



THE Newman

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London Newman Lecture:
Crisis in the Church Today
Fr Michael Campbell-Johnston SJ

Equality: What Does It Mean?
John Duddington

The Arab Spring and Christians
Richard McCallum

Durham Study Day on Death and Dying
Details of the AGM in Coventry
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Book Review
Visiting Stanbrook Abbey
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Cover picture: St Peter's Basilica, Rome

Comment

The new Pope faces a daunting task. The fact that the cardinals chose a non-European is itself a reflection of an important challenge, in that the Church in Europe – once, but not always, the heartland of Christianity – is shrinking fast. In other global regions, including Latin America, the Catholic Church remains strong (though it is facing intense competition everywhere, and is experiencing problems in the Middle East in particular that are examined at length by Richard McCallum in this issue).

Is the reasoning therefore that another Pope from Europe could no longer serve global Catholicism so effectively? This may be a positive development for Latin America, Africa and parts of Asia where congregations have been expanding. But where does this leave Europe, which is struggling with an acute shortage of priests and is losing its faithful, especially the young, to an atheistic society increasingly dominated by materialism and hedonism?

The Newman Association has rarely, if ever, pursued controversy or upheaval. We have worked within the Church, with cordial relations with the hierarchy; our members have pursued education and understanding for themselves and a more active role for the Laity in general. Readers will notice, however, that this issue of The Newman focuses more than usual on the problems of the Church in Europe.

Fr Michael Campbell-Johnston delivered in March a powerful London Newman Lecture in which he analysed a number of fundamental problems which are causing the authority of the Church to be undermined. John Duddington takes a more specific look at social and political pressures in Europe, not least here in the UK, which are bringing the Christian church more and more into conflict with general social attitudes; this clash is highlighted by the ways in which the legal framework is being modified by politicians to accommodate behaviour wholly inconsistent with Christian moral codes. These questions are dominating the content of The Newman because there is an intensifying atmosphere of crisis. Christians in Europe are in the distinctly uncomfortable position of moving from being a dominant majority – albeit often fractured and conflicted – to becoming an oppressed minority. Unfortunately such a trend can sometimes foster a siege mentality. Newman circles up and down the country have been reporting more frequent cases of bitter opposition by traditionally-minded local Catholics who increasingly find the style of open debate long practised by The Newman Association to be threatening or offensive.

It is a moment to remind readers that we have an under-used letters page and I would greatly welcome members' views on some of these urgent themes. Space will be reserved in the September issue.

Meanwhile we pray that Pope Francis will guide the Church wisely and skilfully through the dangerous times ahead. Sometimes it is necessary to change the structure and disciplines of a great institution if it is to preserve its fundamental faith and doctrine at periods of change. That may be easier to achieve with the benefit of a perspective which originates far away from Vatican City.

Barry Riley

The London Newman Lecture

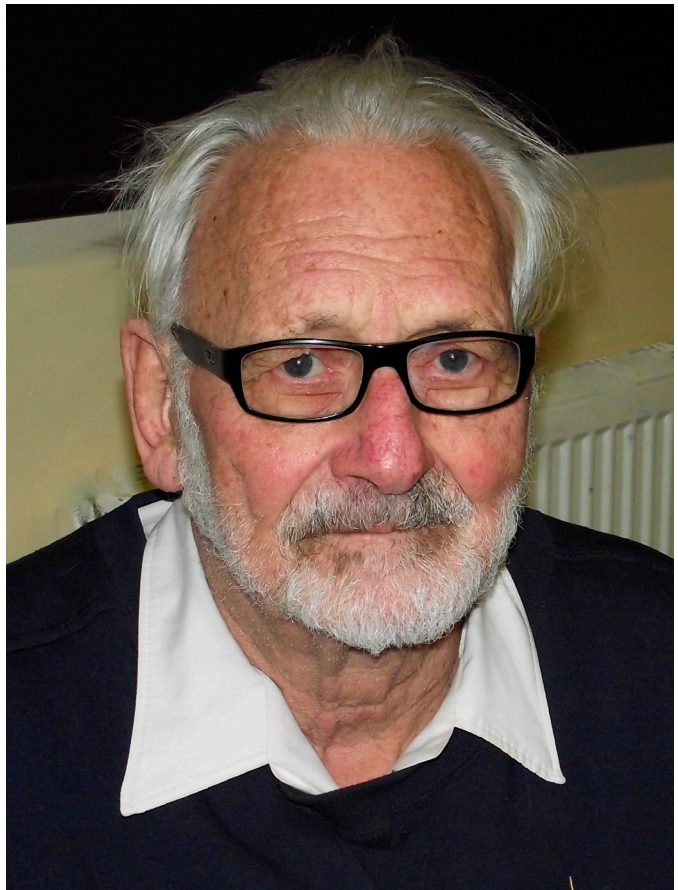
Michael Campbell-Johnston, a Jesuit priest, delivered the 2013 London Newman Lecture on March 14th, the day after the election in Rome of the Argentinian Jesuit Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio as Pope Francis.

Answering questions after his talk Fr Michael revealed that he had encountered the new pope in Argentina in the 1970s. It was a very dangerous period in Argentina when some 20,000 people “disappeared” and thousands more suffered political imprisonment. His discussions with the then Fr Bergoglio did not proceed as he would have liked.

A few weeks later, in *The Tablet*, Fr Michael wrote a little more about the circumstances. Based in Rome at the time, at the Society's Social Justice Secretariat, as an adviser to Fr General Pedro Arrupe, he had certain responsibilities for Jesuit social institutes throughout South America. Several of these resisted oppressive governments more actively than did the institute in Buenos Aires. His discussion with Fr Bergoglio, who was at that time Provincial of the Jesuits in Argentina, “was lengthy and inconclusive since we never reached an agreement”.

On March 14th he said of the new Pope: “I was privileged to know him when he was our Provincial in Buenos Aires. We pray for his success in confronting the many problems facing the Church and offer him our full support”.

**Fr Michael
Campbell-Johnston,
pictured at
Heythrop College
before delivering his
lecture**



Crisis in the Church Today

Michael Campbell-Johnston SJ

The first comment I would like to make is that the title of this talk, Crisis in the Church Today, has nothing to do with the election of Francis, our new Pope. It was composed well before Pope Benedict announced his decision to retire. Not that I consider that a crisis in the Church. Rather the opposite: it is a positive step that can strengthen the Church by permitting it to choose a new Pope capable of confronting issues Pope Benedict himself said he no longer felt able to meet because of his age and ill-health. Hopefully this is precisely what the Cardinals have done in electing Francis as our new Pope, in spite of the fact of his being a Jesuit. I was privileged to know him when he was our Provincial in Buenos Aires. We pray for his success in confronting the many problems facing the Church and offer him our full support.

But to turn to the crises, the topic is so vast and complex that it is difficult to know where to start. I feel a bit like the proverbial mosquito in a nudist colony; it is all very nice but where to begin?

A necessary first step is to limit the scope. In 1900 there were 459 million Catholics in the world, 392 million of whom lived in Europe or North America. Christianity a hundred years ago was an overwhelmingly white, first-world phenomenon. By 2000 there were 1.1 billion Catholics, with just 380 million in Europe and North America and the rest, 720 million, in the Global South. Africa alone went from 1.9 million Catholics in 1900 to 130 million in 2000, which has been described as “the most rapid and sweeping transformation of Catholicism in its 2000-year history”. Sooner or later the Church will have to come to terms with such a dramatic shift in its centre of gravity. For it makes no sense that Europe, with less than a quarter of its membership, should continue to account for nearly three-quarters of the cardinals who qualify to elect a new Pope. However, this talk will be confined to the Catholic Church in Europe and the United States, though I am fully aware that these can no longer be considered the global church’s key areas, at least demographically.

For once however there does seem to be an obvious starting point. I am referring to the famous interview given by Cardinal Martini¹ a couple of days before his death but only published after it and which was described as his spiritual testament. As you may remember, he said he felt the Church was 200 years behind the times. And I quote: “The Church is tired in affluent Europe and in America. Our culture has grown old, our Churches are big, our religious houses are empty, the bureaucracy of our Churches is growing out of proportion, our liturgies and our vestments are pompous.....Karl Rahner liked to use the image of embers hidden under the ash. In the Church today I see so much ash covering the embers that I’m often overcome by a sense of impotence.” The rest of the interview carries suggestions of what needs to be done, to which I shall return.

Similar sentiments have been repeated by so many. I limit myself to three short examples. In a book entitled *Unfinished Journey: the Church 40 years after Vatican II*, Austin Ivereigh writes: “Today there is a sense of disappointment among many Catholics that the reforms of the Second Vatican Council have been truncated, ignored, or even undermined in the contemporary Church, which continues to suffer from clericalism, centralism, male domination and institutional defensiveness. There is

a sense of a journey unfinished." In his book *Take the Plunge* Timothy Radcliffe agrees: "There is a deep unease that the Church is stuck or even retreating. To take again the example of my own Church, after the Vatican Council many Catholics dreamed of a Church that would be radically transformed. Almost fifty years later, this has not happened." Thirdly, and perhaps more predictably, Hans Küng in his *The Catholic Church: a Short History* writes at length of "a betrayal of the Council, a betrayal which has alienated countless Catholics from the church all over the world."

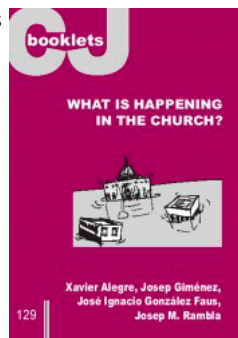
These opinions are supported by disturbing statistics such as those given by Alex Wright, ex-director of the Student Christian Movement, in his book *Why Bother with Theology?* They highlight the fact that we are living in an age and part of the world where "Christianity or any religious practice seem to have lost their meaning for the great majority of people". Less than 8% of people attend Sunday worship, less than a quarter are members of any church, fewer than half of couples get married in church and over a third cohabit without marriage, and so on. A more recent UK study predicts that church attendance is falling so rapidly that, within a generation, the majority of Christian churches will no longer be financially viable and therefore facing closure. Alex Wright goes so far as to say: "In the end, it may be God's will that Christianity is to die out in the secular West."

Clearly some of these problems are shared not only by the churches but by society as a whole. Two that are often quoted are secularism and post-modernity. The first, as we have already seen, is a rejection of the Christian message because to many it seems irrelevant to the real problems facing us and society seems to operate just as well – or perhaps even better – without it. Post-modernity reinforces the desire to rely on self in a reality that rejects ultimate goals or even a sense of direction. Hence any notion of an inherent common good or an accepted objective for the development of society gives way to an individualism in which all people is an island whose duty is to fend for themselves.

This talk was composed before the scandal and resignation of Cardinal Keith O'Brien, yet another example, a particularly sad and painful one, of a cleric accused and guilty of sexual abuse. However, apart from mentioning it here and now, I shall say nothing more on this topic nor on the disgraceful way some church authorities have tried to cover up the problem. This is not because I don't consider it a serious crisis in the Church. On the contrary, it is an extremely serious crisis that has probably destroyed the faith and trust of many. As Christians, we should be thoroughly ashamed and humble enough not only to admit this but also to beg pardon of God and of all those who have been wounded. My reason is that so much has already been said that there is nothing new I can add, and I want to avoid just repeating what I am sure you already know. However for those especially concerned, I would merely like to recommend the study *The Dark Night of the Catholic Church* edited by Brendan Geary and Joanne Marie Greer in which 17 experts cover every aspect of the problem and make helpful suggestions for dealing with it.

Most of what I propose to say is based on a study undertaken by our powerful Jesuit think-tank in Barcelona, *Cristianisme i Justícia*, and published under the title *What is happening in the Church?* (henceforth referred to as the work of the Cij Authors)². It opens with the following words: "For years now, our society is becoming increasingly

conscious of a deep crisis in the Catholic Church. For some, this represents a confirmation of the end of Christianity. For others it represents something that could be described as a regression or a 'winter-time' of the Church". It then suggests five reasons or causes for this which it describes as 'Wounds of the Church today'. I propose to look at each of these in turn since I believe they can help us understand not only what the problems are but also where or how we might find some solutions. And I shall end by adding a sixth wound of my own, and then return to the interview with Cardinal Martini and the suggestions he offers for possible solutions.



First wound: The focus on hierarchy

The first wound, the focus on hierarchy, goes right against one of the key changes advocated in the Second Vatican Council. One of its crucial moments, which took place near the beginning, was the Council's rejection of the text prepared by the Roman Curia for the Constitution on the Church which put the hierarchy first, followed by the clergy and then the laity. This was the order that had been followed up till then which gave rise to the sardonic description of the laity's role as being 'to pray, pay and obey'. Vatican II began its definition of the Church as 'the people of God', and saw it as a communion rather than a hierarchical structure.

In *Ad Gentes* it declared: "The Church has not been really founded and is not yet fully alive, nor is it a perfect sign of Christ among the people, unless there is a laity worthy of the name working along with the hierarchy". In other words, the duty of the hierarchy is to promote and safeguard a real collegiality in a Church in which all its members have a voice and are free to express it. This should clearly include the freedom to discuss such issues as different methods of birth control or a non-celibate priesthood. There should be no list of forbidden topics, even if some might appear to contradict the Church's official teaching.

Not only has this *not* happened but, on a number of issues and in various places especially in the Vatican itself, the Church seems to be moving in the opposite direction. That great ecclesiologist Yves Congar, whom John Paul II made a cardinal and called "a gift from God to His Church", described the process as follows: "Rome has practically eliminated the very reality of the ecclesia and thus reduced it to a group that is dependent on it. The Roman Curia is everything. Rome is not really influenced by anything other than its own existence and its own authority, and is undoubtedly of the belief that it can serve God in this way".

The rest of this talk could easily be filled with examples of decisions made by Church authorities that go against collegiality, but I am sure you know and have probably experienced some yourselves. Even a national hierarchy can be controlled and overruled as we recently saw in the imposition of the new English translation of the Mass which replaced a far better one already approved by national hierarchies. But there is one example I cannot pass by in silence, and that is the unequal treatment of women by the official Church and their relegation to an inferior position in its governance and pastoral ministry. Whether or not the decision is one day taken to admit them to the priesthood, their human rights should be respected and honoured

as of now. The Cij Authors write: "Today's official Catholicism scandalises society by its narrow-mindedness towards women.....Changes need to be made, even if it is only out of gratitude towards those women who are largely responsible for the survival of the Church, and also because this dominant form of patriarchy is extremely damaging to the Church".

What needs to be done? Again I am sure you could make many suggestions, but I would like to end this section with the list offered by the Cij Authors: "Pope Paul VI underlined his hope for equality and participation as being the two virtues of our time in which is reflected the true dignity of mankind. And yet this dual hope does not have anywhere to go in the current structure of the Church, and this represents a major obstacle. The specific steps that this requires have been expressed many times: that the Pope not be Head of State, and that his church representatives in each country do not enjoy the political status of ambassadors: the suppression of the Cardinalate as an office and a reform of the Papal election; participation of local churches in the election of their ministers; giving deliberative functions to the Synod of Bishops by way of collegiality, rather than just consultative ones; a far-reaching revision of the proceedings of the Congregation of the Faith; and a serious and detailed look at the role of women in the Church, of which we should be ashamed. These reforms are not 'solutions' in themselves, but we believe that they would revive the health and credibility of the Church".

Second wound: "ecclesiocentrism"

The second wound identified by the Cij Authors is connected with the first and described by the inelegant word 'ecclesiocentrism'. This refers more to the role of the Christian in the world rather than as a member of a church. Once again there are two different ecclesiologies that seem to be struggling with each other. One understands the community of believers in accordance with the language of the Gospels, as being like the yeast, or like grains of salt or seeds. The other understands the Church as more of a stronghold, as an institutional power that will compete with the secular powers to impose its own way of thinking. One is reminded of Cardinal Hume's famous 'dream' or 'vision' during the 5th General Synod of Bishops on The Role of the Christian Family. As he put it: "It is sometimes better to know the uncertainties of Abraham's tent than to sit secure in Solomon's temple".

In its lengthy discussion on the Church's role in the modern world, Vatican II not only defines the help she strives to give society but also emphasises the help the Church receives from the modern world. "She gratefully understands that in her community life no less than in her individual sons and daughters she receives a variety of assistance from people of every rank and condition.....Indeed, the Church admits that she has greatly profited – and still profits – from the antagonism of those who oppose or persecute her" (*Gaudium et Spes*).

But once again the Cij Authors declare: "We fear that, even though Vatican II signified a clear and definitive choice for the first of the models described, today the Church is blatantly withdrawing to the second option". This is why it is more concerned with its authority than its mission. It believes it must collaborate with mankind in an imposing way rather than through dialogue because it sees itself as being in possession of the answers to all the questions of history. So it feels called upon to impose the truth in an

authoritative way and is more ready to proclaim the benefits it has brought to mankind rather than the benefits mankind has brought to the Church.

This is perhaps understandable on a human level. It is natural to seek privileges and power, so as to be well accepted and believed, but this is not what Jesus promised his disciples. And when he chided them for arguing among themselves as to who should be reckoned the greatest, He told them clearly: "The greatest among you must behave as if he were the least, the leader as if he were the one who serves" (Lk, 22,26). This is the model of a Church that could attract many, whereas the authoritative model is off-putting and repugnant especially to those today who reject or resist authority but often are genuinely searching for guidance in their lives. Therefore it seems accurate and right to describe this as a wound, a crisis facing today's Church.

Third wound: the division of Christians

The third wound, the division of Christians, has been long with us and is familiar to us all. But there is a danger of taking it for granted and forgetting that Vatican II described it as a great sin contradicting the express will of Christ who prayed that all be "completely one" (Jn 17,22). For this reason the Council declared that the Catholic Church felt ready and called to work with all Christian denominations in search of unity. It stated: "Our hearts embrace those brothers and communities not yet living with us in full communion. To them we are linked nonetheless by our profession of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and by the bond of charity. We are mindful that the unity of Christians is today wanted and desired by many, too, who do not believe in Christ. For the further it advances towards truth and love under the powerful impulse of the Holy Spirit, the more this unity will be a harbinger of unity and peace for the world at large" (*Gaudium et Spes*). And certainly over the past fifty years much progress has been made in increasing the understanding and cooperation between the churches.

However this is not the impression communicated by some of the officials in the Catholic Church today, both in the vocabulary they use and the steps they take or have taken. They imply that some churches have separated from the real Church and that what needs to be done to restore unity is for these churches to return to the Mother Church. In this way they have distorted a text that Vatican II deliberately corrected when it said that the Church of Christ "is present in" the Catholic Church, rather than "is" the Catholic Church (see *Lumen Gentium*).

In the UK, another sign is the fact that the Anglo-Catholic dialogue process (ARCIC) which made such remarkable advances and published two positive statements full of hope on the Eucharist and Ordination, now seems to have fizzled out through lack of support, if not clear opposition, from above.

All too often the Catholic Church seems to forget that it is a pilgrim Church, still on a journey, still searching, and therefore confronted by the need to search for and accept change. Yet change is so often resisted. Why should this be so? A recent biography of Bill Ryan, ex-Jesuit Provincial in Canada and for many years director of the Washington-based Centre of Concern, has this explanation to offer: "Institutions as old and complex as the Roman Catholic Church – arguably the oldest and likely one of the most complex on the planet – certainly do not change easily, particularly when headed by a self-perpetuating and unaccountable leadership whose prevailing response to

change has historically been to hunker down and adopt a siege mentality”.

Fourth wound: the hellenisation of Christianity

The Hellenisation of Christianity refers to its expression within a specific culture and mentality, in this case the Greco-Roman. It was certainly a great achievement to realize such an identification at the outset of Christianity, but the Cij authors fear that modern-day Christianity is showing itself incapable of doing the same in today's world. As they point out, our way of questioning and defining reality is not the same as that of the Greco-Roman world. “This is why a large majority of the dogmatic formulations of the faith of the Church, which clearly have an indisputable value, seem so incomprehensible to today's society and devoid of meaning”.

There are numerous signs of this in the official Church's dismissal of many innovative ideas and attempts to preach or write a message more acceptable and understandable to our modern world. And though some have undoubtedly contained inaccuracies or even errors, they were prophetic voices needed by the Church that could have been corrected rather than suppressed. Together with the stand against modernism with its focus on religious experience, a more recent and perhaps familiar example is the attempt of liberation theologians to promote a faith that started from the poor and oppressed peoples of the third world and was therefore meaningful and appealing to them. This attempt was openly discouraged by the Congregation of the Faith and has now almost been silenced.

As the Cij authors state: *“There are authoritative figures who believe that the Greco-Latin angle given to Christianity is the best, if not the only possible, option for today and the future”*. But it was for this reason that Pope John XXIII summoned the Vatican Council for, as he put it: *“The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of the faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another...The Christian, Catholic and apostolic spirit of the whole world expects a step forward towards a doctrinal penetration ... through the methods of research and through the literary forms of modern thought...If it were only a matter of repeating what has gone before, a Council was not necessary”*. To refuse such an updating – and often to react to it through virtual witch-hunts, official disapproval, restrictions and bans – cannot but be considered a serious wound in today's Church.

Fifth wound: forgetting the importance of the poor

The Cij authors put this wound in the first place because they considered it the most important. I have changed the order and put it last, not because I think it is less important but because it is closely linked to an additional sixth wound I want to suggest myself.

A Preferential Option for the Poor became an accepted part of ecclesiastical jargon and policy in the 1980s. This was largely due to the two conferences of Latin American Bishops in Medellín in 1968 and Puebla in 1979 which profoundly influenced the universal Church. The first, though it did not use the expression, recognised that “a deafening cry pours from the throats of millions asking their pastors for a liberation that reaches them from nowhere else”. From this came the commitment “to make ours their problems and their struggles”. The second declared formally the need “for conversion on the part of the whole Church to a preferential option for the poor, an option aimed at their integral liberation”.

The way was also prepared by the 1971 Synod of Bishops on *Justice in the World* which again, without using the formula, recognised “the Church’s vocation to be present in the heart of the world by proclaiming the Good News to the poor, freedom to the oppressed and joy to the afflicted”. And it confirmed the right of the poor to take their future into their own hands and the Church’s duty to give witness to justice by first being just herself.

This option was taken up by many religious congregations. In 1983 the Jesuits adopted it at their 33rd General Congregation in these words: *“The validity of our mission will also depend to a large extent on our solidarity with the poor. For though obedience sends us, it is poverty that makes us believable. So, together with many other religious congregations, we wish to make our own the Church’s preferential option for the poor. This option is a decision to love the poor preferentially because there is a desire to heal the whole human race. Such love, like Christ’s own, excludes no one but neither does it excuse anyone from its demands. Directly or indirectly this option should find some concrete expression in every Jesuit’s life, in the orientation of our existing apostolic works, and in our choice of new ministries”*.

Four years later this option was extended officially to the whole Church by John Paul II in his encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*. He writes: *“This is an option or a special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness. It affects the life of each Christian inasmuch as he or she seeks to imitate the life of Christ, but it applies equally to our social responsibilities and hence to our manner of living, and to the logical decisions to be made concerning the ownership and use of goods”*.

The Church’s teaching on this point, therefore, could hardly be clearer. But it is contradicted by the reality of the world in which we live. Never in the whole of history has there been so much wealth in the world and never has it been so unequally divided. Alex MacGillivray in his book on *Globalisation* claims that the world’s capital assets have grown tenfold since 1980 and now stand at around \$118 trillion. If shared equally, every man, woman and child on the planet would have \$20,000 of capital. But people in the USA, Europe and Japan own 83% of it, while nearly half the world’s population struggles to exist on less than \$2 a day.

Year after year the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) underlines this fact with statistics that can only be described as shocking. I will spare you these, here merely mentioning that the experts distinguish between ‘relative poverty’, when a one-income family cannot cover basic needs in food, health, education, housing or clothing, and ‘absolute poverty’ when it cannot cover basic needs in just food alone. There are at least 1.2 billion people in this latter category. I can’t resist one final statistic from the 1998 UNDP Report which, though outdated, is now probably even worse on an updated basis: *“People in Europe and North America now spend \$37 billion a year on petfood, perfumes and cosmetics. This figure would provide basic education, water and sanitation, basic health and nutrition for all those now deprived of it and still leave \$9 billion over”*. This situation, described by some as ‘unbalanced’ and by others as ‘outrageous’ or ‘grotesque’ is actually getting worse all the time. While some countries, such as India and China, have made spectacular advances, the overall picture is one of regression and growing poverty amidst the ostentatious wealth of a few.

One of the saddest aspects of this situation is that the experts have a good idea of what needs to be done to right it, but that little or nothing gets done. The failure is not in knowledge, technology, nor even finance, but in the political will of both leaders and the people who keep them in power. As I am sure you know, in the year 2000 the largest gathering ever of Heads of State signed the UN Millennium Declaration which committed both rich and poor countries to achieving 8 specific goals each with clear and realisable targets by the year 2015. As we get ever nearer to this date, a recent UNDP Report shows that many of the goals already appear unattainable since “the world as a whole is moving away from them rather than towards them”.

But perhaps for us the most disturbing statement of all comes from the Cij Authors. In spite of the magnificent charitable work done by so many, the Church, especially in its officials and leaders, seems to be part of the problem rather than its solution. They claim that the Church *“which represents the God of the Bible, is not in any way a ‘Church of the Poor’ (John XXIII). We as a Church offer the poor a form of fatherly benevolence, but we have not yet managed to manifest this radical love towards them that would translate as a sacrament of God’s love. Instead it seems as though we behave towards these victims just as the rest of the world does; we treat them lukewarmly and merely to satisfy our own conscience, in the hope that those excluded from society won’t bother us too much.... If we may put it bluntly, we seem to represent much more a Church of the rich than a Church of the poor”*. Little wonder that this wound was placed first!

Sixth wound: neglect of the church’s social teaching

Perhaps one of the main causes of the previous wound is the general neglect and even ignorance, among both lay people and clerics, of the Church’s social teaching. Austin Ivereigh, already quoted above, in another more recent book, *Faithful Citizens*, asks why the Church’s social teaching remains a mystery to most Catholics; why does it remain “outside the mainstream of ordinary parish life, is seldom referred to in the pulpit, almost never mentioned in the RCIA programme for people becoming Catholics, and is very unlikely ever to be taught as part of catechesis and formation programmes”? Why does it live up to the description given in a well-known collection: “our best-kept secret”?

And this in spite of the fact that almost all of the recent papal encyclicals, beginning with Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* in 1891 down to Pope Benedict’s *Caritas in Veritate* three years ago, are not only deeply concerned with applying the Church’s social teaching to modern problems but call on Catholics to study it and put it into practice as part of their religious faith. This charge was repeated by the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales in their statement on *The Common Good*: “All members of the Catholic Church must accept their full share of responsibility for the welfare of society. We should regard the discharge of these responsibilities as no less important than fulfilling our religious duties and indeed as part of them”.

In *Caritas in Veritate* Pope Benedict makes a clear call for a new world order capable of dealing with the new, and not so new, problems that characterise today’s world and seem especially relevant at the present time. Among them he identifies:

- making profit the exclusive goal of economic activity
- growing inequality in the distribution of the world’s wealth

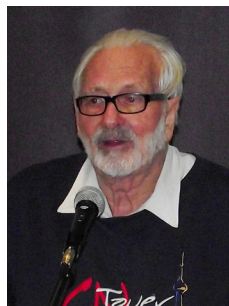
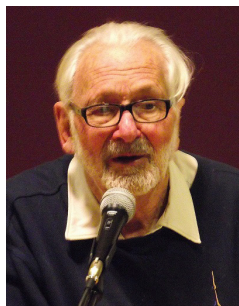
- the insufficiency of purely economic and technological progress
- the lack of control of international trade and finance and the agencies involved in them
- increasing world hunger

Another notable example is the study carried out by the Latin American Bishops of CELAM (Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano) on globalisation in which they claim: *“Properly understood and guided, globalisation could provide sufficient food and a dignified life for all the planet’s inhabitants. It would be capable of a healthy transfer of technology which would make it possible to destroy the scandalous differences that currently exist among peoples. For globalisation to bear fruit, however, it must be diverted from its current neoliberal economic path and guided towards the building up of all society. It is a challenge for Christians to show that beyond the profit motive and unbridled competition among individuals and countries, in a deregulated market, the common values of collaboration, exchange, solidarity and responsibility can be developed. Only in this way will globalisation cease to crush the weak and be a threat, and instead become an immense opportunity for all humanity”.*

This is why the Church’s social teaching is so important. The charitable work done by the Church, though still essential and much needed, is no longer sufficient to build a more just world. It is social structures that have to be changed and mankind now has the necessary knowledge to do this. For the first time in human history we can plan and build the sort of society we want. The Church’s social teaching has a key role to play here since it can show us the sort of society that accords with Gospel principles and help us to build it.

Catholic social teaching does not oppose market economies but does require that human beings and their relationships with others must be the central focus, that their dignity and freedom must be respected, that goods should be used for the benefit of all, and that the legitimate right to property should be respected but also properly exercised. Therefore it rejects indiscriminate consumption, lack of concern for those who are marginalised and lack of respect for the environment. It considers that any economic model supporting these values is unrealistic, unstable and immoral. And it is clear that a culture based on ‘having’ and ‘enjoying’ more than on ‘being’ destroys people and fosters lifestyles that are contrary to freedom, justice and the welfare of those who are poorest.

These two examples should prove beyond doubt that, if a church or any of its members ignores its social teaching, they and the world are being deprived of what



should be a most valued possession and useful tool. But the Church's social teaching in itself is not enough unless it leads to a genuine change in basic attitudes. "If the task of evangelization is not supported by witness or by living what we preach, it is nothing more than empty deceptive rhetoric". Many notable Christians, lay people and clergy, have given heroic witness to what they believe, and some have paid a high price for doing so. I personally cannot forget the example of Archbishop Romero and so many others of El Salvador or of the six Jesuit martyrs of Central America with their housekeeper and her 15-year-old daughter. But I am well aware these are more the exceptions than the rule, and they are not representative of the majority of Christians, including myself, in today's world.

It is good to reflect sometimes on how others, including non-Christians, see the Church and ourselves. Here is a reflection from Julius Nyerere, first President of Tanzania, introducer of the *ujamaa* (familyhood) system of collectivisation, and himself a devout RC whose cause for beatification has been introduced: *"So the world is not one, its peoples are divided now, and also more conscious of their divisions, than they have ever been before. They are divided between those who are satisfied and those who are hungry; they are divided between those with power and those without power; they are divided between those who dominate and those who are dominated, between those who exploit and those who are exploited. And it is the minority which is well fed and the minority which has secured control of the world's wealth and of their fellow men. Further, in general, that minority is distinguished by the colour of their skin, and by their race. And the nations in which most of the minority of the world's people live have a further distinguishing characteristic – their adoption of the Christian religion."* Julius Nyerere



Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to return to the interview with Cardinal Martini. He suggested three important ways for combating the 'tiredness' or ineffectiveness of the Church today. The first is conversion: *"The Church must recognise her own errors and must pursue a radical path of change, beginning with the Pope and the bishops."* But is 'a radical path of change' a realistic proposition? We have already seen how the need for change is so often resisted in organisations as old and complex as the Roman Catholic Church. As the well-known hymn puts it: *"Change and decay in all around I see. O Thou who changest not, abide with me"*.

Yet we know from our own experience that change is an essential part of growth and must therefore be part of any conversion. As Cardinal Newman famously put it: *"To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often"*. And if change is resisted for too long, it is likely to be eventually enforced by circumstances. The example Martini offers are questions about sexuality. He says: *"Questions about sexuality and about all the themes connected to the human body are a good example. These are important questions for everyone and sometimes they seem even too important. We have to ask ourselves if people are still listening to the advice of the Church regarding sexuality. Is the Church still an authoritative point of reference in this field or has it just become a caricature in the media?"*

The second suggestion concerns the Word of God, the Bible which the Second Vatican Council returned to the laity. He emphasises that *"Neither the clergy nor canon law is a substitute for a personal response. All the external rules, laws and dogmas we have are aimed at clarifying that internal voice and discerning the spirit within us."* It is therefore the duty of each individual Christian, as Pope Paul VI so strongly put it: *"without waiting passively for orders or directives, to take the initiative freely and to infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws, and structures of the community in which they live."*

Martini's third suggestion concerns the sacraments and is both radical and welcome. He stresses that *"The sacraments are not an instrument to discipline people but to help them on their journey of life and in their weaker moments. Do we bring the sacraments to those people who need new strength? I think of all those who are divorced and remarried, all the enlarged families. They are in need of special protection."* It is worth quoting in full the suggestion he then offers.

"The attitude that we take towards these extended families will determine the way in which the next generation responds to the Church. A woman is abandoned by her husband but finds a new partner who takes care of her and her three children. This second love story is a successful one. If this family is discriminated against, then not only the mother but also her children will be excluded. If the parents feel outside the Church or don't feel its support, the Church will lose the next generation. Before Communion we pray 'Lord, I am not worthy'. We know that we are not worthy... Love is a grace. Love is a gift. The question whether or not divorced people can receive Communion should be turned on its head: how can the Church help to bring the strength of the sacraments to those who have complex family situations?"

I conclude with the reminder that God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage. The fact that there are crises in the Church should neither surprise nor depress us. This is precisely what Jesus Christ himself promised his followers. This does not however

mean we should just fold our arms and accept them. They need to be resisted and, where possible, resolved. They should rather spur us on to follow Our Lord with a stronger and deeper faith.

But what is true faith? Travelling round London on the bus or by tube and looking at the faces of the people around me, I am often struck by the thought that some of them, though perhaps belonging to no particular religion or church, probably have a far greater faith than I, a so-called 'professional religious'. I am reminded of the Gospel story of the Roman centurion who asked Our Lord to cure his dying son which Our Lord did because, as he said, *"I have not found such great faith in Israel"*. It reminds us that we, Catholics or Christians, have no monopoly on the faith, and that there are many others, belonging to different religions or none at all, who possess and live a far greater faith than ourselves. It is a faith that often expresses itself not in outward observances but in a dedication to another person or cause for which they offer their lives and which is stronger than the desire to seek their own pleasure and comfort.

That is why Archbishop Romero, explaining what it means to offer one's life, gave this beautiful description: *"To give one's life is not just being killed by someone; to give one's life is to have the spirit of martyrdom, to give through one's duty, in silence, in prayer, in the faithful performance of one's obligations, in that silence of daily life, to go on giving one's life, like the mother who, without fuss, with the simplicity of maternal martyrdom, gives birth, suckles her child, helps it grow and looks after it with love. This is to give one's life."* And this is the real expression of true faith, the invitation God is making to each one of us at this particular moment.

M.C-J SJ

Notes

1. Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini was Archbishop of Milan for more than twenty years. A Jesuit, and a Biblical scholar, he was known for his progressive views. He died in August 2012 aged 85.
2. Booklet Number 129 of Cristianisme i Justícia was published in March 2008. The five authors were Xavier Alegre, Josep Giménez, José Ignacio, González Faus and Josep M Rambla.

Annual General Meeting 2013 – Coventry

The AGM of the Newman Association will be held at Christ the King Community Centre, Westhill Road, Coventry, CV6 2AA on Saturday 15 June 2013 at 11AM (registration and coffee from 10.30AM). There will be Mass after the business meeting, followed by lunch. In the afternoon, at 3PM, there will be an opportunity to visit Coventry Cathedral for a guided tour. The charge for lunch is £12.50 and the guided tour £5 (payable on the day). **Lunch has to be booked in advance and you will find a booking form among the enclosed papers.** There are plenty of parking spaces at the community centre and parking near the Cathedral for those joining the guided tour. Please see enclosed papers for full directions to Christ the King Community Centre.

A note from Freda Lambert, Secretary, Coventry Circle

Coventry cannot match the glories of Oxford, where the AGM was held last year, nor the charms of the Blackfriars venue but we can assure you of a warm welcome at this year's AGM.

It will be held in the Parish Centre of Christ the King Church in Coventry. Christ the King is a busy suburban parish and is one of the largest in the Archdiocese of Birmingham with 5,000 parishioners. There are many active groups in the parish, such as a flourishing Football Club and Youth Groups, as well as the SVP, Justice and Peace, Prayer Groups and so on. Before the AGM, coffee/tea will be available and a hot buffet lunch will be provided following the celebration of Mass.

We have arranged, for after lunch, a guided tour of the Cathedral of St. Michael in the City Centre. The building was designed by Sir Basil Spence and was built in the 1950s. It adjoins the old Cathedral which was destroyed during the Second World War. The new Cathedral has many outstanding features including the Graham Sutherland tapestry of Christ in Glory, the stained glass in the baptistery designed by John Piper and the bronze figures of St. Michel and the Devil on an outside wall by Epstein. The Chapel of Unity in the Cathedral has been an important part of the life of the Coventry Circle since it was built.



Coventry Cathedral

We hope that many of you will join us in June at the AGM in Coventry, which is well-served by the national road and rail networks. We look forward to seeing you there.

Two Cheers for Equality?

John Duddington

Equality today

Equality: everyone talks about it now. There are Equality and Diversity Committees wherever you look in any organisation, buttressed by accompanying policies. I have sat on them myself and, from my limited experience, they do much good work, usually on the practical level of ensuring that, for example, there is sufficient disabled access to buildings. Then we have the Equality Act 2010, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and a Minister for Equality, the present occupant of the post being Maria Miller MP.

Government ministers and other politicians use the term 'equality' frequently. Here is a typical example from the Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg who was reported as saying that the vote to legalise same sex marriage was a "*landmark for equality in Britain*".¹ However, we are entitled to ask: in what sense was this a victory for equality and is, in fact, the pursuit of equality a desirable goal for any government and system of law?

In fact most of the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 have nothing to do with the notion of 'equality' precisely because it is impossible to capture that elusive term in legislation. What they have everything to do with is the prevention of discrimination which is defined as treating a person less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic. Such protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation. The legislation allows what amounts to positive discrimination in cases of disability as it provides that an employer, for instance, must make reasonable adjustments in cases where an employee has a disability. This legislation is very sensible and practical and the enactment of detailed anti-discrimination legislation, starting with the Equal Pay Act 1970, must count as one of the signal achievements of postwar Britain.

However, this does not prevent politicians and others developing an obsession with the chimera of equality. On the practical level, despite what Mr. Clegg says, any legalisation of same sex marriage would do absolutely nothing for equality because a study of the Civil Partnerships Act will soon show that its detailed treatment of civil partnerships treats them as marriages in virtually all respects. This view is confirmed by the case of *Wilkinson v Kitzinger* (2006) where it was noted that the Act bestows on civil partners 'effectively all the rights, responsibilities, benefits and advantages of marriage in all but name'.

Thus if, for example, a party to a marriage dies without leaving a will then the surviving spouse has automatic rights to a proportion of their property, and perhaps to all of it. If a marriage is dissolved then the court will divide all of their respective assets and distribute them in such proportions as it considers fair. If there is a civil partnership then the position is exactly the same: the survivor has automatic rights to the property of the party who had died intestate and on a dissolution of the civil partnership a court can make the same orders relating to their property as in the case of a married couple. I suspect that Mr. Clegg and others would then reply: yes, this is true, but still there is

no equality of civil rights: those who wish to enter into a same sex relationship do not have the right to marry. Yet here the evidence is that despite Mr. Clegg's fashionable concern with equality in this case there is very deep inequality elsewhere which politicians completely ignore.

Example of deep inequality

Let us take an example. Many of us who are involved with health and social care are aware of the 'personalisation' agenda. In 2007 the Government published *Putting People First: a shared vision and commitment to the transformation of adult social care*. This took the form of a concordat between central and local government departments, the third and private sectors, which officially introduced the idea of a personalised adult social care system, where people have maximum choice and control over their support, and services are tailored to meet the individual needs and preferences of users. What it has actually meant in many cases is the wholesale privatisation of social care.

Suppose that you are a disabled adult who needs to attend a day centre. You will no longer find very many of these run by local authorities. Instead they are increasingly run by private organisations. Suppose that you, as a service user or carer, have cause for complaint about the service you receive. You ask for the complaints policy: there is none. You ask social services to intervene: they cannot as the centre is not run by them. You contact the Care Quality Commission (CQC): they tell you that they can do nothing. If the centre had provided care for the elderly or residential care then the CQC could have taken action.

Thus we have a large number of institutions caring for the most vulnerable in our society which are entirely unregulated. Anyone can set one up and when set up there is no inspection regime at all. Do politicians care? No. I asked one MP (of a type likely to be sympathetic) about this scandal and was told that it was 'not a political issue'. Yet here is blatant inequality: those in certain types of centres and homes have the benefit of a complaints and inspection system. Others do not.

The Christian vision of equality

It is here that as Christians we need to set forth our vision of equality: not a flat and unattainable notion of equality but about something that goes to the heart of the Christian message: as Michael Nazir-Ali, a former Anglican Bishop of Rochester, puts it: *'the radical equality of all, no matter what appearances may suggest. This is about who people are and not necessarily about what they do or how they choose to live their lives.'*² It is, I think, above all about caring for others. This notion of equality is, I suggest, best expressed by the idea of the innate dignity of each human being. The question is not the supposed value of that person's life or the contribution which they make to the community. Instead we as Christians proclaim that all human life has an intrinsic value in itself: as Nazir-Ali says: 'who people are'. Not only this, but Christians proclaim that the human dignity of us all is to be realised in community and in the search for the common good.

The Second Vatican Council links these two concepts in *Gaudium et Spes*: the common good *'is the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily.... At the same time, however, there is a growing awareness of the sublime dignity of human persons,*

*who stand above all things and whose rights and duties are universal and inviolable.*³ Thus, as Thompson points out: *'The common good is neither simply an aggregate as in utilitarianism....which can be blind to the well-being of individuals and minority groups, nor a disaggregate as in individualism, which de-links personal flourishing from the health of the community or from a good society.'*⁴

How much richer all of this sounds than the mantra of 'equality' uttered so ceaselessly! For the truth is that the current obsession with equality is in fact linked to a naked individualism of a kind that all Christians must reject. Not only this, but the emphasis on individualism is essentially nihilist as it rejects all moral authority and thus takes refuge in what turns out to be a cul-de-sac of worshipping at the secular god of equality. For the secular emphasis on equality turns out to be nothing more than the kind of relativism that Pope Benedict XVI so rightly condemned. All are equal: all life style choices are of equal value: nothing is good: nothing is bad. We are all autonomous human beings.

The result is that, as Pope Benedict said: *'The concept of 'truth' has in fact moved into anti-democratic intolerance. It is not now a public good but something private.'*⁵ All that equality means is the right to pursue different ends and thus to have nothing in common as children of God. As Philippe Beneton puts it: *'It is impolite to say 'You should'; it is necessary to say: 'I prefer'. Or, to put it another way, it is bad to defend the idea of the good'*.⁶ Roger Twigg makes this point when writing of the notion of relativism as applied to different religions. Do we really mean it when we say that 'one religion is equal to another'? What about a religion which demands human sacrifice as distinct from sacrificial love? Would we say that they were both equally good?⁷

In fact a moment's reflection will show us that this idea that we can have a value-free, content-free society where we are autonomous – and the only imperative is to respect the life-style choices of others – is impossible of attainment. Attempts to argue that it can be so are intellectually dishonest. Take once again the example of the legalisation of same sex marriage. The Massachusetts Supreme Court in *Goodridge v Dept. of Public Health* (2003) considered the validity of legalisation allowing same sex marriage⁸ and the Chief Justice, Margaret Marshall, observed that *'many people hold deepseated religious, moral, and ethical convictions that marriage should be limited to one man and one woman'*. Others, she pointed out, *'hold equally strong religious, moral, and ethical convictions that same sex couples are entitled to be married'*. However, as she put it: *'Our obligation is to define the liberty of all, not to mandate our own moral code'*.

By adopting what she saw as a position based on autonomy, equality of all and freedom of choice the Chief Justice doubtless thought that she was avoiding all value judgements but of course she was not. As Michael Sandel points out: *'If the government were truly neutral on the moral worth of all voluntary relationships, then it would have no grounds for limiting marriage to two persons'*.⁹ Not only this but, to be truly neutral and value-free, it would not promote marriage at all. The fact that it does shows that, for all protestations to the contrary, talk of a society where governments are neutral on all moral choices and the absolute autonomy of all is a kind of Holy Grail is just a sham.

Human Rights

In legal terms this notion of equality places a heavy emphasis on the protection of civil liberties as reflected in the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 which incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights of 1950 into UK law. When this legislation was passed I gave it a cautious welcome in an article in this journal.¹⁰ Now I feel that its emphasis on civil liberties alone, albeit reflecting the conditions under which the Convention was passed in 1950, make it an unsuitable instrument for today. Instead human rights need to be seen on a broader canvas in the way that is seen by the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms which is part of the Lisbon Treaty. This covers, in addition to such matters as a right to a fair trial, social and workers' rights including the right to fair working conditions, protection against unjustified dismissal, and access to health care, social and housing assistance.

In fact Pope John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris* very neatly encapsulates this wider notion of human rights: *'Man has the right to live. He has the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and, finally, the necessary social services. In consequence, he has the right to be looked after in the event of ill health; disability stemming from his work; widowhood; old age; enforced unemployment; or whenever through no fault of his own he is deprived of the means of livelihood'*.¹¹ It is noteworthy that this list is introduced by the words: *'But first We must speak of man's rights'*. Later on indeed duties are linked with rights: *'The natural rights of which We have so far been speaking are inextricably bound up with as many duties, all applying to one and the same person'*.¹² However, rights come first and are then linked with duties.

The UK secured an opt-out from the Charter but that does not stop its actual provisions being the basis of a new UK Human Rights Act, as I think it should. I sense that we are reaching the point in this country where the existing human rights legislation will need to be rethought and when it does we as Catholics and indeed all Christians must be in the forefront of the debate. What better place is there to begin than with those noble words of *Pacem in Terris*? Human Rights are often claimed as a kind of gospel of secularism: as, for instance, Vanessa Klug puts it: *'Human rights are seen as a possible alternative common morality for the UK'*.¹³ We could do worse than remind them of the noble efforts made by Christians in the protection of human rights, for example by the Dominican friar Anton Montesimo in his famous sermon in 1511 in what is now the Dominican Republic, where he preached against slavery.¹⁴ Not only this but the part played by Protestant Christianity, in ensuring that human rights were included in the United Nations system after the Second World War, deserves to be better known.¹⁵ This initiative eventually bore fruit in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued in 1948.

Our duty to challenge current orthodoxy

What this does require from Christians is the determination to rise up and challenge the current orthodoxy of equality, something which I sense they are often reluctant to do, possibly from fear of being accused of promoting inequality. In the case of Catholics there is another, often I think unconscious fear: that of being outcasts from the mainstream of society and current progressive thought. There is a dim echo from Recusant days of us being outcasts from English society, encouraging a desire to come

in from the cold and no longer swim against the tide.

It was, I believe, this thought that underlay Paul Velelly's London Newman Lecture in 2008 where he argued that: 'The task of good religion, therefore, is to seek mutual understanding rather than adding to the tensions of a polarising situation'.¹⁶ No it isn't. The task of good religion is to proclaim the Truth. If that puts us at variance with the contemporary world and its mores then that is not a bad thing. When Christ was presented in the Temple it was Simeon who foretold to Mary that He was '*destined to be a sign that is rejected – and a sword will pierce your own soul too so that the secret thoughts of many will be laid bare*'.¹⁷ Christ is a sign of contradiction.

As Michael Nazir-Ali points out, although as Christians we are often called to be the salt of the earth it is in fact as a light to the earth that we are called to be '*working against the grain in a prophetic and not merely a pastoral mode*'.¹⁸ We will pay no heed to the '*easy speeches that comfort cruel men*' in Chesterton's phrase but we find ourselves ever alert to point out and remedy the injustices of the kind which I mentioned earlier and so build up the Kingdom of God. For it is when Christians have been insiders in society that they have been weak: when they have been outsiders they have been strong. Tony Blair's 'Big Tent' is no place for us.

John Duddington is Editor of *Law and Justice* – the Christian Law Review

Notes

- 1 www.pinknews.co.uk/ 5th February 2013 accessed April 8th 2013
- 2 In 'Triple Jeopardy for the West' London Bloomsbury Publishing 2012 at pages 140-141
- 3 At section 26. I have used the text edited by Austin Flannery OP : 'The Basic Sixteen Documents of Vatican Council II' Dublin Dominican Publications 1996
- 4 In Introducing Catholic Social Thought, New York Orbis Books 2010 at page 59
- 5 In 'What is truth?' printed as Chapter 4 of 'Values in a Time of Upheaval' Ignatius Press San Francisco 2006 see page 55
- 6 Quoted in Roger Ruston, 'Human Rights and the Image of God', London SCM Press 2004 at page 10
- 7 In 'Religion in Public Life' Oxford University Press 2007 – see especially pages 2-3.
- 8 I owe this discussion, and the quotations, to Michael Sandel's illuminating study 'Justice, What's the Right Thing to do?' London Penguin Books 2010 at pages 253-260.
- 9 Sandel op.cit. page 251.
- 10 Human Rights and the People of God, The Newman, no.86, May 1999, pages 24-28.
- 11 At section 11
- 12 At 28
- 13 In Values for a Godless Age, Penguin London 2000 at page 192.
- 14 See Ruston op.cit. pages 66-69
- 15 The story is well told in John S. Nurser 'For All Peoples and All Nations' Geneva WCC Publications 2005.
- 16 Printed in The Newman, issue no.74, May 2008, at pages 2-11
- 17 Luke 2:35 New Jerusalem Version
- 18 In 'Triple Jeopardy for the West', London Bloomsbury Publishing 2012 at page 36

Death and Dying in the Catholic Perspective

A study day held on March 9th, 2013 at Durham University

It's good to report another successful joint study day, organised by the Centre for Catholic Studies at Durham University in partnership with the Newman Association, the National Board of Catholic Women and the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. The well-organised programme attracted over 100 participants, with the venue having to be transferred to the Assembly Rooms on Palace Green; this gave space for discussion round a generous buffet lunch.

After Mass at St Cuthbert's church (celebrated by Fr Ben Earl O.P., the Catholic chaplain) and a welcome from Professor Paul Murray, Dean and Director of CCS and the new Ushaw project, we heard seven papers and reviews.

Dr Kathryn Mannix, consultant in palliative medicine at the RVI Newcastle, made a substantial contribution through two papers on medical aspects. In a general survey she pointed out:

- The major change to UK life expectancy over the last century, with both sexes now expecting to live till around 80 (less for men, more for women!)
- In the developed world most people die in hospital rather than at home as they would prefer – there is a regrettable hospitalisation of death, outside the community.
- Different patterns of care were required to meet different in patterns of health decline e.g. between patients with cancer, with chronic heart and lung diseases, and in later stages of general organ failure
- Palliative care requires certain principles kept in balance; patient autonomy, beneficent treatment and absence of maleficent actions, and justice. In practice now, autonomy is tending to override the others, with rights asserted over responsibilities.

Later in the day Kathryn Mannix spoke on the Liverpool Care Pathway (LCP) for the care of the dying. She is an enthusiastic advocate of the LCP, but stressed that it requires considerable training and resource to work properly: these were easier to arrange in hospices rather than in hospitals, overworked and with all the pressures on getting people well. The principles of the LCP are:

- To recognise and address reversible causes of deteriorating health where this could be done
- When health decline could not be arrested, neither to hasten nor postpone death, but to offer support, care and symptom relief
- To accept that diagnosing dying is an uncertain "fine art": some "dying" patients recover!

Dr Mannix discussed the operation of the LCP in North Tyneside hospitals area, and gave an impressive survey which demonstrated inspirational guidance from herself and her team. However if I may venture a personal opinion from the discussion here, the principles, including open discussion with relatives and provision for spiritual care, and so on, all seem excellent, but the demands for training of all staff and for monitoring and form-filling seem likely to stretch all but the most generous of resources. Since apparently the average life expectancy of a person on the LCP is 39 hours, doubts were expressed about how the process at weekends in any hospital could be thorough and

just to patients and relatives. (Others comment that the LCP was designed to be used in hospices, and will always pose problems in a quite different hospital environment). It is clear that there is a major educational challenge here, and as someone remarked, education of staff is regrettably not directly counted in a Care Quality Index.

Spiritual care of the dying and their families was discussed in two papers. The Revd Caroline Worsfold (Anglican chaplain to St Benedict's Hospice Sunderland) dealt especially with the needs of bereaved children (e.g. to be given an explanation and have questions answered, to be with their parent in the hospice – or not – and to change their minds about this over time.) Expression of Christian faith was important: to give the story of Christ's death and resurrection, to express this through symbols (such as the Cross or the empty tomb). The ability of a community to be able to handle the death of a member was crucial and here the Catholic schools gave examples of a good experience.

Two more general linked papers by Caroline Worsfold and by Kathryn Turner (director of Spiritual Formation for the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle) brought out various themes:

- The interesting parallels between birth and death in religious experience (T S Eliot's Magi poem was quoted); Christ was neither born nor died in a bed. In the Bible the bystanders at birth and death were mainly men – the wise men, the Roman soldiers. Kathryn Turner suggested another symbolic link: the Church following Christ in his death and resurrection, as the body follows the head in physical birth.
- Jesus' real concern about death e.g. of Lazarus ("Jesus wept")
- Both babies and the dying need practical care – to be fed, cleaned up, touched
- Relatives need to be empowered to care for the dying – nursing staff should encourage this
- The need for support of the dying and bereaved through prayer
- The need for the relatives to "let go" and the dying to be allowed to die
- The need to allow time for "weeping and lamentation"

Professor David Jones, Director of the Anscombe Centre at Oxford, spoke on the moral issues involved - before later reviewing the day's proceedings. He stressed two key issues: respect for life, and acceptance of the inevitability of death; these needed to be kept in balance, but individuals tended to emphasise one or the other. There were then two further ethical dimensions:

- Respect for the patient, to promote their life and health, to involve them and their relatives in decisions about them
- The use of medical ability and judgement, in diagnosis, treatment and care

David Jones went on to discuss difficult issues, such as the withdrawal of treatment, the use (or not) of clinically assisted nutrition and hydration of patients, and the use of analgesics, which principles of double effect could justify even where life would be shortened. The ethics of all these matters would be determined in individual cases, by the balance of benefit and harm to the patient and by the intention of the treatment or its withdrawal.

There was some discussion of the legalising of patient's advance decisions over their

care. David Jones was not opposed in principle to such declarations, and noted that the GMC document about it (to which he contributed) gave a fair view; he had also written two CTS pamphlets on the subject.

The disappointment of the day was the enforced absence through illness of Professor Janet Martin Soskice. Dr Marcus Pound from the CCS did his best at short notice to distil some of the earlier thinking of Joseph Ratzinger on the Theology of Death, but many of the audience wished for a fuller debate about statements such as "If life at its highest demands the Passion, then faith must reject *apatheia*, the attempt to avoid suffering, as contrary to human nature".

Professor Eamon Duffy from Cambridge gave a stimulating paper on Catholic practices related to Death and Dying, illustrated by some graphic recollections from his own family experiences. He started by reference to the ancient tradition of *Bona Mors*: a death in a state of grace, in the community of the Church, fortified by the sacraments, having discharged duties of charity and justice (e.g. make a will, reconcile family feuds). He noted that the Catholic practice of praying for the dead had now returned to most mainstream Christian bodies in England, stimulated by the need for remembrance after the First World War.

Eamon Duffy's recollection of his family experiences in Ireland emphasised two features; the raw realism of death (e.g. the corpse on display) and its containment by accepted conventions; people knew what to do in prayers, in behaviour to the bereaved and in liturgy. However now, when most deaths take place in hospital, Catholic practice for the dying has been much diluted; hospital staff are uneasy about such things.

On liturgy Eamon Duffy considered that it was helpful to have a relatively inflexible rite, e.g. as in the Requiem Mass, or in set prayers which could be said "on autopilot" without the need for religious professionals. Catholic piety had often emphasised the four last things: death, judgment, heaven and hell, and before Vatican II the office for the Dead and the Dies Irae in the Requiem Mass had all stressed the awfulness of death and the plea for mercy and forgiveness. In the post-Conciliar liturgy "Job had been replaced by St Paul" - with a re-emphasis on hope and salvation for all. Many people found this change positive and helpful, but Eamon Duffy wondered whether it was realistic to deny the bereaved a liturgy that could accompany and contain their pain. The "Death is nothing at all" sentiment is false. The shock and anger of the bereaved needs to be acknowledged in the liturgy, before there can be the full assurance of resurrection. Here perhaps the Psalms were of greater help than liturgies embodying credal statements. This point was picked up in questions about the difficulty of engaging a largely lapsed or pagan congregation in any formal liturgy for the dead, but the alternative of "do-it yourself" liturgy requires great experience and know-how.

The day concluded with an evening prayer liturgy based around the psalms. Inevitably many questions suggested during the day were individual and some difficult - such as the practical Christian response to a patient who has declared a wish for assisted suicide. The day enabled us to hear the approaches and experiences of some of those deeply involved in a wide compassionate ministry, from which we all seek to benefit, ultimately but (we hope) not too soon.

Anthony Baker
(with thanks for comments from other Association members attending)

Philip Bagguley

August 15th 1928 – April 2nd 2013

Philip studied theology in France shortly after the war and returned to England to obtain first class honours in French and Latin at Nottingham University. He had a great love for France and its language (and its wine in moderation) matching only his love of writing.

He became a priest of the Augustinians of the Assumption, and taught in their school, the Becket, in Nottingham. At the same time he was Catholic Chaplain to Nottingham University, and Chaplain to the Nottingham Newman Circle, in which capacities he assisted greatly with the organisation of the Pax Romana Congress held there in 1953. Following difficulties concerned with *Humanae Vitae* he joined the staff of the Department (later the School) of Education of Nottingham University, serving for nearly 30 years, during which he became chairman of the national Modern Language Association and its representative on the World Federation of Language Teaching Associations. In 1972 there began a long and happy marriage to Audrey and in 1997, following many years of research, his book 'Harlequin in Whitehall – A Life of Humbert Wolfe' was published.

Philip played a significant part in the revival of the Nottingham Newman Circle, and he was insistent upon the university/intellectual nature of the Newman Association as noted in his thoughtful contribution 'Whither or Wither' to *The Newman*, September 2012, qui vult, in line with the observation of Fr Keldany, many years Chaplain of the Newman Association, that members have a growing tail to their minds.

Philip will be remembered with great affection by all who knew him for his friendship, his sense of humour, and his desire and enthusiasm to share with others what he had learnt. May he rest in peace.

Eric Poyser

(Eric Poyser was President of the Newman Association in 1959-61. He and Bill Davidson represented the Association at Philip Bagguley's funeral Mass at Nottingham Cathedral on April 22nd.)

Cleveland Newman Members Visit Stanbrook Abbey

On Saturday 21st April 2012 the Benedictine Sisters of Stanbrook Abbey, Wass, kindly hosted an annual Day of Recollection for Cleveland's Newman Circle. Following a very warm welcome, Sister Petra (The Prioress) outlined something of their Benedictine way of life; highlighting those parts which lay people may find helpful.

Listen my son, with the ears of your heart

She began by explaining that patient listening required an attitude to God and to life that was open to hearing and receiving. In order to open our inner ear to God we need to be attentive, inwardly quiet and willing to hear. The sisters' disciplined way of life is meant to lead to a spiritual freedom. So, as disciples of Christ, we too are invited to listen to our Master and be formed by his teaching. We usually join with others in fellowship, via a church, and within that group we LISTEN to God and experience life.



The Benedictine vow of **stability** merely means putting down roots in one's community for life, paralleling the lay commitment of marriage and family life. The sisters' life is real and homely requiring a practical caring and affection in which they are asked to bear with the greatest patience one another's infirmities, whether of body or character. Stability is meant to take away any restlessness and free them in order to listen to God in Prayer. Living the Benedictine way of life, day in and day out, and testing themselves in love, leaves them open to **conversion of life**, or being changed by the working of the Holy Spirit. This is open to all other Christians too.

Each morning he wakens me to hear, to listen like a disciple (Is 52:4)

The whole of Benedictine spirituality can be summed up as *seeking God*. For those called to the married or single life, whether religious or not, this can be equally true. We are all invited to show a readiness to listen and obediently submit to the wisdom of a way of life. **Obedience** is just a Christian way of listening with humility and responding to what we hear, like the Beloved Son. We recognise the greatness of God and, although we know we were created in his image and likeness, accept that we have lost our place through our own disobedience.

A Benedictine day is interwoven with three strands - prayer, manual labour and spiritual reading, which is available to all of us too, if we want it to be. The Prayer of the Church, or Divine Office is, as St Augustine says, *Christ praying in the Church and for the Church, through the Church*. In other words, being the Body of Christ joining our voice and heart with the psalms and praying for the world. It is a hidden apostolic work where we pray for God's healing mercy and the salvation of all humanity.

Work, which is *given* to the sisters, not chosen, is also to be approached with a willing

mind and care. Everything, all the tools of their work, are to be treated with equal care; as holy vessels of the altar. If we too undertake our daily tasks with care and a quiet mind they will speak of the beauty of life and the goodness of God. Work is a tremendous privilege and our workplaces should be spaces where God is present and shared with others. Work, however, is a freedom and should not fully define us. For our worth is in being a person and our work is a very dignified contribution to the well being of a community.

Little prayers, woven throughout the day, unite us with God and remind us that we are about his work. St Benedict links prayer with spiritual reading , or *Lectio Divina*, whereby we offer our time to God, build a relationship with him and gratefully listen to his word. Lectio leads into prayer and as the great Benedictine abbot and spiritual director Dom John Chapman advised *Pray as you can, not as you can't*. Just take your true self to God and present yourself to him as you are, warts and all. If as a lay person you can only manage five minutes then this might be the only reasonable commitment that you can make.

St Benedict is both deeply scriptural and practical, telling his followers that if they want to get to heaven they must run there by good deeds. His Benedictine path is a simple way of living the gospel but a fully human way; open to and shaped by the divine. It is a life of listening, hearing and responding in love to God, to ourselves and to our neighbour Life without end!

After midday Office and lunch Sr Julian (in-charge of maintenance) then outlined the reasoning behind the sisters move to their new eco-friendly monastery where simplicity and sustainability are the order of the day. In modern, purpose-built



buildings the members of the Conventus of Our Lady of Consolation make use of solar panels to provide hot water, a woodchip boiler, rainwater harvesting for laundry and toilet flushing and a roof covered in sedum grass to insulate the building and attract local wildlife. Their buildings

have all used locally sourced stone and sustainable timber and a reed bed, located in the grounds, purifies the water before it re-enters the hydrogen life-cycle. This simple Benedictine life unfolds in a place where the views across the Vale of York reflect the grandeur and glory of God. True to all Benedictines, the sisters really have found a very beautiful spot.

Lorraine Canning

Having Faith in the Arab Spring?

Democracy, freedom and the religious communities of North Africa and the Middle East

Dr Richard McCallum

One of the great confusions of the day for our society and the world more generally is the great resurgence of religion that we see around the world, and no more so than during the so-called 'Arab Spring'. As we look to the Middle East, we see not just secular revolution, not just political upheaval, but religious turmoil.

I want to pose the question: 'Can we have faith in the Arab Spring?' I ask that both in the sense of 'can we see it as being a positive change within the MENA (Middle East & North Africa) region?' and also in the sense of 'can we have faith' – or more precisely – 'will religious communities in the Middle East and in North Africa be free to exercise their faith – in the new era?'

At the outset I want to make a few comments. Firstly, the term itself, the 'Arab Spring', is in some ways ill advised, not least because there are other peoples in the Middle East apart from Arabs. Moreover it is by no means clear that we can call it a 'spring'; indeed, recently in *The Tablet* Cardinal Koch, who is the German Prefect of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, made the comment 'I find it difficult to talk of an Arab Spring as I sometimes get the impression that it is more of an Islamist winter'.¹

Secondly, I would suggest that it is not a zero sum game. In other words, it is neither all bad nor is it all good. There is a tremendous diversity and complexity. It is always good when an evil dictatorship is overthrown and the voice of the people is heard. But the question comes: 'What will take its place and can the people move on from dictatorship?'

Thirdly, we need to avoid seeing the Arab Spring in adversarial terms: 'us' and 'them'. It is so easy to compare our very best with their very worst. We look at our own tradition, maybe our Christian tradition or our political tradition of democracy, and we take that as our highest ideal, and we compare it with the very worst of what we see of extremism, radicalism and violence in the MENA region, and say 'look at *them*, they're not as good as us.' But of course we – the 'West', 'Christians' or whoever – are by no means blameless, and sadly when we look at our own history, even the tradition that we might call 'Christian', it is less than ideal.

Fourthly, this is not a uniform phenomenon. The Arab Spring is a multi-faceted series of events. It is country-specific. Each country is undergoing a unique process albeit with factors in common. And finally, I want to stress how important it is to understand the background to the Arab Spring because it is very difficult to understand current events without understanding something of the history of the region, and the history of the religious communities – particularly the Christian communities which often act as what Anthony O'Mahony calls the 'barometer of the political atmosphere'.²

So can we have faith in the Arab Spring? Firstly, we need a picture of the great complexity and heterogeneity of the Middle East. There has been a population explosion. Including Turkey and Iran along with the Arabic-speaking countries there are now over 400 million people in the region, a fourfold increase in just 60 years. This has made for a very young population. In the United Arab Emirates 25 per cent of

the population are under the age of 15. And that is the smallest proportion of all the countries. The highest is in Yemen which has an under-15 proportion of about 50 per cent.

Often when we think of the MENA region we think of Arabs and maybe Sunni Islam. But the Arab population is by no means uniform. Particularly we hear about Sunnis and Shi'ites, and the tensions between them. Something like 35 to 40 per cent of the region's Muslims are Shi'ite (compared with less than 20% globally). The majority are Sunnis, and then there are also some other small groups of Muslims. There are maybe not quite as many denominations as within Christianity, but they are not far behind. We could mention the 'Ibadis and the Alawites, the Ismailis and the Druze and so on.

However, the Christian church also has a very long, even more complex history in this part of the world. Amongst the different church families of the Middle East the Oriental Orthodox churches form the largest grouping, encompassing something like 70% of the Christians of the region, including the Egyptian Coptic church, the Armenians and the Syrian Orthodox.

Then there are the Eastern Orthodox churches. These are the Greek Orthodox churches of the Middle East, including the three great patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch & Alexandria. And for each of the above churches there is a Catholic sister church, and so you get the Catholic Syrian church and the Greek Catholic church of the Middle East and so on. This also includes the Maronites. Then there are the Protestant churches – the Anglican and other Episcopalian churches and the non-conformist churches, evangelicals, many of which date back to the colonial period and the western missionary movement of that time. Finally, there are a few who have converted to Christianity from a Muslim background in more recent years, and who often face huge problems and opposition from their own communities.

Christians in decline

Despite the number of different churches there has been a huge decline in the Christian population of the Middle East both in actual numbers but also in percentage terms. 100 years ago, Christians formed about 11% of the population in the Middle East. Today it is around 3%. Lebanon has the highest percentage of Christians. Deliberately created as a state with a Christian majority by the French, only between 30 and 40 per cent are now Christian, overtaken by a Muslim majority split between Sunnis and Shi'ites. The largest number of Christians is in Egypt, around about 9 million Coptic Christians, some 10% of the population of Egypt. Up until recently the most stable Christian population was probably in Syria, where between 1 and 2 million Christians were living largely peacefully with their Muslim neighbours with a great deal of freedom. This has tragically been shattered by recent events.

I should also mention that there are obviously other faith communities in the Middle East, principally the Jewish community with a very, very long history both in the Jewish homeland of Israel itself, and before that amongst the Arab nations, and it was only after 1948 that many Jews from those Arab countries went to Israel. So three ancient faith communities have developed with so much shared history and yet also so many tensions and difficulties that we are all too aware of.

Many of you will be familiar with the Old Testament's version of Jewish history. Subsequently, in the early Christian era under Roman rule, there was a dispersion of

both the Jews and the Christians out of Jerusalem and into the surrounding areas of the Middle East, especially following the destruction of the Jewish temple in 70 AD. It was Christianity which thrived over the next 250 years, despite persecution, and in a sense conquered the Roman Empire. It became the empire's official religion in the fourth century from which springs our western-centric view of Christian history. But it was the Middle East, including Syria and Turkey, which were the early homelands of Christianity. And it was the Asian churches that were the great early missionary communities. Philip Jenkins in his book *The Lost History of Christianity*³ points out the vibrancy and the missionary endeavour of some of those early churches. At that point Europe was something of a backwater.

However, in the seventh century, with the rise of Islam and the breaking out of the Arab armies from the Arabian peninsula, the eastern church quickly came under pressure. It was not necessarily a religious conquest in the early days. It was really a political conquest, and it is not always true that people were converted 'at the point of the sword' during those conquests. Very often the Christian and Jewish communities were allowed to continue to practise their own faith, but with certain restrictions on them. This was called *dhimmi* status, a word meaning 'protected'.

Christians had some rights to practise their faith but they were not allowed to build churches, they were not allowed to bear arms and they were not allowed to ride horses. They also had to pay a tax called the *jizya* for the privilege of being under this 'protected' status. So by today's standards – which were not practised anywhere at that time including within 'Christendom' – there were discrimination and restrictions, certainly in terms of people being able to choose which religion they wanted to follow. It was all well and good if Christians or Jews wanted to leave their communities and become Muslim; but for a Muslim to convert to the Christian faith was punishable by death under the *shar'ia*, the code of life for Muslims. In fact, death for apostasy is still inscribed in the *shar'ia*. Many Muslims are uncomfortable with this but in 2010 the Pew Forum did a poll of people in different Middle Eastern countries and found that in Egypt 84% of Muslims still feel that the death penalty is appropriate for apostates.⁴

So the church came under great pressure during the centuries of what we might call Islamic imperialism or colonialism. There was a great social pressure on Christians to convert. Many chose to become Muslims because otherwise it was very difficult to advance economically and socially. So the church in these lands began to decline over those centuries. But then there came a new phase. Having gone through what we call the Islamic Golden Age, where the Islamic civilisation had been so successful in science, medicine, astronomy and mathematics, at a time when Europe was lagging behind, we come to a quite different period of Western colonisation. The Enlightenment was followed by the Industrial Revolution; western powers began to colonise much of the MENA region and for the Muslims this created a great dilemma.

Two responses by Muslims

To this point Islam's success had been a sign of God's favour. And so the question arose of how Allah could allow this to happen if Islam were the true religion? How could Muslims come under the power of the 'infidel'? There were two broad answers to that question.

- One was: 'We have slipped behind and we must modernise. We must emulate

the western powers. We must improve our education, our systems of government and so on’.

- The other was: ‘We have failed to practise our religion properly. Allah is displeased with us. We have to return to the true practice of Islam’. This second response led to a resurgence of religious practice.

One example of this type of response came from the group we call Salafis. The *salaf* were the early generations – Muhammad and the three generations after him. So when you hear the word Salafi, it means people who want to go back to what they consider to be the pure practice of Islam. It does not necessarily mean to say they are violent. There are Salafis that would shun violence and some that would espouse violence. Very often, however, they do have an interpretation of Islamic belief and practice that is quite detrimental to minorities within the community.

We still see these two trends amongst Muslims around the world today. This is a simplistic caricature but it provides the background to the developments we are seeing in the Arab Spring today. At the beginning of the twentieth century the West was the dominant colonial power, while Muslims were struggling with their perceived weakness and there was even a question mark over whether Islam would survive at all. But after World War 2 things began to change. Independence coincided with the discovery of oil; if you are an Arab Muslim wondering why you have been abandoned by Allah and then you suddenly discover that you are sitting on a very, very large lake of oil, your response is ‘*ilhamdullillah* – Praise God! – this is clearly Allah’s provision for restoring the fortunes of Islam’. And so we saw a change of fortunes from the middle part of the last century: in particular, the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which despite being a Shi’ite revolution became a model and inspiration for many Sunni Muslims.

Even earlier in the early 20th century there had been renewed difficulties, leading to persecution, for many of the Christian communities of the Middle East. In 1915 something like 1 to 1.5 million Armenian Christians were killed by the Ottoman Empire, or what we would now call Turkey. There was also a pre-war massacre of Assyrian Christians in northern Iraq. As Philip Jenkins puts it: “From the First World War onwards Christian communities were systematically eliminated across the Muslim world and the Armenian horrors of 1915 are only the most glaring of a series of such atrocities that reach their peak between 1915 and 1925.’

So even before the recent resurgence of political Islam the Christian communities of the Middle East were being eroded. This was not only through violence. Christian communities were better educated and they invested more in education. As tends to happen, that led to lower birth rates amongst Christian communities and so the Christian percentage of the population fell because of lower birth rates at a time when the Muslim birth rate was high. It also led to increased emigration, because if you are more educated, if you have more social and cultural opportunities, then you have the opportunity to emigrate, and many Middle Eastern Christians came to the West during the course of the last century.

For those that remained there was a lack of state or political protection. One of the only viable political vehicles that Christian communities in the Middle East could join during those years, particularly in the post-war period, was the Arab nationalist, or *Baathist*, movement. This was an ethnic *Arab* nationalist movement, not an Islamic

movement, and so it was open to both Muslims and Christians. Indeed some of the political thinkers and founders of the *Baathist* parties were Christian Arabs, like Michel Aflaq. However, these parties came to be dominated by strong dictators and also lost a lot of credibility in the humiliating defeat of the Arab nations by Israel during the 1967 Six Day War. The Palestinian struggle was then hijacked by an often-violent Islamist agenda, through the rise of factions like *Hamas*, *Hizbollah* and *Islamic Jihad*. Christians lost something of their political voice.

At the same time the West was also meddling in the Middle East. Much of its behaviour has undermined its calls for democracy and human rights, and led to an increasingly cynical response by Arabs, who accuse the West of hypocrisy. These views were seemingly affirmed when the West supported the suspension of democracy in Algeria in the early 1990s and refused to recognise *Hamas*' victory at the ballot box in 2006.

It is also the case that the dictators who have been ejected by the Arab Spring were all supported to some extent by western powers which valued economic stability and security over freedom and rights. This too has led Arabs to be cynical about western intentions for the Middle East. All of which has made it extremely difficult for many of the Christian communities of the Middle East; because in Arab Muslim thinking there is often no distinction between being 'Western' and being 'Christian'. They see the historic Christian communities of the Middle East as potential fifth columnists, who must be on the side of the western powers.

The West and the Arab Spring

These trends take us back to the Arab Spring. It is important to remember that these recent events have not been western-led. The western powers were extremely reluctant to acknowledge or to support the Arab Spring, certainly in the early days. Rather, the recent revolutions and demonstrations should be seen as the next phase in the post-war independence movement. Independence saw certain types of government coming to power – Arab nationalist (*Baathist*), socialist, monarchical – all of which proved to be corrupt and self-serving in different ways. As we have seen, in the interests of stability and security they were supported and upheld by the West because it achieved the West's own ends. We are now seeing a new phase where the people, the grass roots, are rejecting those forms of government and are looking for their own new forms of government.

Nobody saw the Arab Spring coming. More than anything else it started as a reaction to economic conditions, anger at corruption and protest at a lack of political freedoms. It started mainly with secular young people. Those from our first category of Muslims who, whilst wanting to maintain their faith identity, also want to modernise and emulate some of what they see in the West. In the early days the Islamists did not join the revolutions. They came in some days later and saw the unrest as an opportunity to introduce an Islamist agenda often with a more prominent role for *shari'a* as an aim. This has been the case in Tunisia where it was underemployed young people, who felt disenfranchised, who started the protests. Very quickly the movement was joined by the middle class, with access to social networking technology enabling the rapid mobilisation of large numbers of people. In a matter of days Ben Ali, the dictator of many years, had fled the country.

Tunisia was quickly followed by Egypt. But the revolution there has been different

in character. Egypt has a much larger working class that has for many years suffered political and economic oppression, and the group that had been the political opposition and had been providing the education and the welfare during that period was the Muslim Brotherhood. Today we call the Muslim Brothers Islamists – a rather loose term that usually means ‘politically motivated Muslims’. During the Mubarak era they were banned but were highly organised and worked at the grass roots level providing for the



population. This explains why now, post-revolution, the people have looked to them as the only organised political alternative which was helping them during the hard years. In contrast the more liberal and secular parties were not nearly so organised and did badly in the post-revolution election. Egyptian Christians, however, supported the more liberal candidates and do not have any influence amongst the Muslim Brotherhood. They thus feel vulnerable.

The Libyan revolution was much more tribal, being about the historical tension between the east and west of the country. Very quickly it became a global conflict as not only NATO got involved, but also the Gulf States, which poured huge amounts of finance into Libya – mainly to Islamist militia groups. Other countries have had different experiences again. Some of the rulers, in Morocco and Jordan, for example, have largely placated the people for the moment. But in Algeria the few small demonstrations were overwhelmingly snuffed out by the security forces. Other countries have been able to buy their way out: the oil-rich Gulf States have largely thrown money at the people, raising salaries and providing better jobs.

Finally, we come to Syria, where we see the full-blown implications of the faultlines between religious communities in the Middle East. It has become about Shi'ite and Sunni. The majority of the Syrian population is Sunni Muslim. But the ruling party is largely drawn from the minority Alawites – a Muslim sect related to the Shia'a, which helps to explain why they receive support from Iran, from Hizbollah and more recently from Iraq. The Syrian rebels are largely Sunnis and alongside them are increasing numbers of Islamist fighters from other countries in the region and even from here in the UK.

When the western powers went into Iraq in the Second Gulf War they completely upset the balance between Sunni and Shi'ites in the Middle East. Up until that point Iraq, despite having a Shi'ite majority, had been governed by a minority Sunni government. Now there is a Shi'ite government which, of course, is a lot closer to Iran. This has very much concerned Saudi Arabia – one of the big Sunni powers in the region – which has come down very heavily on its own Shi'ite population; the Saudis also supported the minority Sunni ruling elite of Bahrain against a Shi'ite rebellion a couple of years ago.

So now we are seeing that played out again in Syria, where a type of Shi'ite minority government, dominated by Alawites, is in danger of being overthrown by a Sunni majority. The Christians are caught in the middle and have been ambivalent about which side to support; the Alawite minority had been protecting Christian rights. Christians are very afraid of a Sunni backlash; there are understandable concerns that, with the amounts of money coming in from the Gulf, a new Sunni regime might take on an Islamist nature.

So in all of these countries we have seen an exodus of Christians. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Christians have left since the Second Gulf War. Again they were caught both between Sunni and Shi'ite sects and also between Muslims and the West. In the twelve months after the Egyptian revolution it is reckoned that 100,000 Coptic Christians left Egypt. Something like half a million have left in the last 10 years. In the same way we are seeing many Syrian Christians fleeing Syria. We are witnessing a tragic attrition of the Christian communities of the Middle East.

It is not all bad news! We might think of Tahrir Square in Cairo in the early days of the revolution where we saw Christians and Muslims demonstrating together, holding up the cross and the Qur'an. Think also of Tunisia where there were also demonstrations after the revolution declaring 'we are Muslims, we are Christians, we are Jews, we are all Tunisians'. There was a TV program made not long after the revolution, and it featured Tunisian Christians worshipping. These are Tunisian Christians from a Muslim background.

And yet there are still those disturbing stories we have seen: pictures from Egypt of Coptic churches being burned by Islamist mobs; President Morsi snubbing the new Coptic Pope and not attending his installation; the kidnapping of Christian women. The Anglican Bishop of Cairo recently said 'Salafists treat us like *dhimmis*' – second class citizens.

Conclusion

The 'Arab Spring' is a momentous series of events. We do not yet know where it is going to end. At times we might be tempted to see these developments as being very negative, but there are also some hopeful signs. Each country has its own story. We have to be active in offering support for religious freedom, particularly encouraging the Christian and other minority communities of the Middle East, protesting where we see oppression and persecution. But otherwise we need to wait before passing judgement. As somebody said when they were asked what they thought of the Protestant reformation, they said, 'it is still too soon to say'!

*Dr Richard McCallum is based at the Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies, Oxford
This talk was given to the North Gloucestershire Circle in February 2013*

Notes

- 1 PONGRATZ-LIPPITT, C. Arab world entering Islamist winter. The Tablet, February 2nd, 2013.
- 2 O'MAHONY, A. A vital presence. The Tablet, February 5th, 2011.
- 3 JENKINS, P. (2009) The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia--and How It Died, HarperOne.
- 4 PEW FORUM ON RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE (2010) Muslim Publics Divided on Hamas and Hezbollah: most embrace a role for Islam in politics. p14. cf Jordan 86%, Pakistan 76%, Indonesia 30%, Lebanon 6%, Turkey 5%

Spirituality

Contributed by Eileen Cheverton

Pride and Humility

Many a man, instead of *learning* humility in practice, confesses himself a poor sinner and next *prides* himself upon the confession; he ascribes the glory of his redemption to God, and then becomes in a manner proud that he is redeemed. He is *proud* of his so-called humility.....We think ourselves wise; we flatter each other; we make excuses for ourselves when we are conscious we sin, and thus we gradually lose the consciousness that we are sinning. We think our own times superior to all others.

John Henry Newman, Parochial and Plain Sermons

An Eternal Sovereignty

*"I saw coming on the clouds of heaven
one like a son of man.....*

On him was conferred sovereignty, glory and kinship

And men of all peoples, nations and languages became his servants.

His sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty which shall never pass away,

Nor will his empire ever be destroyed" (Dan.7: 13-14).

Yet the first stage in the glorification of Christ, His Resurrection, is almost surprising in its apparent ordinariness. Not only did he declare himself "in the breaking of bread", show His doubtful disciples the wounds still to be seen on His flesh, invite Thomas to handle him; in John's description of His appearance on the lakeside the atmosphere is almost one of a family picnic, as though the risen Lord would remind His followers that the glory that awaited them, the glory which He won for them, was not yet.

For them, there remained the task of carrying His message to the ends of the earth, living on in faith, in the certainty of ultimate triumph even if, for them, as for Him, the way to glory was the path of duty, of obedience, of witness to the truth by the testimony of blood.

From "One Body, One Spirit" by Thomas Corbishley S.J.

Letter to the Editor

May I add a brief word to Kevin Lambert's very interesting article on the history of Pax Romana? Back in 1958, long before feminism was even a word, Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo (1930-2004) was the first woman to be Student President of Pax Romana (IMCS) – and she went on to be the first woman Prime Minister of Portugal. That year she organised a Europe-wide women's conference in the Netherlands to discuss the role of women in the church and in the world. Alexina Murphy and I attended the conference as the delegates from Britain (the Union of Catholic Students).

Moira Redfern

Book Review

An Untrammelled Mind and a Loving Heart

50 Years Receiving Vatican II, A Personal Odyssey:

Kevin T. Kelly; The Columba Press, Dublin; paperback, €24.99

For Kevin Kelly, now in his eighties, 'emeritus' does not mean 'past it', but disengagement from work to reengage with life. This book is a collection of writings – essays, lectures, chapters from his books shortened and with addition comments – from his life as a priest and moral theologian. He was ordained a year before the accession of John XXIII and his book is inspired by and infused with the spirit of Vatican II.

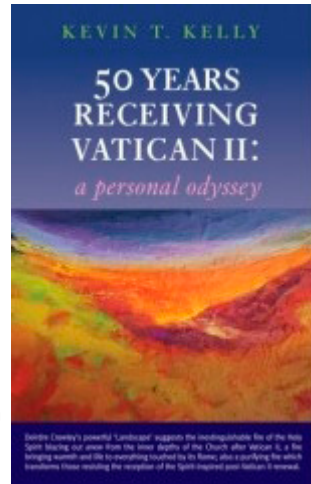
It is a far cry from moral theology's origins as a means of calibrating the sinfulness of discrete acts to modern thinking which sees it as a system for helping people to live well. Good laws do not restrict but enfranchise people. Dr. Kelly holds to the principle of *epikeia*: strict application of the law may go against its spirit.

Various experiences willingly undertaken added immeasurably to the breadth of Kevin Kelly's vision. He shared a church and ministry with an Anglican priest on a new estate at Widnes, where they celebrated a simultaneous Eucharist on special feasts. They shared the Liturgy of the Word, but presided at their respective canons side by side and gave communion to members of their own denomination. The order to stop this practice was a bitter blow. Then he combined serving as a parish priest in Liverpool with teaching Moral Theology at Heythrop College in London from Tuesdays to Thursdays. He remarked that a lot of reading could get done on the twice-weekly train journey.

In 1980 he used a sabbatical to explore the working of liberation theology in the Philippines and Peru, where he was moved by the vibrant faith of poor priestless communities. Subsequently, as a member of the CAFOD advisory committee, he visited the Medical Missionaries of Mary in Africa and saw the sisters' work for HIV/AIDS patients and the Orphan Project, which supported parentless children caring for younger siblings. In this book he gives some account of these experiences which blew his mind.

Sin is committed only when a person harms himself or another person. It is not necessarily catastrophic, but, if owned, can be the beginning of a journey towards spirituality. But Kevin Kelly emphasises the gravity of *social sin*; for example we are all involved in the global commerce which obliges a working man to live far from his wife; out of loneliness he visits a prostitute, catches HIV/AIDS, infects her, and comes home to die.

Kevin Kelly loves the Church with a courageous reforming love, but he does not mince his words in pointing out the harm done by its systematic inhumanity and intransigence on issues involving discipline and gender. He points out that a clerical culture which makes an idol of the institution allowed child sexual abuse to flourish unchecked, and that it encourages hypocrisy; the bishops of England and Wales



expressed considerable unease among themselves over the CDF paper *Persona Humana* but sent a telegram of thanks to Rome for this 'excellent Declaration'.

The author states that the insistence on a male celibate priesthood deprives many communities of the Eucharist and that there are unmistakeable traces of the ancient belief in the inferiority of women. By speaking to married couples, Kevin Kelly learned (and had to accept) that *Humanae Vitae* did not tally with their lived experience. He sees how the rulings on the remarried and homosexuals stigmatise faithful Catholics. Rome has imposed on this country without consultation the Ordinariate and a new Mass text (which Kevin Kelly says should be binned).

Kevin Kelly urges us to receive 'in all its fullness the tremendous gift which God's Spirit has given us in VCII'. He looks forward confidently to a Church in which the glory of God is seen not in obeying laws but in human beings who are fully alive 'on the holy ground of everyday life'. He calls on the hierarchy to see the non-reception of its decrees not as disloyalty but as an invitation to engage in dialogue. He envisages a Church which can accept that salvation has come to a young gay man through the faithful love of a partner, and regards a young girl who becomes a prostitute to save her younger sisters as a saint.

But this is not the way Rome sees such things today.

Josephine Way

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.

Mrs M.C.Bridge (Surrey Hills), Mr G.Conlong (North Staffs), Dr P.Firth (North Merseyside), Mr D.M.Gilbert-Harris (North Glos.), Mrs S.Gilmour (Aberdeen), Ms P.R.Hughes (Tyneside), Mr C.G.Johnson (Coventry), Mrs M.R.McGhee (North Glos), Mr J.McManus (Hertfordshire), Mrs S. McQuinn (Hertfordshire), Mrs M.Warner (North Glos).

Requiescant in Pace

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

Mr P.Bagguley (Unattached), Dr V.D'Andria (York), Mrs K.N.Dunsire (Unattached), Mr J.D.Green (Ealing), Dr C.A.Higgins (Manchester & N.Cheshire), Mr J.Hilton (Unattached), Miss K.M.Lyons (Croydon), Mr G.P. McKenna (Manchester & N. Cheshire), Bro. J.Parker (Glasgow), Dr A.A.Thompson (Worcester), Mr P.C.Warner (North Glos.), Mr D.G.Wilkinson (Unattached),

New Circle

The new Eastbourne and Bexhill Circle is now up and running. It is busily recruiting members and has a full programme arranged for the year. Further details are available from

Mr John Carmody (01323 726334) or Dr Edward Echlin (01424 219788).

Circle Programmes

All Circles

15 June National AGM in Coventry

Aberdeen

2 May AGM and Cheese and Wine

Contact: Margaret Smith, 01224 314566

Birmingham

Contact: Winifred Flanagan, winifredflanagan@gmail.com

18 May The Universal Call To Holiness

Canon John Udris

TBC –The Unfinished Business of Vatican 2

Fr Julian Green

10 June Mass followed by AGM

Cleveland

Contact: Lorraine Canning, 01642 645732, lcanning@btopenworld.com

15 May AGM

1 June Day of Recollection

Coventry

Contact: Freda Lambert, Coventry@newman.org.uk

21 May The Ordinariate and the Year of Faith

Rev. Paul Burch

Croydon

Contact: Pat Pinsent, PatPinsent@aol.com

Ealing

Contact: Kevin Clarke, Kevin.Clarke@keme.co.uk

Edinburgh

Contact: Michael Brennan, 01506 858342, m_brennan5@btinternet.com

Glasgow

Contact: Dan Baird, danbaird98@btinternet.com

Hertfordshire

Contact: Maggy Swift, 01582 792136, maggy.swift@btinternet.com

2 June The New Evangelisation and the Earth

Edward Echlin

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

13 May Mindfulness?

Chris Quirke

1 June Receiving Vatican II and Us

Kevin Kelly

22 June Quiet Day

Thomas Culinan OSB

1 July AGM followed by Reflection on 'A life and times'

Brian Comerford

North Gloucestershire

Contact: Stephanie Jamison, 01242 539810

7 May AGM followed by light refreshments and wine

North Merseyside

Contact: John Potts, john_potts41@hotmail.com

North Staffordshire

Contact: Vincent Owen, 01782 619698

Rainham

Contact: Marie Casey, BMCasey@BTInternet.Com

All SE Circles

Surrey Hills

May
June/ July

Contact: Gerald Williams, guillaume30@btinternet.com
A talk on the work of CAFOD – TBC
TBA

Tyneside

29 May
31 July

Contact: Gillian Allen, 01670 353216, fergusallen@hotmail.co.uk
Blessed John Henry Newman *Sr. Michael*
Dialogue and Proclamation *Rev. Colin Carr, O.P.*

Wimbledon

23 May

Contact: Bill Russell, 020 8946 4265, william_russell@talktalk.net
The Future of the Jesuit Mission in Britain Today *Fr Michael Holman SJ*

Worcester

16 May
June
July

Contact: Heather Down, 01905 21535, hcdown@gmail.com
The Media – TBC
Outing
House Mass and Supper

Wrexham

31 May
28 June

Contact: Maureen Thomas, maureenthomas@uwclub.net
The Sunni Muslim Faith & The Spirit of Cordoba *Mr Zhia Choudhry*
Surrounded by Settlers and Olive Trees: Israel/Palestine Ecumenical
Accompaniment Programme *Ann Farr*
Summer Social TBA

Jul/Aug

York

20 May

Contact: Judith Smeaton, 01904 704525, judith.smeaton@btinternet.com
AGM, followed by lecture Doctors and Nurses and other games:
problems of communication in the caring relationship
Rev. Dr. John Berry



Church of Christ the King, Coventry: see page 15