

# THE Newman

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The Manchester Newman Lecture

Paul Valley

Pope Francis – Reform and Resistance

Giles Hibbert

Embracing the Future

Bernard Robinson

Christian Origins

Ben Ryan

Catholic Founders of the EU

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Book and film reviews  
Working Group reports

Spirituality Page  
London Newman Lecture

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Cover picture: *Pope Francis's modest motto Miserando atque Eligendo* ("pitiable yet chosen")

# Comment

Next month we will be invited to vote in a referendum on the continuation or termination of the UK's membership of the European Union. Our relationship with our Continental neighbours is once more in doubt. We are reminded that English nationalism is an extremely powerful force which has many times through history been brought to bear on Continental targets.

For many Roman Catholics the Treaty of Rome is not quite so troublesome as for non-Catholics. After all, we have in any case declared our allegiance to a Church which, although worldwide in scope, is based elsewhere in Europe. To that limited extent we have diversified part of our nationality. Elsewhere in this issue of *The Newman* Ben Ryan discusses the influence that followers of the Catholic faith have had on the development of the EU: Catholic concepts such as solidarity and subsidiarity played an important part.

Nearly 500 years ago England broke free of a previous Roman relationship. It was implemented not through a referendum involving the whole population but through a sole decision by King Henry VIII. There was no balanced assessment of the pros and cons but it was simply a retaliation against the Pope's refusal of an annulment of Henry's marriage to Catherine. There were, however, other significant factors such as a certain amount of resentment by the broader citizenry of the wealth and power accumulated by the monasteries in England, and the unpopularity of certain features of the Roman Church such as its insistence on Latin in the liturgy (and the Bible) and on celibacy for priests.

The Church of England was converted into an Anglicised and separated near-clone of the Roman Church. The sovereign became its head. In its early days, however, it was never really closely involved in the broader Protestant movement which was developing at the same period of the sixteenth century led by radical Continental thinkers such as Luther and Calvin. British Protestants such as John Knox came a little later. Ironically the Catholic Church has recently modified its approach to the English identity crisis by reverse-engineering an Ordinariate in which Anglicans can continue their liturgical practices but regain communion with Rome.

Elements of these religious schisms can now be seen in the pre-referendum debate. The "Brexit" arguments are often based on faith rather than reason with sovereignty being elevated almost to the status of a divine principle. Economic and social risks and costs are often disregarded. Moreover it is hard to weigh up the long-term security value of pan-European stability against the local appeal – in the short term – of English independence.

But there is, of course, a much wider Anglican communion which is less influenced by nationalism. The Scottish Episcopal Church, for instance, has no royal connections but is headed by a "Senior Bishop". The Scottish Episcopalians, therefore, are disestablished and could happily support an independent Scotland if that were a consequence of England's repudiation of the EU. Where this would leave the Church of Scotland, headed by the Queen, is quite another matter.

Meanwhile, on June 23rd, we will all make a choice between the Protestant ideal of sovereignty and the Catholic principle of solidarity.

Barry Riley

## Manchester Newman Lecture

# Pope Francis - Reform and Resistance

by Paul Valley

*This is an edited version of the talk given at Friends' Meeting House, Manchester, on April 25th. The full text is available on the Newman Association's website.*

Recently<sup>1</sup> the Jesuit university in New York, Fordham, held a public discussion entitled "Is the Pope Catholic?" The phrase has long been used in American colloquial speech as a dismissive response to a silly question. Thus, Question: *Would the kids like to go to Disneyland?* Answer: *Is the Pope Catholic?* But as the Fordham discussion shows, what was once a piece of puerile rhetoric has become a serious question.

A number of prominent Catholics are seriously asking: "Is the Pope truly Catholic?" Hard-line conservatives have long resisted the changes being ushered in by Pope Francis. They didn't like it when he washed the feet of women, and Muslims. They didn't like it when he said the Church has been too "obsessed" (to use his word) with issues like abortion, gay marriage and contraception – and he shifted the focus of the church from sex to social injustice: "How I would like a poor Church for the poor". They called *Evangelii Gaudium*, his 2013 apostolic exhortation, Marxist for its critique of capitalism and condemnation of "the idolatry of money". They told him to stop meddling with science when his landmark encyclical in 2015 *Laudato Si'* accepted the scientific consensus that human activity is at least partly to blame for climate change. They didn't like it when he ruled out any campaigns to convert Jews and approved a "common prayer" with Lutherans for joint commemorations for next year's 500th anniversary of the start of the Protestant Reformation.



### Catholic identity

All this, they said, was spreading "confusion". Confusion is the codeword among Conservative Catholics for anything the Pope says that they disagree with. But they are not actually confused: just annoyed and upset that Pope Francis raises questions over what they have, in the era of Pope St John Paul II and Benedict XVI, held as axiomatic badges of Catholic identity. "Who am I to judge?" riposted Francis, when asked about a gay person who seeks the Lord, answering a question with another question. Questions have not been very fashionable in the Vatican in recent decades: only answers.

But the Pope's latest offering – the 2016 apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, The Joy of Love – has moved the attacks upon him up a gear, and seriously so. The Pope's document on family life has been branded "a catastrophe<sup>2</sup>," "a deliberately destabilizing document<sup>3</sup>" and "an abuse of the Pope's teaching authority [which]... will no doubt be a source of confusion, media spin, and continued crisis within the Catholic Church<sup>4</sup>". One US conservative wrote: "Suddenly the rhetorical question, 'Is the pope Catholic?' doesn't seem so rhetorical anymore<sup>5</sup>". The influential New York Times columnist Ross Douthat, who has been one of Francis's leading critics on the Catholic right, is openly

wondering about the pontiff's doctrinal purity and whether he is leading the Catholic Church into schism<sup>6</sup>.

I'll look at *The Joy of Love* in more detail later. But what has so riled conservatives about it? After all, it is a document which, as they acknowledge, clearly reiterates Church teaching on contraception, abortion, the right of medics to refuse to be associated with abortion, the right of children to have a mother and father and the fact that a same-sex union is not analogous to marriage? What has riled them is this: Pope Francis may not be changing Church teaching but he is dead set on changing the culture of the Church. He wants the Gospel to feel like Good News. He wants the Church to open its arms to embrace what is positive in people's messy lives rather than wagging its finger at what is negative. What the conservatives don't like is that *Amoris Laetitia* says we should stop saying that gay or remarried people are "living in sin". Or that we should see seeds of goodness in even so-called "irregular" situations. All this, says Ross Douthat, has been "designed to introduce a level of ambiguity into Church teaching".

My focus tonight is going to be on what I see as Francis's central reform, which is about *process* – not outcomes. This Pope wants to change the way in which the Church makes its decisions; he wants it to abandon the modern monarchical model of papacy and replace it with the more collegial and consultative decision-making process which characterised the early Church, and to which the Second Vatican Council wanted the Church to return, so that the Pope and the Vatican become the servants of the Church rather than its master.

But it is worth noting in parentheses that this dynamic of reform and resistance is not confined to this single area, crucial though it is to Francis's mission.

As we have seen in the recent days there is resistance, too, to Pope Francis's push to clean up the Vatican's finances. This is an area in which Cardinal George Pell, the Vatican's senior money man, has made huge progress. Yet only last week another department, that of the Secretariat of State, has told all Vatican departments to ignore the international accountancy firm, PricewaterhouseCoopers, brought in by Pell's Secretariat for the Economy to do an external audit of the Vatican finances. Exactly what is going on is obscured but what is clear is that this is a setback for Cardinal Pell's reform process. There is talk of: deliberate attempts to humiliate Pell, whose vigorous reform process was resented by the old guard in the Curia, the Vatican bureaucracy; of the audit unnerving vested interests; of moves to oust the reforming president of the Vatican Bank; and even to get Pell replaced. Some talk of open civil war in the Curia. But at the very least the level of resistance is clear, and seemingly becoming more overt.

Then there is the issue of *sexual abuse*. There is the same dynamic of reform and resistance there. I'm going to be talking about that at length in my lecture at the Sale Festival on 16 June. But, briefly, a hidden civil war which has been waged inside the Vatican for the last two years continues. On one side are reformers who want public accountability for paedophile priests and the bishops who oversee them. On the other is the recidivist Roman old guard whose instinct for cover-up continues. Two years ago Francis set up the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. It is made up of clerics, theologians, psychiatrists, therapists and – most significantly – two survivors of priestly sex abuse. The most vocal of them was Peter Saunders, who founded the National Association for People Abused in Childhood, and who is one of the world's

most forthright anti-abuse campaigners. When Francis chose him to join the papal panel it seemed that real change was in the air in Rome.

Yet in February he was asked to leave the Commission. It was a signal that the Catholic Church is reverting to its old bad habits of secrecy and cover-up. At the same time it was revealed that the Church has been running training courses for new bishops where they have been told it is “not necessarily” their duty to report accusations of clerical child abuse to the police. The commission, it transpires, had been allowed no role in devising the training programme. At its last meeting it heard how two priests recently alerted their bishop to an abuser priest – and were then were told by the bishop to stay silent. The tribunal set up inside the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to prosecute bishops who covered up for paedophile priests has not heard a single case yet. Another commissioner, Marie Collins, has announced her lack of confidence in “those whose task it is to work with us within the Vatican and implement our proposals when approved by the Pope”.

### **Opposition to reforms**

So there is a pattern here. Francis wants reforms; those who oppose them drag their feet or create bureaucratic obstacles. It is there in finance. It is there on sexual abuse. It is there on reform of the Curia. But it is most threatening to the Francis Project in the area I now want to address in detail.

The 2014 Synod marked a new chapter in the history of Catholicism. A first step had been taken in significantly shifting the way in which the Church governed itself. Bishops had openly discussed ideas for which they could have been investigated, censured, silenced or removed from office under previous papacies. The climate of conformity and fear that had gripped Catholicism had lifted. But the price of that was that it allowed the first mainstream public opposition to Pope Francis to emerge. Some critics became fierce in their attacks on him in the weeks that followed. But Pope Francis seemed unfazed.

He told the Argentinian newspaper, *La Nación*<sup>7</sup>: “Resistance is now more evident. But that’s a good sign for me. It’s out in the open and there is no stealthy mumbling when there’s disagreement. I am not worried. It all seems normal to me. If there were no difference of opinions, that wouldn’t be normal.” And he continued: “You could ask me, ‘Are there any individuals who are completely obstinate in their positions?’ Yes, there surely are. But that doesn’t worry me. It’s a question of praying for the Holy Spirit to convert them, if there are such people. The prevailing feeling was a brotherly one.”

The net effect of all this was that the 2015 Synod began with an atmosphere which was far from the brotherly one of which Francis had spoken at the end of the 2014 gathering. There was a lot of *suspicion and bad faith* about. On the eve of the Synod reports began to circulate that Pope Francis had a benign *brain tumour*<sup>8</sup> – reports which several senior cardinals decried as a deliberate attempt to undermine the Pope by implying that his mental acuity was impaired. Then came reports – of varying degrees of accuracy – of 13 senior cardinals writing to the Pope on the opening day of the Synod warning him against any attempt by reformers to manipulate the Synod’s working document, procedures or membership of the group charged with writing the final report<sup>9</sup>.

The Pope himself felt obliged to make some unplanned opening remarks at the synod cautioning its members against buying into what he called a “hermeneutic

of conspiracy". Such fears, the pope said, are "sociologically weak and spiritually unhelpful." But it was not the most auspicious start to the gathering<sup>10</sup>.

The final document which the 2015 Synod produced was more cautious than the text of 2014 which is perhaps why it received the quorum consent of a two-thirds majority for all its paragraphs. In that sense it gives us a picture of the Church – or more accurately, of its bishops – as the Church presently is, rather than the Church as Pope Francis would like it to be. For all that, it is some considerable achievement to have got as far as he has given that almost all these bishops were appointed by Wojtyla and Ratzinger. The final Synod document contained something to please everyone, even if few seem completely satisfied with the final delicate compromise – which took the most controversial issues off the table or treated them with ambiguous language. The result allowed conservatives to insist that nothing had really changed, and that therefore they had won<sup>11</sup>, while liberals asserted that the door had been opened to significant change on the totemic issue of readmitting divorced and remarried Catholics to Communion<sup>12</sup>. The secular media, trying to take the even-handed approach, were unable to decide<sup>13</sup>.

But what was important about the Synod was not the outcome: it was the process. And the changes there produced significant changes in mood, tone and language. Beforehand, although the Church stoutly maintained that it loved the sinner but hated the sin, yet the plain truth is that for all the previous talk of "respect" gay people have in practice been treated with hostility for decades by many in the Catholic Church. Francis's Synods are the first in which the word "gay" has been used. (One cardinal told me that they are also the first Synods in which laughter has been heard). Even the phrase "homosexual unions" is an implicit acknowledgement of a reality more conservative Catholics would be at pains to ignore. In the second Synod there was no talk about homosexuality being "intrinsically disordered" or a "moral evil". Such talk, many in Rome suggest, is now permanently over. And there were even a handful of women allowed, as a token gesture. This Pope says we need a new theology of women, but he's not sure how to go about it.

### **Amoris Laetitia**

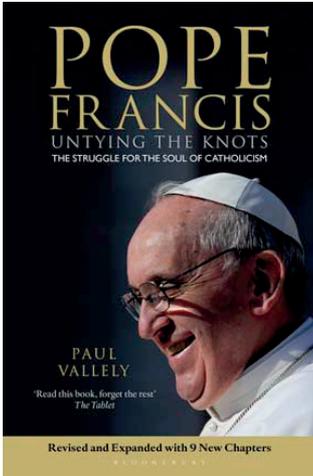
It is on that shift which Pope Francis has built in *Amoris Laetitia*. *The Joy of Love* is an extraordinary document. It is another expression of the deep message of compassion and mercy which have become the hallmark of this Pope. Francis is a Pope who is orthodox on doctrine but revolutionary in his application of it, a Pope who puts the Gospel – and a vividly merciful expression of it – before dogma. And a Pope who believes that mercy is a higher Gospel virtue than judgement or condemnation.

So *Amoris Laetitia* is a document filled with traditional language which reaffirms Catholic teaching unequivocally on issues such as on abortion and the relative merits of heterosexual or same-sex marriage. But it speaks plainly about a wide range of complex pastoral challenges to the family. The long text calls for better sex education for the young, advises engaged couples to spend less on their weddings, calls for parishes to support young marrieds and tells men to do more housework. It looks at challenges facing the family, ranging from war and migration to unemployment and a lack of affordable housing.

But on the controversial issue of lifting the ban on remarried Catholics taking Holy Communion it is ambiguous. It reiterates Francis's *Evangelii Gaudium* pronouncement that the Eucharist "is not a prize for the perfect, but a powerful medicine and

nourishment for the weak.” And it speaks of the so-called “internal forum” in which a priest or a bishop may work with a Catholic who has divorced and remarried to decide privately and on a case-by-case basis if he or she can be fully re-integrated into what he calls “a fuller participation in the life of the Church”.

There is a wilful ambiguity in this. The language is elastic. It allows conservatives to find in it unequivocal affirmation of the indissolubility of marriage. Yet liberals can see repeated distinctions between doctrinal ideals and pastoral compassion – condemning the sin but loving the sinner; the Pope dismisses phrases like “living in sin” insisting sin cannot be determined by a scrutiny of external circumstance. Not everything that looks



“irregular” has sin in its heart.

What this means in practice is that *Amoris Laetitia* will be seen as giving conservatives permission to change nothing at all. Those pastors and bishops inclined to a stricter reading of Church law will not feel compelled to revise their thinking. Indeed they can point to this document as justification for not changing their behaviour at all. And yet the exhortation also allows those more pastorally inclined to point to the same document as justifying change. In many places, far more so in the UK, the “internal forum” is already applied. In many parishes, divorced and remarried Catholics go forward for communion, and many priests either quietly encourage them to do so or, at least, never discourage them, choosing to respect whatever decision they have made in conscience.

## Ecclesial revolution

Yet to say that *Amoris Laetitia* leaves much open to interpretation misses the point of what is really revolutionary about this apostolic exhortation. For I submit that the seeds of a significant ecclesial revolution exist within this document. To understand that we need to look again at process, not outcomes. Pope Francis does not want to change the rules. He wants to change the culture in which those rules are applied.

Consider these passages from the document:

*There is a need to avoid judgements which do not take into account the complexity of various situations.* *Amoris Laetitia*, Para 296

*The divorced who have entered a new union... should not be pigeonholed or fit into overly rigid classifications leaving no room for a suitable personal and pastoral discernment.* (Para 298)

One size does not fit all. He makes that clear at the start of the exhortation. People are encouraged to live by the Gospel, but should also be welcomed into a Church that appreciates their particular struggles and treats them with mercy. Church teachings are universal but they can and should be interpreted with flexibility in different circumstances, places and time:

*Each country or region, moreover, can seek solutions better suited to its culture and sensitive to its traditions and local needs.* (Para 3)

*Not all discussions of doctrinal, moral or pastoral issues need to be settled by interventions of the magisterium.* (Para 3)

That is Rome, the Vatican and the Pope do not need to decide everything. And he returns to that in Chapter Eight, the section of *Amoris Laetitia* which is headlined:

“Accompanying, Discerning And Integrating Weakness”. There he says:

*Neither the Synod nor this Exhortation could be expected to provide a new set of general rules.* (Para 300)

*It can no longer simply be said that all those in any “irregular” situation are living in a state of mortal sin* (Para 300)

*A pastor cannot feel that it is enough simply to apply moral laws to those living in “irregular” situations, as if they were stones to throw at people’s lives* (Para 305)

*By thinking that everything is black and white, we sometimes close off the way of grace and of growth* (Para 305)

Priests must avoid “the closed heart of one used to hiding behind the Church’s teachings, sitting on the chair of Moses and judging at times with superiority and superficiality difficult cases and wounded families”.(Para 305)

Most forcefully he adds, quoting in a footnote from *Evangelii Gaudium*:

“I want to remind priests that the confessional must not be a torture chamber, but rather an encounter with the Lord’s mercy.” (Footnote 351)

Pope Francis knows that not everyone will agree with this view and says that he understands those who “prefer a more rigorous pastoral care which leaves no room for confusion.” (Para 308)

However, he adds:

*“I sincerely believe that Jesus wants a Church attentive to the goodness which the Holy Spirit sows in the midst of human weakness, a Mother who, while clearly expressing her objective teaching, always does what good she can, even if in the process, her shoes get soiled by the mud of the street.”* (Para 308)

What all this is doing is asking the Church to meet people where they are, to consider the complexities of people’s lives, to give them guidance, and to respect people’s consciences when it comes to moral decisions. Some conservatives immediately declared themselves to be “confused”. Others, like the arch-traditionalist Cardinal Raymond Burke, pronounced that *Amoris Laetitia* was not a definitive teaching document but just the personal opinion of Pope Francis. But others pointed to what the Pope had said when quizzed by the press about the meaning of the footnote on Communion.

### **On the Papal Plane**

Had anything concrete changed they asked him at an in-flight press conference in April on the papal plane back from his visit to Syrian refugees in Greece. “Read the presentation<sup>14</sup> by Cardinal Schönborn, who is a great theologian,” the Pope said. Cardinal Christoph Schönborn of Vienna had introduced *Amoris Laetitia* at its official launch in the Vatican. He said it represented what he called an “organic development” of the Church’s pastoral practice for remarried divorcees. Afterwards he said the document had adopted his 5-step programme in Vienna<sup>15</sup>. The programme involves a series of five questions a priest must ask divorced and remarried couples to see how

mercifully and correctly they have behaved before, it can be inferred, they are able to receive Holy Communion. This was, one prominent conservative canon lawyer<sup>16</sup> complained afterwards, “the Kasper proposal” in disguise, adding: “We have something here which is not in accord with what the Church has said up till now”.

So why do I say all this contains the seeds of a significant ecclesial revolution? Let me tell you a story. One sleepy Sunday a friend of mine was with a group of English priests in a car taking a drive in the country just outside Rome after lunch. Few people were around. Only mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun. The road entered a little village where all was quiet. But the traffic light was on red. So the Englishmen stopped. A few moments later a car came up behind them. Its Italian driver overtook them and edged forward through the red lights. The Englishmen sat law-abiding and stationary. Another car did the same. The Englishman continued to obey the red light. Then, finally, it changed. As it did, one of the priests turned to my friend and said: “So now do you understand the Italian attitude to *Humanae Vitae*”. The veteran Vatican-watcher John Allen wrote something reflective a few weeks after *Amoris Laetitia* was published. He wrote: “*What Pope Francis has done is let the rest of the world in on one of the best-kept secrets about the Catholic Church. Yes, the Church has laws, and it takes them very seriously. But even more than law it has flesh-and-blood people, and it takes their circumstances and struggles seriously too. For Mediterranean cultures, which still shape the thought-world of the Vatican to a significant degree, law is instead more akin to an ideal. It describes a moral aspiration, but realistically it’s understood that many people much of the time will fall short. In reality, that’s been the spirit of things in the Church forever, to greater and lesser degrees depending on time and place. Still, it somehow feels new, and important, to hear a Pope saying it out loud.*” That reality has varied from one part of the world to another. In America, which has formed John Allen’s worldview, the Church is polarised between those with such attitudes and a group of conservative bishops, obsessed with abortion, homosexuality



and other below-the-belt issues, who have taken a vociferous hard line in holding rigidly conservative interpretations of Church teaching. But in Britain bishops have almost universally proceeded on the commonsense expectation that their priests will use good judgment in applying Church teaching in its breadth and richness in ways that reflect their local circumstances.

The Jesuit moral philosopher Fr Gerry Hughes gives a good example of that in the current edition of *The Tablet*<sup>17</sup>. He writes: *Take, for example, the commandment to keep the Sabbath holy. In Catholic theology that has been interpreted in terms of attendance at Mass on Sundays and perhaps (though with less emphasis) observing Sunday as a day of rest. On the other hand, it is uncontroversially admitted, at least in general terms, that a person is not bound to attend Mass if it is very difficult or impossible for them to do so in cases of illness, or the unavailability of a Mass in a particular locality where an individual had to be. Similarly, Jesus in the Gospel is presented as saying that keeping the Sabbath holy does not require a person to avoid doing a work of mercy (for instance, healing a sick person, or gathering some berries in order to have something to eat on a journey). Was Jesus “changing the teaching of the Decalogue” or not?*

Hughes sites similar theological developments to explain why Christians stopped refusing to serve in the armed forces, or ended the ban on lending money at interest which was formerly condemned as usury. Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas and John Henry Newman, Hughes explains, are at one in saying that universal principles will often have to be interpreted if we are to make good decisions about particular cases.

### **Flexibility and nuance**

This is what riles Conservatives about *Amoris Laetitia*. It elevates this long-standing Catholic capacity for flexibility and nuance in pastoral practice, and sets it squarely alongside the law in full public view. Conservatives want the Pope to judge, not fudge, as they see it. “Perhaps Pope Francis should ask: Who am I to fudge?” asked one Conservative Catholic recently<sup>18</sup>. They want the Pope to pronounce so they can hide behind the magisterium – a failing which, interestingly, the thoughtful US conservative Ross Douthat has acknowledged in his 2015 Erasmus Lecture which he titled “A Crisis of Conservative Catholicism”<sup>19</sup>.

In it he said: “It’s easy to mock this sudden enthusiasm [among liberals] for papal authority. But a conservative Catholicism that became too quick to play the “magisterium” card as a substitute for sustained argument must acknowledge that it’s being hoisted on its own petard.” Douthat’s suggestion is that anyone talking about papal authority needs to place more “on the fullness of tradition rather than the words of just one Pope”. Which is the kind of talk which got liberals into trouble under the papacies of Pope St John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

But Pope Francis wants a Big Tent with room for everyone, where disagreement is not dissent but dialogue. Previous popes have used post-synod exhortations to issue definitive new positions on the subject in hand. Francis has gone out of his way not to be definitive. *Amoris Laetitia* is, to conclude, a document which comes out of a three-year process involving an unprecedented questionnaire of lay people, two synods and a year of worldwide debate. It quotes from those synods more than 200 times as well as from numerous documents by bishops conferences around the world. It quotes from Protestants and secularists, too.

It speaks of the primacy of conscience, and of the need for discernment – that most Jesuit of practices from this Jesuit Pope. It speaks of the need for “each country or region” to “seek solutions better suited to its culture and sensitive to its traditions and local needs”. He knows this will disconcert “those who prefer a more rigorous pastoral care which leaves no room for confusion”. But Francis wants a more mature spirituality. He wants what the former Master General of the Dominicans, Fr Timothy Radcliffe, has called “a church for grown-ups<sup>20</sup>”.

What this amounts to is the first practical application of the Second Vatican Council’s call for a return to a more collegial church. This Pope is no longer monarch but a bishop among bishops. As *primus inter pares* he does not judge (or fudge) but rather is content to *nudge*. With this document Francis has shown himself to be the *first true Vatican II pontiff*.

**Paul Vallely is a writer and consultant on international development, religion and ethics. He is a Director of The Tablet.**

- 1 19 April 2016
- 2 <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2016/04/amoris-laetitia-in-conflict-with.html>
- 3 <http://religionnews.com/2016/04/20/rns-pope-catholic/>
- 4 <http://thefederalist.com/2016/04/11/pope-francis-is-part-of-the-catholic-churchs-identity-crisis/>
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- 6 <http://religionnews.com/2016/04/20/rns-pope-catholic/>
- 7 <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1750350-pope-francis-god-has-bestowed-on-me-a-healthy-dose-of-unawareness>
- 8 <http://www.quotidiano.net/il-papa-ha-un-tumore-al-cervello-ma-i-medici-dicono-che-%C3%A8-curabile-1.1409328>
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# Embracing the Future

by Giles Hibbert O.P. (died 28.12.2013)

NOTE

by *Fabian Radcliffe OP*

*Giles wrote this paper in February 2007. He had, as he says, been diagnosed with cancer of the liver. In the event this turned out to be a misdiagnosis; but he did not know this at the time of writing, and he felt the need to think more intently about death, its pain and its timing, and about purgatory. Sometime around then, he and I had a conversation in which he mulled over many of his thoughts in the paper, and he gave me a copy of it. But after that we never talked any more about it. I had the impression that once he knew that the threat of death by cancer had passed, he put the paper aside and did not work on it any more, or show it to anyone else, so far as I am aware. So what he wrote here is a provisional expression of his thinking, and to be fair to him we must remember this, and not treat it as a fully considered expression of his views. He would surely have made many alterations before publication. Just what he would have said on hearing that the paper had been made public in its original draft is best left to the imagination! I only hope he will forgive me for sharing his still roughcast thoughts with readers of *The Newman*, and through them with others. If it encourages us all to treat these matters thoughtfully and honestly, and in a truly Catholic spirit, then I am sure he will be pleased. The text is just as he wrote it, and I have simply added a few explanatory footnotes.*

A friend and colleague of mine was heading for a rather nasty death, one of those motor neurone illnesses in which one becomes more and more paralysed. We were worried that he might be tempted to bring life to a close artificially before the horrors actually began to hit him; he had once before, some time back, made an attempt at suicide, but that I am sure was a “cry for help” rather than anything else – a cry which was heard and answered. But in fact he rose well above all our fears and died peacefully in a hospice.

But how “wrong” would it have been if he had decided to accelerate things? It has been the *firm* Christian tradition that to bring one’s own life to an end (*viz.* suicide) is wrong under all circumstances; and to aid someone in doing this is, in our society, a criminal offence: murder. There are many “Christian traditions”, however, which seem firm and irrevocable which are in fact traditions simply because “this is what we have always done/said/thought/etc.” – slavery, torture, usury, homosexuality (*vide* my *A Syllabus of Cherries – A Credo for a Third Millennium Catholic*, CCC Publications 2007, for comments on other “firm” traditions).

I myself have personally wondered about this. Supposing the USA should make a nuclear attack on Iran, and then Russia and/or China join in. The resultant effects would be to take us back more or less into the Dark Ages. Would all those pain killers which I need to survive at the moment, due to the PHN from which I suffer, still be available? Other things – mere survival – would perhaps be more important. Could I cope without them? Already as it is I spend quite some time screaming with the pain. Would I be justified under such circumstances in taking my own life? I do not know – “the firm Christian tradition” is not really strong enough to give me a reliable answer. So, and here is a confession, I have in fact kept back from my medication over the years what I believe to be effectively a fatal dose of morphine. It would probably not work because such a dose – it is oral – might well induce nausea; it would be a waste of my tablets! At any rate, I have passed through that phase and am relatively happy about it. The “temptation” (if that is what it is) has at least temporarily vanished.

It just so happens, now however, that I may well be saved from having to face this problem. I have just been diagnosed with cancer of the liver – probably with further multiple complications in the associated organs<sup>1</sup>. I am likely, if I let “nature take its course”, to be dead long before my pain killers run out! On the other hand, if I do *not* let nature take its course but “fight” the cancer with prayer and will-power, and of course with radiological treatment and chemotherapy, what might be the result? I *might* be cured completely; I *could* be given an extra year or two of life – life at a rather low level – or perhaps just a month or two’s extension. Is refusing such treatment, and thus in effect bringing one’s life to an earlier end, tantamount to suicide? Is it inevitably wrong – or wrong at all? I do not think so.

### Two different scenarios

There are in general terms, however, two different scenarios within which this question might actually have to be asked. Speaking roughly, is the person concerned single or partnered? This latter might be restated more significantly as: “Does anyone radically depend on them?” The two cases are obviously rather different. Where someone has dependents, whether in need of their physical, financial or emotional support, then I think it is clear that considerable attention should be given to the means available for “fighting” the illness – taking into account, of course, the relative pain, discomfort, etc. involved – to both parties. [I am thinking here of my brother-in-law who, in his early 80s, is fighting leukaemia with some inconvenience to his own comfort, most probably on account of my sister’s current need of him for support. He might of course equally be being treated for the sake of a more comfortable death – to alleviate some of the symptoms. I do not believe him to be afraid of dying.]

I am not personally, however, concerned with this “dependency set-up”; I am by contrast *in a sense* single. I say “in a sense” because I am not alone, responsible only to myself, since I belong to the Dominican Order, the “Order of Friars Preachers”. The tie is strong and affectionate, and to a considerable extent successful – I am, after all, from those joining, amongst that minority which are “still here” and still working as a Dominican! The Dominicans are my family and without the relationship which I have with them I would not know how to be a Christian or a Catholic. [The vision given to me by Columba Ryan fifty years ago is still valid and vital.<sup>2</sup>]

But, although I can still work for them, proclaiming the Gospel as befits a member of the *Order of Preachers* – though with, alas, increasingly diminishing frequency and vigour – nevertheless their work in no way effectively depends upon me. I have served the Gospel through them for more than fifty years and I feel that at the age of 78 I could do with a “rest” – if that is what it is to be! Such an age, although perhaps a little on the low side for nowadays, is what one must at least call a “respectable innings”; I do not need to fight for more. Would it be “all right” to die at 80, but not at 78? I conclude from this that, without in any way being selfish, in this context all my consideration should be for myself. Of course I have friends who will be sad when I go – but that is so in any way, at any time – now or in 4, 5, or 6 years’ time. There is no one with regard to whom I am indispensable. There is no one to whom I owe a fight for further “unnatural” survival. I am already winding down (in some ways alarmingly), there’s not much more that can be got out of me.<sup>3</sup>

There are those who desperately fight for life, “just a little bit more” – it is “all that they

have". [Tolstoy's *Resurrection*, or perhaps it is Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables*, has a good description of the condemned man being taken to his execution, who at each turning of the route sees what is ahead as the whole of the life left to him – he still has this, even if it's only minutes. It was very much like that, I remember, when (miserably) I was on my way back to boarding school at the end of each holiday.]

Why are people frightened of death? In the case of those who do not believe there is anything else, they seem to think they will have lost out; they feel cheated dying. But who is it that they are thinking of? If that is the end of them, who is it that is missing out? Who is it that will be there to worry about it? Of course, if the death is going to be painful, that is another matter, but it is clear that even believing Christians often think of their lives as "all that they have", every end-moment is to be grasped at. "I don't want to die!" Why not? Surely, for a Christian (possibly for any enlightened human being, cf. Socrates as presented in Plato's *Phaedo*), it is a very exciting adventure: a setting out on a *new and wonderful enterprise*.

[As a result of a request originating in Trinidad it was suggested to me, in 1979, that I should leave Oxford, where I was lecturing in theology, and go out to the Caribbean to take part, from what one might call a Liberation Theological point of view, in ideologically assisting the somewhat unstable New Jewel Movement revolutionary government of Grenada, and help our people stationed out there to understand them. It would mean a total change of lifestyle for me, leaving all my carefully hoarded goods and comforts – appropriate for an Oxford lecturer but perhaps not for a *friar*: my books, my hi-fi and all my LPs – and start afresh with nothing but my personal expertise and knowledge, and my being a Christian within the Dominican Order. It was indeed somewhat daunting, but what a challenge! I was eager to go, but fortunately or unfortunately, sadly or otherwise, the project fell through for reasons of political confusion unconnected with myself. What a challenge and adventure it would have been! – perhaps one through which I would not have survived.]



Giles Hibbert O.P.

### An adventure

I can't help *regarding dying somewhat like that* – an adventure and a challenge. Now, I believe very firmly in the doctrine of Purgatory in relation particularly to this current topic. I do not mean that aspect of the tradition connected with indulgences and the like which was so disastrous for Christian credibility just before the Reformation, but something much more fundamental and important. I will make use of and partially quote from my own *A Syllabus of Cherries – A Credo for a Third Millennium Catholic* to explain what I mean.

We are called upon, as Christians, to "die with Christ so that we might rise with him" (Rom 6:5) – Paul is arguing against those who say there is no resurrection. The first point to stress in all this is that our salvific grace comes *entirely* from God, *through* his Son, our Saviour. [How we have ever given the Protestants reason to doubt this I am

totally unable to understand – unless it is because of the over-devotion which we have in times past given to Mary and the Saints.] It is within this context of Jesus' healing grace that we are purified and healed. But Jesus has chosen us to be his friends, not servants (Jn 15:14-15), effectively his brothers and his sisters – so as to share with him both his divine and his human life.

In no way, however, and this is the second point to stress, does God treat us as *puppets*; in no way does he *force* anything upon us; both in life and in death he treats us fully as the human beings *whom he has made in his own image*, to live in companionship with him. Thus if we are to “die with Christ in order to rise with him”, it is we who have to do the dying – through his sacrifice and with his grace – it isn't an automatic process, either imposed or imputed. It is a sharing of life, which is what the Resurrection, and everything that led up to it, implies. “Purgatory” is as it were “quasi-mythological” (and has only unfortunately been a “quasi-legalistic”) way of talking about the process of this “dying to self”.

### **A flash of timelessness**

Here, presumably in a flash of timelessness, one is confronted, in some way or other, with all those whom one has hurt; confronted with all the times and ways that one has put oneself first, either in aggression or through laziness. In this confrontation one is healed by the loving presence of the Christ who stands by one as friend, teacher and healer (of each individual as well as of the whole of humankind.) It is not something one has to “do” on one's own – nor could one. So Purgatory is not just to be seen as passive – something done to one, a necessary cleansing – it is something which involves one's having to respond to those whom one has hurt; one has to meet the challenge of being healed through them, in Christ. So why not say of dying “*What a challenge! – even if a somewhat alarming one?*” Why not be able to say “I look forward to dying – however painful this experience of ‘purgatory’ is spiritually going to be”? Would I be wrong, then, if I were offered radiation or chemotherapy to delay the effects of cancer, to refuse it? Would I gain anything, in physical or in spiritual comfort, by accepting it, hoping for a few more months? (Hoping that some such treatment might be able to give a more physically “comfortable” death is another matter.) To live a little longer – I admit that I would like to see the Spring again, the leaves budding on the trees opposite my windows, the cowslips and the orchids up in the hills above here. (They both love the limestone which is a characteristic of the White Peak – though here we are where the Dark and the White Peak meet and intermingle.)<sup>4</sup> But let it be; they will go on flowering whether I am here or not.

I would also very much like once again to celebrate Easter at Llanidloes as planned; but again, let it be, that is in God's hands. It would be good to reach the Dominican Peace and Justice Conference once again in Clun – where they want me to give a paper. It would be nice to die here, at home, rather than in something like a hospice, but that might be a serious cause of inconvenience to others. It does not really matter on my account; that is all relatively insignificant. The great thing is dying.

It is better, I think, to say “dying” rather than “death”; the former is positive, the latter is somewhat negative. Dying authentically is rather like building a bridge – constructive and creative, a leap forward towards something new, the other side. [As a young man, just qualified as a civil engineer, bridge-building (relatively small ones at that time) was

one of my major pleasures!]

Dying is the normal, natural conclusion to our lives, to be welcomed with excitement. But is cancer “natural”? Many people, I’m afraid, regard cancer as an “invasion from without” and therefore to be fought from that point of view rather than from any other. But it isn’t. There may be causes from without, but in a sense it is natural to the body – sometimes indeed questionably so, but often its “proper *telo*”. [This may be an oversimplistic attitude.]

### **In love and friendship**

What is significant in it is being open to the love of the Lord calling to us, offering his arm in aid to one who he has called “his friend”, so that the latter can meet in love and friendship those whom he has hurt and thrust aside. At one time, during the perhaps “over-joyful days” that followed the Second Vatican Council, there was an opinion (to which I subscribed) which favoured white vestments at a funeral rather than the traditional black or the penitential purple/violet. The reason was good in its way: we were celebrating and commemorating, not so much death (actually, our “having died” rather than our “death”), as our belief in the Resurrection – so white was the appropriate liturgical colour. Something, however, was being left out here: purgatory. Although it takes place (if one can put it like that) in the glorious light of the Resurrection, which is the presence of new created life, and is only meaningful within this context – nevertheless Purgatory is quite emphatically penitential, and thus the Church’s traditional use of purple is indeed appropriate.

The reference to “penitential” makes me think of its relationship to the Catholic tradition of the Sacrament of Penance and its relevance to this context. This is the poor relation among sacraments, or so-called sacraments – nobody really knows what it is all about. Until fairly recently it was referred to, and practised regularly by Catholics, as “confession”, and took place in whispers in dark boxes at the back of the church. Terrible sanctions were imposed upon those who abused it. At its worst, I think, the priest had to demand of the penitent “Will you stop doing this?” ... “All right, I will give you penance and absolution.” Is that in the gospels? Does one ever hear of Jesus putting it that way round? Is his forgiveness conditional? The forgiveness which he gives, which is God’s (cf. e.g. Mt 9:6) *always* comes first – even Mt 6:15 is not contradicting that. There is however a corollary: “Come, follow me” or “Go; sin no more”. The forgiveness itself is totally gratuitous – God’s love.

This tradition of confession and penance derives from the situation in the early Church where backsliding, under persecution, was not uncommon. It was necessary for there to be reconciliation, and public reconciliation at that. The term “reconciliation” never totally disappeared. It has been dug up again quite recently and we get it, as a result, used in the modern terminology of the “Sacrament of Reconciliation”. Great! But has this been worked through and properly understood? I think not. In between the early Church and the present day, religion has steadily been privatised; to oversimplify a bit, perhaps, it is all about me and my little soul before God (a “nasty” dirty soul, because it is always in need of re-healing: to be human is to be a recidivist!).

As an example of this, communion in the Eucharist has for a long time been all about making *me* holy; confession (penance) has been all about making *me* pure and clean before God - as if God could only bear the company of those who had been bathed

and perfumed! (Jesus was somewhat different, but who was he? We don't know if we don't read the Gospels to find out. Cf. Mgr Myriel, who in *Les Misérables* was said to have been such a holy man and bishop because "perhaps he had read the gospels.")

I don't believe all this cleaning or polishing up of the soul business; contrition is effective enough for that. The sacraments, in my understanding of them, are not simply what Jesus told us to do ("Go out and baptise ..."), nor what we might *infer* that he wanted, but a dramatic, even semi-mythological, action showing from within his Church his relationship to that Church – or in other words to the People of God. The sacrament of forgiveness, or compassion, as I would like to think of it, is the Church's public declaration that she is following the Christ himself when he says, *first of all* not last of all, "Neither do I condemn you" (Jn 8:11). "Reconciliation" is for the sake of the Church: it is a declaration of how she embodies Jesus as the Christ, just as the Eucharist is for the Church more than for each individual within it – seen as being achieved with pieces of unrecognisable "bread" turned into God.

So does a dying person need to make a "general", or "better than ever before", Confession? I don't think so. Of course she or he needs to look inward and be aware of her/his sins, the hurts committed on others, the contempt or lack of response to the love of God, etc.; and some people may need help with this. But when one comes across the idea that someone dying is lucky if they have a priest to hand to hear their confession – what corrupt nonsense! Catholicism is debasing Christianity. The pastoral need, however, for someone to be comforted (strengthened) at this critical time is another matter, as just suggested; but it may or may not be the necessary work of a priest/minister. I have come across the case of someone dying making a confession purely for the sake of comforting the priest! It is probably the latter that needs it most.

I do believe most profoundly in the sacraments; but if I do not want to "make a confession" this should not be seen as contradicting this belief. I do wish, however, that there were some way of making public my wish for reconciliation. Our bishops, however, have effectively made this out of court as part of the normal life of the Church. I think they believe it would weaken their control and power over us.<sup>5</sup>

Back to Purgatory again, where I meet and seek the forgiveness (in Christ) of those who I have harmed and wounded. I hope I don't "meet" any of you "there", for it would mean that I had at some time hurt you or failed in caring for you. I hope, however, that we shall all *meet up* purified (purged, if you like) in the glory of the light of the Resurrection – in other words in Heaven – whatever the meaning of "meeting up" might be.

Giles Hibbert, 25.02.07

- 1 Giles wrote this only a few days after the cancer diagnosis. But further medical examination showed that this diagnosis was mistaken.
- 2 This refers to the "Cambridge Lectures" given by Fr Columba Ryan when Giles was still in the Army and an engineering student at Emmanuel College. Though their later relationship was sometimes stormy, Giles always had an immense gratitude to Columba for the vision he had received from him about the Christian and Dominican life.
- 3 In fact he lived for another six years, and returned to live in a Dominican community, first in London and finally in Cambridge.
- 4 At the time, Giles was living at Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derbyshire.
- 5 Giles is probably referring here to "The Reconciliation of a group of Penitents with General Confession and Absolution". This was promulgated in 1972 but permission to use it was subsequently withdrawn by Rome.

# Christian Origins

*An edited version of a talk to the Tyneside Circle in November 2015 by Bernard Robinson*

## Introduction

After the disaster of Jesus Christ's crucifixion and death, but also the inspiration of his temporary miraculous reappearances, the Apostles and other followers regrouped themselves so successfully that they became in due course a mighty Church. Bernard Robinson examines the early historical evidence of how this was achieved. He discusses how the concept of the *ekklēsia* became wider and in due course Christianity separated from Judaism after AD 70.

## Jesus and the Kingdom

Alfred Loisy, the high priest of Modernism, wrote in 1902: "Jesus preached the Kingdom of God; but what came about was the Church."<sup>1</sup> Whether we should make a total disjunction between the two terms, Kingdom and Church, is uncertain, as we shall see, but what is clear is that what Jesus regularly spoke about—it was the very centre of his preaching—was the Kingdom of God. This meant "a future age of glory, when God's sovereignty would be revealed in the world in the affairs of men...The land of Palestine will...form the centre of the new Kingdom."<sup>2</sup>

That was the point of the petition: "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Jesus had no plan to found a Church in the sense of a mixed Jewish-Gentile movement outside Israel; he had been sent, he said, "only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24). His disciples were to be a "little flock" (Luke 12:32; cf. Matt. 26:31; Mk. 14:27; Jn. 10:1), a group of wedding guests (Mk. 2:18-20), a reform movement within Israel. "As far as one can ascertain", says C.C.Rowland, "Jesus did not envisage a religious system independent of Judaism. He may have prepared for the existence of a sect within Judaism as a temporary measure during the short period before the kingdom of God came, by delegating his authority to preach and act on God's behalf to his followers."<sup>3</sup>

That Jesus, at least towards the end of his ministry, did not expect the immediate coming of the Kingdom is suggested by his institution of the Eucharist. Admittedly, Mark's version of the Last Supper is a farewell meal, with no command to repeat the action (Mk. 14:22-26), but the account, ten years or so earlier, in 1 Corinthians does have the command, over both elements (1 Cor. 11:24-26). Jesus chose the Twelve as "the faithful remnant of the twelve tribes, the first-fruits of the people of God called to be part of the dawning kingdom of God."<sup>4</sup> They would sit on twelve thrones judging *the twelve tribes of Israel*. (Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:29-30; contrast 1 Cor. 6:2, where the saints will judge *the world*.) Gentiles could, however, apply to join as proselytes, as foretold by the prophets (e.g. Isa. 2:2; 60:3; 66:19-21; Jer. 16:19).<sup>5</sup>

In the Gospels there are only two occurrences of the word *ekklēsia*, church, both in Matthew: 16:18 ("On this rock I shall build my *ekklēsia*"); 18:16-17 ("If your brother sins [against you], tell the *ekklēsia*...if he should refuse to hear the *ekklēsia*..."). The 16:18 text may derive from a saying of Jesus about rebuilding the Temple, in the sense that his disciples would form the eschatological, Jewish messianic community.<sup>6</sup> "Jesus'

thinking on this matter will be similar to that of the Qumran covenanters who saw their community as superseding the Jerusalem temple.”<sup>7</sup> (So too perhaps 1 Enoch 90:20.) Matthew’s *ekklēsia* in Matt.16 can reasonably be taken as a fair gloss. If the Matt. 18 text goes back to a saying of Jesus, he may have been speaking of the local Jewish synagogue,<sup>8</sup> or of a local Jewish congregation. There must be a strong suspicion, however, that 18:15-20 is a Matthaean creation, an attempt to provide a disciplinary code for the Church of his day. The evangelist will have been trying to say what sort of mechanism Jesus would have devised for conflict-resolution among Christians.

## The Church

When we read the writings of Jesus’ followers and disciples, we find them very seldom mentioning the Kingdom, but frequently using the word *ekklēsia*, usually in the sense of a local assembly, but sometimes in a universal sense (Church rather than church, if you like). Why did they come to speak of themselves as Church? The word *ekklēsia* (√ *ek-kalein*, to call forth, call out), is not a Christian (or even an OT Greek) coinage. It primarily denoted the Greek legislative assembly, a parliament one may almost say (occasionally it denoted business meetings of clubs). In the Greek OT, it is often used to translate *qāhāl*, one of the two main Hebrew words for assembly (the other is *’edah*). The fact that it was used in the LXX for Jewish religious assemblies may have helped its adoption as a technical term for the Christian movement; but, as we shall shortly see, this is by no means clear. Its secular usage may be a sufficient explanation for its adoption by Christians, especially Hellenistic Christians.

Since *qāhāl* is regularly translated *ekklēsia* in the Greek OT, many have argued that the early Christians had the Hebrew term very much in mind when they spoke about the church. This seems unlikely. *Qāhāl* (√ *qhl*, to gather people together, to assemble them) tends to mean primarily (a) the assembling of a group of people for a specific purpose, and secondarily (but more commonly) (b) the membership of such a group.<sup>9</sup> Among examples of (a), I would include the texts speaking of “the day of gathering” at Horeb/Sinai: Deut. 9:10; 10:4; 18:16. When, however, Deut. 5:22 speaks of the whole *qāhāl* at that mountain, the word probably means the people assembled there (sense b).

Many scholars think that the word *qāhāl* can often refer to Israel as an organised body. It is remarkable, if this is correct, that we never hear of rulers, elders or princes

of a *qāhāl*, only of an *’edah* (e.g. Exod. 16:22; Lev. 4:15; Josh. 9:15). In several texts, various categories of people (eunuchs, bastards, Ammonites and Moabites) are excluded from the *qāhāl* of YHWH (Deut. 23:1-8; Neh. 13:1; Micah 2:5), and it is often



The Grand Theatre of Ephesus

suggested that these texts must be using the phrase of the people of God. The fact, though, that the precise formulation, stating that these people shall not *enter* the *qāhāl* of YHWH, will indicate that “the exclusion was from a service of worship, doubtless a temple-service...It will be remembered that ‘foreigners’ were excluded from all but the outer courts of the second temple.”<sup>10</sup> Lam. 1:10 is instructive in this regard: it says that Gentiles, who are forbidden to enter the *qāhāl*, have *invaded the sanctuary*.

*Qāhāl*, then, does not refer to a standing body. The other Hebrew word mentioned, *‘edah*, does. Its composition is indicated in Num. 1:2-3, “the whole *‘edah* of the sons of Israel, every single male from twenty years upwards, everyone in Israel able to go to war.” It will have constituted a form of primitive male democracy, like the Mesopotamian *puhrum*. It will have been “responsible for waging war, hearing legal cases, punishing certain transgressions, and attesting important events in the life of the nation.” (TDOT 10:479)

That such a body (which excluded women and children) was thought of as a precedent for the Christian church is not very likely. It is remarkable, in fact, that Christians seldom if ever quoted OT texts using either *qāhāl* or *‘edah* to point up OT precedents for the Christian Church. Acts 7:38 may be an exception. Here Stephen says of Moses: “He is the one who was in the *ekklēsia* in the wilderness with the angel that was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He gave us living oracles.” The point of “in the *ekklēsia*” is not clear, but it may be that it is: “Moses was in the old congregation or church, Heb. *qāhāl*, Greek *ekklēsia*, as Christ is in the new.”<sup>11</sup> This is by no means certain, since Acts seems never to use *ekklēsia* of the universal church. With this possible exception, the NT seems uninterested in trying to connect the idea of the Christian church with OT texts using *qāhāl* and/or *‘edah*. To suppose, therefore, that Christians adopted the word *ekklēsia* because of OT usage of these terms is pretty speculative.

### **Church local and Church universal**

The earliest NT texts to be written that contain the word *ekklēsia* are all Pauline. In the indisputably Pauline letters, *ekklēsia* seems always, in my view, to mean the local church or a local church meeting, even in, for example, 1 Cor.12:28 : “God has appointed in the *ekklēsia*, first apostles...” This is often taken to refer to the universal church.<sup>12</sup> But, says J.D.G. Dunn, “that interpretation involves the anachronistic assumption that ‘apostles’ was already perceived as a universal office.

“In contrast, Paul’s perception was of apostles appointed to found churches (1 Cor. 9.1-2), limited in the scope of their commission (2 Cor. 10.13-16), so that each church properly speaking had its own (founding) apostles—just as it had its other ministries of prophets, teachers, and other charisms. In 1 Cor. 12.27-28, in particular, it is evident that Paul had in mind the church of Corinth as such: ‘You [the Corinthian believers] are Christ’s body [in Corinth], and individually parts of it. And those whom God has appointed in the church...’”<sup>13</sup>

Also in Rom 16:23 the local church is probably meant: “Gaius who is host to me and to the whole church”—of Corinth. The text could, though, as noted by J.C. O’Neill, mean that Gaius “willingly gave hospitality on the congregation’s behalf to all Christian travellers who were passing through (Lagrange).”<sup>14</sup> It seems more natural, though, to suppose that Paul means that Gaius made welcome in his house Christians from all

the house-churches in Corinth (from where Paul was probably writing). In 1 Cor. 14:23 “the whole church” definitely means the local, not the world-wide, church. Dunn writes that “Paul’s conception of the church is typically of the church in a particular place or region. He does not seem to have thought of “the church” as something worldwide or universal—“the Church.”<sup>15</sup>

Colossians and Ephesians do use the idea of the universal Church: Col. 1:18,24.; Eph. 1:22; 3:10; 3:21; 5:23-32. (Col. 4:15,16 uses the word of the local church.) Both letters are late so that, even if one or both should be Pauline, they are evidence of the late development of this notion. Both letters give the Christian community as a whole a cosmic dimension within “the mystery of Christ.” All barriers between Jew and Gentile, and between nation and nation, have been broken down. Christ is the head of the Church, which is his body. For 1 Corinthians and Romans, Christians make up one body in Christ (1 Cor. 6:15; 10:16,17; 12:12-27; Rom. 12:4-5) but the notion of Christ as head of the body is peculiar to Ephesians and Colossians (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:19). (Contrast 1 Cor. 12:21, where the head is a human member of the body.)

### **Patterns of Ministry in the NT Church**

How Jewish Christians organised themselves, is unclear. In the Gentile churches, Paul saw himself as the permanent authority figure. Many church members of both sexes exercised ministerial functions in the various congregations, but it is doubtful whether (*pace* Acts 14:23) any of them (except perhaps at Philippi: Phil.1:1 ) had a set sort of office to which they had been appointed. Certainly at Corinth the impression we get from 1 Cor. 14 is that people of both sexes got to their feet to sing, teach, give a revelation, speak in tongues, or interpret tongues, as they felt called to do. (The women, though, had to cover their heads, as was customary: 11:15.)

Paul’s only requirement was that they must not all perform at once, otherwise their ministry would be in vain. The sort of “disarray” (14:33) that such a charismatic church order could produce may be the reason that towards the end of the first century, on the evidence of Acts, 1 Timothy, Titus, and perhaps 1 Peter, a more institutional form of church ministry emerged. However, quite late on in the first century and beyond, though, some parts of the church, such as the Johannine community and the community of the *Didache*, were still unhappy about increased institutionalism. In the Fourth Gospel, the charismatic Beloved Disciple always outshines the more institutional figure of Peter. In the *Didache*, the Eucharist is celebrated by prophets (10:7), and readers are told to let *episkopoi* and *diakonoi* share in the ministry of the prophets!

### **The Church and Israel**

What continuities did the NT Christians see between the Christian people and Israel? Some scholars think that Paul saw the Christian community as a replacement for Israel. In Gal. 6:16 Paul, speaking of all who follow the thinking that he is expounding, says, “Peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.” John Bligh contends that “‘the Israel of God’ means the Christian Church”, the true Israel, Israel according to the Spirit as against ‘Israel according to the flesh’” (1 Cor.10:18).<sup>16</sup> Dunn, however, argues, more convincingly to my mind, that for Paul the new movement was not

thought of as separate from Israel but as included within it; Israel remained the recipient of God's covenantal blessings (Rom. 9:4-5). Gal. 6:16 will therefore invoke blessings on the whole of Israel, including the Christian movement, which in Paul's day had not yet been differentiated from Judaism as a separate world religion.<sup>17</sup>

"The parting of ways between Judaism and Christianity", says P.S. Alexander, "only takes on an air of finality with the triumph of Rabbinism within the Palestinian Jewish community and the virtual disappearance of Jewish Christianity;"<sup>18</sup> in other words, in the period after AD 70. After the Fall of Jerusalem, Judaism became much less pluralistic, diverse and tolerant of rival interpretations than hitherto. A curse against Christians and other deviants was incorporated into the Jewish liturgy. As Christians saw things, however, the Christian movement was in continuity with the Israel of the OT, the people who on "the day of the *qāhāl*" had been summoned to Sinai/Horeb, there to hear the word of God and to commit itself to obey it under a solemn covenant and to receive the blessings promised to the patriarchs. Election, the divine presence, the covenants, the giving of the law, liturgical worship, and the promises (Rom. 9:4), God's gifts to Israel, belong, they believed, to all those who, by faith, are to be reckoned the offspring of Abraham.<sup>19</sup>

Christians, like Israel—like the rest of Israel, we should perhaps say-- saw themselves as the elect people of God. They had a new covenant which, however, did not invalidate the old one made with Israel (Rom. 11:1-2). They, like Israel, were called to pursue holiness (the commonest NT word for Christians is "saints" [*hagioi*], Rom. 1:7, &c., &c.), but now it was defined not in ritual but in ethical terms. They did not feel bound by the Mosaic Torah (after all, argued Paul, it was a divine afterthought which did not go back to Abraham's time: Gal. 3:17-29).

They made much of the idea of atonement, but for them this had nothing to do with Yom Kippur but with the death of Jesus Messiah. They (perhaps Paul specifically) introduced the doctrine of justification by faith. They had a non-Jewish missionary orientation, and soon became a predominantly Gentile movement. There was much that the Christian *ekklēsia* had in common with Israel as a whole, but there was much that was new too.

## Conclusion

Jesus proclaimed the coming of a Jewish Kingdom, with, probably, Gentile proselytes joining in. Latterly, at least, he seems to have envisaged a period before the final coming of the Kingdom when his disciples would form a reform movement within Judaism. From at least about AD 50, Christians came to use of themselves the word *ekklēsia*, originally in a local sense but later of the universal Church. That they were influenced in this by OT words for assembly, *qāhāl* and *'edah*, is far from certain. Until AD70, Christianity remained part of Israel, though with a number of important new emphases.

The Church initially was largely charismatic in nature, but towards the end of the first century institutional structures came to predominate in many, though not all, parts of the Christian world.

**Bernard Robinson, Tyneside Circle**

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- 1 Loisy, 166.
  - 2 Rowland, 133-34.
  - 3 Rowland, 153.
  - 4 Rowland, 152.
  - 5 The institution of the Twelve did not survive very long, partly perhaps because it was "an early casualty of the failure of the expected imminence of the kingdom" (Brown, 134) and partly because alongside the Jewish Christian church which was struggling to survive (with James, after Peter's departure from Jerusalem, as director of the Jerusalem congregation and Peter as the leader of missionary activities to the Jews [Gal.2:7]), the Gentile Christian mission under Paul rapidly outstripped it.
  - 6 See Robinson, esp.90-93.
  - 7 Robinson, 93.
  - 8 So Schmidt, 50; Robinson, 93.
  - 9 "A gathering focussed on a currently unfolding occasion": TDOT 12:554.
  - 10 Campbell, 135-136.
  - 11 Williams, 108. Similarly Bruce, 172: "As Moses was with the old Ecclesia, so Christ is with the new, and it is still a pilgrim Church, 'the Church in the desert.'" Bruce notes that the verse following Deut. 18:15 refers to "the day of the *qāhāl* on *Horeb*." See also Marshall, 143.
  - 12 E.g. by ODCC, 344.
  - 13 Dunn 1998, 540-41.
  - 14 O'Neill, 259.
  - 15 Dunn 1998, 540.
  - 16 Bligh, 493-94.
  - 17 Dunn 1998, 507.
  - 18 P.S.Alexander in Dunn 1991, 24.
  - 19 1 Peter ch.2 applies to Christians several OT designations for Israel (a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy people...) without saying that the church now has replaced Israel.

# The European Project: A Catholic Story

by Ben Ryan

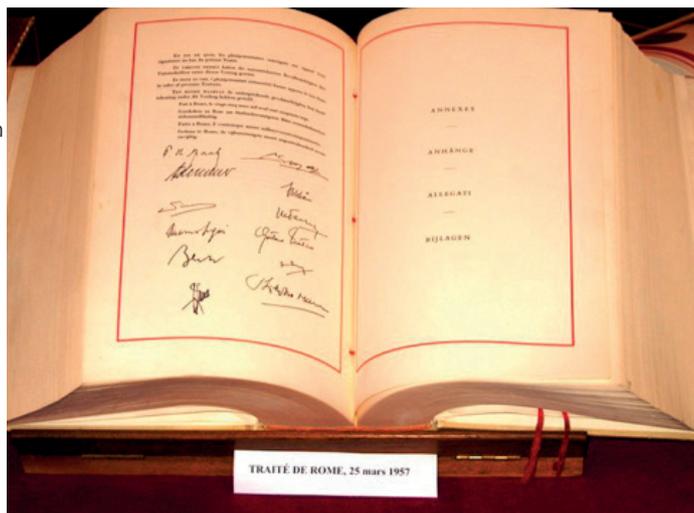
“So, once again, the Pope reveals that the agenda of the Roman Catholic Church is political and manipulative in its objective to be the dominant controlling force in Europe.” So said Ian Paisley in 2000 as he attacked the Catholic Church’s interest in the EU.

The idea that the EU is a Catholic plot was by no means invented by Paisley – it has been a recurrent refrain of nationalist groups (particularly in Protestant countries) for as long as the European project has existed. Certainly in 2000 Paisley was giving the Church too much credit: in truth as an institution the Church had (and has) no real ability to directly influence policy or shape the political future of the EU. However, in another sense Paisley was quite correct: this was a political model which, at least in its origins, was a distinctively Catholic concept.

I should stress what I mean by that. The European project was never exclusively the outpouring of Catholic thought, nor was it ever in perfect harmony with the Church. Nevertheless the early European project had an ideological basis, and that basis was drawn from Catholic Social Teaching, primarily through the medium of Christian Democrat parties and politicians.

This can be too easily overlooked or taken for granted. Plenty of historians and journalists have sought to detach somehow the European project from its intellectual origins. So, there are those who want to claim that the development of the European project reflects an American desire to establish a bloc against Soviet aggression, another string to a bow that includes NATO and the Marshall Plan. This is unhistorical: documentary evidence from the time reveals that the Americans were taken by surprise by the content of the Schuman Declaration and the European Coal and Steel Community. Certainly they were supportive, but to claim the idea came from, or was shaped by, the Americans is fanciful.

Likewise there are those that want to claim that the European project was a socialist design (a myth recently given fresh airtime by Iain Duncan Smith). Undeniably there were socialists involved in the design of the early European project (most notably the Belgian Paul-Henri Spaak); however, their impact was



necessarily limited by the context of 1950s Europe and the dominance of Christian Democrat politicians.

In terms of context it is worth noting that in West Germany and Italy the Christian Democrat parties which were in power in the 1950s were obsessed with keeping the socialists out of power. Socialist parties in Germany and the Labour party in the UK meanwhile were opposed to the early European project; the Germans because they saw it as undermining the future reunification of Germany, the British because they thought it would damage British industries and, therefore, be unacceptable to the unions.

By contrast an analysis of the context and content of the early European project makes it abundantly clear that this new political entity owed its existence primarily to Christian Democracy, and particularly to Catholicism. Many of the key architects of early integration – including the French foreign minister Robert Schuman, the Italian prime minister Alcide De Gasperi and the West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer – were committed Catholics. Catholic Christian Democrats were the dominant group among signatories of the 1951 treaty of Paris that established the ECSC and the 1957 Treaty of Rome that started the EEC.

The Treaty of Rome, for example, was signed almost entirely by Catholic members of Christian Democrat parties with the exception of Paul-Henri Spaak and the two French signatories (all socialists). Spaak's fellow signatory from Belgium, Baron Jean Charles Snoy et D'Oppuers was a Catholic politician with an expertise in Thomist philosophy. Luxembourg's Joseph Bech was another leading Catholic figure as was the Dutch signatory Joseph Luns. In both treaties Catholic politicians far outnumbered the others. When considering context, however, it is not just the fact that individually most of the figures involved were Catholic that is relevant but that the networks which connected them and aided in integration were also Catholic. The historian Wolfram Kaiser notes the role of the Nouvelles Équipes Internationales (NEI) and Geneva Circle – both of them forums for Christian Democrat politicians that pre-dated World War Two. They provided discussion forums and introduced key Catholic political figures to one another. So, for example, Schuman's proposal for the ECSC came as no surprise to Adenauer since it had often been discussed in NEI and Geneva Circle meetings even before WW2.

### **Catholic influence**

More importantly the Catholic influence on the European project can be seen in the content of the ideological basis that came to underpin first the ECSC, then the EEC and finally the EU. Within this basis economics played only an ancillary role. The German chancellor Adenauer made it quite clear in the Bundestag in 1952 that he felt all six governments involved in the early European project (France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Belgium, West Germany) "realise... that the political goal, the political meaning of the European Coal and Steel Community, is infinitely larger than its economic purpose." The political goals (which we could just as accurately call moral goals) were the establishment of peace, solidarity and subsidiarity.

Peace is in a sense an obvious aim of European integration (and by no means a specifically Catholic aim). What was novel about this new European model was the attempt to move beyond treaties that relied on little more than trust, to a situation in which breaking the agreement was in Schuman's words "materially impossible"

because the ECSC required a pooling of sovereignty over the two industries necessary for creating military power and prevented Germany from rapidly outstripping the French industrial sector. This willingness to weaken the power of states for the sake of peace owed much to a particular Catholic ambivalence over the role of the state and nationhood.

From the outset, however the European project was about more than states. There was also a significant focus was on making workers and citizens wealthier, healthier and safer (thereby creating solidarity between people and classes). The commitment was explicitly to “the constant improvement of the living and working conditions of their [member states’] peoples.” This commitment is referred to extensively in both the Treaty of Rome and Paris – for example, Article 117 of Rome states that “Member states agree upon the need to promote improved working conditions and an improved standard of living for workers.”

The other guiding principle was that of subsidiarity, which, according to the glossary of the EU website, is a concept that: “[E]nsures that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen and that constant checks are made to verify that action at Union level is justified in light of the possibilities available at national, regional or local level. Specifically, it is the principle whereby the Union does not take action (except in the areas that fall within its exclusive competence), unless it is more effective than action taken at national, regional or local level.”

The term was consciously adapted from the 1931 Papal Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*. Critically, the idea was not only seen in terms of governance, but of justice. Indeed, Pius XI summarised the concept of subsidiarity in those terms since “it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organisations can do.”

### **A broader conception**

This was tied into a broader conception of how society should function. Christian democracy as an ideology emphasised “personalism”, the idea that all people are fundamentally relational and tied to others. Humans are not atomised individuals but are essentially bound into social structures and particularly families. The emphasis on supporting families and local communities while resisting centralised power found in the doctrine of subsidiarity is one that is critical to the model of Christian democracy and, therefore, the early European project.

This was the intellectual backdrop to what became today’s EU – a distinctly Christian Democrat-flavoured enterprise that owed significantly more to Catholic Social Teaching than it did to Keynesian economics. None of which absolves the EU of the charge that it has not done its founders’ vision justice. Nor does it demonstrate one way or the other whether the UK is right or wrong to be considering a “Brexit”. However, it is to say that the history and intellectual roots of where we are now are in danger of being forgotten or obscured by those who want to tell a story that better fits their own political vision. In a sense Paisley had it right – this was a Catholic plan for a new politics, and that’s a story worth telling.

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## The London Newman Lecture 2016

The London Newman Lecture was delivered at Heythrop College on March 10<sup>th</sup>. The Rev Dr Giles Fraser, an Anglican priest, spoke on *Augustine and Freud: autobiography and grace*.

Unfortunately it is not possible to print a proper report of his lecture, as would normally be done in this May issue of *The Newman*, because the speaker declined to provide a text and also refused permission for his talk to be recorded. Apparently this was because some of the material may be published in a book next year.

A few points from Giles Fraser's lecture can, however, be reported. He described Sigmund Freud and St Augustine as geniuses of the human condition – one an atheist, one not. Freud talked of the "original helplessness" of the human baby, while Augustine was



Rev Dr Giles Fraser

preoccupied with Original Sin. Freud said that people spend their whole lives in recovery from their childhood. Augustine said that human beings are fundamentally dependent on grace. Both Freud and Augustine were obsessed with vulnerability – and with death. "When times are tough in my life I end up preaching about St Augustine" observed Giles Fraser.

Giles Fraser admitted that he once underwent a course of treatment with the psychotherapist Susie Orbach, a "talking cure", which led to an interest in Freud. And inspired by Augustine's *Confessions* he started to write his own autobiography. He noted a principle of Augustine, which was "first confess your failure and then ask for help". "I am not a self-fixing creature," said Giles Fraser. As for Freud, he went on, the father of psychoanalysis considered that "as adults, we develop all sorts of strategies to cope with helplessness and vulnerability. We are all in recovery." And Augustine demonstrated a form of honesty, so that he could plumb the depths of the human condition. "Luther was like Augustine on steroids," he added, raising a laugh from the audience.



Newman members in the Loyola Hall at Heythrop College

## Film Review

# A personal view of *SPOTLIGHT*

by Josephine Way

What struck, and indeed scandalised me, about this film was its depiction of an enclosed, exclusive Roman Catholic community indistinguishable from Boston society, in which anyone from elsewhere or of a different faith was classed as an outsider. The film, which is not about the clerical sexual abuse of children but the exposure by the local newspaper, the *Boston Globe*, of the Church's cover-up, shows what a bad system a theocracy can become. As an adult convert, drawn in by reading French Catholic writers and spending time in that country, where Catholics are not a group apart, my first experience of a faith community was on the bus to the Wembley Stadium celebration of the Centenary of the Restoration of the Hierarchy when I suddenly found myself surrounded by my Roman Catholics! Then my Parish Priest in Edgware volunteered his brother and sister-in-law, then pregnant with triplets, to put me up during the week to save a long cross-city commute to work. I still remember their warm welcome, and their kind enquiry as to when I was going to get married and have babies! My Catholic community while living in London was the Newman Association. Today some Catholics seem to see a difference in essence between themselves and those not of the Faith; I remember a woman who said of her daughter-in-law, "She's not a Catholic, of course", as if to say "What can you expect?"

But more important than this us-and-them attitude, the main revelation of *Spotlight*, winner of this year's Oscar for Best Picture, is the harm done by the idolatry of the institution which has developed over time. People talk as if the holiness of the Church resides in its governance and authority; but no institution can be holy since the aim of all is power and self-promotion. Only in the People of God (a description not favoured by the Curia, who have tended to see themselves as "the Church"), can holiness be found. Another factor is the elevation of the priesthood as a superior class; children were told: "You never say no to Father"!



In a scene showing the Cardinal among prominent Catholic citizens there is a sense of self-righteousness in their having protected the institution from harm; with nothing said, no tip nor wink. In the end we learn that the *Boston Globe* itself has ignored past reports of abuse; only the new Jewish editor, a rank outsider, could set in motion the exposure of the scandal. It is, of course, undeniable that the Church has not only maintained the Faith over the centuries and done much good, but also that without this framework Christianity would not have survived. Pope Francis' vision of an inclusive Church which is not governed entirely by the central authority but with input from all communities shows an encouraging way forward, a different way of perceiving Christ's community.

Some Catholics seem to feel it disloyal to see a film which exposes bad practices in the Church; there is also the excuse that while abuse exists in other organisations, and indeed within families,

the Media “have it in” for the Church so that what they say can be discounted or played down. But only through acceptance of the truth can reform take place. Every Catholic, especially those in authority, should see *Spotlight*.

There are no horrific scenes of abuse; only a glimpse of children in a lawyer’s office, and a mild, elderly priest abuser fiercely protected by his sister. The truth is presented with restraint and economy, no comment is needed. Church authorities were no doubt aware of the cataclysmic effect the revelation would have on the Faithful, when the “One True Church” they believed infallible and incapable of sin should be found guilty of so grave an offence. One brief scene makes the point; an old lady lays down the paper in which she has just read of the exposure and faintly asks for a glass of water; in another a lapsed journalist at Midnight Mass grieves that after what has happened he can never come back to the Church he had loved.

Book Review

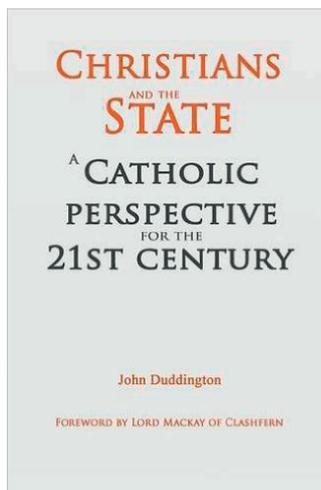
by Aidan Reynolds

## Christians and the State – a Catholic Perspective for the 21st Century, by John Duddington; Gracewing 2016, £12.99

It is difficult to overemphasise the importance of the subject treated in this book. Throughout the Western world the long-accepted norms of behaviour and the moral standards that govern them are being challenged and often overturned. Christians in Britain are now reluctantly realising that our liberal modern state can no longer be counted upon to share our values, and in fact is frequently at odds with them.

Most of us are familiar with such recent instances as the lost battle for Catholic adoption agencies unable to accommodate same-sex couples or the fate of the Glasgow midwives who refused to superintend abortions in their wards. Catholic belief was specific in these cases but all Christians are encountering difficulties as a result of recent legislation. One thinks of the registrar who was dismissed for refusing to handle same-sex weddings, the BA employee who wore a cross with her uniform or the Northern Ireland baker who refused to ice the cake with the wording the gay couple demanded.

The author traces the relationship between Church and State from earliest times pre- and post-Constantine, then through the Middle Ages when, he says, “the modern idea that Church and state are opposed would not have meant a great deal”. The Protestant Reformation changed the relationship with the concept of *cujus regio eius religio* giving the state a dominant role in Church affairs. John Duddington goes on to examine the *pros* and *cons* of our established Church of England. A state Church can become a pawn in an increasingly secular age making it unable to stand up for Christian values when new laws conflict; but it can also be unhealthy when religion is closely linked to the state as, for example, was the case for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Ireland. Religion should never be



allied to a particular political party. On balance, however, he believes that Establishment helps to keep religion in the public sphere and is therefore beneficial.

English law has a Christian basis but quite quickly – and very recently – this basis is being diluted. We must cope with the impact of recent statutes, in particular the Human Rights Act (1998) and the Equality Act (2010). They are well-intentioned and, for the most part, valuable; indeed, they are often underpinned by modern papal teaching, often invoked by the author in a very welcome feature of the book.

However, we can no longer depend on the law being in tune with the common good and Christian morality so that interpretation of the law in medical ethics, employment, dress and other areas is causing problems. Examples are given on pages 192-4. We need to know the law to fight our corner. Faith schools for example are not obliged to promote beliefs in conflict with their own but should not discriminate against those who hold them.

The policy of Catholic adoption agencies in England was held to be illegal but an adoption agency in Scotland, where the law is different, escaped censure. The changing attitude of the Charity Commission to religion is another area of concern. Until recently it was assumed that all churches could be assured of obtaining charitable status with its pecuniary advantages. Now, however, a religious body has to give evidence of “public benefit”. This the enclosed order of Carmelite sisters at St Charles Square was deemed unable to provide.

It is no longer generally accepted that faith and reason go together. Religion tends to be regarded as a set of personal beliefs which lead the less-educated to absurd and superstitious practices. If Christianity is to have cogency in the court of law we must insist that ours is a *reasonable* religion. Those without religion generally fall back upon the concept of natural law as the ultimate guide to moral behaviour. Christianity is not only fully consonant with natural law but cannot be opposed to it. The author quotes Thomas Aquinas: “*The natural law is nothing else but a participation of the eternal law in the minds of rational creatures*”.

How, then, should we respond to the situation in which we find ourselves? First of all we should be cautious about appealing too readily to conscience. An opinion, however strongly held, does not in itself allow one of us to say “I had to follow my conscience”. It is a very serious claim to make that I am not bound by law on grounds of conscience. The New Testament makes clear that the law must be obeyed.

Two situations in which an appeal to conscience may be justified are given on page 91 of this book. Conscience apart, we should campaign vigorously for our right to be heard in the public sphere and to influence the content of legislation, arguing for the difference between a personal belief – e.g. a hatred of fox-hunting – and religious values as group values in contrast to the individualism characterising secular society. Duddington finds inadequate Paul Vallely's view that “the task of good religion is to seek mutual understanding rather than adding to the tensions of a polarising situation” (page 134).

When our fundamental beliefs are threatened we must resist strongly but with reason as well as faith. This book should be studied closely not only by Christians but by those from every religious tradition and by all who enact and implement the law.

*Editor's note: John Duddington is a member of the Worcester Circle and is also a member of the Editorial Committee of The Newman.*

# Letter to the Editor

I found Mike Kerrigan's survey of celibacy comprehensive and valuable (*Married Priests – Has Their Time Come?* in *The Newman*, January 2016 issue). But I would take up a different perspective to say that it is too late to depend on any variation in the condition of the present priesthood. The time of the "married priests" has, in fact, *gone* rather than come. Unless the Eucharistic imperative is to be ignored, ordination must be extended.

What is the position of the Pope on this? As Mike pointed out, Pope Francis has expressed the hope that bishops will approach him on the subject. Some bishops, not merely in Britain and Ireland, have agreed. Much more significantly, Pope Francis in November 2014 allowed married men in the Eastern Church to be ordained in the US, Canada and Australia.

The practicalities do not really present a problem. A simple method of providing the Eucharist is to ordain a number of parishioners elected by each parish after a year's preparation, which effectively takes celibacy immediately out of the equation. A theological education of five or six years is quite unnecessary for providing the Sacraments. The small Glasgow group "To Feed The Flock" wondered exactly how the episcopate and the Tridentine priesthood felt about extending ordination. It sent, respectfully, the suggestions above to most of the bishops of England and Wales, and all of those in Scotland, as well as to 154 of those Scottish priests on the internet. One English and one Scottish member of the episcopate courteously acknowledged receipt, without comment. Of the 154 Scottish priests, just four responded.

## **The priesthood's task**

The Tridentine priesthood seems to be more and more introverted, rather than teaching all nations – even although such introversion apparently precludes the extension of ordination and the consequent expanded provision of the Eucharist which is the priesthood's task. As the *Catholic Herald* pointed out the bishops of England and Wales recently rejected a proposal to urge Rome to ordain married men, concluding that priestly celibacy was a sign and symbol of an interior dedication to Christ and his kingdom.

These, of course, are entirely admirable spiritual aspirations, if possibly difficult to explain or defend with any conviction to a Honduran or Filipino dying without the Sacraments. This will be especially difficult if the dying Catholic knows he could have received the Last Sacraments from a validly-ordained celebrant who is also the furniture maker or textile worker in his village. All over the world there are ordinary Catholics who might wish to enjoy, in their humble way, spiritual aspirations through the Sacraments, but cannot do so. This is more than odd.

No one can deny the part played by the Tridentine priests in the great nineteenth century movement from the country to the city. There were, and are, wonderful people among them, many of them Irish (or of Irish descent), whose dedicated lives and powerful personalities made them natural leaders, when such leadership was vital. Bing Crosby played such an idealised and revered priest in the Oscar-winning film *Going My Way*. But can it be the case today that the Tridentine priesthood simply hopes the paedophile scandals will go away? Hollywood's latest contribution has been

to enshrine the situation in *Spotlight*, also an Oscar-winner.

Can it be true that the very fact of extending ordination – and the creation, therefore, of so many Ordained Celebrants – represents some kind of obstacle to the Tridentine clergy? If they accepted it they would no longer be a very small elite but would become part of a very large group indeed. Such a status-based consideration is of course a very human one, but it should not be allowed to prevent the world from receiving the Eucharist. To change the process of providing the Eucharist is apparently a very difficult step for the bishops, although it is quite impossible for those of us outside the episcopacy or the priesthood to see why it should not be done.

There are three areas in the present which demand immediate action from our bishops and priests. In Britain, with diversity and multiculturalism almost compulsory, who can imagine what Catholicism or even Christianity will be like in the next fifty years? The secular priest has been the engine of the Church for a thousand years. But it is the end product which counts – and that is the provision of the Eucharist. The dynamic which the Church needs just now, in 2016, to provide the Eucharist to the Flock, could well spring from the individual parish.

Falling Mass attendance – and a look at the average congregation – would suggest the alienation of perhaps two generations of Catholics from the part played in the Western Latin Church by the Tridentine priesthood. The worst consequence would be their being permanently deprived of the Eucharist. An Ordained Celebrant system would give representatives of these generations an entrance again into the life of the parish. If it is not too late, the creation of Ordained Ministers may provide our young people with a way out of their apathy (or even antipathy) regarding participation in the spiritual life of the parish.

### **Sooner rather than later**

There is a necessity for undertaking the idea of Ordained Celebrants sooner rather than later as more and more churches are being closed in Britain. To take a wider view, as the westwards movement of Islam progresses, the continued and expanded provision of the Sacrament becomes even more vital. The creation of Ordained Ministers means nothing more than an extension of the Apostolic Succession so that the Flock may be fed. Some older people may find this uncomfortable, but this is merely unfortunate. Some cultural traditions have survived for thousands of years, whether or not they are worth preserving. The obvious importance of providing the Sacraments for more people must take precedence over everything. The alternative, as the shortage of priests continues and intensifies, may be for the faithful to die without the Last Sacraments.

With every respect to the married Anglican clergy who have become Catholic priests, and are playing a valuable part, the concept of “married priests” is a linguistic distraction for Catholics. There is quite simply no need to come to terms with such distractions. Extending ordination to a number of parishioners, a perfectly legitimate and essential method of acting within the Apostolic Succession, is vital for the immediate future of the Church and its progress.

**James Kelly**

*James Kelly is a member of the Glasgow Circle of the Newman Association*

# Newman Association AGM – Manchester, Saturday June 11<sup>th</sup>

## **A welcome by Harcourt Concannon, Chair, Manchester/North Cheshire Circle**

It is a great pleasure for me, on behalf of the Manchester and North Cheshire Circle, to welcome The Newman Association AGM to the City of Manchester and, of course, to the Catholic Diocese of Salford.

Manchester's reputation is secular, the great industrial metropolis of the 19th century and now a postindustrial city known for its football, creative arts, three universities and as a major provider of commercial, legal and financial services. It is well then to say that Manchester has an old Christian tradition. We will meet here in a Quaker Meeting House first built in 1795 for a Quaker community founded in the 17th century.

Moreover, we will go to Mass at St Mary's Church, originally founded in 1422. That church was dissolved in the Reformation but in 1774 a small church was built near here and twenty years later in 1794 a new St Mary's was built. That Church was damaged in the 1830's but was rebuilt in the 1860's – this is the present building, recently restored. The carving and stained glass are of the finest quality; for good reason the church is called the "Hidden Gem".



*St Mary's Church – The Hidden Gem*

The welcome should of course be not to Manchester but to "The Northern Powerhouse". The title is significant because the wealth of 19th century Manchester, conspicuous in its ornate Victorian Gothic Town Hall, was built on cotton. Another example of the wealth of "Cottonopolis" is the huge and impressive Royal Exchange building – the old Cotton Exchange where cargoes of cotton were bought and sold. When cotton was no more the Royal Exchange fell into disuse and demolition was proposed.

But the spirit of a Northern Powerhouse is demonstrated by the ability to change with the times, so if you visit the building what you will see is not a derelict empty space but instead, in the middle of what used to be the vast trading floor, a modern tubular steel construction like a giant space capsule. This is a theatre in the round and home of the famous Manchester Royal Exchange Company.



*Monsignor Roderick Strange*

## **AGM Details**

**11.00** start and lunch at **12.30** (optional, costing £12.50 – see booking form enclosed with this issue of *The Newman*)

**13.30** talk on **Newman's Letters** by **Monsignor Roderick Strange**, former Principal of the Beda College, Rome

**15.00 Mass** at the historic **St Mary's**, Mulberry Street, known as the Hidden Gem (a five-minute walk)

## Newman Association Pilgrimage 2016

### The Monasteries of Eastern Lazio: September 16<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Important:** Please note that the dates and provisional itinerary given in the January issue of *The Newman* have been changed.

We will be staying at the English College's retreat and pilgrimage centre of PALAZZOLA outside the city of Rome. Palazzola is a former Franciscan monastery, built on the site of a Roman villa, that occupies a dramatically beautiful position high above Lake Albano in the Alban Hills, 18 miles from the centre of Rome. The Cistercians, who formed the first community here, built the Church of Our Lady of the Snows in the 13th century. Subsequently Palazzola was a Franciscan house for 500 years. Then in 1919 the English College bought Palazzola as a summer retreat from the heat of Rome.

#### PROGRAMME (Subject to further changes)

- visit to the village of Castel Gandolfo and a private tour of the Papal Gardens
- excursion to the Benedictine monastery of Sacro Speco at Subiaco
- transfer to the Vatican to see the Holy Door and celebrate Mass followed by an afternoon visit to the Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls
- excursion to the Cistercian Abbey at Fossanova
- visits to the Monasteries at Monte Cassino and Casamari
- excursions to the Ninfa Gardens and the Cistercian Abbey of Valviscolo



*Lake Albano at sunset*

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

**£795** in en-suite accommodation (double, twin and single availability)

#### **inclusive of:**

- 6 nights of accommodation at Palazzola
- simple continental buffet breakfasts
- 6 lunches (as per the programme) and 6 dinners
- water and wine with main meals
- programme of excursions
- all entry charges
- Mass offerings and coach driver tips

#### **The following items are not included:**

- travel insurance
- air or train travel to Italy
- airport/station transfers in Italy
- entry and transport in free time
- personal expenditure.

Additional nights after 22 September may be available at £90 pppn (all meals included) for those wishing to spend further time at Palazzola.

## HOW TO BOOK

Please request a booking form from **Anthony Coles, 18 Maresfield Gardens, London NW3 5SX** (Tel: 020 7431 3414, email address [aectc@btinternet.com](mailto:aectc@btinternet.com)). Please complete all sections and return 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 are to be made payable to: Anthony R Coles Travel and Conferences.**

*When flights are booked through Anthony Coles your holiday/pilgrimage will be financially protected by the ATOL (Air Travel Organisers' Licensing) scheme. When you book you will be supplied with an ATOL Certificate as evidence of this protection.*

## Spirituality Page – Boundary Lines

*LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup;  
you make my lot secure.  
The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;  
surely I have a delightful inheritance.*

Psalm 16 5-6 (New International Version)

God has given us all boundary lines: these are the paths laid down for us in this life. Sometimes we grumble at them and wish we were in a different place, or job or time. As Andrew Phang says:

*"I wonder how many of us have wondered about how things might have been if only we had been given an opportunity to do something, or how to capitalise on it when it appeared. Often, however, these are mere regrets and a longing or pining after what we would have liked, but what was not, in the final analysis, our calling."<sup>1</sup>*

However, as he says, whatever the world thinks or perceives "the boundary lines have fallen to us in pleasant places" as what God really wants us to do is to love Him and our fellow human beings, and bring the Gospel of eternal life and salvation to them.

Newman spoke of our worldly vocation in a famous prayer<sup>2</sup>:

*God knows me and calls me by my name...  
God has created me to do Him some definite service;  
He has committed some work to me  
which He has not committed to another.  
I have my mission—I never may know it in this life,  
but I shall be told it in the next.*

Anne and John Duddington

1 From Andrew Phang, *Keeping faith* (Singapore: Genesis Books, 2003) pps. 82-83.

2 This is the first verse of *Some Definite Service*, published in 1848.

# Obituary of Michael Vadon

Michael Vadon died during April after a long illness, at the age of 75. His death ended more than 50 years of commitment to the Newman Association.

He was born in London in 1940 of immigrant Hungarian parents. In the early 1960s, after studying engineering at King's College, London, he joined the fast-growing London Circle of the Newman Association. At the time the Circle was buzzing with intellectual and social activity, the latter being focused especially on its youth wing called CLANG (the Catholic Lay Apostolate for New Graduates), based at that time in the Crypt of St Patrick's, Soho Square, and in nearby Carlisle Street, the then new headquarters of the Newman Association, after a move from Portman Square. The Newman was something of a dating agency at that period and in 1967 Michael married Kay Hunter, another LNC member. She survives him, with their two children and six grandchildren, in what became a very close family.



*Michael Vadon attending the LNL in 2014*

The 1960s was the exciting decade of the Second Vatican Council, with all its hopes and disappointments, and the Association's membership peaked at nearly 3,000. Michael, having been chairman of the London Circle, rapidly moved up the Newman hierarchy and held the Presidency from 1973 to 1975. At this time the Newman had begun to decline in membership following *Humanae Vitae*, published in 1968, but it still had 48 circles and over 2,000 members (compared with today's 750). More radical members had focused their attention on the Catholic Renewal Movement founded in 1969.

Among the issues at that time was the opening of membership to non-graduates. It was also proposed that the Newman should become ecumenical but that never happened. Financial problems began to increase in the difficult economic conditions of the 1970s when inflation peaked at 25 per cent. Council was finding it hard to afford publication of the Newman journal on a quarterly basis and this ceased in 1975 (it was relaunched in the 1980s). Also, it was necessary to negotiate with the Dutch charity which had anonymously funded the Newman's tenancy at 15 Carlisle Street.

Mike began his working career as an engineer at London Transport, then moved to Hoover where he requalified as a management accountant. After a spell at British Leyland in Lancashire he returned to London to a senior position in British Telecom's mobile telephones division, before setting up his own small mobile telecoms business called BRC Consultancy in 1991. He became an international consultant in mobile phone franchising and licensing, travelling as far as China.

During the peak of his business career he drifted away from the Newman but in the

1990s he joined a new Circle in Ealing. He remained on its committee in various roles for about twenty years until ill-health forced him to retire as secretary last summer. Meanwhile in 2007 he accepted the role of Independent Examiner of the annual accounts of the Newman Association, a responsibility he fulfilled up to the financial statement for 2014-15.

Michael was small in stature but big in personality and remarkable for the breadth of his friendships. Besides the Newman he was active in the Catholic Union where he was Secretary of the PPAC (Parliamentary and Public Affairs Committee) from 2008 until September 2014, while he also joined the Board of Trustees of the Catholic Truth Society in 2008. Another affiliation was the Teams of Our Lady, the Catholic organisation for married couples.

He was avid for activity and knowledge in all sorts of fields including the Catholic Church, wine-tasting, the cooking of Hungarian peasant stews, travel to almost anywhere – from the upper reaches of the Amazon to Las Vegas, not to mention the rather uncomfortable Newman Pilgrimage to Egypt in 2007. At one time he was Treasurer of the *Questors*, a leading amateur theatrical company in West London. He enjoyed reading with a new book group which he founded in 2009 and after retirement from his firm he also became a governor of a local Catholic school. Towards the end he was looking forward, still an engineer at heart, to using a new workshop to be installed in a house which he and Kay were preparing to move into later this year.

Barry Riley

## What is *andante*?

by Marie Rose Low

This is a question I have been asked many times, followed by others such as “why does Council use Newman money to pay a yearly subscription to *andante*?” and “if the Association covers the cost of your attendance at the *andante* event, should it not be for more than your personal benefit?” Let me try and answer these questions and maybe some others I have not yet asked.



### **What is *andante*?**

*Andante* is an alliance of 23 Catholic women’s organisations in Europe from 15 countries, representing a total membership of approximately 1.2 million women. *Andante* is open to European Catholic women’s organisations and to organisations for women and men in Europe which subscribe to the objectives of the alliance. The Alliance is run by the Coordinating Committee of *Andante* (CoCoA), now composed of 6 women, each from a different country.

*Andante*’s mission is to be a voice for Catholic women and to offer women’s abilities and their vision for building a living and just Europe that works for the common good. *Andante* works for the just participation of women both in society and in our Church. The role of *andante* is: to inform, to consult, to coordinate and to represent. It is a platform for Catholic women to express their ideas, to discuss them frankly and with trust and to establish common values across our different cultures so that we are able to respond to current and emerging issues in a way that reflects Gospel values and our

experience as women.

*Andante* represents the interests of Catholic women at the Council of Europe and the European Union. The Conference of INGOs<sup>1</sup> is recognised as an institution of the Council of Europe. *Andante* is a full right member of the Conference.\*

### **Why should the Newman Association be a member?**

In spite of being an island, we do not live in 'splendid isolation'. We are part of the world; our circles are not parochial but part of the wider community in which we live, our association has a voice with the bishops and politically under the umbrellas of the NCLA and the NBCW. It is also right that, as a national association, we should play a part in our even 'wider community' i.e. Europe. *Andante* provides a channel for us to do this, as does Pax Romana.

*Andante* speaks for and represents Catholic women but its concerns are not 'feminist' issues. They deal with the day-to-day realities women face across the whole of Europe, either in their own personal suffering or in helping alleviate the suffering of others and these are issues which have concerned, and continue to concern, Newman members e.g. we have recently had two conferences, one on poverty and one on bioethics. *Andante* has likewise had two convocations on the same two topics in the last two years.

At these gatherings, each organisation brings its own experience, expertise and problems and the organisations are able to learn from and help each other. The outcomes of these study days are then taken by *andante* to the Conference of INGOs. By being a member of *andante* our association has the means to channel the outcomes of our own conferences and our own experiences to a European platform.

### **Why pay for me to go to any *andante* event?**

I hope that by now the answer to this question is fairly obvious. Certainly, neither our individual Newman members nor our circles will gain any 'personal' benefit from paying to send a representative to a conference. But if we see ourselves as 'brothers and sisters' to the rest of humanity and if we would like to 'make some difference' to the hardships which those we cannot reach directly are suffering, then this is something we can do as an association through *andante*. However, we cannot do this from a distance: someone has to be present, to be your ears and listen, to try to understand and communicate and to form a bond. The sad thing is that we have had no representation at either of the *andante* conferences on poverty or bioethics as I was not able to attend.

### **Study Days and General Assembly, April 14th-17th 2016, High Leigh, Hoddesdon,**

My second *andante* General Assembly, as one of two Newman Association representatives, proved to be as exhausting and uplifting (though not quite as exotic) as my first one in Bratislava 3 years ago. Every minute was timetabled and 'free time' did not appear anywhere in the schedule. The pace of the three days was relentless and we worked hard – but don't let me give the impression that it was solid work from morning till night. Built into the programme was time to show something of our culture to the other 50 European women and also time to celebrate *andante*'s 10th birthday.

The aim of *andante* is to bring the needs and concerns of the Catholic women of Europe to the Council of Europe and to the Catholic Church. The Study Days are used to discern those issues which are of greatest common concern. Then those of highest priorities will be taken to Strasburg by the CoCoA. Similarly any issues concerning the

Church will be taken to the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CEE).

We began on **Thursday** evening with dinner at 6.30pm followed by the first session, during which the women of *andante* remembered and marked the significant events that had taken place since the beginning of *andante* ten years ago – the first meeting in Budapest, the subsequent workshops and study days, the writing of the *andante* prayer (translated into 9 languages), when *andante* was accepted as an INGO at the Council of Europe, when *andante* made its representation on Poverty to the Council of Europe and many special memories. The strong bonds of friendship that have been formed across Europe were very evident as everyone contributed their own memories.

*Andante* uses 3 official languages, German, French and English and all *andante* literature is produced in three versions. Every delegate has to speak at least one of these languages. The small working groups were organised according to languages spoken. At all other times we wore headphones and listened to translations from our most efficient interpreters.

**Friday** morning and a talk by Julie Clague, a Lecturer at the University of Glasgow. Julie spoke mostly on *Amoris Laetitia* showing how Pope Francis' way of being Church is compatible with Christ's compassion and mercy and is fairly 'female' in its nature. Julie left us with five questions to discuss in groups and so begin to identify the priorities of our organisations. My group was composed of a young Albanian woman, a Romanian and a Hungarian as well as three of us from the UK. Speaking with women from Eastern Europe, women who are constantly dealing with abused women and children, with those who are vulnerable to being trafficked, women who have lived under communist rule, you realise that their reality is outside our experience. To work with them in solidarity, and to be able to assist them, we have got to meet face to face and listen and learn.

After lunch we met again but in different groups in order to widen our discussion. This time we looked at the problems we anticipate in the future. As in our association, many of the Western European organisations are suffering from an ageing and diminishing membership. How do we, both the Church and us, deal with these problems? The members of the organisations from Eastern Europe have a younger profile. Another topic arose out of the refugee problems. Should we not be having serious and wide interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims? How else are we going to be able to understand, help and live with those refugees who settle in Europe?

We finished our discussion with just enough time to change before we came together again to celebrate Mass for *andante's* 10th birthday. It was a beautiful Mass with bidding prayers read in nine languages. We prayed the Our Father together, each in our own language – thoughts of Pentecost flashing through my mind. After dinner we had our cultural evening which turned out to be a great success. An English folk band played and 'called' us through the evening in a barn dance. Whether by spoken words or signs, most of us were able to participate and enjoy ourselves. We were all ready for our sleep.

"*Our position? – Dare to go!*" was the title of Simone Curau's talk first thing on

**Saturday**. Simone is about to take up the presidency of the Swiss women's organisation and is a board member of the Catholic People's Party of Switzerland. She spoke of strategies and the differences between male and female strategies. *Male strategies tend to set a course from which no one is willing to deviate; aggression is met*

with aggression. Female strategies leave room for modification, for compromise, and aggression is countered with attempts at co-operation. We do not have to behave like men, even though it is a man's world; we need to be courageous and adopt our own female strategies, introducing these strategies into society and the Church.

Back in our language groups, after the break, it became obvious that the differences in the needs of women in the Eastern European countries to those in the West were stark. *How can women go into politics or be worried about their role in the church when their basic needs of food and shelter are not being met, when girls are not being educated?* We need to be a voice for those who are voiceless. By the end of this session, we had identified fifteen topics which were causes of concern across all the delegates.

**The General Assembly**, the formal business, began after lunch. We registered and collected our voting card – each organisation had a vote. There were many formalities to get through and we went through these carefully, sometimes very slowly as some problems arose with slight differences of meanings in words and phrases between the three languages. Three new organisations presented themselves asking for membership: they were unanimously accepted. The women standing for the new CoCoA also introduced themselves and were formally elected. The financial report was presented and accepted, and the old CoCoA discharged. The first half of the GA closed.



Getting ready for the GA

We barely had time to change before the start of *andante's* 10th **birthday party!** We had a bit of fizz to toast *andante* and after dinner we provided our own entertainment. Several organisations had come prepared to share something of their culture, to read a poem or to perform a sketch. Maureen Thomas started the evening by introducing a Welsh singer, and then one of his songs was played from a CD. Then other acts followed, tulips from Amsterdam coming second only to the 'tragedy' *The Fatal Quest* performed by the German organisations in three languages!

**Sunday**, early morning Mass and then the second half of the GA. We had to discuss and approve the strategic plan for the next three years; this also proved cumbersome in three languages. We were then asked to vote for the five topics which were of greatest concern to our own organisations out of the fifteen identified the day before. Taking into consideration the conferences our association has held and the interests we see in our members, we voted for the following on your behalf: Poverty, Education, Modern Slavery, Bioethics and Communications. The 5 priorities selected by all the organisations were: Migration, Modern Slavery, Women in the Church, Poverty, Education and Diversity & Difference (these last two got equal votes).

*Andante* will look at these topics, possibly have Study Days on some of them and then make representations on our behalf at the Council of Europe. Our association now has the opportunity to engage with and respond to the work of *andante* by having talks and conferences on some of the chosen topics. The GA concluded with many thanks being given, gifts presented and much applause.

## In conclusion

So, did I gain 'personal benefit'? Of course I did, you cannot go to an event as thought-provoking and as uplifting as this without gaining and growing in some way or other. But I actually didn't set out 'for my benefit', I went to represent you, so that we can all be a part of the bigger picture and in the hope that somehow, in some way, the Newman Association can help to make a better world.

*\* This description of Andante is put together from extracts taken from Andante literature and from its website.*

1 International non-governmental organisations

## Working Groups

Following last October's Newman Assembly in Leeds it was agreed to set up four working groups to examine various aspects of the future of the Association. Three of them have issued interim reports.

The **Finance Working Group** has been examining the deficit which the Association is running – about £4,000 a year excluding exceptional items. Although the Association has substantial assets, enough to last for a number of years, economies may need to be considered. The Group is concerned that the central expenditure by the Association on the journal, the website and Council meetings is excessive in relation to the sums distributed to Circles. Perhaps there should be a target to reduce the deficit to zero, while allocating some of the reserves to fund projects to further the mission of the Association.

The **Mission Group** has concluded that the main objective of the Association remains valid after 70 years: promoting open discussion and greater understanding in today's Church. But there is probably a need for different approaches to how the organisation promotes itself; the Group is looking at comparisons with similar bodies. The most important specific objective is the encouragement of innovation within the Circles. Collaboration with other organisations might be desirable. The Group is proposing to draw up a series of action plans and to set priorities.

The **Communications Working Group** is studying connections at many levels. The group suggests that channels between Council and Circles and between the Circles themselves should be improved. Council should also promote the links that exist nationally with the NCLA and the NCBW, and internationally with Pax Romana and Andante. Other aspects include the strengthening of relations with the Bishops and with universities. The website, some Group members think, is an underused resource, but it is pointed out that the Association has a new QR code which enables rapid access to the website from smart mobile phones.

Unfortunately the **Membership Working Group** has proved by far the most controversial of the four. It has been suspended after the resignation of two of its members from Council. Meanwhile Council has separately been exploring the question of retaining the Catholic status of the Association; it appears there would be limits on the proportion of non-Catholics in the overall membership, and in their rights to occupy senior positions, but the details are not entirely clear. A new working group may be set up.



QR code

# 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 J. J. Bagnall (Edinburgh), Canon D. B. Lordan (Wrexham), Mr J. Pratley (Hertfordshire), Mrs A. Reilly (Coventry), Dr E. Walmsley (York).

## Requiescant in Pace

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

Mrs B. M. Coghlan (Birmingham), Ms C. Green (Unattached), Mrs M. E. Hughes (Coventry), Mrs A. E. Jackson (Cleveland), Mr R. P. Lister (Coventry), Mr A. T. J. Ryan (Unattached), Mrs M. Scott (Birmingham), Mr R. M. Vadon (Ealing).

Michael Vadon was a longstanding member of the Ealing Circle and a Past President of the Newman Association. He also served in recent years as the Independent Examiner for the Association accounts. An obituary of Michael is given elsewhere in this edition of The Newman.

**Subscriptions:** There are just a few subscriptions outstanding for this year. The Treasurer and Membership Secretary would appreciate payment of these subscriptions as soon as possible.

**Bill White, Membership Registrar**

## Circle Programmes

### Aberdeen

9 May AGM and Cheese & Wine

Contact: Margaret Smith, 01224 314566

### All Circles

11 June National Newman AGM

*Monsignor Roderick Strange*

### Birmingham

7 May Reflections on Catholic/ Orthodox Relations

Contact: Winifred Flanagan, winifredflanagan@gmail.com

*Bishop Robert Byrne CO, BD, AKC*

16 July Evangelisation, Proclaim 16 *Jean Johnson, Anne Smith, Natalie Orefice*

### Cleveland

Contact: Judith Brown, 01642 814977, browns01@globalnet.co.uk

### Coventry

24 May The work of 'Pax Christi'

Contact: Colin Roberts cjroberts08@talktalk.net

14 June Mass and AGM

*Pat Gaffney*

### Croydon

8 June Reflections on the Synod on the Family'  
25 June Annual General Meeting – possible talk afterwards

Contact: Arthur Hughes, arthur.hughes116@gmail.com

*Archbishop Peter Smith*

### Ealing

May Visit to Bevis Marks Synagogue  
16 June Circle AGM, Mass and social

Contact: Anne Riley agriley@waitrose.com

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

**Edinburgh** Contact: Lyn Cronin, lyncronin@btinternet.com  
 11 May The Scandal of Christian Disunion *Fr. Nicholas King S.J.*  
 8 June Circle AGM and Party

**Glasgow** Contact: Arthur McLay, mclay@btinternet.com  
 26 May TBA

**Hertfordshire** Contact: Maggy Swift, 01582 792136, maggy.swift@btinternet.com  
 21 May Gerard Manley Hopkins *Fr Dominic Milroy*  
 16 June The Papal Exhortation on the Family *Dr Clare Watkins*  
 3 July Garden Party  
 15 August Visit to Westminster Cathedral *Anne Marie Micallef*

**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  
 9 May Who is my neighbour? An exploration of sanctuary and migration in the light of Catholic Social Teaching *Barbara Hungin*  
 6 June Is the Church's teaching on marriage changing? Should it?  
*Father Martin Clayton*

**North Gloucestershire** Contact: Stephanie Jamison, 01242 539810, sjamison@irlen-sw.com  
 3 May AGM & The Hymns of RC Writers *Revd Canon Michael Garland*

**North Merseyside** Contact: John Potts, john\_potts41@hotmail.com

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

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

**Surrey Hills** Contact: Gerald Williams, guillaume30@btinternet.com  
 TBA CAFOD *Martin Brown*  
 TBA SVP *Ingrid Phillips*

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

**Wimbledon** Contact: Bill Russell, 0208 946 4265, william\_russell@talktalk.net  
 19 May William Wilberforce and the Abolition of Slavery *Mark Williamson*  
 25 June The Christian Response to the Refugee Crisis *Rev. Dr. Giles Fraser*

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

**Wrexham** Contact: Maureen Thomas, maureenthomas@uwclub.net  
 27 May TBC  
 June Wrexham AGM and Party

**York** Contact: Judith Smeaton, 01904 704525, judith.smeaton@btinternet.com  
 16 May AGM, followed by talk: The impact of the Synod on the Family on canon law *Fr. Luke Beckett*