succession of attacks is yet another sign of the urgent need for the governments of the region to adopt, in spite of difficulties and dangers, effective measures for the protection of religious minorities".^{ix} The Egyptian government understood this statement as interference in its own internal affairs; it recalled its ambassador to the Holy See for consultations, and the Apostolic Nuncio was for a time considered *persona non grata*.

With the election of Pope Francis in 2013 there came about a change of attitude. This led to the visit to al-Azhar of a delegation from the Holy See in 2016, and in May of the same year there took place the first visit of a Sheikh al-Azhar (Dr Ahmad al-Tayyeb) to the Vatican to meet with Pope Francis.^x In April of the following year, 2017, Pope Francis accepted to attend an International Peace Conference organized by the

Grand Imam of al-Azhar.^{xi} Later the same year, Dr Ahmad al-Tayyeb was in Rome to participate in a conference organised by the Community of S. Egidio. He requested an audience with Pope Francis and was received with a delegation of five persons after the General Audience. This meeting remained rather formal, but Pope Francis invited the Imam and his delegation to lunch where the atmosphere became more relaxed. It was then that the idea of a joint document was brought up.^{xii}

Preceding documents produced by Muslims^{xiii}

This would not be the first document produced by Muslims in recent times. Among others, mention could be made of the *Message of Amman* (2004), approved by King Abdallah II of Jordan, which proposed tolerance and unity within the Islamic world. In 2007, as a reaction to the Regensburg lecture of Pope Benedict XVI, already mentioned, a group of Muslim scholars wrote an open letter to Pope Benedict and other Christian religious leaders of different denominations.^{xiv} This letter, entitled *A Common Word between Us and You*, presents love of God and love of neighbour as the common ground of Christianity and Islam.^{xv}

In 2016 the Forum for the Promotion of Peace in Muslim Societies produced the *Marrakesh Declaration* after discussion on the rights of minorities in majority Muslim countries. A year later appeared the *Cairo Document*, also on citizenship. In 2018, after a further meeting organized by the Forum for the Promotion of Peace in Muslim Societies, came the *Washington Declaration*. This is a statement produced by Jewish, Christian and Muslim scholars who commit themselves to work for the common good. This *Washington Declaration* was later renewed at a further meeting of the Forum in Abu Dhabi to become the *Charter of the New Alliance of Virtue* (2019), a charter which appeals not only to Muslims but to the followers of other world religions, as also to secular and humanist worldviews.

These documents have been listed in order to show that Muslim religious scholars appear to be becoming much more open, and also that many of the topics dealt with in the Document on Human Fraternity have already been discussed in Islamic circles. It is now time to examine this document more closely.

An analysis of the Document on Human Fraternity^{xvi}

The Title

As stated above, the title of the document under discussion is *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*.

The question has been put whether it was necessary to specify “human” fraternity in the title, since fraternity is really found only among humans. It can be seen that the document considers fraternity to be based not on religious belonging, but on “faith in God, who has created... all human beings” (*Introduction*). In other words, this fraternity does not spring from belonging to a particular religion, but from a common sharing in humanity. The final expression in the title, “living together” is not very common in writings on interreligious dialogue in English, but the Italian term adopted, *convivenza*, is frequently used.

Introduction

This consists of three paragraphs. The first states that faith in God, the Creator, leads to considering all human beings as brothers and sisters. This entails a common

responsibility for “safeguarding creation....and supporting all persons, especially the poorest.” The second paragraph refers to “several meetings characterised by a friendly and fraternal atmosphere” in which “the joys, sorrows and problems of our contemporary world” were shared. Reference is made to progress, both scientific and technical, particularly in therapeutics and in the field of communications, but attention is also called to poverty, inequality, conflict and extremism. Finally, the introduction offers the document as an invitation “to unite and work together” and as “a guide for future generations to advance a culture of mutual respect in the awareness of the great divine grace that makes all human beings brothers and sisters”.

Invocations

The *Document* itself starts with a series of eleven invocations. The first reads:

In the name of God who has created all human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity, and who has called them to live together as brothers and sisters, to fill the earth and make known values of goodness, love and peace (1).^{xvii}

The Islamic resonance here is evident, for in the Islamic tradition every document starts with the qur’anic invocation: *bi-smi Llâhi L-Rahmâni L-Rahîm* “In the Name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy”.^{xviii} Yet the context is widened by invocations of innocent human life and of different categories of people: the poor, orphans, widows, refugees, victims of wars, persecution and injustice; and then of ideals such as human fraternity “that embraces all human beings, unites them and renders them equal” (6). There is a further invocation of “*this fraternity torn apart by policies of extremism and division, by systems of unrestrained profit*” (7), and then the ideals of freedom, justice and mercy are invoked. The penultimate invocation reads: “*in the name of all persons of good will present in every part of the world*” (10).

I think it is useful to cite the final invocation in full:

In the name of God and of everything stated thus far, Al-Azhar al-Sharif and the Muslims of the East and West, together with the Catholic Church and the Catholics of the East and West, declare the adoption of a culture of dialogue as the path; mutual cooperation as the code of conduct; reciprocal understanding as the method and standard” (11).

The declaration is resounding and well formulated. The mention of the two bodies making it raises nevertheless a problem which I shall discuss later.

Contents

One of the characteristics of this document, or Declaration (a term which is used in the document itself), is that it is wide-ranging. Here only a summary of its contents can be given. It enters into its real topic by evoking the causes of the crises in today’s world, suggesting the following: a desensitized conscience, distance from religious values, individualism and materialism. Advances in science and technology are contrasted with deterioration in the moral sphere. The latter is seen to foster frustration leading to extremism whether religious or non-religious. This extremism is itself the source of conflict – reference is made here to a “third world war being fought piecemeal” (16), an expression used frequently by Pope Francis. It is added that conflict is sometimes fueled by “narrow-minded economic interests” (16) There is a mention of “situations of injustice” and “catastrophic crises” which meet with “an unacceptable silence on the international level” (17).

The document then underlines the importance of the family, as “the fundamental nucleus of society”. It states: “To attack the institution of the family, to regard it with contempt or to doubt its important role, is one of the most threatening evils of our era” – the words are strong. In the same invocation the importance of education is underlined, and particularly that of providing children with a “solid moral formation” (18).

Attention is then turned to the primacy of belief in God, the need to recognise God as the source of the gift of life. Deviation from religious teachings and the manipulation of religions are seen to lead to violence and war. Accordingly a strong appeal is made “to stop using religions to incite hatred, violence, extremism and blind fanaticism, and to refrain from using the name of God to justify acts of murder, exile, terrorism and oppression” (21).

The authors, noting that this document accords with previous international documents, express their “firm conviction” that “authentic teachings of religions invite us to remain rooted in the values of peace” (23). “Freedom of belief, thought, expression and action” (24) is upheld. Recognition is given to pluralism and diversity as “willed by God in His wisdom” (24). “Justice based on mercy” (25) is advocated. Dialogue, both cultural and religious, is encouraged. The protection of places of worship is considered a duty. Terrorism is roundly condemned, including support for terrorist movements. Full citizenship is called for. Calls are made to respect the rights of women, children, the elderly and the weak.

Some reflections

The final invocation, cited earlier, raises a question about representation. Can there really be a parallel between Al-Azhar al-Sharif and the Catholic Church? The leaders



Pope Francis and Dr Ahmad al-Tayyeb, the Grand Imam of al-Azhar

of these two bodies are the joint signatories of the document, but their roles are not exactly the same. Francis, as Pope, could be said to represent all Catholics of the East and West (we might be more inclined to say of the North and South) – but he would surely not claim to represent all Christians. Ahmad al-Tayyeb, as Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, certainly does not represent all Muslims of the East and West. The existence of divisions within Islam – the Sunni-Shi'a divide – would seem to be ignored or at least over-looked. It could be added that even among Sunni Muslims the authority of Al-Azhar does not go uncontested.

With regard to the title of the document a question was raised concerning the specification “human” fraternity. A further question arises about the concept of universal fraternity. Muslims who support this idea will refer to the Qur'an which states: “The believers are brothers” (Q 49:10). Of course, everything depends on how the term “believers” is understood, whether as referring to all who believe in God, or as restricted to “true believers”, in other words to Muslims only. The latter would seem to be the interpretation of Yusuf Ali, who in his translation of the Qur'an proposes: “The Believers are but a single brotherhood” and who adds in a note: “The enforcement of the Muslim Brotherhood is the greatest social ideal of Islam”.^{xix} Before criticising this restriction, it is good for us, as Christians, to remember that the earlier practice was to restrict the term “brothers” to those belonging to the Christian community. This was certainly true up to the time of St Augustine who addressed the Donatists as his brothers because they were fellow Christians, even if they did not wish to be treated as brothers.

A common destiny

It is noteworthy that the idea of fraternity in this joint document is not based on religious belonging but rather on belief in God, the Creator of all human beings. The belonging is therefore not to one particular religion but to the human family. This is in fact the starting point of *Nostra Aetate*, the Declaration of the Second Vatican Council on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions. It states:

All men form but one community. This is so because all stem from the one stock which God created to people the entire earth (cf. Acts 17:26), and also because all share in a common destiny, namely God (NA 1).

The consequence of this common belonging to the one human family is spelt out in the final section of *Nostra Aetate*:

We cannot truly pray to God the Father of all if we treat any people other than in brotherly fashion, for all men are created in God's image. Man's relation to God the Father and man's relation to his fellow men are so dependent on each other that Scripture says “he who does not love does not know God” (1 Jn 4:8) (NA 5).

The mention of God as Father can cause difficulties for Muslims, since calling God “Father” is considered to be disrespectful of divine transcendence; consequently Father is not found among the Ninety-nine Names of God. Yet, as the joint document shows, the idea of common belonging can be developed without mention of the fatherhood of God.

A further question has been raised by the following passage of the document: “The pluralism and the diversity of religions, colour, sex, race and language are willed by God in His wisdom, through which He created human beings” (24). If

the term “plurality” had been used rather than “pluralism” there would have been no controversy. That there exists *de facto* a plurality of religions is evident; what is questioned is whether this plurality is to be considered *de jure*, in other words as directly willed by God.

From the Islamic point of view there would hardly be any objection. The Qur’an teaches that God has observed diversity in creating:

Another of His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth, and the diversity of your languages and colours. There truly are signs in this for those who know (Q 30:22).

There is a purpose in this diversity:

People, We created you all from a single man and a single woman, and made you into races and tribes so that you should get to know one another (Q 49:13).

This is further emphasised by another oft-quoted passage from the Qur’an: If God had so willed, He would have made you one community, but he wanted to test you through that which He has given you, so race to do good: you will all return to God and He will make clear to you the matters you differed about (Q 5:48).

What justification can be given from the Catholic side for accepting the plurality of religions? One could at least have recourse to the classic distinction between the direct will of God and God’s permissive will. God has permitted different religions to develop. But something more positive can be said. *Lumen Gentium*, the Second Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, states clearly that “the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims” (LG 16).

This plan of salvation is surely something willed by God, and it is stated that it includes the followers of Islam. Moreover, as *Nostra Aetate* says, “The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions” (NA 2). These religious elements come from God for, as Pope Saint John Paul II pointed out: “the Spirit brings [them] about in human hearts and in the history of peoples, cultures and religions” (*Redemptoris Missio* 19).

A process of dialogue

To sum up, I would consider this document to be courageous, practical and realistic, though wide-ranging. It is courageous of the two religious leaders to sign this common document and thus express their readiness to engage the members of their respective religions in a process of dialogue. They will surely not be surprised if the document has met with opposition from certain quarters.

It is practical. From the above presentation of its contents, it will have been understood, I hope, that this document is geared more to cooperation in practical matters than to a deepening of theological understanding. It is nevertheless based on a theological understanding of creation and sees the creative act of God as the foundation for the fraternity that it desires to promote.

It is a realistic document, taking into account change and progress in the world today, but also recognising the presence of constant conflict and the injustice of inequality that exists in our world. It is very wide-ranging, touching on so many different points. It upholds freedom, including the freedom of “belief, thought, expression and action” (24) (the term *mumârisa* used in the Arabic text would seem to suggest that what is

intended here is communal participation in living out one's faith, whether in worship or in mission/*da'wa* and social action). It emphasises recognition of rights: the rights of women, but also of children, of the elderly and the weak. It is clear in its condemnation of terrorism and of extremism in all its forms and of the use of religion to incite to violence and war. It calls for a culture of tolerance which, one could say, almost by definition goes beyond mere tolerance, certainly beyond a *laissez-faire* attitude, since the document stigmatises individualism. It thus demands moral regeneration.

An on-going process

The authors recognise that their document is not a definitive statement, but rather an invitation to engage in a work-in-progress. This is why I have called it "a proposal and a project". The authors pledge "to make known the principles contained in this Declaration" so that they can be "translated into policies, decisions, legislative texts" (35). They express the hope that the document may become an "object of research and reflection" (36) in schools, universities and institutes of formation. Their aspiration is that it "may constitute an invitation to reconciliation and fraternity among all believers, indeed among believers and non-believers, and among all people of good will" (38).

An "application committee" has been set up: the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity (HCFC).^{xx} This is encouraging since it underlines that the document is truly considered to be but a step in a process. So far there are only two women out of eleven members of the committee: Leymah Gbowee, Liberian peace activist and advocate for women's rights, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011; and Irina Bukova, the former Director of UNESCO. A representative of the Jewish faith has been included in this committee, Rabbi M. Bruce Lustig (Senior Rabbi, Washington Hebrew Congregation); this is a sign that dialogue and cooperation is to be pursued not only by Christians and Muslims, but by and with others too, whether believers or not. A further sign of outreach within Christian circles is the inclusion, *ex officio*, of the Secretary General of the World Council of Churches.^{xxi}

The committee has already been active in promoting a day of prayer and fasting for the end of the pandemic. It was instrumental in having 4 February recognized by the UN Assembly General as the Day of Human Fraternity. It has instituted the Human Fraternity Award; and it has promoted the building of the Abrahamic House in Abu Dhabi which will include a synagogue, a mosque and a church.

I would hope that the Higher Committee might help to clarify some of the points in the document which remain rather vague, such as the reference to the "authentic teachings of religions" or the idea of "full citizenship". Yet the committee has shown that its aim is to fulfil the programme formulated, as already mentioned, as a kind of slogan:

the adoption of a culture of dialogue as the path; mutual cooperation as the code of conduct; reciprocal understanding as the method and standard.

Michael Cardinal Fitzgerald, M.Afr.

*The text of a Distinguished Lecture delivered at Hope University, Liverpool, 17 February 2022., published in *Islamochristiana* 47(2021) pp.133-142.

Notes

- i The English version of this document can be found at w2.vatican.va/content/Francesco/en/event.dir.html/content/vaticanevents/en/2019/2/4/fratellanza-umana.html.
- ii The mosque of al-Azhar was founded by the Fatimids in their new capital city of Cairo (*al-qâhira*) in CE 969/970. It soon developed into a centre of learning. Although originally shi'ite, it became a stronghold of Sunni Islam. Al-Azhar University is a renowned centre of Islamic studies, attracting students from all over the Muslim world. It has, however, extended its faculties to include other disciplines, such as agriculture, education, languages, medicine and science. It has moreover a network of schools and colleges throughout Egypt so, as an institute, it is much broader than just a university. It contains also an important centre for Islamic research. For further information, see the article *Azhar* in *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden, Brill 1961; as also John L. ESPOSITO (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, Oxford, OUP 2003, art. *Azhar*, *al*.
- iii Cf. FITZGERALD M.L. "The Secretariat for non-Christians is Ten Years Old" in *Islamochristiana* 1(1975), pp.87-95; as also, for what follows, Id. "Twenty-five Years of Dialogue. The Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue" in *Islamochristiana* 15 (1989), pp.109-120. The annual volume of *Islamochristiana*, in its Notes and Documents section, reports on the various visits and meetings that have taken place.
- iv The text of the conference, delivered in English, can be found in *Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Etudes Orientales* (MIDEO) (1964).
- v On the 1978 and 1988 visits see *Islamochristiana* 4(1978), pp.214-217; 15(1989), p.190.
- vi Cf. the report in *Islamochristiana* 24(1998) pp.218-220 with the text of the Agreement.
- vii Cf. *Islamochristiana* 26(2000) pp. 179-186 including a translation of an article in the leading Egyptian newspaper *al-Ahram* by Ali ELSAMAAN ("The Pope in Egypt – Meeting of the Symbols").
- viii The text of this discourse can be found in *Islamochristiana* 26(2000) pp.177-179.
- ix For the full text see: vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2011/January/documents/hf_ben_xvi_spe_20110110_dipomatic-corps.html
- x Cf. *Islamochristiana* 42(2016) p.310; for further details see Mohammad ABDUSALAM, *The Pope and the Grand Imam. A Thorny Path. A Testimony to the Birth of the Human Fraternity Document*, Dubai/London Motivate Media Group 2021 pp.67-84. The author relates that the Grand Imam told him of his decision to visit the Vatican "on a November night in 2017" (p.67); this should be corrected to 2015, since the visit took place in 2016.
- xi On this International Peace Conference see M.ABDUSALAM, *A Thorny Path* pp.91-104; the speech of Pope Francis on this occasion is given in *Islamochristiana* 43(2017) pp.303-306.
- xii See M.ABDUSALAM, *A Thorny Path* pp.108-121. A short report in *Islamochristiana* 43(2017) p.307 corrects one detail: the audience took place not in the Apostolic Palace but in a small room adjacent to the Paul VI Audience Hall.
- xiii Cf. Laurent BASANESE, "Il documento sulla Fratellanza Umana per la Pace mondiale e la Convivenza comune del febbraio 2019" in *Islamochristiana* 45 (2019) pp.29- 38, and especially 29-31.
- xiv The text of this letter is reproduced in the special dossier published in *Islamochristiana* 33(2007), in English (pp.241-261), and in Arabic (pp. 262-280).
- xv For an appraisal of the Common Word initiative see Yazid SAID and Lejla DEMIRI (eds), *The Future of Interfaith Dialogue. Muslim-Christian Encounters through A Common Word*, Cambridge University Press 2018.
- xvi For a more detailed discussion of different versions of the text see my article "Reflection on Human Fraternity" in *Islamochristiana* 45(2019) pp.17-27.
- xvii The original texts of the document are not numbered; the numbers in brackets are taken from the texts published in *Islamochristiana* 45(2019).
- xviii Translation of M.A.S. ABDEL HALEEM, *The Qur'an. English Translation and Parallel Arabic Text*, Oxford University Press 2010, p.2. This translation will be used for further quotations from the

Qur'an, unless otherwise stated.

- xix Abdullah YUSUF ALI, *The Holy Qur'an. Text, Translation and Commentary*, Beirut, Dar al Arabia 1968, note 4928, p.1405.
- xx For more details on the HCHF see M.ABDULSALAM, *A Thorny Path*, pp209-212.
- xxi The full list of members of the Higher Committee is as follows: Cardinal Miguel AYUSO GUIXOT (President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue) Co-President; Professor Mohamed Hussein MAHRASAWI (President of al-Azhar University) Co-President; Judge Mohammad ABDULSALAM (Advisor to the Muslim Council of Elders) Secretary General; Irina BUKOVA (Former Director General of UNESCO); Yoannis Lahzi GAID (Former Private Secretary to Pope Francis); Leymah GBOWEE (Nobel Peace Laureate); Yasser HAREB (Writer and TV Presenter); Rabbi M. Bruce LUSTIG (Senior Rabbi Washington Hebrew Congregation); Mohamed Khalifa al-MUBARAK (Chairman, Department of Culture, Abu Dhabi); Sultan Faisal AL-REMEITHI (Secretary General, Muslim Council of Elders); Joan SAUCA, Acting General Secretary, World Council of Churches.

Book Review

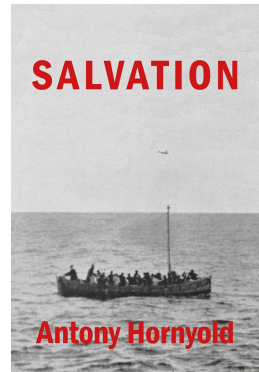
Salvation by Anthony Hornyold (Mount Orleans Press, 2022) 105 pp. Hardback £14.71 ISBN: 9781912945368)

First, in accordance with convention, I must make disclosure of an interest: the author is an old friend of mine. This should not, I hope, detract from this review as I do strongly recommend this book, which would make an ideal Christmas present for a Catholic or indeed Christian friend.

It is the story of Ralph Seabright and starts with his near-death experience during the Second World War when he was shipwrecked on a voyage to Canada to which he was being evacuated. The description of the harrowing events when he was, with others, in a lifeboat awaiting rescue are all the more harrowing for being slightly understated. On his return he subsequently joined the army and was posted to the Holy Land at the time of the Jewish- Arab conflict at the end of the British mandate. He then took a degree at Cambridge and entered the Foreign Office. He never married and having been a practising Catholic all his life finally began study for the priesthood as very late vocation. He then became a parish priest in London. In the course of his priestly life he revisited what is now Israel where he experienced a strange coincidence from his time there many years before. I must not spoil the story by revealing the end!

It is refreshing to read a straightforward account of a life richly and fully lived both as an inspiration to others and as a reminder that Hope still exists in this world and that good can come out of unlikely situations. Moreover the book is beautifully written in a clear but yet gentle, quiet and modest style which has a matter-of-fact feel to it which is in some ways reminiscent of that of Alfred Duggan, the Catholic historical novelist. The effect is that you are carried along effortlessly, accompanied by the author's wry humour. The production is first class and a credit to the publisher.

John Duddington



Synodality: Buzzword or Breakthrough?

By Dr Gregory A. Ryan (Durham University)

I am delighted to talk on Synodality at a time when Pope Francis has instigated the most important Church-wide event since the Second Vatican Council. Will this be a Kairos time for the church – another Pentecost? Or is synodality simply another might-have-been moment to file alongside the 1980 Pastoral Congress in Liverpool? Is synodality simply the latest buzzword, or are there opportunities for a breakthrough of transformative renewal in the Church and the world?

I don't have all the answers today but I offer some thoughts as a theologian, as a formator for lay and ordained ministry, and above all as a member of the Pilgrim People of God. The talk will follow the helpful understanding of the elements of synodality proposed in the 2018 document of the International Theological Commission (ITC), *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church: Synods, Structure, and Style*.



Part 1 – Walking with Pope Francis

Since 2013 commentators have sought a single word to describe the rich, sometimes chaotic papacy of Pope Francis: early indications were that Joy would be the watchword, only to be confidently replaced by Mercy a few years later, and the language of a Poor Church for the Poor, with pastors smelling of the sheep, is rightly never far away. But increasingly, it is *Synodality* that is being suggested as the *leitmotif* of this papacy. Although theologians were writing important articles on this topic during the pontificate of Pope Benedict's XVI it is still an unfamiliar word, and the "synodal" something of a novelty in Catholic linguistics.

Nonetheless, several popular writers saw the significance of this idea in Francis's worldview from the start, most succinctly Drew Christiansen, a reporter for the Jesuit periodical *America*, who, at the start of Francis' papacy in 2013 wrote a short article simply called: "Listen for this word: Synodality" and went on to say that "It looks to be the heart of the Franciscan reform of the Church".

Absolutely! Although not exactly in the way Christiansen expected. Like the 2017 *Pope Francis Word Book*, filled with entries by esteemed authors, but which ignored "synodality" in favour of "collegiality", the 2013 article focused on the learning and listening that goes on between *bishops* and the Pope, whereas Francis has given synodality a much wider sense involving – to use one of his favourite phrases for the Church – the whole Faithful Holy People of God. For Francis, synodality and collegiality are not to be separated but neither are they to be confused!

In the sense that we now coming to understand it, synodality is a surprisingly recent idea. This is a term which only appears once in Francis' 2013 manifesto, *Evangelii*

Gaudium, and that in the context of ecumenism, although the underlying principles are nascent elsewhere. It reappears in a homily for SS Peter and Paul in 2013, but again the context is in the relationships of bishops to each other. As with much of the literature before 2015, synodality seems mainly to involve collegiality among the Catholic bishops, and ecumenical relations with non-Catholic bishops.

In an important 2018 document – *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church* – the ITC calls synodality and synodal a “linguistic novelty” but at the same time shows how synodality is present – or prefigured – in the early Church and forms a key part of later tradition in both East and West. Indeed, it forms a fresh reception of the Second Vatican Council’s ecclesiology of the People of God.

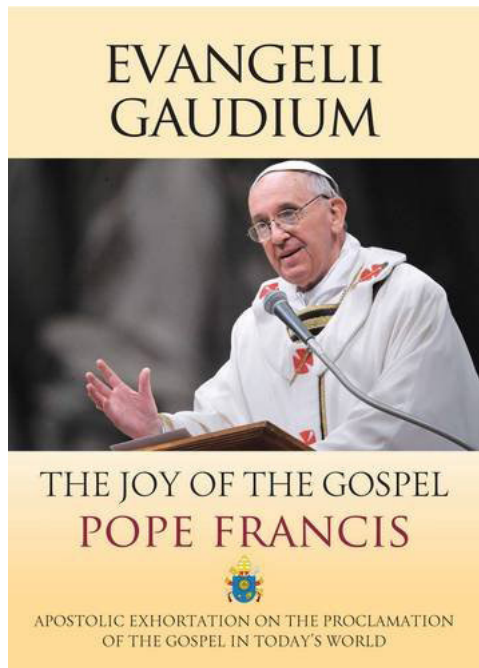
Definitions only get us so far, and as Wittgenstein says, “don’t look for the meaning, look at the use”, so what better place to see Synodality in use than in the synods in which Francis has been significantly involved?

Francis’s Synods

At the 2001 synod of Bishops on “The Bishop: Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the Hope of the World” during which a discussion on the need for episcopal collegiality was pushed aside, Pope Francis experienced increasingly centralised control over the participants and outputs of the synods exercised by Popes and Curia since the Council. But since 2012 he has brought a new process and a new style, beginning with the 2012 synod on the New Evangelisation. This was Benedict’s synod – but Francis’s legacy. In 2013 it was the new Pope who wrote the post-synodal apostolic exhortation, taking evangelisation as the starting point for the wide-ranging exhortation “*Evangelii Gaudium*”. How this might be realised in the Synod of Bishops itself becomes clearer with the 2014-15 synods on the Family.

In many ways what happened in 2014 was the prototype of what is going on now, both in the preparation and in the synod hall itself. Because the synod took place in two sessions, it is possible to see something of the development of a synodal method by comparing the preparation for each session. Some of you might remember the questionnaire associated with this synod. It was not originally intended for distribution to the faithful – indeed it was initially only for bishops – but took its own course and ended up widely distributed.

Although there is a sense that some consultation was better than nothing, there was justifiable criticism regarding the technical, churchy language. But there was a fascinating development between the two sessions of the Synod. The preparatory work for the



2014 Synod started out with a “priority of the answer” (e.g., how well is natural law understood? How can the birth rate be increased?), fitting the lived experience of the faithful into an existing framework. In the initial paper “The Diffusion of the Teaching of the Family in Sacred Scripture and the Church’s Magisterium” was followed by “Marriage according to the Natural Law”. In contrast, the instructions for 2015 move the priority towards real “questions which arise”, following a “see-judge-act” method: “Listening” – “Looking at Christ” – “Confronting the Situation”.

In the synod hall, Francis encouraged *parrhesia* – courageous speaking – and told bishops not to be afraid of disagreeing. At the same time, he insisted on true discernment and learning in the Synod. As has recently been emphasised: “The Synod is a spiritual process and is “not [to be] reduced to a parliamentary debate”.

Synod of Bishops

The conclusion of the 2014-15 synod coincided with the 50th Anniversary of the Synod of Bishops as an institution, and Francis took the opportunity to recognise it as a “fruit of the Second Vatican Council”, intended “so that pope and bishops are able to better provide pastoral care and governance of the Church”.

But what could have been a rather conventional commemoration has become an essential reference point for understanding his synodal vision, showing how the focus was shifting from synodality as the application of episcopal collegiality to something much more comprehensive. Noting the etymology of “synod”, he gave what has become the classic description of a Synodal Church:

A synodal Church is a Church which listens, which realises that listening “is more than simply hearing”. It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. The faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit, the “Spirit of truth”, in order to know what he “says to the Churches”.

Significantly, he also expanded the hermeneutical horizon for understanding the synod and episcopacy, by clearly distinguishing *collegiality* and *synodality*, and by situating the former with the frame of the latter:

In a synodal Church, the Synod of Bishops is only the most evident manifestation of a dynamism of communion which inspires all ecclesial decisions... an expression of episcopal collegiality within an entirely synodal Church. Two different phrases: “episcopal collegiality” and an “entirely synodal Church”.

The Venezuelan theologian Raphael Luciani neatly summarises the development we are seeing here as a movement from the conciliar understanding of *episcopal collegiality* to a new understanding – and practice – of *episcopal synodality*. What the Church is now working through is a further conversion to a *synodal ecclesiality*.

But development of synodality in respect of synods does not stop there.

By the time of the **2018 synod on Young People and Vocational Discernment**, this synodal ecclesiality is starting to come to the fore. Sr Nathalie Becquart, who as undersecretary to the present synod is the first woman to hold that role, has highlighted that post-synodal exhortation highlights important issues about the full participation of women in a synodal church – especially their “presence” in ecclesial bodies and “participation” in decision-making. Recently Sr Nathalie has challenged

prevailing ecclesial attitudes on “feminine genius” arguing that it is not possible to say “Women are like this; men are like that, so women can bring this to the Church.” Rather, the challenge is to be the Church with men and women together: she presents synodality as a path of reconciliation not only between clergy and laity, but between women and men.

Finally, the 2019 Synod on the Amazon emphasised that a synodal Church needs to hear the “cry of poor and cry of earth”. It also gave an example of one of the challenges of Francis’s approach. Global media focused largely on one issue – the possibility of married priests – which the Synod had discussed and recommended but which Francis did not endorse. Bradford E. Hinze, professor at Fordham and author of an important book on *Dialogue in the Catholic Church* criticised Francis for apparently not hearing the voice of the Synod on this matter. Was it lack of courage, and papal authoritarianism? A generous reading might say that the Pope was making two important points: first, distinguishing between debate – even with majority assent – and true Spirit-led discernment; and second, concern that the hot-button topics of the global north should not obscure a holistic set of regional issues.

In this first dimension of synodality, then, it can certainly be seen as more than buzzword in terms of a synod of bishops, of understanding episcopal synodality, and to some degree of how that related to a wider synodality of the whole faithful.

Ecclesiogenesis?

This brings us to the present synodal process, the so-called “Synod on Synodality” – which is clearly not simply a synod on “holding synods”. The official title “For a synodal Church” clearly indicates the emergence of a synodal ecclesiality. Both Luciani and Becquart see this as *ecclesiogenesis*, the emergence of a transformed Church requiring a “new leap from the collegial ‘we’ ...to the ecclesial ‘we’.”

Becquart: “*This vision of synodality presents the Church in its historical dimension in a state of permanent birth, in an on-going process of reform. That is to say, it is a Church that takes people into account, starting below from the bottom-up of the people in a generative approach that sees the*



*The pope with Raphael Luciani
Church constantly being born and starting anew.”*



Nathalie Becquart

But a genuine breakthrough requires more than new *understanding* of Synodality. Ecclesiogenesis is also a matter of ecclesial conversion and institutional reformation. The Latin American experience recognised that synodal conversion first requires pastoral conversion – going to and learning from the peripheries, and following

through to change structures and practices based on experience, listening and reflection.

As the ITC acknowledges: “Pastoral conversion for the implementation of synodality means that some paradigms often still present in ecclesiastical culture need to be quashed because they express an understanding of the Church that has not been renewed by the ecclesiology of communion. These include: the concentration of responsibility for mission in the ministry of Pastors; insufficient appreciation of the consecrated life and charismatic gifts; rarely making use of the specific and qualified contribution of the lay faithful, including women, in their areas of expertise.”

Such pastoral conversion points to a synodal church as “Whole Church” Catholicism, and to the second of the ITC levels of synodality: stable structures and processes.

Part 2: Structure and Processes

In *Evangelii Gaudium* Francis makes an understated but powerful observation: “Lay people are, put simply, the vast majority of the people of God. The minority – ordained ministers – are at their service.” Their role is by no means passive, nor is it to fill gaps left by a shortage of priests, but involves a wide range of ministries in the world and in the Church, a potential seen as limited by lack of suitable formation, and by not being given opportunity to participate in local church decision making.

Inverting the Pyramid

One of the most pervasive images for Synodality is Francis’s description of an “inverted pyramid” on the basis of ministerial service such that the Pope serves the bishops and churches, the bishop serves the other clergy, who serve the laity and the world. This is important and has real pastoral consequences. For example, Francis’ reordering of the Curia to be an instrument to support the needs of local churches, rather than simply as a distribution channel for Papal strategy. Inverting the pyramid has also been fruitfully developed by theologians, reflecting on the role of the *sensus fidei* in a synodal church, and in the dynamics of *ecclesiologenesis*.

Of course, Newman recognised the value of “consulting the faithful on matters of doctrine” long before Vatican II but since the Council’s teaching on the *sensus fidelium*, and on “reading the signs of the times in the light of the gospel”, an understanding has developed among theologians such as Christoph Theobald and Richard Gaillardetz of the *pastorality* of doctrine. That is, the relationship between the world of lived experience and formal expressions of Church teaching.

The challenge of receiving Vatican II in this regard is not to exalt the laity or denigrate ordained ministry, but to situate all in the whole *People of God* – differentiated, yes, but as equal daughters and sons in the Pilgrim Church.

Structures of Participation

The participation of the whole faithful, and especially developing the participation of the laity, brings us to the ITC’s second level of synodality: the need for stable structure and processes that make the participation of the whole faithful possible.

The commission states that this “cannot simply be a matter of reusing what is already there but must integrate and update the heritage of the ancient ordering of the Church by means of the synodal structures inspired by Vatican II *and must be open to the creation of new structures*”.

This applies not just to episcopal and diocesan synods; while Francis does not directly contradict Benedict XVI's negative assessment of the theological value of episcopal conferences he quotes extensively from regional and national conferences in his magisterial teaching. He has reopened questions which have implications for canon law and inculturated diversity. However, when detailing permanent structures for involving the *laity* beyond occasional diocesan synods and assemblies, the ITC suggestions are limited to the existing provisions for Diocesan Pastoral Councils, Parish Pastoral Councils and Parish Finance Councils.

Now, it is encouraging – and I suspect challenging for many – to hear Francis say emphatically: “How needed pastoral councils are! A bishop cannot guide a diocese without pastoral councils. A parish priest cannot guide the parish without the parish council. This is fundamental!” But this cannot be the limit of what is possible. In particular there is, on the one hand, a great need to find a way of practising synodality for those who do not do committees, and on the other hand to find a way of inculcating the spiritual and ecclesial values of synodality into these low-level structures so they have an ecclesial and missional pastoral function, not merely an administrative one. There is a great danger of Synodality being only a buzzword here – a complacent rebranding of things we were already doing, without attending to the call to newness heard from Pope Francis and from the synod office, as well as from the grassroots.

Syn-hodos is not just about walking together but being called together as an assembly for a purpose. So, too, a synodal Church is not just about listening to each other but about co-responsible decision-making, and structures and processes need to recognise and facilitate this. What might be in view here for a synodal Church?

In Latin America, CELAM has responded to the synodal process by planning four interlocking centres, on: Knowledge Management; Basic Ecclesial Community Training; Pastoral Action Programmes and Networks; and Communications. Perhaps we are not ready for something like that at a continent or even country level, but might some pastoral cooperation between dioceses form part of our local response?

More radically, Raphael Luciani makes an intriguing suggestion that as well as diocesan councils (which come under the governance of the bishop and conform to the logic of canonical structure) there might be other synodal bodies in a local church that are *ecclesial* rather than *episcopal* in nature. These will be bodies where clergy and laity meet simply as the People of God in that place.

The Bishops' Conference

Beyond the diocese, think of how the Catholic Church is represented at the national level in England and Wales by the Bishops' Conference – not just internally as regards governance but as the external face of the Church. The CBCEW website is headed up “The Catholic Church in England and Wales”. A synodal ecclesiology perhaps raises questions about whether there ought not to be a visible national entity of the Church in England and Wales – as an evangelistic sign, not only as a decision-making body – which is *served* by the CBCEW.

Finally, and worth a talk of its own, we should pay attention to the language used in the documents on synodality, as with Vatican II, referring to People of God: “all the baptised” – not just all the Catholics (and certainly not just “all the clergy”). This has

major implications for an ecumenical dimension to the synodal transformation of the Church, perhaps along the lines of the emerging approach of “Receptive Ecumenism” which seeks actively to *learn* from other traditions, not just overcome historic divisions.

Part 3: Synodal Style

A flourishing synodal Church requires more than synods and processes. It also needs a third level of synodality: which the ITC calls *synodal style*. “Synodality must become the Church’s *modus vivendi et operandi*”.

It is, as Luciani says: *“Not a method but an ecclesial way of proceeding....It requires reconceiving, and not merely modifying, the forms by which all Church structures and mentalities can be effectively synodalized.”*

Let me offer three brief thoughts on what “synodalising” mentalities might involve? Firstly, this style requires certain habits or virtues, such as those listed as “synodal attitudes” in the preparatory documents for the current synod: *courage, honesty, charity, humility, openness, hope, inclusivity, community...* It’s probably not surprising that these kinds of virtues are needed in dialogue. But there is another area of Francis’ thinking which is very significant in respect of synodal style but which can be overlooked in emphasising consensus.

Secondly, therefore, synodal style requires a particular approach to what Francis calls *contradistinctions* – polar opposites which work in a productive tension.

When the Pope encouraged speaking with *Parrhesia* at the 2014 synod, even if that meant disagreement, he was giving flesh his conviction that conflict needs to be faced, not avoided, or prematurely resolved in a neat synthesis, but engaged with so that polarised positions can be transcended on a new plane – a transformative growth emerging from the interplay of the poles – what he calls “overflow”. This is what unity prevailing over conflict looks like not an absence of discussion on certain topics. In his readable and profound little book *Let us Dream* Francis puts it like this:

Our main task is not to disengage from polarisation but to engage with conflict and disagreement in ways which prevent us from descending into polarization...holding disagreement and allowing it to become a link in a new process.

And finally, the third point on Synodal Style takes us back to *Evangelii Gaudium*, and specifically to one of Francis’ four principles for building a society: Time is greater than Space:

Giving priority to space means madly attempting to keep everything together in the present, trying to possess all the spaces of power and of self-assertion; it is to crystallize processes and presume to hold them back. Giving priority to time means being concerned about initiating processes rather than possessing spaces. (EG 223)

How then might we imagine this rather abstract idea that time is greater than space? From the first days of his papacy, wise commentators have pointed out that Francis is neither conservative nor progressive, to use those unhelpful but pervasive categories. Rather he is a radical, returning to the *radix* – the roots. The point of returning to the roots is not to bury oneself deep in the ground forever, but to grow afresh. It is not to recreate the first flower, but to reappropriate the original vital principle and nourishment.

Raphael Luciani correctly says that “[Synodality] requires theological-cultural

recreation of the foundational spirit that led to the church's original foundation", and it is this dynamic sense of recovering a foundational spirit, indeed listening to the Holy Spirit, in initiating an emergent – if somewhat unpredictable – process, that makes me think of Francis' approach to transformative ecclesial renewal, in particular his approach to synodality, as a form of "rewilding" the Church. This is not, as a colleague suggested, because the synodal pathway painstakingly cleared by the church is immediately being overgrown with the weeds and briars of distorted human and ecclesial nature, but because rewilding is concerned with re-establishing not the past form but the *conditions* for ecological processes and species diversity to get underway, as a recent book* on rewilding illustrates:

"Rewilding is not so much about turning back the clock and restoring damaged ecosystems to an arbitrary past baseline. Rather, it is about restoring networks of interactions between communities of organisms and their physical environment along with the ecological processes that emerge from these interactions."

"It is more open-ended and relaxed about ecological novelty. It embraces the view that there is no way back for ecosystems, and that, as ecological interactions and processes recover, ecosystems will take on new forms. These may evoke the past, but they will be different"

This gives us a good picture, I think, of synodal style to complement the style and image of listening and walking together. Synodal style is style with a purpose, not returning to an arbitrary past, but creating an environment for flourishing and diversity. Sometimes it will be messy and unpredictable, sometimes requiring patience and belief in the long haul – "being concerned about initiating processes rather than possessing spaces".

Conclusion: Buzzword or Breakthrough?

I have focused today on the intellectual apparatus around synodality. Clearly, a rather different presentation could have looked at the topic in terms of the theological and spiritual factors involved in synodality – the sense of faith, the notion of communion, the biblical precedents, and above all the action of the Holy Spirit. And our focusing on what The Spirit is saying to the churches today – in listening to each other, in contemplation and action. Or again, although I have touched on some practical issues, much more could be said about the need for rethinking formation for laity and clergy in a Synodal Church. Also, about the widespread sense that "we've been here before", or about best practice for holding meetings in a synodal style. I'm happy to wander down those paths in our discussion!

Hopefully the three perspectives I have presented today go some way towards thinking about synodality not as a fashionable buzzword, but a rich, multi-layered reality to be rediscovered and developed in the life and mission of the Church. Despite all the challenges, I am hopeful.

This article is a modified version of the talk given by Dr Ryan after the Newman Association's AGM in Newcastle on June 25th.

**Rewilding: The Radical New Science of Ecological Recovery* by Paul Jepson and Cain Blythe, Icon Books.

Religion and Politics in Britain today

By John Duddington

Introduction

Ought Christians as Christians to take part in political debate? One view is that Christians should be wary of this and in Edward Norman's *Christianity and World Order*,ⁱ based on the Reith Lectures which he gave in 1978, Norman feared that some Christians were adopting wholesale the values of the secular world and failing to bring an authentic Christian voice to public debate. In his second lecture "Ministers of Change" Norman referred to the statement issued after the Medellin Conference of Roman Catholic bishops in 1968, which condemned neo-colonialism, and endorsed the need for new and reformed political and economic structures.ⁱⁱ

He also referred in this lecture to the document "Uppsala Speaks" issued after the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches held there in 1968 and which urged the peoples of the world "to realise the need for revolutionary change"ⁱⁱⁱ. This tendency to, as he thought, see the world through the prism of secular and not Christian values led Norman in his concluding lecture "The Indwelling Christ" to argue for "the separation of individual Christian action from the corporate witness of the Church". He agreed that this would be seen as the "privatisation of religion" but said: "I think that is exactly what it is".



Cardinal Theodor Innitzer,

A curious example of this was in 1938 when, after visiting Hitler following the invasion of Austria by Germany, Cardinal Theodor Innitzer, the archbishop of Vienna, issued some directives to urge Austrians to vote in the forthcoming plebiscite for union with Germany. However, having said that "the exclusive mission of priests is to care for souls ... they must remain at a distance from politics" he then seemed to contradict this by eulogising the idea of the "nation" and saying that "a truly religious life presupposes the practice of national virtues". The Austrian episcopacy followed this by issuing explicit advice to their flocks to vote for union with Germany. It is important, though, to note that a swift rebuke followed from the Vatican.^{iv}

This last example shows us how dangerous it can be for the Church to retreat into itself and ignore what is happening in the political world.

However, Norman does have a point: it

is vital that Christians, when taking part as Christians in public debate, have as their starting-point the words of the Gospel and not those of a particular social programme. I would argue, nevertheless, that a kind of dualism which, as R H Tawney put it, “draws a sharp line between the life of the spirit, which is the concern of religion, and the external order with which religion has no concern” is fundamentally wrong. As Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* said: “It is no longer possible that religion should be restricted to the private sphere and that it exists only to prepare souls for heaven. We know that God wants his children to be happy in this world too, even though they are called to fulfilment in eternity, for he has created all things ‘for our enjoyment’ (1 Tm 6:17), the enjoyment of everyone.” As Jacques Maritain vividly put it: “These two orders^v are distinct but they are not separate. If grace captures us and recreates us in the depth of our being it is in order that the whole of our action may be affected by it and illuminated with it.”^{vi}

This much would, I expect, be agreed by many readers of this journal but we need to go further and in this article I will try to explore a path forward for religion in public debate.

No longer a guaranteed place for Christianity

Most Christians, when asked, would probably agree that we cannot just assume that Christian views ought by their very nature to be accepted by the rest of society but I wonder if there is still an unspoken assumption that this is the case? Archbishop William Temple was one of the leading exponents of the Church’s role in politics during the early part of the 20th century and his *Christianity and Social Order*^{vi} is unjustly neglected today and still worth reading. However, what underlies this, and all of Temple’s thinking, is that, as John Kent puts it, “Church and state should combine to reflect the overriding purpose of God”.^{vii} However the idea of Church and state combining would not only be unacceptable today but would also bring with it what I suggest is an unhealthy closeness between Church and state. Perhaps one should now say that the Church should seek to influence society and politics so that the overriding purpose of God is expressed through its words and actions.

What is clear is that the Christian voice in politics is accepted and indeed welcomed but only where it accords with what it accords with the prevailing mores of society. In *Talking God, the Legitimacy of Religious Public Reasoning*^{viii} Jonathan Chaplin looks at the reaction to a march through central London in 2008 by six hundred Anglican bishops carrying placards past Downing Street and the Houses of Parliament to make their demands on behalf of the Millennium Development Goals. The



WCC Photo
Archbishop William Temple

then Prime Minister, Gordon Brown was among the audience and told them that he was "humbled" to be among men and women for whom he had "the utmost respect, the greatest admiration, and the highest affection". Press reaction was favourable and Chaplin asks: "Where was the familiar chorus telling us that this was a shameful attempt by a self-appointed religious minority to impose its view on a (supposedly) secular majority?"

Chaplin then looks at a hypothetical situation where 600 Catholic bishops from around the world converge on Westminster.

They march round Parliament Square and down Victoria Street carrying pro-life banners, ending up outside Westminster Cathedral where they listen to speeches calling for an end to abortion. Suppose that again the Prime Minister joins them and tells them that he has "the utmost respect, greatest admiration and highest affection for them".

As Chaplin points out:

Imagine, if you can, the public reaction. Imagine the outrage, the accusations of undemocratic bullying, the calls for French-style secularism. The comment pages would be log-jammed with sermons informing us that religion is a private affair, and that we shouldn't mix up the things of God and Caesar.

Indeed, the Guardian columnist Jackie Ashley once wrote after Roman Catholic bishops had issued a statement about abortion: "If any MP really thinks their personal religious views take precedence over everything else then they should leave the House of Commons. Their place is in church, mosque, synagogue or temple. Parliament is the place for compromises, for negotiations in a secular sphere under the general overhead light of the liberal tradition."^{ix} Yet it is often in being counter-cultural that we as Christians find ourselves in the right place in the end.

A Way Forward?

Yet I detect a reluctance among some Christians to be counter-cultural and to swim against the popular tide. As Lord Mackay, the former Lord Chancellor has said, Christians must beware "....the wish to be popular or acceptable to public opinion..... We all must be conscious of this whatever church we support, established or disestablished, or if in our lives we are guided by moral principles which may have no religious base. Are we to go along with the tide or stick to our principles? It is usually easier to go along with the tide. Swimming against it involves strength of commitment."^x

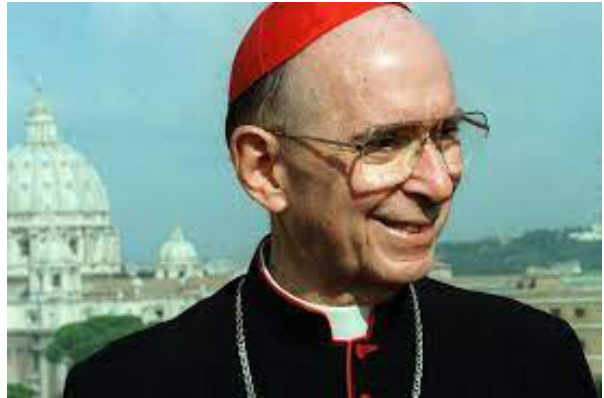
When Christ was presented in the Temple it was Simeon who foretold to Mary that He was "destined to be a sign that is rejected – and a sword will pierce your own soul too so that the secret thoughts of many will be laid bare"^{xi} Christ is not a sign of cosy engagement with the secular world but a sign that we may be in contradiction to it and if that puts us at the margins of debate in society then so be it.

Yet we must not understate our case. The value of religion is made clear in numerous judgements of the courts. The European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Kokkinakis v Greece* (1993) said that the religious dimension "is one of the most vital elements that go to make up the identity of believers and their conception of life, but it is also a precious asset for atheists, agnostics, sceptics and the unconcerned". In a South African case the court said that: "Religious belief has the capacity to awake

concepts of self-worth and human dignity which form the cornerstone of human rights. It affects the believer's view of society and founds the distinction between right and wrong. It expresses itself in the affirmation and continuity of powerful traditions that frequently have an ancient character transcending historical epochs and national boundaries". This is the kind of positive view which we should be stressing.

However, we still have the practical question of just how to express a Christian view. As Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*^{xii} said (at. para 125): *The Church's teachings concerning contingent situations are subject to new and further developments and can be open to discussion, yet we cannot help but be concrete – without presuming to enter into details – lest the great social principles remain mere generalities which challenge no-one. There is a need to draw practical conclusions, so that they "will have greater impact on the complexities of current situations".*

As Cardinal Bernardin, then Archbishop of Chicago, put it "religiously rooted positions somehow must be translated into language, arguments and categories which a religiously pluralistic society can agree on as the moral foundation of key policy positions".^{xiii} One example, which is very pressing at the moment, concerns euthanasia.



Cardinal Bernardin, then Archbishop of Chicago

Catholics, and indeed many other Christians, are absolutely opposed to euthanasia and the teaching of the Catholic Church is made clear in *Evangelium Vitae* issued by Pope John Paul II: "that euthanasia is a *grave violation of the Law of God*, since it is the deliberate and morally unacceptable killing of a human person. This doctrine is based upon the natural law and upon the written Word of God, is transmitted by the Church's Tradition and taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium".^{xiv}

Yet it falls to us to translate this message into ways that resonate with the secular world and so we must point out that mission creep happens where euthanasia is legalised. In Oregon 38.6% of patients committing suicide had expressed concern about being a "burden" on others and in 2020 the Dutch government approved plans to allow euthanasia for terminally ill children aged between one and ^{xv} saying that this would prevent some children from "suffering hopelessly and unbearably". There are many other instances of this "mission creep", especially in Holland and Belgium. Surely this is not what most people want? One could go further. In an article in the Catholic Medical Quarterly Francis Etheridge has pointed out the evidence for the link between the experience of loneliness and requests for euthanasia^{xvi} and if this is so then why is society not tackling the root of the problem and not the symptom?

The above is but one example of a specific issue where in public debate Christians

need to bring forward arguments which, whilst not denying a Christian basis, express that basis in a fully Christian way with regard for the whole person on the basis of human reason. On a wider canvass there is much to be said for the notion of a “consistent ethic of life” of which the most notable exponent was Cardinal Bernardin. This does not in any way seek to diminish the absolute opposition of the Catholic Church to abortion and euthanasia but seeks to put it in a wider context of the promotion of life itself as God-given and in doing so gives shape and meaning to the fundamental Christian concept of the absolute dignity of each human person.

Thus Cardinal Bernardin distinguished between what he termed “life threatening issues” such as genetics, capital punishment, abortion and euthanasia, where the Church has an absolute moral position and “life diminishing issues” such as prostitution, pornography, sexism and racism where as he put it: “they all contribute in some way to a diminishment of human dignity” and so there is the need for “specific reflection and concrete action”.^{xvii} The whole point is that we must not be single issue Christians but resist any attempts to diminish human dignity.

Furthermore, we must insist on a private space not only for matters of religious belief but for all matters of deeply-held conscience. One area where this is currently threatened is the very practice of private prayer under the Public Order Bill 2022 which as most will now know, would introduce “buffer zones” outside abortion facilities across England and Wales to ban pro-life volunteers. What is not so widely known is that this is already happening with a number of local authorities introducing by-laws which are worded in draconian terms and are worded so that the mere practice of private prayer outside an abortion clinic is criminalised. This is because it is now a crime, where there is such a by-law, to even “advise or persuade, or otherwise express an opinion” within a certain distance of an abortion clinic. Secularists may well rejoice at this but beware; once this line has been crossed it will be crossed in other cases. In fact, laws are already in place to protect women from harassment when they attend appointments at abortion clinics and so all of this legislation is quite unnecessary

Conclusion

If it is right that Christians should engage in political debate then is it right that they should be engaged in party politics? In the concluding words of his *Christianity and History*^{xviii} the historian Herbert Butterfield, having surveyed the different political parties in Britain throughout history, advised “hold fast to Christ and for the rest remain totally uncommitted”.

I disagree. On a personal note my own father, a committed and active Catholic all his life, was also involved in the Conservative party and strongly believed in the Conservative tradition of Harold Macmillan and R. A. Butler of the “Middle Way”^{xix}. He chaired a local authority housing committee for many years and was very strongly opposed to the sale of council houses. Readers will have similar examples of involvement with other political parties. Butterfield was of course right that we must hold fast to Christ but whilst making sure that in the words of the old hymn our anchor holds we must not be afraid of active participation in political life and action. There is no divide between the things of God and Caesar!

Notes

i Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.

- ii The documents of this conference can be found, together with other documents relating to Catholic social teaching, including Papal encyclicals, at www.shc.edu/theolibrary/cstdocs.htm
- iii *Uppsala Speaks, Section Reports of the World Council of Churches* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1968).
- iv The story is told in G. Passelecq and B. Suchecky, *The Hidden Encyclical of Pius XI* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1997). An example of where the borderline between the sacred and the secular was firmly crossed is that of the Bavarian priest who, in post war Bavaria, told his congregation that he would not instruct them how to vote but 'Make it Christian, make it Social, make it Union!'
- v He is referring to the spiritual and the temporal.
- vi J. Martian *Scholasticism and Politics* (Macmillan, 1940) at 195.
- vii (1942) Harmondsworth, Penguin but republished by Shephard-Walwyn/SPCK in 1976.
- viii John Kent William Temple (CUP, 1992) at 175.
- ix London: Theos Report 2008.
- x Jackie Ashley, 'Cardinals, back off from this war with women and state' *The Guardian*, June 4, 2007.
- xi These words were in a lecture 'Does Establishment have a Future?' which he delivered in Middle Temple on May 9th, 2013, and which is reprinted in *Law and Justice*, 170 (2013) pp. 7-18
- xii Lk 2:35.
- xiii London: CTS, 2013.
- xiv *Consistent Ethic of Life* (Sheed and Ward, 1988) at p.91
- xv John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium vitae* (25 March 1995), 65: AAS 87 (1995),
- xvi (2022) *CMQ* 72 (3) 22-25.
- xvii *Consistent Ethic of Life* at 29-30.
- xviii Collins, 1949.
- xix Are there any adherents of Butskellism today?

Hosting A Ukrainian Family & 'Doing Church'

By Jeffery Pratley



To start at a generic beginning – the Church. Maybe one of the reasons for my family being a host for a refugee family from Zaporizhzhia (close to the Russian front) is Church. Or rather “doing Church”. Although when I pick through the New Testament, I find all sorts of “Church”. There is the utopian model in Acts 4. where all live in harmony and unity as pitted against the squabbling church

of Corinth. Then the personal snapshots of the “house” churches in Paul's letters, followed by the critical analysis of the various churches by “the angel” in the Book of Revelations. The drive of Church in Matthew 18:16 – “go out, make disciples of all the nations” is the *raison d'être* for many evangelical churches, while the gathering of the “church” at the last supper is the essence, as sacramentalised, in the liturgical churches.

However, it is the moral imperative of Jesus' parable of the Last Judgement, “when you did it to the least of my brothers, you did it to me” (Mt: 25:40), placed just before the narrative of his death and resurrection, that speaks more explicitly to me. Here, I see Jesus as THE sacrament and our response to his humanity and divinity as “doing Church”. Probably this is a reason for us becoming a host to a refugee family. Maybe in modern CST (Catholic Social Teaching) talk, this is the principle of solidarity. Of course, all these expressions of Church are valid, and are reflections of the “Pilgrim People of God”. But for me, it is this call – “you did it to me”, the call of the sacrament of the other person – that is a very cogent expression of “doing Church”.

Refugee Partnership

Another preliminary: I belong to the local Refugee Partnership - which again is “doing Church”. It was actually initiated by Catholics but now is fostered mainly by the Anglican churches (we hold our meetings in a Quaker Meeting House). While there are a few from Islamic and other religious backgrounds, most of us seem to be from a Christian source that are driven by the moral imperative of seeing Christ in the stranger (not that we ever talk about this of course!). The Partnership tends to deal more with asylum seekers under the radar rather than those entering through more conventional or “legit” avenues. We befriend, signpost sources of financial assistance, provide legal

direction and aid, tutor adults in ESOL as well as children in their schoolwork, etc. The partnership simply responds to the need of the stranger, the alien.

Which brings us to the Ukrainian family who have taken residence with us. So, maybe as well as “doing Church”, by seeing the other as Christ, there is now the challenge of “doing the domestic Church” (Vatican II) as family Veltzaveta – Liza (mother), Sophiia (19-year-old daughter, 2nd year university student) and Semen (a six-foot fourteen-year-old). Back in Ukraine, Mischa, the husband, is on patrols in the army.

When the actual war (sorry “just annexation of Rus”) started, I felt moved to think beyond the box. Our four children, bar one, have left home – except for their bulky possessions. So - why not? I cautiously approached my wife, a hard-working head of a Catholic school in Brent, London. “I have been thinking.....” on which she turned to me: “You know, I have been thinking too!”.

The next stage was the government website – Homes for Ukraine. There were trumpets and banners but not much action. It took us nearly a month and a half to connect with any actual Ukrainian refugees. It was only when we contacted the Ukraine Catholic Church in London that we hit a real action plan. They put us in touch with Opora, a refugee charity. Two days later we had six replies. Decisions! Finally, we chose a family that had older adolescents – as we had had experience in this and felt that such families would be more difficult to place. Liza, the mother, wrote back an effusive letter from Lithuania, where they had been holed up for two and a half months. We set up the link for the UK government machinery immediately and began to communicate. However, it took many turns of the screw before they finally received visas.

They finally arrived in late June this year on an evening flight to Luton, tired, apprehensive but hopeful. The next week saw them settled in, relaxing and trying out their school English on us. There were many things to do: declarations, job centre interviews, NHS applications, surgeries and dentists, universal credit set up; Even I found myself stumped with some of the bureaucratic entanglement. The school application for Semen was tough, as it came at the end of the school year. A Catholic school we applied to told us to forward his baptism certificate (they are not Catholics). Others did not get back to us. It was a stressful summer break trying to get somewhere and it was only on the second week of the start of the school year that we finally scored a place. And of course, the change of Semen's name to Simon was a must!

Rockets in Zaporizhzhia

From the start, though Liza and family were sociable, there was a reserve that indicated trauma. Liza told us that before they moved, every time the sirens begun, they would have to run for about half a kilometre to reach their bunker. A few days ago, Liza told me that she was finding it difficult to get to sleep because of the rockets in Zaporizhzhia and acute anxiety for her family and friends. Yet the remarkable take away I have from them is their resilience, Liza's in particular.

She tells me that one of her favourite English books was Anne of Green Gables and its message to be always joyful. One of the bonuses was when we took teaching English into our own hands. ESOL classes (English for Speakers of Other Languages) were in short supply, so we decided to teach it ourselves. As a retired English teacher, I set up the lessons and gave the family language books to quiz each other, among other exercises. For about an hour and a half in the afternoon we pursued a lively format of

writing, reading, listening and speaking which was just as much sharing as learning. To me, this has been the highlight – the joy of sharing language and literature and with it ourselves. Yet another way of “doing Church”.

It is difficult to live with another family and adjust to their habits and needs. There is the goldfish bowl tension with all our foibles and occasional flare-ups on display: Liza with her stropy teenagers, us with the strain of our busy lives. Not exactly the smiley community of Acts. Yet much is done that sees Jesus gracing us in the stranger, the dispossessed, the struggling. Again, this works both ways. Liza's infectious laughter and Simon's funny ways, the sharing at meals when we eat together, the chats over the dishes, the revelation through them of the resilience of the human spirit.

I received a jolt when Liza, having had a disturbed night, sent me an email and then spoke to me the next morning. “What is going to happen to us when our six months are up? Housing is very difficult to get.” I had been to a refugee forum a week before, so I very much appreciated this concern. All the agencies were reporting the fierce competition in the housing market. Many of the Afghan refugees from the airlift in Kabul are still holed up in bridging hotels. I really felt her trauma in this. Thank God I was able to reassure her that we will not abandon them and that they could stay on how long it takes to negotiate for their security. However, many other host families could well be struggling with this dilemma. Maybe like the early churches with catering for the marginalised. And having a government denying a cost crisis in all of this is not helpful.

So what about “Doing Church”. Liza and family are not “Christian” and, except for a grace before our meals, Church is not an item on our agenda. It would be wonderful to talk about things of God, but we go where the Holy Spirit leads us. Meanwhile:

“When you did this to the least of my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.”

Jeffery Pratley spoke to the Hertfordshire Circle on 22nd September

Obituary – Kevin Lambert

Kevin Lambert, a member of the Newman Association for sixty years, and a huge contributor to the Association's activities during much of that time, died on June 28th aged 86. A long-time member of the Coventry Circle, he became a leading figure on the national Council, including a term as President between 1993 and 1995. and made several particularly important contributions.

For example, he was the Newman representative on Pax Romana for many years. This provided international connections which may have encouraged him to organise a series of Newman Pilgrimages. These took Newman members around large parts of the Middle East, including Israel,

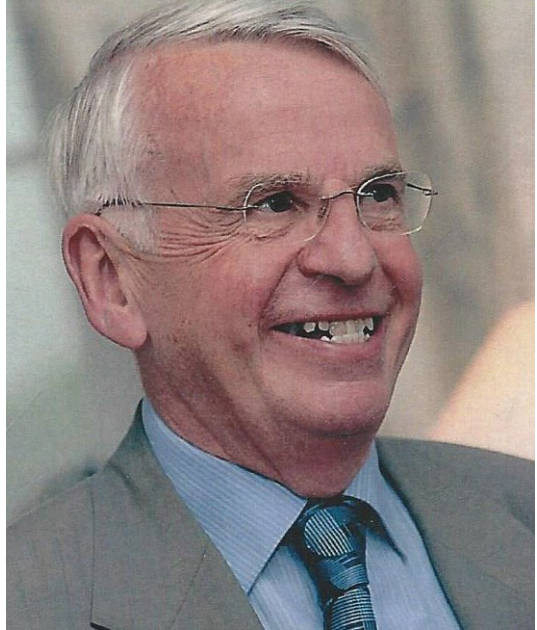
Turkey, Syria and Egypt, at a time when political conditions were more favourable than they have subsequently become. With the Middle East remaining in turmoil more recent pilgrimages have been confined to Italy and Cyprus.

After a Circle Officers' Conference had called for better communications between Council and the Circles, he took up the further challenge of editing an email newsletter sent out to Circle Secretaries to supplement the occasional journal *The Newman*. These were mainly linked to the regular meetings of Council.

A native of Lancashire, from Blackburn, Kevin studied physics at Leeds University and embarked on a career of teaching and lecturing. He was an active member of the Association for Sciences Education. He organised science field courses as part of his work for the National Association for Able Children in Education. After retirement he became Chair of Governors at Our Lady of the Assumption School in Coventry.

The Newman Pilgrimages

Meanwhile he was developing his Newman activities. The pilgrimages began with a visit to the Holy Land in April, 1997, and they continued every 12 or 18 months in the spring or autumn each year to Istanbul, Greece, Italy, Anatolia and Syria, with a visit to Santiago de Compostela in between in 2004. The most challenging pilgrimage was probably to Egypt in 2007, and Kevin contributed a personal report on that journey to the May 2021 issue of *The Newman*. It did not help that the pilgrimage clashed with the dates of that year's Ramadan so hotels were difficult, one being described by Kevin's wife Freda as "a run-down holiday camp". However, there was the highlight of a night-time ascent of Mount Sinai which ten brave pilgrims signed up for. He wrote



that the path up the mountain was boulder-strewn but well-marked although "I soon learned, the hard way, that camels have right of way". Kevin's final pilgrimage, the eleventh, when he was already suffering from health problems, was to Rome and Assisi in 2012.

Eventually drastic brain surgery was required to save his life. As a consequence he suffered physical disabilities, including speech problems, but he lived on for a number of years and he refused to cease his activities with the Association. In particular he continued to produce the Newsletter and there were in all 99 of these published until he finally resigned in April this year, after an Easter Newsletter, only a few weeks before his death. He also continued his lifelong love of walking but instead of the long hikes across the Lake District, Yorkshire, Scotland and Wales which he once enjoyed he had to be content with local routes.

Besides his connection over a long period to Pax Romana Kevin also accepted the responsibility of representing the Newman on the National Council for Lay Associations, which reports to the Bishops' Conference. For Pax Romana he agreed to organise a gathering in the UK in 2009 which took place at the High Leigh conference centre in Hertfordshire. He gathered charitable funds to help finance this event.

Well into his 80s he continued to be active. When Fr Fabian Radcliffe retired as national Chaplain in 2018 the search was on for a successor. Kevin remembered that Mgr Patrick Kilgarriff had been the chaplain for the Newman's Seven Churches Pilgrimage to Asia Minor in 1999. A highlight had been the celebration of Mass using a gravestone as an altar at the Anzac cemetery at Gallipoli overlooking the Bosphorus. He contacted Fr Pat, who had subsequently been appointed Rector of the Venerable English College in Rome, but by 2018 was about to retire as a Parish Priest in Malvern, and he agreed to be the new National Chaplain.

Kevin Lambert is badly missed. He has been a great source of energy and initiative for the Newman Association. Requiescat in pace.

B.R.



Mary, Founder of Christianity?

by Chris Maunder

In his Mariological work, Newman emphasised the ancient insight that Mary could be described as a “New Eve”. In parallel to Christ, who was described as the second Adam in the Pauline epistles, Mary was the woman in the story of redemption which restored what had been lost by the original man and woman in Eden. According to the second century theologians, Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, Mary by her obedience to God put right what Eve had spoiled. This is a familiar theme in the development of Mariology. Therefore, Mary’s relationship to her son Jesus Christ is in some sense analogous to that between Adam and Eve. Eve was Adam’s “helpmate” in the Genesis story. It can be asked: what kind of helpmate is Mary to Christ? Does her contribution mainly consist in her agreement to bearing Jesus in her womb and her loyalty to him at the cross? Or was it this and more?

The question as to whether we should maintain a literal belief in the virgin birth in a modern age in which we understand the role of religious myth and know about the function of DNA has been alive in Catholicism since at least the 1960s. It led Karl Rahner, in his *Theological Investigations*, to suggest that Catholics who believed the virgin birth literally and also those who did not could at least agree that Mary “was incorporated with her whole body-soul existence into the historical salvific mission of Jesus” (Volume 19, English translation, DLT 1983, p. 229). In other words, at the very least, even if it were regarded as a mythical narrative, the virgin birth story is true in a metaphorical sense: it does at least assure us that Mary was called to a vocation in which she wholeheartedly made possible the ministry of Jesus.

Birth narratives

In addition to the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke, there are two passages in John in which Mary features: the marriage at Cana (2.1-12) and the crucifixion (19.25-7). In both, she is not named but referred to as the “mother of Jesus”. Clearly, these two passages are linked because of the reference to Jesus’ “hour”, which is the cross, and they serve to present Mary at the beginning and end of Jesus’ ministry. Unfortunately, for the purposes of knowing how Mary contributed to the ministry between these moments, there is nothing about her in the Johannine narrative from 2.13 to 19.24. Can we retrieve anything from that long gap in the story?

There are two reasons that suggest an explanation as to why Mary’s activity during the ministry is not as prominent as it might be. The first is that, as many feminist scholars have pointed out, the New Testament is true to the culture of its time, that is, it is *androcentric*, with an emphasis on male participation and male leadership. The Catholic Church itself accepts that we have to read scripture with a knowledge of the culture in which it was written; Catholics are not “fundamentalists” (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1993). While it is clear that women were crucially involved in the ministry – we read glimpses of this at Matthew 27.55-6, Mark 15.40-1, and Luke 8.2-3 – we do not find out much about them.

The second obstacle to the inclusion of detail about Mary in Jesus’ ministry is a hesitation on the part of the evangelists about Jesus’ family, who get only a very small mention. In several places – Matthew 12.46-50, Mark 3.31-5, Mark 6.3, Luke 8.20-1,

John 2.12, Acts 1.14 – the “mother and brothers” of Jesus are mentioned as a family unit (the assumption that Mary was a widow by the time of Jesus’ ministry is probably a sound one). We know that at least one of these brothers, James, became the Church leader in Jerusalem, as is in evidence in Acts 15, Galatians 1-2, and other early Christian sources, such as the Gospel of Thomas and the *Church History* of Eusebius. Both James and Jude have letters attributed to them in the New Testament.

The Will of God

The evangelists seem to have been a little nervous of the authority of these brothers. In Mark 3.31-5, Jesus waves his family aside and says that “whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother” (quotes from New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition). This reticence can be explained by referring to Galatians 1-2, where Paul makes clear that James was associated with those Jewish Christians who were committed to maintaining the Jewish Law, the *Torah*, which Paul regarded as a crucial limitation on the spreading of the Gospel.

So perhaps we would know more about the traditions of the family of Jesus if it were not for the fact that Paul and the evangelists were trying to wean the early Church from the idea that the family were indispensable. There are stories about them in some of the non-canonical or apocryphal writings; these are impossible to substantiate historically, of course, but they do show evidence of the importance of Jesus’ family in some traditions. This is not to imply that the policy of downplaying the family by the evangelists was unwarranted in the circumstances of spreading the gospel: it is just to observe, in agreement with many recent studies on James and the other brothers, that it was the case.

With Mary in the New Testament, we are not left with almost nothing, as with the brothers, because of the passages we have mentioned already: the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke, and the two places in John. However, these do not really present the authoritative and important figure that might be inferred from the fact that Mary was the mother of a family which had a prominent role in the early Church. There is enough evidence available in research into Christianity and Judaism to show that women did hold important positions of leadership and influence, thanks to, for example, Bernadette Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue* (1982), Ute Eisen, *Women Officeholders in Early Christianity* (2000) and Ally Kateusz, *Mary and Early Christian Women: Hidden Leadership* (2019).

Yet in the birth narratives we have the portrait of a very young woman who is uncertain at the visit of an angel; at Jesus teaching in the Temple aged twelve, a mother who is worried and perhaps confused about the vocation of her Son; in Mark 3.31-15 and its parallels, a mother who seems not to be admitted to the group of disciples; at Cana, a mother who seems not to fully understand what her Son’s ministry is about; at the cross, a woman who is entrusted to the care of a male, the “disciple whom Jesus loved”.

Altogether, this does not amount to a strong image of femininity. Admittedly, it is counterbalanced somewhat by the power of the *Magnificat*, in which Mary echoes her Hebrew forebears Miriam and Hannah in announcing God’s victory, and by the fact that the miracle at Cana, initiated by Mary, reveals Jesus’ glory and causes people to believe in him. Nevertheless, several Church fathers of the early centuries, including

Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen and John Chrysostom, commented on Marian passages in the gospels by observing the weakness of Mary which consisted in her being female. Unconditional and uncritical devotion of Mary is a later development from the fourth century onwards; in the West, its roots lie in Ambrose and Augustine.

In the gospels, despite the lack of detail, we do find hints of the considerable contribution of women to the ministry of Jesus, which assure us that it was very important. Matthew 27.55-6, Mark 15.40-1, and Luke 8.2-3 tell us that women “provided for [Jesus and the twelve] out of their resources” (Luke 8.3). In John’s Gospel, in addition to Cana, Jesus has three conversations with women which are pivotal; the Samaritan woman in chapter 4, who goes off to spread the news about him; Martha in chapter 11, who declares that he is the Messiah and Son of God after he tells her that he is “the Resurrection and the Life”; Mary Magdalene in chapter 20, the first witness to the resurrection who is sent out to tell the apostles, and who later in Church tradition gained the title “apostle to the apostles”.

The story of the anointing

Above all, there is the story of the anointing, as this appears in all four gospels in different forms. The version in Mark and Matthew is probably the earliest, as scholarship concurs on the priority of Mark, and Matthew often follows Mark reasonably closely. These versions (Mark 14.3-9; Matthew 26.6-13) portray a woman anointing Jesus on the head. Those present object that the ointment could have been used for the poor but Jesus counters this by pointing out that the woman has anointed him beforehand for his burial, and then we read his assessment of her: “Truly, I tell you, wherever in the whole world the good news is proclaimed, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her” (Mark 14.9).

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza’s famous feminist analysis of this passage, *In Memory of Her* (1983), rightly asks why we do not even know the woman’s name, given the importance of her action. The solemn declaration by Jesus indicates that the anointing is not a routine piece of hospitality. In it, the woman declares Jesus to

be the Messiah and anticipates his death and burial at the same time, thus prophesying the difficult truth of the dying Messiah. Mark’s and Matthew’s versions, in which the anointing is on the head (it is on the feet in Luke and John), strongly suggest that a Messianic anointing is intended. Nowhere else is Jesus, the “Anointed One”, actually



Mosaic of Mary wearing priestly garments

anointed.

The anointing woman is not named in three gospels, but in the fourth – John – she is identified as Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus. She is not Mary, the mother of Jesus. However, there are several parallels between the anointing woman of Mark's and Matthew's versions and Mary in the Lukan narrative of the annunciation, visitation, and birth and presentation of Jesus. Both women foresee the suffering of Jesus: the anointing woman by anticipating the ritual anointing after his death, and Mary through the prophecy of Simeon ("a sword will pierce your own soul too", Luke 2.35). Both women understand that Jesus is the Messiah, and both are told that they will be praised and remembered by all future generations.

These clues suggest that we must at the very least assume that the very earliest Christian community was a joint enterprise between males and females, not only in the daily tasks and providing resources, but also in the theological and intellectual vision. One could go further and infer that those who understood Jesus to be the Messiah were predominantly women: Christianity began as a woman's religion, albeit one the centred on the male Jesus as Messiah. Women in those patriarchal times would naturally have chosen a non-violent response to the malaise that Israel suffered under the Romans and Herodians, one that sought to build up the community, reunite it where it was fragmented, and place particular emphasis on restoring and including the poor and suffering. In these actions, they intended to establish the "kingdom of God" as a place of identity and meaning for their people, a concept considerably distinct from an armed insurrection, yet the challenge that it represented still led to the death of Jesus as its Messiah, or anointed king.

The different Marys

In the case of Mary, the mother of Jesus and his brothers and sisters, another clue comes in the confusion that exists over the various Marys at the cross and tomb. In my book *Mary, Founder of Christianity*, I provide arguments to support the ancient claim that Mary the mother of James and Joses (as she is named at Mark 15.40 – mother of James and Joseph in Matthew 27.56, and mother of James at Luke 24.10) was none other than Mary the mother of Jesus. This was proposed by a certain Helvidius at Rome in the fourth century but refuted by Jerome, who was concerned about the perpetual virginity; he concluded that James and Joses were merely cousins of Jesus. The identification of the two is held in some traditions of the Orthodox, where it does not threaten the perpetual virginity, as the Orthodox follow Epiphanius in understanding James and Joses as the sons of Joseph by a previous wife; thus Mary is their step-mother.

In the book, I go further and identify Mary the wife (? – the Greek is not clear) of Clopas as Mary the mother of Jesus too, and tentatively also Mary the mother of John Mark at Acts 12.12. I cannot give all the detailed arguments in a short article, but the best answer as to why all these ways of describing Mary were used is that she was a mother figure to the Church at Jerusalem and its most important apostles. James the brother of Jesus was the first leader in the Church at Jerusalem and, according to later writers, he was succeeded by Simeon the son of Clopas. John Mark was important to the narrative in Acts and seems to have served as the Jerusalem Church's appointee to accompany Paul (which he ceased to do in Pamphylia, much to Paul's chagrin, Acts 15.38).

The fact that Mary could have served as a mother figure to apostles for which she was not the natural mother is supported by that most familiar of Marian passages in the gospels: the adoption by her of the beloved disciple and vice versa in John 19.26-7: "When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son'. Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother'. And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home."

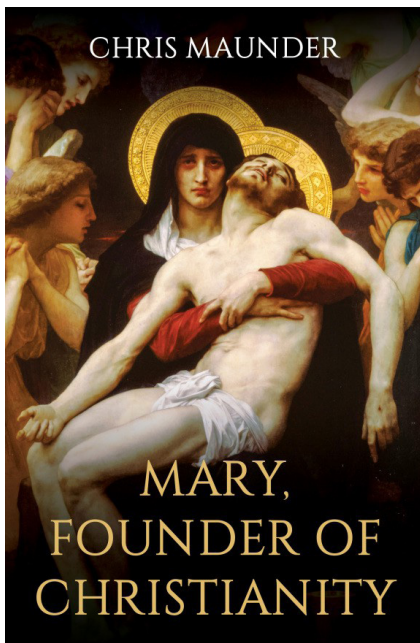
While there is some speculation in this reconstruction, it does serve as an explanation for some of the mysteries surrounding the name Mary in the gospels and Acts. Otherwise, we have to assume that being called Mary was an advantage that helped several different women to become prominent members of Jesus' community and the post-Easter Church! I think that there were only three: Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus at Bethany.

The theory that Mary was a mother figure, first for her own very influential family and then for the Jerusalem community, establishes Mary's importance in the very earliest Church and situates her at the forefront of the ministry as well as after the crucifixion and resurrection (when her presence is summarised very briefly by Luke in Acts 1.14). The reasons why more is not said about this we have explained by two cultural tendencies in the gospels: one reducing the memory of the leadership of women in the movement, and the other downplaying the dominance of the family of Jesus in the Church which followed him at Jerusalem.

For me, these deliberations about Mary's role are not merely rational attempts to find gender balance in the gospel story. They take on a near-mystical appreciation of the central role of Mary, not just as a transitory mother figure who appears at pivotal moments in the story of Jesus, but as someone with enormous influence across the

breath and length of his mission, contributing intellectually as well as emotionally and physically. And Mary would not have carried out her vocation separately from the other women in the community, such as Mary Magdalene. She and they worked and reflected together, providing their resources as the gospels tell us, and deserve to be called "founders of Christianity".

This article is based on a talk given to the York Circle on June 6th 2022



Chris Maunder is a retired visiting fellow of York St John University and Treasurer of the Centre of Marian Studies (based at St Mary's University). He is the author of *Mary, Founder of Christianity*, Oneworld Press, 2022. His previous books include *The Oxford Handbook of Mary* (OUP, 2019) and *Our Lady of the Nations: Apparitions of Mary in 20th Century Catholic Europe* (OUP, 2016).

Obituary – Maureen Thomas 1935-2022



A former Secretary of Wrexham Newman Circle and President of the Newman Association, Maureen Thomas died on August 7th aged 87.

A note by Carole O’Toole, Chair of the Wrexham Circle

Maureen's zest for life was infectious. Whether talking about the latest novel she had read, the next talk she was preparing, the most recent garden visited or her next idea for a Newman meeting, Maureen's commitment to any project undertaken was remarkable and all consuming.

Dedicating a huge amount of her time to the Newman Association both locally in Wrexham, where she served as a very hardworking secretary for more than 30 years, and as a member of Newman Council from the 1990s until the 2000s, including as President from 2003 to 2005. Maureen never tired of telling me about her

experiences as President. I imagine she would have been a force to be reckoned with when chairing Council meetings!

Maureen was very proud to represent the Newman Association at various events. She was a strong supporter of Andante, the European Catholic women's organisation, and I enjoyed listening to her tales of all the fascinating people she had met at the various conferences she had attended.

Maureen had many interests and, never afraid of a challenge, embraced new ideas with an enthusiasm which inspired all who knew her. She had an MA in Garden History and two years ago she contributed a very scholarly article to this journal on monastic gardens. There was great detail on Cloister Garths, Physic Gardens, Infirmary Gardens and much more.

She was a lively conversationalist and I know that many Newman members who met her on Newman pilgrimages and at other events enjoyed her company immensely. Whether talking about her personal family history – she seemed to have relatives across the globe – or John Henry Newman, about whom she was very knowledgeable, Maureen was fun and engaging to be with. She had a great sense of humour. Always ready to consider new ideas, she never tired of fighting for the causes she believed in energetically.

A great lover of life Maureen lived it to the full. She had a wide circle of friends, dating back to her schoolmates in Ireland, and will be sorely missed by them all; none more so than her many friends in the Newman Association. It was a privilege to have known Maureen. Our thoughts are with her family, her sons and grandchildren, of whom she was so very proud.

RIP Maureen.

Spirituality Page: Theresa of Avila



St. Theresa of Ávila, also called **Saint Theresa of Jesus** (1515-1582), was one of the great mystics of the Church and the author of many spiritual classics, especially on prayer. Of these the best known is probably *The Interior Castle* which is divided into seven mansions (also called dwelling-places), each level describing a step to get closer to God.

She began the Carmelite Reform, which restored and emphasised the austerity and contemplative character of the life of Carmelite nuns and was also active in the reform of the Carmelite friars in association with St. John of the Cross. She was made a Doctor of the Church in 1970 by Pope St. Paul VI, the first woman to be so honoured, and is also quite incidentally the patroness of headache sufferers.

St. Theresa, like so many other saints, of which St. Thomas More comes especially to mind, had a wry sense of humour with which we can easily identify. The best known instance is surely the story of when she was crossing a ford in the river on her donkey when the beast suddenly bucked and she fell into the water, along with all her belongings. Sitting in the river, St. Teresa simply looked toward Heaven and said: "If this is the way you treat your friends, I can understand why you have so few." Nor did she have time for unintelligent nuns: "God preserve us from stupid nuns!" she said. Instead she wished her nuns to have good judgement and to avoid narrow mindedness.

This is a perfect morning prayer of hers:

*Lord, grant that I may always allow myself to be guided by You,
always follow Your plans,
and perfectly accomplish Your Holy Will.
Grant that in all things, great and small,
today and all the days of my life,*

*I may do whatever You require of me.
Help me respond to the slightest prompting of Your Grace,
so that I may be Your trustworthy instrument for Your honour.
May Your Will be done in time and in eternity by me,
in me, and through me. Amen.*

St. Teresa led a restless life and as one of her biographers has said: "Of outward peace she knew none until the end of her days". Yet inwardly she was undoubtedly at peace and no mention of her would be complete without a reference to the famous prayer found written in her handwriting in the margins of her breviary after she died:

*Let nothing disturb you.
Let nothing frighten you.
All things pass away.
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things.
They who have God
lack nothing.
God alone is enough.*

Anne and John Duddington

Report on the Newman Association AGM in Newcastle, June 25th 2022

The Newman Association managed at last to hold its AGM face to face in the County Hotel Newcastle despite the impact of rail strikes on the day. We needed 25 full members to make a quorum and the mood very much lightened as we signed in the twenty-fifth, an elderly retired priest – it was most fitting that the clergy sealed the deal. A few more were able to come, with a large contingent from the local Tyneside Circle, so well done to them and to Terry Wright who let them all know the urgency of the meeting. Once together and in good spirits we set off to do the necessary administrative business of the day.

The minutes of the meeting in January 2021 were approved as accurate and after couple of points under Matters Arising we moved on to the Acting President's Report. Brian had been Acting President for a couple of months owing to the elected President, Winifred Flanagan, stepping down in view health issues. He began, as is appropriate, with thanks to all those who had contributed so much to keeping the Association going during the period of the pandemic. The first in line for thanks were the Officers and members of the Circles and then he passed on to some individuals for special thanks.

Special thanks

Kevin Lambert was first since he was stepping down as Newsletter editor, the culmination of many years of faithful service including a stint as National President.

He thanked Patricia Egerton and Harcourt Concannon for their work on Council over the past four years, the first for exemplary work as Membership Secretary, and John Duddington for all his work on our status as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation which was well on the way towards approval by the Charity Commission, with some alterations to be voted on at the meeting. Janet Evers was also due thanks for her representation of the Newman on the National Board of Catholic Women, a post which she was now relinquishing owing to other commitments.

Of the present Council, Anthony Baker (Treasurer) and Sophie Rudge (Secretary) will remain while in post while Winifred moves on to become Past President and Alex Mthobi has agreed to stand as Vice President. As prospective newcomers to Council we have Terry Wright of the Tyneside Circle and John Duckett of the Coventry Circle. After mentioning the difficulties over the past two years, Brian was able to call to mind some positive moves for the future.

The Manchester Newman Lecture would go ahead in September when Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald would deliver his postponed lecture on *FRATERNITY: A PROPOSAL AND A PROJECT FOR RELATIONS BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS* and there were hopes for the postponed London Newman Lecture presented by Austin Ivereigh also to take place, perhaps by Zoom. On a more sustained level, he drew attention to the Awards Scheme which was being organised by Patricia Egerton. This was a scheme to bring the Newman Association more openly into the view of students in our Catholic higher education institutions, hopefully stimulating an interest which could be fostered. Two national events had taken place recently – the Newman pilgrimage to Ravenna in September and the Retreat at Douai Abbey in Advent. The numbers were not very large but all enjoyed and appreciated



Fr Pat Kilgarriff preparing for Mass at the AGM

the presence and leadership on both occasions of our Newman Chaplain, Mgr Patrick Kilgariff, to whom we owe special thanks for his inspiring work contributions. Brian offered a final word of thanks to Barry Riley and his editorial team for their work on the Newman Journal which had continued to come out at the usual regular intervals during the pandemic. It was necessary in the circumstances to look forward rather than backwards and to seek to make our 80th anniversary year, 2022, a really creative and positive year.

Sophie in her Secretary's Report gave due thanks for all the support she had received over the last eighteen months in all the trying circumstances. Anthony reported how the management of our finances had changed somewhat since the last AGM. Since there was no-one available to take over the full Treasurer's role, after the resignation of Kevin Ryan, Council had decided to split the work involved between Anthony and David Swallow's firm. David, as our Independent Examiner, would take over the operational role of Treasurer, with Anthony, as a member of Council, acting as Treasurer in a supervising/responsibility role.

Total assets

The total assets at February 1st 2021 were £128,774, of which £86,025 was held in the COIF account, £25,881 in banks under central control and nearly £16,000 held by Circles. So the Association was clearly both solvent and liquid in terms of its funds. There was a large operational surplus for the year, mainly owing to the non-payment of donation to Circles and the very favourable stock market trend over that period of time. He remarked that the value of our investments, in the light of national events, would certainly reduce in the future. Also on a negative note, there continued to be some difficulty in obtaining Treasurer's Annual Returns from some Circles. Anthony completed his report by giving special thanks to Patricia for all her work and help as Membership Secretary in the arrangements over the Direct Debit payments by members. The Accounts were approved unanimously, and then David Swallow was reappointed as our Independent Examiner.

We then moved on to the Special Resolutions which confirmed our wish to become a CIO and also to enable us to hold our meetings online. Finally, the various ballots for election of Officers and members of Council were conducted and all those proposed were duly elected. Brian Hamill was confirmed as President and Alex Mthobi as Vice President with Anthony Baker as Treasurer and Sophie Rudge as Secretary. Winifred Flanagan was welcomed as Past President with Terry Wright and John Duckett as new members of Council.

Brian then agreed to send our annual report with our usual greeting to the Hierarchy, which Gabriella Quirke and Janet Ward requested should be in the style of collaborative ministry.

As a final note, Father Pat Kilgariff drew everyone's attention to the forthcoming pilgrimage to Padua, May 18th-25th 2023, and the Retreat at Ampleforth on April 28th-30th 2023, which he recommended as wonderful occasions for fellowship within the Society.

With all the business now complete, Brian closed the meeting closed and we moved on to a fine buffet lunch to be followed by Greg Ryan's talk on Synodality.

Obituary – John Bryden

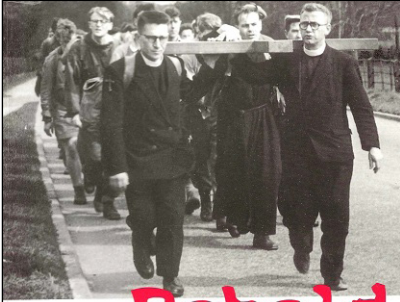
John Bryden, who died in November at the age of 88, was a leading figure in the Newman Association during its peak years in the 1960s and served as President from 1965 to 1967. Earlier he had been President of the Sheffield University Catholic Society and then President of the Union of Catholic Students. He was also involved in Student Pax Romana, and indeed during a spell in New York on a post-doctoral fellowship he was the acting representative of Pax Romana to the UN in New York in the temporary absence of the permanent representative.

He was also a lifelong supporter of Student Cross, the cross-carrying pilgrimage movement which organises walks from various starting-points to Walsingham each Easter. Older pilgrims join Easter Cross. The first Student Cross Pilgrimage set off on March 20th, 1948, to walk the 120 miles from Ely Place, in London's Holborn, to Walsingham. John's own first experience was of the Northern Leg in 1956 and later he became a member/Trustee of the Student Cross Association Committee. On retiring from a 30-year career with BP in 1990 he decided he had time to research and write a history of Student Cross and this was published by the Student Cross Association in 1998 as *Behold the Wood*. The movement still thrives, with twelve groups, or legs, for Easter 2022.

He joined the Newman Association in 1956 and in 1960 joined the Hull Circle before transferring to London. For the Newman Association the 1960s were exciting but troubled years. Membership surged to a peak of around 3,000 as lay Catholics looked forward to the results of the Vatican II Council which deliberated from 1962 to 1965. Elections to the Council and posts as Officers became contested for probably the first time. After being National Secretary for two years he was elected President in 1965 just as the excitement over Vatican II was reaching a peak. Quoted in this journal's 70th anniversary supplement in 2012 John Bryden remembered the anticipation. "A number of senior members of the Association, including myself, went to Rome during the Council, dined with the entire English Hierarchy in the English College and attended Mass in St Peter's with the entire Hierarchy of the Church."

Those were the peak years for the Newman. In 1968, however, after an interval, came the bitter anticlimax of *Humanae Vitae*, Paul VI's encyclical on birth control which was very disappointing for many Newman members. John Bryden, after two years working in South Africa, returned to a tense situation as more traditional members of the Association disagreed with liberal thinkers. He was one of the founders of the London ad hoc group of Catholic lay people which became the Catholic Renewal Movement, as in effect the Association split into two. He responded vigorously to a request for





Behold the wood

*A history of the Student Cross pilgrimage
1948 - 1998*

JOHN BRYDEN

reminiscences on the 70th anniversary of the Newman in 2012, arguing that: "It was difficult for the Newman to get engaged in public controversy in Church matters, although we could discuss the issues in private, whereas the CRM could do as it saw fit." On *Humanae Vitae*, he said that he and other senior Newman members had a long meeting with Cardinal Heenan and "he agreed that it was entirely a matter for individual consciences".

John valued the Association for providing a secure atmosphere where people could debate issues without fear of denunciation. He later commented: "The Church must...relate its theology to science, economics, medicine and so on, which the Newman and Pax Romana have always done without the enthusiastic support of the institutional Church."

In later life John and his wife Rosemary retired to the north of Norfolk, just a few miles from

Walsingham. The cross regularly carried by Easter Cross pilgrims was stored in their garage.

BR



The Slipper Chapel near Walsingham

Reaching Women on the Margins

Barbara Bolgiano, Newman Association representative to the National Board of Catholic Women, writes:

In a desire to improve the lives of marginalised women, sixty women and seven men spent a weekend at Ushaw College, Durham to walk together on a synodal path. Organised by the National Board of Catholic Women (NBCW), the conference *Women at the Periphery Taking Centre Stage*, November 25th-27th, was a response to the statement by the Synod of Bishops of the *fundamental importance that the voice of the poor and excluded find a place.*

Women leaders working with those on the margins were joined with Sr Marie Kolbe Zamora from the Vatican's General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, with Professors of Theology and Religion, Anna Rowland and Karen Kilby from Durham University, and Abbot Hugh Allan represented the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

The conference coincided with the UN Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women, and sixteen days of Activism

Against Gender-based Violence, and conferees were appropriately bedecked with orange poppies. Abbot Hugh used the metaphor of the impact of an earthquake, when he spoke of the need to find safe spaces. "Our safe space is Jesus Christ", he reminded, suggesting that the grace needed for healing and transformation could only be found in the love of the Christ, when we can safely find that in each other.

The Synod process

Turning to synodality on the Saturday afternoon, Prof. Anna Rowlands explained that many are encountering new people and ideas in the Synod process; in the first phase, listening and discernment were needed. There is a call now for the Church to draw closer to the ordinary lives of women, a call for the Church to be a powerful ally of women. Sr Marie Kolbe, a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity, acknowledged the reality of change. "It is a painful time while we re-focus", she acknowledged, given the long-term focus on the Institution ever since the early Church Councils; change requires a review of Canon law, and a consensus among the Church hierarchy. While all movements in the direction of women's call for equality may seem like appeasement, change is rapidly happening in the Vatican with the further appointment of women.



Our Lady of Joy, Ushaw College, Durham

Julian Paparella, currently working with Sr Marie Kolbe as the voice of youth, and of the married, impressed on the conference, which included ten students from Durham University, that women have a key role to play towards achieving a more synodal church. He suggested following the synodal model of Jesus's journeying side-by-side on the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35): go out to meet them, begin by asking them questions, engage them in conversation, be prepared to walk in another direction, and enter into their ordinary lives.

Prof. Karen Kilby's leadership on the final morning teased out a *sensus fidei*, with mutual desires expressed for returning to the basics of a pilgrim Church, of people of God living out Gospel values, using kind communication, unconditional love, building a new community through the sharing of gifts, of wisdom and of compassion.



Sr Marie Kolbe Zamora

The Newman Association as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Members will be pleased to know that on November 23rd 2022 I received the following email from the Charity Commission: *The Charity Commission is pleased to advise that your application to convert the Charitable Company to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) has been successful.*

I have explained the reasons for this change and its consequences in previous issues and will not try the patience of readers further on this but very briefly the existing Newman Association continues with the same charity number and so bank accounts do not need to be changed, nor does there need to be a new gift aid application. This is because we were already a company as well as a charity and we still have incorporated status. But we are now regulated solely by the Charity Commission. The company registration number (00434364) should no longer be used.



John Duddington

Now is the time to thank all who have given support in what has been frankly the most trying CIO conversion that I have been involved with. Thanks to all those members who voted in the successive AGM's, thanks to all those who sent in observations and especial thanks to Brian Hamill, Winifred Flanagan, Anthony Baker, Sophie Rudge and Barry Riley who, in their positions as officers of the Association, gave unflagging support. Moreover very real gratitude goes to Ian Jessiman who actually started this process off by his meticulous revision of the 1947 constitution and made two journeys from London to Worcester to discuss this with me. Our collaboration was for me a real delight.

A process beginning in the 1980s

To come to the very end: this result has been for me the culmination of a process which began in the mid 1980's when Rosemary Nixon, then Newman President, asked me to investigate possible charitable status for the Newman. This was achieved in 1991 with the support of the then President, the late Ken Brooks, and you can read my account of how this was achieved in the Newman publication *A Use of Gifts*. Now we are still a charity but we have taken advantage of the CIO procedure (not available then) and also have a modernised constitution. We now have the structures and so let us to use them to promote the Newman.

Floreat Newman!

John Duddington

NEWMAN ASSOCIATION PILGRIMAGE

18th to 25th MAY 2023 (8 days, 7 nights)

PILGRIMAGE TO PADUA

This holiday/pilgrimage is to Padua, the city of St Anthony, in the Veneto region of Italy. It has been postponed from October 2022. Full details were given in the November 2021 issue of *The Newman*. They can now be obtained from the Newman Association's website or from Anthony Coles, 18 Maresfield Gardens, London NW3 5SX (tel. 020 7431 3414).

In **Padua**, we will stay at the **Casa del Pellegrino**. This popular three-star hotel is situated within the medieval city opposite the Basilica of St Anthony – thus making it very easy to visit the shrine (open 06.30 - 19.30 daily). The *Casa del Pellegrino* is a recent name for a hotel that dates back to the 18th century. Behind the 18th century façade this very friendly and very clean 3-star hotel offers 162 modern en-suite rooms (toilet and shower), air-conditioning and TV. Most rooms overlook the inner garden, while others overlook the Basilica of St Anthony. All rooms are accessible by lift. The large restaurant offers continental buffet breakfast and set menu main meals with ¼ Q wine and ¼ Q mineral water per person. The casa also has a snack bar, as well as a small private chapel.



St Anthony's Basilica seen from the pilgrimage hotel

COST

£1195 per person (sharing); **£1295** per person (single occupancy)

Inclusive of: 7 nights en-suite accommodation; city tax (currently €2 pppn); continental buffet breakfast; seven dinners; two lunches; wine and water with main meals; all excursions, entry and guide fees; Mass offerings; tips to coach drivers.

The following items are not included: travel insurance; flights/train travel to Italy; airport transfers in Italy (these will be pre-booked for you and you will pay the driver); five lunches; entry and transport in free time; personal expenditure.

FITNESS

A reasonable level of fitness is required for sightseeing on this pilgrimage as there will be a lot of walking and standing around whilst sightseeing in and around Padua.

HOW TO BOOK

Please obtain a booking form and complete all sections. Send this with your non-refundable deposit (of £200 per person) to **Anthony Coles, 18 Maresfield Gardens, London NW3 5SX** (Tel: 020 7431 3414). Please be advised this pilgrimage is limited to 24 people, so early booking is advised. The balance of the cost of this pilgrimage is then due ten weeks prior to departure. All cheques to be made payable to: *Anthony R Coles Travel and Conferences*.