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The FURROW

A JOURNAL FOR THE
CONTEMPORARY CHURCH

+ *Kevin Doran*
Vaccination – An Act of
Solidarity

Suzanne Mulligan
Fratelli Tutti and a
Consistent Ethic of Life

Patrick Hannon
Religious Freedom – Then
and Now

Gerald O'Collins
When translation lapses
into interpolation: the case
of the ESV

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Late Summer Frost

Neil Xavier O'Donoghue
Roman Missal at 50

R D Donnelly
The Quiet Revolution of
Pope Francis

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VOLUNTEER PRIESTS NEEDED

My name is Brian Kavanagh and I was ordained in 1992 (*Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin*). I work part-time in the **Parish of Allen** and in the **Marriage Appeal Tribunal** in Maynooth, Co. Kildare. I am also an accredited counsellor with **NAPCP** and work with **ACCORD** marriage counselling services.

I am in the third year of a Masters in Psychotherapy in Dublin City University. ***This year I am required to conduct research and complete a thesis.*** My research *'aims to explore the experiences of priests in their counselling role in light of their seminary formation'*. **I NEED VOLUNTEERS!**

I would like to invite Priests ordained since the year 2016 to participate.

Your engagement will involve an interview and your anonymity and confidentiality will be guaranteed. Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

**Please contact me on 087 6162675
if you are willing to assist me in my research project.**

Many thanks.

Brian

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The Furrow

A pastoral monthly founded 1950.

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Novate vobis novale
Et nolite serere super spinas.
Yours to drive a new furrow,
Nor sow any longer among the briers.

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Vaccination – An Act of Solidarity

+ Kevin Doran

It seems like a lifetime since we first became aware of COVID-19. In the early days of the pandemic, there was some talk about the possibility of a vaccine, but it all seemed very remote. Now, less than a year later, there are no less than thirty-eight different candidate vaccines at various stages of development, and at least five of those are already being used in various jurisdictions. The focus has shifted from “when?” to “what?” and “how?”

The availability of a vaccine which is safe, effective, and widely available represents the best chance of a return to normal living, for all of us, but especially for older people and those with serious underlying conditions. Alongside the technical and scientific questions, ethical concerns have also been raised in some quarters about how some of the COVID-19 vaccines have been developed. While these are valid concerns, there are also reasonable and reassuring answers, if we are ready to hear them.

SAFE AND EFFECTIVE

Some people point to previous high-profile scandals associated with the pharmaceutical industry as a reason for concern. On the other hand, thanks to large scale childhood vaccination programmes in the 1960s many serious diseases like TB, German Measles (Rubella) and Polio have almost completely disappeared in Ireland. The development of vaccines and the immunisation of whole populations has been described as “undoubtedly a positive step” when it comes to the prevention of infectious diseases.¹

Before a vaccine is authorised for use in the general population, a series of trials takes place including, as a final stage, the testing of the vaccine on large numbers of volunteers. There are important protocols in place to ensure that people who agree to participate in these trials have given and are capable of giving informed consent.²

1 Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Healthcare Workers. *New Charter for Healthcare Workers*. Philadelphia, NCBC, 2017, #69

2 WMA. Declaration of Helsinki, 1964 (Revised 2013) # 28. See also European Communities (Clinical Trials on Medicinal Products for Human Use) Regulations. Dublin: Stationery Office, 2004

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There has been an understandable urgency attached to the development of an effective vaccine for COVID-19. Some surprise has been expressed at the unprecedented speed at which vaccines have been developed and approved. This is probably explained by the unprecedented investment of resources and expertise.

Risk management is a matter of proportion. There is a serious moral obligation on pharmaceutical companies to ensure that there are no short-cuts which would expose end-users to disproportionate risks. The validation of every stage of the process is the role of the regulatory authorities. Ultimately, healthcare and biomedical research are built on trust.³ Bad science is not the only thing that undermines trust. We also need to discern very carefully the sources and the reliability of the information that we find on social media, where opinion is so frequently presented as fact.

DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION OF VACCINES

The Chinese are sometimes blamed, however unfairly, for COVID-19. It is, perhaps, less well-known that the Chinese began exploring vaccines nearly a thousand years ago. Modern immunology discovered the possibility of developing vaccines using the live virus itself. The virus is “attenuated” (or weakened) by being cultured over a number of cycles in such a way that it loses its capacity for causing serious illness, while remaining strong enough to produce an immune reaction. This process requires a living biological “host” in which the virus is grown. Over the years researchers have used cells taken from chicken or duck embryos, from rabbits, hamsters and monkeys. Since the middle of the twentieth century, many vaccines, including some of those most commonly used to prevent childhood diseases were developed and produced using human foetal cell-lines as the “host”. These cell-lines were developed using biological tissue taken from specific identifiable fetuses aborted in the 1960’s.⁴ This has, understandably, raised serious moral concerns and conscientious objections because of the ethical conflict between vaccination (which is about protecting life) and abortion (which is about destroying life).

Many vaccines today use cell lines developed either from ethically sourced human cells (such as umbilical cord blood) or from animal cells (such as Vero monkey cells). The majority of the

3 D. O’Mathuna, “Trust and Clinical Research”, *Research Practitioner*, 10.5, September–October 2009, 170–177

4 Cf. Olshansky, and Hayflick. “The Role of the WI-38 Cell Strain in Saving Lives and Reducing Morbidity” *AIMS Public Health* 2017 Vol 4 127-38; cf. also College of Physicians of Philadelphia: “Human Cell Strains in Vaccine Development”, 2018 from <https://www.historyofvaccines.org/index.php/content/articles/human-cell-strains-vaccine-development>. Sourced on 3rd Dec 2020

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candidate vaccines for COVID-19 do not depend for their design, development or production on the use of human foetal cell-lines.⁵

For many years, scientists have been exploring an approach to the production of vaccines using messenger RNA (or mRNA). Instead of weakened strains of the virus itself, this cutting-edge technology uses chemically produced mRNA, which mimics the action of the virus and trains the immune system to respond. The Pfizer BioNTech vaccine and the Moderna vaccine, which are among the first COVID-19 vaccines to be approved, use this new technology. Human foetal cell-lines were not used in the design, development or production of either of these vaccines, though it is acknowledged that they made use of a foetal cell-line for one of the confirmatory lab tests.

THE CHURCH AND THE ETHICS OF VACCINATION

In 2003, long before anyone heard of COVID-19, Debra L. Vinnedge, wrote to Cardinal Ratzinger, then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), asking for guidance on whether or not it was lawful to vaccinate children with vaccines prepared using foetal cell-lines. The answer came in the form of an eight page document prepared by the Pontifical Academy for Life and authorised by the CDF.⁶ In December 2020, the CDF published a doctrinal *Note* in which the principles of the earlier teaching were applied to the specific circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁷

St Thomas Aquinas explained that the morality of any action depends primarily on its object (what is being done) and on its end (why it is being done). The circumstances can also undermine the goodness of an act (e.g., playing a trumpet, however well, in the middle of the night).⁸ When it comes to making a moral assessment of vaccines which depend on foetal cell-lines, there is not just one action involved. We need to ask ourselves what is being done at each stage of the process.

Abortion is the taking of an innocent human life and is, therefore, objectively immoral. Foetal cell-lines are derived from

5 Cf. J.L. Sherley and D. Prentice. “An Ethics Assessment of COVID-19 Vaccine Programs”, from <https://lozierinstitute.org/an-ethics-assessment-of-covid-19-vaccine-programs/>. Sourced on 19th Nov. 2020

6 Pontifical Academy for Life. “Moral Reflections On Vaccines Prepared From Cells Derived From Aborted Human Foetuses”. Rome, 2005. Also *Dignitas Personae*. Rome 2008, #34-35.

7 CDF. *Note on the morality of using some anti-Covid-19 vaccines*. Rome: 21st Dec. 2020. (Hereinafter “Note”) This note confirms the guidance given by the Irish Bishops in *Welcoming Vaccines for the Common Good*, 10th Dec. 2020.

8 Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae* Ia IIae, Question 18. Cf also Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*. Rome, 1993 #71-83

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the tissue of an aborted foetus and cultured over many years in laboratory conditions. By the time they are used as a biological host to develop a vaccine, none of the original cells remain, but there is still a material or biological connection with the original act of abortion.

The Church has always made a distinction between formal (deliberate) involvement in an immoral act (which involves sharing the immoral intention of the original act) and material involvement (which may often be incidental and remote). It is not enough for a researcher to say “that he does not approve of the injustice perpetrated by others, but at the same time accepts for his own work the ‘biological material’ which the others have obtained by means of that injustice”.⁹ There are, however, “differing degrees of responsibility” and the responsibility of those who decide to use foetal cell-lines “is not the same as that of those who have no voice in such a decision”.¹⁰

The primary moral concern today is that our present choices would contribute to the shaping of future biomedical research and development. By expressing a principled preference for “ethically irreproachable” vaccines, we make it clear that we do not want biomedical research in the future to depend on abortion or destructive research on human embryos. For that reason, the Church encourages producers of vaccines and health authorities, even those which continue to use human foetal cell lines, to make it clear that they reject the act of abortion and “to produce, approve, distribute and offer ethically acceptable vaccines that do not create problems of conscience for either health care providers or the people to be vaccinated”.¹¹

VACCINATION AS MORAL ACT

We can now go on to consider the action of giving and receiving a vaccine which depends on foetal cell-lines. The essential point is not just that the foetal cell-lines are materially remote from the original abortion, but also that the act of vaccination is an intentionally distinct act.

The intention (or end) of the external act, as St Thomas explains, is the object of the internal act of the will.¹² The physical (external) act of vaccination and the associated decision (act of the will), are both directed towards a “good end”, namely the protection of life and health, which serves both the good of the individual and the common good. There are also “good secondary ends”, since

9 *Dignitas Personae*, #35. See also “Note” #1

10 *Ibid.*

11 CDF “Note”, #4

12 *Summa Theologiae* I, II, 20 & 21

the management of the pandemic allows people to get back to work and reduces the burden on the economy, thereby allowing resources to be directed back to housing, education, healthcare and the other things that support normal life.

Unless the external act is objectively evil, the morality of the act derives primarily from the will. Vaccination is not, of its nature, evil. As long as the person taking the vaccine does not will (or agree with) the previous abortion, he or she is free from any moral responsibility in relation to it.

It is reasonably argued that the appearance may be given of justifying abortion. This would be an unintended side effect and the Principle of Double Effect applies. Nonetheless, to mitigate the unintended effect, the Church asks people, where possible, to choose a vaccine that is free of any material link to previous abortion and, where that is not possible, to advocate for the production of vaccines which do not have that connection.

Finally, we come to the circumstances, and this is where the most recent *Note* from the CDF is particularly helpful.¹³ One of the circumstances is “the grave danger posed by the COVID-19 pandemic”. The CDF also recognises that various factors may make it impossible for doctors and their patients to actually choose a vaccine that is “ethically irreproachable”. The successful development of a safe and effective vaccine is just the first step. Other factors which may affect availability include transportation, storage, distribution and cost. Ultimately it depends on the decisions of individual governments to license and purchase such vaccines.¹⁴

For all of these reasons, the CDF *Note* states: “It must therefore be considered that, in such a case, all vaccinations recognized as clinically safe and effective can be used in good conscience”.¹⁵ This “does not constitute formal cooperation with the abortion from which the cells used in production of the vaccines derive.” Catholics, while choosing where possible “ethically irreproachable” vaccines, may use any COVID-19 vaccine that is approved for clinical use, on the understanding that they themselves do not approve of or consent to abortion for the purposes of biomedical research.

A QUESTION OF CONSCIENCE

Everyone is obliged to follow his or her well informed conscience. In the context of a global pandemic, it is important to consider

13 CDF “Note”, #3

14 *Ibid.*, #2

15 *Ibid.*, #3

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that vaccination is not simply a private matter. This reality must inform any judgement of conscience. The CDF *Note* stops short of describing vaccination as a moral obligation. It does say, however, that:

“Those who, however, for reasons of conscience, refuse vaccines produced with cell lines from aborted fetuses, must do their utmost to avoid, by other prophylactic means and appropriate behaviour, becoming vehicles for the transmission of the infectious agent. In particular, they must avoid any risk to the health of those who cannot be vaccinated for medical or other reasons, and who are the most vulnerable”.¹⁶

THE DISTRIBUTION OF VACCINES

The costs of developing a vaccine are significant but the potential rewards are even greater. It is reasonable that pharmaceutical companies would wish to protect their “intellectual property” investment. How is this to be balanced with the urgent need of populations which cannot afford the cost? At time of writing, it is being reported that the vaccine developed by Astra-Zeneca and Oxford University is to be made available on a not-for-profit basis, which is highly commendable from an ethical point of view.

Catholic Social Teaching, while in no way denying the importance of the free market for the common good, requires that essential medical treatment should be made available on the basis of need, not on the basis of the capacity to pay. The ownership of private property carries with it “a social mortgage”.¹⁷ Under the principle of the Universal Destination of Goods, there is an ethical responsibility on pharmaceutical companies to moderate their desire for profit. Likewise, there is an ethical responsibility on governments, under the principle of distributive justice, to ensure that, both in their own societies and in the wider world, those who are most at risk are the first to receive the vaccine. Pope Francis says:

*“The preferential option for the poor, this ethical-social need that comes from God’s love, inspires us to conceive of and design an economy where people, and especially the poorest, are at the centre. And it also encourages us to plan the treatment of viruses by prioritising those who are most in need.”*¹⁸

The TRIPS agreement is an annexe to the agreement which

16 Ibid., #5

17 Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. 1987, #42

18 Pope Francis. General Audience, 19th August 2020

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established the World Trade Organisation.¹⁹ It recognises the right of WTO members “*to protect public health and, in particular, to promote access to medicines for all*”.²⁰ It allows governments to provide for the production of generic versions of essential medicines not only for the domestic market but also for countries facing public health problems and lacking the capacity to produce generic drugs. Given the significant capacity of the pharmaceutical industry in Ireland, it should be considered whether we might have a contribution to make in producing vaccines, under license, as a service to developing countries.

19 World Trade Organisation. TRIPS Factsheet. https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/tripsfactsheet_e.htm Accessed on 3rd Sept 2020

20 World Trade Organisation. “Declaration On The Trips Agreement And Public Health”. Ministerial Conference Fourth Session, Doha, 9 - 14 November 2001

Rest. We all need times of good quality rest. Even God rested after his work of creation which gives rest a divine dimension (cf. Gen 2: 2-4). If we go without the rest our bodies need then the health of our bodies will suffer. If our souls go without the rest they need they too will begin to break apart. I recently saw a Road Safety warning on a billboard that said: “Tiredness kills”. Yes, tiredness can kill not just the body but the soul if it does not rest in God. May every area of our lives rest in Him and be refreshed.

– BILLY SWAN, *Love Has a Source* (Maynooth, St. Paul’s Publishing) p.139.

Fratelli Tutti and a Consistent Ethic of Life

Suzanne Mulligan

On December 11th the BBC reported that President Trump would rush through the federal execution of five inmates on death row.¹ These executions are due to take place during the final few weeks of his presidency and before President-elect Biden enters office. And so by the time this article is published all five people will have been put to death.

This move by Mr. Trump surprised some. He is the first outgoing president for 130 years not to pause executions during a time of presidential transition. And according to the BBC report, if all five executions are carried out, Mr. Trump will become “the most prolific execution president in over a century”,² approving the execution of 13 human beings on death row since July of this year alone. It is a macabre legacy.

Despite this, and in disregard of his vehemently anti-immigrant, xenophobic and racist views, Donald Trump was hailed by many in the run up to the recent US election as a “pro-life” president. And Joe Biden, who promised to abolish the death penalty if elected, had his commitment to Catholic/Christian values frequently questioned. The challenge for Catholics in the United States and elsewhere, it seems, is to avoid becoming single-issue voters, committing instead to what John Paul II termed “a culture of life” in all its totality.³ For the principle of the sanctity of life is not a selective one; the sacredness of human life is not derived from, nor dependent upon, virtue or merit. It does not apply in a limited way only to the unborn or to those we like. It does not

1 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-55236260> accessed on December 18th, 2020.

2 Ibid.

3 See USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, Part I, available at: <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship-part-one>

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apply more robustly at certain stages of human life than at others. It is universal, applicable to all human beings in all circumstances and in all contexts.

And the ethical implications of that foundational Christian belief are far-reaching, extending well beyond the rights of the unborn. The sanctity of life demands, among other things, a commitment to ending child hunger and child marriages; working towards basic universal healthcare for all peoples; fighting for the abolition of harmful practices such as female genital mutilation; and committing to protect and preserve the natural world. It involves a rejection of all forms of violence in society, including gun violence, gender-based violence, and the death penalty. It requires condemnation of the proliferation of armaments and violent conflict around the world. And it implies that we welcome the stranger, especially those displaced because of war, violence or economic destitution. With the aid of *Fratelli tutti* let us reflect on some of these points more fully.

FRATELLI TUTTI ON WAR AND THE DEATH PENALTY

In his latest encyclical Pope Francis discusses a wide range of moral concerns, including war and the death penalty. Building on the teachings of his predecessors, the Holy Father raises serious objections to both, describing them as “false answers” to contemporary problems. For Francis, war and the death penalty “do no more than introduce new elements of destruction in the fabric of national and global society” (FT n.255).

War

Pope Francis is firm in his condemnation of war. “We can no longer think of war as a solution, because its risks will probably always be greater than its supposed benefits. In view of this, it is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a “just war”. *Never again war!* (FT n.258, emphasis added). Reasons for war can often be couched in humanitarian arguments, or justified through the manipulation of information, Francis warns. And given the highly globalized nature of our world, the broader impact of even localised conflicts is often all too evident.

It should be added that, with increased globalization, what might appear as an immediate or practical solution for one part of the world initiates a chain of violent and often latent effects that end up harming the entire planet and opening the way to new and worse wars in the future. In today’s world, there are no

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longer just isolated outbreaks of war in one country or another; instead, we are experiencing a “world war fought piecemeal”, since the destinies of countries are so closely interconnected on the global scene (FT n.259).

Cicero, regarded as a key architect of the doctrine of the Just War, claimed that the resort to violence represented a failure of our humanity. As rational creatures, he argued, we ought to be able to resolve our differences through peaceful, intelligent means rather than resorting to the sword. Francis echoes these sentiments: “War is a failure of politics and of humanity, a shameful capitulation, a stinging defeat before the forces of evil” (FT n.261). Both humanity and the environment bear the horrific cost of conflict, while the existence of nuclear, chemical and biological weaponry threatens human existence in previously unimaginable ways. And although the policy of deterrence is often used to justify the proliferation of nuclear arms, this tactic is a fragile and risky one. The Holy Father calls for the fostering of greater trust among nations, and a global politics built on mutual respect, dialogue and collaboration: “International peace and stability cannot be based on a false sense of security, on the threat of mutual destruction or total annihilation, or on simply maintaining a balance of power” (FT n.262).

Interestingly, Pope Francis also recommends the establishment of a global fund that could put an end to world hunger and progress development in poorer parts of the world. “With the money spent on weapons and other military expenditures, let us establish a global fund that can finally put an end to hunger and favour development in the most impoverished countries, so that their citizens will not resort to violent or illusory solutions, or have to leave their countries in order to seek a more dignified life” (FT n.262). Consider for a moment the sums involved.

According to the World Bank, the United States spent over 731 billion dollars in 2019 on its military.⁴ This far exceeds the spending of its closest rivals. The UK, for example, spent just over 48 billion dollars in the same year, while Russia’s military expenditure came to 65 billion dollars. Germany and France each spent approximately 50 billion dollars on their military capabilities. To put this another way, in 2019 the Pentagon’s budget was almost three times bigger than China’s. In that year, the US military budget exceeded the next 10 countries’ defense budgets combined, equating to approximately 38 per cent of global military spending. And as Elliott Negin argues in *Scientific American*, “While the Pentagon budget routinely eats up more than half of annual U.S. discretionary spending, a host of other interrelated threats that undermine national security writ large

4 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?locations=US>

go chronically underfunded, including the current public health, environmental and climate crises, all of which disproportionately harm low-income communities and communities of color”.⁵ Furthermore, global military spending is occurring at a time when extreme poverty is set to rise for the first time in over twenty years. Can Christians reasonably claim commitment to a culture of life while ignoring, or even benefiting from, such huge expenditure on armaments?

The death penalty

The death penalty has raised major ethical concerns for Church leaders for many decades. Like John Paul II and Benedict XVI before him, Francis rejects the argument that the death penalty is necessary to protect the common good, a point also found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

Today, however, there is an increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes. In addition, a new understanding has emerged of the significance of penal sanctions imposed by the state. Lastly, more effective systems of detention have been developed, which ensure the due protection of citizens but, at the same time, do not definitively deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption.

Consequently, the Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that “the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person”, and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide (CCC: 2267).

Pope Francis calls on Christians and all people of good will to work together to abolish the death penalty world-wide, as well as improve the conditions within prisons “out of respect for the human dignity of persons deprived of their freedom”. (FT 268). This plea is echoed by many within the Catholic Church. The US Bishops, for example, have for several years questioned the use of the death penalty in their country, and the recent federal executives have generated further condemnation from within the USCCB.⁶ Others have gone further. In an article for *The National*

5 See: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/its-time-to-rein-in-inflated-military-budgets/>. The figures cited here are supported by data supplied by the World Bank in the link above.

6 See, for example, Archbishop Paul Coakley and Archbishop Joseph Naumann’s statement, available at: <https://www.usccb.org/news/2020/us-bishop-chairmen-lament-additional-federal-executions>, or USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, available at: <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship-part-two>

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Catholic Reporter James Keenan SJ and William Montross SJ are critical of several high-ranking Catholics in the judiciary and politics who are facilitating these executions. “Still, Catholics are assiduously ignoring [Catholic] teachings. Barr launched the killing spree without hesitation, and when the Catholic justices intervened and vacated preemptively the stays of execution, they effected these killings. The active Catholic participation in this killing spree is remarkable, and of course, scandalous, especially in as much as they rush the nation to committing these actual executions ... [And] Catholics in high offices have shown by their own extraordinary actions that they are among the most active participants in executing tragically vulnerable people”.⁷ Of course Barr and others will claim they are simply implementing the rule of law. But one is left wondering how such actions could possibly promote a culture of life or defend the principle of the sanctity of life. No doubt committing to a consistent ethic of life will place enormous economic, political, personal, and spiritual demands on us. But then, fidelity to the Gospel has never been easy or convenient.

FACING UP TO GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The 2016 election of Donald Trump and the United Kingdom’s decision to leave the EU both highlight a worrying trend across many parts of the world. We have witnessed a rise in far-right political movements, identifiable by clear anti-immigrant, xenophobic rhetoric, and by a narrow nationalism that attempts to promote a limited sense of belonging. Control of borders is now a key political promise in many election campaigns.

A blatant hypocrisy underpins the anti-immigrant sentiment that is on the rise. Take for example the UK’s efforts to regain control of its borders by leaving the EU. Britain is second only to the United States in global rankings for military exports. UK military exports rose to approximately £14bn in 2018, falling to 11 billion in 2019. The Middle East is the primary destination for these sales, accounting for 60% of all arms exports in 2019 (down from 80% in 2018).⁸ Alarmingly, UK arms sales to repressive regimes increased by £1bn in 2019 compared to 2018 figures. “In 2019 the UK sold £1.3bn worth of weapons to 26 of the 48 countries that are classed as ‘not free’ by Freedom House, the US government-funded pro-democracy institution. This was compared with just £310m in

7 <https://www.ncronline.org/news/justice/catholics-involvement-death-penalty-killing-spree-scandalous>

8 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/06/uk-remains-second-biggest-arms-exporter-with-11bn-of-orders>

2018 ... Business is brisk among those countries which the Foreign Office itself identifies as having poor human rights records”.⁹

Much of this weaponry, it is believed, is being used in conflicts in Yemen and Syria. And yet we find that most of the world’s leading armaments suppliers, including the UK, are refusing to accept responsibility for the millions of civilians fleeing these conflicts. Borders are being closed, the plight of migrants is being largely ignored, while enormous profits are made from the conflicts fought with Western armaments.

By the end of 2019 it was estimated that 79.5 million people had been forcibly displaced worldwide, of which 26 million were refugees and 45.6 million were internally displaced persons.¹⁰ As David Hollenbach SJ explains, “If solidarity extends only as far as national or cultural borders, refugees will not receive the support they need. On the other hand, if we fail to support ... citizens who are economically vulnerable, we should not be surprised when some of them take anti-immigrant and anti-refugee political stances. The challenge, then, is to find the appropriate relation among the solidarities that link us to communities of diverse scope”.¹¹

Responsibility and *response* can be determined by examining several criteria. Primary responsibility, of course, rests with the nation/government of those displaced. But, as we know, many people are fleeing conflict, oppressive regimes, and religious and ethnic persecution. Thus, where countries will no longer protect the rights of their citizens the global community may be obliged to intervene. Proximity – be it geographical or cultural – is another factor that helps determine our response to refugees. Capability is a third. The duty of any nation towards refugees must be weighed against the needs of one’s own citizens. But as Hollenbach notes, “neither of these duties is absolute. Duties to fellow citizens do not always trump duties to refugees, nor do duties to refugees always override duties to co-citizens. This means we are challenged to strengthen solidarity on multiple levels”.¹² Finally, one must examine the degree to which one’s government and economy benefits from the sales of armaments to unstable, fragile nations around the world. Surely countries that profit financially from global arms sales bear some responsibility towards the civilians fleeing conflict?

9 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/25/uk-arms-trade-repressive-regimes>

10 <https://www.unhcr.org/en-ie/figures-at-a-glance.html>

11 <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2019/10/21/what-we-owe-refugees-fleeing-persecution-around-globe>

12 <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2019/10/21/what-we-owe-refugees-fleeing-persecution-around-globe>

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A CONSISTENT ETHIC OF LIFE

As Pope Francis clearly states in *Fratelli tutti*, the Catholic Church now commits itself to the abolition of the death penalty worldwide. Like war, the use of capital punishment is a complex issue, requiring legal, political, socio-economic, and cultural reform. It raises uncomfortable questions about the levels of violence in society, as well as the myriad of injustices that create the conditions for violence to flourish. The US Bishops have called for the abolition of capital punishment, stating that, “our nation’s increasing reliance on the death penalty is extremely troubling. Respect for human life must even include respect for the lives of those who have taken the lives of others ... The antidote to violence is not more violence.”¹³ As a part of any pro-life commitment, the US Bishops encourage the creation of solutions to violent crime that respect the dignity of the human person.¹⁴

A leading figure in the promotion of “a consistent ethic of life” was Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin. He recognised that some resisted this idea because of the desire to “push their narrower agendas”.¹⁵ But he also acknowledged that the idea itself is a challenging one: “It requires us to broaden, substantively and creatively, our ways of thinking, our attitudes, our pastoral responses. Many are not accustomed to thinking about all the life-threatening and life-diminishing issues with such consistency. The result is that they remain somewhat selective in their response”.¹⁶

Consistency in our ethic of life may require a radical change in how we treat others, including immigrants, people of other faiths, members of the LGBTQ+, the poor, and prisoners. It may place greater burdens on us as a society, requiring increased taxation, for example, to more adequately assist vulnerable communities. It may challenge some of our religious assumptions. It may require reforming long-established structures and laws, rectifying religious, political and societal practices that exclude or marginalize. As John Paul II put it, “It leads us to promote life actively, and to *develop particular ways of thinking and acting which serve life*. In this way we exercise our responsibility towards the persons entrusted to us and we show, in deeds and in truth, our gratitude to

13 USCCB, “Faithful Citizenship: Civic Responsibility for a New Millennium”, in Charles E. Curran, Leslie Griffin (eds.), *Readings in Moral Theology* no.12: *The Catholic Church, Morality and Politics*, (New York: Paulist Press, 2001), p.151.

14 They include here the creation of adequately paid jobs, equal opportunities for women and minorities, a living wage, access to healthcare and child care, and safe, affordable housing. See p.154

15 Joseph L. Bernardin, “Consistent Ethic of Life”, in Curran and Griffin, *Readings in Moral Theology* no. 12, p.162.

16 *Ibid.*, p.162.

God for the great gift of life”.¹⁷ The need for a consistent ethic of life is all the more urgent when one considers the range of threats to human dignity and human life. Bernardin argued that this ethic “cuts across such issues as genetics, abortion, capital punishment, modern warfare, and the care of the terminally ill”. One might also include here endemic racism, societal violence, lack of access to adequate healthcare, and environmental destruction. Bernardin understood that these are distinct problems, each complex in its own way, but argued there was a “common moral challenge” that binds them to a consistent ethic nonetheless.¹⁸

And as John Paul II argued in *Evangelium vitae*, to be pro-life is to actively work for the common good of society. “It is impossible to further the common good without acknowledging and defending the right to life, upon which all the other inalienable rights of individuals are founded and from which they develop. A society lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice and peace, but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalized.” (EV, 101).

Thus, a consistent ethic of life requires a broad and inclusive framework. It includes commitment to the dignity of life at all stages, as well as the provision of conditions that enable human beings to flourish, and dedication to eradicating “the ancient scourges of poverty, hunger, endemic diseases, violence and war” (EV, n.3). Matters of war and capital punishment may initially seem like distant problems to many of us. But we must each ask how we can better promote a culture of life, either locally or globally. Do our pensions benefit from investment in armaments or fossil fuels? Can we do more as a society to help refugees or the homeless? Do we encourage attitudes and structures that are sinful to those around us? Do our workplaces allow misogynistic or homophobic practices to go unchecked?

Throughout all his social documents, Pope Francis asks us to examine our ways of living, our attitudes, our biases. He seeks more than merely reform of unjust structures; he understands that a new way of thinking, a new vision, is required also. As he puts it, “Certainly ... without an attempt to enter into that way of thinking, what I am saying here will sound wildly unrealistic. On the other hand, if we accept the great principle that there are rights born of our inalienable human dignity, we can rise to the challenge of envisaging a new humanity” (FT, 127).

¹⁷ John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, n.76.

¹⁸ Bernardin, “Consistent Ethic of Life”, p.163.

Religious Freedom - Then and Now

Patrick Hannon

Ireland, France, and the United States are but three of the countries around the globe in which religious freedom is at present at issue in public discussion and/or in the courts. Here, a High Court action was initiated in November which challenges restrictions on worship introduced owing to Covid-19, asserting an infringement of a constitutional right. In France there is recurrent controversy around the impact of the doctrine of *laïcité* on the religious freedom of adherents of the Islamic faith, the second biggest religious grouping in that country. In the United States there is a virtually continuous litigation, as religious groups and secularists for their respective reasons oppose policies and laws which involve the freedom of religion guaranteed by the Constitution. And there are countries where people are put to death because they practise a religious faith.

Little of this could have been anticipated when on 7 December 1965, the day before the Council concluded, Pope Paul VI promulgated *Dignitatis humanae*, a Declaration which has shaped Catholic thinking on religious freedom since then. The document's character was described by John Courtney Murray SJ, a key influence on its drafting: 'The Declaration on Religious Freedom is a document of very modest scope. It is concerned only with the juridico-social order and with the validity, in that order, of a human and civil right to the free exercise of religion'¹. Underlying theological questions remained to be tackled, as did questions about the concrete application of the document's principles. And who then anticipated such developments as the migrations that our times are witnessing, or the kind of religious pluralism now globally evident?

The Declaration's progress through the Council was not trouble-free. Questions were raised as to its continuity with earlier church

1 'The Declaration on Religious Freedom', in *War, Poverty, Freedom: The Christian Response*, (Concilium 15, ed. Franz Böckle), New York: Paulist Press, 1966, pp 3-16.

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doctrine, including that of the self-understanding of the Catholic Church, and the claims encapsulated in the formula ‘Error has no rights’. Other contributions wondered about the structure of a theological document which opened with an argument from reason, only later introducing theological considerations, and only as confirmatory of what was already established by rational argument. Yet the Declaration was passed by a vote of 2,308 to 70, and its passage was applauded by the Council Fathers when the result was announced.²

And the general reaction, inside and outside the Church, was positive. Catholic commentators saw its letter and spirit as reflecting the desire for *aggiornamento* expressed by Pope John XXIII when he convoked the Council, and its coherence with documents such as the Decree on Ecumenism, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions, and the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, itself promulgated on the same day. There was also negative criticism, predictably from traditionalist fringe-groups but also from more moderate quarters, reiterating misgivings of some of the Council Fathers and adding to them; and the criticism continues more than fifty years later. Still, the Declaration has held its own, providing a starting-point and a framework for further thought and discussion, and it is the starting-point of an important document from the International Theological Commission which appeared early in 2019, *Religious Freedom for the Good of All*³.

An earlier article provided an overview of that document’s content, and an intimation of its spirit and intendment⁴. In summary one could say that whilst recognising the signal value of the Declaration, the document points to changes in society and in the Church which necessitate fresh reflection upon the principles which the Council provided. It refers especially to ‘a new focus on religious and national traditions in the Middle East and Asia [which] has significantly changed the perception of the relationship between religion and society’; the religious radicalisation known as fundamentalism; a political culture which, while professing ideological neutrality, marginalises or even excludes religious expression in the public sphere; and what it calls an ‘on-going post-modern removal of the commitment to truth and the transcendent

2 A scholarly account of the conciliar debates, with useful documentation and commentary, together with a new translation is in David L. Schindler and Nicholas J. Healy Jr., *Freedom, Truth, and Human Dignity*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015.

3 Hereinafter *RFGA*. The translation used here, lightly edited for clarity, is accessible at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20190426_liberta-religiosa_en.html

4 *The Furrow*, November 2020.

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[which] poses in new terms the theme of religious freedom in both a political and juridical context'.⁵

All of these developments call for a new approach, and they are the focus of the Theological Commission's treatment of the topic. But first, what did Vatican II say? The Commission's document opens with a chapter entitled 'The Perspective of *Dignitatis Humanae* in its Time and Today', elaborated in four sections dealing with, respectively, the situation before the Council, what the Council said, religious freedom after Council, and offering some reflections under the heading 'On the Threshold of Renewal'.

BEFORE THE COUNCIL.

One of the points of contention in the conciliar debates and in the Declaration's reception in the Church at large was the question of its continuity with earlier magisterial teaching and theological thinking. A key to that thinking lies in the principle 'Error has no rights', a notion that at its worst had led to the torture and death of people known as heretics and infidels; at its best to a toleration of other faiths, pending the eventual establishment of 'the one true religion' in a global Christendom. As will be seen shortly, the teaching of the Declaration could hardly be further from such a position, and most attempts at arguing for any continuity between the two are less than convincing.

Not so, however, that of the Theological Commission's document, which explains the change in terms of an interplay between societal changes and a development in church doctrine. At first glance this might look like blaming society for mistakes on the part of church authority, as when it is said that in the past, 'a certain ideological configuration of the State, interpreting the modernity of the public sphere as an emancipation from the religious sphere, caused the Magisterium to condemn freedom of conscience, understood as legitimate indifference and subjective arbitrariness vis-à-vis ethical and religious truth'⁶. But the document's account is nuanced. Earlier reaction of church authority is put in context: 'Christianity represented the State religion and was the de facto dominant religion within western society. The aggressive establishment of a State secularism which repudiated the Christianity of the community was first theologically read as

5 *RFGA* §5

6 *RFGA* §15. 'Provocato' is the verb used in the Italian version in reference to the Magisterium's reaction, and on the Vatican's website this is translated as 'provoked', a word which in English usage often suggests anger in the response of the one provoked. Since in Italian it may mean no more than 'caused' or even 'prompted', and looking at tenor of the passage as a whole, it seems preferable to avoid the more loaded word.

a sort of “apostasy” from the faith, rather than as a “legitimate separation” between Church and State’. This information is not offered as though an excuse, and it is pointed out that another consequence of the events thus summarised was ‘a better self-understanding of the authority of the Church vis-à-vis political power, and a gradual broadening of the reasons for the Church’s freedom within the framework of fundamental human freedoms’⁷. The section concludes with a note on the particular contribution of Pope St John XXIII, whose thinking as expressed in the encyclical *Pacem in terris* and elsewhere had, as the document puts it, paved the way to the Council. Pope John had described the rights and responsibilities of persons from the perspective of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and he taught that the harmonious coexistence of peoples presupposes freedom. A brief synthesis of Pope John’s thought draws on several of his writings and addresses: ‘The person’s vocation is found within a God-given capacity to seek the truth with one’s own intelligence, choose the good with one’s own will, and assent wholeheartedly to the divine promise of salvation, a promise of God’s love that redeems and completes the human being. And the disposition to freedom must be defended from every type of abuse, intimidation, or violence’⁸

DIGNITATIS HUMANAЕ⁹

There follows an account of the Declaration’s content in terms of four arguments justifying the belief that religious freedom is a right founded upon the dignity of the human person, arguments ‘fully revealed by the light of divine revelation, freely welcomed in the act of faith, and clarified by the reflections of the Church’. This is an orderly approach, and the material selected furnishes the background to the document’s later treatment of themes requiring attention in the changed circumstances of our time. But the density of the writing makes paraphrase or summary difficult and, rather than rehearsing the arguments in anything like due detail, our purposes may be served by a short account of the Declaration’s thinking which goes to its essence, followed by an indication of some particular emphases in the Theological Commission’s treatment.

The core of the teaching can be put briefly: it is an affirmation of a right to religious freedom, founded upon the dignity of the human person, and seen in the light of the nature of the search for truth. The right is formulated in the second paragraph: ‘This

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *RFGA* §16.

⁹ Hereinafter *Dh*

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freedom means that all are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his or her own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits'. The due limits are later specified as 'the just requirements of public order', and the concept of public order is explicated in paragraphs 6 and 7.

The dignity of the person resides in the twin gifts of reason and freedom (*Dh* §2), and it is of the nature of the search for truth that 'the inquiry is to be free, carried on with the aid of teaching or instruction, communication and dialogue, in the course of which people explain to one another the truth they have discovered, or think they have discovered, in order thus to assist one another in the quest for truth' (§3). Everyone has the duty, and therefore the right, to seek the truth in matters religious, but 'people cannot discharge these obligations in a manner in keeping with their own nature unless they enjoy immunity from external coercion as well as psychological freedom' (§3); 'The freedom or immunity from coercion in matters religious which is the endowment of persons as individuals is also to be recognized as their right when they act in community' (§4); and, critically: 'the right to religious freedom has its foundation not in the subjective disposition of the person, but in his or her very nature. Hence the right to this immunity continues to exist even in those who do not live up to their obligation of seeking the truth and adhering to it and the exercise of this right is not to be impeded, provided that just public order be observed' (§ 6)

The concept of public order as that expression is used in the Declaration is not the same as that of common law legal systems such as our own, where it refers to behaviour in public places and is violated by, for example, being drunk and disorderly in the street. Rather is it a version of a concept familiar in continental civil codes, where it has a more ample connotation, indicated here in the Declaration's characterisation of it as a 'fundamental constituent of the common good'. 'Common good' is a term of art in Catholic social teaching, and the Declaration reproduces a well-known general description: '[it] consists in the entirety of those conditions of social life under which persons enjoy the possibility of achieving fulfilment in a certain fullness of measure and with some relative ease'¹⁰. It is also expressed in terms of the requirements of public peace, justice, and public morality.

Turning to the four arguments which provide the framework for the Theological Commission's account of the thought of *Dignitatis humanae*, and given the density already mentioned, what follows

¹⁰ *Dh* §6

here cannot capture the rich content of the passages in which the arguments are elaborated, but the essence and something of the style of the presentation may be seen.¹¹

The *first* argument concerns the integrity of the person, by which is meant, in the words of the document, the impossibility of separating one's internal freedom from its public manifestation. Human beings are endowed with reason and will, by virtue of which they are called into a relationship with goodness, truth and justice, in reality a relationship with God; and this is the radical foundation of religious freedom. And 'the central point is that the sanctity of each individual's freedom cannot be coerced or hindered in the exercise of authentic religion.'

The *second* argument starts from the duty to seek the truth which, the Commission says, 'demands and presupposes dialogue between human beings in accord with their nature as social beings.' Moreover, 'religious freedom is not restricted to the individual but involves the whole community, and in a particular way the family'; and here the document draws attention to the special role of the family, in the Council's words: 'The family, since it is a society in its own original right, has the right freely to live its own domestic religious life under the guidance of parents. Parents, moreover, have the right to determine, in accordance with their own religious beliefs, the kind of religious education their children are to receive. Civil powers, in consequence, must acknowledge the right of parents to make a genuinely free choice of school and other means of education'.

The *third* argument echoes the first when it speaks of the person as *homo religiosus*, for in the first argument it has been said that the relationship with the good to which human beings are called is in reality a relationship with God. And the human being is by nature social, so that it is natural for men and women to manifest their religiosity not only by internal acts but also in public worship. Free exercise of this relationship in society must be immune from any external coercion that would impinge upon this freedom, the Commission says, and civil and political authorities, have no right to interfere in questions related to the domain of personal religious freedom. 'The State must also respect the public manifestation of one's religious freedom as long as it does not impact negatively on the just public order of society, based, in any case, on proven facts and correct information'.

The *fourth* argument concerns the limits of purely human, civil and legal power in matters of religion, implicit in what has already

¹¹ In order to obviate a proliferation of footnotes, it might be noted here that the remaining quotations are from *RFGA* §§22-28, which also contain the references to the sources of quotations used in the document.

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been made very clear. An important addition is in the attention called also to religion's responsibility to be fully aware of the legitimacy or not of its public manifestation – a point touched on in the document's opening chapter. 'Indeed, the clarification of the limits of religious freedom, with a view to the safeguarding of justice and peace, are integral parts of the common good.'

AFTER THE COUNCIL

The section is introduced by recalling what the Council said about the then contemporary scene: that although a right to religious freedom is recognised by most constitutions, there are regimes in which the recognition is not matched in the practice of the public authority. To which the Commission adds: 'Fifty years on new threats against religious freedom have acquired global dimensions. These threats place various moral values at risk, as well as the interpretation of the important international speeches, discourses, and teachings of the papal magisterium. The Popes of our time clearly indicate that this theme... poses anthropological, political, and theological questions regarding the fate of the common good, and peace between peoples of the world'.

Drawing on various addresses and writings, the Commission recalls certain themes in the teaching of the popes from St Paul VI to Francis, as they reflect upon or elaborate themes of the Declaration. For Pope Paul a key insight was the importance of dialogue, which in today's context, he noted, must also involve other religions; and such dialogue 'must have the attitude of openness with regard to others without the temptation to condemn a priori, combined with the imperative to avoid harmful polemics which unduly offend other believers.' For Pope John Paul, religious freedom, 'the foundation of all other freedoms', is not just a right among others but '[the] guarantee of all freedoms that ensure the common good of persons and peoples'. And 'this right is the basis of peaceful civil coexistence, it is intrinsic to true democracy, a necessary guarantee of life, justice, truth, peace, and the mission of Christians and their communities'.

Pope Benedict's thought is presented by way of a summary of ideas from his message for World Day for Peace 2011. Benedict, with Pope Paul, sees the right to religious freedom to be founded upon the dignity of the human person 'in as much as he or she is a spiritual being, one who is relational and open to the transcendent'. Importantly he adds: '[I]t is not therefore a right reserved to believers alone but is shared by all people, since it is the synthesis and summit of all other fundamental rights'. When respected by all, religious freedom is 'the sign of a political and legal society that guarantees the realisation of authentic and integral human

development'. With Paul also, he is conscious of the importance of dialogue, and with all the popes from Paul onwards, of the connection between religious freedom and societal stability and peace. The promotion of justice, unity, and peace for the human family, favours the search for truth that focuses on God, and ethical and spiritual values that are shared and universal. This search ultimately encourages dialogue between all for the common good in the construction of a peaceful social order.

On the contrary, a lack of respect for religious freedom at any level of life: individual, common, civil, or political, offends both God and human dignity, creating situations of social disharmony. Such disrespect is evident in religious sectarianism and fundamentalist violence, but also in various forms of religious discrimination and in militant ideological secularisms. Benedict speaks again here of a 'positive secularism' which, according to the document, includes the notion that State institutions should promote religious education as 'the highway which leads new generations to see others as brothers and sisters and work together'. But, again, a correlative responsibility on the part of the religions is indicated: they 'must insert themselves in a dynamic of purification and conversion, [a] task of right reason illuminated by right religion'.

Pope Francis thought it necessary to stress that religious freedom does not aim at preserving a 'subculture', a fear sometimes voiced, and a criticism made by a certain kind of secularism; rather it 'constitutes a precious gift of God for all, a fundamental guarantee of every other expression of freedom, a bulwark against totalitarianism, and a decisive contribution to human fellowship'. Francis has pointed out that some of the classical texts of the religions have a motivating power that stimulates thought and increases understanding and sensitivity. He joins his predecessors in calling on governments to protect and defend freedom of conscience and religious freedom as foundational among human rights. He often refers to the martyrs of our day, victims of persecution and violence for religious reasons, as well as criticising ideologies that exclude God from the life of individuals and communities. But he adverts, too, to the religions' responsibilities: 'authentic religion, starting from its own interiority, must arrive at an account of the existence of the other in order to foster a common space, an environment of collaboration with all, in the determination to walk together, to pray together, to work together, together to establish peace'.

A NOVELTY THRESHOLD?

This somewhat opaque expression heads the concluding section of the document's treatment of *Dignitatis humanae*. It returns to the question of the continuity of the Declaration's teaching with

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earlier Magisterial and theological teaching and thinking, and to difficulties in its reception, and it characterises the post-Conciliar Magisterium as concerned to underline ‘the dynamics intrinsic to the process of the homogeneous evolution of doctrine’. The concern seems to resonate with the authors of our document, and their response touches on both the issue of development of doctrine and on the significance of the ‘new orientation’ in thinking about religious freedom.

As regards the former, they quote from the Declaration itself: ‘This doctrine, received from Christ and the Apostles, the Church has therefore, in the course of time, kept and transmitted. Although at times in the life of the People of God, journeying through the vicissitudes of human history, there have been ways of acting which are not in conformity - even contrary - to the spirit of the Gospel, the Church has always taught that no one can be compelled to faith’. And as to what the new way of thinking might imply for evangelisation, it says: ‘This is the dynamic of the inculturation of the Gospel, which is a free immersion of the Word of God in cultures, in order to transform them from within, illuminating them in the light of Revelation, in such a way that faith itself allows itself to be challenged by contingent historical realities – interculturality – as a starting point for discerning deeper meanings of revealed truth, which in turn must be received in the culture of the context’. So much for the Declaration on Religious Freedom, its essence, its novelty, its impact upon the life of the Church over more than half a century. It was an extraordinary achievement: its essential principles remain valid, and its insights will continue to illuminate the way ahead. But much has changed, and the Theological Commission was charged with a study of the changes, and with identifying future needs and challenges. What is offered in their document is, in their own words, a theological-hermeneutical reflection which will suggest a reasonable renewal of the reception of *Dignitatis humanae*, and present a basis for the integration – anthropological and political – between the personal and communal application of religious freedom.

What light is shed by the Commission’s thinking on current issues of the kind listed in the paragraph which opens this piece? An answer would require three separate articles, for in each case the issues are different, but the document does in fact contain the makings of an approach to at least some of the questions. What these makings should emerge as, in a couple of further articles, we look at the rest of *Religious Freedom for the Good of All*.

When translation lapses into interpolation: the case of the ESV

Gerald O'Collins, SJ

The passage from one language to another always involves interpretation. Those producing the new translation look for words in the receptor language that will best interpret and convey the meaning of the original text. At times, however, they can be tempted to go beyond the wording of the text to add interpretative *interpolations*, for which there is no basis in that original text. Several translations of 1 Timothy 5:22a ('do not be over-hasty in laying hands on anyone') serve to illustrate this persistent defect. They show the misplaced technique of interpolation at work.

This example opens the way to examine the rendering of two important passages from Romans (5:9b and 11:28a). In those cases the English Standard Version (ESV) joins other translations by lapsing into interpolation.

1 Timothy

The New English Bible (NEB) of 1961 succumbed to the temptation to interpolate when translating the verse from 1 Timothy: 'do not be over-hasty in laying hands *in ordination*' (italics mine). Paul's instruction to Timothy could refer to (a) what we would today call ordination to the ministry (see 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6). But the apostle may be referring to (b) an imposition of hands involved in reconciling sinful Christians – specifically installing or re-installing in the preaching office a presbyter who is suspected of sin – or to (c) an imposition practised at admittance to church membership. Instead of leaving things open and translating precisely what is found in the Greek ('do not be over-hasty in laying hands on anyone (*mēdeni*))', the NEB preferred to clarify what it took to be the meaning by interpolating 'in ordination'.

The NEB was not alone in doing so. In the New Testament in Modern English (1958; rev. 1973), J. B. Phillips had already indulged in a similar interpretative interpolation: 'never be in a

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hurry to ordain a man by laying your hands on him' (italics mine). A few years later the 1971 Living Bible, which admittedly proposed itself as 'Scripture paraphrases', offered the translation: 'never be in a hurry about choosing a pastor'. 'Choosing a pastor', like the 1996 New Living Translation ('never be in a hurry about appointing a church leader'), suggests, anachronistically, advice for protestant and other churches in the United States and elsewhere, in their practice of choosing and appointing their pastors. It changes the focus from a ceremony involving the imposition of hands to the prior activity of choosing someone from a group of candidates and appointing that person as a church leader.

In this case, recent translations have resisted the temptation to interpolate. The 1989 Revised English Bible (REB) renders 1 Timothy 5:22a: 'do not be over-hasty in the laying on of hands'. The 1989 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) introduces 'ordain' in translating: 'do not ordain anyone hastily'. This is, however, no interpolation, but the result of judging 'ordain' as the clearest or at least the closest equivalent of what was indicated by the Greek 'lay on of hands'. The 2001 ESV, to its credit, avoids any interpolation: 'do not be hasty in the laying on of hands'.

Romans

The example of interpolation that I have chosen from 1 Timothy does not affect or challenge central doctrines of Christianity. But other such interpolations can do so. Take Romans 5:9b: 'much more shall we be saved from the anger (*orgēs*)'. The Greek text does not end by saying 'the anger of God'. But this does not stop the English Standard Version (ESV) from rendering those final words: 'from the wrath of God' (italics added). The ESV is not alone in doing so. Such translations as the 1966 Jerusalem Bible (JB), the Living Bible, the NRSV, the Phillips Modern English, and the RSV also gratuitously add 'of God' to 'the anger'.¹

Supporters of the ESV (and these other translations) will doubtless scramble to justify the interpolation added to Romans 5:9b, 'of God'. But they need to contend with the firm statement coming from Brendan Byrne: 'the explicit designation of the wrath as "God's wrath" on the part of many translators...has no warrant in the Greek text which simply has *'apo tēs orgēs'*'.²

Beyond question the Bible speaks, anthropologically, of the divine anger, which blazes out when God's loving will is thwarted by human sin.³ This anger, still often translated by the old-fashioned term 'wrath', frequently points to imminent judgment:

- 1 The REB followed the NEB by translating '*'apo tēs orgēs'*' 'from the final retribution', and did not interpolate by adding 'of God'. The translators considered '*orgē'*' in this context to mean, not so much 'anger', but final judgment or retribution.
- 2 B. Byrne, *Romans* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 171–72.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 72–73.

‘the revelation of God’s wrath means that the final reckoning is underway and human beings are being found wanting in God’s sight’.⁴

But divine anthropomorphism run the risk of being interpreted *au pied de la lettre*, especially by biblically uneducated readers or hearers. Scholars may not find ‘the anger of God’ too difficult to grasp and explain. But those who lack adequate scriptural training can lapse into an unwarranted and even monstrous view of a vindictive, punishing God, who delights in venting anger on sinners. In the case of Romans 5:9b, there is no call to overload the problem which other verses in the same letter raise (for instance, ‘God’s anger from heaven is revealed against all ungodliness’—Rom 1:18), by interpolating ‘of God’. Why should we so explain the ‘anger’ in question, especially when the context refers to sinners being saved? There is much to be said for the translation offered by the NEB and REB: ‘we shall all the more certainly be saved through him [Christ] from final retribution’.

Later in Romans the ESV, also like some other translations, adds a similar interpolation ‘of God’ (not found in the original text) when it renders Romans 11:28a: ‘as regards the gospel, they [the partially hardened Israel] are enemies *of God* for your sake’ (italics mine). Once again the ESV does not stand alone. A similar interpolation ‘of God’ comes from the JB, NEB, NRSV, REB, and RSV.

Distancing himself from this faulty tradition of translation, Byrne refrains from any interpolation ‘of God’ and translates Romans 11:28–29: ‘as regards the gospel they [the bulk of Israel] are enemies, for your sake, but as regards election they are beloved, because of the fathers. For the gifts and call of God are irrevocable’.⁵ The ‘present behaviour’ of many Israelites blatantly puts them in hostile opposition to the gospel. But their election by God overrides this ‘present hostility’; they remain ‘loved by God because of the fathers’.⁶ Their ‘enmity’ affects ‘the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles’. But, irrevocably, God regards them as beloved and never as enemies.⁷

By interpolating ‘of God’ into Romans 5:9b and 11:28a, the ESV and some other translations *fail* the test as translators. The pastoral insensitivity involved in this interpretation could consistently mislead non-scholarly readers and encourage them into fashioning a deep and lasting false image of God. I remain astonished that translators have declined to notice and deal with the problem. As a Catholic Christian, I remain equally astonished that some bishops’

4 Ibid., 65.

5 Ibid., 348.

6 Ibid., 351.

7 Ibid., 355–56.

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conferences have voted to approve of the ESV, which proposes that I speak of the bulk of the Jewish people as ‘enemies of God’.

The ESV and other versions, while creating further problems for their readers by twice interpolating ‘of God’ in Romans, left behind the positive wording of the 1611 King James Version (also called the Authorized Version or AV). It rendered Romans 5:9b: ‘we shall be saved from wrath through him [Christ]’.⁸

Likewise, the AV did not gloss ‘enemies’ with ‘of God’ when it came to Romans 11:28a: ‘as concerning the gospel they are enemies’—a statement patently justified by the way many Israelites rejected the gospel. Their present, hostile behaviour when faced with the Christian proclamation allowed Paul to call them ‘enemies of the gospel’. But they remained ‘beloved’ by God, who called and blessed them in their ‘fathers’ (Rom 11:28b). Paul insists: ‘the gifts and call of God are irrevocable’ (Rom 11:29). The AV translation remains *exemplary* by avoiding any interpolation and expressing accurately the meaning of two relevant verses: ‘as concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes, but as touching the election [by God], they are beloved for the fathers’ sake. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance’ (Rom 11:28–29).⁹ If, or when, their choice of the ESV returns to the agenda, may the bishops’ conferences that have opted for it no longer view this translation as a gift of God. With repentance, they should *revoke* their approval.

8 Here the 1582 Douai-Reims New Testament provided the translation: ‘shall we be saved from wrath through him [Christ]’. Although King James strictly forbade his translators to take any notice of this Douai-Reims translation, here they may have done so.

9 Once again the AV hints at dependence on the Douai-Reims rendering of Rom 11:28–29: ‘as concerning the gospel, indeed, they are enemies for your sake, but as touching the election [by God] they are most dear for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance’. But, as always, we need to acknowledge the pervasive influence of William Tyndale’s earlier translation (spelling modernized): ‘as concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but as touching the election they are loved for ye fathers’ sakes. For verily the gifts and calling of God are such that it cannot repent him of them’.

Late Summer Frost

Bridie Stringer

This reflection takes its starting point from my evening walks in the Hampshire countryside during lockdown. Throughout this period of social isolation, I have been fortunate to have been able to walk for a couple of miles each evening and witness the arrival of new flocks of lambs, new herds of cattle, the harvesting of grain crops and the sowing of seed for the next growing season. I regularly saw my neighbour gathering fruit from her apple and pear trees and this year's generous harvest resulted in bags of free fruit for those passing her garden gate. She did not want any form of payment since she had an abundance and simply said: 'I now just need to get rid of them!' She told me about her recent visit to a favourite local café, reopened after the easing of restrictions and how she and her husband, as regular customers, had looked forward to their first visit there in six months. She had expected to be elated and overjoyed but, instead, could only feel a sense of flat disappointment and tried to understand why. She felt it was the inability to really communicate with others in the café, the nervousness about getting too close to other customers in case it made them feel vulnerable and insecure. We both agreed that this would not change for a very long time to come. What has all this rural musing to do with theology? The apple theme is one which I would like to explore and also the theme of people gathering.

Apple Theme

To begin with the *apple theme*, I am not in favour of a naïve reading of Genesis 3, in which a devious Eve offers fruit to her dim partner. Although this hermeneutic has been demonstrated forcibly in the writings of some of the most eminent Church Fathers, I would have hoped that, as a contemporary community of believers, we are now more nuanced in our reading of this mythical episode. Tertullian (c.160-220 AD), however, writing in the second century and credited with being the founder of Latin Christian theology describes Eve thus:

'You are the gateway of the devil; you are the one who unseals the curse of that tree, and you are the first one to turn your back

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on the divine law; you are the one who persuaded him whom the devil was not capable of corrupting; you easily destroyed the image of God, Adam. Because of what you deserve, that is, death, even the Son of God had to die'.¹

The narrative of the Fall is no longer given the horticultural prominence it once had and, in today's Children's Bibles, Adam and Eve are generally seen standing side by side holding strategically placed sheaves of grass rather than guiltily gorging on forbidden fruit, whether Granny Smith or Pink Lady! However, Tertullian's perception of women as devious, seductive and untrustworthy is still very much part of contemporary pastoral debate. Women still struggle to have their status recognised as fully *In Imago Dei* and some sectors of the Church community prefer to cite St Paul's injunction as per 1 Corinthians 14 about women not having uncovered heads at worship and not speaking in the assembly. The progressive and liberal wing of the Church's *Magisterium* offers a more positive narrative, framed mostly around the status of the Virgin Mary and the 'genius' of women. Pope Francis certainly expresses this view, but herein lies a danger that, in putting women on a pedestal, they actually remain disenfranchised, whilst theoretically being valued.

This leads me into my *next* apple theme – the exhaustion of labouring in the field. For this, I look to the apple harvest described movingly by American poet Robert Frost in *After Apple Picking*, written in 1914. I have the words of this poem printed out and fixed to the wall beside my desk, as some lines resonate with my academic engagement with pastoral theology.

The first lines of the poem suggest that is all is not entirely as it seems. The jubilant celebration of the reward of hard work is simply not there, rather like my neighbour's first visit to her favourite café after the pandemic lockdown:

My long two-pointed ladder sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.

And later in the poem, the following lines are wistful and poignant:
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking: I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself desired.

1 *De Cultu Feminarum*, section i.I, part 2 Translated by C.W. Marx <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/ter tullian27.html> accessed 08/09/2020

I think that is probably where I situate myself in the great harvest debate about equality and inclusion within Church ministry. Should we stay with the ladder and the bucket in the orchard or accept that we can perhaps partake of other foods instead of apples?

The anticipation of the teaching document of Pope Francis, released in October, caused huge discontent because of its title *Fratelli Tutti* (literally translated as ‘All Brothers’ in Italian). Vatican News journalist Andrea Tornielli clarified the use of this title on 16 September:

‘We are waiting to know the contents of the encyclical, which the Successor of Peter addresses to the whole of humanity and which he will sign on 3 October at the Saint’s tomb. There have been some good discussions about the title and its meaning. Since it is a direct quotation from St Francis (taken from the *Admonitions*, 6, 1: FF 155), the Pope has obviously not changed it. But the formulation of the title in no way intends to exclude women, that is, more than half of the human race’.²

Admonitions, 6 was clearly addressed to St Francis’ fellow friars minor and this accounts for the gendered language in his salutatory opening words. The *Admonition*’s message is for the friars to be humble and not to seek glory for themselves. The actual words he uses draw on the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd:

‘Let us all, brothers, consider the Good Shepherd who to save His sheep bore the suffering of the Cross. The sheep of the Lord followed Him in tribulation and persecution and shame, in hunger and thirst, in infirmity and temptations and in all other ways; and for these things they have received everlasting life from the Lord. Wherefore it is a great shame for us, the servants of God, that, whereas the Saints have practised works, we should expect to receive honour and glory for reading and preaching the same’.³

Having now engaged with the new papal encyclical, it seems clear that Pope Francis has chosen the Italian message of his saintly predecessor to remind us of his own earlier exhortation *Laudato Si*, which again deployed the words of St Francis to urge the People of God in our time to honour and care for the earth. In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis highlighted Jesus the Good Shepherd to be our pastoral exemplar and in *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*), he urged evangelisers to ‘take on the smell of the

2 See *An encyclical for all brothers and sisters* <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-09/pope-francis-fratelli-tutti-encyclical-all-brothers-and-sisters.html> accessed 23/09/2020

3 <https://www.franciscans.ie/the-writings-of-st-francis/#7> accessed 23/09/2020

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sheep'(EG24).⁴ I think that, with these precedents to go on, the disaffection of the feminist lobby regarding the letter, before its release, were rather *unwarranted*.

Fratelli Tutti is a rich compilation of Catholic Social Teaching as expressed by the Holy Father when addressing delegates at his audiences over the seven years of his pontificate. It draws on the priorities and aspirations expressed in the Vatican II documents on how the Church as a body interacts with the world and how we as individuals relate to one another, the community in which we live and the wider world. It is a document which is anthropological, sociological, philosophical and theological ... as many 'ogicals' as you can mention. In some respects, this can be a disadvantage since it seems to fire on all cylinders at once and can be received as repetitive, too all-embracing and lacking in specific courses of action.

GATHERING THEME

It will be interesting to see how the encyclical is contextualised by local episcopal conferences and diocesan leaders in order to guide their flocks in what is now being described as 'the new normal'.

It is to this topic that I steer the next section of my reflection. I am drawn to the teaching of the original Francis by his celebration of all things – animal, vegetable and mineral. His integrated pantheism (God in everything) helps us not to crudely differentiate those things which are of the body and those of the spirit, those of humanity and those of the rest of creation. This was brought home to me forcibly in the use of the Prayer of St Alphonsus Ligouri⁵ during the live-streamed Masses of the lockdown. The version acknowledged by the Redemptorists themselves is given in the endnote. However, I have noticed that some dioceses nuanced the wording in a more pastorally pragmatic way so that their communities might feel *less* liturgically impoverished through their inability to physically attend Mass and receive Holy Communion into their mouths.

Some dioceses used 'come at least spiritually into my soul' and to many attending live-streamed Mass, this may have seemed like a grudging compromise, especially since it also included 'Never permit me to be separated from you'. Although this is in

4 Apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*(EG)2013 http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html accessed 23/09/2020

5 My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and desire you in my soul. Since I cannot receive you sacramentally now, come at least spiritually into my heart. As you have already come, I embrace you and with all my being unite myself with you; never let me be separated from you. <http://www.redemptorists.co.uk/news/news-items/1935-pope-francis-recalls-st-alphonsus-prayer-for-spiritual-communion.html> accessed 23/09/2020

the original Ligouri prayer, there are perhaps overtones of blame which, in the present context, are somewhat pastorally inept. Other dioceses used the words: ‘passionately desire to receive you’ whilst omitting ‘... at least ...’ and ended the prayer with the words ‘... so that I may unite myself wholly to you, now and forever. Amen’. I think these distinctions also played out in the initial debates about the need to close church buildings in the interests of public health. Some took the view that it was a denial of people’s rights to enter sacred space for seeking solace in private prayer, whilst others emphasised the danger of touching pews, door handles and the social responsibility of keeping others safe from harm. One episcopal leader took the view that the physical was perhaps being prioritised over the spiritual. My own view is that, in many respects, Jesus did precisely that in his own ministry. Otherwise he would not have raised the dead or cured the sick, as the former were already in ‘a better place’, spiritually speaking, and the latter, if not cured, would soon be joining them there. Instead, Jesus showed the spirituality of *service* to the body and, thereby, the spirit and did not dichotomise them.

The physical consumption of the consecrated species is of course fundamental to Catholic practice, but it is the meaning of the act which should be prominent, particularly at a time when physical participation is impossible. We are urged at the end of the Eucharistic celebration to go out and be what we have consumed – the Body of Christ. In other words, we are called to enact in our own lives what Christ is to his followers – a gentle guide and an embodiment of his mercy and kindness. We can still do this enriched by our commitment through spiritual communion.

With that in mind, it is perhaps worth considering what the *future* holds for our worship as the lockdown eases. Will we revert to what we knew before as the only authentic expression of our belonging or will we include other forms of expression and witness? Will canonical penalties for not attending Mass be reapplied for those who fail to attend and will we undertake a system of liturgical rationing so that those who book their places can ‘get Mass’ and ‘get Jesus in Holy Communion’, while others do not?

A recent pastoral letter by one bishop, inviting his people to return to worship used the tone and tenor of the Prophet Joel: “‘Come back to me” says the Lord’ etc. Again, like the use of the Ligouri prayer, this seemed to reproach the absent brethren for something over which they had absolutely no control. There are some faithful members of the flock who will not be able to attend Mass and receive Holy Communion for the foreseeable future – those with serious medical conditions or with family members who must shield because of health challenges. To be told that ‘it is

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in our churches that the Lord sanctifies, teaches and guides us' will be particularly dispiriting for this parish constituency.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

As we consider the post-Covid Church, I think it reasonable to wonder how clergy will feel enabled to equip the members of their communities for doing the work of God in settings which are now very different to this time last year? There is a mourning for the loss of ritual and liturgical identity as well as bereavement caused by Covid deaths but there are also perhaps opportunities to engage in debates about social responsibilities, the dignity of work and the common good. This was brought home to me at my local live-streamed Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday when the celebrant advised his online congregation that Mass would be paused shortly before 8.00 p.m. in order for those who wished to take part in the weekly street applause (known as the 'Clap Out for the NHS') to do so. Mass would then resume at a couple of minutes past 8.00p.m. The priest himself, fully vested, went into the street and applauded too. Here, although none of the community was physically present, we were all gathered together in spirit and honoured the health service foot washers of our own time, who were, in effect also gathered at the Lord's table since they were in our thoughts and prayers.

LITURGY OF THE HOURS

As we know, the sacramental imagination can be engaged in many ways outside the confines of church buildings and my own prayer practice of many years, the *Liturgy of the Hours*, has been particularly comforting during the period of isolation. One of the catechetical opportunities posed by Covid19 is for this *Prayer of the Church* to be given more prominence, as it does not require mediation by vested clergy in an empty church. However, in order to avoid the dissonance which I noted earlier regarding sinful Eve, it would be helpful for the *Divine Office* to be updated in more inclusive language and to avoid the patriarchal misogyny which is found in the Psalms, Intercessions, and Antiphons of the current edition. To give but a couple of examples. The *Benedictus* for 24 September, the Feast of Our Lady of Walsingham, is prefaced with the following:

The door of Paradise was closed to all men because of the sin of Eve; it has been opened again by the Virgin Mary.

The words of Psalm 141:5 in Sunday Evening Prayer (Week 1),

taken from of the Grail edition of the Psalms express sentiments which resound very negatively for women who are oppressed and abused: 'If a just man strikes or reproves me, it is kindness.' The Anglican Psalter and the Anglicized Catholic Bible (NRSV) express this sentiment differently by offering dynamic equivalence: 'Let the righteous strike me; let the faithful correct me.' At a time when new translations of Lectionary texts are being chosen by Bishops' Conferences, it would perhaps be prudent, and indeed courteous, to consider dynamic equivalence over and against texts which owe their origins to convoluted Latinate translations and pre-Vatican II ecclesiology.

DOMESTIC CHURCH

Liturgy is of course an embodied practice, involving ritual, shared meaning and symbolism. Some of this ritual can be adapted for the home setting as acknowledgement of our identity as a community of believers. Many older Catholics will remember the small holy water fonts which used to be fixed to the wall by the front door for visitors entering and leaving the house to dip their fingers in and bless themselves. Another religious artefact, particularly appropriate for this time of year is the Advent Wreath. Constructing a small Advent wreath with purple candles for the dining table and lighting the candles (one per week of Advent) might also be a helpful catechetical tool in the 'domestic church'.⁶ This could be accompanied by a reading from some of the scriptural texts of the day. As one of the participants of a theological online community noted recently, this type of lived out faith is very much rooted in our Judaic roots where the Shabbat meal can be seen to prefigure our sacramental Eucharist. This meal was presided over by the head of the household, and all family members had a role to play in terms of tasks to perform and words to say.⁷

BACK TO APPLES

To bring my reflection to its conclusion, I again return to the poetry of Robert Frost, whose 1916 poem *Putting in the Seed* resonates with my Hampshire evening walks and our hopes for better times:

How Love burns through the Putting in the Seed
 On through the watching for that early birth
 When, just as the soil tarnishes with weed,
 The sturdy seedling with arched body comes
 Shouldering its way and shedding the earth crumbs.

6 See Making the most of Advent - YouTube from the Centre for Applied Theology 21/11/2020

7 See What to Expect at a Shabbat Dinner – Kveller accessed 25/11/2020

Roman Missal at 50: Liturgical Asceticism

Neil Xavier O'Donoghue

This is the tenth and final article in this series that aimed to provoke a sort of extended liturgical examination of conscience as we mark the 50th anniversary of the *Roman Missal* renewed under Pope Paul VI, one of the clearest fruits of the Second Vatican Council. My contention throughout has been that the liturgical renewal proposed by the Council has yet to be fully implemented. This is despite the publication of a series of renewed liturgical books that are vastly superior to their Tridentine forerunners in terms of coherent presentations of the *lex credendi* [law of belief] of the Church. The mistake that has been all too often made is that of equating a minimal adoption of the new books with the liturgical renewal itself. I believe that the Church needs at least a century to appropriate the renewal that an Ecumenical Council offers. We are barely at the half-way stage and therefore this examination of conscience should help us to improve our liturgical celebrations.

Having read my earlier articles, readers may rightfully question, what do we need to do? Is it simply a matter of time? Is it enough to give the liturgical renewal more time to develop? No, there is a lot of work that we can do. While the Scholastic axiom holds true that God is not confined to the sacraments and he can work with people in mysterious ways outside of the structure of the Catholic Church, the treasure of the Eucharist is perhaps the most important reality inherited by the Church from Christ. As number 16 of the *GIRM* puts it:

The celebration of Mass ... is the center of the whole Christian life for the Church both universal and local, as well as for each of the faithful individually. In it is found the high point both of the action by which God sanctifies the world in Christ and of the worship that the human race offers to the Father, adoring him through Christ, the Son of God, in the Holy Spirit. In it, moreover, during the course of the year, the mysteries of

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redemption are recalled so as in some way to be made present. Furthermore, the other sacred actions and all the activities of the Christian life are bound up with it, flow from it, and are ordered to it.

The first point that needs to be underlined is that the importance of the Eucharist requires that we give it our very best. A “good enough” effort is not enough to give to preparation of the Eucharist. It requires the very best that we have: as beautiful a setting for the celebration as we can possibly give it, the most beautiful vessels and vestments, the best prepared liturgy possible (even if it is a pain to have a liturgy committee in a parish), beautiful music and art and well-prepared prophetic homilies. On a very simple level of natural justice, we owe God the very best that we can possibly give him. Visitors to the National Museum in Kildare Street in Dublin can see an example of this in the Ardagh Chalice. The most beautiful part of this eighth century chalice (itself the most beautiful piece of metalwork ever produced on this island) is in the underside of the foot of the chalice. Today a mirror placed beneath the chalice allows visitors to see this highly decorated feature. However, when it was designed it is likely that its creator considered that only God would be able to see this, as it would not be visible during the liturgy. The best is “wasted” on God, like the costly nard with which Mary anointed Jesus’ feet (Jn 12:3).

If we hope to get anything from the liturgy, we must give it our very best. We cannot simply give the liturgy our leftovers. We are not aiming at a minimalistic validity to cover our responsibility (even if we must guarantee the minimum for a valid and licit celebration). We need to constantly ask ourselves how we can celebrate the liturgy in its fulness. This preparation has both external and interior dimensions, with the internal preparation being far more important.

It is interesting to note that at the end of his life, when St. Francis had been relieved from any leadership role in the Franciscan Order, and as the Order was increasing greatly in numbers and strength, what most concerned the saint was the dignity with which the Eucharist was celebrated in the houses of the Order. In his last letter to his brothers late in 1224, which forms a sort of spiritual testament, he did not choose to give an exhortation on charity or poverty, but wrote on the importance of the worthy celebration of the Eucharist:

In the Lord I also beg all my brothers who are priests, or who will be or who wish to be priests of the Most High, that, whenever they wish to celebrate Mass, being pure, they offer

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the true Sacrifice of the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ purely. [Let them do this] with reverence [and] with a holy and pure intention, not for any mundane reason or out of fear or out of love of some person, as if they were pleasing people.¹

CONVERSION AND HOLINESS

It should be no surprise that perhaps the harshest criticism that is levelled against the current liturgy is that all too often it is divorced from life. Amending liturgical books is ridiculous if Christians do not amend their lives. The renewed Missal of Vatican II must be accompanied by conversion. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* reminds us that “in order that the liturgy may be able to produce its full effects, it is necessary that the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, that their minds should be attuned to their voices, and that they should cooperate with divine grace lest they receive it in vain.”

Pope Francis has warned that hypocrisy is one of the biggest sins of today’s Christians. This “sin is saying one thing and doing another; it is a double life,” he warned. He continued with this example, “I am very Catholic, I always go to Mass, I belong to this association and another; but my life is not Christian, I do not pay my employees fairly, I take advantage of people, I play dirty in business, I launder money.”² For the liturgy to be fruitfully celebrated it requires personal holiness.

David Fagerberg, Professor of Liturgy in the University of Notre Dame, IN, has proposed the new term “*liturgical asceticism*” to explain what is most needed in today’s liturgical celebrations.³ In order to understand exactly what this liturgical asceticism is meant to achieve, it would be helpful to consider Fagerberg’s basic understanding of what liturgy itself is. He defines it in this way:

Liturgy is the Trinity’s perichoresis kenotically extended to invite our synergistic ascent into deification. In other words, the

- 1 *A Letter to the Entire Order* 14 in Francis and Clare, *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, ed. Richard J. Payne, trans. Regis J. Armstrong and Ignatius C. Brady, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1982), 56. For more on the background of this letter see Augustine Thompson, *Francis of Assisi: A New Biography* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 119-122.
- 2 Pope Francis, Morning Meditation In The Chapel Of The *Domus Sanctae Marthae*, 23 February 2017. Available at http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2017/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20170223_do-not-delay-conversion.html
- 3 Fagerberg’s theological project of “liturgical asceticism” is a development of the work of Alexander Schmemmann (1921-1983) and Aidan Kavanaugh (1929-2006). He summarizes the project in the prologue to David W. Fagerberg, *Liturgical Mysticism* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2019), xiii-xxi, n.b. xiv-xv.

Trinity's circulation of love turns itself outward, and in humility the Son and the Spirit work the Father's good pleasure for all creation, which is to invite our ascent to participate in the very life of God; however, this cannot be forced, it must be done with our cooperation.⁴

In order to participate in this liturgy, we need to change or convert, and this conversion is both the gateway to participate in the liturgical action and one of the principal effects of our participation. Fagerberg explains that liturgical asceticism is this nexus of conversion and participation:

Liturgical asceticism capacitates a person for liturgy. The preliminary, negative asceticism is only to clear out the silt, to awaken the sleepwalker, to dust off the coin that bears the king's image, so that the *imago Dei* can again stand aright, and offer the holy oblation in peace. And where is this sacrificial oblation accomplished? In both the sacred and the profane. It happens in the former under sensible signs, and it happens in the latter by *consecratio mundi*. The sacramental liturgy and our personal liturgy are connected as in a seamless garment.⁵

This does not happen all at once, but is the fruit of:

A lifetime of liturgy in all its dimensions – the liturgical year, the liturgy of the hours, the Divine Liturgy, the fasts and the feasts, the sacrament and the sacramental – is required to give a person the calm, steady, ascetical regard for the Godhead. Liturgy is the perichoresis of the Trinity kenotically extended to invite our synergistic ascent into deification. By her ascetical formation in the liturgical life, Mrs. Murphy becomes a theologian.⁶

I quoted from the Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann in the first of this series.⁷ Perhaps another quote from him would

4 David W. Fagerberg, *On Liturgical Asceticism* (Washington D.C.: C.U.A. Press, 2013), 9.

5 David W. Fagerberg, *Consecrating the World: On Mundane Liturgical Theology* (Kettering, OH: Angelico, 2016), 2.

6 Fagerberg, *On Liturgical Asceticism*, 113-114. The Mrs. Murphy he refers to is a sort of liturgical everyman that stands for the normal practicing Christian who regularly partakes in the various expressions of the Church's liturgical life and, while having no formal training in academic theology is a better "theologian" than many of the experts who try to instruct her. See Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology: The Hale Memorial Lectures of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary 1981* (New York: Pueblo, 1984), 146-147.

7 For an introduction to Schmemmann see my earlier article, "Schmemmann's Challenge for Contemporary Roman Catholicism." *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 73 (2008): 133-147.

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be a good way to conclude. He argues that for liturgy to have any meaning whatsoever it must be fully assimilated by today's Christians:

The early Christians realized that in order to become the temple of the Holy Spirit they must *ascend to heaven* where Christ has ascended. They realized also that this ascension was the very condition of their ministry to the world. For there – in heaven – they were immersed in the new life of the Kingdom; and when, after this 'liturgy of the ascension,' they returned into the world their faces reflected the light, the 'joy and peace' of that Kingdom and they were truly its witnesses. They brought no programs and no theories; but wherever they went, the seeds of the Kingdom sprouted, faith was kindled, life was transfigured, things impossible were made possible. They were witnesses, and when they were asked, 'Whence shines this light, where is the source of this power?' they knew what to answer and where to lead men. In church today, we so often find we meet only the same old world, not Christ and His Kingdom. We do not realize that we never get anywhere because we never leave any place behind us.⁸

8 Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, 2nd ed. (Crestwood, NY: SVS, 1973), 28.

The Road to Joy. A fourth feature of joy is that it is not just rooted in God but in the ways of God. These are the ways of God we must embrace if Joy is to be ours. For example, joy will be impossible if we act unjustly or ignore truth. Plato (428-347 BC) argued that justice is always happiness (*The Republic*, 'Book 2', 358a) and St Augustine (354-430) insisted that 'the happy life is joy based on the truth. This is joy grounded in you, O God, who are the truth' (*Confessions* 10, 22, 33). Likewise, St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) argued that all the prescriptions and prohibitions of the Gospel are ordered to our Joy (*Summa Theologiae*, q. 99). Here is the invitation to order our lives along the domains of justice, truth, peace and love. It is the way of the Beatitudes where Jesus teaches us how to be blessed. When we are blessed, joy ensues. Feelings come and go but the fruit of a well ordered life is blessedness which leads to lasting joy.

– BILLY SWAN, *Love Has a Source* (Maynooth, St. Paul's Publishing) p.139.

The Quiet Revolution of Pope Francis: *A Note from Organisational Theory*

R D Donnelly *et al.*

As the first non-European to ascend the Throne of St Peter for many centuries Pope Francis was not imbued with the closed culture of the Vatican operating significant change within the Church.

On embarking on this change process within the Catholic Church, Pope Francis has looked to the idea of employing the Inverted Triangle, a change tool which is widely used with varying degrees of success in all sectors of a modern economy. Fr. Gerry O'Hanlon SJ¹ describes in the clearest terms possible the struggle the Holy Father is having in getting the Vatican and thus the Church to come into the 21st Century in terms of Goals, Vision, Message, and the delivery of God's Message within a modern setting. O'Hanlon comments on the Inverted Triangle and it is the intention of the writers that this note will explain the uses of this and other tools of organisational theory as they might be applied to the power structures within the Church, and to share our experience of the essential elements in the process – and strategies to be employed for any possibility of success and change to occur.

Before inverting the triangle, it has to be considered in its natural state where the Chief Executive or other titled senior manager sits at the apex. Below this sit all the other employees of various degrees of seniority, with titles such as Deputy Manager, Assistant Manager, and so on, down to the bottom line where you find the poor Front Line Workers. Yet they are the ones who face the customers or users of the service so could be seen as having the most important job in the company - and having the greatest impact on its image. They are paid the least, get orders from the levels above them, and in general are told what to do and avoid thinking. Examples of this include the Armed Forces, the Civil Service, Local Authorities, large private sector organisations, and

1 O'Hanlon, G., *The Quiet Revolution of Pope Francis. A Synodal Catholic Church in Ireland?* Messenger Publications, Dublin, 2018.

Dr R D Donnelly (University of Edinburgh), Dr H Kahn (University of Edinburgh), Professor M A Glencorse (International University of East Africa) and Professor M S Morrison (International University of East Africa).

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of course the National Health Service. This applies to the UK only, surely.

This method of running an organisation was absolutely fine for the world in the early twentieth century. Everybody knew their place and did as they were told. However, from the 1970s this has been changing and a move to a more questioning and challenging attitude is more appropriate.

The answer to this changing environment was conceived to be inverting the triangle so that the apex was at the bottom with the triangle spread out from it. Here the chief saw his role as server to the layer above him, the deputy chief(s), so as to enable them to perform their function better. They in turn sought to serve their subordinates and so on up to the front line where the workers now have the whole organisation working to enable them to perform the task of serving the customer/user to their entire satisfaction. Thus, the organisation became outward looking and fit to compete in modern times. The intention was to make the organisation more customer friendly by making it a better and more outward looking place to work.

While the Inverted Triangle is wonderful in theory more is needed. In the sphere of the Church all that would happen is that the Holy Father would be at the bottom of the triangle trying to assist the Cardinals to assist the Archbishops to assist the Bishops to assist the Monsignors, and other ranking clerics to assist the Parish Clergy in helping the Faithful receive the message of the Good News. A brilliant idea but without additional changes it is unlikely to happen. On its own, inverting the triangle will not work to create the collegiate Church desired by the Holy Father and by many in the pews. That, together with additional changes may be necessary, but will not be easy.

There are two changes necessary to complete the movement away from the Ultra Montane structure that is the Church today if it is to become the synodal Church many dream of seeing. These are:

- first*, de-layering the triangle, and
- second*, changing the culture within the entire Church.

DELAYERING

In the private sector *delayering* has involved the removal of layers such as Deputy Manager, Assistant Manager, and many more. Every level that exists in the chain of command can provide an opportunity to make a mistake in the message to achieve the object of the enterprise. In commercial enterprises the primary concern is profit; for the church it will be an understanding of the message

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of the Gospel. Complex, multi-layered organisations can become preoccupied with their system and lose clarity in achieving their purpose. Mistakes can be either accidental or deliberate. Delayering can, however, have its problems if not done with sufficient thought. For example, in Scotland, Lothian and Borders Police removed the rank of Deputy Chief Constable only to reinstate it after a few months. They came to understand that the Deputy Chief Constable played a crucial role in coordinating actions across a large force. It is too easy to assume that because you have reduced layers it will be right and appropriate. In this case it was neither.

One of the best examples of the use of delayering was at General Electric (the 21st-largest firm in the United States) under Jack Welch. He removed some 10,000 managers and increased the return to shareholders by 5000% during his twenty or so years in charge. Delayering for him was a strategic choice to be pursued relentlessly with careful planning, and as such it worked.

The less complicated the interconnections within the organisation the better the chances are of avoiding mistakes. This is illustrated by the addition of the concept of '*silo management*' within the triangle where there are numerous separate departments, each with their own chain of command. It is this command system which supports and maintains the triangle, whether or not the triangle is inverted. Inversion does not remove the silo management process. Apart from being visible, it is a state of mind. In this system, commands come down and are obeyed. Within the Church this system reflects the way in which previous Popes have made decisions which are then carried out by the Church; it is a top-down approach.

CULTURE CHANGE

In order to create the collegiate Church the Pope wishes to see, difficult changes have to be made. The old system which supports the traditional approach has to alter. This is likely to encounter fierce resistance. In addition, culture change of the required magnitude takes *time*; perhaps more time than will be allowed to the present Pope. He is already in his eighties. The way to ensure the change process continues beyond his term is to appoint reform-minded prelates to positions of importance within the Curia in sufficient numbers to maintain change of direction. As noted below he is doing this and will continue to do so.

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

It is naïve to think that the bureaucrats of the Vatican would suddenly and easily surrender power. Resistance will come from many quarters, not least from those who have prospered under the

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previous system and who have no intention of giving up on their hard-won privileges. There will be many within the higher ranks of the Church, and also the lower levels, who like the present silo system and will do their utmost to keep their silos in place.

There are many different approaches to trying to deal with this resistance. None of them is certain of success but if not attempted and won then there is unlikely to be much change. The following ideas, based on organisational behaviour theory, might be suggested:

- ▶ address the attitude towards change of the people about to be involved in the process of change,
- ▶ realise and affirm the singular role of the senior managers in their commitment to the process, and
- ▶ avoid the mistakes of Vatican II (see below).

ATTITUDES TO CHANGE

People have a variety of attitudes towards change. In any collection of involved or concerned people, 10% will be all for the change, 10% will oppose it at any level and 80% will sit on the fence to see which side is gaining the upper hand before deciding which side to join. The task of the *change leader*, in this case the Holy Father, is to ensure that the Side of the Angels, that is the reformers, is seen to be winning. Sadly, the thoughts contained in Querida Amazonia² may not be the outcome wanted by those who support reform in the Church. Christopher Lamb's recent book, *The Outsider*³, illustrates clearly the extent of that resistance and the damage it is doing to the Church. In addition, the forces of resistance are becoming more desperate over time. The College of Cardinals, however, is now composed of a majority appointed by Pope Francis, and thus the reformation might succeed despite the resistance. The resisters know this and are increasing their attempts to stop the process. As to how far they will go, the recent writings of Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano⁴ suggest they will go a very long (and dangerous) way.

- 2 Libreria Editrice Vaticana (2020) Querida Amazonia of the Holy Father Francis to the people of God and to all persons of good will. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20200202_querida-amazonia.html (Last accessed 2 December 2020)
- 3 Lamb, C., *The Outsider - Pope Francis and his battle to reform the Church*. Orbis Books, New York, 2020.
- 4 'Archbishop Vigano is aligning with Trump to stay in the spotlight. Pay him no attention'. <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2020/06/12/archbishop-vigano-aligning-trump-stay-spotlight-pay-him-no-attention> (Last accessed 2 December 2020)

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THE ROLE OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Key people at the top must side with the change process and the desired outcome if it is to be successful. This is true of all organisations at all times. This is the hardest task facing any chief executive who seeks change. The Pope will need a Curia which is on his wavelength, and he is not certain to get that. He has started the process of making them his supporters by sending signals that the world has changed, and that any resistance will be opposed.

One clear signal which has supported change is the appointment of reform-minded clergy to positions of influence with the Vatican. That signal will have resounded around the world and the message should be clearly understood. A *second* powerful signal is the replacement of Cardinals within the Vatican who have not bought into the Pope's ideas. They have been found jobs in their home countries. These two moves, straight out of the Organisational Theory textbook, are getting the ball rolling.

AVOIDING THE MISTAKES OF VATICAN II

According to O'Malley⁵, in the opening phase of the Vatican II there were a multitude of notes and consultative papers that emerged over a very short time, and thus blunted the edge of the change process. This also allowed opponents of change all the material they needed to slow down or subvert the process. Further, the structure of the Council was impossible to comprehend. "The organisational chart of Vatican II was so complex as to defy a depiction", commented O'Malley. In modern parlance perhaps the message to the reformers of today would be '*Keep it Simple*' as was the mantra of Bill Clinton: if it is simple, then it is understandable. O'Malley compares the attitudes of the minority of the Council, who were against reform and who were Vatican-based in the main, with the many who laboured at the periphery of the Church and who supported reform. The '*centre knows best*', and those outside of it are of little import, was the attitude of those against reform. This is also common in many large organisations. Just ask a General Practitioner within the NHS how they are regarded by hospital-based consultants.

In addition to these direct attempts to further the revolution, below are possible options from Organisational Theory which offer interesting possibilities:

- ▶ Top-management people become positive *role-models* as suggested above, by the appointment of reform-minded clergy.

5 O'Malley, J. W., *What Happened at Vatican II?* Belknap/Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 2008.

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- ▶ The organisation must select, promote, and support employees who espouse the new values, which will mean the promotion of the supporters of change. Perhaps the recent appointment of Ruth Kelly and five other females to the new Council to oversee Vatican finances could be counted as an effort in this direction by the Pope.
- ▶ There should be a shakeup of current *subcultures* through, for example transfers and terminations, as suggested above.
- ▶ There should be peer group consensus via staff participation or via a collegiate system.

CHANGING THE ORGANISATION CULTURE

In addition to the points above, Pope Francis will have to reset the culture of the Church. By ‘*culture*’ we mean how the underlying beliefs, values and principles are expressed and are incorporated in the ways in which people interact within the organisation.

First, it must be recognised that changing the culture of any organisation is not easy. Managers of a commercial organisation can attempt to modify the *visible* aspects of culture, such as language, stories, and rites. These can be applied by the Pope to the Church, but it will take drastic action to reframe the *underlying* values and assumptions for the 21st century. Organisational Behaviour suggests ways in which change can be achieved, or at least attempted, by the Church. These could include:

- ▶ Change the *people* in the organisation - a more varied entry to the priesthood - perhaps married priests or an expanded Diaconate.
- ▶ Change *people’s position* in the organisation - using the models of orders like the Dominicans where no appointment to a managerial post is other than temporary and that the holder will return to the ranks after a specific stated period of time.
- ▶ Change *beliefs, attitudes and values* - develop open discussion of attitudes to various subgroups such as gay people, the role of women within the church, and others.
- ▶ Change *people’s behaviour* - a less clerical approach to the people in the parishes.
- ▶ Change *systems and structures*.
- ▶ Change the corporate *image* - a more caring and open church.

All of these could be implemented by Pope Francis over time - and indeed the Church would benefit from some or all of these.

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Secondly, an institution can become a “*learning organisation*”⁶. A learning organisation is one that has developed the continuous capacity to adapt and change. The characteristics of a learning organisation include:

- ▶ There is a changed vision that everyone agrees on.
- ▶ People discard their old ways of thinking and the standard routines they use for solving problems or doing their jobs.
- ▶ Members think of all organisation processes, activities, functions and interactions within the environment, as part of a system of interrelationships.
- ▶ People openly communicate with each other (across vertical and horizontal boundaries) without fear of criticism or punishment.
- ▶ People sublimate their personal self-interest and fragmented departmental interests to work together to achieve the organisation’s shared vision.

It may be difficult for the Church to use the methods of a learning organisation. Applying some of these techniques will not give an instant change in culture; that takes years. But it can be done and should be attempted by Pope Francis.

CONCLUSION

The process of changing the Church in order to create a vibrant, growing and relevant body is not easy. That it is *essential* is shown by examining the attendances at Mass among Catholics. In many countries fewer than 10% of Catholics attend Mass regularly. In the private sector the silo system of management with layers of bureaucracy has reduced profits and led to the collapse of many organisations. How much more important is it that the decline in active Catholics is heeded before the Church is reduced to a mere sect? The inverted triangle is a *start* but it has to be accompanied by massive changes in culture.

6 Senge, P. M, *The Fifth Discipline*, New York: Doubleday, 1990.

Homilies for March (B)

Eugene Duffy

Third Sunday of Lent

March 7

Ex 20:1-7. Ps 18:8-11. 1 Cor: 22-25. Jn 2:13-25

Those of us of a certain age learned to memorise the Ten Commandments when we were in fourth class. They were presented like the law of the land: a clear statement of what was to be done and what was to be avoided. They were a kind of checklist for evaluating one's behaviour or a helpful guide for making a good confession. Even as we heard them read today, in the first reading, they might be heard as the legal minimum requirements that one must observe to remain in good standing before God.

The commandments need to be placed in context. When God presents the people with the commandments, they have already been through an incredible experience. They had been liberated from a long enslavement in Egypt, where they suffered great hardship and were denied the freedom and prosperity that had been promised to Abraham and his descendants. Through a series of extraordinary event – being miraculously able to cross the Red Sea, being able to survive the hazards of the desert and be fed and watered as they went – they were led to the realisation that they were especially cared for by their God. This God had heard their cries of misery during their enslavement and now through a series of extraordinary events liberated them and set them on course to be God's own chosen people.

These experiences evoked a profound sense of gratitude in them. An equally generous response was called for from them. How could they express their gratitude to their God for this graciousness towards them? It was not enough to speak words of appreciation and thanksgiving, which they did in their prayers and rituals. These words were to be matched by a whole way of life that would also demonstrate their gratitude to their God. They made a solemn treaty or covenant with this gracious God and they agreed to be bound by its terms. In essence they pledged themselves to reflect God's

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graciousness to them in the way they related to one another. Other nations around them and before them had their commandments given by their gods. For the people of Israel, the commandments were not just a matter of compliance and slavish obedience to a set of impositions. Rather, they were an expression of gratitude and appreciation for what God had done for them. Their motivation for observing the commandments was significant: they wanted to imitate God's goodness to them in the context of their everyday lives. It was neither fear of punishment nor a slavish subservience that motivated them to keep the commandments.

A reflection on the commandments and their original context can help us today to appreciate the importance of the moral life. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to live life according to high moral standards, not just in our external actions but in our intentions and motivations. The moral life for the Christian is not just a matter of complying with moral or ethical guidelines. Rather, as members of the community of disciples of Jesus, we want to show the world the very nature of our God – a God who is gracious and kind, who is never irritable or resentful, but who is willing to forgive, to heal and to reconcile. This is why we wish to live the moral life: God has first loved us, so now we are called to love one another. The commandments are a good starting point for us to begin to demonstrate our commitment to goodness, truth and integrity.

Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 14

2 Chron 36:14-16, 19-23. Ps 136. Eph 2:4-10. Jn 3: 14-21.

The gospel reading gives us only a snippet of a much longer dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus, but we need to remember the context of their encounter to appreciate the little we hear of their exchange. Nicodemus is 'a Pharisee, a leader among the Jews', a significant person in his own right and he comes to Jesus by night. The leadership of the Jewish people was opposed to Jesus and felt threatened by him. The way that Jesus portrayed the relationship between God and humanity did not fit with their understandings of how that relationship worked. Obviously, Nicodemus felt pressurised to comply with the majority opinion. Therefore, he did not feel free to engage with Jesus in broad daylight, in full view of his contemporaries. At the same time, he was curious about what Jesus had to offer and so he came by night, under cover of darkness, to question Jesus. He suspected that what Jesus was doing could only be done by one in whom the power of God was at work.

There is something very modern then about Nicodemus. On the one hand, in the public domain he is content to row in with the agreed opinion of the elite and not to reveal his unease with

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it. On the other hand, privately, he has serious doubts about the public consensus and wants to question Jesus seriously about the significance of his work.

Jesus then gets to the heart of the matter with Nicodemus. He tells him that God's desire is to save us, to rescue us from the darkness of evil, not to judge and condemn. God loves us and has come among us to find us and unite us with Godself. We normally think of humanity being on a search for God, but here Jesus assures us that it is God who searches us out and seeks to bring us to where there is ultimate life and light. Our responsibility is to accept this good news. If we accept this good news we experience new life, the power of God's Spirit at work in us and we will walk in the light of God's Kingdom. However, if we refuse to accept this good news, then we bring the judgement on ourselves; we condemn ourselves to the darkness of our own limitations.

The report of the encounter between them ends where today's gospel passage ends and there is no clue given as to whether Nicodemus was convinced by what Jesus had to say to him or not. In fact we have to wait until the very end of the gospel for an answer to that question. There we find that when Jesus is being buried by Joseph of Arimathea, another secret disciple of Jesus, Nicodemus comes with a hundred pounds of spices to give Jesus an honourable burial. Clearly, as he reflected on his encounter with Jesus he was convinced that Jesus was the presence of God in the world. Thus he eventually emerged from the shadows into the light.

St Patrick's Day

March 17

Jer 1: 4-9. Ps 116. Rm 10: 9-18. Mk 16: 15-20.

Practically every parish in the country has a local saint attached to its history or its folklore and many of them include St Patrick among them. Unlike many local saints whose names are preserved, we know a great deal about St Patrick because we have two documents from his own hand: his *Confessions* and the *Letter to Coroticus*. These give us some detail about his life, his outlook and his mission. Patrick was born in Britain, his father was a deacon and an alderman in a Roman British town. When Patrick was taken captive by Irish raiders the servants of his father's household were killed. These details resonate with so many who arrive on our shores today – people who have been displaced from their homelands, who have witnessed violence and bloodshed. Traditionally, we think of our own emigrants on St Patrick's Day and it is good that we do. Now we need to think also of those who are the immigrants among us and of the need to extend to them our thousand welcomes and hospitality.

St Patrick's first encounter with the Irish was a trying experience, herding sheep on the mountainside, in all kinds of weather, often naked and hungry, over a period of six years. Through these hardships that he endured there was a momentous change in his life. He discovered God, whom he had previously neglected. He interpreted his sufferings as a punishment he deserved because he had neglected God up to then. He began to pray and did so night and day. This in turn gave him the strength to escape his enslavement and move on with his life in a more purposeful way.

His ship was waiting and it seems to have taken him to France, where he studied and became a priest and was eventually ordained a bishop, with a view to being sent back to Ireland on mission. His contemporaries did not regard him as a suitable candidate for such a mission. Not only was he going to a barbarian nation, but on the neighbouring island heresy was rampant. Who was Patrick to cope with such challenges? One of his longstanding friends, to whom he had confessed a serious sin of his youth, betrayed him, declaring him unfit for the mission.

Like the prophet Jeremiah, who protested his youth when being commissioned by God, Patrick was aware of his own shortcomings. God promised Jeremiah his protection. Patrick became very conscious of how much God worked through him despite his own shortcomings. He wrote his *Confessions* as a way of expressing his appreciation for what God had done through him and to demonstrate what the power of God can do with a very mediocre subject.

His other writing, the *Letter to Coroticus*, shows how like the Old Testament prophets he could be forceful in confronting evil. Coroticus and his soldiers had slaughtered a great number of people whom Patrick had recently baptised. He wrote to them, warning them of the dire consequences of their murderous deeds. But he ends by reminding them that despite the enormity of their crimes, if they repented the Lord would grant them peace.

The real St Patrick is no sentimental figure from a distant past, but the kind of Saint who still has much to say to us even at 1600 years of distance.

Fifth Sunday of Lent

March 21

Jer 31: 31-34. Ps 50:3-4, 12-15. Heb 5: 7-9. Jn 12: 20-30.

The prophet Jeremiah was addressing the people of Israel at a very turbulent time in their history. In the early part of his life, a very upright and honourable king, Josiah, had ruled the country. He had effected reforms that brought the country back to something of its original vision and purpose. As a nation, Israel had long

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ago pledged to live according to God's plan for it, which included living by the terms of the agreement or covenant which they had made with God through the agency of Moses. Their understanding was that God, who desired their prosperity and wellbeing, would ensure these for them if they remained faithful to this agreement, if not they could expect disaster.

However, the reforms introduced by the good king did not last for long and with the accession of his successor they reverted to idolatry and other immoral behaviour. This guaranteed disaster for them and the form that it took on this occasion was their being overrun by the Babylonians and great numbers of the people of Israel being sent into exile in Babylon.

It was in the midst of this great social and political upheaval that Jeremiah's words in today's first reading were first spoken. The prophets often speak like anxious parents. When they see the prospect of bad behaviour they warn of the dire consequences. When the worst happens, they speak words of reassurance and hope. Thus in the midst of the crisis in which the country found itself, Jeremiah speaks words of hope and consolation.

Jeremiah speaks of a new agreement or new covenant. He speaks on behalf of God and presents a wonderful image of God, a God who refuses to remember the past sins of the people and who promises to effect a great renewal. God now determines to change the hearts of the people. God is promising to change their understanding and their willpower so that in future they will be able to remain faithful to God and God's plan for them.

We are the heirs of that new covenant. The renewal has happened, probably in a way that Jeremiah could never have anticipated. Our sins have indeed been forgiven because of the death and resurrection of Jesus. The risen Jesus has breathed new life into us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are indeed a new creation. Our task is to allow the awareness of that situation to percolate through our consciousness. We no longer have to fear a vengeful God, rather we have only to reckon with our own hardness of heart. Our task is to allow God to soften that hardness and then to enjoy the freedom and fullness of life that God desires for us. Lent is a time to allow that softening of the heart to happen so as to prepare for the gift of new life that we will celebrate at Easter.

Passion Sunday

March 28

Is 50: 4-7. Ps 21: 8-9, 17-20, 23-24. Phil 2: 6-11.

Mk 14: 1-15:47.

St Mark opens his gospel with these words: the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. When Mark, then,

tells the story of Jesus there is no doubt about his being aware of who Jesus was: the Son of God or God's presence among us. Yet, when we read his gospel we get a profound sense of the humanity of Jesus. The humanity, especially the frailty and vulnerability of Jesus, comes through more clearly than in any of the other gospels. This emphasis on the suffering humanity of Jesus is nowhere more evident than in the passion narrative of today's liturgy.

As we read this passion account we get a real sense of the desolation and abandonment that Jesus must have experienced as he faced his last days in Jerusalem. He was betrayed by one of those whom he had specifically chosen to be part of his inner circle of disciples and who were being formed to extend his mission. As he contemplated the dreadful ordeal that lay ahead of him, his three most trusted disciples fell asleep and were not bothered to remain with him in his agony. Then we have a strange detail, as Jesus is being arrested and his disciples run away, a soldier catches one of them by the loin cloth he is wearing. The cloth comes away in the soldier's grip and the young man runs away naked. An alert reader might remember that at the beginning of Jesus's public ministry the disciples left everything to follow him, now it appears that they will literally leave everything to get away from him. How much worse could it get?

Shortly after, as Jesus is dying on the cross, Mark says that "there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour". Then he says, "Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?'" Now it appears as if even God has abandoned him and there is darkness all around. Jesus's own faith in the Father is put to the ultimate test. But we know that he has already made his deep act of faith, when he said in the garden, "But let it be as you, not I, would have it". Beneath the immediate pain and desolation there is an even deeper trust in the Father, that God will not abandon him utterly but through his suffering and death the divine plan will ultimately be accomplished.

That trust and faith of Jesus is vindicated on Easter morning, were it not we wouldn't be reading this difficult gospel today. Therefore, despite the bleakness of the scene that is painted by Mark, there is in fact reassurance and hope. For those who keep their eyes fixed on God, confident in God's goodness and love, their suffering will never be in vain. For those who experience genuine crises of faith, there is reassurance too; even Jesus had a sense of God's absence. For those who continue to live with confidence in God's goodness, despite temptations to the contrary, there is always the offer of new life. The challenge is to accept what is being offered.

Featured Review

*Pro Deo et Pro Patria/Dochum Glóire Dé agus Onóra na hÉireann**

Tadhg O’Dúshláine

The deliberately derivative title, as acknowledged, is most apt for this sumptuously produced volume: the collegiate, inclusive ‘We’, in place of Neil Kevin’s ‘I’ and the ever constant homely ‘Maynooth’ as *alma mater*, through all her vagarious denominations from, colonial RCC to aesthetically disjointed MU, a timeless place of many talents and achievements, like the God Nuadha from which it derives its name. Coverage across that broad spectrum is varied: most comprehensive from retired staff and past pupils and across the Arts and Sciences; less so in other faculties; and lacking across other constituencies, such as Administration and ‘what might be called Maynooth’s hidden infrastructure’. All in all, the contributions reflect a general warm gratitude and satisfaction, sometimes with restrained frustration and respect, *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*, and more in criticism of an institutional mindset than an individual. Most also express confidence that Maynooth’s continuing willingness to embrace change will secure its ongoing contribution in and to the making of modern Ireland.

The editors’ methodology of attempting to ‘fill the gaps of history’ is laudable and affords multiple aspect perspectives on certain events: the Theology Students’ Strike, for instance, subject of some three separate takes and other references. Throw in its precursor, ‘A Rumble of Thunder’ and you get a sense that the delivery of Maynooth in its current incarnation was difficult, painful and not without sacrifice and loss. A single phrase moving from conditional to definite verb leaves us in no doubt: ‘But the regime could and did stunt growth’. In content then, the editorial choice appears guided by *quot homines et mulieres tot sententiae*. In matters of style the full gamut, from the homely intimate, to the lyrically romantic, to the cold acerbic, is entertained in both

* Salvador Ryan and John-Paul Sheridan, *We Remember Maynooth*, Dublin: Messenger Publications, 2020.

Tadhg Ó Dúshláine spent more than fifty years in Maynooth, as student, teacher and interim Director of An Sagart.

words and pictures - all not to everybody's taste. Then again: *de gustibus non est disputandum*, but certainly more than enough, in both content and style, to fuel lively and fruitful debate for any Book Club.

But for all the inclusivity there are glaring gaps: where's the oft-mentioned, proactive Micheál Mac Gréil? Where's Mary Hanafin (Uachtarán na Cuallachta, three in a row winner of Gael Linn inter University Debate, together with colleague John O'Donohue), Geraldine Byrne? Where are writers Pádraig Standún and Mick Harding? Present and past theologians in the Pontifical? President's, Vice-President's of MU and MSU, Registrars and contributors from all other constituencies, people we recognise as having done both Church and State some service? Were they invited? Did they refuse on the excuse of other commitments? Did they present unsuitably? More food for thought for the Book Club.

But let us indulge in what we have. The volume is lavishly illustrated with carefully selected photographs. Many Constable like romantic landscapes, many refined Gothic facades; some revealing (unintentionally perhaps), like that of Francis Cremin in Joe's square, head buried in what looks like a tabloid (297); that of the gothic frieze, bearing the names of such Church luminaries as Iulius Africanus, Eusebius Caesariensis and S. Prudentius, overarching a former Librarian's 'lowest moment' (270); and that of Tomás Ó Fiaich (329), looking uncomfortable in full regalia, and appearing not to know what to do with the spade, for truth to tell, as President he hardly commissioned a toilet for Maynooth. Tomás Ó Fiaich built communities, relationships, friendships and of him more than any it will be said *exegit monumentum aere perennius*; the closing words of Bill Tinley's 'Slideshow', echoing *Waiting for Godot*, are perfectly *ad rem* here. The choice of full colour or black or white is revealing. For all the Gothic Splendour of the numerous shots of the College Chapel and Saint Mary's refurbished oratory, one harkens for the vibrant aura of spiritual renewal of the former Benedict Tutty post Vatican Two designed Mary's, with Tom Fee giving *Deus Meus* his all at the Irish Mass on Fridays. The scholastic clarity of Gothic architecture never appealed to the baroque Irish. Some of the cold black and white shots recall a rigid Maynooth that challenged us, raw innocent 'chubs', with a 'who do you think you are?' if you dared sit on the garden seats on the manicured lawn to the right of Stoyte from the front gate, softened only by the fond memory of Tom Fee inviting us to sit under the yew tree where Silken Thomas sat. We believed him and we did.

On the basis that a picture is worth a thousand words let us examine the two page spread 'Staff photograph 1960s' (490-1), in many ways the loom on which the warp and weft of this rich

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tapestry is woven. Three members of that team contribute: (two featured: Devlin and Ó hÁinle and McDonagh, missing from the photograph), and all three, in their own inimitable way, afford opportunities for reflection and debate and action. In an otherwise urbane and meek contribution, by one who was a student when Mayo last won the men's senior All-Ireland, one might have understood an exasperated '*Quamdiu, Domine, quamdiu...!*' from the Mayoman but the shout 'Will yez play like Catholics' is deserving of much exegesis. He implants another teaser too, from Myles na Gopaleen (himself the nephew of a celebrated Maynooth professor): "Q. 'Can an Irish Government introduce whatever legislation it wishes?' A. 'It may or it may-nooth?'" Devlin's revelations appeal to us on many levels, none more so than that of his determination to recover the Irish College in Paris for the Irish, by which he means the Irish people, procuring for us what is probably the finest outreach centre of any university in the world, on a street that bears our name, Rue des Irlandais. Ó hÁinle's comprehensive account of Celtic Studies scholarship complements and speaks to many other contributions across disciplines such as Music and History to Meath's proud boast of engagement through presidents from Russell to Farrell, historians and scholars, from Ó Gramhnaigh to Tom O'Connor to Tracey Ní Mhaonaigh, editor of *Irisleabhar Mhá Nuad*, the longest running annual in Irish or English on this island.

Many others comprise the major themes of the tapestry. Four President's (Corish, Newman, Olden, O'Donnell); the Bursar,; the trainer of a two in a row Fitzgibbon team, Gerry Maher; the ubiquitous Francis Cremin; the fastidious John McMackin and, top of the right, in the front row, J.M. McGarry (*The Furrow*).

Many others featured here are the subject of individual essays. Connolly, Drury, Dom Casey, McCullen. The final Shakespearean quote in praise of Drury ('He was a man, take him for all in all. I shall not look upon his like again.') might well have provoked the response from all mentioned, Drury himself in particular, 'Deo gratias'. They didn't crave stagnant imitation. Their mission was *tradare* and *e-ducare*, seeing tradition and education as process of *populorum progressio*, continuity and change, hastening slowly with the latter for the sake of the former, in accord with the signs of the times.

There are other photographs that speak to 'the continuity and the change', none more so than those that feature Maynooth's sporting successes.

Fitzgibbon Cup Winners 1973-74, (115). Captain Paddy Barry, and brothers Gus and Fachtna O'Driscoll were SMAs and would not have made it to Maynooth prior to 1969 (not to mention the

laymen featured here), the year that saw the Limerick Senior Hurling Captain of 1957, Liam Ryan, arrive as Professor of Sociology. Others of that class of '69 here are Seán Silke, Victor Blake, and brothers Joe and Iggy Clarke, All-Ireland winners with Galway. Top of the right in the 1974 photograph is the 'Fitzy' used to locate Tom Collins' contribution (301). The photo of Sigerson Cup winners 1976, (265) invites much comment too, with Captain Dan O'Mahony (of that class of '69 again) looking more like a referee between President Tomás Ó Fiaich and trainer Malachy O'Rourke dressed in civies, and thereby hangs another tale.

Most revealing of all, perhaps, is that shot of Second Divine's 1934 (111), like the class-piece a veritable cultural and social history. The sign in front, as though suspended from the captain's knees, one Frank Cremin, is *as Gaeilge*, as was the class-piece for nigh on one hundred years from the 1880s to the early 1970s. Third from left, back line, is Eamonn Devlin, neighbour and friend of Tom Fee's, author of *Domhnach Mór*, the model of a parish history that Tom wished for every corner of Ireland. The photo on page 137 features two graduates from 1958 who did that and more: John Hume and Ciarán Devlin.

There are distracting little inaccuracies here and there: the definite article before 'Graf'; Newman never erected a Folly, but he did provide a 'Newman Gentium'; the omission of an award winning play, published in the official series of bicentenary celebrations, from an otherwise comprehensive list. A considerable number of frivolous anecdotes are included, but few of the more telling representative ones, not to mention the Limericks. But these and other scribal lapses can be put right in our readings. The proposed Book Club might consider a thematic approach under such heading as: i) personalities; iii) food and drink; iii) building's; iv) sport; v) publications, and other categories in order to complement and preserve the rich and important memories the volume evokes. Now might be the time, given *The Furrow's* pivotal role in the development of Maynooth over the last three score and ten years, to provide a platform and forum inviting readers to share their first impressions on reading this volume and to record their own stories and the memories it invokes, along the lines of the Irish Folklore Commission, with its motto the Gospel exhortation to 'gather up the remaining fragments lest they perish'.

The inscription over Ó Gramnaigh's tomb '*Múscail do mhisneach, a Bhanba*', is echoed unwittingly here by a former professor of anthropology of Jewish extraction, who states that MU, still in its infancy, 'is probably old enough to understand and appreciate the parent'. Let us not interpret the dwindling class-pieces of the National Seminary as failure, or the dissolution of

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the Recognised College as a triumph, but the triumph of failure that Maynooth enshrines, allowing us to dare to predict that class-piece may be resurrected if what a former president Dermot Farrell, archbishop of Dublin, in whose diocese Maynooth is situated, comes to be, when he intimated in an interview on RTÉ that the impediment to the ordination of women is not in scripture but a matter of tradition. A senior All-Ireland winner is now the MU GAA officer; a sociology professor continues to expand on Ryan's and Mac Gréil's legacy of practical application, a senior Latin lecturer salutes Maynooth as great educator of great men and women: *magna parens frugum ... magna virum et mulierum*. All three are women, something Maynooth takes for granted now and hardly needs to point out. In the meantime, *carpe diem*, as Tom Finan was accustomed to encourage us. Whether we do or not, *neosfaidh an aimsir*.

We are indebted to the editors and their collaborators who prepared for us this sumptuous repast, a substantial *vade mecum* of consolation and encouragement.

Gratitude. Being grateful to those who do something for us, and expressing our appreciation for their help, shows that we are respecting them and treating each of them as a person, an end, and not just as a means to our own convenience. Moreover, interestingly, showing gratitude to someone is also an expression of humility on our part, because it acknowledges that we needed help, we were not self-sufficient or all-competent to do something on our own when it needed to be done.

– JACK MAHONEY, SJ, *Glimpses of the Gospels* (Dublin: Messenger Publications) p. 84.

Document

CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH LETTER

SAMARITANUS BONUS

on the care of persons in the critical and terminal phases of life

INTRODUCTION

The Good Samaritan who goes out of his way to aid an injured man (cf. *Lk* 10:30-37) signifies Jesus Christ who encounters man in need of salvation and cares for his wounds and suffering with “the oil of consolation and the wine of hope”.¹ He is the physician of souls and bodies, “the faithful witness” (*Rev* 3:14) of the divine salvific presence in the world. How to make this message concrete today? How to translate it into a readiness to accompany a suffering person in the terminal stages of life in this world, and to offer this assistance in a way that respects and promotes the intrinsic human dignity of persons who are ill, their vocation to holiness, and thus the highest worth of their existence?

The remarkable progressive development of biomedical technologies has exponentially enlarged the clinical proficiency of diagnostic medicine in patient care and treatment. The Church regards scientific research and technology with hope, seeing in them promising opportunities to serve the integral good of life and the dignity of every human being.² Nonetheless, advances in medical technology, though precious, cannot in themselves define the proper meaning and value of human life. In fact, every technical advance in healthcare calls for growth in moral discernment³ to avoid an unbalanced and dehumanizing use of the technologies especially in the critical or terminal stages of human life.

Moreover, the organizational management and sophistication, as well as the complexity of contemporary healthcare delivery, can reduce to a

1 Messale Romano, *rimformato a norma dei decreti del Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II, promulgato da papa Paolo VI e riveduto da papa Giovanni Paolo II*, Conferenza Episcopale Italiana – Fondazione di Religione Santi Francesco d’Assisi e Caterina da Siena, Roma 2020, Prefazio comune VIII, p. 404 (Eng. trans.)

2 Cf. Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Health Care Workers, *New Charter for Health Care Workers*, National Catholic Bioethics Center, Philadelphia, PA, 2017, n. 6.

3 Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Spe salvi* (30 November 2007), 22: *AAS* 99 (2007), 1004. “If technical progress is not matched by corresponding progress in man’s ethical formation, in man’s inner growth (cf. *Eph* 3:16; *2 Cor* 4:16), then it is not progress at all, but a threat for man and for the world”.

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purely technical and impersonal relationship the bond of trust between physician and patient. This danger arises particularly where governments have enacted legislation to legalize forms of assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia among the most vulnerable of the sick and infirm. The ethical and legal boundaries that protect the self-determination of the sick person are transgressed by such legislation, and, to a worrying degree, the value of human life during times of illness, the meaning of suffering, and the significance of the interval preceding death are eclipsed. Pain and death do not constitute the ultimate measures of the human dignity that is proper to every person by the very fact that they are “human beings”.

In the face of challenges that affect the very way we think about medicine, the significance of the care of the sick, and our social responsibility toward the most vulnerable, the present letter seeks to enlighten pastors and the faithful regarding their questions and uncertainties about medical care, and their spiritual and pastoral obligations to the sick in the critical and terminal stages of life. All are called to give witness at the side of the sick person and to become a “healing community” in order to actualize concretely the desire of Jesus that, beginning with the most weak and vulnerable, all may be one flesh.⁴ It is widely recognized that a moral and practical clarification regarding care of these persons is needed. In this sensitive area comprising the most delicate and decisive stages of a person’s life, a “unity of teaching and practice is certainly necessary.”⁵

Various Episcopal Conferences around the world have published pastoral letters and statements to address the challenges posed to healthcare professionals and patients especially in Catholic institutions by the legalization of assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia in some countries. Regarding the celebration of the Sacraments for those who intend to bring an end to their own life, the provision of spiritual assistance in particular situations raises questions that today require a more clear and precise intervention on the part of the Church in order to:

- reaffirm the message of the Gospel and its expression in the basic doctrinal statements of the Magisterium, and thus to recall the mission of all who come into contact with the sick at critical and terminal stages (relatives or legal guardians, hospital chaplains, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist and pastoral workers, hospital volunteers and healthcare personnel), as well as the sick themselves; and,
- provide precise and concrete pastoral guidelines to deal with these complex situations at the local level and to handle them in a way that fosters the patient’s personal encounter with the merciful love of God.

I. CARE FOR ONE’S NEIGHBOUR

Despite our best efforts, it is hard to recognize the profound value of human life when we see it in its weakness and fragility. Far from being

4 Cfr. Francesco, *Discorso all’Associazione italiana contro le leucemie-linfomi e mieloma (AIL)* (2 marzo 2019): *L’Osservatore Romano*, 3 marzo 2019, 7.

5 Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris laetitia* (19 March 2016), 3: *AAS* 108 (2016), 312.

outside the existential horizon of the person, suffering always raises limitless questions about the meaning of life.⁶ These pressing questions cannot be answered solely by human reflection, because in suffering there is concealed *the immensity of a specific mystery* that can only be disclosed by the Revelation of God.⁷ In particular, the mission of faithful care of human life until its natural conclusion⁸ is entrusted to every healthcare worker and is realized through programs of care that can restore, even in illness and suffering, a deep awareness of their existence to every patient. For this reason we begin with a careful consideration of the significance of the specific mission entrusted by God to every person, healthcare professional and pastoral worker, as well as to patients and their families.

The need for medical care is born in the vulnerability of the human condition in its finitude and limitations. Each person's vulnerability is encoded in our nature as a unity of body and soul: we are materially and temporally finite, and yet we have a longing for the infinite and a destiny that is eternal. As creatures who are by nature finite, yet nonetheless destined for eternity, we depend on material goods and on the mutual support of other persons, and also on our original, deep connection with God. Our vulnerability forms the basis for an *ethics of care*, especially in the medical field, which is expressed in concern, dedication, shared participation and responsibility towards the women and men entrusted to us for material and spiritual assistance in their hour of need .

The relationship of care discloses the twofold dimension of the principle of justice to promote human life (*suum cuique tribuere*) and to avoid harming another (*alterum non laedere*). Jesus transformed this principle into the golden rule "Do unto others whatever you would have them do to you" (*Mt 7:12*). This rule is echoed in the maxim *primum non nocere* of traditional medical ethics.

Care for life is therefore the first responsibility that guides the physician in the encounter with the sick. Since its anthropological and moral horizon is broader, this responsibility exists not only when the restoration to health is a realistic outcome, but even when a cure is unlikely or impossible. Medical and nursing care necessarily attends to the body's physiological functions, as well as to the psychological and spiritual well-being of the patient who should never be forsaken. Along with the many sciences upon which it draws, medicine also possesses the key dimension of a "therapeutic art," entailing robust relationships with the patient, with healthcare workers, with relatives, and with members of communities to which the patient is linked. *Therapeutic art, clinical procedures and ongoing care* are inseparably interwoven in the practice of medicine, especially at the critical and terminal stages of life.

The Good Samaritan, in fact, "not only draws nearer to the man he

6 Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, 10: AAS 58 (1966), 1032-1033.

7 Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Salvifici doloris* (11 February 1984), 4: AAS 76 (1984), 203.

8 Cf. Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Healthcare Workers, *New Charter for Healthcare Workers*, n. 144.

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finds half dead; he takes responsibility for him”.⁹ He invests in him, not only with the funds he has on hand but also with funds he does not have and hopes to earn in Jericho: he promises to pay any additional costs upon his return. Likewise Christ invites us to trust in his invisible grace that prompts us to the generosity of supernatural charity, as we identify with everyone who is ill: “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” (*Mt 25:40*). This affirmation expresses a moral truth of universal scope: “we need then to ‘show care’ for all life and for the life of everyone”¹⁰ and thus to reveal the original and unconditional love of God, the source of the meaning of all life.

To that end, especially in hospitals and clinics committed to Christian values, it is vital to create space for relationships built on the recognition of the *fragility* and *vulnerability* of the sick person. Weakness makes us conscious of our dependence on God and invites us to respond with the respect due to our neighbor. Every individual who cares for the sick (physician, nurse, relative, volunteer, pastor) has the moral responsibility to apprehend the fundamental and inalienable good that is the human person. They should adhere to the highest standards of self-respect and respect for others by embracing, safeguarding and promoting human life until natural death. At work here is a *contemplative gaze*¹¹ that beholds in one’s own existence and that of others a unique and unrepeatable wonder, received and welcomed as a gift. This is the gaze of the one who does not pretend to take possession of the reality of life but welcomes it as it is, with its difficulties and sufferings, and, guided by faith, finds in illness the readiness to abandon oneself to the Lord of life who is manifest therein.

To be sure, medicine must accept the limit of death as part of the human condition. The time comes when it is clear that specific medical interventions cannot alter the course of an illness that is recognized to be terminal. It is a dramatic reality, that must be communicated to the sick person both with great humanity and with openness in faith to a supernatural horizon, aware of the anguish that death involves especially in a culture that tries to conceal it. One cannot think of physical life as something to preserve at all costs –which is impossible – but as something to live in the free acceptance of the meaning of bodily existence: “only in reference to the human person in his ‘unified totality’, that is as ‘a soul which expresses itself in a body and a body informed by an immortal spirit’, can the specifically human meaning of the body be grasped”.¹²

9 Francis, *Message for the 48th World Communications Day* (1 June 2014): AAS 106 (2014), 114.

10 John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium vitae* (25 March 1995), 87: AAS 87 (1995), 500.

11 Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus annus* (1 May 1991), 37: AAS 83 (1991), 840.

12 John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis splendor* (6 August 1993), 50: AAS 85 (1993), 1173.

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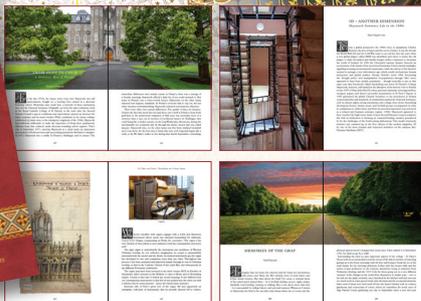
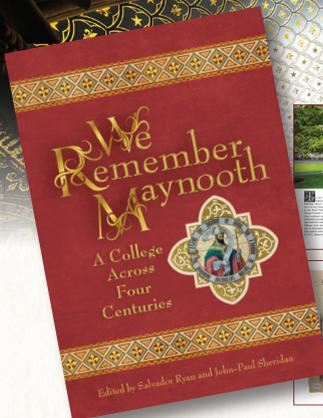
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