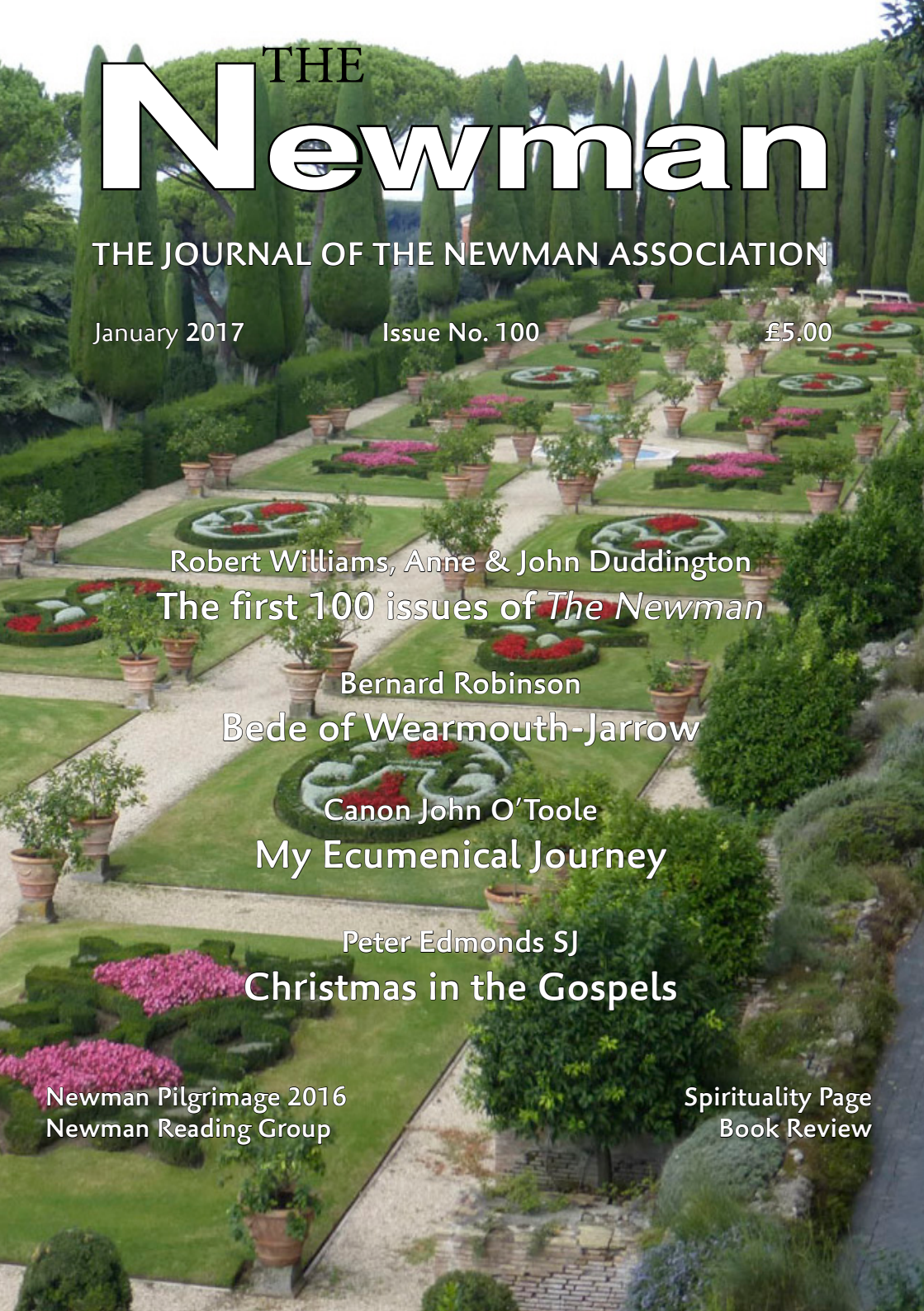




THE Newman

THE JOURNAL OF THE NEWMAN ASSOCIATION

January 2017

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Robert Williams, Anne & John Duddington
The first 100 issues of *The Newman*

Bernard Robinson
Bede of Wearmouth-Jarrow

Canon John O'Toole
My Ecumenical Journey

Peter Edmonds SJ
Christmas in the Gospels

Newman Pilgrimage 2016
Newman Reading Group

Spirituality Page
Book Review

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Cover picture: *The pontifical Barberini Gardens at Castel Gandolfo*

Comment

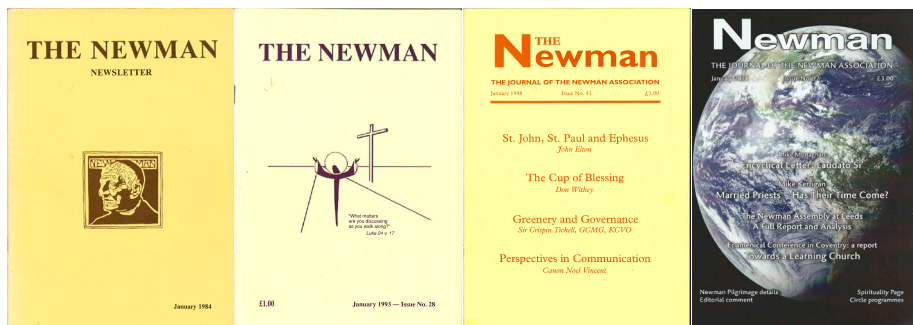
This is issue number 100 of the current series of *The Newman*, the journal of the Newman Association. A previous version of the journal was discontinued in the 1970s, a time of financial stringency, but number 1 of the new series appeared in January 1984, edited by Robert Williams and later, at various times, by Eileen Cheverton. Publication has been unbroken since 1984. Robert handed over the editorship about five years ago but he has contributed to this issue a survey of the highlights of the contents during the past 33 years, helped by John and Anne Duddington, longstanding members of the Editorial Committee.

My own involvement goes back about five years and I think this is a good opportunity to set out, briefly, some of my thoughts on the objectives of *The Newman*. It runs parallel with the Newman Association News, a newsletter which provides a direct channel of communication between the Newman's Council and all the secretaries of the local circles. It is sent out as an email attachment and the most recent edition was produced after the Council meeting in December. *The Newman*, in contrast, as a printed document, provides more of a public face for the Association, going out not just to members but also to the bishops and various other individuals and institutions. The contents of the journal are intended to reflect the full range of the Association's activities. Each issue includes the texts of three or four talks, usually given at local circles but sometimes at set piece events such as the London (and now also Manchester) Newman Lectures. There is coverage, too, of conferences, annual meetings and, as in this current issue, pilgrimages.

I have tried, with only partial success, to develop the reporting of other circle events such as awaydays and retreats. I also like to include letters from members; they have not been forthcoming in the numbers that I would hope to see but robust epistles have been delivered to me on subjects ranging from the New Missal and the role of *The Newman Association* to the possible solutions to the shortage of ordained Catholic priests. I repeat that I would welcome more letters. I also like to include one or two book reviews.

The success of *The Newman* depends very much upon the participation of the membership and I am very grateful for all the help that I have received. As we move beyond edition 100 I trust that we will continue to publish many more issues into the future.

Barry Riley



The Newman: the 100th issue in the current series

Origins and chronology

Certain occasions seem to invite a reflection; and, as we go to press for this issue of *The Newman*, it is perhaps apt to do just that to mark the fact that this is the 100th issue in the current series. Down the years a very large number of people have generously contributed articles, thoughts and sheer hard work in the production of the various issues, so we trust this article will do them justice and give an apt flavour of some of the items published since the series started. We also offer the article as a small way of saying a big “thank you” to all those who have helped in the production of these issues.

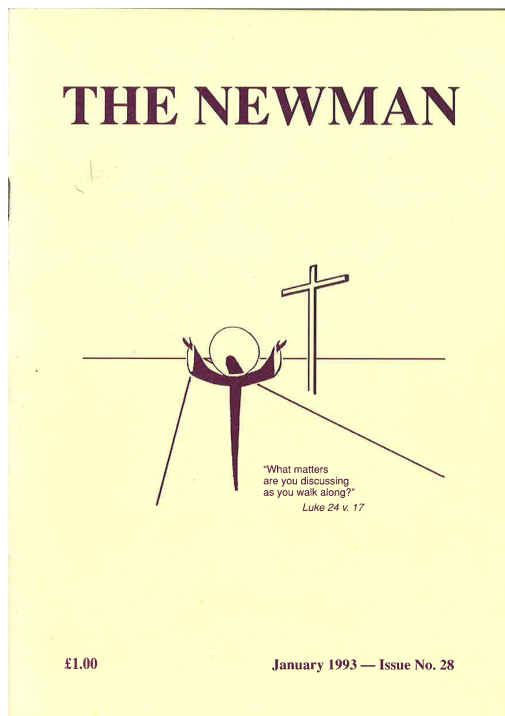
Started in January 1984, this series of *The Newman* succeeded earlier Newman Association publications, which had run under various editorships since the beginning of the Association in 1942¹. By 1984, a significant influence in the work of the Association was George Sayer (1914 -2005), a member of Council and of the Worcester Circle, and one-time Head of English at Malvern College (see *An Appreciation of George: Issue 67: January 2006*); and it was on his initiative that the current series began.

Down the years, the Editorial Committee for this series has stayed remarkably steady – a wonderful and supportive aspect of things, which has been a great help to the specific Editors of each issue. Three main Editors have held office since 1984 and the number of Committee members has usually been six (now seven)².

One of the privileges of being an editor is that articles come across one’s desk which are uplifting, scholarly and a delight to read. By way of marking this 100th issue, therefore, three of us on the current editorial committee have agreed to share with the current readership some of the items that have caught our attention down the years. We trust these will “strike a note” too with Association members and others who may have occasion to read this issue of the journal.

Policy

So what has this series attempted to be about? As primarily a journal for members (and hopefully echoing the policies of earlier series) our first aim has been to facilitate the objectives of the Newman Association – namely the enhancement of “an instructed



and well-educated laity" as famously spoken about by John Henry Newman (1801-1890). We have, however, been mindful that our readership could well extend beyond just Association members; and, in that context, it has also been a particular privilege to have articles that resonate with issues affecting both the Church and the wider world – hopefully as constructive contributions to the discussions of the day.

In the early years of the Association much thought was given to the post-war years and the discussions that would in due course lead up to the Second Vatican Council (1963-1965). Indeed, the late Hugh Dinwiddy (for an Appreciation, see **Issue 79: January 2010**), an early member of the Association, once described "early Newman Summer Schools and their offspring" as having "brought with them, as it were, the dawn chorus of Pope John's Council"³; and one would like to think that such emphases are still the hallmark of the Newman Association and its activities.

At the time of the first issue in the current series, in 1984, the Association was, by then, beginning "... to examine the role of the Association now, some 20 years after Vatican II ..."⁴. Indeed, as we go to press, such up-dating of thoughts about the Association's work are again current. We trust, therefore, that some of the items shared in this article (especially in the following section) may help in this ongoing work of adjustment and renewal.

On a practical note, as our regular readers will know the normal contents of *The Newman* consist of: (i) Notification and Reports of Newman Association Circle meetings, (ii) Regular updates about Association matters - e.g. notices of and reports on AGMs, (iii) Letters to the Editor, (iv) Items about or papers from Newman Association conferences - these sometimes being held in conjunction with other Christian organisations, (v) Reports on or actual texts of London Newman Lectures⁵ and, more recently, Manchester Newman Lectures, (vi) Reports from the Association's Special Interest Groups, (vii) Scholarly articles relating to matters of contemporary interest and importance, these arising from Association members' engagement with the issues discussed, (viii) Carefully selected items for a regular "Spirituality" page, (ix) Book Reviews and (x) Circle Programmes.

In the light of this, therefore, we trust that readers will understand the magnitude of the task we have set ourselves and will be able to appreciate the selections we have made. Records of the contents of all one hundred issues are available from the Association's Editorial team and recent issues can be accessed on the website.

Items and excerpts from past issues

Given the range of material included in this series, it has been a hard job to be selective (and succinct!) with items that have "struck a chord" and which could therefore be mentioned as an appreciation to our contributors. These difficulties notwithstanding, however, such an appreciation is surely appropriate; and the following paragraphs are offered to that end.

As a start, therefore, one can, perhaps, mention a recent article in this series, which focused on *Faith and Reason* (**Issue 83: May 2011**) – surely a helpful clarification in this modern age of two key concepts; concepts, indeed, of relevance and importance for "an educated laity". By way of a reflection on Pope Benedict XVI's address in Westminster Hall (17.9.10) and citing this, it was pointed out that "faith is not an alternative to reason but ... the precondition of reason": the role of

religion being “not so much to supply (objective) norms governing right action, as if they could not be known by non-believers ... , but rather to help purify and shed light upon the application of reason to the discovery of objective moral principles”.

In a similar philosophical vein, with contemporary relevance, was the 2002 London Newman Lecture *The Impossibility of Atheism*, given that year by Professor Nicholas Lash (**Issue 56: May 2002**), where attention was drawn to the growing desire

since the 16th and 17th centuries for “nouns” and “explanations” rather than “verbs” and “understanding” – a “dethroning of the verb” as it was put. Medieval culture was fundamentally a narrative culture, one in which verbs were central: “You need verbs to do things and so everything is thought of primarily in terms of what is going on. And this is true of you and me and of the world and of the mystery of God”.

Moreover, this narrative culture was primarily about understanding; about getting the story right, trying to understand better and participating in the story of the world, including the story of creation and redemption of it. By contrast, narratives came to be “discounted” in the seventeenth century and later as a scientific perception emerged on the grounds that “storytellers aren’t reliable”. In place of understanding the quest was on for “explanation” and, for this purpose, “nouns are better”.

Translating Calvin

As an example of this it was pointed out that “such a notion was well illustrated with reference to ‘the book that Calvin never wrote’”. The title of Calvin’s great work *Christinae Religionis Institutio* of 1536 was correctly translated in 1561 as *The Institution of Christian Faith*. But by 1831 it had become mistranslated as *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. For Calvin as a medieval theologian, “institution” was a verbal noun to describe the business of building up, but by the 19th century “institution” had been turned into a thing, an organisation (something which now implies the existence of “bureaucrats” to run it!).

In a similar way, but with reference to the Liturgy, an article which struck a note was *The Real Presence* by Timothy Radcliffe OP (**Issue 6: September 1985** and reprinted in **Issue 67: January 2006**). In this article it was suggested that, with reference to the bread and wine after consecration, “to ask what something *really* is is to ask, first, what place it has in our communication with one another”. This, he went on, was in contrast to the modern understanding “that if you want to know what something *really* is then you must look through a microscope”. For example, it is not that describing a kiss as “the mutual compression of mucous membrane” is untrue, but rather that “it fails to get at the full truth”!

Accordingly, and expanding on this analogy with reference to The Eucharist, it was pointed out that: “The whole theology of the Eucharist depends on the belief that the community between God and Man, and between man and man, is really *given* now in some sense in the Church. If we do not really believe that Christ is with us, dwelling *with* us and *in* us, and we in Him, then there is no context in which this bread and wine can be the Body and Blood of Christ”. So what is at issue in the doctrine of the Real



Professor Nicholas Lash

Presence in the Eucharist is not whether Catholics think they get a little more than some Anglicans think they get, but whether the community of the Church is in some sense sacramental – making present now the kingdom of God.

Such thoughts, surely, help both in the education of the laity and, more widely, in our ecumenical relationships with the wider Christian body. In more recent years, there has been another most helpful article on this theme by the Association's Chaplain, Fabian Radcliffe O.P. - *The Eucharistic Community* (**Issue 76: January 2009**), this arising from some parish discussions, based on the model of Newman Association Circle meetings, on the ideas of "communion" and "what makes a good parish?"

One aspect of contemporary thinking and concern covered in this series of the journal since the 1980s has been that of environmental matters – particularly our Christian discernments and responsibilities – this, surely, being a good case of reality being seen in the big picture. In this connection the Association's Environment Interest Group has come into existence and, while not so large or so formally-tasked as earlier Interest Groups such as the Philosophy of Science Group and the Theological Studies Group⁶ this group has helped to facilitate conferences and papers down the years, many of which have been published in *The Newman*. Indeed, this could be said to be an interesting example of how a "sequence" can build up – "one thing following another" – through the engagement of the Association's members.

Environment Interest Group

This environmental "sequence" was launched by the Association in 1990 with the conference of that year *Creation, Christians and the Environment*, held at Birkbeck College, London⁷. As a result of that conference, key links were established particularly with two of the speakers and the Association's Environment Interest Group was started – this being ecumenical as a function of the many participants at the conference. Shortly after this, members of the Interest Group were alerted to (and some attended) the London Templeton Lectures of 1995, given in that year by Sir Ghilleen Prance FRS, then Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. These talks were in due course published as *The Earth Under Threat: A Christian Perspective*⁸.

Then in 1996 (four years after the UN "Earth Summit" at Rio de Janeiro), the Bath Circle hosted the Association's conference *The Church and the Earth after Rio: is Creation Safe with Christians?* As a result of the connection by then with Sir Ghilleen he kindly came to speak at this conference on the theme *Is there any Hope for Creation?* (**Issue 42: September 1997**). The Chairman of the Bath Circle and the Convener of the Interest Group subsequently attended the 2003 London Newman Lecture *Newman and the Environmental Imperative* (**Issue 59: May 2003**) given that year by John Gummer MP, at that time Minister for the Environment. And this stimulating address then led on to the Association's 2004 Hereford ecumenical conference, jointly hosted with Christian Ecology Link (now Green Christian) *Faith and the Environmental Imperative: responding to "The Call of Creation"*⁹ – *The Call of Creation* having by then been put out by the Catholic Bishops' Conference



Sir John Houghton

of England and Wales to mark the 2002 UN “Earth Summit” at Johannesburg (“Rio + 10” as it was called).

As to the two links with speakers, made as a result of the 1990 conference: one was with Robert Murray S.J., then Senior Research Fellow at Heythrop College, London and the author of *The Cosmic Covenant: Biblical themes of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation*¹⁰ and the other Professor R.J. Berry, Professor of Genetics at University College, London. Through Murray opportunities arose to explore the connection between poetry and environmental theology: see *Poetry for the Peaceable Kingdom* (**Issue 50: May 2000**); while through Berry links were made between the Association and the Interest Group and The John Ray Initiative (JRI) recently established to promote “responsible environmental stewardship in accordance with Christian principles and the wise use of science and technology”.

One of the founders of the JRI was Sir John Houghton, one-time Professor of Atmospheric Physics at Oxford, Director General of the UK Meteorological Office and, at that time, a member of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); and it was through this connection that Sir John came to speak at the 2004 Hereford conference on *Global Warming & Climate Change: a challenge to scientists and Christians*. In the light of this, *In the Eye of the Storm*, Sir John’s autobiography, was later reviewed in the journal (**Issue 93: September 2014**); and, more recently, there was an excellent reflection by Mike Monaghan, a member of the Environment Interest Group, on the latest papal encyclical *Laudato Si’: on care for our common home*, this being occasioned by the 2015 UN Climate Change Conference in Paris (**Issue 97: January 2016**).

There are many other references to contemporary thought and the engagement of Newman members with current issues. The Bio-Ethics Group dates from 1984 with a nucleus of members from Worcester Circle. One pressing matter that it dealt with was embryo research in the light of the Warnock Report on which it organised a conference at Newman House, University of Birmingham, in 1987 (**Issue 11: May 1987**) and another at Worcester in 1993 on Medical Ethics more generally, of which one focus was the Tony Bland case (**Issue 29: May 1993**).

There have of course been many other conferences over the years where the proceedings have appeared in *The Newman*. One instance is the conference on the Problem of Evil organised by the North Cheshire Circle in 1990, which resulted in two notable papers in *The Newman* (**Issue 23: May 1991**). Brendan Callaghan SJ spoke on *Physiology and the Problem of Evil* and remarked that “Perhaps the true core of original sin lies not in our capacity to ‘do wrong’ but in our incapacity to allow God to ‘do right’. Perhaps the devil’s true artfulness is shown not in our ‘sins’ but in our inability to accept that God’s love encompasses our sinfulness.” Dr. Joseph Rymer then looked at “The Concept of Evil from Scripture” and remarked that “Evil is anything or anyone which threatens the covenant that Yahweh, the Hebrew God, has established with the people he has chosen”.

Seven Key Issues

The Social Gospel has not been neglected either. There was, for example, a notable paper by Victor Guazzelli, then Bishop in East London, based on a talk given to the London Circle (**Issue 19: January 1990**). He noted that a report prepared for the

Diocese of Westminster in 1982 identified seven issues which, as he put it, gave “a clear illustration of the scale of human suffering and the complexity of some of the issues which formed the context of the Church’s social action”. These were: One-Parent Families, Unemployment, Housing, Race Relations, Poverty, the Elderly and the Reduction in Public Expenditure. Readers might care to consider whether and to what extent that list has changed to day and what we as Christians should be doing about them.

One also realises how much the journal has done to turn our attention to the wider world. One example is with articles about the Association’s membership of Pax Romana; and, in **Issue 13: January 1988**, Philip Daniel, an early member of the Editorial Committee, recalled his impressions of its 40th meeting and of what Pax Romana is about. And it is to Philip that we also owe a splendid article on the *The Purpose and Practice of the Newman Association* (**Issue 1: January 1984**), which reproduces an Action Plan for the Association for 1970-75, which could well be used again.

On the theme of the wider world, one recalls also the contribution of Nigel Dees, a gifted architect and a much-loved member of the Editorial Committee until his untimely death, who used his talents to serve the developing Hospice Movement – particularly at the then-new St. Michael’s Hospice, Hereford. In both these capacities, he provided a distinctive introduction to an article on this subject from the Wimbledon Circle (**Issue 3: September 1984**).

As to the “deepening” of faith, the regular contributions to the journal’s Spirituality pages have given much food for thought. Some particular items that stand out include *Julian of Norwich and the Attractiveness of God* by Joyce Martin (**Issue 39: September 1996**), *Sacramental Living*, the 2014 London Newman Lecture (**Issue 92: May 2014**), *Love*, the famous poem by George Herbert (1593-1633) (**Issue 78: September 2009**) and *Spirituality and Ageing* by Rev. Dr. Albert Jewell (**Issue 77, May 2009**).

Inevitable, and rightly, there have been many essays on Newman himself. The first issue of the current series (**January 1984**) contained an article based on a talk by the well-known Newman scholar Joyce Sugg on *Newman and his Relevance Today*. As she pointed out, Newman is “an example of one who was intensely loyal to the Church and yet could be a critic, even a severe critic, of certain of the structures that existed then and to an extent exist now”. Can the same be said of some Newman members? Later, we had the text of a sermon delivered in Newman’s church of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie (**Issue No. 21: September 1990**). He spoke of one of Newman’s final letters where he felt that a “silent and secret process is going on in the hearts of many ... that would issue in a public opinion strong enough for the spread and exaltation of divine truth over all the world”.

As the Archbishop recognised, that is “a vision as yet unrealized. Indeed it seems to recede as fundamentalism grows, reactionaries recover ground and western Christendom succumbs to secularism”. Yet, as he also said; “the influence of religion does not diminish”, and it is of course our task as Newman members to seek to realise that vision of Newman.

Finally for this section, members of The Newman Association will surely have strong

memories of past members, who have now “gone before us marked with the sign of faith”. A particularly inspirational one to many of us was George Sayer, mentioned earlier, friend and biographer of C.S. Lewis. A wonderful sample of his enthusiasm is contained in, again, **Issue 1: January 1984**, where he gave sound advice on *How to Start a Reading Circle*. The last sentence is worth recalling as it also applies to recruitment to Circles: “Oh, and never forget that people like to be invited; and that, if nicely invited, their tendency is to say ‘Yes!’”. Do read the whole of his article.

Conclusion: thoughts for the future

And so *The Newman* goes on to begin, God willing, a second century of issues – as always, interested in that synthesis of faith and reason referred to earlier; and, in the light of that, seeking to deepen the spiritual lives of its readers and to engage constructively with the issues which face the Church today – without polemic and without rancour but, as ever, seeking to discern the voice of Our Lord and to answer that question of His which, for a certain number of issues, used to appear on the front cover of the journal: “What matters are you discussing as you walk along?” (Luke 24:17).

With so much excellent material received down the years, how can one ever hope to do justice to it all in a single article? We have not been able, for instance, to give a flavour of the poems which have appeared. Suffice to say that we trust that these thoughts and references to articles published in this series of *The Newman* will give a flavour of our policy and the contributions received. And, as we now look beyond this 100th issue, we trust that there may be – in the items cited here – some clues to the prospects for future articles.

As to the idea of “an instructed and well-educated laity”; that, surely is as important today as it ever was. By way of an exploration of this, some helpful thoughts can be found in the first issue of *The Newman* in the new millennium, *Seeking Newman’s Message Today: the Experience of the Hertfordshire Circle* (**Issue 49: January 2000**), by Anthony Baker, at that time Chairman of the Hertfordshire Circle. With reference to Newman’s work and reflections, readers were reminded that “an informed laity is ever more required to play its part” in discernment about the truths of the Christian religion, their expression and their development. Indeed, this was strongly confirmed in the documents of Vatican II, especially *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*. There is food for continuing thought here, surely, as we look to the future.

In so far, therefore, as the Association is concerned to help deepen faith and explore the implications of that for our work and wider relationships, both social and within the larger context of the natural order, then we trust that there will continue to be many further articles of the calibre of those mentioned here – scholarly, pastoral and ecumenical – coming the way of *The Newman* (via the range of sources mentioned in section two of this article); and that these will, as in the last 100 issues, continue to facilitate that “instructed and well-educated laity” that Newman spoke of so many years ago.

Robert Williams, Anne Duddington, John Duddington

Notes

- ¹ For details of earlier Newman Association publications, see *A Use of Gifts*, produced in September 1992 (in place of the 27th issue in the current series) to mark the 50th anniversary of *The Newman Association: Journals and Publications* by Eileen Cheverton

p. 25-26.

² Chronology: Editors, Robert Williams 1984-86, 1991-94, 1998-2000, 2009-11, Eileen Cheverton 1986-91, 1994-98, 2000-08, Barry Riley 2011 to date. Committee: since 1984 the following Newman Association members have kindly served at various times on the Editorial Committee: Nigel Dees, Theo Westow, Philip Daniel, John Duddington, Anne Duddington, Josephine Way, Aidan Reynolds, Marie Rose Low and Christopher Quirke.

³ See *The Newman Association: A Personal Tribute* by Hugh Dinwiddy in *A Use of Gifts* p. 43.

⁴ See *The Newman Issue* No. 1 1984 p. 27: *The future of the Newman Association*, Peter Nielson, Association President.

⁵ The London Newman Lectures have been held annually since 2000, thanks to the generous bequest of the late Jim Matthews (1941-1997); he was a member of the London Circle and a one-time National Treasurer of the Association.

⁶ See *A Use of Gifts: The Philosophy of Science Group* (p. 31-33) and *The Theological Studies Group* (p. 38-39).

⁷ Copies of the Conference Report available through the Convener of the Newman Association Environment Interest Group.

⁸ *The Earth Under Threat: A Christian Perspective* by Ghillelan Prance (1996), Wild Goose Publications, ISBN 0947988807.

⁹ Copies of the Conference Report are available through the Convener of Newman Association Environment Interest Group.

¹⁰ *The Cosmic Covenant: Biblical themes of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation* by Robert Murray (1992), Sheed & Ward Ltd., ISBN 0-7220-2750-8.

The Newman Presidency

Gerald Williams resigned as President of the Newman Association in December, after suffering health problems. He served in the position for 2½ years.

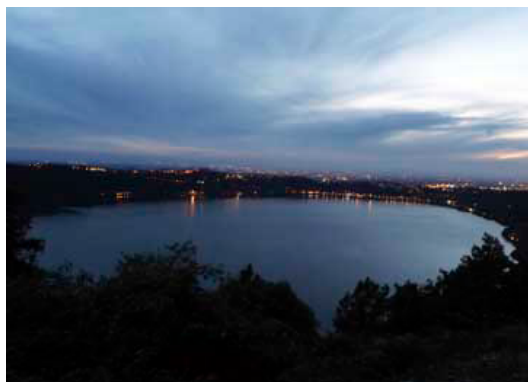
One of the two vice-presidents elected at last June's AGM, **Sir Anthony Holland**, has agreed to serve as Acting President. The next step will be considered by Council at its meeting early in March.

Sir Anthony, a member of the Wimbledon Circle, is a distinguished retired lawyer and is a former President of the Law Society. He has been chairman of the Northern Ireland Parades Commission and an independent commissioner in the field of financial regulation.

Newman Pilgrimage 2016

By Barry Riley

Although two couples pulled out at the last moment, for health reasons, 44 people, nearly all Newman Association members, attended the 2016 Pilgrimage; it was based at the Villa Palazzola, 18 miles south-east of Rome, between September 16th and 22nd. There were trips to a number of monasteries and other locations within the province of Lazio, together with visits to Rome itself and to the Pope's summer palace at nearby Castel Gandolfo, clearly seen from Palazzola across Lake Albano which lies within the crater of an extinct volcano.



Lake Albano at sunset

Palazzola is the former summer residence, acquired in 1920, of the Venerable English College in Rome, which still owns it as a pilgrimage, retreat and study centre. The central cloister is evidence of the monastic origins (Franciscans occupied Palazzola for 500 years) but now there is an elegant terrace and garden, with a swimming pool.

An early problem was the cancellation of a British Airways flight on which eleven pilgrims

were booked but all arrived eventually, though the welcome party had to be delayed until the following evening. On Saturday, the first morning, the group embarked upon what was to be an extended tour of monasticism in the Lazio region, starting with Subiaco; this was where St Benedict first embarked in about the year 500 on his vocation as, to begin with, a hermit and then, in due course, a community leader and developer of his famous Rule.

There were originally thirteen small communities of followers around Subiaco but what remains today is the spectacular monastery of Sacro Speco, mostly dating from the 11th century. The monastery is built on a steep hillside around the cave where St Benedict lived for about three years as a hermit. Benedict himself, however, left the area in 529 when his early model of small monasteries proved unworkable and moved instead to Monte Cassino where he devised his Rule in the context of a much bigger establishment. His principle *Ora et Labora* – pray and work – came to dominate monasticism for centuries. He died in 547 and is buried at Monte Cassino, which the Newman Pilgrimage reached on the Tuesday, three days later.

Today's seemingly impregnable Abbey of Monte Cassino dominates the surrounding plains from its hilltop site but it is only the latest of many reconstructions, the current

edifice dating only from the 1950s after the Abbey was destroyed by Allied bombing in 1944.

The Newman pilgrims were guided into a basement area where some of the original monastery remains. Elsewhere the buildings – including the Baroque church – were on an impressive scale, but it is sad to realise that an Abbey which once housed over 200 monks has now shrunk to a community of about 30.

In the afternoon the Newman bus moved on to the more modest but still impressive Cistercian Abbey of Casamari. All the church's windows were expensively made of alabaster, though one or two members of our group complained that this made the interior very dim.

One of the monks patiently informed us about the community's way of life, and although he spoke in Italian we were fortunate to have the services of our unofficial interpreter Canon Michael Cooley. Outside the Abbey a large market was doing an active trade in cabbage and leek plants, and it was clear from the Abbey's own vegetable patch that extensive planting was taking place for the winter and spring.

In between our days of monastic exploration we paid a visit to Rome. In acknowledgment of our temporary landlords we celebrated Mass at the Venerable English College itself, in the splendidly gold-decorated chapel.

Fr Fabian, our chaplain, preached on the theme of the day's Gospel according to Luke: you cannot be the slave both of God and money. We then moved to

St Peter's Square, slowed down by airport-style security checks but emerging just in time for the celebration of the Angelus by Pope Francis; he was very distant in a high window but fortunately was amplified by loudspeakers and giant video screens. After a picnic lunch in the gardens of the Villa Borghese we visited the Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls, where we entered through the Holy Door.

On Monday we visited Castel Gandolfo, driving around the crater rim to the village where the Pope has a summer residence. Although most of his palace, and the



The Pope at his window



Mass at the Abbey of Fossanova

accompanying Vatican Observatory, is closed to the public some Newman pilgrims visited an exhibition covering the history of the papacy from 1503 to today. Others went on a guided tour of the amazing pontifical Barberini Gardens which spill down the edge of the hillside and give a wonderful view of the countryside away towards Rome. The umbrella pines were astonishing, and the gardens surprisingly turned out to have their own small Roman theatre, ideal for taking group photographs.

On Wednesday the bus took us to the final monastery on our list: Fossanova, which like several other Abbeys has changed hands over the centuries and although founded by Cistercians has since been taken over by the Franciscans. We celebrated Mass in the impressive church; its bare stone walls, in accordance with Cistercian principles, provided a stark contrast to the ostentatious extravagance of, for example, the rebuilt Baroque church at Monte Cassino. Fossanova is notable for being the place where the Dominican St Thomas Aquinas died while stopping over on his journey to the Council of Lyon in 1274. Several of us climbed a steep spiral staircase to the room (now a small chapel) where he is said to have met his end.

In the afternoon we made progress along the lush coastal plain to the Ninfa Gardens. Once owned by a partly-English family, this remarkable horticultural site is watered by gushing streams which spring out of the nearby limestone cliffs. Whereas Italian gardens are generally dominated by right-angled grid patterns and heavily-clipped hedges at Ninfa the trees spread naturally and there are even English-style herbaceous borders. The garden grows in and around the ruins of the old town of Ninfa, which apparently fell in the 17th century when its inhabitants backed the wrong Papal faction: that is a warning to us all.



Newman members gathered in the town square at Castel Gandolfo

Besides the daytime travelling we enjoyed our varied evening activities. On the Sunday Gerald Williams organised a highly cultural and varied quiz covering Italian artists, composers of operas, the first lines of English novels and much more. On Monday evening we heard Professor Maurice Whitehead, currently attached to the English College and reorganising its archives, give a lecture on the College's history when it was under Jesuit administration between 1579 and 1773.

On Wednesday we enjoyed a rather more relaxed talk from Canon Michael Cooley on St Philip Neri, who was known to the Italians as "God's jester". St Philip's style, Michael Cooley said, was "serious but with a bit of jollity". He remembered his own days at the English College, where major Church events were apparently known as functions and the seminarians regarded themselves as "function fodder". One such function would

take place every May 26th, St Philip's feast day, at the Chiesa Nuova in Rome, the church where he is buried. Canon Michael therefore persuaded us to sing a comic song called *A Function Tonight*; its chorus ran:

With your Liber, birette and candle

Impossible to handle

Boiling wax on your cassock, and your cotta alight.

Throughout our stay we greatly enjoyed the food at Palazzola, always starting with an authentic helping of pasta (a different variety each day) or risotto, followed by a meat dish and then a comprehensive selection of seasonal fruit, including some of the biggest apples ever seen. There were endless supplies of excellent Castelli Romani wine, this being the local product grown on the hills south of Rome.



Anthony Coles

We were shepherded constantly by Fr Fabian, who said Mass in a wide variety of locations and led us in late evening recitals of the *Salve Regina* in the cloister. Our grateful thanks are also due to Anthony Coles who organised the pilgrimage magnificently, always counting us diligently on the bus and making sure that we reached every monastery on time. His knowledge of the location of toilets (or "facilities") was infallible and his pork-pie hat made him easy to spot and follow. On the bus he would seize the microphone and inform us authoritatively of everything from Romulus and Remus to the cultivation of Kiwi fruit, depending on our particular journey that day.



The Newman pilgrims photographed at Casamari

Homily by Fr Fabian at the English College, Rome: Sunday September 18th 2016

Gospel reading: Luke 16: 1 – 13: *“No servant can be the slave of two masters.....you cannot be the slave both of God and of money.”*

Today's Gospel reading probably strikes a familiar note. It's about a man who is going to lose his job, and is worried about his future. How will he afford to live? He is called a “steward”, but perhaps a better word would be “manager”. He hasn't been too honest with his employer's property; wasting it perhaps, or even embezzling it; so he is for the sack. But how will he find a new job? He is not robust enough for manual work, which seems to be the only employment available. And he would be ashamed to beg. In any case begging is an unreliable source of income. But he hits on a clever idea which promises to give him security in the future.

To understand it, you need to know something about the financial and business practices of the time. Jews were forbidden by the Mosaic Law to lend money on interest. But one way in which people got round this law was to lend in kind, not in cash. So you might lend, say, fifty barrels of oil, which the borrower could then convert into cash. But you would require a hundred barrels to be paid back, the equivalent of 100% interest. Because the transaction was carried out in goods rather than in cash, it was not regarded as breaking the Jewish law. So the man in the story is using his authority as a manager to cancel the interest, and simply requires the borrowers to repay what they had originally borrowed. No wonder they were grateful to him, and would look after him when he lost his job.

Of course the manager's action was dishonest. But he was no more dishonest than his employer, which was why the manager could get away with it. If his actions were examined by law, his employer's illegal behaviour would also come to light. So the employer could hardly make a complaint. In fact, he recognised the shrewdness of his manager, and praised him for it.

God's people are his stewards

Well, that's the story. But what's the point of it, for us? We can be sure that Jesus is not encouraging us to behave like the manager or his employer, and embark on shady business practices. So what *is* he saying? It's one of those stories that try to shock people into thinking about their own situation. Among the Jews, a story about an employer and his manager would be understood as saying something about God and His People, Israel. God is Creator. Therefore he is master, and his people are his stewards in creation. They had a responsibility not only to care for it, but also to lead others to the God who was the creator and saviour of them all.

The immediate thrust of many of Jesus' stories, especially in this part of Luke's Gospel, was to warn them that their day of reckoning was upon them. So here the story is saying that they are like a manager who is about to be sacked for failing to live up to his responsibilities. But it is still not too late. If they are shrewd and astute, like the manager was, they can still save themselves from disaster.

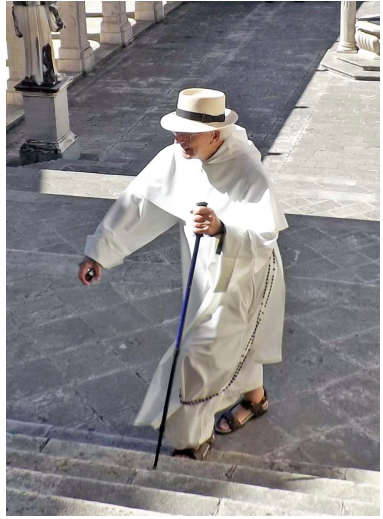
Jesus does not spell out, even in general, what they would have to do. The purpose of telling the story is to challenge people to think for themselves. Obviously he is not saying that they will save themselves by being dishonest in business, like the manager.

But he is saying that they will be saved by showing the same astuteness as the manager, and adopting practices that reverse the way they have behaved in the past.

In practice, what did that mean for them? It meant listening with open hearts to what Jesus was saying. It meant following Jesus' own practice of welcoming the outsider. It meant pushing out the boundaries of the Kingdom, rather than narrowing them. It meant recognising in practice that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. It meant showing compassion and forgiveness and welcome to the sinner – and so on. That is what the story is designed to say to the listeners – and to us.

So: what about us? Why do we read this story? Perhaps we are not on the verge of crisis as the manager was, and the Jews were also. But every

day is a judgement day for someone; and one day it will be our turn. And what will matter then is how much we have listened to Jesus now, and followed him now, and tried to live now with the same love and compassion as he did. The story makes us think about his love and compassion and forgiveness, which is what we celebrate and make present, in this and every Eucharist, and in every day of our lives.



Fr Fabian Radcliffe at Monte Cassino

London Newman Lecture 2017

Thursday, March 2nd

Frank Field MP

From Poverty to Life Chances



The London Newman lecture this year is to be given by Frank Field MP at Heythrop College, London, in the Loyola Hall. He is the Labour MP for Birkenhead and an energetic campaigner on social issues. He is the current Chair of the House of Commons' Work and Pensions Select Committee. He has been a member of the General Synod of the Church of England.

Tickets £10. Tickets can be obtained by post by sending a cheque payable to The Newman Association and enclosing a s.a.e. to Chris Quirke, 29 Spring Road, Hale, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 2UQ. The ticket price includes a glass of wine.

6.00 for 6.30 at Heythrop College, Kensington Square, London W8 5HN

The Christmas Story According to Matthew

By Peter Edmonds SJ

This is an edited version of a talk given in November 2016 to the Manchester & North Cheshire Circle. A version of this article has appeared in Thinking Faith, the online journal of the Jesuits in Britain. See www.thinkingfaith.org.

Anybody wanting to read the earliest account of the Christmas story could be forgiven for thinking that the beginning of the New Testament would be the best place to start. But there is a problem. Matthew's Gospel is placed at the beginning of the New Testament not because it was the first of the New Testament's books to be written but because it is the gospel in which we find the most elevated portrait of Jesus – the fullest exposition of his teaching and the only references to the Church in all the gospels.

Expert opinion informs us that all the gospels date from a time after the major epistles of Paul were composed, and also that Matthew's was not the first New Testament gospel to take shape. This honour belongs to Mark. Matthew's "Christmas story" represents a report that dates from the third generation of Christianity – that is, around the mid-eighties of the first century, many years after the events it describes; it was no doubt shaped by earlier texts. So in order to understand what Matthew is trying to tell us in the opening chapters of the New Testament, we would do well to think about the beginning of his gospel in the context of what we read elsewhere in the bible.

Paul and the Acts of the Apostles

In the letters of Paul, the earliest New Testament writings, there is a single reference to the birth of Jesus Christ. This comes in the Letter to the Galatians, as part of a series of theological arguments that Paul employs to support his message: "When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might obtain adoption as children" (Galatians 4:4-5). This lone mention of the birth of Christ contrasts with Paul's repeated emphasis on the significance of Christ's death and resurrection.

We read the fullest reference to these events towards the end of the First Letter to the Corinthians where Paul writes: "For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve" (1 Corinthians 15:3-5). Paul is appealing to the gospel message which he had preached on previous occasions to the Corinthians and to what he himself had been taught, presumably after his conversion which is dated around AD 36. This text brings us back to the first days of Christianity.

This emphasis on the death and resurrection of Christ is also found in the speeches of Peter reported in the Acts of the Apostles, which stress these events as the centre of the Christian message. In his speech on Pentecost day, Peter says: "God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36). Before the High Priest and his Council, Peter says: "The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree" (Acts 5:30). Peter says nothing about

the Christmas story. Its proclamation is being reserved for a later stage of the Christian mission.

The Gospel of Mark

When in due course the first written gospel appeared – that of Mark, usually dated AD 65-70, a decade or so after the undisputed letters of St Paul – we look in vain for any report of the infancy and birth of Jesus. Mark begins with a quotation of three Old Testament passages which refer to the exodus of God's people from Egypt (Exodus 23:20), their exile in Babylon (Isaiah 40:3) and their return from exile (Malachi 3:1). Mark is telling us how, in Jesus, God continues his past activity on behalf of his people.

The evangelist, after introducing John the Baptist and reporting his preaching activity, then brings the adult Jesus onto his stage, as a man who comes from Nazareth to be baptised by John. At his baptism a voice from heaven pronounces Jesus as his Son; Jesus is then driven into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit and tested by Satan. There, "he was with the wild beasts and the angels waited on him". Then he began his ministry. He announced: "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:1-15).

The Gospel of Matthew

We can surmise that the gospel attributed to Mark became known and valued in places other than its initial destination, which may have been Rome in the time of the Emperor Nero or Syria in the tense years before the Jewish revolt of AD 70. It reflected the needs and interests of a persecuted community and was less obviously relevant to those for whom Matthew is reckoned to be writing, who may well have been a group of former members of a synagogue in the cosmopolitan city of Antioch, a group struggling to establish its identity as God's special people. So the person whom we know as Matthew rewrote Mark's Gospel in ways more appropriate for that community's needs.

In this new gospel account the main points of Mark's beginning are not only kept but expanded. Matthew tells us more about John the Baptist and about the baptism of Jesus and his testing by Satan in the wilderness (Matthew 3:1-4:12). But before this, Matthew inserts four sections about the origin and background of Jesus. We learn about Jesus's ancestry (1:1-17). We learn about his birth and how he came to be born (1:18-25). We learn about his reception by foreigners and his rejection by the leaders of his own people (2:1-12). We learn about the drama of his early years, how he escaped death, went into exile in Egypt and how finally he came to be in Nazareth (2:13-23).

The Generations (Matthew 1:1-17)

The first section is a genealogical table. It is introduced by an announcement that Jesus is Son of David and Son of Abraham. There may well be two Old Testament passages implied by these two titles. The first is God's promise to King David by the prophet Nathan that God "would establish the throne of his kingdom for ever" (2 Samuel 7:13). The second is the promise that God makes to Abraham that "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). This beginning suggests that the community of Matthew was a mixed one of Jew and Gentile – Jesus belonged to both. There follows a list of the ancestors of Jesus. At first sight, this is the sort of list that we

find in various places in the Old Testament. We read about the ancestors of Abraham in Genesis (11:10-32) and of David in the book of Ruth (4:18-22). We might think that such a list has little to tell us, but it repays careful reading. Among the royal ancestors of Jesus are bad kings as well as good kings. Some are known to us from the Old Testament, others are quite unknown. Some are first-born in the family but others are junior siblings. There are only five women in the list, but their stories are well worth exploring. Moreover, the list falls neatly into three groups of fourteen, and fourteen is the sum of the Hebrew letters that make up David's name.

Somehow God overcomes many obstacles to bring about the birth of Jesus. This is surely a God of mystery. It is this God who speaks from heaven and proclaims Jesus as his beloved Son (Matthew 3:17). He is the God whom Jesus will later acknowledge as his Father, "Lord of heaven and earth" (11:25).

Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25)

If the genealogy instructs us as to who Jesus is, the next section informs us how he came to be born. Again, this is a mysterious birth, because Jesus did not have a human father; as the angel informed Joseph when Mary was found to be with child, "the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit".

We first meet this creative Holy Spirit in the second verse of the Bible where we learn that "the spirit of God swept over the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2), and we frequently encounter this Spirit in the prophets. Ezekiel, for example, looks forward to the time when God would put a new Spirit within his people as an agent of renewal (Ezekiel 36:26).



The arrival of the Three Wise Men

Matthew concludes this paragraph with the "Emmanuel" quotation from Isaiah (7:14). This child would be "God with us", which prepares us for the promise of the Risen Christ at the end of the gospel that he would be with his disciples "always, to the end of the age" (28:20). His name would be Jesus, because "he would save his people from their sins". Readers familiar with the stories of the birth of Ishmael, son of Hagar, and of Isaac, son of Sarah (Genesis 16-18), and of Samson (Judges 13), will enjoy recognising how the annunciation by the angel to Joseph follows a similar pattern to these ancient traditions.

The Wise Men (Matthew 2:1-12)

Matthew's third section is perhaps more familiar to us from its use on the Feast of the Epiphany rather than at Christmas. It combines a search for the "king of the Jews" by wise men "from the East", their joy at their arrival "at the house" and their worship

of the child. All this is in contrast to the lack of interest of the “chief priests and the scribes” who, despite their learning and knowledge of the scriptures, took no action. The reader knows that Herod, despite his smooth words, has no intention of meeting and paying homage to a rival king.

We can easily read this paragraph as an anticipation of the Passion story. There are parallels to be drawn. The inscription on the cross on which Jesus died reads, “King of the Jews” (Matthew 27:37). Herod called for a secret meeting with the wise men (2:7); the chief priests “conspired” to arrest Jesus (26:4). There are contrasts, too. The light of a star brought the wise men to Jesus, but on Calvary there would be darkness. The wise men worshipped Jesus (2:2,11); on Calvary, the leaders of his own people mocked him (27:41-43), yet the Gentile centurion and his companions confessed him to be “God’s Son” (27:54). As in the previous paragraph Matthew includes words from scripture, combining quotations from Micah (5:2-3) about his birthplace in Bethlehem and 2 Samuel (5:2) about his role as shepherd.

Egypt and Nazareth (Matthew 2:13-23)

The fourth and concluding section of Matthew’s infancy story falls into three parts. In the first (2:13-15) Joseph takes the child Jesus and his mother to Egypt. The attentive reader remembers how another Joseph who dreamed also went down to Egypt (Genesis 39:1). The prophet Hosea provided a convenient text about God calling his son out of Egypt (11:1).

In the second part (2:16-18) Herod attempts to kill the child whom the wise men had worshipped. In a narrative that resembles the plotting of the Pharaoh to kill the infant Moses (Exodus 1:16) Herod fails. A quotation from the prophet Jeremiah reassures us that all this was known to God (Jeremiah 31:15). If Matthew presumes that his reader is familiar with the rest of this chapter of Jeremiah, he wants us to share the optimism and hope that marks this chapter as a whole. For God, the massacre of the holy innocents was not the end of the story.

In the third part (2:19-23), we arrive at Nazareth, the village from which, according to Mark, Jesus set out to seek John the Baptist (Mark 1:9). Once more Joseph, whom we have met already as a “righteous man” (1:19), is obedient to the voice of an angel. He takes the child and his mother and brings them not to the land of Israel, but to Galilee, in the north where Archelaus, a nasty son of Herod, had no jurisdiction. This was where the public ministry of Jesus would begin. It would be the place where the people of Isaiah’s prophecy, “who sat in darkness”, would see a great light (4:16). As for Jesus himself, he would be called a Nazarene. At this point, Matthew resumes his story along lines parallel to Mark, with his expanded versions of the mission of John the Baptist, the baptism of Jesus and the temptations that followed. His readers are now ready to listen to his account of the mission of Jesus.

Gospels of Year A

Matthew’s Gospel is proclaimed on most Sundays in Year A of the three-year lectionary cycle. May these four paragraphs of Matthew’s “infancy narrative” prove a sound foundation for us to hear the message of this gospel and understand it, so that, in the words of Jesus concluding his parable teaching, we may bear fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, others thirtyfold (Matthew 13:23).

Bede of Wearmouth-Jarrow: Man of the Bible

By Bernard Robinson

Introduction

Bede (673-735 AD), England's only Doctor of the Church (he was proclaimed Doctor of the Universal Church in 1899 by Pope Leo XIII), was born at a time roughly two centuries after the Romans had largely departed from this country. Christianity was still a new religion living in the shadow of the old paganism.

In Northumbria, in what Wilfrid at the Synod of Whitby called "a corner of a remote island"¹, Bede lived a quiet monastic life of prayer and scholarship. He worked solo, without an amanuensis to help him. He drew his inspiration from the Christian Fathers. To read the Fathers, said Bede, was to look upon God's face². He had the great good fortune to have in his monastery a fine library thanks to the labours of his mentor, Abbot Benet Biscop, who had brought many volumes over from the Continent. Bede himself travelled no further afield than Lindisfarne, Hexham and York.

Around him battles raged. "In Bede's lifetime," according to George Thornton, "Northumbria had five kings of whom only Alfrid and Oswy died peaceful deaths"³. The monk-scholar pursued his life's work quietly but with a sense of urgency. He had a strong sense that history was moving to its climax. He was living in the final age of the world, to be succeeded by the eternal eighth age.

At the end of his famous *History of the English Church and People* Bede writes: *When I was seven years old, I was, by the care of my kinsfolk, given into the charge of the very reverend abbot Benedict [Benet Biscop, 628-89] and then of Ceolfriith [642-716], to be educated. From then on, I have spent all my life in this monastery [of Wearmouth-Jarrow⁴] concentrating entirely on the study of the Scriptures. [V.24]*

We know, of course, that he did not in fact devote all his energies to scriptural study. He did, after all, produce tide tables that were used for centuries after his death; also works of rhetoric and chronology; and he wrote about the lives of some of his Christian predecessors in Britain; moreover, this is to say nothing of his great *History of the English Church and People*. It was the Bible, though, that was his passion and his chief spiritual nourishment.

He wrote many commentaries. In his early years he concentrated on the New Testament, commenting on the Apocalypse, the Catholic Epistles, Acts, Luke and Mark (his was one of the few patristic commentaries on Mark). Later he turned his attention to the Old Testament, commenting on Genesis, 1 Samuel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Tobit, Proverbs, the Song of Songs, Habakkuk and the accounts of the construction of the Tabernacle and the Temple⁵. He also wrote fifty Homilies, based on Scriptural liturgical readings. (The biblical works of Bede that are currently available in English are listed at the beginning of the Select Bibliography below.)

Bede's approach to the study of the Bible

Before trying to interpret texts it is important, where there are variant readings in different manuscripts, to try to discover which is the original one. This task, called today Textual Criticism, was one which medieval scholars already took seriously.



Thus, in his commentary on Genesis, Bede noted that at 2:2 Jerome's Vulgate, translated from the Hebrew, has God completing his works on the seventh day, while the Old Latin version (taken from the Greek) places completion on the sixth day. At 2:8 the Vulgate has God planting the Garden of Eden "from the beginning," whereas the Old Latin, like the Greek, has "towards the East"⁶.

The Bible was, for Bede, unambiguously the Word of God. It was written, it is true, by human authors, but it was God's Word that they were setting down. Through their words God was addressing men and women down the ages, not just their contemporaries. Bede gave a decidedly passive role to the human writers: in his preface to his commentary on Acts, Bede

says of Luke that his pen was directed by the Holy Spirit, so that he could in no way write anything untrue.⁷

Bede further thought that God frequently intended a meaning to the words that went beyond what the human writers had in mind, and he gave priority to this Spiritual Sense over the Literal Sense. He wrote that the meaning of the human authors is only the outer rind of Scripture⁸; the pith is the divine message, hidden within⁹. In his commentary on Genesis, Bede noted the danger of allegorical interpretation, in that one may "desert the explicit faith based in history"¹⁰, but in practice he often virtually ignored the Literal Sense.

Elkanah's Two Wives

Thus in his preface to his commentary on 1 Samuel, he tells bishop Acca of Hexham that for a commentator to look to the OT just for the literal meaning, as the Jews do, is insufficient, for what value can it be to two celibates like themselves to hear that Samuel's father, Elkanah, had two wives? One must realise that the two wives have a symbolic reference, standing as they do for the Synagogue and the Church¹¹. When we read the story of the young Saul searching for his father's lost donkeys (1 Sam. 9), according to Bede we should understand that Saul stands for Christ; the donkeys represent the lost souls of men; the four places through which Saul passes stand for the four ages that preceded the coming of Christ; and Samuel, who predicts Saul's future, stands for John the Baptist¹².

Bede, like his predecessors, divided the Spiritual Sense into up to three subdivisions: allegorical; tropological and anagogical. [Allegorical: referring forward to Christian times; tropological: moral; anagogical: eschatological.] Thus in his early work *Schemes and Tropes*, he writes of the text, "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion" (Ps 147:12).

The one and the same Jerusalem may be understood in four ways: on the level of

history, the city of the Jews; allegorically, the Church of Christ; anagogically, the City of God; tropologically, the human soul.¹³ Scripture, he says elsewhere, has four roles: to inform, correct, comfort and point to the consummation of things¹⁴. The patristic type of exegesis, as the PBC document *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993) notes, “pays scant attention to the historical development of revelation”; allegorical exegesis, in particular, “runs the risk of being something of an embarrassment to people today,” even though the lessons drawn from it are edifying (III.B).

If today scholars do not usually identify spiritual senses separate from the literal meaning, that is because they look for spiritual meaning within the literal sense. Contrast two ways of reading Deut. 25:4, “*You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.*” (a) In 1 Cor. 9:9, Paul looks in this text for a spiritual, allegorical, sense: “Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Or does he not speak entirely for our sake?” Paul takes the text to mean that ministers of the Gospel have a right to be fed by the Christian community. (b) “The entitlement of the ox to have what it needs of the farmer’s produce for its health is analogous to the rights of the poor and disadvantaged to consume what they need of another’s crops (Deut 23:24-25 [picking rights]; 24:19-22 [gleaning rights]). The wholeness of the covenant society extends even to its livestock¹⁵.”

Bede included commentaries on OT material not previously covered: Proverbs, Tobit, the Tabernacle, the Temple, Ezra-Nehemiah. His aim was not merely to fill in gaps left by previous Fathers but also, in a number of cases, “to show how the history of Israel could be read figuratively as the story of the Church in general and of the Anglo-Saxon Church in particular.”¹⁶ Thus the Tabernacle in the wilderness could be seen as standing for the Synagogue, since only the Hebrews had constructed it, whereas the Temple stood for the Church, since gentiles had helped to build it. Ezra was both scribe and priest. As scribe he was a model for such as Bede himself in preserving and teaching Scripture. As a priest who rooted out abuses, he should serve as a model for bishops in Bede’s own day, since so many of them, says Bede, “exact an immense tax and weight of worldly goods from those they claim to be in charge of while in return giving nothing for their eternal salvation either by teaching them or by providing them with examples of good living.”¹⁷

Bede’s Sources

Bede’s main sources were the four great Latin Fathers – Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome and Gregory the Great – although he also used, among others, Origen, Cassiodorus, Hilary, Cyprian, Victorinus, Arator and Isidore. He always claims to be following in the Fathers’ footsteps¹⁸ but his use of them is far from slavish. I here propose to say a few words about one commentary and one homily.

COMMENTARY ON ACTS [AD 709-16]

None of the Latin Fathers had written a commentary on Acts (and few of the Greek Fathers had) so Bede had to rely on his own resources to some extent, though he made frequent use of an allegorical metrical composition on Acts by the Roman subdeacon Arator. According to one scholar, Bede’s commentary was the fruit of notes that he had been keeping for a number of years, but the book was put together “at top speed, so as not to keep Acca [who had commissioned it] waiting.”¹⁹ The speed of composition

will have accounted for the uneven coverage: chapter 6 gets no more than five brief comments.

He remarks that at Pentecost “the Church’s humility recovers the unity of languages which the pride of Babylon had shattered”.²⁰ On 2:6, “*Everyone heard them speaking in his own language*”, Bede says that this can be taken two ways: (a) The Apostles spoke in all the languages of their audience, using one language after another; (b) The Apostles spoke in their own language but the members of their audience each heard the words in his own language. (The possibility that the Apostles were using *glossolalia*, a form of ecstatic utterance normally intelligible only with the help of an interpreter [cf 1 Cor. 12:10; 14:13-14] is not considered.)

When we come across something particularly down-to-earth, homely even, in Bede, one usually finds that he is leaving his sources to one side and teasing the matter out for himself. So here at Acts 12:8, when the angel who has come to release Peter from prison tells him to gird himself and put on his sandals, Bede suggests a reason why Peter may have been sleeping unbelted and unshod: the cell-floor was doubtless cold (like Bede’s own cell?) so he will have taken off his belt and sandals so as to let his tunic down and tuck it warmly under his feet.

Bede, equally characteristically, then finds in this a practical lesson: this provides an example to the weak – when we are tried by bodily affliction or unjust treatment by men, we are permitted to relax somewhat our intended rigour.

Then, after this pastoral reflection, he adds a spiritual one: since it is said, *May your loins be girt and your shoes on your feet, making ready for the gospel of peace* [Luke 12:35; Eph. 6:15], spiritually we are commanded to take up again the insignia of the virtues and the preaching of the word.²¹

At 24:14, Bede rightly prefers the Greek reading *the Way which they call a heretical sect* to the Vulgate’s *a sect which they call a heretical sect*. (When he wrote the Acts commentary, Bede’s Greek was probably rather shaky, and he inferred the Greek reading from a text of the Old Latin version.²²) At 28:11, giving the name on the figurehead of the boat that brought Paul and his companions to Sicily, Bede correctly practises textual emendation, recognizing that in the Vulgate text that he is using *castrorum* [camps] is a scribal error for *Castorum*, Castor and Pollux.

Bede often comments on chronological and geographical matters in the text of Acts, and also on matters of rhetoric. Bede updated his views on Acts later, in a *Retractatio* [c.725-731], treating mainly of questions of textual criticism and down-to-earth details. Bede liked to get details right (he “detested superficiality”²³); in this respect he was rather more like a modern scholar than were most of the Fathers. Thus on Acts 27:16, where Luke



is describing the lifeboat attached to the ship (Gr *skaphē*, Vulgate *scapha*) in which Paul travelled to Rome, in the commentary Bede had said that it was a small boat made with twigs covered with untanned hide, while in the *Retractatio* he says that he had been following Isidore and that his subsequent reading has led him to suppose that the term used could equally well denote a canoe scooped out of a single tree.

Differences between the Vulgate and the Greek are also discussed. By the time he came to write the *Retractatio* it seems that his grasp of Greek had improved somewhat. He therefore notes in the *Retractatio* that, in the Pentecost narrative, the Vulgate's *variis linguis* [in various languages], Acts 2:4, is an inexact rendering since the Greek has *in other languages*. On 2:6, Bede notes that some have criticised him for saying in his Commentary that this can be taken in two ways. He was following, he retorts, an irreproachable source, St Gregory of Nazianzus²⁴. He still thinks both interpretations tenable, but since Luke does not hint that Peter's discourse (2:14-36) was uttered in a succession of languages, 2:6 probably means that members of the audience heard each in his own language what had been spoken in only one.

HOMILY II.15: For the Feast of the Ascension [c.730]

All his life long Bede's motivation for writing may best be described as pastoral. He wrote commentaries to assist bishops to train their clergy and to help other priests who lacked Bede's own educational advantages to prepare their sermons. We have fifty homilies penned by Bede himself, all towards the end of his life. Whether he preached them himself is uncertain. They are very exegetical, but they are rather less reliant on the Fathers than are his commentaries. They had a profound influence long after Bede's death.

A century later, at the instigation of Charlemagne, Paul the Deacon, a monk from Monte Cassino, compiled a Homiliary, an anthology of patristic homilies. Almost a quarter of the contents come from Bede. This Homiliary became the standard collection of readings for the monastic Night Office and thus came to instruct monks for centuries to come. One scholar (A. Katzenellenbogen) has argued that the relief sculptures in Chartres cathedral find their primary influence in Bede's homilies.²⁵

Bede's homily for Ascension Day derives a special interest from the fact that his death occurred on the eve of that day, after first vespers of the feast. (There is a well-known Ascension hymn attributed to Bede.²⁶) This homily refers to the OT more than do most of his homilies. Bede spends part of the homily, it is true, on explaining the meaning of the Ascension account in Luke 24:44-53, and saying such things as that the way in which the apostles are portrayed as "persevering unanimously in prayer" while waiting for the gift of the Spirit (Acts 1:14) should be a model for us to follow. Then he lists a number of OT texts which he sees as foreshadowing the Ascension:

- i. Num. 13:24-25. The Israelites sent by Joshua to reconnoitre the Promised Land see two men carrying a cluster of grapes on a pole. Bede sees the two men as representing the preachers of the Old and New Covenants, and the cluster of grapes him who said "I am the Vine" (Jn. 15:1).
- ii. Ps 47 [Vg 46]: 6. ("God goes up with a shout, the Lord with trumpet-blast"), a text still used for Ascension Day. Rather than take it, with Bede, as a straight prediction of the Ascension, we might say today that it may well have originally celebrated an annual ceremonial re-coronation, in the Autumn, of the God of Israel, and that

in applying it to Christ we are saying that he shares in the kingship of his heavenly Father, and that one of the ways in which we can picture the Ascension is as his ascent to the throne of glory.

iii. Gen. 5:23. The translation of Enoch to heaven at the age of 365.

iv. 2 Kings 2:8-14. Elijah's assumption to heaven in a fiery chariot.

The end of the homily is more straightforward: *Let us, my dearly beloved brothers, venerate with boundless zeal the glory of the Lord's Ascension, which was hinted at in advance by the words and actions of the prophets, and later fulfilled in our Mediator himself. In order that we too may follow in his footsteps and deserve to ascend to heaven, let us practise while on earth a heavenly humility, bearing in mind Solomon's words, "Pride goes before a fall, while the humble in spirit will be glorified" [Prov. 29:23]. The Ascension of our Redeemer has taught us where all our efforts should be directed. The Ascension to heaven of the Mediator between God and human beings shows us that the door to the heavenly homeland lies open to human beings.*

As the excellent preacher says, "Let us seek the things that are above, where Christ sits at God's right hand; let us savour the things above, not earthly things." [Col. 3:1-2] Let us seek him and have our faith strengthened. Let us seek him with deeds of love. Let us be strengthened by the hope of what we shall find. Let us always seek his face, so that when he who so peacefully ascended shall return in fearful fashion, he, Jesus Christ our Lord, may find us prepared, and take us with himself to the festivities of the city above.

One notes here, as in so much that Bede wrote, a strong sense of the idea of the Church as a pilgrim people. In another homily, he says of the Church that it "is partly a pilgrim on earth, absent from the Lord, and partly it is present with the Lord, reigning in heaven".²⁷ Elsewhere again he says: "The saint is no denizen of earth but a traveller and a stranger".²⁸ Nearly every one of Bede's homilies urges the hearer to press forward to our heavenly "homeland". For better or worse, that is seldom a leading motif in present-day sermons.

Conclusion

Bede's exegetical work is compounded, in varying proportions, of the scholarly, the pastoral, the down-to-earth and the spiritualising (allegorical exegesis being particularly pronounced in the case of the OT books). As one scholar says: although Bede took much from his predecessors, "he chose freely among the solutions that which he preferred; his choice was usually judicious and sensible".²⁹ If in what Bede wrote about the Bible there is much that is time-conditioned and outmoded there is much, too, that can continue to instruct and move us today, and to awaken our sense of the stature of the first English biblical scholar and the only English Doctor of the Church.

This is an edited version of a talk given to the Tyneside Circle in July 2016 by Bernard Robinson. Before his retirement, Bernard Robinson lectured in Sacred Scripture at Ushaw College, Durham. He is a member of the Tyneside Circle of the Newman Association and of the Society for Old Testament Study.

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NOTES (PL=Patrologia Latina, CCSL=Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina)

- 1 Bede, *History* III.25; in Sherley-Price edition, 192.
- 2 *In Cant.*, PL 91:1095D.
- 3 Thornton (1991), 9.
- 4 It was a single monastery, on two sites, seven miles apart. It seems that Bede began at Wearmouth and later moved to the Jarrow house, perhaps on its opening in 682 (so, most recently, DeGregorio, 6), perhaps considerably later (so, for example, Robson; see also Bede, *Ecclesiastical History* ed. McClure and Collins, xiii).
- 5 He never wrote a commentary on the Psalms, though they played a great part in his life: he sang them in church, he studied them, and he prayed them for private devotion. He wrote, though, an Abbreviated Psalter, going through the whole of the Psalter and picking out individual verses. This was intended for private prayer, and because of Alcuin's admiration for it Bede started a fashion for such compilations.
- 6 Bede seems to accept the Vulgate reading in the first case. God finished his works on the seventh day in the sense that, having finished the creation of the world in six days, he then created the seventh day, a prefigurement of the Sabbath. If Eden was planted towards the East, and, as some suppose, in a place remote from human habitation, there are problems, he says, about the statement that the Flood covered the entire surface of the earth, if this means only the presently inhabited world. (*noster orbis*.) But, says Bede, wherever it was planted ("whether here or there"), the important thing is that it was on the earth.
- 7 CCSL 121:4.
- 8 This phrase was derived from Jerome, *ep.* 53, and would be echoed down the centuries, e.g. by Bonaventure.
- 9 CCSL 119A:237.
- 10 CCSL 118A:3.
- 11 CCSL 119:9.

- 12 CCSL 119:77.
- 13 CCSL 123A:169.
- 14 CCSL 119:9.
- 15 McConville, 368-69.
- 16 DeGregorio, "Bede and the Old Testament" in DeGregorio, 127-141, here 135.
- 17 *Comm. In Nehemiam*, cap.21. DeGregorio's translation, DeGregorio, 138.
- 18 E.g. CCSL 119:10; 121:3; PL 91:10:77B.
- 19 Laistner, xviii.
- 20 Bede here echoes Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 41:16.
- 21 *Commentary on Acts*, ed. L. T. Martin, 112-13.
- 22 *Commentary on Acts*, ed. L. T. Martin, xix.
- 23 Capelle, 40.
- 24 *Oration* 41:15.
- 25 See L.T. Martin, "Bede and Preaching" in DeGregorio, 156-169.
- 26 *Hymnum canamus gloriae* (or, *Domino*). ("New praises be given...", tr.R. A. Knox; "Sing we triumphant...", tr. B. Webb.)
- 27 *Hom.* II.1, CCSL 122:19.
- 28 CCSL 118A:186.
- 29 Capelle, 26.

Manchester Newman Lecture 2017

on **Monday, April 3rd**

in Memory of Mary and Tom Brogan

Together in tomorrow's Europe: How the presence of Muslims will change Christianity in the old continent and what Christians need to do about it



This lecture is to be given by **Damian Howard SJ**. He is a lecturer at Heythrop College and Vice-Director of the Bellarmine Institute, a theological faculty within Heythrop. He works on Muslim-Christian relations at the Hurtado Institute, a Jesuit Centre in East London and a place of 'welcome and community'.

A donation of £5 at the door will help us to cover costs. Advance booking is essential.

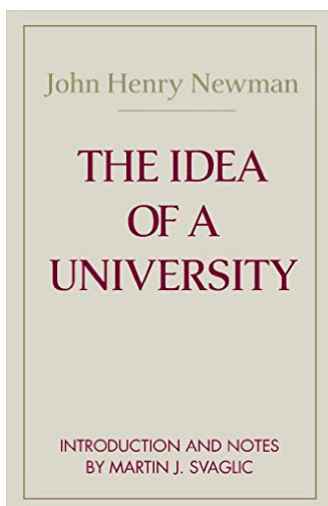
Email dcq@mac.com or telephone 07764 946074

6.30 for 7.00 p.m. at Friends' Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS

Newman Reading Group

One of the initiatives to come out of the Newman Association Assembly in Leeds in October 2015 was the creation of regional Reading Groups. The first meeting of such a group took place in July 2016 in Birmingham; there were eleven attenders from Birmingham, Coventry, North Staffs and Rainham.

The book was Newman's *The Idea of a University*. The next meeting will take place on Saturday, January 28, from 3 to 6pm at St Michael's Polish Church, Moor Street, Birmingham. This is within close walking distance of New Street Station. The book will be *John Henry Newman: A Portrait in Letters*, edited by Roderick Strange. The choice of the subsequent book will be decided by those who attend the next meeting and could relate to Newman or to any other Catholic writer/movement or theme. Anyone interested should contact me: cjroberts08@talktalk.net.



Before the first meeting on *The Idea of University* extracts and possible discussion topics were circulated. The atmosphere was friendly and convivial with liquid refreshments and biscuits and we also cut a cake to celebrate our launch! The meeting started with everyone summarising their own thoughts and viewpoints. The dominant themes that emerged from this initial input were: the purpose of university education, the university as a community of teachers and learners and what should be the place and the mission statement of a Catholic university.

Concerning the purpose of a university, discussion focused on whether vocational degrees leading to professional qualifications are compatible with Newman's emphasis on the humanities and the liberal arts. Some group members regretted the gradual decline in foundation courses with a liberal studies

component while others argued that the acquisition of knowledge and the cultivation of judgment could be acquired outside the formal ambit of a humanities degree. Newman himself asserted that self-education through private study can be more authentic and enriching than superficially digested knowledge. Far from being hostile to vocational education, Newman promoted the Faculty of Medicine at the proposed Catholic University of Ireland which went on to become the most successful Faculty. The purpose of a university also led to a discussion of the social and cultural values it promoted and which Newman associated with those of the "gentleman". Whilst the word may seem dated, it still conveys enduring values and behaviours that transcend gender and class: refinement of character, respectful listening to differing opinions, and avoidance of gossip and slander. The reassertion of these values is important in the modern campus which is sometimes characterised by ideological conflict, political correctness and rejection of differences, leading to disruption of visiting speakers and policies of "no platforming".

The group discussed how the ideal of Newman's concept of the university as a community of teachers and learners is reflected today. Various developments were mentioned that Newman would have approved of such as interdisciplinarity, research-led teaching, student-centred learning, study abroad and final year dissertations that require reflexive synthesis. He would also have approved of the tutorial system although it is difficult and even unrealistic to apply the Oxbridge system across the whole university sector.

The third theme was the role and purpose of a Catholic university and the group compared and contrasted the mission statements of Newman University Birmingham (Catholic) and Birmingham City University (secular). The mission statement of Newman University was explicitly value-driven with the use of words like "community", "values", "dialogue", "individual integrity", "justice" and "vocation". The mission statement of Birmingham City University was more vocational and goal-oriented and used terms such as "prospects of individuals" and "professional practice" with explicit reference to insertion in the work place.

Newman was conscious of the importance universities attached to "ethos", regardless of their religious or secular character – contemporary universities are trying to fashion and define their own particular ethos for the sake of their present and past students. However, the group recognised that there were a number of factors affecting newer universities that militate against the creation of a stable ethos: the focus on vocational degrees, the rapid pace of economic change and the lack of a shared social and cultural background that characterised the student intake in Newman's day.

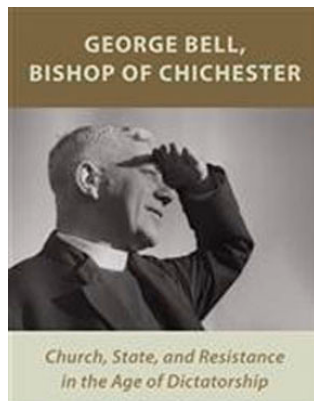
Colin Roberts, Coventry Circle

Book Review

George Bell, Bishop of Chichester; Church, State, and Resistance in the Age of Dictatorship by Andrew Chandler (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2016), 224 pages (paperback), \$35. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7227-2

The period of the Second World War gave us, if nothing else, three outstanding Christian leaders in this country: our own Cardinal Arthur Hinsley, Archbishop William Temple and Bishop George Bell, the subject of this outstanding book.

Bell was Bishop of Chichester from 1929 until his retirement in 1957, a long time, which would have been shorter had he succeeded Temple as Archbishop of Canterbury. Instead Geoffrey Fisher was appointed, perhaps to the disappointment of Bell at the time but in the end this gave him a further opportunity to put his gifts at the service of the wider church. He was above all a prophetic figure who was one of the pioneers of ecumenism. In this he was one of the first Anglican Bishops to work closely with the Catholic Church in the



person of the redoubtable Cardinal Hinsley.

It is moving in this book to read of the collaboration between these two, and also between Hinsley and Cosmo Gordon Lang, then Archbishop of Canterbury, in the Sword of the Spirit Movement which aimed to bring all Christians together in the heat of the Second World War. It is distinctly moving to read of the great ecumenical meeting at the Stoll Theatre in May 1942 when, at the close, Bell, as Chandler puts it “simply turned to Hinsley and asked him if he would be prepared to lead them all in saying the Lord’s prayer together”.

Wartime policies

Bell is probably best known today for his opposition to the policy of the British Government towards bombing Germany and here we have his speech in the House of Lords on February 9th 1944 when he warned about the “harvest that they are laying up for the future relationships for the peoples of Europe” as well as its moral implications. This sounds admirable but one wonders if Bell had weakened his case by arguing when war broke out that negotiations should start with Hitler? The Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax, no warmonger himself, replied to Bell’s suggestion with the understatement that there existed “no reasonably possible grounds for successful negotiation”.

Bell was no armchair critic either. In 1942 he undertook a dangerous flight to Stockholm at the request of the British Government in the hope that cultural links, and presumably other connections too, would prove fruitful with this neutral country. It was then that he met, for the last time, his friend Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The description of Bonhoeffer suddenly standing in front of the astonished Bell in a Stockholm hotel is unforgettable. Sadly nothing really came of all this and Bell returned to Chichester and Bonhoeffer to his murder at the hands of the Nazis at Flossenbürg in 1945.



George Bell

This then was a life richly and fully lived in the service of His Lord and it is wonderful to have it brought to life by Andrew Chandler in this engrossing study.

However, there is a postscript, for in 2015 allegations surfaced that Bell had sexually abused a child in the 1950s. The Diocese of Chichester promptly paid compensation on the “balance of probabilities” that this was true without bothering to interview Bell’s

Chaplain at the time, who is still alive, and who was with him constantly. Nor did it examine Bell’s own diaries to see if he was even in the country when the alleged abuse took place.

The resulting furore over what was seen as a gross miscarriage of justice extended beyond the Church of England and the matter was raised in the House of Lords. Now, just before writing this review, news has come to hand that Lord Carlile has been asked to conduct a review into the case. This, to say the least, is most welcome.

John Duddington

My Ecumenical Journey

By Canon John O'Toole

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, who prayed that we might all be one, we pray to You for the unity of Christians, according to Your will, according to Your means. May your Spirit enable us to experience the suffering caused by division, to see our sin, and to hope beyond all hope. Amen.

This prayer is used by the *Chemin Neuf* community which is Roman Catholic in origin but has an ecumenical membership and a charism of praying for the full unity of all Christians.

Introduction

I would like to speak about my own ecumenical journey and what, looking back, I see to have been the significant steps and milestones on the way. I'd like to approach this by reflecting on how my own personal experiences have overlapped with the Roman Catholic Church's ecumenical journey at the national and international levels and how the personal and the institutional may throw light on each other. Hopefully this will ring some bells with your own personal ecumenical journey.

Thoughts and reflections

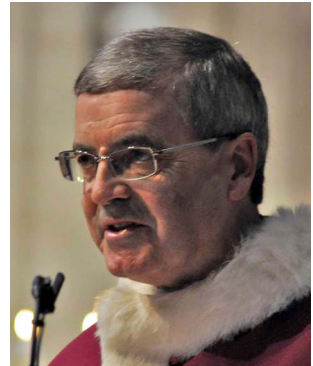
My first observation is, however, that real life doesn't run as smoothly or as evenly as these straight lines.

The "cardiograph screen" may be closer to reality for most of us – with many ups and downs as well as flat and even periods. Fortunately, our faith is that God is able to write straight with crooked lines. But I hope the following dates may be useful pegs on which to hang a few thoughts and reflections.

1950 I was born in Dublin on February 1st 1950 (my birth certificate has January 1st!). This was in the reign of Pope Pius XII. I lived there until I was eight years old, growing up in an environment where 99 per cent of people were RCs and where one's Catholic faith was enormously bolstered by the social and cultural support network. One never thought of not going to Mass!

My mum told me later that there were two Protestant families who lived along our road – the Stewarts and the Proctors. When the youngest Stewart boy was killed by a milk van the family brought the boy's favourite teddy to our house and gave it to my mum for my younger brother Gabriel. Simple gestures like this may advance ecumenism as much as, if not more than, all the agreed theological statements.

1958 My dad lost his job as a bus conductor and moved to Chatham in Kent to look for work. A few months later my mum and five kids arrived to join him. Suddenly reality changed for me. From being in the Catholic *majority* I was now part of a Catholic *minority*. There was no place available in the local Catholic primary school and so I went to the local state school – where RCs stood outside the hall while



Canon John O'Toole

prayers were being said and I had to pretend not to like the hymns that attracted me. Some years later Mervyn Stockwood, the colourful Anglican Bishop of Southwark told me that in 1958 he had invited Bishop Cyril Cowderoy, his RC counterpart, for dinner. Showing him round his house he took him into the chapel and suggested that they said the Lord's Prayer together but Bishop Cyril replied: "No, I'm sorry. Rome won't allow it." Strangely this was the same year that saw the surprising election of Pope John XXIII who very quickly set up the Secretariat for Christian Unity.

In 1960 he extended an invitation to Dr Geoffrey Fisher, who thereby became the first Archbishop of Canterbury since the Reformation to visit the Pope, although in a private capacity. Most famously, John XXIII summoned the Second Vatican Council and we have perhaps forgotten, amid the focus on our internal changes, that one of its principal aims was to seek the reunion of all Christians.

1965 I went to the Junior Seminary at Mark Cross, near Tunbridge Wells at the age of 13 in 1963. Two years later, in 1965, I was expelled for smoking! 1965 marked also the close of the Second Vatican Council which brought about what we would call today a paradigm shift in the Roman Catholic Church's understanding of itself and its relationship to other Christians, other faiths and to the wider world. The Church moved from seeing itself as apart from or even against the world to being *in* the world and *for* the world, while not *of* the world.

The Decree on Ecumenism was promulgated on November 21st 1964 and spoke (in para 4) of the unique Church of Christ as "*subsisting*" in the Roman Catholic Church, but with many elements of sanctification and truth existing beyond its visible boundaries – so the Church of Christ is, as it were "defined" in the Catholic Church, but not "confined" to it. Importantly, the Decree recognises the presence of the Holy Spirit not only in other Christian believers as individuals, but in their communities – viewed not as heretical conventicles, but as sources of grace and holiness.

The Decree rightly sees the Church and the Church's unity not only in sociological terms (being chums together), but in theological terms – as mirroring the life of God as Father, Son and Spirit. We are "one in Christ" and so "brothers and sisters" and it is God's Spirit that draws and gathers us together as parts of one (albeit dysfunctional?) family. Perhaps a key quotation is in para 7: "There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart (i.e. a conversion)". Change and conversion can be painful and many have had to make a painful and slow journey through the six C's – from conflict and competition, through coexistence and co-operation to commitment and eventually full communion. Over 50 years since the ending of the Second Vatican Council in 1965 it has also been said that Catholics can be divided into three groups: pre-Council, post-Council and what Council?

Having moved to a non-Catholic school for my A levels I discovered when I tried to join the Christian Union that the staff had to have a meeting to decide whether or not Catholics could be admitted. I made friends with Paul Hatt, a devout Anglican evangelical. He, his family and his church taught me much about the importance of reading, praying and living the Scriptures. Paul kept a Gideon's New Testament and Psalms in his blazer pocket and during the lunch hour would slip away quietly to a corner and spend ten minutes or so reading and reflecting on God's Word – and his example spurred me to a love of the Scriptures. His mum was a kind and saintly

woman and I was delighted when she told me that I was on her prayer list.

I recall arriving at King's College, London as a 19-year-old to study history and clutching my supply of Catholic Truth Society pamphlets. I was ready to defend the RC corner even to the extent of defending the indefensible such as the Inquisition – but I was rather thrown into confusion to find the Anglican ordinands walking round in cassocks, holding thuribles and clutching Vatican II documents in their hands. I began to see that many differences are *within* rather than *between* denominations.

I remember also being surprised to find that Martin Luther had believed passionately in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist even though he rejected the idea of transubstantiation and the Mass as a sacrifice. As we prepare to commemorate in 2017 the 500th anniversary of the start of the Protestant Reformation I recall that while I was at the seminary at Womersley we were once set an essay by the very traditional Church history professor with the title: "If Martin Luther were alive today, he would have been at the Second Vatican Council. Discuss."

1978 Ordained in the year of the three Popes (Paul VI, another passionate ecumenist, John Paul I and JP II) and in my first appointment as an ordained priest, I was pleasantly surprised to find a good ministers' fraternal where there was respect for each other and for each other's tradition as well as a good lunch and the challenge of discovering different ways both of believing and of expressing belief. It was also obvious that many positions that people took were as much to do with personality and psychology as with philosophy and theology – and could cut across denominational lines.



Mass at St Paul's Thamesmead

The 1990s I had always been keen on ecumenism "in my head" but I think my experience at Thamesmead taught me how to be ecumenical "in my heart" too. St Paul's was a modern church building also opened in 1978 and shared by four denominations – Anglican, Methodist, URC and Roman Catholic. I went there in 1990. There were two chapels (a RC chapel and a United Congregation

chapel) separated by a corridor which

was known by the parishioners as Reformation corridor – a wooden construction that could be dismantled once unity had arrived! In the rest of the building not only did space have to be shared (a real difficulty) but the collections were also shared (a real test of ecumenical commitment and literally putting your money where your mouth is).

Every Friday morning there was a Team meeting where we prayed, planned and argued together. Falling out and making up formed part of life: offering forgiveness and seeking forgiveness are key parts of both our denominational and ecumenical lives. Once a month there was a celebration of "Simultaneous Eucharists" when both congregations joined together, with two altars on the sanctuary and the lectern standing in between. The Liturgy of the Word was completely shared (with the homily being given by one of the Team), then we moved to our respective altar, but used the same Eucharistic prayer, praying for the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury as

well as for our own diocesan bishops and Church leaders.

People then came forward to receive communion from their own minister (so no intercommunion) and the service ended with the sign of peace followed by refreshments afterwards. It was a bold ecumenical experiment in its day and as far as we could go within the rules at that time within each other's traditions. Certainly many friendships were made both by ministers and people that cut across denominations and theologies. It was during my time at Thamesmead that the 1993 document *Principles and Norms of Ecumenism* came out drawing together much good practice since Vatican II and spelling out the implications and possibilities that flow from the "real yet imperfect" communion that we already enjoy as Christians.

John Paul II's famous encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (*That they may be One*) came out in 1995 and I remember being greatly encouraged by its "easy to read" style and by the way it reaffirmed ecumenism as one of the pastoral priorities both of John Paul's pontificate and of the Church's mission (to be Roman Catholic is to be ecumenical). He also invited other Christian leaders and their theologians to explore with him how the Pope might exercise a service of love and be a focus of unity rather than a source of division among all Christians. Significantly, he asked forgiveness for the times the Pope's authority has been used to dominate rather than to serve. The abuse of authority is something which can happen in all our traditions and at every level of the Church's life – whether in the Vatican, in a diocese, in a parish, in a home.

From 1996 to 1999 I worked as part of the Team at the Catholic Missionary Society, leading parish and school missions throughout England, and this taught me not to advertise things as "ecumenical" (they attract few people), but to present a theme (e.g. family life or justice and peace) ecumenically. It's the wisdom of "doing things ecumenically" rather than "doing ecumenical things". One of the key stumbling blocks, that of celebrating the Eucharist and receiving communion together, was addressed in the RC Bishops' teaching document *One Bread One Body* in 1998. The fundamental principle which underlines its norms on Eucharistic sharing is that "the Eucharist is properly the sacrament of those who are in full communion with the Church" and so cannot as a rule be received by those who are not in full communion, except where there is "a danger of death, or if there is some other grave and pressing need such as a unique occasion for joy or for sorrow in the life of a family or individual such as a Baptism, Confirmation, First Communion, Marriage, Ordination or death" (paras 106 and 109).

The teaching of *One Bread One Body* seems logical if one's premise is that the Eucharist is a *sign* of unity, but some argue strongly that it is also a *means* to unity. We also live in a culture which often reacts emotionally rather than logically and so finds it difficult to make sense of the Church's rules and the nuanced theological thinking on which they are based. People tend to say "What would Jesus do?" and quoting from the rule-book may cut little ice as a response. At the very least, therefore, a more generous interpretation of the permitted norms – and a wider knowledge of them – would be a help. John Paul II in *Ut Unum Sint* says: "*We can now ask how much further we must travel until that blessed day when full unity in faith will be attained and we can celebrate together in peace the Holy Eucharist of the Lord.*" (para 77)

Returning to the diocese in 1999 I was appointed as parish priest to the large and

lively parish of St Andrew's, Thornton Heath. However, I was surprised how relatively little was done ecumenically. This was not due to a lack of goodwill but simply to a lack of time. The clergy were good people, but everyone seemed very busy doing their own thing in their own patch. With the tragedy of a sword attack in our Church the Salvation Army came to our rescue, changed the time of their own evening service and offered the Salvation Army citadel for our Sunday evening Mass with the Salvation Army captain rummaging around in his cupboards to try and find a candle for the RC congregation! That is practical ecumenism.

2005 In 2001, I became a member of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee (or English ARC as it is known) which is the national version of ARCIC – set up over 50 years ago now to study the ARCIC Agreed Statements and to see how best to make them more widely known at the local level. Pope Benedict XVI was elected Pope in 2005 and continued Pope John Paul's urgent call to pray and work for unity insisting that this is not an optional extra but that "to be Roman Catholic is to be ecumenical."

Travelling down to Guildford one day to have a pub lunch with some classmates of mine from our seminary days my eye was caught by a poster in St Nicholas's Anglican church in Guildford advertising a talk for the coming week. The title of the talk was "Could the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church ever be united?" to be given by the then Bishop of Guildford, Bishop Christopher Hill.

I went back the following week to hear his excellent talk. I wonder, for example, which season of the year you think might best sum up the current state of ecumenism – would it be winter, spring, summer or autumn? Is the ecumenical glass half-empty or half-full – or has it been it been dropped and smashed? In 2009 Pope Benedict XVI set up the Ordinariate to enable "groups of Anglicans" to join the Catholic Church while preserving elements of their theological, spiritual, pastoral and liturgical patrimony. He spoke of this as a "prophetic" gesture while others are more cautious and others more critical. Perhaps it is still too soon to tell. How might the Ordinariate be a "bridge" rather than a "wall" to full Christian unity?

2011 In 2011 I was appointed as Dean of St George's Cathedral where I was very pleased to find that very strong friendships and links existed with our sister Anglican Southwark Cathedral. Every year we united for a joint pilgrimage and this touched and attracted a much wider group of people than a talk or a formal meeting. I was a little surprised when the young Anglican priest with us asked me if it was all right if he used the luminous mysteries of the Rosary for the prayer time which, according to our programme, was to be led by the Anglicans. Having two Southwark Cathedrals caused not a little confusion and quite a bit of fun at times and the emphasis in both was on worship, welcome and witness. WWW (and in that order) is a good brief mission statement for the cathedrals, churches and chapels of all our denominations.

2016 Pope Francis was elected in March 2013 and, from the start, showed his ecumenical commitment by deliberately choosing to describe himself as "the Bishop of Rome" rather than Supreme Pontiff. In January 2015 I started my present work as National Ecumenical Officer for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales although my work also involves dialogue with people of other faiths and indeed of no faith.

The "bread and butter" of my work is servicing the various ecumenical bilateral

dialogues between the Catholic Church and the Anglican, the Methodist, the United Reformed, the Byzantine Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches as well as informal conversations with the Baptist and Pentecostal Churches. There is also a Court of the Gentiles for dialogue with people of no faith. The “jam” on the bread is the privilege of representing the Catholic Church at many ecumenical services and events as well as attending the Church of England General Synod and, this year, the Methodist Conference.

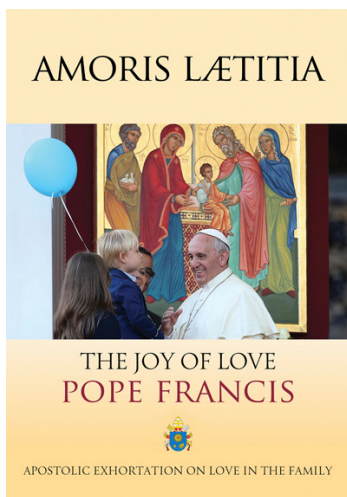
So what answer would I give to the question: “Could the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church ever be united?” My answer is in terms of an image. If you travel not to Guildford, but to Liverpool, you will find two Cathedrals which are fairly close to each other. The Anglican Cathedral was designed by a Roman Catholic and the RC Cathedral was designed by an Anglican and the two cathedrals are joined together by a road which is called Hope Street. So my answer is hopefully yes – for where there is a will, there is a way – no matter how great or insuperable the difficulties or obstacles may seem.

Pope Francis has a rich ecumenical experience from his time in Buenos Aires where pastorally he emphasised relationships rather than structures and partnerships rather than rivalries. Relationships and trust are the bridge to reconciliation and unity or as one Anglican bishop has put it “*affective ecumenism comes before effective ecumenism*”. Pope Francis himself has famously said that “ecumenism is too important to be left just to the theologians.”

Significantly, his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) in November 2013 was addressed not just to Roman Catholics but to all Christians and was warmly welcomed across the traditions. *Laudato Si* was addressed to the whole of humanity and his latest Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love) on the theme of marriage and family life speaks of the importance of love in the *Christian* family of the Church and in the family of the world.

What the fullness of unity will look like in reality we may not be able to imagine. Recently Pope Francis (in an address to the plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity on 10 November 2016) spoke of how crucial it is for all of us to focus on the person of Christ since by drawing closer to him we will draw closer to one another. He also listed three “false models” of communion:

- Unity is not the fruit of our human efforts or the product constructed by ecclesiastical diplomacy, but is instead “a gift that comes from on high”. Unity is a journey rather than a destination.
- Unity is not uniformity. The different theological, liturgical, spiritual and canonical traditions which have developed in the Christian world are a wealth for and not a threat to the unity of the Church.



- Unity is not absorption. Christian unity does not lead to a “reverse ecumenism” for which churches would have to deny their own history of faith. By focusing on what we have in common rather than what separates us we are able to acknowledge that we are brothers and sisters.

Finally, I have brought a map to remind me of Blessed John Henry Newman’s great hymn, *Lead kindly light* and especially the lines: “*I do not ask to see the distant scene, one step enough for me.*” For Newman, faith is a lamp which lights up only the next step but, if we take that step in faith, then we have enough light to take the next step. We may not be able to see what full visible unity will eventually look like but we can take a step forward in faith – and leave the rest to God.

This talk was delivered to the Hertfordshire Circle on November 27th. Canon O’Toole is National Ecumenical Officer for the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales.

Concerning Circles

New Members

Recruitment has gone well during the autumn and as a result we can welcome the following new members, who have been elected at recent Council meetings. They are attached to Circles as shown.

Mrs J. Collins (North Gloucestershire), Lord J.E. & Dr E. Drummond-Young (Edinburgh), Mr P. Groombridge (Hertfordshire), Mrs A. Harrop (Manchester & N. Cheshire), Mrs M. M. Lundberg (Edinburgh), Miss J. Reid (Cleveland), Mr J. N. Roberts (Surrey Hills), Mr W. & Mrs C. Roller (Edinburgh).

Requiescant in Pace

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

Dr F. M. Andrews (Unattached), Mrs M. E. Baker (Hertfordshire), Mr M. Hammond (Coventry), Mr P. V. Hazelwood (Coventry), Rev. C. I. & Mrs M. B. Howe (Wrexham), Mrs E. M. Lewis (Worcester), Mr F. J. A. Mallon (Glasgow), Miss K. M. Midwinter (North Gloucestershire), Mr F. Shannon (Unattached).

Mary Baker was the wife of Anthony Baker, a previous president of the Newman Association, and a much-valued member of the Hertfordshire Circle.

Vacancy for Membership Secretary

After sixteen years, the present Membership Secretary would now like to relinquish the position as soon as a successor can be appointed. The duties are not onerous and a full job description is available. Any volunteers should contact the Association secretary, Brian Hamill, at secretary@newman.org.uk.

Bill White

Pax Romana

Over 100 delegates from North and South America, Africa, Asia and Europe assembled in Barcelona at the end of October for the 2016 32nd Plenary Assembly of Pax Romana. The opening lecture was given by Josep Rambla SJ on *Mercy, a Political Action*. The following day was devoted to *See, Judge, Act* sessions. *See* comprised a series of testimonial presentations from the Ukraine, RD Congo and Catalonia on the common theme of *experiences of indifference and mercy*. After a series of workshops on such diverse topics as *Political conflicts* and *Women's concerns* the Assembly turned to the *Judge* theme with a talk by the President of the Hungarian federation on *Mercy of Lethargy: from Indifference to Mercy*. The *Act* session was focused on *the challenge of our commitments* which took the form of a round table discussion with people of different backgrounds.

International Institutions

Reports of Pax Romana delegates at International Institutions provided the theme of the following morning; these included the Council of Europe, UNESCO and Human Rights Council. It is always impressive to hear from these delegates and the work they do on behalf of Pax Romana. After a closing ceremony, led by the outgoing President Javier Iguiniz (Peru), Mass was celebrated by the Auxiliary Bishop of Barcelona. The afternoon visit to Gaudi's **Sagrada Familia**, a guided walk through the old town of Barcelona and a delicious meal in the yacht harbour marked the end of the first part of the general assembly.

The Statutory (business) Session followed with the election of Josep Carbonell (Catalonia) as interim chair and the election of new member federations which ranged from Ecuador to the Ivory Coast. The various reports for the international institutions and secretariats will appear on the Pax Romana website www.icmica-miic.org. There was some discussion of letters to be sent to Pope Francis and to the newly elected UN Secretary General, a former member of Pax Romana, before lengthy reports from Council and Philippe Ledouble, the Secretary General of Pax Romana.

New four-year President

Kevin Ahern (USA) was elected President of Pax Romana for a four-year term and the new vice-presidents are Nuria Sastre Domenech (Europe), Elizabeth Muller (Latin America), Kevin Johnson (North America), Fredrick Wamalwa (Africa); the vice-presidency for Asia was left vacant for the time being. Phillipe Ledouble (France) continues as Secretary General and Fr Luis Maria Goikoetxea (Basque Country) will be the International Chaplain. Separate regional workshops followed and the European group decided to hold two Assemblies in 2017 in Paris in March and in Lviv (Ukraine) in September.

By Kevin Lambert – based on notes provided by Annemarie Weinzettl (Austria)

Spirituality Page

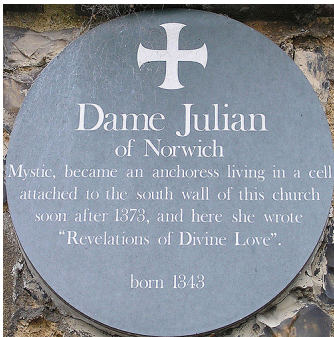
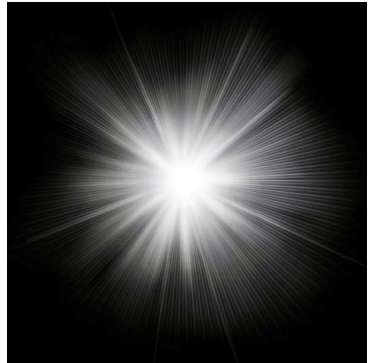
Light

Light, especially in these winter days, is a constant theme of many spiritual writings. It is taken up by the prayer said by the priest when candles are blessed at the start of the Mass for the feast of Candlemas, the Presentation of the Lord, on 2nd February. It begins: *"O God source and origin of all light"* and ends with the prayer that *"treading in the path of virtue, we may reach that light which never fails"*.

We all know of Newman's famous poem 'Lead, Kindly Light' but what may be less known is what he called a song written in 1849 at the Oratory in Birmingham and called simply *Candlemas*. Here are the first and last verses:

The Angel-lights of Christmas morn,
Which shot across the sky,
Away they pass at Candlemas,
They sparkle and they die.

And still, though Candlemas be spent
And Alleluias o'er,
Mary is music in our need,
And Jesus light in store.



Of course, for the Christian, light is not just about light in darkness but the light of faith, and night is the absence of that faith, a point made by Julian of Norwich in chapter 82 of the Revelations of Divine Love:

*Our faith is a light,
kindly coming from
our endless Day that
is our Father God.
In which light our
Mother Christ and*

our Good Lord the Holy Ghost lead us, in this passing life. This light is measured discerningly, standing unto us, at need in the night...thus I understood that our faith is our light in the night, Which light is God, our endless Day.

Anne and John Duddington



Circle Programmes

Aberdeen

Contact: Margaret Smith, 01224 314566

- 6 February "For the those in peril on the sea" *Doug Duncan*
 6 March "Chapels of the Rough Bounds": the Heather Priests of the West Highlands *Alasdair Roberts*
 3 April "Sharing Mary's Memories": a history of the Rosary *Eileen Clare Grant*
 8 May AGM, followed by Cheese and Wine

All Circles

- 2 March London Newman Lecture 2017 *Frank Field MP*
 3 April Manchester Newman Lecture *Damian Howard SJ*
 10 June 2017 AGM This will be the 75th anniversary of the Newman Association

Birmingham

Contact: Winifred Flanagan, winifredflanagan@gmail.com

- 1 March Catholic roots of the European ideal. Is it a reality? *Jim Coghlan*
 5 April The Crucifixion as portrayed in Poetry & Art *Bob Wiltshire*
 6 May Ramble in the Lickey Hills followed by afternoon tea at Winnie's

Cleveland

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

- 15 January New Year's Lunch
 15 February The Holy Spirit: a hidden character in the work of salvation *Fr Philip Cunah*
 22 March Christ at the Centre: Catholic education today *Andrew Gardner*
 26 April The Refugee Crisis: helping those for whom life is endless exile
Kath Sainsbury & Pete Widlinski

Coventry

Contact: Colin Roberts cjroberts08@talktalk.net

- 6 January Epiphany Mass & Party
 23 January Christian Unity Service
 24 January Coventry Cathedral's Ministry of Reconciliation *Rev Dr. Canon Sarah Hills*
 28 February Lutheranism *Bishop Kenney*
 March Day of Recollection *Details to be announced*
 25 April The Bible and women's ministry: women and the Ordained Ministry in the Lutheran Church *Rev Paulina Hlawiczka*

Croydon

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

- 7 or 14 January New Year Party with Vox Continua singers

Ealing

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

- 25 January The scandal of Christian disunity *Fr Nicholas King*
 16 February A Jewish view of Jesus *Rabbi Danni Rich*
 20 April Older & younger generation's view of the Catholic Church *Carmody Grey*

Eastbourne & Bexhill

Contact: John Carmody, 01323 726334, johnmh22@outlook.com

- 16 January Love of neighbour and Europe *Father Chris Bennion*
 2 March Trident, nuclear weapons,.....vanity and stupidity *Bruce Kent*
 May (date & venue tba) Wine & cheese social with accompanying talk

Edinburgh

Contact: Lyn Cronin, lyncronin@btinternet.com

- 18 January Looking forward to the Church of tomorrow *Panel of local speakers from the Archdiocese*

15 February	New Models of Christian Community : towards a Post –Clericalist Church	<i>Werner G. Jeanrond</i>
15 March	Eucharistic Traditions	<i>Rev. Scott McKenna</i>

Glasgow Contact: Arthur McLay, mclay@btinternet.com

26 January	The Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy: The Legacy	<i>Father Jim Lawlor</i>
23 February	A South American Experience: Lessons for Western Parishes (Provisional title)	<i>Father Timothy Curtis S.J.</i>
30 March	Liturgy, Translation and the Future?	<i>Rt Rev Bishop Maurice Taylor</i>
27 April	tbc	

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

28 January	Caritas Westminster	<i>Bishop Paul McAleenan</i>
February	Joint event with University of Hertfordshire - TBD	
11 March	Quiet Day	<i>Bishop John Crowley</i>
2 April	St Matthew Passion at the Royal Festival Hall	
30 April	Circle AGM followed by a talk - subject & speaket to be decided	

Hull & East Riding Contact: Andrew Carrick, 01482 500181

January	New Year Meal at 'Cognac' on Chanterlands Avenue - Date TBC	
15 February	The Role of the Deacon	<i>Rev. R Shakesby</i>
15 March	The Apostleship of the Sea	
19 April	Title TBC	<i>Rev. W Massie</i>

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

London Contact: Patricia, 0208 504 2017

Manchester & N. Cheshire Contact: Chris Quirke, 0161 941 1707 dcq@mac.com

North Gloucestershire Contact: Stephanie Jamison, 01242 539810, sjamison@irlen-sw.com

7 February	Work as a Prison Chaplain	<i>Bishop Robert Byrne</i>
7 March	Church Issues	<i>Bishop Crispian Hollis</i>
4 April	The Church of the Holy Sepulchre & the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem	<i>Fr David Mills</i>
2 May	AGM folowed by Contradictions in the Bible?	<i>John Huntriss</i>

North Merseyside Contact: John Potts, john_potts41@hotmail.com

16 February	From Grief to Grace – Pastoral Care of the Abused	<i>Fr. Dominic Allain</i>
16 March	Chemin Neuf	<i>Marie-Eve Fontaine</i>
20 April	Communion for the Divorced and Remarried?	<i>Fr. Martin Clayton</i>

North Staffordshire Contact: Vincent Owen, 01782 619698

Rainham Contact: Marie Casey, bmcasey@btinternet.com

London & SE Circles

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

Tyneside Contact: Ann Dunn, jadnew@btinternet.com

25 January	Prison Fellowship. Taking the Love of Jesus into Prison	<i>Patricia Bragg</i>
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Wimbledon	Contact: Bill Russell, 0208 946 4265, william_russell@talktalk.net	
17 January	St Mark's Gospel	<i>Fr Nicholas King, SJ</i>
Worcester	Contact: Heather Down, 01905 21535, hcdown@gmail.com	
Wrexham	Contact: Maureen Thomas, maureenthomas@uwclub.net	
27 January		
	My Problem with the Catholic Church Today	<i>Peter McGivern</i>
24 February	Contemplative Practice at the Retreat House Chester	<i>Ged Johnson</i>
31 March		
	TBA	<i>Pauline Thomas</i>
28 April	The Old Testament and Contemporary Issues	<i>Rev Dr Jason Brae</i>
York	Contact: Judith Smeaton, 01904 704525, judith.smeaton@btinternet.com	
16 January	New Year's meal	Details to be confirmed
20 February	Can canon law be described as ministry?	<i>Sr. Helen Costigane</i>
20 March	Local Upheaval? York and the Reformation	<i>Professor Bill Sheils</i>
15 May	Augustine and original sin	<i>Joe Fitzpatrick</i>



*The view from Villa Palazzola across Lake Albano to the Pope's Palace at Castel Gandolfo
(see page 10)*