

THE Newman

THE JOURNAL OF THE NEWMAN ASSOCIATION

September 2013

Issue No. 90

£3.00

JHN

Vatican II: Reception and Non-Reception?

Michael Walsh

Vatican II and Us

Fr Kevin Kelly

The Year of Faith: Christ's Victory over Relativism

Fr Stephen Fawcett

Practices of Death and Dying

Eamon Duffy

Science and Religion: Friends or Foes?

Paul Black

Visit to the Birmingham Oratory
Letter to the Editor

Book Reviews
AGM report

Contents

Comment	1
Vatican II: Reception and Non-Reception?	2
How the Council came about	6
Vatican II and Us.....	12
The Year of Faith: Christ's Victory over Relativism	14
Visit by Ealing Circle members to Birmingham Oratory – May 11th, 2013.....	17
Practices of Death and Dying in Catholic Tradition	19
Letter to the Editor.....	24
Obituary of Moyra Archibald	25
Annual General Meeting, Coventry, June 15th 2013.....	26
Law and Justice reaches its 50th birthday.....	28
Science and Religion: Friends or Foes?	29
Book Reviews.....	34
Concerning Circles	36
London Newman Lecture 2014	36

Editorial Committee: Barry Riley (Editor) • Eileen Cheverton • Anne Duddington • John Duddington • Josephine Way • Robert Williams

Editorial Advisory Board: John Bailey (Tyneside) • Dr. Gerard Carruthers (Glasgow) • Dr. Marie Rose Low (Hertfordshire) • Dr. Christine Newman (Cleveland) • Dr. Christopher Quirke (Manchester) • David Taylor (Worcester)

Printing: Silver Pines Services, Sevenoaks

Articles, comments, etc.: Should be sent to Barry Riley by email at editor@newman.org.uk – items should be sent in Word format as an attachment or as an embedded text within the email. Hard-copy items may be sent by post to 17 Mount Pleasant Road, London W5 1SG. Tel: 020 8998 5829. Articles should not normally exceed 3,000 words.

Copy Deadline: for next issue is **15th November 2013**.

The Newman: is published by the Newman Association, 20-22 Bedford Row, London WC1K 4JS. **Website:** <http://www.newman.org.uk>. Unless the Editor is informed in advance that contributors wish to refuse permission for online use of their material, The Newman Association may use on its website any article or other material contributed to *The Newman*. Unless the article has been previously published elsewhere with copyright assigned, copyright will reside with the author, The Newman and the Newman Association. In this case an author may republish his or her material elsewhere with the permission of the Association and printed acknowledgement of its prior appearance in *The Newman*.

Email: info@newman.org.uk

British Library Reference Number: ISSN-0951-5399

Back numbers: copies of a number of previous issues of *The Newman* are available from the editor - see contact details above.

The Newman Association Charity No. 1006709

President: Anthony Baker

Acting Hon. Secretary: Dr. Christopher Quirke, 29 Spring Road, Hale, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 2UQ, 0161 941 1707 to whom general enquiries should be addressed.

Contributions to <i>The Newman</i> express the views of their authors and not necessarily the views of the Newman Association
--

Cover picture: JHN crest from the wall of Newman's shrine.

Comment

Young Catholics often feel that the Second Vatican Council has, after 50 years, become ancient history and they may be surprised at the focus still being placed on the event. But I make no apologies for the further anniversary coverage in this issue, including a scholarly analysis by Michael Walsh of the Council's aftermath and a more personal and pastoral note by Fr Kevin Kelly.

After all, Vatican II has largely defined the 71-year history of the Newman Association. The early development of the Newman, in the immediate postwar period, was marked by the restlessness of an increasingly educated laity and by a sense that great changes lay ahead for the Catholic Church. By the 1960s membership had grown to almost 3,000 with a large element of young people. Intense interest, almost excitement, was generated by the progress of the Council itself during the period 1962 to 1965 and in associated events such as, of course, the publication of the encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae* in 1968.

From the 1970s onwards, however, it became clear that the hopes of more radical lay Catholics were likely to be disappointed. Conservative elements in the Church resisted some of the principles of Vatican II, such as subsidiarity. The Vatican has not been willing to let control slip. Over the past 40 years membership of The Newman Association has dwindled to the point when today, though stable, it is well below 1,000. Indeed, the number of practising Catholics has also diminished and it seems that traditionalists may be asserting more control over a residual Church (see also our note in this issue on the Oratorians in Birmingham).

This issue of *The Newman* takes the Vatican II story into its 51st year, launched by Pope Benedict as the Year of Faith running from October 11th 2012 to November 24th this year (the Feast of Christ the King). In his *Porta Dei* Apostolic Letter last October Pope Benedict argued that because of a profound crisis of faith it was no longer possible to recognise a unitary cultural matrix. Fr Stephen Fawcett has developed this for us into an analysis of the Year of Faith's fight against the challenge from relativism.

Barry Riley



Commemoration of the opening of Vatican II, set in the marble floor of St Peter's

Vatican II: Reception and Non-Reception?

By Michael Walsh

Reception is here used in the sense of whether the ideas of Vatican II have fully become the received wisdom of the Church.

It has been said¹: “Nothing alters quite like the unalterable.” The pre-conciliar fortress Catholicism had seemed, at least to the unhistorical eye, steadfastly unchangeable. This was particularly so under the pontificate of Pius XII, whose austere figure and penchant for oracular pronouncements had seemed to many Catholics to represent the ideal of what a pontificate should be. *Il ultimo Papa*, one Italian biographer called him: the last Pope. And then, in the conclave of 1958, the cardinals elected the roly-poly figure of Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli as Pope John XXIII. The election of a Pope who smiled at the camera, rather than staring into the middle distance as if enthralled by a vision of the Virgin Mary, was swiftly overshadowed by the summoning of the Second Vatican Council.



Michael Walsh

The historian and convert from Anglicanism, Edward Norman, is perhaps typically dismissive of the Council's long-term effects, believing that what happened subsequently to the Roman Catholic Church and other churches would have happened anyway, without the Council. There is, however, no denying the impact which the Council had at the time upon Catholicism and indeed upon much of the world-wide movement of Christianity – which is what we call “reception”. Yet whether the outcome of the Council was quite what John intended is in fact unclear.

Last year two remarkable exhibitions in Rome vied for attention, each demonstrating a different facet of Papal power. In the Capitoline Museum there was on display a formidable array of items from the Vatican archives including a 60 metre long parchment roll containing the records of the trials of the Templar knights, that uncomfortable example of Papal chicanery in the midst of the Ages of Faith. And the letter from the bishops and nobles of England begging Pope Clement VII to grant King Henry VIII his divorce.

Fewer people than climbed the Capitoline steps found their way to St Paul's Outside the Walls. As you may well know, it is some distance from Rome's historic centre. Accidentally destroyed by fire in the 19th century St Paul's has been majestically restored. It is especially worth visiting because interwoven with this permanent display of treasures are some particular mementos of the Vatican Council. Above all there is on exhibition the original text of a speech by Pope John XXIII in which he announced that the Council was to be summoned.

For such a momentous occasion the Pope's speech was on a disconcertingly scrappy bit of paper. He scribbled it down in a barely legible hand with much crossing-out. Surely had Papa Roncalli intended to announce the Vatican Council at such a time and place he would have had a speech typed out and more than a handful of Cardinals –

seventeen, in fact – with him to hear the message.

The preparations for the Council revealed the battle lines in the Vatican between the newly-created Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity under the Jesuit Cardinal Augustin Bayer and the Theological Commission presided over by Alfredo Ottaviani. The two committees clashed over the preparatory document for the Council on the sources of revelation. Bayer was a scriptural scholar and for many years had been Rector of the Jesuit-funded Biblical Institute. The Biblical Institute, and implicitly Bayer himself, was attacked in an article in the Journal of the Lateran University, *Divinitas*, by a professor at the Lateran. If this was an attempt to undermine Bayer it backfired. Pope John let it be known how much he disapproved of the article and the rector of the Biblical Institute was appointed to the Theological Commission alongside Ottaviani.

The history of the Council, which opened on October 11th 1962, and closed on December 8th 1965, is complex. The pre-conciliar conflicts between the old Vatican, represented by Ottaviani, and the new, represented by Bayer, immediately resurfaced. Ottaviani's attempt to present lists of nominees to be elected to the pre-conciliar working parties was frustrated by Cardinal Achille Lie'Nart of Lille, one of the Council's presidents, when he proposed that the Council fathers put off their meeting for a whole week. It was an apparently small, but in the long term significant, victory for the Bishops of the Church over the Vatican Curia. Not only did it assert the authority of the Council Fathers over the Church bureaucracy but discussions about who to elect draw together bishops from different language groups and help them to get to know one another, which they didn't before the Council began. In 1962, it should be said – something that may come as a surprise – there were relatively few national conferences of bishops. That they now exist throughout the world is one of the most obvious examples of the reception of the Vatican Council's ecclesiology.

The Council as it proceeded undoubtedly raised great hopes, as well as sowing much confusion amongst Catholics. The Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, with its emphasis on first on the whole Church, as the People of God, then the doctrine on Collegiality – the doctrine that all the bishops form a college with responsibility for the whole Church and not just for their own dioceses – raised expectations that, in future, authority would be much more diffuse and not solely associated, as it had been in Catholics' minds, with the Papacy and the Vatican Curia. It was also expected that the doctrine of collegiality, *mutatis mutandis*, would be applied to structures at every level of the Church, right down to the parish.

Episcopal conferences were instituted where they did not already exist. The Synod of bishops also came into being, a new structure created in the immediate aftermath of the Council. But neither delivered what had been hoped for by the reformers. Paul VI had been prevailed upon during the Third Session to add the *Nota Previa Esplanativa* to Chapter Three of the Constitution of the Church, which gave a much narrower interpretation of the collegiality of bishops than the Constitution itself laid down, asserting that the Supreme Pontiff can always exercise his power at will, as his office demands.

This undermined the fundamental concept of Collegiality, a concept which was subjected to the implacable hostility of Joseph Ratzinger. As an aside, I may quote a recent lecture by Christopher Hill, the Bishop of Guildford. "If Vatican II is in a process

of at least partial reception by Anglicans," he said, "the *Nota Previa* is not".

In May the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued *Communiois Notio*, which was followed exactly six years later by John Paul II's *Apostolos Suos* which, as Massimo Faggioli² puts it, reinforced one of the basic assumptions of the International Theological Commission chaired by Cardinal Ratzinger; that is, the need to scale back some of the aspects of Post-Vatican II decentralisation and empowerment of national bishops' conferences. It seemed that power was being reclaimed by the Church's head in Rome, at the expense of the Church's body throughout the world (to quote Faggioli again).

I want to make here a point about the history of the Catholic Church. I began this talk with the expression 'fortress Catholicism'. A more conventional phrase, I suppose, might have been 'Tridentine Catholicism'. From the middle of the Sixteenth Century to the middle of the Twentieth Catholics had been living under the shadow of the Council of Trent, which had been held, albeit spasmodically, from 1545 to 1563. Trent was the last reforming council. The correlate of Vatican II, therefore, is Trent and not Vatican I, which in the end was not concerned with Church reform. The structure of the Roman Curia before Trent was entirely different from that which followed the restructuring of Pope Sixtus V and which basically survives to this day. It wasn't the same Vatican. Secondly, unlike the Roman Curia in the 1960s, a good many, if not most, of the Cardinals surrounding the Popes of Trent were in favour of reform. That, again, is the discontinuity. But despite the backing of so many of the sixteenth-century cardinals the implementation of the reforms of Trent – I'm thinking particularly of the establishment of seminaries – was a long-drawn-out process. There has never really been an attempt to execute one much-vaunted reform of the day, the requirement that all bishops reside in their dioceses.

But to return to Vatican II. When the Council was announced, the attitude of Wilhelm Bishop Hooft, General Secretary of the Geneva-based World Council of Churches since its foundation in 1948, was at best ambiguous. As I suggested, Pope John first cast the Council in the context of Christian unity, and it was after all called by some an ecumenical council. It is debatable whether the term as applied to Vatican II is entirely appropriate. But certainly it was confusing to those who were accustomed to using the term "ecumenical" in the context of inter-church relations. Furthermore, Bishop Hooft was not entirely happy that the Roman Catholic Church should suddenly appear centre-stage in the world of ecumenics, particularly after the hostility which it had shown towards Christian unity in the first half of the twentieth century. "Those who had been working in the ecumenical vineyard in the first hour," he said in a broadcast in May, 1964, "had not looked kindly upon those who had arrived at the eleventh hour."

There was, moreover, a particular grievance. In August 1959 the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches met at Rhodes. It was the first time the Committee had met within the confines of the Orthodox world. And they were particularly concerned to make possible for the autocephalist³ Orthodox churches behind the Iron Curtain to join the World Council. There were Vatican officials present, not as observers – because the Curia was not prepared to tolerate this – but as journalists. In the margins of the conference, however, these 'journalists' engaged in discussions with the Orthodox. Rome had, of course, always believed that the union with the Orthodox

would be easier to achieve than that with the churches of reform.

When Bishop Hooft heard of these talks he was furious. He had suspected, ever since the announcement of the Council, that Rome would attempt to steal the ecumenical initiative from Geneva. He had, none the less, formally welcomed the announcement and had expressed the hope that ecumenism would be a major feature of the deliberations. By the time of the incident of Rhodes, however, the reunion aspect of the Council had receded. In his first Encyclical, *Ad Petri Cathedram*, on the 29th of June 1959, Pope John made it clear that the chief aim of the Council was the renewal of the Roman Catholic Church. He also had invited the non-Roman Catholics "to seek and enter into the unity for which Jesus Christ prayed".

At this point John's understanding of Church unity was that of submission to Rome, an approach naturally unacceptable to the World Council. By the time the decree on ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, was approved this attitude had been wholly abandoned, at least by the majority of the fathers in the Council. Of particular significance for the future of ecumenism was the section in the decree which talked about the hierarchy of truths, a concept to which far too little attention has been given. As a notion, however, it is not quite as new as it sounds, as it is similar to the theological notes which used to be attached to doctrines. As some people here may know, this is a particular hobby-horse of Professor Nicholas Lash.

Be that as it may, John Moorman, Bishop of Ripon and scholar of Franciscan history in its great variety, was a particularly active Anglican observer at the Council. He wrote the following in his book *Vatican II Observed* in 1967. "The result of the Council has been to alter the whole ecumenical pattern and to carry the ecumenical discussion into a new field. Rome has, at last, begun to interest herself in the problems of unity. A new pattern has emerged as a result of the Council and much of the thought and language which was valid five years ago is now obsolete". Now, it is true that the movement towards Christian unity seems to have, from the point of view of the Catholic Church at least, come to an apparent dead end, though some conversations continue. Partly this may be because Rome has had other preoccupations. But I want to dwell for a moment on the ecumenical movement because it is hard to imagine the Church *without* this commitment to ecumenism. Now, one could not have said this before the Council. Ecumenism, and the Catholic attitude towards it, is one very clear sign of the reception by the Church of Vatican II as is, also, the attitude to religious freedom, or relations with non-Christian religions. As Massimo Faggioli puts it, in a neat turn of phrase, the Council has irreversibly penetrated the DNA of modern Catholicism. Yet clearly there is a widely-held belief that the Council has not been received in its fullness; this is the view of progressives within the Church although it has been viewed as something of a disaster by the traditionalists. After the Council we thought there would be a day of sunshine in the history of the Church. Instead there arrived a day of clouds, of tempests, of darkness, of questioning and uncertainty.

So let me turn now to the factors which impeded the reception of the Council. One has to remember that reception is not a simple term. People receive the message of the Council in different ways according to their background, to their degree of preparation, in accordance with their own particular concerns. Thus when one looks at *Gaudium et Spes*, the pastoral constitution of the Church in the modern world, it is striking

continued on page 8

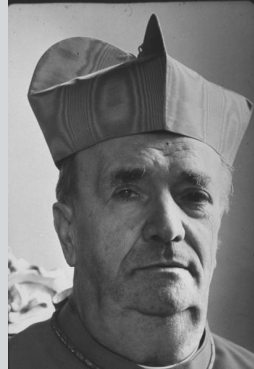
How the Council came about

The understanding of the Council's origin is complicated by the fact that there were contradictory versions given at different times by the Pope himself. The first version to become public was given on the 8th of May, 1962. It is almost certainly the least reliable. It is certain, however, that this Council, widely regarded as a reforming one, was in fact suggested to Roncalli on the night before his



Ernesto Ruffini

election by two of the most conservative Italian cardinals. Ernesto Ruffini, who was Archbishop of Palermo from 1945 (he died in 1967), and in 1946 had been created cardinal in Pope Pius XII's first consistory. The other was Alfredo Ottaviani (1890-1979) who had been elevated to the purple in the same consistory as had Roncalli himself. He has been revealed in Roncalli's diaries – much to my surprise,



Alfredo Ottaviani

I must say – as the future Pope's closest confidant in Rome while Roncalli was away from the Vatican on diplomatic service.

These two, Ruffini and Ottaviani, had proposed a General Council to Pius XII in 1948. They wanted one, they said, because of the doctrinal errors which were inflicting harm upon the faithful. Secondly, because Canon Law needed to be brought up to date (they actually used the term *aggiornamento*) and because Catholics had to be united against Communism. And because, they argued, it could also be an occasion for the definition of the dogma of the Assumption of Mary.

In the end, of course, Pius XII did not choose the Conciliar route. It was in any case a view in the Church that after the definition of Papal Primacy, and especially of infallibility, at the first Vatican Council in 1869-70, Councils were unnecessary. Some, at least, of the supposed heresies Pius attacked in his 1950 Encyclical *Humanae Generis*, and in the same year he proclaimed the Assumption of Our Lady to be a truth of the Faith to be held by the whole Church.

Nevertheless Pius XII had made tentative moves in the direction of a Council and handed the planning of it over to Ottaviani's Holy Office. Whether Roncalli himself had ever considered the calling of a Council before Ruffini and Ottaviani had a word in his ear on the evening of 27th October 1958 we don't know. After that date he thought about it quite often and he possibly made up his mind on the night of the 8th January 1959, though he was later to give the impression that the idea had come to him on the 20th January 1959 in conversation with Domenico Tardini, whom he had made Secretary of State in November 1958 and created a Cardinal a month later.

The formal announcement, as I have just mentioned, was made to an extraordinary Consistory of just 17 Cardinals gathered together in the Basilica of St Paul Without the Walls in a service to mark the end of an octave of prayer for Christian Unity. The news of the Council, Pope John recorded, was greeted with a devout, and impressive, silence. Now, it was not only the Council that was announced that day. The Pope, who took very seriously his pastoral responsibilities as Bishop of Rome, said he would summon a Roman Synod. And he accepted the Ruffini-Ottaviani suggestion that an aggiornamento of Canon Law was required.

The Roman Synod, it should be recorded, met but proved to be of little more than symbolic significance. The updating of the Code was indeed put in train, lasting until the Pontificate of John Paul II. The Council met 3½ years later, after a remarkably short time for preparation. But then, John was feeling his age and was eager to get it under way.

It is questionable, however, whether the Council that took place was the Council the Pope had in mind when he first spoke of it to the Cardinals in St Paul's Outside the Walls. There was, in Pope John's address, a special appeal to non-Catholics. It was, he said, a renewed invitation to our brothers of our separated Christian churches, to share with us in this banquet of grace and brotherhood. The words sounded remarkably like an invitation to take part in the Council to those who were not of the Roman Communion.

The official version of what he said has a rather different emphasis. The renewed invitation was "to the faithful of separated communities, likewise to followers in goodwill in the search for unity and grace" which was not what he said. The term 'churches' had disappeared and the apparent invitation to take part was played down. The non-RCs were to follow the Papacy in the search for unity rather than to join in as seemingly equal partners. For the context of the Pope's words suggests that one of his chief aims for the Council was Christian Unity.

Reception of the news within the Roman Curia was muted, to say the least. It was all too much for the Vatican's semi-official newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* which only mentioned the calling of the Council on an inside page, making instead the Pope's standard condemnation of Communism its lead story. *Civiltà Cattolica*, the Jesuit journal which is censored by the Secretariat of State, managed to avoid mentioning the Council for a whole year.

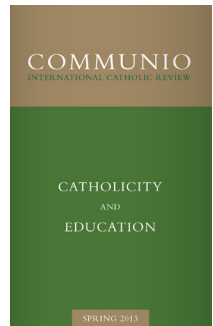
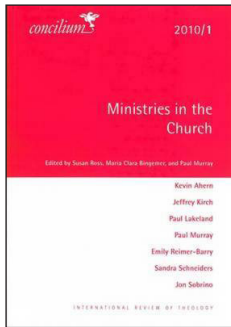
In New York Cardinal Spellman, who had taken part in the conclave which elected Roncalli, complained that he had first heard about the Council from the press. Then he said that he thought the Pope had been pushed into it. In Milan the first reaction of Giovanni Battista Montini, whom John had created a Cardinal, but because of his more modest rank of Archbishop had not been in the Conclave, remarked that the Pope did not realise what a hornet's nest he was stirring up. Montini was very soon to become Pope Paul VI. As late as Lent 1963 he was writing in a pastoral letter that today there were no errors in the Church, or scandals, or deviations or abuses to correct, so why did they need a Council? Once the die was cast, however, he committed himself fully to the Council..

continued from page 5

that some have chosen to pay more attention to what the document has to say about the Church in its social and political context – American theologians in particular – while Asian theologians have been more concerned with what it has to say about the embedding of the Church within different local cultures.

Gaudium et Spes is a convenient place to start, because apart from the radical rejection of religious liberty by some of the most traditionalist of the fathers no document of the Council proved to be more fought over or more divisive. The divisions are exemplified by the foundation of two opposed periodicals which are probably well-known to you all: *Concilium* and *Communio*. The former, *Concilium*, was founded in 1965 while the Council was still under way by theologians who were most influenced by the

theology of St Thomas Aquinas. Among these founding members of *Concilium* were Hans Küng, the Dominican Yves Congar, Edward Schillebeeckx and the Jesuits Bernard Lonergan and Karl Rahner. Ratzinger was at first among this group but he soon withdrew and in 1972 with Hans Urs von Balthazar, Henri de Lubac, Walter Kasper and the Oratorian convert from Protestantism Louis Buoyer founded the rival publication *Communio*.



The earlier publication *Concilium* embraced a radical interpretation of the Council, seeing the Council (as Rahner said in 1965) as “the beginning of the beginning”. The later one, *Communio*, chose instead to emphasis what has been called “the hermeneutics of continuity”, despite the fact that one of its founders, Josef Ratzinger, had written in 1966 that the Council was “undoubtedly a rupture” with what had gone before. The divisive issue, to quote the excellent Massimo Faggioli once again, was *Communio*’s idea of Vatican II validating *ressourcement* as a method for further work in theology versus *Concilium*’s idea of Vatican II as the beginning of a *reformatio*, a more comprehensive updating of the Catholic Church, in its theology and structures.

Now *ressourcement*, I should explain, is a term employed by the new theology, the *nouvelle théologie*, a movement which arose in the mid-twentieth century, predominantly – as its name suggests – among French-speaking scholars, and means a return to the sources (these being the Bible, the fathers of the Church and the liturgy). It had a considerable influence on many of those who were advisers to the bishops at Vatican II. But after the Council it fell out of favour with the more radical theologians because the stress on the past was seen as prescriptive rather than liberating. But that is what some people wanted to do: they wanted to limit the impact of the Council. This proved to be a considerable challenge.

In 1564, immediately after the end of the Council of Trent, Pope Paul IV established the Congregation of the Council which alone had authority to provide an authentic interpretation of the Tridentine decrees. Nothing similar occurred after Vatican II, with the perhaps happy result that the interpretation of the Council was left not to a Roman congregation but to theologians and to the bishops. As a consequence there have been multiple interpretations, multiple receptions, of the Conciliar documents.

For a Church whose teaching was regarded by many within the Church and some outside it as clear and unchanging the multiplicity of receptions presented a considerable problem. It was a problem for Pope Paul VI. *Humanae Vitae* was the result. This was a crisis for married couples but it was also, suggests John O'Malley, a crisis for the management of change, and of how the Church deals with its past. Pope Paul's strategy for limiting the interpretation of Vatican II, in the absence of a new congregation of the Council, was to propose a *Lex Fundamentalis Ecclesiae*, to stand as an introduction to the Code of Canon Law. This *Lex Fundamentalis*, said Paul VI in November 1965, was to contain the Constitution of the Church.

To many this seemed an excellent proposal: a statement which would lay out in the Code the rights of the People of God. A Commission set about drafting such a document and then suddenly in 1981 – indeed, almost immediately after it had been approved earlier that year by a specially-convened commission – it was abandoned. Why it was abandoned I do not know, and there has been remarkably little discussion about the *Lex Fundamentalis*. But its main purpose seems to have been to enshrine a particular interpretation of ecclesiology, a restriction upon the Church and upon the future development of theology. The revised Code appeared in 1985 without the *Lex Fundamentalis* though some of its provisions that we know about have been actually incorporated into the text.

John-Paul II chose a different route to curbing enthusiasm for Vatican II, namely the Catechism of the Catholic Church. There had, of course, been a Catechism of the Council of Trent encapsulating the authorised understanding of that Council. But at the Synod in 1985 to mark the 20th anniversary of the close of Vatican II the fathers of the Synod, after much prompting, suggested that there should be a Catechism to represent the authorised interpretation of Catholic doctrine in the light of the Council.

Now, this Synod of 1985 was a very curious affair. According to the historian Alberto Melloni the questionnaire sent out to 135 participants "contained the presupposition that the Synod would demonstrate the limits of the reception of Vatican II". Six months were allotted for the replies to be formulated and 95 were eventually received. Nearly all the responses, said Melloni, distanced themselves from the negative tone of the part of the questionnaire of the Secretary-General of the Synod and also of J Ratzinger's hypotheses.

The Catechism, when it eventually appeared, was also a very curious affair. It has since been treated by the Vatican as a definitive statement of Catholic belief when it is nothing of the sort. It is presented as an alternative to the Conciliar documents though it does not have, and cannot have, the same authority as a Council of the Church.

Now let's be clear, there has never been a Council of the Church quite like Vatican II. Virtually all Catholic bishops were present and that included bishops from many Eastern rites as well as Western. Moreover there were observers present from many, if not all, of the major Christian denominations. They played a larger part in the formulation of the Conciliar documents than is often acknowledged. We know much more now about how events unfurled thanks to the five-volume history of the Council edited by the late Giuseppe Alberigo (and in its English edition by the American theologian and historian Joe Komenchak). That history, too, has come under fire in an attempt to undermine the impact of the Council.

It is, of course, true that Vatican II was not without its failings. Some of the documents are uninspiring and uninspired. As Bishop Christopher Hill remarked in the letter I quoted earlier, in any Conciliar reception it is never the whole body of Canons or the texts of the Canons that are received. Only some parts of any Council are remembered. One obvious omission from the Conciliar text is any developed theology of the laity. Worst of all, the ecclesiology of Vatican I, and the still older ecclesiology of *Communio*, are placed side by side and remain unconnected.

Now, when a year ago I undertook to deliver this lecture on the reception and non-reception of the Second Vatican Council I thought it would be a simple matter of drawing up a balance sheet, as it were, of the ways in which the Council impacted, or failed to impact, on the life of the Catholic Church. I discovered, however, on thinking about it, that the issue was not quite so straightforward. Apart from a small minority – the followers of the schismatic Archbishop Lefebvre, for instance, and a few other groups – the Council has been received by all in the Church. But as I have also suggested, people have received it differently, depending on any number of factors such as cultural context, but most significantly, perhaps, in the light of their theological background and preferences. I have mentioned the two schools of thought gathered around the two periodicals *Concilium* and *Communio*. The latter was founded in conscious reaction to the former in the belief that *Concilium's* emphasis on dialogue underplayed the revelations received by Christians in Christ.

The starkest expression of this particular conviction was the declaration *Dominus Jesus*, reinterpreting the careful phrase of the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church that the Church of Christ ‘subsists in’ the Catholic Church. It asserts as Catholic doctrine the conviction that the Roman Catholic Church is the sole true church of Christ and rejects the notion that other Christian bodies, the Orthodox churches excepted, can properly claim the title church: they can only claim to be ecclesiastical communities. This document was approved at a plenary meeting of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and bears the signature of its then Prefect, Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, now of course Pope Emeritus. The declaration was approved by Pope John Paul II and was published on 6th August 2000.

It is, of course, true that the expression ‘subsists in’, which many understood to be drawing the distinction between the Church that Christ founded and the Catholic Church, was open to various interpretations. *Dominus Jesus* addressed the issue and the CDF⁴ returned to it in July 2007 during the pontificate of Papa Ratzinger, reaffirming the absolute identity of the Church of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church whereas the churches (or ecclesiastical communities) of the Reformation “do not enjoy Apostolic Succession in the Sacrament of Orders and are therefore deprived of the constituent development of the Church. These are ecclesiastical communities which, in the absence of the sacramental priesthood, have not preserved the genuine and integral substance of the Christian Eucharistic Mystery and cannot therefore, according to Catholic doctrine, be called churches in the proper sense”.

In *The City of God* Augustine famously distinguished between the City of God and the City of Men, which implicitly seems to oppose the Church and the World. The Augustinian school is wanting to set the Church and the World in a situation of rivalry: it sees the world in a negative light. Evil and sin so abound in the world that

the Church should always be suspicious of it. Naïve optimism, the neo-Augustinians will undoubtedly say, is frequently to be found in those who enthusiastically espouse *Gaudium et Spes*, that most contested of Vatican documents. It was Augustine, one must remember, who invented the concept of Original Sin.

Those who wish to limit the impact, the reception, of the Second Vatican Council make common cause with those who criticise the Alberigo-Komenchak History. They complain that the authors of the History have used all kinds of extraneous sources to illustrate the course of events – including contemporary accounts by journalists. While it might seem commendable to concentrate attention on the documents themselves, what the critics are in fact doing is playing down the place of the Council in the history of the Church and in the history of the world.

The Second Vatican Council was an event in history. It was an event marked by the number and variety of bishops who attended, by the input of so many learned theologians, by the presence of large numbers of ecumenical observers and by the active interest in its doing by the world's media. It was an event because, like other councils, its final statements were meant – and to a very large extent did – command a consensus it was in its committees and sub-committees and pressure groups not far removed from a parliamentary procedure. It was also an event, as Professor O'Malley has insisted, because of its style, quite different from what had gone before. Trent, like other councils, produced documents of varying length, but these were encapsulated in Canons to be observed, and of course Vatican II did nothing of the sort.

If I may quote an anonymous reviewer in *The Economist* recently, historians have a professional fondness for turning-points – years that act as hinges in history rather than as numbers in a sequence. Some of these hinges turn out to be anything but. 1848 proved to be, in A J P Taylor's phrase, a turning-point in history when history failed to turn. But others resounded down the ages. There are unquestionably dates which mark the turning-points of history: the ending of one epoch and the beginning of another. Those who do not see the Second Vatican Council as just such an event wish to continue interpreting the history of the Church and its doctrine in the tradition of the Council of Trent. But I would argue that Trent, like Vatican II, was a turning-point in Church history. Henceforward, again I would suggest, we will interpret the tradition of the Church, including the work of Trent, through the work of the Council of Fathers between 1962 and 1965. Some may feel uncomfortable with that, but that is indeed what is happening already, when interpreting the history of the Church and the Second Vatican Council. That has been happening since the close of the Council, and that is the measure of its reception.

Notes:

1. Said by the anthropologist Clifford Gibbs
2. Massimo Faggioli is an assistant professor at the University of St Thomas, Minnesota. He is the author of *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning* (Paulist Press, 2012)
3. A head bishop of an autocephalous (or self-headed) church is not responsible to any higher ecclesiastical authority
4. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

This article is based on a talk given to the Ealing Circle in May, 2013

Vatican II and Us

by Kevin Kelly

We, the People of God, are the Church

Our Church Theology today sees the Church as far more than an administrative structure, functioning along hierarchical lines. The bishops at Vatican II very deliberately put the “people of God” before the hierarchical structure of the Church. “We are church” sums up a fundamental theological truth which has within it the power to energise a movement for renewal in the Church. There are far-reaching implications. To take but one example, it moves us to go beyond any tendency to regard women as minor partners in that “we”. It has moved many women among us to take their rightful place within the important work of theological reflection within the Church.

Our Eucharist In the light of eucharistic theology today, no longer do we see ourselves as attending the priest’s Mass. The ministry of the Eucharistic celebrant is precisely to enable us all to share together in our community Mass. People-participation has a much higher priority than observing rubrics.

Our Parish A parish is a community with a mission. People and priest, we all share responsibility for the life of the parish community and its mission. Such co-responsibility should flow naturally into collaborative ministry. A primary role of the priest should be to encourage and enable each of us to undertake *our* share in the work and mission of the parish. We are not just “helping Father”! As a wise priest once said: “Collaboration is not a way of doing something more efficiently; it is a way of being church more authentically”.

Our Bible The Bible is no longer a closed book reserved to experts. God’s Word is given to us all to inspire our lives. The aim of good Bible scholarship should be to help us read the Bible for ourselves – intelligently and faithfully. Intelligently: recognising the text as written by believers in a specific historical context; faithfully: bridging the gap between that context and our own times. Making the text our own frees us from a fundamentalist slavery to a dead letter, devoid of any living context. In that way we can be enriched and challenged by the faith of our forebears while recognising that our world today and the problems we face are very different to theirs.

Our experience Theology involves “making faith-sense of experience and experience-sense of faith” (Jack Mahoney SJ). That is why it takes human experience seriously, as the bishops did at Vatican II. Most of us are not professional theologians, but our experience is still theologically important. For instance, if very many Catholics today say that the Church’s official teaching on contraception does not speak to their own experience, they are not being theologically ignorant. They may, in fact, be making an important theological statement that needs to be listened to.

Our teaching authority The Church is not made up of teachers and learners. The Church as a whole is a learning Church and a teaching Church. Theologians are still exploring the implications of the Vatican II statement that the whole Church has a share in the charism of infallibility. The Pope and the bishops have the role of speaking authoritatively in the name of the Church, but the real author of such teaching is God. That is where the rest of us have a role to play. In receiving such teaching we “own” it as God’s teaching. In some instances the Church as a whole may feel unable to “own”

a specific piece of teaching as presently promulgated. It fails to make experience-sense of their faith and faith-sense of their experience. At times God's spirit can be even more active in this process of non-reception than in the process of reception. In such instances non-reception, sometimes misleadingly referred to as "dissent", should be seen as loyal and faithful co-operation in the teaching ministry of the Church and needs to be listened to respectfully by the Pope and bishops in exercising their teaching authority.

Our ecumenical sisters and brothers As Pope John Paul II pointed out in *Ut unum sint* (1995) we are not faithful Roman Catholics if we do not take ecumenism seriously. That means accepting that God's spirit is truly present and active in other Christian churches. The full implications of this still need to be further explored, as Pope John Paul II admitted when he invited other Christian churches to discern with him how best the role of primacy should be exercised to promote communion between all Christians. As Christians we all share in the one baptism which makes us members of the one body of Christ.

International ecumenical commissions like ARCIC have laboured hard to produce agreed statements which have gone beyond mere words. They are the fruit of a growing together in faith through the lived experience of their members. Moreover, the experience of growing together in faith has not been limited to the members of such commissions. For instance, the experience of many ordinary Church members has convinced them that the present ruling on intercommunion fails to make faith-sense of their experience or experience-sense of their faith. This was brought out very simply but powerfully in a very moving story related in the L'Arche communities comment on *One Bread, One Body*. In an ecumenical community the response of one of the disabled non-Catholic residents when refused Communion by the priest was a simple "Don't be silly, Jack." "Out of the mouths...!"

Our One World Vatican II defined the Church as "a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God and of the unity of all humanity" (*Lumen Gentium*, n.1.). This means that we cannot claim to be Christians and opt out of responsibility for our world. In fact, the bishops went even further: "The split between the faith they profess and the daily lives of many people is to be counted as among the more serious misconceptions of the day....Christians who neglect their temporal duties are neglecting their duties to their neighbour and even to God and are endangering their eternal salvation." (*Gaudium et Spes*, n.43)

At the 1971 post-Vatican II Synod on Justice the bishops expressed the same truth in a more positive way. They said that working for justice and peace was an integral element of preaching the Gospel: Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation." Certainly, post-Vatican II theology rejects a purely 'churchy' Christianity. And now ecological and environmental issues are also accepted as an integral part of the redemptive and liberation agenda.

This is a shortened version of a talk given to the Manchester and North Cheshire Circle in June 2013.

The Year of Faith: Christ's Victory over Relativism

In his interview with Peter Seewald, published as *Light of the World*¹ in 2010, Pope Benedict XVI said that the two 'years' he had instigated by then – the 'Year of St Paul' and the 'Year for Priests' – were given to help the Church return to her original vitality, simplicity, radicality and beauty (p 76). That is perhaps even more true of one of his last gifts to us: the Year of Faith.

The Catholic Church is the only religion with evolution explicitly built into it. The Councils of the Church in particular allow for relevant issues to be dealt with authentically by the Magisterium, the documents and pronouncements of which become part of the fabric of the Church which can be built on with the confidence of faith. It is normally agreed that there have been twenty-one of these ecumenical Councils, the last two of which have been held at the Vatican. Vatican II differed in degree from all the preceding Councils in that it was a pastoral Council: rather than primarily dealing with points of doctrine, it dealt with the mission of the Church and how best to proclaim the Gospel to the modern world. In so doing it did indeed clarify and deepen our understanding of much of the faith, particularly about the Church herself, her Liturgy and the Word of God, but it was the pastoral dimension that shaped the Council.

John Henry Newman has often been said to have been a major force in getting us to Vatican II and I would like to link what I think are the two key gifts of Vatican II to us with two of his most famous principles.

Dialogue *Heart speaks unto heart.* A key question of Vatican II was, in a prevailing culture which has moved from the experience of authority to the authority of experience, how do we respond to the pluralist situation in which we find ourselves? And the answer articulated so eloquently in *Gaudium et Spes* – the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World – is 'dialogue'. When I genuinely share something of myself with you and you genuinely listen, and you genuinely share something of yourself and I genuinely listen, then we both grow. This is built on the inalienable dignity of every human person, and their intrinsic freedom. This 'heart to heart' applies to individuals and institutions. It is enriched by an appropriate trust in the goodness of the other. It is enhanced when both sides can acknowledge the beauty and brokenness of both parties. It requires a common desire to discover truth.

Truth This takes me to my second point, which is more a discernment from the documents than something that is explicitly written: Vatican II calls us to have confidence in the truth, and in the power of truth. Perhaps too much in the past, people in the Church have at times felt the need to reinforce the proclamation of the truth with external force – whether it be through undue fear, or psychological or physical pressure. But truth is intrinsically imbued with the power of love (as the last two papal encyclicals have reminded us). Vatican II calls us to trust genuinely in this power of truth itself, which helps us assent to it rather than cling to it. This echoes what, to me, was Newman's most important decision, made at the age of 17, when he chose to follow the truth wherever it led him². The understanding that truth is something distinct, that is to be discovered and assented to through authentic communication, experience, reason and decision, is central to authentic dialogue.

As Christians we can go further and understand that Truth is actually a divine Person and it is primarily God's communication to us that allows for us to receive the truth; the initiative is from Truth himself, which we are created innately receptive to. This Christian understanding of truth enriches our understanding of dialogue; one can enter into authentic dialogue without it, but dialogue is stillborn until both parties can acknowledge there is truth.

That is why the last two popes in particular have clearly spoken of the "tyranny of relativism". Relativism prevents unity, true dialogue and any sense of purpose. It is for this reason that it is the real enemy within our culture. Atheism is both a symptom of and an impulse towards relativism. But atheism of itself does not prevent dialogue.

Relativism's answer to pluralism is silence and an acceptance of a lowest common denominator which is forever being lowered. Relativism's answer to sensitive subjects is to avoid them for fear of friction and offence. The Church's answer to pluralism is dialogue; its answer to sensitive subjects is that they must be dealt with sensitively, in truth.

Fifty years is not a long time in terms of the Church and her Councils. It takes time for the renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit to be received, assimilated, understood and communicated. Authentic progress is always measured. That always allows louder, less discerning voices to have their day after a Council, and this one was no exception. So much damage was done in the name of "the spirit of Vatican II" by people who had often not read a single actual document. Unsurprisingly, this "spirit" always seemed to agree with what they, before the Council, had decided needed to happen to the Church. Vatican II called for the dialogical nature of the liturgy to complement the mystery of it, not replace it. It called for dialogue to search for the full expression of truth, not to replace it. It called for biblical criticism to enrich the Church's traditional understanding of Scripture, not to replace it.

Most of the damage done to the Church and the world in the name of Vatican II was done by relativists "interpreting" the Council – and imposing their interpretation on the rest. Relativism is a denial of absolute truth in favour of a philosophy that truth may depend on circumstances and culture: morals are relative to the social group within which they are constructed. There is certainly pressure from our culture to play by relativist rules: "You can practise your private religion, so long as you do so by the rules of relativism": silence, not dialogue; avoidance, not sensitive communication; opinion not truth; emotion not grace, the unruffled peace of death, rather than the challenging peace of life. And for too long, too many of us have agreed to play by the relativists' rules, because surely we're being proud and arrogant otherwise? Enough!

To me the Year of Faith is exactly that: the Church saying "Enough!" We are all called to reject the relativist agenda and to be Catholics as Christ called us to be. In *Porta Fidei* – The Door of Faith – Pope Benedict's announcement of the Year of Faith, he calls us all to know our faith more, particularly through the Creed, the Vatican II documents and the resultant Catechism of the Catholic Church. If we truly believe in the power of truth to bring us to life, then we will be passionate for every element of that truth. There are so many ways given to us to help us access them, but only we can choose to avail of them.

He also called us to be joyful and confident in the faith. Why shouldn't we be? It is

part of the relativist agenda for us to be apologetic and embarrassed about it. Have you seen what irrational opinion is believed in around us? We have nothing to be embarrassed about. This goes hand in hand with knowing our faith better. The more we know our faith, the more we will naturally be confident and joyful in it; the more confident and joyful in it, the more we will thirst for the truth.

The third thing Pope Benedict asked of us was for this to lead to a deeper commitment from each of us to participate in the new evangelisation. But again that will happen naturally if we take on board the other two. No fiancé needs to be told to talk about a partner, or communicate the love of that spouse. It's part of being in love. We might need to learn skills in communicating, in being part of the new evangelisation, but the most important part – the desire to evangelise – automatically comes from being in love with Christ and his Church.

The Year of Faith marks an important stage in the implementation of Vatican II. The battle with relativism has been won inside the Church, and the Year of Faith is a clarion call to us all no longer to play by the rules of relativism in our relationship with the world and those around us. I might sound unbelievably naïve to say that the battle has been won within the Church but I believe it is true, at its true heart. Relativism gained such momentum that its damage will be felt for a long while to come. There are so many elements within the Church still scarred by it. But the energy has gone out of it; at the true heart of the Church, Truth has conquered. Like all "good" heresies, relativism will continue to rear its head, but it will become increasingly toothless within.

The Year of Faith calls us then to be more authentically Catholic to the world. This does not mean we will be more successful in any earthly terms! From the example of the Lord himself, I would say exactly the opposite. His authentic proclamation of the gospel only led to Resurrection through crucifixion. And he went to his death with his eyes open. He set his face like flint (Lk. 13:31-33) knowing where his authentic witness was taking him. We are his body and cannot expect a different fate. Vatican II's trust in the power of love and truth was an "eyes open" choice to follow Our Lord to Calvary.

We are not called to be successful, but faithful; that's why we had a Year of Faith, not one of Success. It helps us return enriched to the vitality, simplicity, radicality and beauty of our faith; to share in Christ's victory over relativism by more authentically believing and proclaiming in the faith of our fathers – with whom we are proud to be true to Him till death.

Fr Stephen Fawcett

1. Light of the World, Catholic Truth Society, 2010

2. Apologia Pro Vita Sua, 1864, available from Penguin, and others

In the Apologia Newman wrote of the essayist Thomas Scott: "He followed truth wherever it led him, beginning with Unitarianism, and ending in a zealous faith in the Holy Trinity. It was he who first planted in my mind that fundamental Truth of religion."

Fr Fawcett has been chairman of the Diocese of Birmingham's Year of Faith Committee

Visit by Ealing Circle members to Birmingham Oratory – May 11th, 2013

We attended 11 a.m. Pilgrims' Mass in the Oratory church. Then we went to a session of prayers in the adjacent Shrine of John Henry Newman. We were told, oddly, about Newman's failures: his poor Oxford degree, his inability to change the Anglican Church, and later his struggles with the Irish bishops as he attempted to set up a Catholic university in Ireland. However, it is his positive achievements that we remember today.

Later Brother Francis Gavin took us on a short tour. The main church dates from about 1912 so it was built some years after Newman himself died in 1890. It is in an impressive baroque style, and in line with the Oratorians' conservative reputation, including a devotion to Masses in Latin, the altar is positioned so that the celebrant does not face the people.

Newman would have liked the church, suggested Brother Francis. But why did Newman become an Oratorian? Perhaps the restrictions imposed by other orders did not appeal to him. We were told a story about how he stayed briefly with Dominicans, but he was unimpressed with their enthusiasm for making perfumes. He preferred the Oratorians' outward-looking style.

Newman established an Oratory in Birmingham in 1849, although – another example of his failures – he had bought land for an Oratory in Oxford, but was forced to sell it again soon after. An Oxford Oratory was, however, established eventually, although



not until 1993. There has been further growth recently: Oratories are being founded this year in Manchester and York.

Newman was content to remain in Birmingham for the rest of his life. There would have been too many distractions in London. But other Oratorians went to London in 1852 and created what eventually became the much bigger and richer Brompton Oratory.

The Birmingham Oratory on Hagley Road remains an inner-city parish church, though its Italian baroque style is much more ornate than is found in the typical church. The marble was genuine, Brother Francis told us, unlike in the London Oratory where much of it was painted on wood. Quality can be costly, however, and the Birmingham Oratory is currently seeking to raise £200,000 for restoration work. Our Circle made a modest contribution.

We visited a small chapel built on a corner of the church. This chapel was a near-replica of the chapel of St Philip Neri, founder of the Oratorians in 1556, in the Chiesa Nuovo in Rome. By coincidence a number of people in our party had visited the original chapel in October 2012 during the Newman Association Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi.

A blue plaque on the Wall outside the Oratory commemorates the fact that this was the residence in much of the late 19th century of the Blessed John Henry Newman, the plaque having been unveiled by Pope Benedict in 2010. After that papal event a strong rise in the number of pilgrims was expected, but so far the actual number of visitors has been a little disappointing. Visits can, however, now be booked through the Oratory's website.



Barry Riley



Brother Francis Gavin addressing Ealing members in the cloisters

Practices of Death and Dying in Catholic Tradition

by Eamon Duffy

Most of what I have to contribute on the practices of death and dying in Catholic tradition is already in print, in three of the essays in *Faith of our Fathers**. In those essays I argued the need for some more robust ritual accommodation of what might be thought of as negative feeling in our current liturgical encounters with mortality – a franker and less bland and controlling acceptance of grief, guilt, anger, and fear – fundamental emotions and stances which I believe tend to be theologically downplayed, sanitised or edited out of current liturgical practice. And I emphasised the centrality of the imitation of Christ in his death as well as his life as integral to Christian discipleship, and suggested that any healthy Christianity must include a deliberate and realistic apprehension of our own mortality, expressed in conscious preparation for the act of dying.

This requires the recognition of death itself not merely as something which happens to us, but as an act which in some sense or other we need to own and perform, if not consciously in the hour of death itself, in which we may of course be comatose, distracted by pain or drugged by morphine, or for that matter screaming behind the dashboard of a car or under the wheels of a bus. But if we can't deliberately embrace our dying literally in our own particular *novissima hora*, then we need to do so pre-emptively, in the cultivation of Christian practices which enable us in some sense to accept and, in anticipation, internalise our own deaths as an *imitation Christi*, death performed as an expression, like his, of faith, hope and love.

I've not in fact got much to add to what I had to say in those essays, so I will begin from a different direction with two personal recollections, both of them derived from my Irish upbringing. Before doing that, however, I register one aspect of Catholic practice in relation to the dead which seems to me to underlie everything else, the simple fact of offering prayers for the dead, a practice which is of course now common in the churches of the reformation also, especially in the Anglican communion.



Eamon Duffy

Protestantism in its chemical purity outlawed this practice, but since the First World War it has become widespread among Anglicans and even some other protestants. To pray for the dead is to make strong affirmations about death itself – that it does not sever relations between the living and the dead absolutely. Further, that love, and loving concern, for the dead can still be expressed in the ultimate expression of hope, prayer, whatever we may think we actually hope to achieve by such prayer, and whether or not we believe in any kind of purgatory. So at the outset I want to register that I think everything essential to Catholic belief about the dead is contained in the simple petition, Lord have mercy, or, if you prefer, *requiem aeternam dona eiis*,

domine. The rest is elaboration and exposition.

But now to those recollections. I was raised in a working class family in what was by Irish standards a sizeable town on the east coast of Ireland, just south of the border with the north. It was an urban environment, where most people earned their living in factories – Carroll's tobacco factory making Sweet Afton cigarettes, Rawson's shoes, the Dundalk Bacon factory, or, my father's workplace, the Great Northern Railways engineering works, which made and repaired steam engines. But it was an urban community still very much in touch with its fairly primitive rural hinterland: milk was delivered daily to our door not in bottles, but ladled into milk-pails and canisters from the churn by the farmer who had milked the cows himself that morning, and who did his rounds by horse and cart. The river was one field away from our house: in summer everybody fished and swam there: my brothers and I earned the odd half crown every August helping local farmers bring in the hay, and many of my friends picked buckets of blackberries from the hedgerows in season to sell to the greengrocers. So though we were townspeople, rural ways were not far in the background. And that included rural ways with death.

One of my most vivid memories from the early 1950s, when I was about 6 or 7 years old, is of the death from cancer of the mother of a schoolfriend who lived a few doors away. As was customary, the children of the street were rounded up, and shepherded into the bedroom in which the corpse was laid out in an open coffin. She had been a cheerful, plump and smiling figure, with glossy auburn hair. The shock is with me still: the rubicund smiling mother had become a wizened doll, her face pinched, bony and a curious coffee-colour, her fingers stiff and twig-like, and, most disturbingly of all, her copious auburn hair apparently more abundant than ever, lapping in luscious waves round the shrunken figure in its dulse-brown shroud, seeming to fill the coffin and spill over the sides. I imagine, though, that my childish recollection has elaborated a sight which in all conscience needed very little exaggeration to bring out its shocking pathos and, I suppose, its terror. I imagine all the other children were as daunted I was, but we knew what to do. We blessed ourselves with the holy water in the bucket at the foot of the coffin, and knelt to on either side of it to say a prayer.

And then a second memory, more than thirty years on. In the summer of 1986 my mother died suddenly while staying at my sister's house in our home town. Jenny my wife and I flew back in haste, because funerals still take place only a couple of days after a death in Ireland. We arrived hotfoot from the airport to find the house heaving with relatives and friends, and my mother laid out in her best two-piece suit in an open coffin on the dining-room table: my plane had been delayed, so the departure to the parish church for the reception of the body was imminent, but the priest had not yet arrived. Since I was a professional theologian, the general view was that I was ideally qualified to lead the communal recitation of the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary, which we did till the hearse and the priest arrived, when we set off to walk the mile or so to the church. My wife, daughter of an Anglican vicar, was then only a recent convert to Catholicism, having surrendered a couple of years earlier after holding out nobly for sixteen years: she had never before seen a corpse, nor ever attended a funeral. Confronted with my mother's body and invited to admire it, she commented haplessly on the beauty of the glass rosary wrapped round my mother's hands. My

sister, with that devastating combination of practicality and spontaneity which is one of the things that most endears her to me, prised the beads from my mother's fingers and handed them to my thunderstruck and rather horrified wife.

The reception of the body into the church which followed was overwhelming. There were several hundred people there, a lifetime's accumulation of friends and neighbours, and more recent acquaintances from the pensioners' club at which my mother had been an enthusiastic amateur vocalist. I remember nothing of the service itself, or what the priest had to say, but I will never forget that every single person in the church came up to us afterwards and spoke to me about my mother, pressed my hands, said they were sorry for our trouble. Next day after a mass at which a local choir sang the *kyrie*, *sanctus* and *agnus dei* from the Mozart Requiem, and the congregation belted out the protestant revivalist hymn *Shall we gather at the river* in homage to my mother's childhood sojourn during the first world war in dour Dungannon, under the stern supervision of her father's Presbyterian family, we walked behind the hearse to the town graveyard, a mile and a half away, on the main Dublin-Belfast road. At that time the Dundalk bypass had not yet been built, so the traffic between the island's two capitals slowed behind my mother's coffin to walking pace, and many of the shopkeepers along the route drew down their blinds or came out to stand in their doorways as a mark of respect for a woman they knew little or nothing about, but whose status at the centre of a funeral entitled her to the gesture.

These are two very different but related memories. Are these examples of distinctively Catholic practices, or merely of the customs of any semi-rural society, where the rawness of death is mediated through a strong phalanx of shared social rituals?

Where would one have found a closer resemblance to these two incidents, in an Irish protestant funeral, or an English Catholic funeral in, say, Surbiton or the Thames valley? And was it deep wisdom, or a kind of abuse, to expose six- and seven-year-old children to the sight of an emaciated corpse, whom many of them had known only months before as a blooming and healthy young mother?

What the two memories have in common, I suppose, is a raw realism about the fact of death – the corpse on display, in one case horrifically so, but within a ritual framework which sets manageable boundaries on the experience, by containing it within a set of social and religious conventions which helped to tame its terror: familiar words and actions – the holy water, the prayers, rosary, *de profundis* – all of which say to us: this is indeed terrible, but we know what it is, and here are the ways in which we deal with it. You don't have to invent anything, or ask yourself what is to be done: here is a procedure, familiar, tested, to be trusted. If that is so, then such considerations seem to suggest that a liturgy with relatively little variation, not too much flexibility in it, might be the right way to deal with death: the point of the procedures is that they are familiar, can run more or less on autopilot in the extremity of bereavement, and can be operated with minimal intervention from religious professionals.

Catholic prayer and practice about death has, of course, in the past gone in for another kind of raw realism, hammering home both the universal and particular inevitability of death. The old Penny Catechism encouraged devout lay persons to dispose themselves for death every night as they lay down to sleep: St John Fisher placing a skull on the end of the altar whenever he celebrated Mass can stand for a long tradition of intense

consciousness of the *memento mori*, of the skull beneath the skin, which is deeply embedded in Catholic piety. And the terrors of death dwelt upon were not merely physical: death was located in the church's liturgy and catechesis within the framework of the Last Things: sin and judgement, heaven and hell, were at least as prominent as hope and mercy in the liturgy of death.

That liturgy was itself characterised by a strong emphasis on mourning, on holy fear, on our urgent need of God's mercy. The vestments were black or violet, most of the texts of the liturgy sombre, even at times frightening: there were sublime evocations of light and peace in texts like the *In Paradisum*, sung as the corpse left the church, but the stupendous evocation of final judgement and the end of all things in the *dies irae* also said or sung in pre-conciliar masses for the dead stands for this dimension of the old liturgy. So too did the choice of scripture readings and psalms in the office of the dead, above all the daunting sequence of nine readings from the book of Job round which the major part of the office for the dead was structured.

*My spirit is broken, my days are extinct
The grave is ready for me
My days are past, my plans are broken off
And the desires of my heart.
They make night into day
The light, they say, is near to darkness
If I look for Sheol as my house
If I spread my couch in darkness
If I say to the pit, you are my father
And to the worm, my mother or my sister
Where then is my hope?*

That kind of graphic encounter with mortality in the form of graves and worms and epitaphs has been tidied away in the post-conciliar liturgy: those who seek to minimise the revolutionary impact of the Second Vatican Council need only lay the old and new liturgies of the dead alongside each other to see not minor readjustment, but a radically different ethos. Gone are the daunting passages from Job, replaced by far more explicitly upbeat and reassuring passages from St Paul: ministering clergy more often than not now wear white, not violet (and black vestments are in fact forbidden), the note of judgement is muted if not quite to inaudibility, and the prayer texts are saturated with messages of comfort and hope. The continuing deployment of psalms of penitence and lamentation in the Divine Office do, it is true, provide a strong element of continuity between the old and new modelled liturgies for the clergy, but with the exception of the *de profundis* they are absent from masses for the dead and other liturgies shared by the laity, so that overall, there is no escaping the dramatic contrast.

And that of course can perfectly plausibly be seen as almost entirely gain. When preparing these remarks I consulted a friend who is a Catholic deacon, who for the last twenty years has exercised a special ministry to the dying and the bereaved. He is a passionate advocate of the new liturgy of the dead, specifically as embodied in the Order of Christian Funerals. Here is some of what he has to say about it.

"The first thing that I would say is that while funerals are clearly about the dead, they are also about the living. They are about helping people to live on with the reality of often

extreme loss and consequent bewilderment, when they wonder if life has any meaning at all. I shudder when I hear the words of Henry Scott Holland – ‘Death is nothing at all . . .’ In reality HSH presents these words as a parody of some folks’ attitude to death, and then goes on to say that it is actually a shattering, earth-shaking event. I have never attended a grieving family and found them anything but suffering a seismic shift. I never have to convince them of the terrible reality of death.

“The OCF caters – I believe – for both the need of the living and the dead. In the first place, as I always point out to the grieving, the OCF proclaims, from the first words of greeting at the church door, and above all else, the reality of Easter Resurrection and the promise of Easter that we receive in Baptism. ‘In the waters of Baptism X died with Christ and rose with him to new life. May he now share with him eternal glory.’

“Not only are the prayers written in beautiful English (some of them lifted from the Book of Common Prayer) but they are so varied that a choice can be made to speak to the breadth of circumstances confronting the minister from the death of a child, through tragic death to the peaceful end at the conclusion of a full and creative life that all must wish for and only a lucky few attain. The needs of the intensely church-involved are catered for, as are those semi-detached Catholics whose funerals I have been doing....for 20 years now.

“Whether I am doing the funeral of a still-born baby, an accident victim, a suicide, a sick mother leaving behind an infant, a heroin/alcohol addict or an old man after a long and fulfilled life I know that the OCF, coupled with the excellent funeral lectionary, will provide me with the resources to speak to that particular grief and loss.”

That is a powerful endorsement, rooted in demanding and sometimes harrowing experience at the coal face in hospital, crematorium and house of mourning, if coal face isn't too tactless a metaphor in the context of crematoria: and as someone who has never ministered to the dying or the bereaved, I don't have the impudence to say a word against it.

BUT....assurance of resurrection can become a glib failure to take seriously enough the EXPERIENCE of loss, bewilderment, and anger which death arouses. The fierce language of lamentation and protest, of ANGER about death, not least anger with God, which is so deeply embedded in the older liturgy seems to me to carry its own deep authenticity and wisdom, and it corresponds to something very widely experienced. To move too readily from the articulation of the horror and loss of death, what Newman calls the “masterful negation and collapse of all that makes me man” can be to offer a sticking-plaster as a nostrum for an amputation.

My own wife took more than five years to emerge from the desolation of the loss of her mother, and to her dismay in those years she found very little comfort in the hopeful assurances of the liturgy, for which she was simply not humanly ready. This may for all I know be an unrepresentative case, but the basic experience of prolonged grief is surely not uncommon, and the eagerness of the new liturgy of the dead to preach hope and resurrection without much admixture of darker feelings seems to me not to offer much purchase, nor any objective correlative, for those dark and negative feelings which have to be lived through, not suppressed.

For the same sort of reason I am suspicious of the elaboration of certain kinds of symbolism at funerals – the placing of various objects on top of the coffin for example to express aspects of the dead person's life and interests – as a generalised post-

modern clutter, like the teddy-bears and sloppy messages that multiply now round the site of any celebrity death or mishap: kitsch distractions from the tremendous realities of loss, sorrow, sin and redemption which are the proper matter of the liturgy.

* Published by Continuum, 2004

This article is based on a talk given on March 9th at the Study Day "Death and Dying in Catholic Perspective" at Durham University.

Eamon Duffy is Professor of the History of Christianity at Cambridge University.

Letter to the Editor

Is it a sin to have more than our fair share?

Dear Sir,

Blessed John Paul II talked of ecology during an address he gave in the USA in 2001. "Thus is seen the harmony of man with his fellow creatures, with creation and with God, which is the plan willed by the Creator. This plan was and is continually upset by human sin, which is inspired in an alternative plan, portrayed in the Book of Genesis itself (Chapters 3-11), which describes the affirmation of a progressive conflictual tension with God, with one's fellow men, and even with nature. Yet, man's lordship is not 'absolute, but ministerial...' "

Interestingly, over the last decade there has developed a religious movement in North America and Ireland known as Green Sisters. In her book of that name Sarah McFarland Taylor describes how Green Sisters are environmentally active Catholic nuns working to heal the earth as they cultivate new forms of religious culture. Inviting us into their world, Taylor offers a first-hand understanding of the experiences of women whose lives bring together orthodoxy and activism, and whose lifestyle provides a compelling view of sustainable living. As a result lawns are being uprooted and organic crops are being sown.

In another initiative the WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) is trying to get spiritual leaders to guide their flocks to be stewards of the Earth. In Genesis God speaks to Noah and establishes a covenant between him and every living creature on the ark. Over 80% of people in the world identify themselves as religious. Faith-related institutions operate half of the world schools. In sheer numbers they could be a major influence for conservation and tackling global warming.

The difficulty at the individual level is that the problem of pollution and global warming is of such a scale that it can only be tackled at the governmental level, and there is little that an individual can do about it. At the human level there has been a growing awareness that we must use fewer plastic bags, we must recycle and manage our waste and we must not waste food. This awareness experienced by a minority must be expanded to the whole population.

How can this be done? At one time it was thought to be wrong to drink and drive, and although people were exhorted not to drink and drive they showed little response. However, when a law was passed and breathalysers were used to enforce it attitudes totally changed. Today the law receives full general support and it is effective.

The same principles must be applied to the faithful's attitude to the stewardship of the

planet. The initiative of The Blessed John Paul II address must be translated to a sense of sin and transgressions, because the laws of God are being broken. This sense of sinfulness, which we are fully made aware of with sins of the flesh, stealing and killing, would bring home to the ordinary faithful our responsibility for the planet, as a home for our children and grandchildren.

There is also the possibility of echoes of former times of “indulgences”: it might become obligatory to purchase carbon offsets when we fly. It would certainly be useful and educative if carbon offsets could be organised by CAFOD or another suitable Catholic agency to demonstrate our concern about the planet and global warning.

We are all familiar with the concept of a “poverty line”. Although this can be contentious to define it does enable us, in a targeted way, to address the problem of poverty. Perhaps we should define the concept of AYFS (Above Your Fair Share) which would define an income or level of consumption that would not be sustainable if the 7 billion inhabitants of the planet were to seek the same standard of living.

If that level of consumption were to be defined we in the Western developed world would, one suspects, find it to be uncomfortably low. It would perhaps change attitudes to people who are heavy consumers. “They are taking more than their fair share”. It is interesting that research shows that where there is a large gap between top incomes and the incomes at the lower end there is a corresponding dysfunctionality of society evidenced by the size of the prison population, statistics for life expectancy and so forth.

If such an initiative were to be realised the Church’s leadership in our society, already evident in our schooling and social teaching, could also extend to ‘Saving the Planet’. That could be a profound step in the mission to re-evangelise our society.

Tom Crowe

Obituary of Moyra Archibald

Moyra Archibald, a longstanding and very well-known Newman member who contributed a great deal to the Association, died on June 14th 2013 after a long illness valiantly fought and cheerfully borne.

Moyra took a law degree at King’s College London and subsequently qualified as a solicitor. She spent some time in private practice but her main field was in commercial law where she became one of the leading experts. Not only this, but she was active in legal affairs on behalf of the Church. She was the legal advisor to the National Board of Catholic Women and also to the Newman Association and acted as an auditor to the Tribunal of Northampton Diocese. Moreover, she played a leading part in re-drafting the Articles of Association of The Newman Association consequent on its attainment of charitable status in 1990 and was also well known to many through her attendance on Newman pilgrimages.

Moyra had a wonderfully kind heart with a warm human sympathy coupled with a strong sense of justice (and injustice!) which made her the most delightful and stimulating of companions.

May she rest in peace.

John Duddington

Annual General Meeting, Coventry, June 15th 2013

On Saturday, June 15th, 55 members and Associate members gathered at Christ the King Community Centre, Coventry where Maureen Porter, Chair of the Coventry Circle, welcomed us to the City.

The formal business of the day included reports from the President, Secretary and Treasurer. The President, Anthony Baker, reviewed key events of the year, highlighting the talk (*What Happened to Vatican II?*) given at the last AGM by Fr. Peter Cornwell, who had wondered whether the message of Vatican II was being overlooked, and Anthony tied this in with the London Newman Lecture given by the Jesuit Fr. Michael Campbell-Johnston in the week of the election of Pope Francis, also a Jesuit known personally to Fr. Campbell-Johnston. His talk had been entitled *Crisis in the Church Today*, and he had spoken of six wounds requiring reform (the talk was published in full in the May 2013 issue of the journal).

Anthony went on to recall the continuing work arising from the Circle Representatives' Conference in late 2011. He mentioned that two particular issues had been debated by the Council and resolved: the question of whether to continue with Full and Associate classes of membership – for the time being we would retain the distinction; and the question of funding of Circles – where the existing arrangements would also continue. He stressed that Circles who have a need to fund special projects could bid for support from the centre if their own funds were insufficient. He commented on the improvements made to the Journal and website. A number of new or revived Circles had begun operating during the year and he emphasised that people's commitment and time were the most important elements in developing the work of the Association.

At the moment, he noted, we were not organising enough conferences, but Hertfordshire Circle were planning a conference on *Christianity and the Arts*, probably for November 2014. Council had rejected a request for a donation for an anti-trafficking project, as this was not seen as being our proper territory. Anthony mentioned that the Association had benefited this year from two significant legacies, from Mary Brogan and Muriel Houldin,



and Council was evaluating proposals for their use. Two particular projects were approved: a high profile project on Receptive Ecumenism with the Centre for Catholic Studies at Durham, and one to address the storage of our archives, also at Durham. Anthony finished by thanking the Coventry Circle and Christ the King Parish for organising and hosting the AGM. He expressed best wishes to Kevin Lambert for his continuing recovery.

The Secretary's and Treasurer's reports followed.

Secretary Chris Quirke stated that he had kept up the statutory records with Companies House and the Charity Commission, had prepared agenda and minutes of meetings and dealt with correspondence. He noted that the change of venue of the London Newman Lecture to Heythrop College at short notice had proved a resounding success. The lecture had been attended by over 150 people, and was also notable in that the speaker was, for the first time, a priest. Chris spoke humorously about his role as the contact point for the Newman Association – there was little contact from outside the Association and what there was tended to be questions about John Henry Newman rather than the Newman Association! He detailed some of his efforts to interest editors (e.g. *The Tablet*, other Catholic newspapers) in printing material about the Association and its activities. It was clear that the Association had a visibility problem, he concluded, and that was worrying.

Treasurer Peter Havard expressed his thanks to Circles for the timely submission of their accounts, which had allowed the preparation of the financial statements in good time. In summary, Peter said that we had a surplus in excess of £64,000 for the year, solely because of the two legacies received. Without the legacies, our operations would have incurred a loss of about £2,500. We should expect to see that sort of loss each year, which was a worry for the longer term, but at the moment we had about £170,000 in reserves, of which £17,000 was held in Circles' accounts.

We now all went into election-mode, voting on three special resolutions, which were approved (details of these were among the papers sent to members with the May issue of the journal). Moving to electing officers and Council members, Anthony Baker was re-elected as President, Peter Havard as Treasurer, Gerald Williams as Senior Vice President, and Christine Newman and Brian Hamill as Vice Presidents. Marie Rose Low, Carole O'Toole, William Russell and Chris Quirke were elected as ordinary members of Council. No candidates were proposed for the position of Secretary, but Chris Quirke agreed to carry on as Acting Secretary for the time being, with help from Council



member John Potts. Bill Davidson, who had completed his four years as an ordinary member, retired from Council, as did Lorraine Canning and Brenda Fazikas who had been co-opted to Council during 2012/2013.

Father Fabian presided at the celebration of Mass in the Church of Christ the King, which was immediately followed by a splendid buffet lunch back at the Centre. With the enthusiastic help of Chair Maureen Porter most of us then

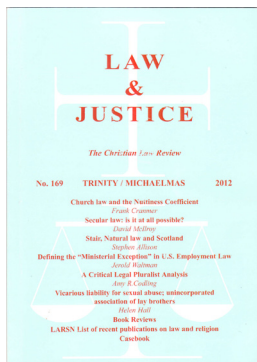
trekked off to the City Centre, and to Coventry Cathedral for a guided tour. We learnt that the Cathedral was not only a physical expression of hope, love and celebration for Christians in Coventry but also for all citizens of Coventry and the wider world. All in all, much praise to the Coventry Circle for their organisation and welcome: it had been an enjoyable and very satisfactory day.

John Potts and Chris Quirke



Epstein's Archangel

Law and Justice reaches its 50th birthday



Most of you will know of the Newman's membership of Pax Romana but few will know that it was through this that we can trace the genesis of the journal Law and Justice, the Christian Law Review. In an article in 1963 for The Wiseman Review, better known as the Dublin Review, Peter Benenson, who became famous as one of the founders of Amnesty International, traced how this came about.

The Lawyers' Secretariat of Pax Romana was founded in 1951 and was, in 1963, developing into an International Association of Catholic Lawyers. About 1960 a group of lawyers decided to establish a British Section of the Secretariat to, as Benenson put it: "provide for Catholic

lawyers a forum where they could discuss and work out answers to the spiritual problems which they meet in their professional life".

In fact this body was known as the Legal Studies Group of the Newman and its main activity was the production of a Bulletin of which the first number appeared in 1962 and which started regular publication in 1963. The moving spirit in this was the indefatigable Michael Penty, who was a considerable figure in the Association in those times, and the journal was titled *Quis Custodiet* after the celebrated remark of Juvenal: "*Quis Custodiet ipsos custodies?*" the point being that the guardians (i.e. the lawmakers) themselves need to be guarded especially by Christian principles.

In 1969 this journal came to be published by an independent trust, the Edmund Plowden Trust, and from 1972 it assumed its present title. The journal, too, is no longer a specifically Roman Catholic one and has changed in other ways: its first issue contained 12 pages, the two issues of 2012 ran to 300; we are now peer-reviewed, have a well-used website and an international readership.

Somewhere in the early days the Pax Romana connection was lost, and the journal now emphasises a Christian viewpoint rather than a Catholic one. However, two things remain: the connection with the Newman as for forty of its fifty years' existence the journal has been edited by two Newman members, Michael and me. More pertinent perhaps although we have evolved we remain true to our original purpose of putting forward a Christian viewpoint on issues of law and justice, ever more needed today when the very place of religion in our legal system and in public life itself is under attack.

If anyone is interested in our work do email me at editor@lawandjustice.org.uk or look at our website: www.lawandjustice.org.uk

John Duddington

Science and Religion: Friends or Foes?

by Paul Black

Introduction

My PhD study involved using the techniques of X-ray crystallography to find out how the atoms of iron and aluminium were arranged in crystals which were found in alloys of these two elements. When I had succeeded, and could look at a model of this crystal structure, I could reflect that I was the first one to unlock the secret of this piece of the natural world, thereby sharing the vision of the Creator. This sense of wonder has been expressed by many scientists, and sits oddly alongside the so-called conflict between science and religion, a conflict characterised more by confusions than by genuine differences. My purpose here is to explore some of these confusions.

The meaning of Creation

The concept of a Creator is not an alternative to the scientist's explanation of the universe. Instead, it is an answer to the question that science cannot answer, which is *why* this universe exists at all, rather than nothing. As the philosopher Wittgenstein explained: *Not how the world is but that it is, is the mystery.*

To understand the full implication of this view, it is important to be clear about the meaning of the term 'Creator'. I might say that I 'created' this article. Yet if I had not committed the ideas to text in a computer it would cease to exist outside my memory, and disappear entirely if my brain ceased to work. Its continued existence depends on the properties of computers, print and paper, which do not depend on my existence. However, all the properties of the universe depend on its Creator for their existence: if He were to cease to hold them in being they would cease to exist, for there would be nothing about them which does not depend on Him.

But there is even more to be taken into account. The Creator of the universe would have to be outside its framework, of space, time and matter, dimensions which He created. The question "Where is God?" cannot have an answer in the language that we use to discuss 'where'. A similar difficulty applies to such questions as "What was God doing before He created our universe?" Part of St. Augustine's answer was that "He was creating hell for people who ask such questions". The question makes no sense because, as the Creator of time, He cannot be measured as if He were located within our time.

Although we can, through science, come to know something about God through his *works*, and wonder at the fact that we are able to take delight in them, it can only give us a limited understanding of the Creator. To go further we have to rely on God's *words*, on His revelation to us. Given this distinction, need there be any conflict between those two sources, His *works* and his *words*? In principle no, but many have believed that the two are in conflict.

One argument was expressed by Richard Dawkins, asserting that religion must be treated as a scientific hypothesis. This pre-empts any serious debate about the relationship between the two, and the poverty of most of Dawkins' arguments reflects this error. It is evident that his problems about creation have their origin in his concern about evolution, and it is in this arena that most of the recent conflicts between scientific beliefs and religious beliefs have arisen. In previous centuries the area of conflict has been in cosmology. For the purpose of this article, I shall develop the

argument in two sections, dealing in turn with cosmology and with evolution.

Cosmology and the Anthropic Principle

Myths in many cultures describe the history of the created universe. For Christianity, Genesis was a source. However, that book contains two different accounts, whilst its authors wrote in the context of their model of the earth, which was of a flat surface under the hemispherical globe of the firmament. The early Church was not concerned with conflict between Genesis and the quite different geocentric models of rotating spheres proposed by Aristotle and Ptolemy. Aristotle's model ruled until the 16th century when Copernicus concluded that the heliocentric model was far more satisfying. However, since it implied that the earth was spinning on its own axis, he could not explain why we were not blown off its moving surface. Galileo was a more public proponent, producing more convincing evidence from observations with his new telescope. Many in the Church saw this model as an attack on the biblical revelation. Galileo made his defence clear as follows:

"...it being true that two truths cannot contradict one another, it is the function of wise expositors to seek out the true senses of scriptural texts. These will unquestionably accord with the physical conclusions".

Such statements worried the Church: he was a layman who added, to his un-diplomatic mockery of opponents, the insolence of pronouncing on interpretation of the Scriptures. This was at a time when the Reformation challenged the Church's sole right to make such interpretations. Yet Galileo's interpretation, that Genesis was not meant to be a science textbook, was correct; sadly the Church took almost three centuries to recognise this finally, in a statement by Leo XIII in 1893.

However, Galileo differed fundamentally from his predecessors. They were proposing purely geometric descriptions of planetary motion. He was interested in causal mechanisms. His studies of the physics of motion and of the force of gravity opened a quite new phase in the study of cosmology. A central feature of gravity is that it is a force of equal mutual interaction: it is easy to understand that the earth pulls the falling apple down, far less obvious that the apple is at the same time pulling the earth towards it. Yet the details of the motion of the moon around the earth could only be understood in terms of such interaction, and the scope of the theory expanded subsequently to include all of matter in this interaction

This realization led to a puzzle: if there is a universal mutual attraction, why isn't all of matter being pulled closer together? This puzzle became even more challenging when astronomers studied the light from the stars. The waves emitted by any source of light (or of sound) are stretched out if the source is moving away from us as it emits them, and compressed if it is moving towards us. The astronomers' analyses revealed that, far from moving together, all the stars were moving apart from one another and that the distances between them are unimaginable. For example, the sun is 93 million miles from the earth so light from the sun takes 8 minutes to reach us. This distance can be expressed as '8 light-minutes'. Measured in this way the nearest galaxy to our own, Andromeda, is two million light years away – i.e. we are now looking at light that it emitted two million years ago.

These puzzles led to the hypothesis of the Big Bang. If all matter were originally compressed together and then exploded, it would fly apart as the force of the

explosion overcame gravitational attraction. There are then two questions – what caused the explosion, and will gravity eventually pull the exploded pieces together? The first question was answered by the study of nuclear physics. If an enormous mass of matter is compressed, the gravity will so compress atoms that nuclear fusion reactions occur, reactions which release huge amounts of energy, raising the temperature so that everything flies apart – i.e. a nuclear explosion.

The second question is more fascinating. The gravity force between any two objects decreases rapidly as the distance between them increases. So if the initial explosion had been powerful enough the attractions would be overcome and the universe would expand so quickly that within a few years any ‘spectator’ would see an apparently dark and empty universe. However, if the force of the explosion had been relatively small, gravity would soon slow down the exploded matter and pull it back together.

Between these two extremes, there could be a delicate balance between gravity’s effect in slowing things down and the decrease of its effect as things move apart. Theoretical calculations have shown that this last scenario, which is the one in which we live, is a very delicate balance indeed. Thus, the Big Bang was not too big, and not too small, but just right. This is one example of the so-called Goldilocks Effects, leading us to wonder why it is ‘just right’. This view is taken further by the Anthropic Principle, by which it is assumed that the design was made ‘just right’ to serve human evolution.

It is tempting to conclude that the Big Bang was the moment of God’s creation. Stephen Hawking describes an incident in the Vatican observatory at a scientific conference in the early stages of Big Bang theory. At the end of the conference, Pope John Paul II gave a farewell address, welcoming the theory, but saying, according to Hawking, that “we should not enquire into the Big Bang itself because that was the moment of Creation and therefore the work of God”. The pope was thereby repeating the mistake of his predecessor in the Galileo case – using religious beliefs to constrain scientific enquiry. Hawking was intrigued, because he had already presented a paper in the conference engaging in such enquiry.

Hawking has also stated that as he, with others, developed models to account for the Big Bang, with the possible emergence of matter and energy through fluctuations in empty space, he decided that a Creator was not a necessary hypothesis – the universe could emerge from this empty space, i.e. from nothing. The problem with this view is that the ‘empty space’ of Hawking and others is a space in which the laws of gravity, of matter and of energy all operate; the creation of this space with these properties still calls for explanation. The trap is to use the term ‘nothing’ in such statements as “Why this universe rather than nothing?”, for the term ‘nothing’ can represent a real entity with (created) properties: the question ought to be re-phrased as “Why this universe rather than not anything?”

As matter flew apart after the Big Bang, there would be many local fluctuations, so some pieces would clump together, on a small scale forming stars, on a larger scale forming galaxies. Many varieties of stars are observed: some may explode quickly – overcoming gravity, some will compress and form black holes. Our own Sun is ‘just right’, and is relatively stable in using up its own nuclear fuel slowly, with enough supplies left for about 5,000 million years. As it initially collapsed, lumps of matter collected around it and formed the planets. For life as we know it to have

developed on earth, its distance from the Sun had to be such that the temperature made biological development possible, and the mix of the elements had to be such that organisms that use carbon dioxide could develop. This is one more instance of the Anthropic Principle, although in this case, the principle is weak because there are so many millions of stars that a few suitable planets were bound to turn up.

More strikingly, the cosmologist Fred Hoyle worked out in 1953 that the nuclear reaction processes in stars could only produce the carbon that organic life requires if there existed a particular isotope of carbon. This led to a search for this hitherto unknown isotope, which led to its discovery and so to further support for the Anthropic Principle. The idea that our universe was designed to create a home in which humanity could evolve links cosmology to the study of human evolution.

Theories of Evolution

The existence of the animal world was seen as an interesting problem when it was recognized that systematic groupings were possible, and that by selective breeding certain characteristics could be enhanced. When Darwin analysed the wide range of evidence that he had collected about the multiple variations between plant and animal species he laid the basis for the theory of evolution by natural selection. One of those who challenged the theory at a public meeting was Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, who at the time (1860) was vice-president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. He said that “we have objected to the views with which we are dealing solely on scientific grounds”. One such objection was that Darwin’s proposed process was a slow one – it would take far too long to evolve our species. Another was that there was no known mechanism that could produce the random variations that the theory required.

The ‘too slow’ objection was eventually overcome through the study of the various radioactive nuclei in our earth’s rocks, which showed that these must have been assembled 4.5 million years ago. The theory of the ‘mechanism’ was revealed later with developments in theories of genetic variation. Many Christians, however, in common with Muslims and Jews who share the same Old Testament traditions, have continued to reject the theory. The objectors are labelled as ‘creationists’, an ambiguous term since in one sense all who believe in a Creator are creationists. A better title would be ‘young-earth creationists’, for they start with an interpretation of the Old Testament that sets the origin of our universe at 4,000 BC. At this point, the Creator created all the species simultaneously.

A different objection is that evolution by natural selection relies on the slow accumulation of one in a million chances from random variations to produce an evolutionary advantage: no Creator would have relied on such a clumsy process. However it has been found that a process of exploring the effects of a large number of random changes in any design may be the most efficient way of producing improvements in that design. The profiles of aeroplane wings, and the planning of the optimum locations for ambulance centres in large urban environments, are two examples of current use of this approach: it can be the *optimum design* process.

Many ‘creationist’ arguments involve the ‘God of the gaps’ approach: when science cannot explain how the Big Bang started, or how 6,000 B.C. can be reconciled with the slow pace of evolution, God is brought in to fill the presumed gap in our understanding. Andrew Coulson, echoing Galileo, described the error in this approach as follows:

"If He is in nature at all, He must be there right from the start, and all the way through it... When we come to the scientifically unknown, our correct policy is not to rejoice because we have found God: it is to become better scientists."

In late Victorian times a different type of conflict arose, led by a scientist, T.H. Huxley. He had been present at the 1860 meeting and was offended by an ill-judged aside by Wilberforce, asking whether Huxley was related to an ape on his grandfather's or on his grandmother's side. He led a group of nine scientists united by a "devotion to science, pure and free, untrammelled by religious dogmas". Whilst the 1860 meeting received almost no mention in newspapers and reviews at the time, this group publicised an inaccurate account of the event twenty years later – an account which has been copied ever since.

Whilst concerns about the potentially negative relationship between Christian belief and evolutionary science can easily be satisfied, the Jesuit theologian, John Mahoney, has proposed a strongly positive relationship. Put briefly, he asserts that the argument that the 'facts', of Adam, Eve and the Fall, made necessary the Incarnation and Christ's act of redemption, is inadequate. It implies that God had a plan A, which was undermined by humanity's preference for pride and disobedience, so He had to implement plan B. Mahoney suggests a quite different perspective, in which the creation plan included a process of evolution with humanity as the end-point of the design.

In human history one can trace the evolution of moral sense, of altruism and of reflective and spiritual thinking. However, the ultimate step in the development was for our human life to be incorporated into the life of the Creator a step beyond the scope of natural evolution. The Incarnation, the complete sharing of the Son with our human heights and depths in his Passion, and the subsequent descent of the Spirit, bridged this gap. The Incarnation and the Redemption were the final completion of the process of evolution, an essential and integral part of a single plan, designed to enable humanity to take the ultimate step into participation in the Divine life.

This simplified précis of Mahoney's argument risks bowdlerising a serious and scholarly work which draws on the work of theologians, from Augustine and Aquinas to Küng and Rahner. My main reason for including it here is to draw attention to the problem that Mahoney was trying to tackle, one that was presented in the following terms by Pope John Paul II :

"Does an evolutionary perspective bring any light to bear on theological anthropology, the meaning of the human person as imago Dei, the problem of Christology – and even upon the development of doctrine itself?"

Conclusion

This last quotation brings me back to my opening paragraph. It is tragic that so many shallow arguments, inaccurate histories, and clashes between leading actors and their institutions, have created the tradition of conflict between science and Christian belief. The mistakes made, on both sides of the divide, can be identified and corrected. The positive aspect, the wonder and delight that scientists enjoy and share as they have continually uncovered more wonderful features of the created universe, should be seen as a divine gift of opportunity. We need to be more bold in asserting both this wonder and delight, and in exploring further the potential of scientific results for refining our understanding of Christian revelation.

References

- M.Poole: User's guide to Science and Belief, 1990 Lion
J. Mahoney: Christianity in Evolution, 2011 Georgetown University Press
A. and J.C. McGrath: The Dawkins Delusion, 2007 S.P.C.K.
P.Black, M.Poole and G.Grace: Science Education and the Christian teacher, 2007 C.R.D.C.E. Institute of Education, London
E.L.Mascall: Christian Theology and Natural Science, 1956 Longmans
S. Hawking: A Brief History of Time, 1996 Random House.

This article is based on a talk given to the Wimbledon Circle in March 2013 by Paul Black, Emeritus Professor of Science Education at King's College, London.

Book Reviews

The Way Opened Up by Jesus

A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew by Jose A. Pagola; Convivium Press 2012

This beautifully-produced little book really might change your life!

The writer sees God the Father somewhat as Pope Francis does; the bishop of Rome declares that the salvation of God is available for everyone, believers and unbelievers alike, and Pagola speaks of the crazy love and scandalous generosity of God, whose unconditional forgiveness is given unasked, who desires only our good. Pope Francis insists that we must be a church for the poor, as Pagola does, and is calling a halt to honorary titles. But it is painful to face the author's damning indictment of the church we love and belong to, the institution which the new pope has been chosen to reform.

Pagola describes a church in which status takes priority over service, an institution weakened by routine and paralysed by fear, in which people will not take risks – yet Pope Francis urges us to do just that and not to be afraid of what the CDF will say. We are living in a state of embedded codependency, with the hierarchy assuming autocratic power and offering us security in return, as long as we do not question its judgements.

Our failing as Christians is that we adhere to an institution instead of following a person; instead of making Jesus the vital centre of our life. We act as if devoutly receiving the sacraments is all that is required of us, while following an apparently respectable and inoffensive Gospel. Pagola breaks open for us the Sermon on the Mount and shows how Jesus's teaching will never be as meaningful for us, in our comfortable lives – our basic wants supplied, our leisure occupied with possessions and entertainment – as it will be for the grieving, the poor, the despised and the oppressed.

We need to begin by learning to be quiet alone in a room, open to the mystery of God in the depth of our soul. We cannot, as true followers, be indifferent to the sufferings of the world, and are called to care and work unremittingly for justice and peace. We must call for reform in the church with tenderness not condemnation. But we can be joyful, because it is as everyone takes on the love and compassion of the risen Christ that God's reign is created.

Pagola's words reflect, perhaps, our experience of the institutional church of Rome but in the Church of God at such and such a place we can see how the Holy Spirit is alive and active, as a bishop kneels to receive the blessing of a newly ordained priest and a minister offers the Cup as if actually sharing Christ with us.

Josephine Way

Philip & Faith: A Tale of Development by Terry Wright; New Generation Publishing, 2012; paperback £6.99 (Kindle £4.28)

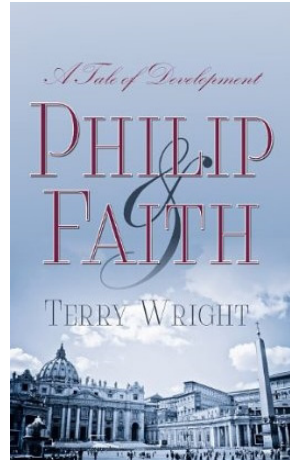
The titular protagonists of Terry Wright's second novel are two lifelong friends: Philip, an English professor who, from a teenage evangelical conversion, moves on to become an enthusiastic—and, later, a less than wholly enthusiastic—Catholic; and Faith, his first love, who from a similar evangelical beginning progresses, via marriage to an academic Anglican vicar, to become herself one of the first wave of ordained women priests.

We first meet them in a 2010 prologue, watching the televised beatification of John Henry Newman during Pope Benedict's visit to Britain. Anglican Faith is more comfortable with the ceremony than Catholic Philip, and, as we later learn, this is typical of their contrasting personalities and 'churchpersonships'. Philip is an edgy, intellectual and liberal Catholic, not very tolerant of non-intellectual or illiberal attitudes among his fellow believers, while Faith, though also very intelligent, is much more accepting of a broad range of belief and practice. We then go back to the 1960s and his original Billy Graham conversion, and to the sixth-form conference where he not only met Faith for the first time but also encountered for the first time a historical-critical approach to the gospels. He was bowled over by both.

The story develops along two lines. The biographical line traces Philip's and Faith's young and very innocent liaison, their drifting apart when they go to different universities; her marriage to George; his conversion to Rome and less innocent friendship with the Catholic Rachel, whom he marries; his thesis on Newman and subsequent appointment to a post at Durham; a hiatus in his marriage, leading to a period in therapy before a reconciliation; Faith's progression from teaching RE at a sixth-form college to ordination; and the reunion of the four friends, when Faith's appointment as a curate in Durham bring her and George to where Philip and Rachel have got together again.

But the second, and perhaps stronger, line is that of the changing patterns in church practice and style in the decades from the immediate post-Vatican II period to the present day—from a point, in the 1960s, when it seemed that progress and creativity were with the Catholic Church, to a point on the other side of *Humanae Vitae* and the 1992 General Synod allowing the ordination of women, when the baton of *aggiornamento* seemed to have been passed to the Church of England. And, in counterpoint, we also watch the development over this period of Philip's and Faith's theologies, beliefs, and practices.

This is a combination of themes which, I suspect, will resonate with many Newman members, especially those of the same generation as Philip and Faith—and of the author himself, who, as well as being Emeritus Professor of English Literature at Newcastle and the author of ten books exploring the interaction of Christianity and modernity, is a member of the Newman's Tyneside Circle.



Martin Redfern

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:

Fr. N.P.Chatfield (Eastbourne & Bexhill), Mr J.Conneally (Eastbourne & Bexhill), Mr J.W.Cotton (Eastbourne & Bexhill), Mrs H.Flynn (North Merseyside), Mr R.Killingbeck (Eastbourne & Bexhill), Mr A.Petch (Hertfordshire), Dr P.D.Petrie (Glasgow), Ms K.Ramakrishnan (Eastbourne & Bexhill), Mrs U.Round (Wimbledon), Mrs J.Stiles (Eastbourne & Bexhill), Mr C.Woodward (Wimbledon).

Fr. Chatfield is the newly appointed Chaplain to the Eastbourne & Bexhill Circle.

Requiescant in Pace

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

Miss M.B.Archibald (London), Mr W.M.D.Holt (Unattached), Mr W.C.Meigh (North Glos.), Mrs A.M.Willbourn (Hertfordshire).

Angela Willbourn was a founder member of the Newman, joining in 1944 with her late husband Tony, a past President. Moyra Archibald gave valued service as Legal Adviser to the Association (see the obituary elsewhere in this issue) and Walter Meigh and William Holt had been longstanding members of the Bath and North Gloucestershire Circles, respectively.

Subscriptions

The Membership Secretary will be sending out reminder letters soon for the few outstanding 2013 subscriptions. A quick reply (preferably with a cheque enclosed!) would be appreciated.

Bill White, Membership Registrar

London Newman Lecture 2014

Thursday, March 6th

Sacraments: doing the joined-up living?



This lecture is to be given by

Dr Gemma Simmonds CJ,

a senior lecturer in pastoral theology at Heythrop College, London, where the event will take place.

Dr Simmonds will argue that on their own the Sacraments (signposts to the Kingdom) hang in mid-air whereas they should be seen as rooted in our everyday lives.

Ticket information will be given in the January 2014 issue of *The Newman*

Circle Programmes

Aberdeen

3 October Soldiers of Faith and Fortune
7 November The Scottish 'Camino'
5 December Poetry and Inspiration

Contact: Margaret Smith, 01224 314566
Alasdair Roberts
Chris Dyos & Fiona Mitchell
Participants bring along a favourite poem

Birmingham

7 September Discussion on Vatican 2
12 September Am I My Brothers Keeper? CST
24 October Conscience and the Law
November Mass with Chaplain
30 November J&P views of Pope Emeritus Benedict. & Pope Francis
December Social time, date to be announced.

Contact: Winifred Flanagan, winifredflanagan@gmail.com

Mgr. Pat Kilgarrieff

Bishop William Kenney

John Duddington

Francis Mohan

Cleveland

25 September Adoption: why it's demise needed to be reversed
16 October The Church's teaching on marriage annulment?
20 November Indulgences and Martin Luther

Contact: Terry Egerton, tpj.egerton@virgin.net

Sir Martin Narey

Dr Helen Costigane SHCJ

Mr. Kevin Ryan

Coventry

3 September Opening Mass and Party
24 September Sikhs and Sikhism
29 October A Vision for the Archdiocese
26 November Liberal Judaism
7 December Advent Mass

Contact: Maureen Porter, 02476 502965, maureen.porter@talktalk.net

Mr. Amrick Singh Ubhi

His Grace, Archbishop Bernard Longley

Rabbi Margaret Jacobi

Croydon

Contact: Andy Holton, a.holton857@btinternet.com

Ealing

Contact: Kevin Clarke, 07710 498510, kevin.clarke@keme.co.uk

Eastbourne & Bexhill

4 September Our universe that Vatican 2 almost missed out
9 October Circle Mass & AGM.
23 October Communicating the Faith to young people

Contact: John Carmody, 01323 726334, johncarmody44@hotmail.co.uk

Dr Edward Echlin

Celebrant Fr Neil Chatfield

Katrina Avery

Edinburgh

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

Glasgow

26 September Campaign of the Church of Scotland against Irish Catholics between the Wars: Nature, Causes and Legacies
31 October New Pontiff – Old Problems
28 November The Magisterium and Moral Change

Contact: Dan Baird, danbaird98@hotmail.com

Professor Tom Devine

Michael J. Walsh

Julie Clague

Hertfordshire

22 September Health and the Catholic Tradition
20 October The Personal Ordinariate
4 November Crime Reduction
9 November Musical Evening
8 December The Deacon: to be or not to be?

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

Jim McManus

His Honour Judge The Reverend James Patrick

Pastor Nims Obunge MBE

Students of Purcell School of Music

Justin Cross

Hull & East Riding

Contact: Andrew Carrick, 01482 500181

LLanelli

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

London Contact: Patricia, 0208 504 2017
2 November How Islam views Christianity *Fr Damian Howard S.J*

Manchester & N. Cheshire Contact: Chris Quirke, 0161 941 1707 dcq@mac.com
7 October Francis of Assisi, Rebuilding the Church, Loving the World
John Michael Harvey OFM
11 November The Holocaust and the Problem of Evil *Albert Radcliffe*
2 December Heaven Haven? The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins *Roger Clarke*

North Gloucestershire Contact: Stephanie Jamison, 01242 539810, sjamison@irlen-sw.com
1 October Eastern Christian thought. *Dr Isaac Chenchiah*
5 November Dei Verbum: Vatican II *John Huntriss*
3 December The Eucharist – a Feast of Justice and Freedom *Fr Richard MacKay*

North Merseyside Contact: John Potts, john_potts41@hotmail.com
19 September Current Legal Challenges for Christians *Neil Addison*
17 October Formation of the College of Cardinals *Peter Firth*
21 November The Gospel Infancy Narratives *Michael Tunnicliffe*

North Staffordshire Contact: Vincent Owen, 01782 619698

Rainham Contact: Marie Casey, bmcasey@btinternet.com

SE Circles
December Day of Recollection

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

Tyneside Contact: Maureen Dove, 01912 579646, maureenanddove@btinternet.com
25 September The Lindisfarne Gospels *Maria Charlton*
30 October TBC
27 November A Survivor of the Holocaust *Gabrielle Keneghan*

Wimbledon Contact: Bill Russell, 0208 946 4265, william_russell@talktalk.net
25 September Ignatius the Psychologist *Fr Brendan Callaghan SJ*
21 November JFK and Catholics in Public Life *Dr Peter Gallagher SJ*

Worcester Contact: Heather Down, 01905 21535, hcdown@gmail.com
19 September Who and What are Catholic Voices *Mary Clarkson*
3 October Christian and Human rights Law *John Duddington*
7 November Martyrs of Worcestershire
5 December Christmas Party and Quiz

Wrexham Contact: Maureen Thomas, maureenthomas@uwclub.net
27 September Destructive Images & Alarming Narratives *Revd Dr Trevor Dennis*
25 October The Symbolism of Islamic Gardens *Maureen Thomas*
29 November A Bike Ride Around the North Sea Coast *Rev Andrew Sully*

York Contact: Judith Smeaton, 01904 704525, judith.smeaton@btinternet.com
16 September Walsingham Today *Fr. Noel Wynn SM,*
21 October York Newman Lecture Healing gifts for Wounded Hands: the Promise
and Potential of Receptive Ecumenism *Professor Paul Murray*
18 November We serve a generous God *Mrs Margaret Sentamu*