



# Newman

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Encyclical Letter: *Laudato Si'*

Mike Kerrigan

Married Priests – Has Their Time Come?

The Newman Assembly at Leeds  
A Full Report and Analysis

Ecumenical Conference in Coventry: a report  
Towards a Learning Church

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Cover picture: *Planet Earth, our common home*

# Comment

Next year many Christians – but perhaps not very many Roman Catholics – will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation; Martin Luther pinned up his *Ninety-Five Theses* on a church door in Wittenberg on October 31st 1517 in a retaliation against the activities of indulgence salesmen who at that time were raising money for the rebuilding of St Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Half a millennium later the Newman Association is grappling with some of the consequences. Fortunately we are no longer living in an age when members of rival Christian sects are in danger of being hung, drawn and quartered. But can we fully join together with our fellow-Christians – in association if not in communion? The relevant issue which came up at the Newman Assembly in Leeds last October was whether non-Catholics should be admitted as full members rather than as Associate Members, a category that was introduced about twenty years ago. That halfway house has enabled a number of non-Catholics to join, and even be appointed to Council, but has not fully resolved the issue.

In the past couple of years the officers of the Association have devoted a good deal of time and money to ecumenism, for instance by funding a research fellow at the Centre for Catholic Studies in Durham in 2014, and this has been reflected in the contents of *The Newman*. This month the ecumenical coverage comes to a conclusion, for now at least, with a report on the conference held in Coventry in November: *Learn to Learn, Receptive Ecumenism in Action*. This was jointly sponsored by the Newman and the National Board of Catholic Women.

In the UK ecumenism, in practice, is mainly concerned with the relationships between Catholics and Protestants, but globally the Catholic Church is actively involved in a much wider set of relationships involving, in particular, the Orthodox tradition and the Pentecostals. In this country the links between Catholics and Anglicans, particularly, are very close; movements by individuals from one Church to the other are quite frequent (and the Association is named after just such a convert). The remaining divide is related more to tradition and discipline than to doctrine. However the Orthodox Church and the Pentecostals, the second and third largest Christian denominations in global terms, remain a long way out of the reach of Rome.

If we are in favour of ecumenism is it contradictory to deny full membership to Christians baptised in other traditions? Perhaps, but the matter requires very careful consideration. Our Memorandum of Association dating back to the 1940s says that our mission "should pay particular reference to the Roman Catholic Church". Would that be sustainable if non-Catholics could gain full voting membership? Could Mass continue to be said at the Annual General Meeting? Moreover *The Newman* has the status of an Association of the Faithful under the Canon Law of the Catholic Church. This gives us a formal relationship with the hierarchy which might not be appropriate if the voting members were no longer exclusively Catholic.

Accordingly Council has appointed a Working Group to study the complex issues involved. If it finds a practical and attractive solution Council may well put forward proposals. But the final decision will be up to members, probably through a motion proposed at an annual general meeting.

Barry Riley

# LAUDATO SI'

by Mike Monaghan

## Introduction

*"Laudato Si', mi' Signore* – Praise be to you, my Lord". In this beautiful canticle St Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like "a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us". Did an environmental document ever begin like that?! This document adds poetry and a sense of the interconnectedness of all life on earth. No longer is it saturated with the technocratic and political heaviness which permeates much of the environmental literature (which I have personally been studying for some 40 years). *Laudato Si'*\* must be the most readable, widely read and welcomed and inspiring document published by the Church since Vatican II. It is also possibly the most important.

Why? Firstly, simply because the Church has at last produced an encyclical devoted to the environmental crisis (and it should be stressed, not only concerned with global warming). Statements on the environment have been included in documents from Rome and by individual hierarchies, but none have been devoted solely to it. And never one so stark and clear in its warnings and challenges – but also one filled with hope and joy. Secondly, it is radically different from most other environmental statements in its constant theme of relating environmental destruction to its impact on the poor. It goes even further than this. It directly questions root causes of the environmental crisis which arise largely from the current neo-liberal economic systems. The mindset that disregards the destruction of the environment also ignores the plight of the poor and the scandal of growing inequality.

## The Purpose and Structure of *Laudato Si'*

The tone is set in the magnificent opening paragraphs. It certainly opens with a bang. *This sister [Earth] now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters [LS2].....Now, faced as we are with global environmental deterioration, I wish to address every person living on this planet.....In this Encyclical, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home. [LS3]*

Dialogue is a constant theme of Pope Francis as evidenced by the recent Synod on the Family. In paragraph 15 of the encyclical the Pope notes that he sees the document as being "added to the body of the Church's social teaching" – i.e. it is not a standalone

\**Laudato Si'* can be downloaded from the Vatican website. It is also available as a paperback from the Catholic Truth Society at £4.95 plus postage.

document but is a development of a longstanding body of teaching, albeit one which many have felt has been too anthropocentric in the past. This document certainly reverses that.

The major themes of the encyclical which I will try to touch on are:

- what is happening to our common home – the scientific basis for concluding that we have an ecological crisis
- how Christian teaching gives coherence to our commitment to the environment
- an analysis of the roots of the problem, i.e. looking at not only the symptoms but the deepest causes
- proposals for dialogue and action

I will also review some of the criticisms which have been made of the encyclical.

### Earlier Church Statements

However, before that I wish to refer to some previous Church statements on the environment. *Laudato Si'* is often described as if it emerged from the blue. Whilst not wishing to detract from its unique character it shows very clearly that it draws from and develops earlier statements, few of which sadly seem to have had much impact amongst most Catholics, let alone the wider world – though Christian environmentalists have attempted to draw attention to them. Pope Francis is at pains throughout the encyclical to refer to previous documents, not only those emerging from the Vatican but also those from bishops of many countries (no less than 21 statements from the bishops' conferences of different countries ranging from Japan to Bolivia are quoted – though not one from the UK – as well as from the Orthodox Church). This reference to a wide range of hierarchies is in accord with the Pope's emphasis on the important role of Bishops' conferences and the local church. The Pope draws particularly from Popes Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI. [LS 4-9]

Over 40 years ago, in *Octogesima Adveniens*, Pope Paul VI referred to the ecological concern as "a tragic consequence" of unchecked human activity: "Due to an ill-considered exploitation of nature, humanity runs the risk of destroying it and becoming in turn a victim of this degradation". He spoke in similar terms to the United Nations about the potential for an "ecological catastrophe under the effective explosion of industrial civilization" and stressed "the urgent need for a radical change in the conduct of humanity", inasmuch as "the most extraordinary scientific advances, the most amazing technical abilities, the most astonishing economic growth, unless they are accompanied by authentic social and moral progress, will definitively turn against



man”.

John Paul II became increasingly concerned about this issue. In his first Encyclical in 1979 he warned that human beings frequently seem “to see no other meaning in their natural environment than what serves for immediate use and consumption”. Subsequently, he would call for a global “ecological conversion”.

Benedict XVI likewise proposed “eliminating the structural causes of the dysfunctions of the world economy and correcting models of growth which have proved incapable of ensuring respect for the environment”.

Pope Francis also draws on the inspiration of Patriarch Bartholomew of the Orthodox Church who has spoken, in particular, of the need for each of us to repent of the ways in which we have harmed the planet. For “inasmuch as we all generate small ecological damage” we are called to acknowledge “our contribution, smaller or greater, to the disfigurement and destruction of creation”. (He quotes Orthodox sources no less than ten times, surely something unique in a papal document.) Sadly the many statements going back over 40 years have had little impact on the Church and even less on the rest of the world. This encyclical may be different. The urgency of the situation is more widely recognised and, as noted, Pope Francis emphasises that he sees his encyclical as being addressed to all mankind.

I want now to summarise some of the key themes. I will quote quite extensively from the document; the Pope expresses things far more eloquently and often more tellingly than I could.

### **What is happening to Our Common Home?**

The encyclical provides a masterly summary in Chapter 1 [LS 17 to 61] of the state of the world drawing on the most up-to-date scientific information but characteristically referring the malaise to a deeper understanding of human nature. The findings are well-known to those who have chosen to be aware of them but what is original is to see them so explicitly endorsed in an encyclical. It covers a wide area; the main sections are:

- pollution and climate change
- water
- biodiversity loss
- quality of human life and inequality

and it finishes with a strong criticism of the inadequacy of the responses so far.

In a short paper it is impossible to do justice to the comprehensive coverage. I will therefore highlight one or two more striking statements made in response to the encyclical. Before looking at the Pope’s words let me quote a statement from a professor of environmental studies at Yale, Gus Speth. “I used to think that the top global environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change. But I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy. To deal with these we need a spiritual and cultural transformation.” This to my mind sums up what the Pope seeks to address.

### ***On Pollution***

The Pope rather dramatically comments: “Each year hundreds of millions of tons of



waste are generated, much of it non-biodegradable, highly toxic and radioactive, from homes and businesses, from construction and demolition sites, from clinical, electronic and industrial sources. The Earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth.” [LS21]

### ***On Waste***

“We have not yet managed to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations, while limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources, moderating their consumption, maximising their efficient use, reusing and recycling them.”[LS22]

### ***On Climate Change***

“The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system....most global warming in recent decades is due to the great concentration of greenhouse gases....released mainly as a result of human activity. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades. Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming....Many of those who possess more resources and economic or political power seem mostly to be concerned with masking the problems or concealing their symptoms.” [LS 22-26]

### ***On Water***

He comments on the growing problem of availability of water especially to the poor who lack access to it. “They are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity.” And he is also critical of privatisation of water supplies. [LS 26-31]

### ***On Biodiversity Loss***

In a striking departure from much previous Christian thinking he comments: “It is not enough, however, to think of different species merely as potential “resources” to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves. Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right.” [LS 32-42]

### ***On the Quality of Human Life, and Inequality***

“....the growth of the past two centuries has not always led to an integral development and an improvement in the quality of life”; “.... lack of physical contact and encounter [with the poor], encouraged at times by the disintegration of our cities, can lead to a numbing of conscience and to tendentious analyses which neglect parts of reality. At times this attitude exists side by side with a “green” rhetoric”. [LS 43-47]

In summing up this section the Pope concludes: “We need only take a frank look at the facts to see that our common home is falling into serious disrepair. Hope would have us recognise that there is always a way out, that we can always redirect our steps, that we can always do something to solve our problems. Still, we can see signs that things are now reaching a breaking point.” [LS 61]

### **Christian Teaching and the Environment; the Gospel of Creation**

The Pope stresses the value that a religious approach has in the analysis of, and inspiration for, action in relation to the world’s environmental and social problems.

"Science and religion, with their distinctive approaches to understanding reality, can enter into an intense dialogue fruitful for both." [LS 62]. Christians "... realise that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith". "It is good for humanity and the world at large when we believers better recognise the ecological commitments which stem from our convictions." [John Paul II, 1990, for World Day of Peace]

### **Biblical Insights**

The encyclical analyses briefly what some of the key passages from the Bible have to say about the relationship of humans to the rest of creation. It makes an extremely important point in referring to Genesis 1:28 about mankind having "dominion" over every living thing. The Pope admits that this has been used by Christians to encourage "...the unbridled exploitation of nature....This is not a correct interpretation of the Bible as understood by the Church". [LS 67] The essence of the biblical texts, he states, is that we are charged to "till and keep" the garden of the world. "We are not God. The Earth was here before us and it has been given to us". [LS 67] And he refers several times to the biblical insights which challenge the modern myth of endless growth. "If we acknowledge the value and the fragility of nature and, at the same time, our God-given abilities, we can finally leave behind the modern myth of unlimited material progress." A fragile world, entrusted by God to human care, challenges us to devise intelligent ways of directing, developing and limiting our power. [LS 78]

### **The Human Roots of the Ecological Crisis: Integral Ecology**

The phrase the Pope uses most frequently to describe what is the root of what has gone awry is the "technocratic paradigm". This is not an attack on technology as such. He points out that: "Technology has remedied countless evils which used to harm and limit human beings. How can we not feel gratitude and appreciation for this progress, especially in the fields of medicine, engineering and communications?" [LS 102] But he warns that "Never has humanity had such power over itself, yet nothing ensures that it will be used wisely, particularly when we consider how it is currently being used." [LS 104]

There is a tendency to assume that "...reality, goodness and truth automatically flow from technological and economic power as such." [LS105] And in a final quote from this section of the encyclical he notes that it is "...easy to accept the idea of infinite or unlimited growth, which proves so attractive to economists, financiers and experts in technology. It is based on the lie that there is an infinite supply of the earth's goods, and this leads to the planet being squeezed dry beyond every limit." He commends those who have challenged the dominant technocratic paradigm, citing for example "...cooperatives of small producers who adopt less polluting means of production, and opt for a non-consumerist model of life, recreation and community. Or, when technology is directed primarily to resolving people's concrete problems, truly helping them live with more dignity and less suffering." [LS 112 ]

And in a hope-filled passage he highlights that some are demonstrating that.... "An authentic humanity, calling for a new synthesis, seems to dwell in the midst of our technological culture, almost unnoticed, like a mist seeping gently beneath a closed door." The other root cause cited is "modern anthropocentrism". "When human beings place themselves at the centre, they give absolute priority to immediate convenience



and all else becomes relative. Hence we should not be surprised to find, in conjunction with the omnipresent technocratic paradigm and the cult of unlimited human power, the rise of a relativism which sees everything as irrelevant unless it serves one's own immediate interests. There is a logic in all this whereby different attitudes can feed on one another, leading to environmental degradation and social decay.”[LS 122]

In response to this the Pope advocates what he terms “integral ecology”. This requires us to have a vision which takes into account every aspect of the global crisis.

“When we speak of the ‘environment’ what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live.”[LS138]

In a seminal passage he notes: “We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.”[LS 139]

And in a characteristic section on *The Ecology of Daily Life* he comments on the possible response to the situation faced by people in poverty: “At times a commendable human ecology is practised by the poor despite numerous hardships. The feeling of asphyxiation brought on by densely-populated residential areas is countered if close and warm relationships develop, if communities are created, if the limitations of the environment are compensated for in the interior of each person who feels held within a network of solidarity and belonging. In this way, any place can turn from being a hell on earth into the setting for a dignified life.” [LS 148]

### **Some Criticisms**

The encyclical has been widely welcomed (including by environmental groups who are often hostile to the church), scientific bodies, senior government representatives, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and many church leaders. But it has predictably generated criticism from several quarters.

The most vehement of these objections have been from generally conservative, right wing individuals. The six Catholic candidates seeking to be nominated as the Republican candidate for US President, for example, have been understandably challenged by the encyclical given their party's stance on the environment – and perhaps even more on their pro-market economic policies. The reactions of one of the candidates Jeb Bush, is perhaps typical: “I don't get economic policy from my bishops or my cardinals or my pope.” He added: “The climate is changing, whether men (NB!) are doing it or not.” I am not sure where he gets his economic or other policies from! There are also sceptical voices from within the church. Cardinal Pell, who is well-known for generally conservative views and is a noted “climate change sceptic/denier”, said: “The Church has got no mandate from the Lord to pronounce on scientific matters”. True, Cardinal Pell does also say that the encyclical “beautifully” sets out the Christian obligation to protect the environment. But he apparently disagrees with the Pope's proposed methods of so doing. His objection echoes that of others within the Church who challenge the appropriateness of the Church to address such issues. I find this odd given that we have a long history of statements on social teaching for

well over 100 years. As is amply demonstrated in this encyclical, social teaching today which ignored the environment and did not address the causes of environmental decline would be rightly criticised for its failure to look at reality.

But more representative of Catholic reaction is that of John Allen, a prominent American commentator on the Church, who said in an analysis: "*Laudato si'* seems destined to go down as a major turning-point, the moment when environmentalism claimed pride of place on a par with the dignity of human life and economic justice as a cornerstone of Catholic social teaching. It also immediately makes the Catholic Church arguably the leading moral voice in the press to combat global warming and the consequences of climate change."

The scientific community is, however, very supportive. An editorial in the journal *Nature*, for example, shortly after the encyclical's publication, stated: "Nicholas Stern, author of an influential report on climate change, stated that 'The publication of the Pope's encyclical is of enormous significance. He has shown great wisdom and leadership. Pope Francis is surely absolutely right that climate change raises vital moral and ethical issues....Moral leadership on climate change from the Pope is particularly important because of the failure of many heads of state and government around the world to show political leadership'".

There are some criticisms which to my mind, however, do have some validity. I will mention three:

- The document is long and at times repetitive. I have heard it suggested that repetition is a Jesuit way of making sure the message is heard; to me it became a little tedious and the length of the document will surely put some people off tackling it.
- Some sections are also rather simplistic in their treatment of issues on which there can be legitimate differences of view.
- Its references to the impact of population are to my mind weak. It rightly states that: "Instead of resolving the problems of the poor and thinking of how the world can be different, some can only propose a reduction in the birth rate....To blame population growth, instead of extreme and selective consumerism on the part of some, is one way of refusing to face the issues. It is an attempt to legitimise the present model of distribution, where a minority believes that it has the right to consume in a way which can never be universalised....[LS50] And he notes that:

"For poor countries, the priorities must be to eliminate extreme poverty and to promote the social development of their people." [LS 172] But I think he fails to acknowledge that continued rapid population growth in some developing countries makes the task of eliminating poverty, and of having effective environmental protection, very much more difficult. And I would note that in some of these countries the Church's "ban" on contraception has a negative impact.

### **A Call to Action**

The call to action is widely targeted and stresses the need for dialogue amongst peoples but notes again that the world has so far been....incapable of finding effective ways of dealing with grave environmental and social problems worldwide. [LS164] He nevertheless says: "There is reason to hope that humanity at the dawn of the twenty-first century will be remembered for having generously shouldered its grave

responsibilities.” [LS165] And he cites international conventions on hazardous waste and ozone-depleting chemicals as examples of what can be achieved. The much more difficult issue of how to tackle climate change will require he says ..... honesty, courage and responsibility, above all on the part of those countries which are more powerful and pollute the most. [LS169]

He regrets that too often politics in such countries....concerned with immediate results, supported by consumerist sectors of the population, is driven to produce short-term growth. In response to electoral interests, governments are reluctant to upset the public with measures which could affect the level of consumption or create risks for foreign investment. [LS178] Individuals and local groups are praised as being able to stimulate real change and make a real difference including pressurising governments to develop more rigorous regulations and controls. He wisely notes that continuity is essential....because policies related to climate change and environmental protection cannot be altered with every change of government.

Results take time and demand immediate outlays which may not produce tangible effects within any one government's term. That is why, in the absence of pressure from the public and from civic institutions, political authorities will always be reluctant to intervene, all the more when urgent needs must be met. To take up these responsibilities, and the costs they entail, politicians will inevitably clash with the mindset of short-term gain and results which dominates present-day economics and politics. [LS 181]

Environmental protection cannot be assured solely on the basis of financial calculations or adequately supported by market forces. For individuals, while suggesting the need for us to be actively engaged where we can in politics, he also notes that this may not be for everyone; but involvement with one of the countless dedicated organisations and groups is advocated. He also stresses the need for us to adopt what he terms more sober lifestyles including the reduction of our own energy consumption, and he cites Pope Benedict's call to regard purchasing as a moral and not simply an economic act. He acknowledges this is not easy, especially for young people brought up in an extreme consumerist society.

Small daily actions are commended. A person who can afford to spend and consume more but regularly uses less heating, and wears warmer clothes, shows the kind of convictions and attitudes which help to protect the environment. There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions. [LS211] And he lists several other examples we could all follow including one which received a surprising amount of attention – practising Grace before and after meals. The concluding section is an echo of the inspiring opening verses: *“We come together to take charge of this home which has been entrusted to us, knowing that all the good which exists here will be taken up into the heavenly feast. In union with all creatures, we journey through this land seeking God; let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope”.* [LS244]

Mike Monaghan

*This article is based on a talk given to the Manchester & North Cheshire Newman Circle in November 2015, a Circle of which Mike Monaghan is a member.*

# Married Priests – Has Their Time Come?

*This article is based on a talk given to the Ealing Circle in October 2015. Mike Kerrigan is chair of the Movement for Married Clergy (MMaC). He is also a member of the Tyneside Circle of the Newman Association.*

Catholic statistics are not always reliable, but it looks as though, in the past fifty years, the number of secular priests in this country has almost halved. In the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, for example, where seven parishes have just been amalgamated into one, this shortage is increasingly felt. And moreover the clergy are ageing: even in the last twenty years the number of retired priests has increased substantially. Meanwhile the Catholic population seems to be just about as numerous, perhaps slightly more so, than 50 years ago.

Most priests now live on their own. Curates are almost an extinct species: in Hexham and Newcastle, almost the only ones are those very recently ordained. Even MMaC's optimistic projections suggest that by 2025 the diocese will have about 40 per cent fewer priests than now, assuming the current rate of about two ordinations a year can be maintained. Ordinations nationally have declined sharply during the past few decades and, although they have picked up slightly during the past couple of years, it is by no means certain that this upturn will last. We are already extremely short of priests and we know we will soon be much shorter; MMaC feels that it is time to consider the ordination of married laymen.

## A brief history of clerical celibacy



*St Peter and Wife by Eileen McCabe*

Most of the apostles were married, as far as we can see. Peter had a mother-in-law, according to the gospels, so he was married. St Paul, who wasn't married, nevertheless believed the other apostles and disciples of the Lord, including priests, were entitled to marry. And if we look at the earliest writers in the Church – for example, St Ignatius of Antioch – he just took it for granted that St Peter and the other apostles were married men. Most priests, bishops and even popes were married. Paul himself assumed that those who presided at the liturgy (the *episkopos*) would be married – though not more than once! In the early church there really was no clear notion of celibacy as a requirement for priesthood.

So how and why did the idea that priests should be celibate gain traction? Well, by the 4<sup>th</sup> century various expressions of doubt about the compatibility of marriage and the priesthood began to emerge. The Council of Nicea (325 AD) discussed the prohibition of marriage, but an Egyptian bishop, called Paphnutius, who was a monk himself, and therefore celibate, considered that imposing celibacy would be “imprudent, difficult in practice and objectionable in that it would reduce a personal choice of celibacy to a regulation”. That was in 325 and interestingly,

in 2015, MMaC would say very much the same thing.

There was a growth of monasticism in the Early Church. People went off, first as hermits and then to live in communities, where celibacy was of the essence. That was beginning to become an ideal: a feeling that they were the *best* sort of priests. This was reflected in the writings of important figures in the early Church such as St Ambrose and St Jerome: a view that celibacy was a superior state to marriage. St Augustine, a huge figure, spoke relatively positively of marriage but said in 401 AD that “marriage and virginity are two goods of whereof the one is greater” – meaning virginity. So the idea of celibacy was gaining ground and there was increasing pressure on priests to be celibate.

But the Church was not as closely-controlled at the centre as it has since become and most ordinary priests at that time continued to be married. By the eleventh century, however, opinions were changing significantly. By this time the papacy had become much more powerful than it had been 600 years before. One practical advantage of celibate clergy was that they could not pass on Church property to their children. And at this period the monasteries were being reformed in France so the prestige of monasticism was being increased still further. People like St Peter Damian were calling a priest “the bridegroom of Christ” and in that sense if the priest had any other partner he would be an adulterer. Finally, Canon Law was gaining a great deal of influence, being seen as an instrument of reform. So by the time of the Lateran Councils in the 12<sup>th</sup> century it was decreed that clergy marriages were null and void: you couldn’t be married and a priest.

Still, compliance was patchy. When a new bishop took over his diocese the first thing he would do was to complain about the loose morals of his clergy and vow to do something about it. And at that time one of the highest-prized dispensations from Rome was that of legitimising priests’ sons, who would otherwise be illegitimate. So discipline was irregular – until the Reformation, which required the Roman Church to clarify its own discipline. To put it simply, if the reformers said priests could be married, the Roman Church said clearly: “Oh no, they can’t.” This confrontation sealed the victory of celibacy in the Roman Church. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) was conclusive, saying: “If anyone says that the married state is to be placed above the state of virginity, let him be anathema”. Celibacy became the badge of the Roman Catholic priesthood. Martin Luther married, and Jean Calvin said virginity was not superior to marriage. Protestant ministers were married, so Roman Catholic priests could not be. They would henceforth be trained in seminaries, often from a very early age, and therefore the Church had control over the lives of future priests. Thus celibacy became the norm by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Whatever the special historical circumstances, however, MMaC would maintain that the key underlying motive for its adoption was still – and, one might argue, remains today – *cultic purity*: the ancient idea that sexuality and the priesthood cannot mix. That separation is not unique to Christianity; in the Old Testament, already, the high priests in the Temple were to be pure, they were to abstain from many “defiling” actions, and any sexual contact was seen as a cause of objective impurity.

### **Celibacy in the modern Church**

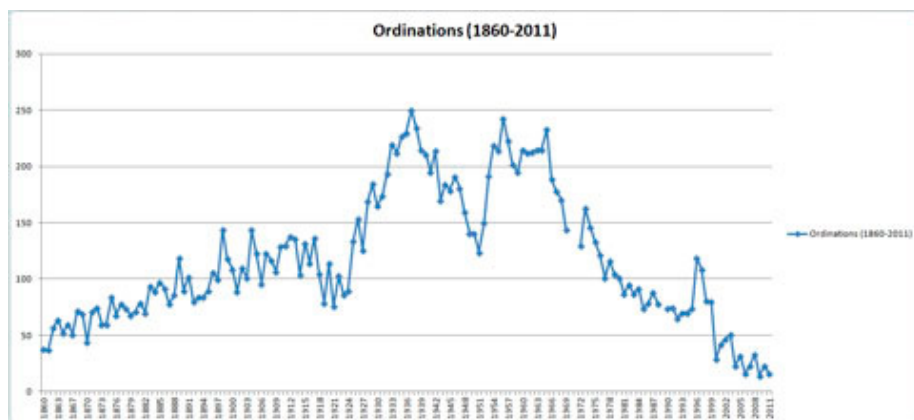
In the Early Christian Church the argument for celibacy gained strength as time went

on, especially when priests began to celebrate the Eucharist every day, as opposed to only on the Sabbath, as in the beginning. Those original priests were often urged to refrain from sex on a Saturday, before the Sunday. But if they were to say Mass every day then logically they could not have sex on *any* day of the week. This logic was revived as recently as 1994 when the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy published a document entitled *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests*. This upheld the medieval law and, quoting only the ancient sources, appeared to justify it still by the ancient concept of cultic purity.

However, thirty years earlier the Vatican Council had very positive things to say about marriage, describing marital relations as "noble and worthy". So in the light of that, MMaC would say the cultic purity argument can no longer be upheld: you cannot maintain that sexual activity is incompatible with the priestly state.

So what, apart from cultic purity, are the current arguments for retaining celibacy? The cost issue is often raised, because single men are cheaper to maintain; mobility is a factor, as single men are easier to move around, including to the missions; availability can be mentioned, because a single man should be able to devote all his time to his priestly duties; tradition matters too, in a way, because the Council of Trent was unambiguous about celibacy, and as this has been the rule for a thousand years the Church is very reluctant to change. Perhaps the most cogent argument, however, is spiritual growth – that the sacrifices entailed by celibacy have led to a deepening of spiritual resources and have enabled some priests to live lives of dedicated service and genuine holiness. Not all priests experience this spiritual growth.

But the principal practical reason why today MMaC think a change to this law of mandatory celibacy is necessary is simply that we are short of priests and that the situation is going to get even worse. Indeed some other parts of the world they are much shorter than we are. In any case, some of the advantages claimed for celibacy are not so evident: after all, the married clergy in other denominations, and in the Anglican church in particular, are in many cases as wholeheartedly devoted to their congregations as our celibate clergy are. Without dwelling on the sexual abuse scandals of recent years, one has nevertheless to ask whether there is some connection



Source: *The Latin Mass Society*

between that and *enforced* celibacy. Then there is clericalism: celibacy makes the clergy a class apart. They live very differently, and if there is a lingering feeling that they are somehow above the ordinary people, then that is not a healthy factor for the Church.

### The need for change

Change is needed, not just for reasons of shortage but for other reasons too. Change is justified because priesthood is a vocation to a ministry, whereas celibacy is a *gift of grace* for holiness. Briefly, the argument there is that the two are not intrinsically connected. Vatican II said as much: perfect and perpetual continence is not indeed demanded by the very nature of the priesthood. An American theologian, Richard Gaillardetz, has put it rather interestingly: he has said there are various *logics* at work when we consider the question of celibacy. There is the logic of *cultic purity*, which MMaC would argue is no longer tenable. There is the argument of *prophetic witness*: that celibacy is a counter-cultural affirmation of a way of life that is for the Kingdom. And then there is the logic of *ministerial service*, of the job that the priest does in the Church.

Now, whereas celibacy can be imposed as an obligation if one believes there is an objective incompatibility between being married and being a priest, if one doesn't accept that premise then it becomes rather difficult to see how the obligation can be justified. The argument would be that the *charism* of celibacy is a gift of grace given to not many (as Jesus says in St Matthew) and that it cannot be imposed as a mere obligation. Gaillardetz says that this enables us to unhinge the ministry of the priesthood from the question of celibacy; whereas you can feel that you have a vocation to be a priest, to minister to need in the Church, you are not necessarily gifted with the charism of celibacy. There are several other reasons:

- There is widespread support for change. If the laity are to be consulted we believe – although nobody has surveyed opinion in this country yet – that most Catholics would support the idea of allowing married men to be ordained priests. We are arguing that *virī probati*, tested men, in other words men who show all the qualities for being considered for ordination, except that they are married, should be considered for ordination.
- Also, there are many priests who have left the ministry but have not abandoned the Church – quite the contrary, many of them being very active in their parishes in the service of the Church. It is calculated that there may have been as many as 10,000 such resignations in the UK within the past fifty years, which is an awful lot considering that we have fewer than 3,000 currently active priests. However, the Church may not yet be open to accepting these priests back, so MMaC concentrates on urging that married *laymen* be ordained.

There will, of course, be practical issues, one of which is the need for careful planning. One may wonder whether any forward planning going on in the Church – there are no indications that anybody is thinking very broadly about it. Indeed, when MMaC first talked to ex-Anglican clergy, they did not suggest they had been consulted by the official Church about their experiences; MMaC, however, has asked them and recently published the results of its survey.

MMaC believes that married clergy would be very largely self-supporting, either through their profession – their work – or on the basis of other incomes, because in



many cases they would be retired men on pensions. Therefore most of them would be non-stipendiary. They would also be practising on a part-time basis, but then we have so few priests nowadays that many of them are already only partly in their parishes because they have other jobs to do.

Another practical issue is that there would be families to be considered, and in particular there would be the wives of married priests. Also, training would need to be provided if you could not take people off into seminaries, although many of the laymen who wished to become priests would probably be theologically well-versed already.

### **A change of atmosphere**

What is happening? Well, after the MMaC was founded in the mid-1970s not much happened in the first 35 years of its existence. There was optimism in the first years after the Vatican Council, even though Pope Paul VI had vetoed the discussion of celibacy at the Council. Despite that prohibition there was a feeling that things would change. But such optimism disappeared under the pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI. However, there has been quite a change of atmosphere under Pope Francis.

The Brazilian bishop of Xingu, Bishop Erwin Kräutler, who has a tiny number of priests for an enormous diocese, asked Francis in 2014 if he could ordain married men. Francis was taken aback, but then he said, well, why not? If you come forward with some concrete suggestions, he said, we will see what happens. And the Brazilian bishops have set up a commission to do precisely this. In Ireland Bishop Leo O'Reilly of the Diocese of Kilmore has recently proposed that the Irish hierarchy do the same. In this country, it's a subject for discussion rather than a matter for action at the moment but the Bishop Emeritus of Portsmouth, Crispian Hollis, wrote to *The Tablet* last July and has sparked a great amount of debate about the issue: the celibacy debate is coming to the surface. What would be important, though, would be for *active*, rather than retired, bishops to say something.

In fact a motion for the ordination of mature married men was tabled at the Plenary Assembly of the Bishops' Conference last November by Bishop Seamus Cunningham of Hexham & Newcastle. But according to a report in the Catholic newspaper *Northern Cross* there was no support from other bishops. They believed that the priesthood and celibacy were intimately linked, and sacrifice was at the heart of the priesthood – the sacrifice of the Mass and the sacrifice of the priest who offered his life for his people.

In conclusion, however, one might reflect on this: the Church of England in 2010 had 563 new priests; half of those were women, granted, and some of the men were non-stipendiary. But those ordained for full-time ministry were still nine times as numerous as the Catholic priests ordained in that year, for roughly the same number of practising church members. Is celibacy the key difference? It's an interesting question.



Mike Kerrigan

# Report on the Newman Association Assembly in Leeds, October 10/11 on

## **The Newman Association....is it worth saving?**

More than 40 members attended the assembly at Leeds on October 10th and 11th. The following pages include reports on the proceedings and discussion of the action taken by Council so far. There is also selection of responses received from Circles and individuals.

### *A Message from Gerald Williams*

When, a few weeks after the event, I reflected upon the Newman Assembly at Hinsley Hall, Leeds, the first thing that occurred to me was, what a positive experience it was. The Assembly was asked to answer the following question: Is the Newman Association worth saving? – a very challenging query, as it was intended to be. As much of the detail of the Assembly will soon be posted on the Newman website, I propose only to give an overview of the weekend.

The success of such a conference usually requires meticulous planning and this conference was no exception. Huge credit must go to Kevin and Freda Lambert and to Carole O'Toole for all the work they did in advance of, and during, the conference weekend. We were also indebted to the Diocese of Leeds for the exceptionally good facilities at Hinsley Hall; we were also fed extremely well.

The conference got off to an excellent start with an inspiring introduction by our Chaplain, Father Fabian, who addressed the subject of "Mission" with passion and with his usual thoughtfulness, after which the delegates went into their first groups' session. Clearly they were highly motivated and the ideas began to flow as evidenced by the feedback. The immediate response to the headline question was a resounding "Yes, the Newman is worth saving", but if it is to survive for another 75 years it needs to change, modernise, market itself better and – whilst remaining firmly Catholic – it must find ways of making all members equal; a tricky bit of squaring the



*Gerald Williams, President*

circle in relation to Associate Membership needs to be achieved. The quality of the feedback spoke volumes for the note-taking within the groups and also for the abilities of the spokespersons to convey the groups' ideas.

To an extent, Father Fabian's address had set a tone for the Conference and I noted, in particular, that although many different, sometimes conflicting views were expressed, they were all received with great respect by the audience. In fact, courtesy and intelligent communication were two of the outstanding features of the weekend. The only word with which I could possibly take issue, but which was used occasionally as a criticism of the NA, was "elitist". I would make no apology for the Association's determination to maintain high standards at all times, but I saw no evidence at the Conference (or in any talks I have ever attended) where there has been any suggestion of elitism; there is probably less now than when the Association was formed by and for Catholic graduates and university students in 1942.

### **Some thorny issues**

The Saturday afternoon session was occupied by Finance – with a very thoughtful exposition by Anthony Baker. This subject also provided some thorny issues: to list but two, why cannot the larger Circles keep more of the income that their membership generates, and why have we given so much of our income from bequests to the Centre for Catholic Studies, Durham University. Of course finance is closely related to membership, and membership to publicity and communication, which were topics raised by all the break-out groups.

After supper some delegates watched a film on the life of Cardinal Blessed John Henry Newman, courtesy of a kind member of the Eastbourne/Bexhill Circle. Others repaired to the bar or lounge, whilst others tried to sift through the feedback from the groups to prepare a core programme for Sunday morning.

One result of the breakout sessions was the realisation that "A (Newman) Star is Born". Not sparing his blushes, but Peter Firth (North Merseyside) had made such a persuasive case for a new style of "marketing the Newman Association" that he was asked to forgo his evening's relaxation and prepare a PowerPoint presentation for the start of the Sunday session. This was very well received.

Again the attendees went into groups to discuss, *inter alia*, the following thoughts:

1. How can the Association fulfil its Mission? Whose responsibility is it?
2. How can we assist potential (and current) members for whom membership fees are prohibitive?
3. How can we improve our profile on the Web? Do we use modern resources well?

The responses were overwhelmingly concentrated on three areas:

- Mission
- Communication
- Finance

Consideration of these issues is to be carried out by three small groups, normally of six persons, with Council members in the minority. These groups will hold discussions and, we hope, will make their recommendations to the membership in time for the next AGM, in Manchester next June. Where we will go from there is up to the membership.

Gerald Williams  
*President*

# *Summary of the discussions and decisions at the Assembly, October 2015*

## **Broad agreement was reached to commit to the following:**

- i To examine the possibility of changing the membership rules to enable all members to be full members.
- ii To establish working groups made up of Council and non-Council members to consider changes to
  - a the mission of the Newman Association
  - b methods of communication between Council and Circles and between the Association and the wider Church
  - c financing the Association
- iii To modernise the membership form. It should be made available online and the new version should remove the requirement for sponsors and exclude the word "profession".

## **SUMMARY of the discussion of the main themes**

*Any attempt to summarise the main themes has to take into account the wide variety of views expressed on the majority of the themes discussed below. The need for the Newman Association to remain in existence was undisputed. Many people expressed the view that the Newman Association occupies a unique place in the Church by providing an independent forum where lay people meet freely to discuss topics of their choice. Also, with near-unanimous support, the view was stated that the Newman Association should remain a Catholic organisation. More than one speaker described the Association as a "safe" place for discussion and learning to take place. The Assembly did not, to any great extent, explore the role of ecumenism with regard to the future development of the Association.*

### **• The Mission of the Newman Association**

Much debate centred on the mission of the Association and on whether a new image developed from a renewed vision for the Association in the 21st century might offer a significant way forward which could help to increase the membership of the Association and broaden its age profile. One member recommended the use of business modelling techniques in rebranding the Newman Association and analysing how we might take the Association forward. Such techniques could include identifying our USP (unique selling point), selecting our target audience, considering "product" marketing and developing up-to-5-year business and financial plans on an annual basis; possibly, too, we should commission a new logo.

For some members such jargon did not seem to fit in with the existing culture of the Association; however, it was agreed that these ideas could be used as a framework for re-examining how we promote the Newman. Many agreed that the establishment of a working group to look at these ideas in more detail would represent a clear and

positive step forward. The general consensus was that it might be sensible to limit our target audience to the 40/50-plus age group rather than to attempt to reach out to much younger people.

### • **Methods of communication between Council and Circles and between the Newman Association and the Church**

Communication as a general theme was much discussed and varying opinions were expressed. Some members felt that much good work following the last two Circle Officers Conferences had led to considerable improvements in the communications between the Circles and Council. In particular, the website had become an invaluable source of information. Others argued for still more and better communication between Council and the Circles. Should there be a greater awareness of how Council makes decisions? Should the minutes of Council meetings be circulated to all members?



*Carole O'Toole*

of the more general working group looking at the overall mission of the Newman Association.

There was more of a consensus concerning the need for much better communication from the Newman Association, not only within parishes but specifically to reach the hierarchy. A definite need for more active promotion of the Newman Association across the Church was identified; ways of achieving this could possibly form the remit of a specialist working group or form part of the scope

There was near unanimous approval for, and appreciation of, *The Newman*, the Association's regular journal, as a means of communicating Newman Association activities but also as being a valuable benefit of Newman Association membership.

### • **Financing the Newman Association.**

Here again many differing, and sometimes opposing, views were expressed. Some members were quite happy with maintenance of the status quo, but others suggested root-and-branch change largely focused on the idea of a "bottom up" organisation in preference to the current "top down" structure; in financial terms such a reorganisation might involve Circles retaining more of the membership subscriptions than is at present possible. The questions of funding university bursaries and membership of other Catholic organisations also elicited differing opinions, with equally passionate views being expressed for and against. The formation of a working group to consider how the Newman Association manages its finances was suggested and generally agreed upon.

Carole O'Toole

# Some of the speakers at the Assembly



*Fr Fabian Radcliffe, National Chaplain*      *Peter Firth, North Merseyside Circle*      *Patricia Egerton, Cleveland Circle*      *Harcourt Concannon, Manchester & N Cheshire Circle*

## The Use of the Association's Finances

Anthony Baker, former President and until recently acting Treasurer, gave a briefing at Hinsley Hall on the use of the Association's financial resources to support its Mission. To begin with he outlined the financial situation, first at the national level and then at the level of the local Circles, in aggregate.

### National Income 2014-15

	£000.0
Subscription	14.6
Gift Aid	2.5
Bank interest	1.9
Donations, conferences	2.0
Legacies	2.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23.0</b>

### National Expenditure 2014-15

	£000.0
Circles expenditure	8.8
Journal and website	8.8
Lectures, publicity	2.6
Liaison bodies (e.g. Pax Romana)	1.8
Governance	3.2
Postage etc	1.5
Grants	3.0
	<b>29.7</b>

### Circles Income 2014-15

National grant	6.3
Circle functions	0.8
Income at meetings	4.5
Other	0.6
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>12.2</b>

### Circles Expenditure 2014-15

Circle meetings and lectures	7.5
Hire of rooms	2.9
Secretarial costs	1.1
Other	2.0
	<b>13.5</b>

The appropriate use of the resources depended, he said, on how the Association wished to develop. He set out three distinctive future approaches; these were not the only models, he explained, but they would serve to stimulate debate.

- **External mission**

The association could pursue existing partnerships and seek new ones. We could be prepared to be the funder and the partner organiser in evangelising events. We would promote our distinctive slant: intellectual enquiry, dialogue and discussion.

- **Delegation to Circles**

This emphasis might involve recycling money mainly back to the Circles. They would be encouraged to pursue their own approaches. The central role of the national Association would be focused on the setting-up of new Circles, together with overall governance.

- **National/Circles partnership**

This model could involve the encouragement of Circles to develop local evangelising roles. There would be more conferences, debates and dialogue. There should be promotion of increased numbers of Circles, especially where these could be in easy local partnerships – for instance, with dioceses.

With all these models, he added, there should be consideration of the Association's relationship to events promoted by the hierarchy through the Bishops' Conference.

## *Points of View*

**Various written submissions will be made available for inspection on the Association's website. The following representative selection of extracts is given without individual attribution.**

As a Circle we have always been ecumenical and members feel quite strongly that Christians should be admitted to full membership. However, the Circle agreed it was quite important that the Newman is seen as an organisation of Catholic laity that is integral to the Catholic Church. We could think of no other lay organisation which duplicates the role of the Association.

We accepted that the Newman has in general a post-retirement age profile. This does mean that there is likely to be a natural process of losing members but at the same time means that as other people approach retirement age we will be able to recruit new members. We saw this as a continuing state of affairs and were not unduly disturbed at the lack of young members – which seems to be a factor across many different voluntary organisations.

**In general we felt that The Newman needs to communicate more and better. This relates both to the way in which the Association carries out or enables communication *within* the organisation and the way in which it relates to bodies outside the Association. The former includes communication between the centre**



**and the circles, between the centre/circle and individual members or between members and officers. The latter includes communication with the hierarchy or other Catholic organisations, with the media or with the public. Different approaches to communication are likely to be needed to tackle each of these cases.**

*The Newman Association means a great deal to us. But while we wish to agree that it is worth saving we also have serious doubts as to whether we have the resources to do so adequately. We value what we do, both in terms of the talks which we organise and the camaraderie that exists between the members and friends of the Circle. However, many of us are increasingly suffering from health problems and the limitations of old age. We sometimes wonder how much longer we can carry on.*

Amongst lay organisations in the Church we are slightly different, we are independent and we need to promote this. We are all on the same side. We need to seek dialogue with the Bishops and we need a stronger voice within the Church. There is a tension between us and the hierarchy but we are a real part of the structure of the Catholic Church. The hierarchy doesn't really want a relationship with us, the Bishops are ill-at-ease with us, but we must speak up for our Faith, which is our right.

*Unanimously, our group felt that the Newman Association should seek to fulfil its role through the Circles, with the majority of the funds channelled through the Circles. Obviously we need a central Council, for governance, legal issues, liaison, cross-fertilisation, helping to seed new Circles, organising national conferences, but we don't want Council to appear so top-heavy and for those on Council to appear so burdened.*

**As there is very little incentive for visitors attracted to Circle talks to become members of the Newman Association we propose that for a period of one or two years our resource-rich bank balance should be used to fund a *subscription holiday for new members*. Thus they could taste the full benefits of membership, and also perhaps be encouraged to join Circle committees, before paying any subs. *In addition* we propose that our central resources should be explicitly available to those who would incur hardship in paying Newman subs, and to widow(er)s who should be charged at half the "married rate".**

Evangelisation? We are not sure about this. We see our role as Newman members as providing opportunities for people to grow in faith and understanding. Rather than being missionaries we provide witness to Christ by the example of our lives and actions.

*We agreed that the Newman needs to have a sense of Mission. We tried to express this in practical terms. We felt that our overall approach should be: "What can we do for the Church?" and we considered the likely Newman contribution. While what the Newman does by way of enabling critical understanding of the Faith in a sense serves the Church as part of adult formation this is a different type of formation to that provided, for example, through the training of Catechists or the CRRS. A possible method of widening the*

*Newman contribution would be to focus on ways of supporting the New Evangelisation.*

Our relations with the Hierarchy should be redeveloped (we use this word rather than “change”) so that we are seen to present ourselves to the Hierarchy proactively. But it is important that however helpful to the Hierarchy we remain independent. We have in mind the need for a series of positive acts on our part geared especially to ways in which we might be able to make meaningful contributions to the work of New Evangelisation.

**We took the Mission of the Newman Association within the Church to be that of supporting the development of an informed, educated laity – that is, providing the opportunities and the environment where people can safely explore their Faith and learn more at their own level among like-minded folk.**

*The Bishops’ Conference move to support New Evangelisation, as set out in “Proclaim 15”, suggests a way of offering the resources of the Newman. If one also considers the “Year of Mercy” we would have an area where the resources of the Newman could be useful to bishops. While the theme of “mercy” is wide it could be interpreted very effectively in terms of critically understanding the problems, for instance, of homelessness and migration.*



*Hinsley Hall, Leeds*

# Report on the Newman/NBCW Conference in Coventry on November 14th

## Extracts from the Keynote Address by Dr Clare Watkins

### Towards a Learning Church

**But you are not to be called rabbis, for you have one teacher and you are all students. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. *Matthew 23, 8-10***

#### A commitment to dialogue

Today I want especially to speak of a very particular set of ecumenical practices: those of academic theologians who serve on bilateral conversations. The Roman Catholic Church has been committed to these bilateral dialogues for over 50 years now and it has been actively involved in the World Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission since its beginning, although we are not members of the WCC. Sometimes, we must be forgiven if we wonder whether it is all worth it. I remember the excitement around the ARCIC final document in the early 1980s, and of course there was a huge amount of proper excitement in 1999 around the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification between Lutheranism and the Catholic Church, with an affirmation from the World Methodist Council. There have been innumerable resolutions of historical differences between Catholics and Anglicans, Methodists and Lutherans, and so forth. And despite all this work in these rooms, we still read the texts and go off on our separate ways. Many Church people think that what we do in dialogue is irrelevant. Why do I, and others like me, still commit to it?

For myself, to answer that question takes me to the central argument of this presentation: that ecumenism – and ecumenical dialogue in particular – is one of the key ways in which we can be renewed as a learning Church. In what follows I want to draw on this practice of ecumenical dialogue or conversation and explore its implicit understanding of teaching and learning – in other words, of pedagogy. Ecumenical dialogue is not simply part of a practice of Faith and Order, narrowly understood as one of the expressions of ecumenism, but rather it is a practice transformative of Church, and of persons and of ecclesial cultures. And this, because it is a particular way of participative and mutual learning.

The work of ecumenical dialogue is about conversations across our differences, in order to seek a deeper unity. It is not about persuading one another, and it is even less about simply defending one's own position; it is about understanding our differences and preserving our present and future unity, the unity for which Jesus prayed.



Dr Clare Watkins

## Learning across difference

Dialogue is not simply an exchange of ideas; in some way it is always an exchange of view, of personal perspectives and realities. I am reminded of the eight days or so every year I spend, with others, serving on the Methodist-Roman Catholic international dialogue. Last month we met in Malaysia which has to have the least hospitable climate I have ever experienced. In this strange environment we are all displaced and taken out of where we are comfortable. We do this all in the name of dialogue, but it is a very practical way of conversation and a practice of our entire person. It cannot be limited to any simple notion of the cognitive. So what do we see in this vision of ecumenical dialogue? It is true that these dialogues are characteristically intellectual and theological in the form and content. But what reflection on these aspects of teaching and the experience of those who do it strongly suggests is that, for all this, the bilateral dialogue's work is not abstract and it is far from unspiritual. Rather, it is the work of conversational learning between Christians – and *hard* work.

This is why it is exciting; not just for ecumenism but also fundamentally for life in, and for, the Church. It is a practice which helps us to become more fully churched, a community of disciples, a community of learners, and it is a practice that makes clear that in order to be a learning Church there are some tough spiritual disciplines that are needed long before, and after, any intellectual academic expertise. We can learn from these texts, and from our own experience of conversation, a powerful list of qualities that are required for being a community shaped for dialogue and shaped for learning: honesty, humility, attentiveness, patience, steadfastness and above all love, especially of the one who is different, who is strange, who is challenging.

In the end it is the embodiment of these virtues of learning across difference that keeps me and the others going back to these meetings. For in those meeting-rooms I invariably touch something of the heart of Christ's Church. And that something is about allowing God to teach us all together as his disciples and allowing ourselves to be taught by God, typically through the ones who are other to us, who are strange.

My argument in this presentation is that the work of ecumenical conversation and, formally, the bilateral dialogues, embodies a way of being Christian together which is a gift to the whole Church. Too often, as Catholics, we have emphasised that ours is a *teaching* Church, with clear doctrine. We often stress the importance of the Magisterium of the Church without stopping to consider what teaching and learning consist of. As any good teacher will tell you, they consist of a whole lot more than asserting clear statements to pupils who simply have to remember them when asked and go along with what they are being taught. If the Church is really, and effectively, to be a teaching Church then it needs to renew its structures and language as a teaching and learning community. The great insight of ecumenical conversation is that it is precisely in these exchanges of gifts across our differences that new and authentic insights and learning are received and formulated. The call to ecumenism is nothing more than the call to be authentically Church, a community of God-learners and seekers.

## A teaching-and-learning Church

My own ecclesiological preference has become to refer to our Catholic Church not simply as a teaching Church but as a teaching-and-learning Church. Learning

is in fact a way of personal formation which is profoundly transformative. What is here being described concerning doctrine and teaching in our tradition suggests that our commitment to the Church as a teaching Church, and to the body of doctrine as enabling deep learning envisaged in the tradition, must carry with it this appropriateness of pedagogy.

The deep-learning, participative pedagogy that I am suggesting here has far-reaching implications for the ways in which a teaching-and-learning Church shaped by such an approach understands and practises its mission. In particular, for our purposes, it emphasises the ways in which the communal discernment of God's Word in the Church requires not so much a group of expert teachers, with a suitably well-behaved cohort of learners, but rather a pedagogical community in which fundamentally all the disciples are students. And this is where ecumenical conversation and dialogue, according to my description, can be given a proper place, and be recognised as a set of practices that is transforming of the whole Church.

Of course, to work ecumenically is primarily about seeking greater unity among Christians, and it is increasingly recognised thereby as contributing to the movements of reconciliation in all spheres of our broken human living. But fundamentally ecumenism – especially, clearly, when understood as *receptive* ecumenism – is about the renewal of Church culture. It is one of the several practices which, I believe, the Spirit is using to chasten any overly didactic insistence of the teaching Church and draw us into that beautiful Christian pedagogy of mutual discipleship under the tutelage of Father, Son and Spirit.

We have actually opened up a deeper understanding through these dialogic practices. One of my key favourites here was the work done around baptism which, again, we take for granted as something which Christians have in common. Actually the conversations across the differences which persist in our understanding of baptism have led to an extraordinary deepening of the understanding of baptismal vocation. This would be a fascinating example to explore in more detail. For now, however, I want simply to consolidate the point which is becoming clear: that ecumenical conversational practice, far from being the marginal preoccupation of a few – and I have to say, of an *ageing* few – is actually at the heart of the renewal of Church for the future.

In particular, this renewal is one which seeks to draw churches from the rigidity of informative and regulative understanding to the receptive, to an outward-looking attentiveness, a looking to the other who is different. It is, I suggest, of a piece with the renewal of Pope Francis and his vision of Church as committed to listening and to exploring its peripheries as its essential centre. The recent Synod in Rome, I think, testifies both to the promise, but also to the great difficulties, of this commitment to receptivity and learning from the other – even the so-called “transgressive” other.

I have been talking about my experience with dialogue; this is at its heart a spiritual practice based in conversational learning and the conversion of each person to attend in love to the others – those who are strange, those who are different, challenging. When something of what goes on in the demanding meeting-rooms of ecumenical dialogue is increasingly a practice in ordinary Christian life everywhere – and I think it *is*, actually – then we will begin to see a renewed Church, a learning Church, which knows itself as a community of disciples taught only by one Father.

## Panel Session at the Coventry Conference

*The Newman's Anthony Baker was the moderator of a panel consisting of Dr David Cornick, Rev Callan Slipper and Dr Clare Watkins*

*David Cornick, a minister of the United Reformed Church, is General Secretary of Churches Together in England. Callan Slipper, an Anglican priest, is Ecumenical Facilitator of Churches Together in Hertfordshire. Clare Watkins, a Catholic, is a lecturer in Ministerial Theology at the University of Roehampton.*

### **Question: Where now for ecumenism?**

David Cornick

Cardinal Walter Kasper has shown there is an amazing degree of doctrinal unity. But some differences remain, and moving any further is going to take a huge amount of theological work. So what should we do in the interval?

For now, we need to do all kinds of work for the community, and ecumenism has to be represented at each generation. But we have to recognise that tension remains. I think we've got to be grown up and recognise the fact that there's a lot of genuine anxiety out there. It's not something that's attractive, but it's something that Jesus tells us – if I read the Gospels rightly – not to worry about.

Callan Slipper

A major factor in why there is currently an emphasis on social action is that it is the influence of the Holy Spirit. There's been a move abroad among Christians to do things. They recognise the need, and they instinctively do it together. Instead of people coming together from different places in order to become one, when we engage in mission and action together we *already* recognise ourselves as being one. We should sense this feeling of being one body. It changes the context of the relationship. We also need to speak to one another and deepen our understanding of one another. This is not something that can be done only in the theological dialogues, it is something that also needs to be done at the lower levels. The whole receptive ecumenism agenda fits in perfectly. It gives us a way of entering into a conversation with one another so that we get to understand each other more and more deeply. It does help to overcome the fear of each other.

We have a list as long as our arm about the reasons why we are frightened of others: they might make us change, they might hurt us, they might say something that makes us feel uncomfortable. The joy of the receptive ecumenism approach is to say: "All right, I'm not perfect, but what can I (we) learn from the other?" Firstly, we are working as one body for the transformation of society, which is basically a mission agenda; and secondly, we are learning to appreciate and love one another more deeply.

### **Question: What are the fruits of bilateral agreement?**

David Cornick

I said to one of my students: "What about the Joint Declaration on Justification?" She

said, “what?” The document stated that justification, although regarded as one of the causes of the Reformation, should no longer be considered church-dividing. This is the problem of reception. The relationships between churches are very different from the way people understand those relationships to be. How do you get the fruits of that down into the pews, the lecture rooms and the seminar rooms? I wish I knew, because reception is really at the heart of change. The Catholic Church is still receiving the documents of Vatican II, and probably will be for a century.

Callan Slipper

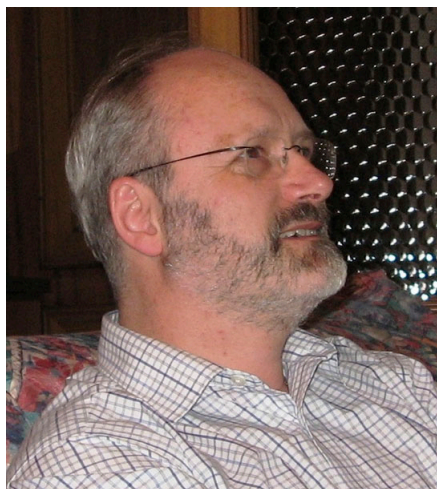
These things don’t go out to everybody because many people aren’t interested. One part of the answer is to *stimulate* interest in the ecumenical endeavour. In my Focolare movement we studied all the ARCIC\* documents. Why? Well, we are mostly Catholics and Anglicans and we all wanted to be one. We certainly received these documents, and we were certainly motivated to do it. In Hertfordshire, recently, we had a big day called “Go for Growth” and our panel included people from four or five different backgrounds. It showed the value of learning from one another’s experiences.

Clare Watkins

This can be quite a daunting question in the dialogue commissions when we meet. As theologians we have to examine our own consciences here. The documents we produce are overlong and difficult to read. For example, I am worried that our new Methodist-Roman Catholic ecumenical document about holiness will turn out to be dull, rather than beautiful. The trouble is that the sponsoring commissions do not take it upon themselves to distribute the ecumenical documents, and I am not sure that the sponsoring churches do either. I would encourage the use of these texts academically, at an undergraduate and a master’s level – they are really rich resources.

Callan Slipper

The implicit assumption is that lay people are not going to be able to engage with



Rev Callan Slipper



Dr David Cornick

\* Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission



ecumenical dialogue, and if that is the case then we haven't done our job. Increasingly, at these dialogues, we are asking the question: "Who is it going to be for?" We should not separate the discipleship journey and the theological journey.

David Cornick

Here is just one example of good practice. The World Council of Churches has produced a conversions document called "A Church towards a Common Vision" and the Doctrine Panel of the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Catholic Bishops' Conference chose to respond to this paper together. They spent two or three days together producing a joint response. It was really good, and I see no reason why that can't be replicated, at diocesan or maybe even parish level, if the right people are involved.

***Question: Is full visible unity the goal? What, to you, does that structural unity look like?***

Callan Slipper

I must say that different people have different ideas about what they are looking towards. I don't see that it matters: we'll recognise what it is when we get there. However, I personally am very keen on structural unity. What I do *not* mean is that the Church should be one big monolithic institution. I think that God has quite firmly kicked that objective into touch. All the different churches have their gifts and we have to be enriched by these gifts. Some form of pluriformity in the future Church has to be there. But there will also have to be bonds of communion, structure so that we can act together and agree. The shape has to be something that allows for both the one Christian body to speak and act in one concerted manner but then also for that one Christian body to be properly pluriform. Many of the churches are also coming to this same conclusion.

Clare Watkins

This highlights to me the spirituality of the ecumenical endeavour. For all our efforts we know that in the end it is God's gift. We do what we can and we try to move with the Spirit and for that reason I am going to refuse to answer what the structure should look like. We must let go of those questions and let it shape itself.

David Cornick

I believe in one holy and apostolic Church. I believe that Jesus prayed that all his people should be One. It is our responsibility to work towards that goal. But part of me wants not to be a theologian but to be a sociologist. According to the Pew Foundation's latest count there are something like 40,000 denominations in the world, and one thing I would like to lay on the table is the way that Christianity has diversified over the last fifty years. All of us would like to pay tribute to the pioneering work which the Catholic Church has done in entering dialogue with Pentecostals, and that is really important because Pentecostals are now the second largest group of Christians in the world. It is not any longer a simple question of Protestant-Catholic dialogue. It is very difficult to say that there is one aim of visible unity. Catholics and many Protestants may say that, but there are others around that do not share that DNA. Pentecostal growth is very different from what we understand in mainstream Catholicism and Protestantism. Pentecostals will send a different branch off on its

own, and won't be a schism but it will simply be a different network with a different bishop. They are not out of communion with each other and nor will there be doctrinal differences between each other. It is a profoundly different sort of growth, centripetal rather than centrifugal.

Callan Slipper

We have to understand that there are different ways of understanding the Church. The journey we are on is re-understanding the Church.

***Question: How do we reach the younger generation?***

Clare Watkins

The first thing to say is that not all young people are the same. There are, in the Catholic Church, quite a lot of conservative, reactionary young people. There are also many anti-institutional, non-denominational Catholic youngsters. These differences reflect a desire to understand what it is to be Christian in late- or post-modernity. You have to figure it out for yourself; this is an example of hyper-secularism and post-modernity. And understandably that is either going to take you to a kind of reclaiming of the tradition, or you are going to swim in the delights of post-modern eclecticism: you are not going to be tied to anything and you can go wherever you want.

David Cornick

I have difficulty with post-denominationalism because it is a Catholic concept. I don't think Protestants and Orthodox go post-denominational. But you can tell me I am wrong about that. Balanced against that, my friends in pastoral ministry tell me that if they were to scratch away at the surface of their congregations they would find that they had come from all kinds of places and all kinds of traditions. They are worshipping there because it suits them, and that is what they call post-denominationalism. That's more of a Protestant reality than a Catholic/Orthodox reality. And on the generational theme, younger adults don't understand some of the things that we think are really important, such as the doctrine on sexuality.

Callan Slipper

I have sympathy with those who are going post-denominational. However, life puts really hard questions in front of us, and we have to answer them. You have an unwanted pregnancy, what do you do? There are end-of-life issues. Do you just make the answers up or do you listen to the wisdom of the past? Because of our nature as human beings we have to respect traditions. If we accept the vision of the Church as being made up of different gifts, those gifts are only given in incarnate form. You simply can't do your Christianity in depth without some degree of traditioning. And where is it that people are going when they are doing their post-denominationalism? They are going between churches that maintain these traditions; and if we need to pay attention to what God is doing in the gifts that he gives to the different traditions we need also to respect them.

# Newman Association Pilgrimage

20 – 27 September 2016 (8 days, 7 nights)

## 2016 Pilgrimage to the monasteries of Eastern Lazio

Our pilgrimage to Rome and its surroundings in 2016 will be based at the English College's retreat and pilgrimage centre of Palazzola.

**PALAZZOLA** is a former Franciscan monastery, built on the site of a Roman villa, that occupies a dramatically beautiful position high above Lake Albano, 18 miles from the centre of Rome. The Cistercians, who formed the first community there, built the Church of Our Lady of the Snows in the 13th century. In 1919 the English College in Rome bought Palazzola as a summer retreat from the city's heat.

The Villa Palazzola stands in 16 acres of mainly wooded land. From the terraced garden, there is a breathtaking view over Lake Albano to the Pope's summer residence at Castel Gandolfo and down over the city of Rome and across to the sea. For further information and photographs please see [www.palazzola.it](http://www.palazzola.it).

At Palazzola there are many things to do – reading in the garden, enjoying the swimming pool, local walks through the woods, watching the sunset with a drink in hand, sitting quietly in the chapel – or just do nothing! For those more active there are walks through the woods to nearby villages, tennis courts, and buses and trains into Rome.

### PROGRAMME (Subject to change)

#### Tuesday September 20<sup>th</sup>

Arrival in Rome and transfer to Palazzola. (Lunch for early arrivals). Evening Mass. Welcome Reception. Dinner.

#### Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup>



*Monastery of Sacro Speco at Subiaco*

Morning excursion to the Benedictine Monastery of Sacro Speco at **Subiaco** for a tour

Led by one of the monks and Mass.

#### Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>

Morning excursion to visit the private **Ninfa Gardens** (a superb early 20th century plant collection amongst medieval ruins, now looked after by the World Wide Fund

For Nature and now referred to as the *most romantic garden in the world*) and the the Cistercian Abbey of **Valviscolo**.

### **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Full-day excursion to the Benedictine Monastery at **Monte Cassino** for a tour and Mass. Afternoon return via the Cistercian Monastery at **Casamari** for vespers.



*Benedictine Monastery at Monte Cassino*

### **Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>**

Afternoon excursion to the Cistercian Abbey at **Fossanova** (now run by the Franciscans), where the Dominican St Thomas Aquinas died.

### **Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>**

Early morning transfer to the **Vatican** to celebrate the *Jubilee for Catechists'* Mass (subject to ticket availability) with Pope Francis in **St Peter's Square** followed by the



*Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls*

*Angelus*. Afternoon excursion to visit the **Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls** (with its many English connections and also the mosaic portraits of the 266 Popes) and to join the Benedictine monks for vespers.

### **Monday 26<sup>th</sup>**

Morning excursion around the lake to visit the village of **Castel Gandolfo** for a private tour of the Papal

Gardens followed by free time for shopping in the village.

## **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>**

Morning Mass. Departures. Lunch (for those with afternoon departures).

## **ACCOMMODATION**

Palazzola has been modernised in a way that retains its simplicity and character. Standard room accommodation in the 13th century Old Wing is provided in simply furnished rooms with washbasins providing hot and cold water along with shared modern bathroom and shower facilities. There is a lift in the Old Wing. En-suite rooms are provided in different locations around the Villa including the 17th century New Wing annex. Towels and soap are provided.

## **FLIGHTS**

Direct flights to Rome are available (based on summer 2015) on Tuesdays from:

**Birmingham** (*Monarch*) **Bristol** (*Easyjet*), **East Midlands** (*Ryanair*) **Gatwick North** (*British Airways*) **Gatwick South** (*Easyjet, Norwegian, Vueling*) **Glasgow Prestwick** (*Ryanair*) **Heathrow** (*Alitalia, British Airways*) **London City** (*Alitalia*) **Luton** (*Easyjet, Monarch*) **Leeds** (*Jet2*) **Manchester** (*Jet2, Ryanair*) **Stansted** (*Ryanair*)

**COST: £695** in standard accommodation (single and twin availability)

**£895** in en-suite accommodation (double and single availability) inclusive of:

- 7 nights accommodation at Palazzola
- simple continental buffet breakfasts
- 7 lunches (as per the programme) and 7 dinners
- water and wine with main meals
- airport/local station transfers on September 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> for specified flights
- full programme of excursions and all entry charges
- Mass offerings and coach driver tips

The following items are not included: travel to Rome, travel insurance

## **FITNESS**

Please note that Rome, the environs and the area around Palazzola are best discovered on foot, therefore a reasonable level of fitness is required for walking around the hillside sites.

## **HOW TO BOOK**

Please request a booking form from **Anthony Coles, 18 Maresfield Gardens, London NW3 5SX** (Tel: 020 7431 3414, email [aectc@btinternet.com](mailto:aectc@btinternet.com)). Please complete all sections of the form and return it with your deposit of £100 per person. The balance of the cost of this pilgrimage will then be due eight weeks prior to departure. All cheques should be made payable to: **Anthony R Coles Travel and Conferences**.

When flights are booked through Anthony Coles your holiday/pilgrimage is financially protected by the ATOL (Air Travel Organisers' Licensing) scheme.

# Living Theology at York, 2015

Last summer *Living Theology* weekends were held at the Bar Convent in York, in Ammerdown near Bath, and in Liverpool, Llandudno and Glasgow. These Jesuit-inspired summer schools of Christian faith in the Catholic tradition are open to all, Catholic or not, lay or not. The weekends are friendly gatherings of people sharing experiences and learning from excellent teachers on a variety of subjects. They provide opportunities for people to deepen their knowledge of the Christian faith and to learn new and helpful ways of looking at the whole Christian tradition; they also include times for prayer, and the Eucharist.

So what happened at York last year? You may know that the Bar Convent is presently undergoing major renovations, but nevertheless the Sisters' hospitality was second-to-none. While their Café was open to the public as usual we, the 'living theologians', had the exclusive use of three meeting rooms, refreshments and lunches included, and could also use the chapel for prayer and the gardens for relaxation. There were twenty-eight people registered: some from the north-east commuted from home; some from further afield – including Derby, London, Oxford and Edinburgh – found accommodation locally.

Our lecturers were superb. Fr Gerry Hughes SJ, formerly Master of Campion Hall, Oxford, gave three lively and thought-provoking plenary talks. In *Authority in an Intercultural Society*, he explored how different cultural and religious groups might minimize divisions by focusing on what it means to live 'a fulfilled human life'. In two other talks he addressed the question *Why did Jesus die?*, both from historical details indicated in the gospels and from theological issues arising from ideas of redemption, sacrifice and the Passover meal.

Bill Tompkins and Sr Helen Costigane SHCJ each gave two short courses over the weekend, and participants chose which to attend. Bill is an engaging speaker who has lectured at Leeds University and Leeds Trinity University; his topics were *Religious Language* and *Liberation Theology's view of Christ*. His views are especially insightful and challenging because he spent many years working in South America, where Liberation Theology started. Helen, a lecturer at Heythrop College specialising in Canon Law and Pastoral Theology, considered *Conscience and Authority* and *How relevant is Canon Law today?* Her outgoing and energetic style meant no-one departed thinking that Canon Law was dull!

Many of the participants at last year's weekend at the Bar Convent were 'returners' who had enjoyed Living Theology weekends in previous years; some were coming for the first time, but everyone found something of value in the experience. Comments included "exceeded my expectation", "excellent content and delivery" and "amazing scholarship and knowledge presented in a comprehensible and informative way". A sixth-former said: "It is a good preparation for university" (and commented favourably on the existence of the student discount!). A secondary teacher remarked how attending Living Theology could benefit anyone who teaches RE in a school. So, if you are aged from 17 to 70+ you may well find Living Theology interesting and useful: why don't you consider joining us in 2016? See the website [www.livingtheology.org.uk](http://www.livingtheology.org.uk) for all the Living Theology weekends, or contact Jo Caramello (01845-526593) to be included on the mailing list for York.

Patricia Egerton

# Spirituality Page

## Mercy

As the Year of Mercy progresses we need to think clearly and deeply about what mercy really means. Pope St. John Paul II, in his second encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, considers not only the theological foundation of mercy but also its place in dealing with the challenges of modern life.

He looks at the idea of mercy in the Old Testament and then reminds us that we are all called to the exercise of mercy; that “mercy does not pertain only to the notion of God, but it is something that characterises the life of the whole people of Israel and each of its sons and daughters: mercy is the content of intimacy with their Lord, the content of their dialogue with Him”.

Not only this but when we exercise mercy it is not just a unilateral act on our part, which could easily lead to a condescending attitude by us, but a bilateral one. This is because: “In reciprocal relationships between persons merciful love is never a unilateral act or process. Even in the cases in which everything would seem to indicate that only one party is giving and offering, and the other only receiving and taking (for example, in the case of a physician giving treatment, a teacher teaching, parents supporting and bringing up their children, a benefactor helping the needy) in reality the one who gives is always also a beneficiary. In any case, he too can easily find himself in the position of the one who receives, who obtains a benefit, who experiences merciful love; he too can find himself the object of mercy”.

As Portia puts it in *The Merchant of Venice*:

*The quality of mercy is not strained,  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed;  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.*

But where does the exercise of mercy leave justice? In *Dives in Misericordia* Pope St. John Paul II refers to: “the fundamental link between mercy and justice spoken of by the whole biblical tradition, and above all by the messianic mission of Jesus Christ. True mercy is, so to speak, the most profound source of justice. If justice is in itself suitable for ‘arbitration’ between people concerning the reciprocal distribution of objective goods in an equitable manner, love and only love (including that kindly love that we call ‘mercy’) is capable of restoring man to Himself”.

Anne and John Duddington



Pope St. John Paul II





## 2016 London Newman Lecture

### **Augustine and Freud: autobiography and grace** **The Reverend Dr Giles Fraser**

Dr Giles Fraser is priest-in-charge at St Mary's Newington in south London and former Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral. He writes the Loose Canon column in *The Guardian*, as well as appearing frequently on BBC Radio 4 in *Thought for the Day* and *The Moral Maze*. He is a visiting professor at the LSE.

**Thursday 10 March, 6 for 6.30pm**

**Heythrop College, Kensington Square, London W8 5HN**

Ticket **£10** (**£5** for members of The Newman Association); tickets (to include a glass of wine) available from *Chris Quirke, 29 Spring Road, Hale, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 2UQ*.

For further information email: [secretary@newman.org.uk](mailto:secretary@newman.org.uk) or phone 07764 946074.

Cheques should be made payable to *The Newman Association*.

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

## 2016 Manchester Newman Lecture

### **Pope Francis – Reform and Resistance** **Paul Vallely**

Paul Vallely CMG is a leading British writer on religion, ethics, Africa and developmental issues. He is Visiting Professor in Public Ethics at the University of Chester and Senior Fellow at the Brooks World Poverty Institute at the University of Manchester. His best-selling biography *Pope Francis – Untying the Knots* was published in 2013 and expanded in 2015 with additional chapters on the inner workings of the current papacy, as *Pope Francis: The Struggle for the Soul of Catholicism*



**Monday 25 April 2016, 6.30 for 7pm**

**Friends' Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS**

Ticket **£8** (**£4** for members of The Newman Association) if booked in advance;  
**£10** at the door

To book contact Chris Quirke, preferably by email ([secretary@newman.org.uk](mailto:secretary@newman.org.uk)) or phone 07764 946074

# Concerning Circles

## New Members

We can welcome the following new members, who have been elected at recent Council meetings. They are attached to Circles as shown:

Mr P. T. Dignam (Edinburgh), Sir Anthony Holland (Wimbledon), Mrs P. McKernan (Ealing), Fr D. McNamara (North Merseyside), Mr O. & Mrs B. L. Dudley Edwards (Edinburgh), Mrs A. Rumian (Ealing), Mrs S. A. Rush (Coventry).

## Requiescant in Pace

Your prayers are asked for the following members who have died recently:

Professor R.W. Daniels (North Glos.), Mr A. Dunsire (Unattached), Mrs C. Stephens (Hertfordshire), Mrs M. M. Theodorides (Manchester & N. Ches.)

## Subscriptions

Direct Debit subscription payments will be collected on February 1st 2016. Members paying by cheque will receive the usual reminder during January.

Bill White, Membership Registrar

Advance notice

## Newman Association AGM 2016, Saturday, June 11th



This year's Annual General Meeting will take place at 11 a.m. at Friends' Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS.

The AGM will be followed by a talk on Newman's letters by Mgr Roderick Strange, former Principal of the Beda College in Rome.

Full details will follow in the May issue of *The Newman*

## Circle Programmes

### Aberdeen

12 January	Year of Mercy	Contact: Margaret Smith, 01224 314566
8 February	No room for Homelessness!	<i>Fr Stuart Chalmers</i>
7 March	Quiz Night	<i>Alasdair Cameron</i>
12 March	Day of Recollection	<i>Canon Bill Anderson</i>
11 April	Mystic Raptures and Levitation: The Life of a Beguine of Provence	<i>Aileen Macdonald</i>
9 May	AGM and Cheese & Wine	

### All Circles

10 March	London Newman Lecture: Augustine and Freud: autobiography and grace	<i>The Reverend Dr Giles Fraser</i>
25 April	Manchester Newman Lecture: Pope Francis – Reform and Resistance	<i>Paul Vallely</i>

**Birmingham** Contact: Winifred Flanagan, winifredflanagan@gmail.com  
 12 March The Way Forward *Jean Riordan*  
 9 April Pope Francis' Encyclical on the Environment *David McLaughlan*  
 7 May Reflections on Catholic/ Orthodox Relations  
*Bishop Robert Byrne CO, BD, AKC*

**Cleveland** Contact: Judith Brown, 01642 814977, browns01@globalnet.co.uk  
 17 January New Year Lunch  
 24 February Love and Suffering. Views of Julian of Norwich and Hans Urs von Balthasar *Prof Karen Kilby*  
 16 March Called to a Noble Adventure. The challenges of youth ministry today *Fr Paul Farrer*  
 20 April The History of Christianity in India with particular reference to the Syro Malabar rite. *Dr Dominic Rajkumar*

**Coventry** Contact: Colin Roberts cjroberts08@talktalk.net  
 7 January Epiphany Mass & Party  
 23 January Christian Unity Service: Chapel of Unity - Coventry Cathedral  
 26 January Charity: 'Carriers of hope Coventry' *Sue Sampson*  
 23 February Work of 'Birmingham Citizens Advice Bureau' *Sister Mary*  
 March Day of Recollection  
 26 April Night Shelters in Coventry & Leamington *Chris Johnson & Margaret Moore*  
 24 May The work of 'Pax Christi' *Pat Gaffney*

**Croydon** Contact: Arthur Hughes, arthur.hughes116@gmail.com  
 16 January New year party  
 8 February Barnabas Society/ Vernon Stokes *Fr. Richard Biggerstaff*  
 9 March Circle Lenten Mass. Celebrant and Preacher *Bishop Paul Hendricks*

**Ealing** Contact: Anne Riley agriley@waitrose.com  
 21 January Annulment – the facts *Monsignor John Conneely*  
 24 January Planning for the future: the Ealing Circle and the National Association  
 18 February The Church in China *Fr Eamonn O'Brien*  
 21 April The Caliphate *Fr Damian Howard*  
 May Visit to Bevis Marks Synagogue

**Eastbourne & Bexhill** Contact: John Carmody, 01323 726334, johncarmody44@hotmail.co.uk

**Edinburgh** Contact: Lyn Cronin, lyncronin@btinternet.com  
 27 January Catholics, Families and the Synod *Deacon Peter Lavery*  
 24 February Views from the Pews *Panel of lay people share their views after the Synod*  
 9 March Love & Suffering *Prof. Karen Kilby*  
 11 May The Scandal of Christian Disunion *Fr. Nicholas King S.J.*

**Glasgow** Contact: Arthur McLay, mclay@btinternet.com  
 28 January Facing the challenges of Laudato Si' *Professor Colin McInnes*  
 28 April Andrew Lang – The Reformation and its place in Scottish History *Dr Catriona MacDonald*  
 25 February The Catholic Imagination of George Mackay Brown *Dr Linden Bicket*  
 9 April Circle visit to Abbotsford with Mass  
 26 May TBA

**Hertfordshire** Contact: Maggy Swift, 01582 792136, maggy.swift@btinternet.com  
 17 January Social Change: the Persistence of Faith *Bishop John Gladwin*  
 13 February Panel on Laudato Si'  
 12 March Quiet Day *Father Chris Connor*  
 17 April Circle AGM  
 21 May Gerard Manley Hopkins *Fr Dominic Milroy*

**Hull & East Riding** Contact: Andrew Carrick, 01482 500181

**Llanelli** Contact: M. Noot, 01554 774309, marianoot@hotmail.co.uk

**London** Contact: Patricia, 0208 504 2017

**Manchester & N. Cheshire** Contact: Chris Quirke, 0161 941 1707 dcq@mac.com  
 7 March Medieval Monastic Gardens *Maureen Thomas*  
 9 May Who is my neighbour? An exploration of sanctuary and migration in the light of Catholic Social Teaching *Barbara Hungin*

**North Gloucestershire** Contact: Stephanie Jamison, 01242 539810, sjamison@irlen-sw.com  
 2 February Pilgrimage, Yesterday & Today *Very Revd Michael Tavinor*  
 1 March Green Christian: What, When & How? *Martin Davies*  
 5 April Blessed John Henry Newman on Vatican 11 *Dr Ian Ker*  
 3 May AGM & The Hymns of RC Writers *Revd Canon Michael Garland*

**North Merseyside** Contact: John Potts, john\_potts41@hotmail.com  
 18 February Catholic Faith and Critical Reason: Enemies or Friends? *Prof. John Sullivan*  
 17 March Should Priestly Ordination be extended to Married Men? *TBA*  
 21 April Laudato Si' : On the Care of Our Home *Mgr Peter Fleetwood*

**North Staffordshire** Contact: Vincent Owen, 01782 619698

**Rainham** Contact: Marie Casey, bmcasey@btinternet.com

**Surrey Hills** Contact: Gerald Williams, guillaume30@btinternet.com

**Tyneside** Contact: Ann Dunn, jadnew@btinternet.com

**Wimbledon** Contact: Bill Russell, 0208 946 4265, william\_russell@talktalk.net  
 21 January A Jewish View of the Catholic Church *Tony Hammond*  
 17 March The Church of the East *Dr Erica Hunter*  
 19 May William Wilberforce and the Abolition of Slavery *Mark Williamson*

**Worcester** Contact: Heather Down, 01905 21535, hcdown@gmail.com

**Wrexham** Contact: Maureen Thomas, maureenthomas@uwclub.net  
 26 February The Christian's Cross, The Muslim's Veil...to wear or not to wear? Religious discrimination in the work place today *Vincent Ryan*  
 29 April The Synod on the Family *Bishop Peter Brignall*  
 27 May TBC

**York** Contact: Judith Smeaton, 01904 704525, judith.smeaton@btinternet.com  
 18 January Being a Muslim in York *Imam Abid Salik*  
 15 February What is it to be a Christian? *Fr. John Farrell O.P.*  
 18 April Married priests: the time has come! *Michael Kerrigan*  
 16 May AGM, followed by talk