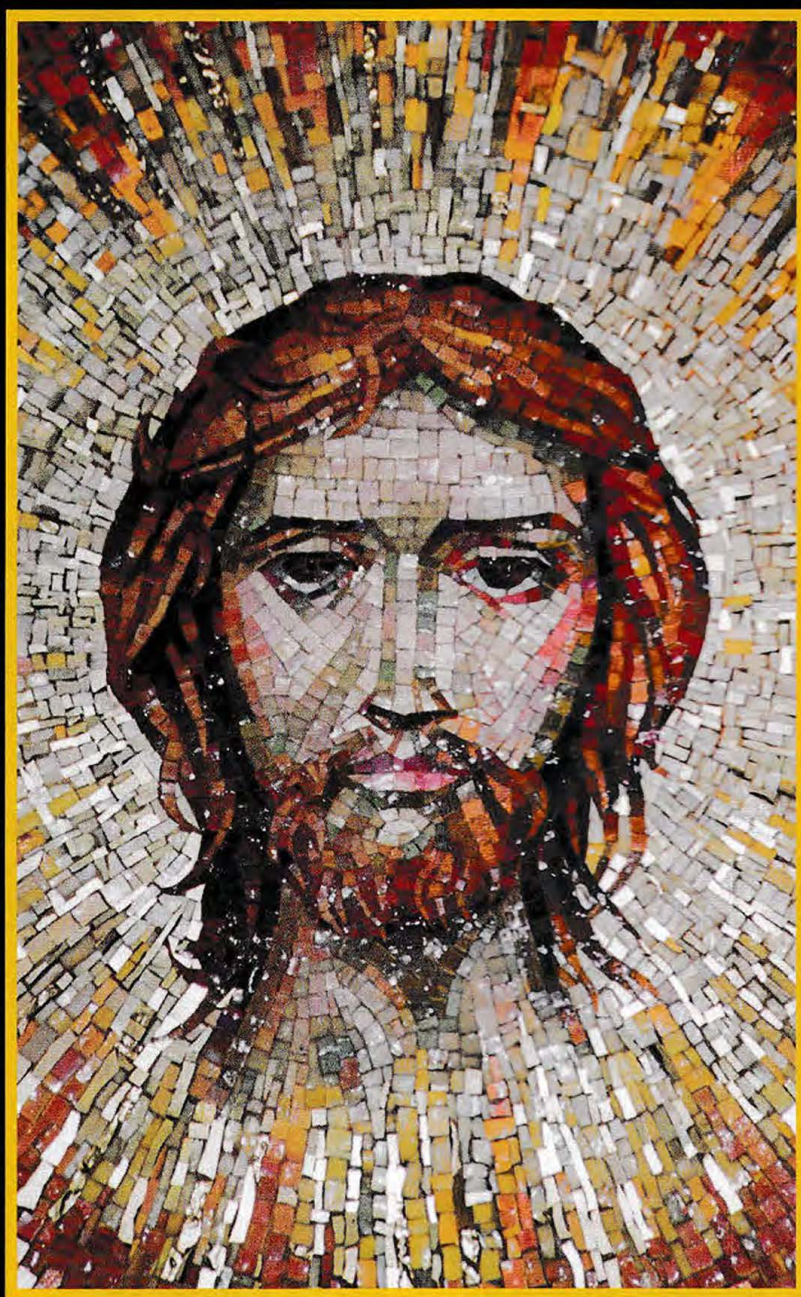


# ANNALS

Australasia

Journal of Catholic Culture



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# ANNALS AUSTRALASIA

*Journal of Catholic Culture*

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3

## Politics, The Priority of St Mark's Gospel and Papal Authority

The issues underlying the alleged priority of St Mark's Gospel are important and complex. Our Editorial attempts to throw light on a theory that has become a dogma that underpins much of the radical liberal thinking about the dates and authorship of the Christian Gospels

11

## Hard Times at Botany Bay

Many Australians have some knowledge of the First Fleet that brought convicts and settlers to Botany Bay in 1788. ALAN KATEN DUNSTAN looks here at the little-known fate of the six ships of the Second Fleet that set out from England in 1789 with their cargo of convicts destined for Botany Bay

19

## Europe's Ticking Time-Bomb

Bavaria's Premier has described the German National birthrate as 'a ticking time-bomb'. Recent figures show that secularised Spain with a birthrate of 1.07 children per woman has the lowest ever recorded for any nation in human history. R.J. STOVE discusses some of the consequences of this demographic down-turn

26

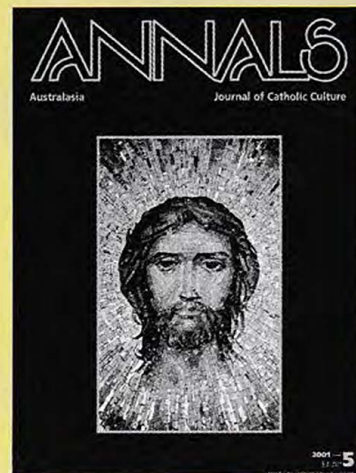
## Lourdes: God's Many-Splendoured Thing

This review by IAN MACDONALD of Father Paul Glynn's 'Healing Fire from the Frozen Earth' offers *Annals* readers a glimpse of the wonderful world of Lourdes and other Marian Shrines where miracles of healing have taken place

35

## Thought, Visual Acuity and Picture Books

This is the second article in a 4-part series on the importance of fine literature for children. Author SUSAN MOORE discusses benefits conferred by picture books on boys and girls whose school histories have been marked by failure, especially in reading and writing



Front Cover: A head of Christ created out of mosaic. The image is in the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament in the Catholic Cathedral of St Henrik in Helsinki [Helsingfors], Finland. There were 7,052 Finnish Catholics in 1999. The only Catholic bishop in the country is in Helsinki.

Back Cover: A selection of books published by Chevalier Press, ideal as presents for Catholics and for non-Catholics, and for all occasions.

In the Name of the Father .....	1
Pope could have been deported to Russia .....	7
Letters .....	8
August Reflections .....	10
Does Public Execution include Broadcast? .....	15
Media Matters .....	22
Infallible way to sink the Ship of State .....	28
Comradely Celebrations .....	29
News of the Catholic World .....	32
Movies .....	39
Knowing Your ABC .....	44

Front Photo: Paul Stenhouse, MSC

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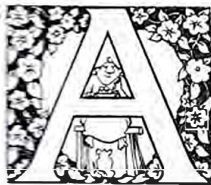
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In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and  
of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

## Matters of Faith and Opinion



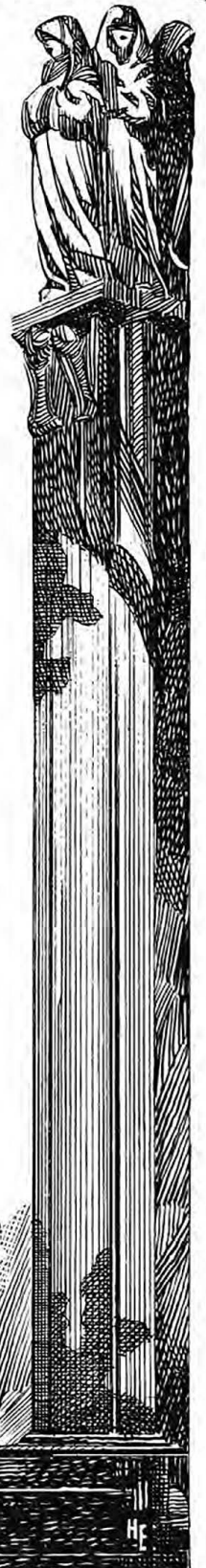
As St Augustine says, 'Those who defend opinions, no matter how false or perverse, yet without stubborn animosity, being ready to accept the truth when they find it after careful searching, are in no way to be considered heretics'. [Epistle xliii]

This is because they have not knowingly made a choice that contradicts the doctrine of the Church.

Thus, some scholars may be seen to differ in matters that do not touch on the Faith, arguing whether this or that opinion may be held; or if such topics do pertain to questions of Faith, then they concern matters about which the Church had made no final decision. After such a determination has been made by the authority of the Universal Church, however, were one stubbornly to repudiate it, one would be considered heretical.

This authority principally resides in the Supreme Pontiff. As Decretal 24 says: 'As often as arguments about faith arise I consider that all our brothers and fellow bishops have no alternative but to refer to Peter, that is, to the authority of his name and honour. Against this authority neither Jerome nor Augustine nor any of the other holy doctors, would attempt to defend his opinion'.

- St Thomas Aquinas [1225-1274 AD] *Summa Theologica*, II-II, art. 2,  
ad 3um. Translated, Paul Stenhouse





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## Exploring the ideological foundations of Gospel criticism

# POLITICS, THE PRIORITY OF MARK'S GOSPEL, AND PAPAL AUTHORITY

*Annals has received numerous requests for some comment to be made on the background to the alleged priority of the Gospel of Mark. The issues underlying this claim are important and complex. We hope that our editorial will throw some light on what has become a central tenet of much liberal thinking on the dating and authorship of the Christian Gospels.*



THESE days it is widely claimed that 'the great majority of scholars now believe the gospel of Mark was the earliest of the three books' of the Synoptic gospels.<sup>1</sup> According to professor J. V. Campbell of Westminster College Cambridge, 'If we cannot be sure of Markan priority and the existence of Q what can we be sure of?' Professor Van Harvey of Stanford University believes that those who doubt the priority of Mark must be wrong, 'because it is inconceivable that all German New Testament Scholars could be mistaken on such a fundamental point'.<sup>2</sup>

### Matthew, Mark and Luke

The traditional view reported by Eusebius of Caesarea was quite other. Clement of Alexandria is quoted by this ecclesiastical historian as saying that the gospels with genealogies were the first to be written down - i.e. Matthew and Luke [with genealogies] were written before Mark or John [without genealogies].

The so-called *Monarchian prologues* [introductions to early latin translations of the four gospels] dating from the 3rd - 4th century AD declare the order of composition to have been Matthew first, then Mark, followed by Luke and John and that Matthew was written in Judaea, Mark in Italy and Luke in Achaia.

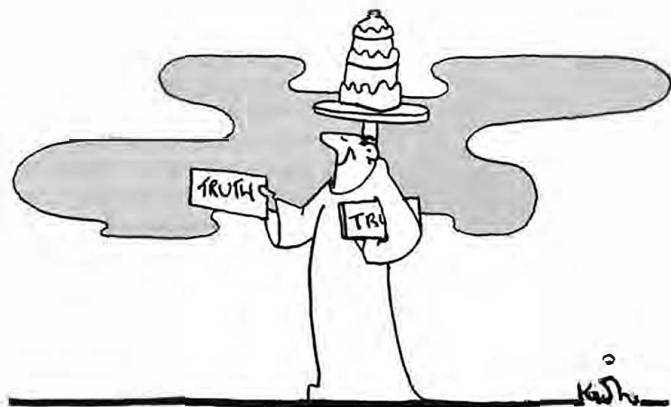
St Augustine taught that Mark was dependent on Matthew and Luke.<sup>3</sup>

All these sources agree that

Matthew was prior, and generally that Mark was written after both Matthew and Luke.

Up until the 18th century, the process the evangelists followed would have been described thus: Matthew wrote first [in Hebrew] making extensive use of existing oral and written sources. Then Luke wrote, using Matthew and other sources written and oral. Mark composed his gospel using both Matthew and Luke as well as some other sources available to him. All

three wrote their texts in different ways, and made distinctive contributions to their gospels. The so-called Q material hypothesised by 19th century mainly German theologians and their disciples is simply what Luke copied from Matthew, but Mark never incorporated in his gospel. The appeal that Q holds for some modern theologians is due to Luke's omitting specifically Jewish material from Matthew, and taking only what would be intelligible to his gentile readers.



## Disseminating Catholic truth

**A**N obvious duty is the duty of disseminating Catholic truth where it is not fully understood. Of course, I would not willingly, and do not on principle, seek to disturb the beliefs another man holds, in the hope that if he came to lose his present confidence he might possibly return to Catholicism. That in its turn would be doing evil that good might come; and the danger of his losing his religion altogether is, nowadays, greater than the hope that he *might* become a Catholic. But over the positive truths of the Catholic religion I cannot keep silence; the house of Israel must be preached to whether it will hear or whether it will forbear. Your difficulty is one of speculation, rather than of practice.

— Monsignor Ronald Knox, *Difficulties*, 1930.



## Arguments for the primacy of Mark

Superficially, the argument for Mark's primacy is based on the order of the narrative. Frequently all three synoptic gospels agree amongst themselves. Sometimes Matthew and Mark agree against Luke. Sometimes Luke and Mark agree against Matthew. But Luke and Matthew almost never agree against Mark.

The German teachers of Bultmann interpreted this to mean that Matthew and Luke independently copied Mark, because the order of the material in Mark is almost always supported by Matthew or Luke or both. For the sections of Matthew and Luke not found in Mark scholars have recourse to an hypothetical collection of sayings of Jesus which was originally called Lambda [for Logia]<sup>4</sup> and is now called Q [the first letter of the German word *Quelle* meaning source].

James Robinson<sup>5</sup> declares that 'Q is surely the most important Christian text we have' - more important apparently than the canonical gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke or John, or any of the epistles. He goes on to say that this status of Q as the most important Christian text 'should not be contested'. Why not?

B.H. Streeter, explaining away the minor agreements between Matthew and Luke [who are assumed to have been independent of each other, but dependent on Mark] argued fallaciously: if Luke used Matthew then there would be no need for Q. But we need Q. *Ergo*, Luke did not use Matthew.

It would take a brave liberal post-post modern theologian to admit that we don't need Q.

Some proponents of the priority of Mark say that it is more primitive; but generally, where it is primitive, it agrees with Matthew. Others say that it is more 'useful'. To whom? Albert Schweitzer recognized the theological usefulness of the Marcan hypothesis especially with reference to the work of Schenkel and Weizacker:

'What attracted these writers to the Marcan hypothesis was not so much the authentication which it gave to the detail of Mark ... but the way in



## Minstrel Kings

WE know that in the reign of Edward I minstrels from all parts of the realm assembled at Westminster for the marriages of the King's daughters; we know some of their names: King Grey of England, King Caupenny from Scotland; Poverat, minstrel to the Mareschal of Champagne. There were 426 minstrels at the festivities when the King's fifth daughter, Margaret, married the Duke of Brabant's son, John. When King Edward I held a 'courpleisir' in 1306 on the eve of his departure to the war in Scotland, no fewer than six kings of the minstrels attended. Many minstrels attended Henry V when he went to the wars with France: after his death eighteen minstrels were paid pensions of 12 pence a day for their services at Agincourt.

We know that for centuries no great house was built without its minstrels' gallery; that during those centuries music ranked with philosophy at the universities as an essential part of every scholar's education.

And then the minstrels vanished, so suddenly and completely that by the close of the Middle Ages they were merely remembered as a tradition. With the introduction of printing, history, poetry and romance were given a new medium of expression and propagation. The artists in the discarded medium suffered.

Artists have three functions, to create, to preserve by re-creation and to educate. For centuries the minstrels fulfilled these functions in the realms of music, literature, and, in its infancy, drama. Travelling about the country from place to place they were also in their age the equivalent of our Press. And their audiences were composed of women as well as men, for in the Middle Ages women were never shut out from any festivities or functions. They shared also in field sports and pastimes as mediæval picture books prove.

- Olga Hartley, *Women and the Catholic Church*.

which this gospel lent itself to the *a priori* view of the course of the life of Jesus which they unconsciously brought with them. They appealed to Holtzmann because he showed such wonderful skill in extracting from the Marcan narrative the view which commended itself to the spirit of the age as manifested in the [eighteen]sixties ... the way in which Holtzmann exhibited this characteristic view of the sixties as arising naturally out of the detail of Mark was so perfect, so artistically charming, that this view appeared henceforward to be inseparably bound up with the Marcan tradition. The victory belonged not to the Marcan hypothesis pure and simple, but to the Marcan hypothesis as psychologically interpreted by a liberal theology.<sup>6</sup>

The important element in the theory of Mark's primacy is not scientific argument as such, but theological and sociological assumptions that are brazenly offered for acceptance, in the absence of any compelling proof, simply because they are held by articulate and caring scholars.

If Luke copied Mark, how do we explain the fact that no literary characteristics of Mark show up in Luke? They should be there, at least in fragmentary form. On the other hand, there is clear evidence of Luke's literary characteristics in the text of Mark.

## The Gospel of Thomas

According to the proponents of Q we have only one example of the most original form of the sayings of Jesus - the gospel of Thomas. It is presented as the original source - along with Q - prior to Mark, which offers hope (or so the story goes) that Christianity 'shackled by a deadly orthodoxy, moribund in hoary tradition, compromised on all sides by an unholy alliance with principalities and powers - can through eyes of faith opened to insight from extracanonical materials enable us to perceive a thin ray of light at the end of the dark tunnel of contemporary theology.'

That thin ray of light is the Coptic gospel of Thomas found in Egypt at Nag Hammadi in 1947, along with



43 other secret books of the Egyptian Gnostics, and sold for three Egyptian pounds to dealers. With the aid of patient scholarship [the story goes] the hypothetical text of Q can be reconstructed, guided by light from the extracanonical material that points to another type of Christianity that was not hostile to the gnostic teaching and allowed the sayings of Jesus to develop in an eastern manner until they were crystallised in the 3rd or 4th century text of the gospel of Thomas. This is the sales-pitch, anyway.

We are expected to buy the idea that a *narrative tradition* and a *sayings tradition* constitute quite separate and hypothetical documentary sources for the gospels; and moreover that there was once an apostolic community composed of people who were not Christians who nevertheless followed Jesus but [contrary to the canonical new testament] had no use for miracles, healing, the cross, redemption or resurrection.

The insoluble problem is that the Thomas-Q hypothesis depends on the assumption of the priority of Mark which is, in its turn, demonstrably groundless.

David Dungan noted that C. S. Petrie had examined the seventeen reconstructions of Q printed in James Moffit's Introduction to the New Testament and discovered that 'not a single verse of Matthew was common to all seventeen reconstructions and only eighteen from Luke'. Petrie commented: '... the malleability of this nebulous hypothesis makes Q a letter to conjure with. Its protean nature allows the magician to endow his production with whatever characteristics he may choose, and he is encouraged to adopt for Q the principle that Humpty Dumpty paraded when Alice sought for a definition of glory: "It means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less".'<sup>8</sup>

Earle Ellis in his essay on the state of Biblical Criticism declares: 'Q is a single document, a composite document, several documents. It incorporates earlier sources; it is used in different redactions. Its original language is Greek; it is Aramaic; Q is used in different translations. It is



## Frivolous Torture and Death

**T**OPCLIFFE [Elizabeth's torture master] boasted that the rack in the Tower was child's play compared with his. Among the many atrocities committed by him was that of hanging up Robert Southwell till he lost consciousness over and over again, and when he had vomited blood he wrote to the Government that he was sure to get some information from him soon.

In 1594 he brought an action against Fitzherbert, for the sum of £5,000, which he said had been promised him if he would torture to death three recusants, including Fitzherbert's father and uncle. The facts of this horrible contract were not disputed, but Fitzherbert refused to pay on the grounds that one of the recusants was still alive and that the other two had not actually died of torture. As a matter of fact they had died in prison after their terrible sufferings. The case was too abominable even for Elizabeth and was hushed up, but Topcliffe somehow became possessed of the Fitzherbert estates.

The light reasons for which Elizabeth resorted to the rack cannot be better illustrated than the following, related by Lord Bacon in one of his letters. The Queen was mightily incensed against Haywarde, on account of a book he dedicated to Lord Essex, being a story of the first year of Henry IV, thinking it a seditious prelude to put into the people's heads boldness and faction: She said, she had an opinion that there was treason in it, and asked me, if I could not find any places in it, that might be drawn within the case of treason? Whereto I answered, for treason, sure I found none; but for felony very many: And when her majesty hastily asked me, Wherein? I told her, the author had committed very apparent theft: For he had taken most of the sentences of Cornelius Tacitus, and translated them into English, and put them in his text. And another time when the Queen could not be persuaded that it was his writing whose name was to it, but that it had some more mischievous author, and said, with great indignation, that she would have him racked to produce his author; I replied, nay, madam, he is a doctor, never rack this person, but rack his style: Let him have pen, ink, and paper, and help of books, and be enjoined to continue the story where it breaketh off, and I will undertake, by collating the styles, to judge whether he were the author or no.' Had it not been for Bacon, Haywarde would have been racked by Elizabeth for dedicating a book to Essex, when that nobleman happened to be out of favour with her.

— L.A. Parry, *The History of Torture in England*.

the Matthaean logia; it is not. It has shape and sequence; it is a collection of fragments. It is a gospel; it is not. It consists wholly of sayings; it includes narrative. It is all preserved

in Matthew and Luke; it is not. Matthew's order of Q is correct. Luke's is correct; neither is correct. It is used by Mark; it is not used by Mark'.<sup>9</sup>



In 1835 David Friedrich Strauss published his *Life of Jesus*, accepting the traditional view that the gospel of Mark was written after Matthew and Luke and having made use of them.

In 1863 Heinrich Holtzmann advanced a Two-Source theory according to which Q is earlier than Matthew and Luke, and therefore chronologically closer to Jesus.

In 1866 Hajo-Uden Meijboom<sup>10</sup> published a book exposing the fallacies of the two-source theory. This exposé came only three years after Holtzmann's book appeared.

### The Politics of Form-Criticism

How could the Prussian authorities appoint Holtzmann as Professor of the University of Strasbourg in 1874? How could the priority of Mark become a Protestant [and, later, a Catholic] dogma over a relatively short period?

According to William Farmer,<sup>11</sup> an answer is to be found in the fierce conflict between the *Kulturkampf* of the German State and the First Vatican Council; between Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and Pope Pius IX. Bismarck determined to reduce the influence of the Holy See in Germany. At issue [because of Bismarck's vision of total and iron control in Germany] was the position of the saint Peter, and the relationship of the Pope to the chief of the apostles. The novel hypothesis of Mark's primacy offered good reason for trivialising the claim to papal infallibility which rested on the passage in Matthew [16, 18-19] that was not found in Mark. Holtzmann's star was rising, and Adolf Hilgenfeld [1823-1907], who maintained the traditional view, lost influence. Mark's primacy became a *datum* in the Protestant theology schools, and undercut the basis for observance of the decrees of the First Vatican Council.

When Pope Leo XIII became pope, and Bismarck relaxed the severe anti-Catholic laws, the primacy of Mark and the existence of L or Q were in posses-

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sion in German universities, despite Vatican disapproval. After 1875 state-funded German scholars who disputed Mark's primacy were regarded as endangering the 'foundation of the State,' and the Gospel of Matthew became a symbol of ultramontanist.

In the absence of probative historical and literary evidence, and in the face of evidence to the contrary, pres-

sure from the State ensured that Mark prevailed over Matthew.

With the exception of Theodore Zahn and Adolf Schlatter, most academics realised who buttered their bread, and toed the State line. The fact that scholars overseas, notably in Oxford and Cambridge, followed their German colleagues, reflects the politically correct nature of the decision.

Sociologically, Mark's primacy leads to the deconstruction of Canon Law and the weakening of Papal authority. To ensure that German Catholics had 'suitable' leadership, Bismarck required all clerics to be educated in state-run institutions and intellectually neutered the Catholic Church in Germany in the process.

The Jews in Bismarck's time were willing to go to great lengths to appear to be good Germans. Some individuals abandoned their dietary laws and some Synagogues even moved their main Sabbath services to Sunday. The price they would pay under Hitler for their religious compromises, still lay in the future.

Catholic scholarship which followed the lead of Baron von Hügel and went along with the downgrading of Matthew in the politically motivated ideological reform of the gospels under the *Kulturkampf*, is still counting the cost.



— Paul Stenhouse, MSC PhD

1. Mark Allan Powell, *The Jesus Debate: A Lion Book*, 1998, p.42.
2. Both quoted in *The Gospel of Jesus*, by William R Farmer, Westminster Press, Kentucky, 1994, p. 146.
3. The Harmony of the Gospels, 4.10.11.
4. B.H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, 1924.
5. Lecture on 'The Sayings of Jesus: Q' at Drew University, October 1983.
6. The Quest of the Historical Jesus, trans. W. Montgomery, New York, 1910 pp.203-204.
7. William R Farmer, op. cit. p. 168.
8. David Dungan, 'Mark and the abridgement of Matthew and Luke' in *Jesus and Man's Hope*, ed. D.G. Burdick, Pittsburgh, 1970, 1.77.
9. 'Gospel Criticism: A perspective on the State of the Art,' in *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien: Vorträge vom Tübinger Symposium 1982* ed. P. Stuhlmacher, JCB Mohr 1983, p.37.

10. A History and Critique of the Marcan Hypothesis 1835-1866: A contemporary report rediscovered, trans. J. Kiwiet, Macon, Ga. Mercer University Press, 1992.
11. Emeritus professor of New Testament, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, in his *The Gospel of Jesus*, 1994.



### The Toast! To Journalism. May God Help It!

— G.B. Shaw,  
at a dinner in Fleet Street, given by the  
Guildhouse to the Press, 1900.



## The Pope and the Red Army Major

# POPE COULD HAVE BEEN DEPORTED TO SIBERIA IN 1945



SEMINARIAN Karol Wojtyla may have never survived to reach the papacy if it hadn't been for a Soviet Red Army officer who loved history and who ignored an order of Stalin's in 1945.

Wojtyla, the future John Paul II, unwittingly saved his own life by helping the Soviet officer translate books on the fall of the Roman Empire.

This previously untold episode of the Pope's life was published in the Italian weekly magazine *Famiglia Cristiana* by the officer himself, Major Vasily Sirotenko.

Sirotenko, a professor of medieval history, was a member of the 59th Armada of General Ivan Stepanovich Konev, who took Krakow from the Germans on Jan. 17, 1945.

The next day, the soldier was among the men who occupied a quarry of the Solvay firm, about 50 kilometres (31 miles) from the city.

'The Germans surrendered there also and escaped almost immediately,' Sirotenko wrote. 'The Polish workers were in hiding.

'When we arrived, we began to shout: 'You are free, come out, come out, you are free.' When we counted them, they numbered 80. Shortly after I discovered that 18 of them were seminarians.'

The liberation by Stalin's army was no banquet. Soldiers stole what they could: money, watches, clothes. The first Russians who entered Krakow only wanted food.

Sirotenko, on the other hand, was looking for books in Latin and German. So he was glad when he spotted the seminarians.

'I called one of them and asked him if he could translate from Latin and Italian,' Sirotenko recalled. 'He

told me he wasn't very good in these subjects, he had studied little. He was terrified, and added immediately that he had a very intelligent friend who was clever in languages, a certain Karol Wojtyla.

'Then I gave the order that Karol be found. I discovered that he was quite good in Russian, as his mother was a 'Russinka,' that is, a Ukrainian

of Russian roots. That is why I also had him translate documents from Russian to Polish.'

Sirotenko became friendly with Wojtyla and asked him to translate articles on the fall of the Roman Empire, which was subject to all kinds of interpretations by Stalin.

The officer and his translator became so friendly that, one day, a political commissar, Lebedev by name, called the Soviet officer: 'Comrade major, what are you doing with that seminarian? Are you planning to ignore Stalin's orders? Are you not convinced by the Aug. 23, 1940, order regarding Polish officers, teachers and seminarians?'

Sirotenko replied: 'I cannot shoot him. He is too useful. He knows languages and the city.' He added: 'The commissar knew it was true, but didn't want to take any risks. So he told me it was my responsibility.'

The first wagons of prisoners then left for Siberia, with people who would never return. The Solvay quarry seminarians were among the first on the list. Sirotenko saved their lives, however. He used the same excuse to persuade Lebedev.

'I wrote an order in connection with exigencies related to military operations taking place in Krakow, stating that Wojtyla and the others should not be deported,' he recalled.

When Karol Wojtyla was elected Pope in 1978, Sirotenko was one of the few people in Russia who recognized the name, with the exception of the government and the KGB.

On March 6, he received a letter from the Pope, congratulating him on his 85th birthday. The old history professor and former officer of the Red Army looked at the letter and said: 'We have both had a very full life.'



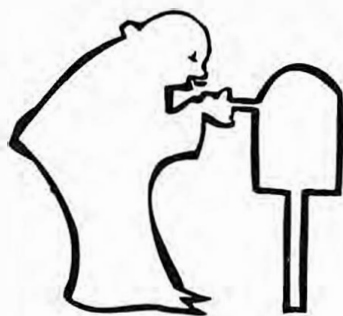
### The Holy Spirit?

CATHOLICISM need not wait for the last trumpet, to ask from the anabaptists an account of the multitude of priests they murdered in Münster, - of the number of churches to which they set fire, - of the thousands of statues and pictures, which they cast to the flames, - of all the valuable charters, of which they made wadding for their cannon, and the monasteries, which they pillaged, with even still greater cruelty than the Lutherans. For a while they triumphed. After their first victory, the fanatical senate made a decree, ordering the people, in the name of Christ and the Gospel, to devastate the churches. The people obeyed. Then were seen anabaptists claiming to be under the influence of God's Spirit, breaking open with the axe the church doors, burning the organs and pulpits, and accumulating statues and paintings on the public squares, where a vast fire soon consumed them. The relics were taken from their places, and the bones of the ancient martyrs were scattered to the winds. The sacred vessels were made drinking cups, and the wax lights were made to behold, even in the very sanctuary, the excesses of an unbridled and shameless libertinism.

On this day of profanation, Münster was styled a new Sion; and a manifesto, published by Rothmann, decided that as there was only one book necessary for salvation - the Bible - all others should be burned as useless or dangerous. Two hours afterwards the library of Rudolph Langius, consisting almost entirely of Greek and Latin manuscripts, perished in the flames!

- JMV Audin, *History of the Life, Writings and Doctrines of Martin Luther*, Paris 1840.





### Re: Papal Tour of Greece

Your note in April/May *Annals* on p. 40 re Greek Orthodox Church's warning to Pope not to proceed with his tour – or pilgrimage in the steps of St Paul – will, I hope, be followed quickly by an account of the astounding success of the great man's visit, as instanced even by the *Tablet's* treatment of it: its editorial – Pope's Heroic Journey – and Pope Builds Bridges, heading its Church in the World section, let alone the profoundly moving text of his address to Christodoulos (what a wonderful name the Primate of Greece has! And so Pauline. It is almost as good as the name of the Irish actor we had out here for Dancing at Lungahsa, Meliossa – or 'melissa' – which means The Equerry of Jesus. 'Issa' is Jesus in Gaelic. But I digress).

So we have yet another stunning story from John Paul the Great, who is dead but he won't lie down, who by rights should be in a wheelchair in an Old Man's home, yet continues to lead by word and gesture. There is more about the muslims in Damascus, and I await your response and commentary on that area, since it is your special interest.

Brilliant ploy to secure Ronald Conway on Pell; not to mention George Weigel! The latter fits very well on the back of his page in the *Tablet* on March 31, The Truth About Freedom. I have distributed this to my marvellous Scripture group which meets in the UQ Chaplaincy every Wednesday.

St Leo's College, Brisbane FR GREG JORDAN SJ

### Interesting

We find *Annals* interesting reading every issue, thanks.

Scoresby Vic. 3179 CHRIST THE PRIEST SEMINARY

### Hope

Very sorry I'm a bit late with my subscription. I was confused as I thought I had paid it previously.

Many thanks for a wonderful magazine that's truly Catholic. Our great Pope shows us all how to live despite age and frailty. In addition we have a better hope with a new and younger Bishop in Sydney.

Cooma NSW 2630

MARGE MACKAY

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### In Favour of anklebiters

Tracy Grayson's article in *The Australian* (16/5/2001) outlines the current attitude to children – 'You won't find anklebiters on my wish list', but we fail to appreciate how much they contribute to our own and the community's development.

I often wonder how history would have changed if Henry the Eighth was blessed with children, if Napoleon and Hitler had families before they went to War and if Richard Nixon had sons that could have been drafted for Vietnam.

It is the young Mums and Dads who are the keepers of the covenant, the carriers of a nations ethos and the ones who look for a future in this great land. Let's not muddy their vision with a paradigm that suppresses their selfless love, joy and enthusiasm.

Walla Walla NSW 2659

PAUL STAR

### Tip of iceberg

*Annals* [9/10 2000] keeps up the standard. I enjoyed your editorial about the thin end of the wedge. You'd think there was a central office somewhere, charged with dismantling civilisation! I suppose it must feel like a lonely battle for you sometimes, but remember, there are a lot of people behind you who benefit enormously from what you do. Those who send you e-mails are just the tip of the iceberg.

Hawkesbury Heights 2777 DAVID BLACKBURN

### Wonderful

Thank you for a wonderful journal.

Bankstown NSW 2200

E MEIER

### From a Missionary Bishop

Greetings from our still suffering Solomons, once the Happy Isles. In the midst of the mayhem caused by the ethnic tension – a misnomer if ever there was one – receiving delayed copies of the *Annals* is a pleasure.

I am amazed at the variety of topics you manage to cover so competently. You have wide ranging interests you are able to convey to your readers.



For most of us, who over the years as missionaries are often starved of up-to-date and relevant theological reading matter, the *Annals* has filled some of the need.

Perhaps someone else reading this note might have recent spiritual and theological works they'd be happy to pass on. It would be most welcome support. Light reading is also appreciated. Keep up the good work.  
BISHOP BERNARD O'GRADY, OP  
Gizo, Solomon Islands

### Vaya con Dios

The arrival of *Annals* is a complete joy, in my old age, with theology, philosophy, human history and general knowledge.

Congratulations, and also on your measured comment on Paul Collins – about time!

I enclose my cheque to cover two more years of wonderful reading, God willing!

Best wishes and Vaya con Dios [Go with God].

Glen Waverly Vic 3150

GEORGE JORDON

### Well balanced

The current issues of *Annals* have been excellent with content well balanced. It seems the journal is destined to serve the 21st century with both style and grace. Keep up the good work!

Wahroonga NSW 2076

NORMAN LEWIS

### A lot of Pleasure

Over the years I have got a lot of pleasure from *Annals*, I look forward to renewing my subscription.

Wellington, NZ

(Br) MATTHEW SOMERS SM

### Time and Eternity

I was very moved by Father Colin Baker's article 'The Liturgy of Holy Mass.' At page 16, he stresses that the sacraments and the Divine Office are events which embrace time and eternity, and says 'This is consistent teaching of the Fathers of the Church.'

I would like to add to his comments on the basis of statements of two Fathers of the Church and of St Paul.



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St Ambrose says: 'When however the Spirit is called *'Finger (of God)'*, operative power is signified, for the Holy Spirit, equally with the Father and the Son, is the Holy Operator of the Divine Works'.

Secondly, St Paul, in the well known passage from Ephesians, says: 'Out of his infinite glory, may he give you the power *through his Spirit* for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted in faith and built on love, you will with all the saints have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth, until knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge,

you are filled with the utter fullness of God.'

St Patrick says: 'The joys of the kingdom of God no man can tell, nor even conceive or understand, while he is yet clothed in flesh, for they are greater and more wondrous than they are imagined or conceived to be. For the Kingdom of God is greater than all report, better than all praise of it, more manifold than all knowledge, more perfect than all conceived glory'.

It therefore seems to me that the words and gestures of the Mass and the Sacraments are special loving gifts of the Holy Spirit to us, to enable us to grow and develop as members of Christ's Mystical Body, and then to experience eternal joy and delight with the saints in the eternal Kingdom of God.

Hurvalley's Point NSW 2111 ANTHONY YOUNG

### Bravo

Just wish to put in another word of endorsement for James McAuley's masterful "A Letter to John Dryden" to be found in *Collected Poems of James McAuley*. Angus & Robertson, 1994.

The poem rewards return readings and is very much worthy of study, containing great wealth within its easy-flowing couplets. Bravo McAuley, you've got me!

Lane Cove NSW 2066

D LYNCH

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# THOUGHT FROM THE LITURGY OF THE DAY



## AUGUST

**1** Wed *Alphonsus* Romans 8:1  
The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death

**2** Thur *Week 17* John 15:15  
I call you friends.

**3** Fri *Week 17* 1Thess 2:13  
Accept it as God's message, not some human thinking.

**4** Sat *InVianney* Ezek 3:21  
Warn them and if they abstain from sin they shall live.

**5** Sun *Week 18* Col 3:5  
When Christ your life is revealed, you will be revealed in all your glory with him.

**6** Mon *Transfiguration* Mark 9:6  
This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.

**7** Tues *Week 18* Mat 14:27  
Take heart, it is I. Do not be afraid.

**8** Wed *Dominic* John 10:27  
The sheep that belong to me listen for my voice; I know them and they follow me.

**9** Thur *Week 18* Mat 16:23  
You are an obstacle in my path, because the way you think does not come from God.

**10** Fri *Lawrence* Psalm 112:9  
Open-handed he gives to the poor; his justice stands firm.

**11** Sat *Clare* Psalm 131:2  
I have set my soul in silence.

**12** Sun *Week 19* Luke 12:40  
You must stand ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

**13** Mon *Week 19* Ps 147:15  
Praise the Lord. He sends his word to the earth.

**14** Tue *MaxKolbe* John 15:16  
I chose you to go out and to bear fruit that will last.

**15** Wed *Assumption* Luke 1:47  
My spirit exults in God my Saviour, because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid.

**16** Thur *Week 19* Psalm 119:88  
Because of your love give me life and I will do your will.

**17** Fri *Week 19* Psalm 136:16  
He led his people through the desert, for his great love is without end.

**18** Sat *Week 19* Mat 19:14  
Let the little children come to me, for it is to such that the kingdom of heaven belongs.

**19** Sun *Week 20* Luke 12:49  
I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already blazing.

**20** Mon *Bernard* Eph 6:13  
You must rely on God's armour, or you will not be able to put up any resistance when the worst happens, or have enough resources to hold your ground.

**21** Tues *Pius X* John 21:17  
Peter said: Lord, you know everything. You know I love you. And Jesus said: Feed my sheep.

Thoughts compiled by Father Michael Fallon, MSC.

**22** Wed *BVMQueen* Luke 1:45  
Blessed are you for believing the promises made you by the Lord.

**23** Thur *Week 20* Mat 22:9  
Go to the crossroads in the town and invite everyone you can find to the wedding.

**24** Fri *Bartholomew* Apoc 21:14  
The city walls stood on twelve foundation stones, each one of which bore the name of one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

**25** Sat *Week 20* Mat 23:12  
If you exalt yourself you will be humbled. If you humble yourself you will be exalted.

**26** Sun *Week 21* Luke 13:23  
Try your best to enter by the narrow door, because I tell you many will try to enter and will not succeed.

**27** Mon *Maries* 1Cor 1:18  
To those of us on the way, the language of the cross is God's power to save.

**28** Tues *Augustine* 1John 4:12  
As long as we love one another God will live in us and his love will be complete in us.

**29** Wed *InBaptist* Mat 14:13  
Hearing of John's death, Jesus withdrew to be alone.

**30** Thur *Week 21* 1Thess 3:12  
May you love one another and the whole human race as much as we love you.

**31** Fri *Week 21* 1Thess 4:3  
What God wants is for you all to be holy.



## A Brief Account of the Ships of the Second Fleet

# HARD TIMES at BOTANY BAY

*Most Australian's have some knowledge of the First Fleet that brought convicts to Australia in 1788. ALAN KATEN DUNSTAN describes the little known story of the ill-fated Second Fleet, and the wretched fate of the human cargo it carried.*



T was one thing to embark on an utterly novel experiment – to take a party of a thousand, including some seven hundred convicts, to establish a settlement on the other side of the world. It was quite

another matter for planners to provide adequate supplies for a colony so far distant.

In January, 1788, Governor Philip and his charges had established themselves at Port Jackson. By the way of refreshing some memories, here is a brief outline of how, after the first year or so, the settlers were faring:

'The summer of 1789-90 was a time of dreary monotony, aggravated by the keenest anxiety. No tidings had been received of the ships that were expected from England as early as September, 1788, with supplies of provisions and clothing; and nothing of importance at the settlement occurred to divert attention from the miseries of the moment and the fears of impending famine!'

Official dispatches in private letters written at this time are most entirely confined to discussing the scarcity of food. At such times certain rites of hospitality were necessarily ignored and invitations to dine, even with Governor Philip at Government House, carried the request for guests to bring their own bread.<sup>2</sup>

But if the members of the 'First Fleet' were ill-fed, they were equally ill-clad. And whilst the officers had their own private stocks of clothing, those who depended upon the government stores – and they constituted nearly the entire population – went about half-naked as well as hungry. By June 1789, the general

distress was aggravated by the winter, and the convicts – men and women – pieced together rags to cover their nakedness. Such conditions were not strictly conserved for convicts. Marine privates were only marginally better off and many were forced to appear on guard barefooted and ragged.<sup>3</sup>

Toward the close of 1789 no supplies had been received from Britain and the stock in hand had fallen so low that it became necessary to reduce the ration. Foreseeing such difficulties, Philip had dispatched the *Sirius* (sailing east to west) to the Cape of Good Hope for provisions,

but the quantity she was able to bring back – she returned in May 1789 – was little more than four months' supply of flour. On a second such mission, *Sirius* was wrecked off Norfolk Island in March 1790. The only ship remaining in the colony, the *Supply*, was dispatched for the East Indies for food.<sup>4</sup> By April 1790, the settlers were virtually starving. Nevertheless, help of a kind, was on the way.

The Second Fleet, that is to say the ships which were sent out from England in 1789, consisted of six vessels – the *Guardian*, a storeship, the *Justinian*, which brought supplies but no convicts and the *Lady Juliana*, the *Suprize*, the *Neptune*, and the *Scarborough*, which carried altogether nearly 1,300 prisoners.

Of these the first to arrive, on 3 June, 1790, was the *Lady Juliana* which brought bad news.

At the Cape she'd seen the *Guardian*, under the command of Lieutenant Riou who later met his death at the battle of Copenhagen. The *Guardian* had sailed from England in the September after *Lady Juliana* had left, bringing two years' supply of provisions and a 'garden' of fruit trees which had been prepared under the direction of Sir Joseph Banks.<sup>5</sup>

With the most extraordinary ill-luck this vessel was struck by an 'island of ice' 500 leagues from the Cape, when lying alongside with the crew chopping off lumps of ice to replenish the stock of fresh water, a sudden change in wind and tide pitched the ship into the iceberg, smashing, among other things, the tiller and rudder. When the *Guardian* got clear she was found to be taking water rapidly. In the circumstances it is easy to see why Banks's garden was quickly thrown overboard, and



## Plagiarist Inc.

THE right to liberty and the dogma of human equality are reasonable deductions from the metaphysics of the Christian religion. The worldliness of the eighteenth-century Christians caused them, however, to shrink from accepting these logical conclusions of the doctrines which they professed. And the Age of Reason thus gave the curious sight of a world divided – one half, the orthodox, accepting the premises of the Christian religion, the other half, the unorthodox, in warfare against it but using as the weapon of their warfare, conclusions rightly to be drawn from these premises.

– Christopher Hollis, *The American Heresy*, Sheed and Ward 1927, p.9.





## Pilgrimages as Penances

**P**ILGRIMAGES were incessant; they were made to fulfil a vow as in cases of illness or of great peril, or in expiation of sins. Confessors frequently gave the going on a pilgrimage as penance, and sometimes ordered that the traveller should go barefoot or in his shirt. 'Commune penance,' says Chaucer's parson in his great sermon, speaking of atonement which must be public, 'commune,' because the sin has been public too, 'is that prestes enjoynen men comunly in certeyn caas, as for to goon, peradventure, naked in pilgrimage or barfot,' that is to say, naked in their shirts. In accordance with a vow made during a tempest, Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II, walked ten miles barefoot on the frozen ground, to White Kirk, near North Berwick, and had, on his return, 'to be borne, rather than led by his servants.'

— J.J. Jusserand, *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages*

she was only saved from floundering by the heroic efforts of Riou and a handful of crew. Their voyage of eight weeks back to the Cape in the water-logged vessel - where she lay until she rotted - was a remarkable feat of seamanship.<sup>7</sup>

A clergyman was also on board the *Guardian*, one Mr John Crowther, who had been appointed to share religious duties with Richard Johnson, the zealous "Bishop of Botany Bay", as William Wilberforce had dubbed him. Crowther left the ship with the purser in a long-boat; and of five such boats, this was the only one that reached safety. They were fortunately picked up by a French ship which took them into the Cape, and from there he travelled to England by the first available transport.<sup>8</sup>

So much for the *Guardian*. Before dealing with the others, it is worth noting that John Nicol, a steward who also had the job of striking the leg-

irons off the women as they came aboard in chains, left an account of this voyage which is worth reading. His story throws a curious light on the transactions of that time. He writes:-

'We lay six months in the river (Thames) before we sailed, during which time all the gaols in England were emptied to complete the cargo of the *Lady Juliana*. When we sailed there were on board 245 female convicts. There were not a great many very bad characters; the greater number were for petty crimes and a great proportion for being disorderly - that is, street walkers, the colony at the time being in great want of women.'

One, 'a beautiful young Scottish girl, one of only three Scots on board, broke her heart and died in the river.' Four others escaped; and four were pardoned on account of George III's apparent 'recovery' from illness,

which in 1811, degenerated into permanent and incurable insanity.<sup>10</sup>

The *Lady Juliana* took ten months to complete the journey from England to Australia. This compares with about eight months for the First Fleet. Yet she was not required to obtain supplies for the colony en-route, nor was she encumbered sailing in convoy. Was her convoy purposely prolonged? It's difficult to avoid the conclusion that it was. But, if it was, it is easy to see why. John Nicols explains:

'When we were fairly out to sea every man on board took a wife from amongst the convicts... The girl with whom I lived... was named Sarah B. (Whitlam) She was a girl of modest, reserved turn, as kind and true a creature as ever lived. I courted her for a week and... would have married her upon the spot had there been a clergyman on board.'<sup>11</sup>

Like some ancient cruise ship's entertainment officer, Nicol reported the ship 'remained eight weeks in Rio de Janeiro,' and 'that 'crossing the line was great sport!'

A few weeks after the arrival at Port Jackson of the *Lady Juliana*, the *Justinian* appeared. In a curious arrangement these ships had left the Thames on the same day, one bound for Sydney the other for the West Indies! The *Justinian* carried a cargo to Jamaica, landed it, and then returned to London where she was unloaded, reladen, and sailed to New South Wales: a voyage she completed in just five months!<sup>12</sup>

With the *Justinian*'s arrival, there was, briefly, a period of plenty; but it did not last. The period ended just eight days later when the *Suprise*, *Scarborough*, and *Neptune*, came into port loaded with sick and dying men. The treatment of the convicts aboard these ships forms the blackest chapter in the history of transportation.

The three vessels sailed from England with 1,006 male and eighty-nine female convicts. By the time they had arrived at Port Jackson, 267 persons, including eleven women, had perished; a large number of those brought into port were dying, and of the remainder at least one-half had to go into the hospitals and sick-



tents, where many of them died, some only a few hours, or a few days, after their reception.

Richard Johnson, an eye-witness writes: 'Many of the convicts were unfit to be moved, and a number of them expired when they were brought upon deck... Common humanity required that they should be given a chance at life now that the voyage was over; but instead of being carefully handled, they were slung over the ship's side in the same manner that you would sling a box... The bodies of a number of men who had died before they could be taken ashore were simply thrown in the harbour...'<sup>13</sup>

The poor condition of the prisoners was a consequence of their being chained together in confined spaces, and of keeping them below where they were constantly breathing foul air, and of getting too few vegetables to eat. Not surprisingly when they were brought up it was clear that most had scurvy, dysentery, and fever, and many were covered with lice. 'A great number were unable to walk... The strongest carried their comrades on their backs,' others just 'crept on their hands and knees.'

The difficulty of housing so many sick can be easily imagined: despite the fact that it was the middle of winter, inmates were forced to sleep on the ground and, because of the scarcity of such articles, only one in four had a blanket. Needless to say in 21 days, a further 86 persons had died - 84 convicts, one soldier and one child; and four hundred and fifty remained on the sick-list.<sup>14</sup>

The suffering was partly due to the decisions of the British Government wherein contractors were paid so much per head to ship the convicts, including maintenance on the voyage. The amount paid over was the same, whether all the prisoners arrived safely at their destination, or not. The contractors, through their agents (the masters of their transports), had therefore little interest in preserving life; on the contrary, to the cynical, every death was a gain. More deaths meant greater profit. And this principle extended to the ration. An example of this was seen when the masters set up stores and openly sold goods originally intended for



## Lateral thinking

THE Prince, travelling through his domains, noticed a man in the cheering crowd who bore a striking resemblance to himself. He beckoned him over and asked: 'Was your mother ever employed in my place?' 'No, Sire,' the man replied. 'But my father was.'

- Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation*. London, Pan Books, 1964

consumption by the prisoners, which, despite the 'extortionate' prices being asked, were eagerly sought after.<sup>15</sup>

If all of this going-on sounds only vaguely like the masterly re-supply of what the politically correct now call the *invasion*, it will come as no surprise to learn that, whilst angry letters passed between 'Botany Bay' and the Home Office, and while the inhuman treatment of the convicts on board the *Neptune*, *Suprize*, and

*Scarborough*, was 'thoroughly investigated' by the courts, 'nothing came of these proceedings.'

It may also come as no surprise that little had been learned by the time the 10 ships and 2,061 persons comprising the 'Third Fleet' arrived, one year later, when 194 men and 4 women, or nearly one-tenth of the gross number, died on the voyage!

It is to be hoped that the re-telling of this old story conveys the sense of misery which characterised the poor who were driven to seek refuge in petty crime. Apart from those whom, through family history, we now know to have been our ancestors, who could such people have been? And what had brought them to such straits?



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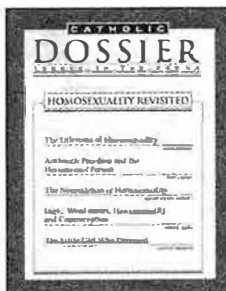
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Alan Dunstan is a professional photographer with an abiding interest in Australian and Catholic Church History. He is completing a PhD at Macquarie University on *The Land in Question and the Early Labour Movement in Australia*.



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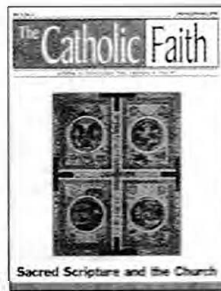


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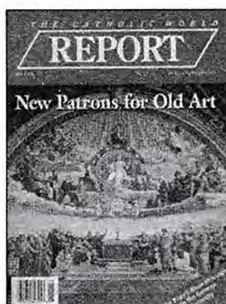


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## Reflections on the execution of Timothy McVeigh

# DOES 'PUBLIC' EXECUTION INCLUDE BROADCAST?

By PATRICK QUIRK



HO can we forget the final scenes of the 1938 film *Angels with Dirty Faces*?

James Cagney, as Rocky Sullivan, is going to his death for a life of crime. Father Jerry Connolly (Pat O'Brien) attends the execution and pleads with Rocky to 'die yellow' and so show the boys who idolised his lifestyle that crime doesn't pay. Rocky at first refuses with the memorable lines:

'You asking me to pull an act, turn yellow, so those kids will think I'm no good...You ask me to throw away the only thing I've got left...You ask me to crawl on my belly - the last thing I do in life...Nothing doing. You're asking too much...You want to help those kids, you got to think about some other way.'

Of course once the execution commences, Rocky ends up pleading for his life in the death chamber and the newspapers report that 'Rocky dies yellow killer coward at end.'

The history of public execution is a grisly one, and seldom with the morality plays attached to movies from the 1930s. The most recent, and arguably the most public execution in the history of executions, that of 'Okalahoma bomber' Timothy McVeigh, has again raised the questions of what an execution is all about, and who should be allowed to see it?

As it turns out, McVeigh's June 2001 execution was witnessed by a very limited group: prison officials, victims and relatives of those who died in the bombing, under very controlled circumstances at the federal prison at Terre Haute, Indiana. Only about 20 people saw the execution through the one way

glass execution chamber. There was another group of 232 who watched via closed circuit television while gathered in an Okalahoma City viewing room. This mini-broadcast was not recorded in any way, not even temporarily, and the TV signal from the execution chamber was encrypted to prevent interception by computer hackers.

But there were those who planned for a much larger audience - the whole world, in fact, would have been able to watch if Entertainment Network Inc ('ENI') had been successful in a free speech case before the US courts in April. This Florida company, which according to court records supplies 'news, entertain-

ment and information via the Internet World Wide Web', was ready to let us all watch the execution unfold on the Internet and sued to vindicate their free speech 'right' to do so. One cannot but ask why?

One also wonders who would have tuned in? Would the Internet have coped with the traffic? Would digital video copies be made, swapped or sold? Would this become a government funded snuff movie? Perhaps the broadcast would have flopped?

Thankfully, Judge John D. Tinder of the Southern District Court of Indiana ruled that the execution of McVeigh would not be filmed and broadcast simultaneously on the



## Pessimists not good judges

I rolled on my tongue with a terrible joy, as did all young men of that time, the taunts which Swinburne hurled at the dreariness of the creed -

'Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilæan, the world has grown gray with Thy breath.'

But when I read the same poet's accounts of paganism (as in 'Atlanta'), I gathered that the world was, if possible, more gray before the Galilæan breathed on it than afterwards. The poet maintained, indeed, in the abstract, that life itself was pitch dark. And yet, somehow, Christianity had darkened it. The very man who denounced Christianity for pessimism was himself a pessimist. I thought there must be something wrong. And it did for one wild moment cross my mind that, perhaps, those might not be the very best judges of the relation of religion to happiness who, by their own account, had neither one nor the other.

- G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*





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Internet. The ruling was based on a federal prohibition on visual or audio recording of an execution and given in response to a constitutional 'free speech' application to broadcast the event.

Though surrounded by legal intricacies, the substance of ENI's argument was that US federal regulations purporting to guarantee the media's entitlement to view a federal execution did not go far enough. Accordingly, any prohibition on filming and live broadcast of such events was therefore in contravention of the free speech provision of the US Constitution (the famous First Amendment).

In strict legal terms, admission to federal executions in the US is controlled in great particularity by Bureau of Prisons (BOP) Regulations. Those allowed access to view an execution include 'necessary personnel' designated by the prison warden, Department of Justice attorneys, the prisoner's spiritual advisor, two defence attorneys, three adult friends or relatives of the prisoner, eight citizens, and ten representatives of the press. The non-recording regulation makes clear that 'No photographic or visual or audio recording of the execution shall be permitted.'

It was as a representative of the press that ENI first sought admission to the execution in March 2001. As part of that process, they also asked to bring a small camera into the witness chamber to allow for wireless broadcast to a van outside the prison complex. They proposed that this broadcast would then be relayed to Florida for transmission over the Internet. There is even some suggestion in the judge's reasons that downloading the transmission would not be free but on a 'pay per view' basis. If this were not possible, ENI requested that the Bureau of Prisons provide a live broadcast for their use in any event.

The Bureau refused ENI's request to film the execution or to provide a broadcast. In doing so the government argued they had an interest in 'not sensationalizing the event, maintaining prison security and good order, and respecting the privacy interests of the condemned individual.'

Part of ENI's argument in the case

was that 'all the citizens of the United States were victims of the crime perpetrated by McVeigh', and so all should be allowed to view the execution. This curious argument hardly needs rebuttal.

So were the government regulations an unwarranted limitation on First Amendment free speech? Not according to the court. News-gathering is certainly protected by the First Amendment, but this right is not unlimited. Despite a prohibition on filming, the fact that the press were still provided with physical access to the execution weighed heavily on the mind of the Judge in refusing to allow the broadcast. Treatment in similar cases had consistently upheld the constitutionality of these kinds of restrictions.

Judge Tinder also considered previous cases dealing with media access to non-prison areas such as Department of Defence property upon the return of soldiers' bodies. In none of these was there an infringement of the First Amendment.

One of ENI's most interesting arguments was that the government prohibition on filming was not 'content neutral' as required by previous Supreme Court First Amendment cases. In the Plaintiffs' opinion, and paraphrasing Marshall McLuhan, 'the medium is the message'. This meant that denial of a right to film was in effect a denial of 'content', at least in the sense that film portrays things quite differently from other media such as print, and anything other than a 'pure' broadcast of actual events is subject to media 'spin'. This was firmly rejected by the court as being based on a false conception of what constitutes 'content'. As far as the judge was concerned, the medium was not the message. (One can hear the print journalists breathing a sigh of relief!)

So why do we recoil at the thought of someone wanting to broadcast an execution? And are there other good reasons for not allowing such a broadcast? Putting aside questions of the morality of the death penalty in any given case, it would seem the first objection is simple bad taste. Beyond that there is the question of the impact



## Wot? No accountability?

THE greater the quantity of respect a man receives, independently of good conduct, the less good is his behaviour likely to be. It is the interest, therefore, of the public, in the case of each, to see that the respect paid to him should, as completely as possible, depend upon the goodness of his behaviour in the execution of his trust. But it is, on the contrary, the interest of the trustee, that the respect, the money, or any other advantage he receives in virtue of his office, should be as great, as secure, and as independent of conduct as possible. Soldiers expect to be shot at; public men must expect to be attacked, and sometimes unjustly. It keeps up the habit of considering their conduct as exposed to scrutiny; on the part of the people at large, it keeps alive the expectation of witnessing such attacks, and the habit of looking out for them. The friends and supporters of government have always greater facility in keeping and raising it up, than its adversaries have for lowering it.

— R.W. Sydney Smith, *Edinburgh Review*, April 1808.

on the prison population itself. The prison warden gave evidence that if prison inmates were to see the execution on the Internet they may feel it was being treated as 'sport, which dehumanizes them' and this might lead to prison disturbances.

Another cause for concern is the creation of a *Theater des Schreckens* – a 'theatre of horror' – with the accompanying corruption of conscience. One might also argue that broadcast of human intimacies (like friendship, sexual relations, death) can destroy the fragile virtues that privacy is meant to support. Most of us would want to die in private, prayerful, circumstances. Indeed every 'Hail Mary' requests a prayer at that very hour. Finally, the privacy of those who must carry out the execution should also be considered, as it was by the Judge in the McVeigh case.

From Roman times to the French Revolution, the practice of public execution has changed little over the centuries. Modern hunger for sensation combined with Internet broadcasting now have the potential to

drastically change that practice, and clearly not for the better. Doubtless Father Jerry in *Angels with Dirty Faces* would not have wanted his boys to be watching the death of Rocky Sullivan on television or the Internet. The printed word provided them with all that was necessary. Returning to the Father's final lines: – 'It's true, boys. Every word of it. He died like they said. All right, fellas. Let's go and say a prayer for a boy who couldn't run as fast as I could.'

As to the recommended prayer, one could not have done better than to ask the boys to say with St. Francis:

'Praised are you, my Lord, for our sister bodily Death, from whom no living man can escape. Woe on those who will die in mortal sin! Blessed are they who will be found in your most holy will, for the second death will not harm them.'

(*Canticle of the Creatures*)



PATRICK QUIRK is Assistant Professor of Law at Bond University on Queensland's Gold Coast with a special interest in Ethics and the Natural Law. He is currently Visiting Assistant Professor at Columbus Law School, Catholic University of Washington.



## Questions worth asking

**T**O BE sure, from forcible sterilisation to euthanasia, abusive experimentation and the Final Solution itself, Nazi doctors perpetrated crimes whose depravity is probably impossible to exaggerate. Indeed, in my first book, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis*, I described the horrific medical experiments done in the concentration camps: dozens of men killed, for instance, by low pressures or icy cold conditions, just so that the *Luftwaffe* might learn what its pilots could withstand; dyes injected into the irises of living prisoners by the SS doctor Josef Mengele, to see whether brown eyes could be changed into blue.

But as deeply shocking as those incidents are, it is also unsettling to discover that Nazi doctors and public-health activists also took part in work that medical specialists and public-health officials today would regard as progressive or even socially responsible – and that some of that work was a direct outgrowth of Nazi ideology. Many Nazis were environmentalists; many were vegetarians. Species protection was a going concern, as was animal welfare. Nazi health activists launched the most powerful antismoking campaign of its day, and the Nazi war on cancer was the most aggressive in the world. Nazi doctors worried about over-medication and the overzealous use of X-rays, and they cautioned against an unhealthy workplace.

Nazism rightly stands as the low-water mark in twentieth-century moral culture, the ultimate refutation to ethical relativism. But the uncomfortable fact is that Nazi-era doctors were also the authors of world-class, first-rate science. And so the moral quandary inevitably arises, can good come from evil? I am always troubled by such questions, because they seem to stem from a scarecrow image of fascism and a wooden, ahistorical image of science. I would rather ask: what is science that it so easily flourished under fascism? What was it about German fascism that encouraged the progress of certain kinds of science, and why has this part of the story been lost to historical memory?

— Robert Proctor, 'Bitter Pill', in *The Sciences*, May/June, 1999.

## Demographic downturns and cultural self-hatred

# EUROPE'S TICKING TIME BOMB

*Recent figures show that secularised Spain with a birthrate of 1.07 children per woman has the lowest birthrate ever recorded for any nation in human history. R.J. STOVE discusses some of the causes and consequences of this demographic down-turn.*

**L**a Pasionaria, the Spanish Civil War's Stalinist harridan, must be chuckling in her grave. Less than three decades back (despite her own best 1930s efforts in establishing a sun-drenched gulag), Spain was still a recognisably Christian land, with every intention of remaining so.

Today, as secularised and nihilist as anywhere else in Europe, Spain wins the demographic booby-prize: a birthrate of 1.07 children per woman. As *Associated Press'* Madrid bureau proclaimed on February 3: 'The fertility rate in Spain has now fallen to the lowest ever recorded for any nation in human history.'

Read that last sentence again. Nothing in mankind's annals has matched this societal death-wish. Spain's suicidal mania excels even against the formidable competition from other hitherto Catholic countries in Europe: France, now with a birthrate of 1.26; Italy, now with a birthrate of only 1.2 (*Associated Press, Madrid, op. cit.*). Presiding over the result is Spanish PM José-María Aznar, nominally a Catholic, whose recent achievements include permitting full pension rights for homosexual couples (*The Economist*, November 25, 2000). Perhaps he has simply attained a keener insight into his own church's sexual morality than has every Catholic theologian over the past two millennia.

Elsewhere in Europe, certain leaders dare to query the cultural self-hatred which Aznar exemplifies. One such is Bavaria's Premier Edmund Stoiber, whom *The Financial Times* reported last February 1 as recommending that present child allowances be trebled.

To an interviewer from Gennany's

*Bild am Sonntag*, Stoiber complained that the national birthrate – while, at 1.38 per cent, slightly improved from its 1990 level of 1.3 – is still low enough to be 'a ticking timebomb for the social security system and our whole economy.' He wants to see mothers getting the equivalent of \$US16,500 per child, as opposed to the \$US5,500 per child they now receive.



## Despotism

**T**OCQUEVILLE not only had the correct idea of the despotism he feared might arise in the future, but he also had an understanding of how it might come about. He pointed out that the despotism of Louis XIV in France arose when the monarch commanded all the nobles of France to live at Versailles, whereas previously they represented secondary instruments of government by ruling in their feudal domains. The despotism of the king was thus alleviated.

Generalised, the point is expressed by Abraham Lincoln in his statement that the federal government should do for the people only those things which the people cannot do for themselves, either individually or collectively in their private associations. This is the principle of subsidiarity.

The private associations may be associations for profit or they may be philanthropic associations, but they should operate to prevent the concentration of all power, both political and economic, in the hands of the central government.

– Mortimer J. Adler, *Adler's Philosophical Dictionary*, Simon and Schuster, 1996.

Merely to suggest such a course of action in Australia would, of course, elicit howls of rage from the chattering classes who see nothing wrong in extorting from taxpayers 90 times that amount on Lucian Freud's exercises in depravity. Even in Europe, it runs counter to the whole program for human betterment as propounded by French PM Lionel Jospin, who recently upbraided Stoiber and his fellow Bavarian officials for valuing Europe's 'religious legacy' (*Chronicles*, May 2001). But Stoiber has attracted several local defenders, including a party colleague who recently contested office on a specifically anti-immigration platform: 'Children, not Indians'. The same sentiment has been heard from the Oriental end. India's Foreign Minister deplored last year the brain-drain by which his country's best and brightest flee their homeland for Europe (*Korea Herald*, January 17, 2000).

European whites' demographic situation might or might not be salvageable by methods akin to Stoiber's. In America the point of no return was long ago reached, indeed passed. The Californian State Government's Proposition 187, vigorously supported by voters in 1994 and restricting welfare access for philoprogenitive illegals, was struck down the following year by Federal judges, who deemed it 'unconstitutional'. Nowadays – as *The Age* exulted on May 2 – whites with English as their first language are a minority in 48 out of America's 100 biggest cities: including such long-time Anglo-Irish redoubts as Boston. During the 1990s, while America's white birthrate shrank to a mere 1.8, its black birthrate climbed to 2.3, and its Hispanic birthrate to a scarcely credible 3.1 (*Center for Disease*



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Control, Washington DC: Birth and Fertility Rates by Educational Attainment: United States [1994]).

Gibbon (in *Decline and Fall's* Vol VII) foresaw the cultural fate that millions of Europeans wish to embrace, at whatever cost to recognisable Christendom. Had Islam been victorious at the Battle of Tours (732 AD), Gibbon wrote, 'the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mohammed'.

An admittedly extreme view, supporting this conclusion's continued plausibility, came from French Muslim spokesman Mohammed Saboui (*Catholic*, December 1998 – January 1999): 'Our well functioning, 'peaceful' invasion of Europe has not been completed yet. We want to act simultaneously in all host countries. Since you keep on making more and more room available for us, we would be stupid not to fully profit by it. ... You have framed laws that penalise those who utter any racist expression against us. And you can't see how blinded you are ... One only respects that which one fears!'

It is tempting for us as individuals to sympathise with Muslims' loathing for the West's moral decay. Amid the wider strategic issues involved – the issues which Lenin summarised in his rhetorical question 'Who whom?' – sympathy and antipathy are alike irrelevant.

As B. A. Santamaria observed in *News Weekly* on July 21, 1990: '[T]o ensure the demographic decline of the West, Western governments provide more child care places to absorb more women into their workforce, while marriage laws dissolve the traditional family ... The demographic pincer movement is already evident.'

Evident to the likes of Stoiber, yes. But evident to those who control Canberra, and will continue to control it regardless of who wins the next Federal election? Hardly.



R.J. STOVE is editor and publisher of the Sydney-based Internet magazine *Coder* [www.codermag.com.au]. A shorter version of this article appeared in *News Weekly* on May 19, 2001. Reprinted with permission.



(Source: CRTN Information Service, edited by Catherine Ancion for Aid to the Church in Need, Königstein, Germany.)

### **Christians the world's most persecuted community**

Christians are the world's most persecuted religious community, according to the workgroup for religious freedom of the Swiss Evangelical Alliance. In a statement made on the occasion of the UN's June 26 commemoration day for the victims of torture, the Swiss

Evangelical Alliance mentioned that members of non-registered Churches continue to be arrested and tortured in China, North Korea and Laos. In Southern Sudan, they are sold as slaves and are subjected to the worst forms of psychological and physical abuse, the Evangelical Alliance wrote. In Muslim countries, converts to Christianity are often tortured or killed, since apostasy from Islam is not tolerated there. Faced with this extreme violence against Christians, the Swiss Evangelical Alliance and other organizations have called for international action and prayers for the victims of religious persecution.

### **Pope calls for end of embargo against Cuba**

Addressing the Cuban bishops during their 'ad limina' visit on July 6, Pope John Paul II

expressed his opinion that their government should become more respectful of human rights and that the United States should lift its embargo against the island. The Holy Father welcomed the many improvements of the Cuban Church's situation since his 1998 visit to this country. 'Without a doubt,' he said, other aspects of life in Cuba have not improved, 'but with the good will of all, it is to be hoped that just and opportune solutions will be found.' Stressing that the US-imposed economic restrictions against Cuba are 'unjust and ethically unacceptable', the Pope encouraged the Cuban bishops to 'continue in the patient work for justice, for the true freedom of the children of God and for the reconciliation of all Cubans, both those who live on the island and those who live elsewhere.'

## **FICKLE POPULISM AND PASSING GLORY**

*By PAUL STENHOUSE, MSC PhD*

**I**N 799 a Roman mob almost killed Pope Leo III [795-816], attempting to blind him and cut out his tongue after they attacked him while he was riding in procession to St Peter's from the Church of San Lorezo at the Piazza del Popolo by the Flaminian Gate. The reasons for the attack are far from clear. Some speculate that it was inspired by envy on the part of Roman families offended because the Pope had invited the French King Charles the Great (Charlemagne) to defend the papacy and Rome against, amongst others, Irene the Empress of Constantinople.

The Pope's predecessor, Pope Hadrian I [772-795] had threatened to anathematise the Empress of Constantinople if

she did not respect the jurisdiction of Rome over Illyricum [comprising Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia Herzegovina]. The poor orphan girl from Athens whose beauty so entranced the Emperor Leo IV that he married her in 769, was a formidable opponent: she had had her own son, Constantine VI, and her husband's five brothers, blinded and imprisoned after she seized power in 797.

Less than two years later another Roman mob was praising the Pope and yelling out 'Life and Victory to Charles the emperor' when Leo III [his scars still visible from the beating about his head that he received] crowned Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor in St Peter's Basilica on Christmas day 800.

A thousand years later, when Napoleon Bonaparte insolently crowned himself Emperor of the French in Notre Dame in Paris, in the reluctant presence of Leo III's successor Pope Pius VII on December 2 1804, the former Corsican artillery lieutenant is said to have worn the sword that Charlemagne had worn when he rode into Rome in 800 for his coronation in St Peter's by Pope Leo III.

This pride of Napoleon in being associated with Charlemagne contrasts with the ignoble treatment given to Charlemagne's bones by the Jacobin zealots who scattered the Holy Roman Emperor's ashes to the wind at Aachen [Aix-la-Chapelle] at the time of the Reign of Terror.





# MEDIA MATTERS

By James Murray

## Day Ambush

The move to regulate religious charities while seeking to co-opt them into state welfare systems is worldwide. Not surprisingly, therefore, President George W Bush has been talking up the move at Indiana's Notre Dame University, powerhouse of Catholicism and grid-iron football.

In a speech at the university, he said: 'Any effective war on poverty must deploy what Dorothy Day called "the weapons of the spirit".'

Hendrik Hertzberg (*The New Yorker*, June) called the Bush reference 'audacious'. No wonder. Journalist and pacifist Dorothy Day (1897-1980) was the saintly co-founder with Peter Maurin (1877-1949) of the Catholic Worker movement, still operational (and inspirational) at the sharp end of the war against poverty.

Certainly Day might have had problems with the Bush administration's new taxation policy. According to Hertzberg, it will confer on the richest 400 an extra \$50,000 a month; on the richest one per cent, an extra \$3000 a month. At the other end of the scale, the least rich 20 per cent will get an average of \$5.40 cents a month.

In his autobiography, Day's co-worker Michael Harrington described how she was offered a substantial grant by a Ford Foundation official and turned it down on the grounds that followers of St Francis of Assisi could not have a bank account.

Some may feel this to be overly rigorous. But all charity workers everywhere should realize that corporate and state money comes with wires attached that may cut them from their ethos.

For years now there has been talk of a movie based on the life of Dorothy Day whose drinking companions (in her less regenerate days) included the playwright Eugene O'Neill and the writer Max Eastman (who once knuckled Ernest Hemingway). Your correspondent's choice to play Day? Meryl Streep. Peter Maurin? Gabriel Byrne. Max Eastman? Tom Cruise. Ernest Hemingway? Russell Crowe. Eugene O'Neill? George Clooney.

## Lunn Fun

Hugh Lunn's new memoir *Working for Rupert* (Hodder Headline \$29.95) is a sequel to *Over the Top with Jim* and *Head Over Heels*. It is a fascinating mix of wry anecdote and shrewd observation. Possibly Lunn is a touch too reverential as he

puts the limelight on the titular Rupert (Murdoch, that is) while backing gently into it himself to explain why he stayed and why he left. There again the accusation of backing into the limelight was first made about James Barrie.

Lunn, like Barrie, has a magic writing touch, displayed initially as a Reuters war correspondent in Vietnam. His new work recalls the seeming artlessness of Norman Lindsay's *Saturdee* and Tom Collins's *Such is Life*.

And Lunn like Collins can give the impression of being less interested in history than in legend, not least his own. He refers to his editors (but not betters) on *The Australian* by sobriquets: the Larrikin Editor (Owen Thomson), the Flamboyant Editor (Bruce Rothwell), the Best Editor (Mark Day). Sometimes, however, he doesn't attach names, as in the case of the Quiet Editor (James Hall?) the Steady Editor (?), the Humorous Editor (?) and so on.

The impression of legend-making is reinforced by Lunn's account of working at *The Daily Mirror*, London in 1965. Describing the moment when the F word was first said on television, he refers to the speaker as 'a playwright'. (Ken Tynan, theatre critic and writer of *Oh, Calcutta?*) He goes on to allege that the interviewer tossed his clip-board away, saying: 'Well, thanks a lot. That's the end of my TV career.' (David Frost whose career continues?)

Earlier in his narrative, Lunn speaks of a veteran *Mirror* casual simply as Mac and says that after Rupert Murdoch took over *The Sun*, its news editor was Mac. (Brian McConville, later decorated by Queen Elizabeth after taking a bullet when he intervened to help prevent a gunman from abducting Princess Anne?)

McConville would have been delighted by Lunn's hearsay account of Larry Lamb, miner's son knighted for services to Murdochism-Thatcherism as editor of *The Sun*. On a trip to the Great Barrier Reef, before taking on the editorship of *The Australian*, Lamb refused to swim from Murdoch's yacht until a rope was tied round him.

Lunn's description of Lamb thrashing in the sea with Murdoch holding the rope can be seen as metaphor for all those who sail aboard the leviathan News Corporation with Rupe the Scoop. For some, his ropes are gold, for others silver and for others, well, what about shoestrings?



## Ageing Herald

The ongoing resistance by Fairfax Group journalists to Age-Herald copy sharing arrangements is something big chief Fred Hilmer should heed. As a distinguished McKinseyite, were Hilmer running Arnotts, for example, he would not grind Tim Tams into an undifferentiated mix with Iced Vo-Vos. There again, he might to achieve a better bottom line.

The rape allegations against Aboriginal leader Geoff Clark were a specific example of the risks in shared copy. In running the allegations jointly *The Age* and *The SMH* created a perception of ganging up.

The allegations should have been run exclusively by *The Age* first, and then followed up by *The SMH* if only to create a greater sense of balance and less drawing of the colour line. *The SMH* has a substantial history of recording abuse of liquor and women as evils that cross race and class divisions. Accordingly, it might have provided some context. Gin-sodden drunkenness was endemic in 18th century England. Scotland, Ireland and Wales were scarcely teetotal. Rum was the foundation liquor of Australia. In the 1950s, French leader Pierre Mendez-France felt the need to mount a campaign against alcoholism, including child alcoholism. This year, the Irish Government has issued warnings about binge drinking.

One question uncanvassed has been whether the social evils of liquor and women abuse have increased among Aborigines since the care of religious missionaries was replaced with secular public service administrators? Noel Pearson is the only Aboriginal leader your correspondent recalls recently as going on the record that his mission (Lutheran) care was beneficial. What about other mission educated Aboriginal leaders?

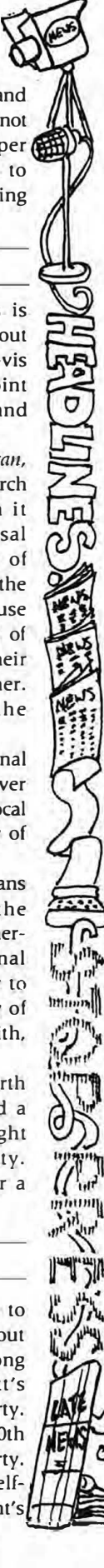
Missionary efforts have been closely scrutinized. Time possibly for a comparative close-focus scrutiny of the secular regime that replaced them.

Incidentally, those delighted that Kerry (Genghis Khan) Packer has sold his stake in the Fairfax Group should remember the French phrase *reculer pour mieux sauter*. In this context, very freely translated, it means: 'To retreat from an objective so as to advance upon it more relentlessly.'

## Porter Toast

The durable Barry Porter of the Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance, has announced a laudable ambition for his retirement: unwinding the deal that merged the Australian Journalists Association with Actors Equity and other unions.

The merger was driven by Labor Government policy as promulgated by Laurie Brereton, and based on the premise that ILO rules prevented the continuation of unions with less than 10,000 members.



Porter's stint as a union leader has been long and laudable. Unlike some of his colleagues, he did not use his face-to-face encounters with newspaper management for career advantage that led to exempt status and executive privileges, including strike breaking.

## Dulles Point

The Catholic Church in the United States is usually perceived as leader in the argument about giving more weight to national churches vis-à-vis the universal church. Yet the most cogent point against this precedence has come from the US and Cardinal Avery Dulles SJ.

In an article for the magazine *Inside the Vatican*, he states: 'The very concept of a particular Church presupposes a universal Church to which it belongs, whereas the concept of the universal Church does not imply that it is made up of distinct, particular Churches. Historically, too, the priority of the universal Church is evident because Christ unquestionably formed the community of the disciples and prepared the apostles for their mission while they were still gathered together. Particular Churches emerged only after the Church became dispersed.'

Dulles was joining the debate between Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and Cardinal Walter Kasper over the linkage between the universal Church and local Churches with its implications for the authority of bishops and diocesan practice.

Dulles concluded: 'Kasper, who is by no means an extremist, would certainly agree that the Catholic Church must be on guard against degenerating into a loose federation of local or national Churches...It is more than imperative than ever to have a vigorous office that safeguards the unity of all the particular Churches in the essentials of faith, morality and worship.'

In assessing the Dulles view, it may be worth remembering that the United States is indeed a pluralistic society but its Civil War was fought primarily to ensure its constitutional integrity. Without such integrity neither a nation nor a church can endure.

## Abbott's Habits

No one with any sense could take exception to the general truth of Tony Abbott's statement about how poverty can in part be self-induced. A long line of great human beings, including Abbott's name saint, Anthony, lived in self-induced poverty. Arguably the most effective politician of the 20th century, Mahatma Gandhi, lived in such poverty. This is not to suggest that Abbott, harried by self-confessed ambition, should swap his natty, gent's power suiting for a dhoti.



ABC radio and television, always desperate to bite their own tails, took his *Four Corners* statement out of context, fudged it and ran with it. Many in print media followed the lead. Nonetheless Abbott can create the impression, to use a John Laws phrase, that he needs a sub-editor between his brain and his mouth, or a minder (ironic given that Abbott progressed to parliament by way of journalism and minderdom).

His great boost to the short political trajectory of Dr John Hewson was the quip about telling a rented property by its unown lawn. Your correspondent was then living in rented splendour with a front lawn where his fellow Bondi-ite James Packer could have grazed his polo ponies. The quip inspired the lines: 'Rhodes was a rascal, a liar and cheat/ No wonder his scholars generate less light than heat.'

As well as being a Rhodesie, Abbott won an Oxford blue in boxing. This suggests a two-fisted fighter. So why his impression of being one-fisted? Right jabs to welfare and the unemployed, but no left hooks to corporate welfare, including the taxation revenues State Governments pay to big business as setting-up sweeteners.

In politics, as in boxing, balance is the key to lasting achievement.

### Big Boo

Reality (or banality) television is here to stay, but not forever. The law of diminishing returns will ensure this outcome despite the ratings success of *Big Brother* (title plagiarised from George Orwell's 1984). The chief horror of this show was neither the banshee shrieks of Gretel Killeen, an elegant satirist slumming it, nor the competitors' antics. It was the parasitic puffery of other media. There was little if any scrutiny of the Channel Ten voting process in which there appeared to be scope for fans to act out the folklore of corrupt politics: vote early, vote often.

### Target Archer

The pursuit of novelist-peer (but not peerless novelist) Jeffrey Archer has been one of the longest in journalistic history. It began, not with the 1980s

allegations of his extra-marital assignments, but in the 1960s when he first made his name with an Oxford fund-raising appeal in which he involved a relatively new music group: the Beatles.

Archer's boasts aroused suspicion. Your correspondent was among reporters who sought answers. Archer knew one thing back then: daily newspaper reporters are busy bees. Don't answer their calls, avoid being door-stepped and they may go away, at least for a time.



### Dangers of sentimentalism

THE rationalist can answer his opponents; the sentimentalist cannot. The rationalist can argue: 'All men are born equal, because God created them so, equal before His altar, equal in His sight. If you cannot see this, it does not become the less true, nor does it make the difference of a pin to anything, except perhaps the state of your soul.' The sentimentalist can only say: 'I, at least, feel all men to be equal. And, if you do not, you must, I suppose, be made differently from me.'

- Christopher Hollis, *The American Heresy*

Later Archer became a protégé of the powerful, including Maggie Thatcher. In addition, he was a best-selling author with a multi-million dollar contract from HarperCollins, controlled by Rupert Murdoch. Archer may thus have felt able to play Artful Dodger with more insouciance. Yet in the end, it was the Murdoch-controlled *News of the World* that helped to nail him for conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

At HarperCollins, there may well have been sighs of relief from those who had to assist in the 12-draft editing of Archer manuscripts. But will their relief be permanent?

Or under the HarperCollins imprint will there be a new Archer work? One detailing how much better it is for matters of public interest to be clarified immediately rather

than for those involved to try to out-fox the media pack, or indeed for the pack to start yelping at each other over such minor points as the ABC of sources, editorial independence and political interference.

### Chifley Inspiration

Remembrance of Joseph Benedict Chifley tends to include reference to the eloquent speech in which he gave the Australian Labor Party its inspirational metaphor, 'the light on the hill'. Your correspondent has concluded that Chifley in turn was inspired by an even greater speech, The Sermon on the Mount, and conflated two images from St Matthew's account: 'a city set on a hill cannot be hid' and 'no man hides his light under a bushel'.

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# WANXIAN DIOCESAN APPEAL TO REBUILD CATHOLIC CHURCHES SUBMERGED BY THE THREE GORGES DAM

**T**HE YANGTSE RIVER cleaves its way through the centre of China from the highlands of Central Asia down to the Pacific Ocean. Half-way down the river tower the Three Gorges, the gate between Sichuan province and the outside world. For thousands of years the Yangtse, which brought material and cultural benefits to the regions it touched, brought in its wake calamitous floods and great loss of life and property.

To prevent the disastrous floods, the world's largest dam is in the process of being built covering a surface area of 1,000 square kms. The dam will stretch 600 kms in length, from above Yichang to a point below Chongqing. Recent TV coverage in Australia has focussed attention on the project. Six Catholic churches are to be submerged – those of Wanxian, Wuling, Kaixian, Yunyang, Fengjie and Wushan – and many thousands of Catholics are to be relocated far from their traditional religious centres. In addition to churches, there is urgent need for clinics, hostels, kindergartens and convents around the church compounds.

Compensation is to be made - based on 1992 valuation and far from sufficient to cover the cost of purchasing land and erecting new churches and ancillary buildings. In most of the new towns the Catholic Church will need more land than before if it is to continue to carry out its vital work of evangelisation.

Through the generosity of individuals and agencies in Hong Kong and abroad, nearly HK\$9 million has already been raised – sufficient to cover the cost of the land and some preliminary site formation. More than HK\$15 million is needed to cover the cost of construction.

Donations no matter how big or small are much needed and will be greatly appreciated. God will undoubtedly reward with the promised hundred-fold those who devote what they can spare to this work so important for the survival of the Catholic Faith along the banks of the Yangtse River in central China.

Please send your donation, specifying that it is for the **Wanxian Appeal**, to

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# LOURDES: GOD'S MANY SPLENDOURED THING

Reviewed by IAN MACDONALD



**T**HIS work has an ingenious premise: visit some pilgrims who were miraculously cured and recount the stories of others as well as the shrines where the cures happened, particularly Lourdes, dedicated to the visions of Our Lady seen by St Bernadette.

Paul Glynn writes with the understated flair that made his book *A Song for Nagasaki* a world best-seller. This one should add handsomely to the funds his books have already produced for the impoverished sick of the Third World.

In an account of astounding happenings, the miracle that spoke most eloquently to this reviewer was

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*Healing Fire from Frozen Earth*  
Paul Glynn  
Marist Fathers Books 1 Mary St,  
Hunter's Hill, NSW 2110  
rrp \$10.00

---

that of World War I veteran John Traynor, wounded in action in Belgium and at Gallipoli. As a result he became an epileptic with a hundred per cent disability pension.

Against medical advice, he travelled from his home in Liverpool to Lourdes in 1923. He was cured, and returned to the shrine again and again as a stretcher bearer, displaying the kind of quiet heroism that had caused him to rescue his wounded commanding officer under fire.

But Paul Glynn's work is no mere catalogue of cures at Lourdes and the other Marian shrines of Knock, Ireland; Fatima, Portugal; and Medjugorje, former Yugoslavia.

He reminds us of two factors: the initial close scrutiny of the relevant authorities to the citation of miraculous cures; the strictness of the procedures under which cures are authenticated.

He cites a number of authors. One, Patrick Marnham went to Lourdes to cast on the shrine the cold eye that had made him a member of the *Private Eye* satirical magazine team. He stayed to record his observations reverently.

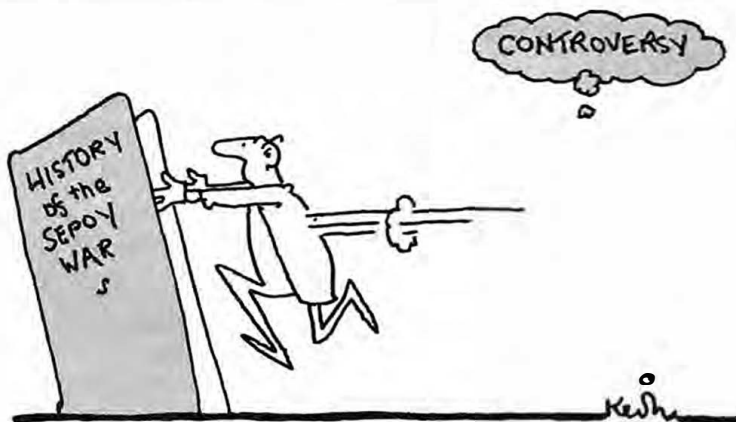
Another Franz Werfel, under a vow, and as a Jew one of the people who recorded God's earliest miracles, wrote *The Song of Bernadette*, a bestseller which became an acclaimed film.

Without doubt the most distinguished observer of the Lourdes miracles was Dr Alexis Carrel, Nobel Prize winner in 1912 for early work on organ transplants.

Later, in co-operation with the aviator Charles Lindburgh, he developed a prototype heart-lung pump. Carrel was the modern scientist *par excellence*.

Son of a devout mother, educated by Jesuits, Carrel came to describe himself as a 'tolerant sceptic'. His influences included Emile Zola whose rancorous work *Lourdes* repeats the belief of the pioneer psychologist Charcot that the Lourdes cures were the result of auto-suggestion.

Carrel, ever a scientist, decided he needed to cross-check for himself in 1902. The result was *Journey to Lourdes*, a book based on his private notes and published by his wife after his death. Central to the book is Carrel's account of the cure of Marie Bailly, a patient he himself was treating with morphine as an incurable sufferer of tubercular peritonitis during a pilgrimage.



## Avoid Controversy at all cost?

**W**ould it not be better for most people if, instead of stuffing their heads with controversy, they were to devote their scanty leisure to reading books, such as, to name one only, Kaye's 'History of a Sepoy War,' which are crammed full of activities and heroisms, and which force upon the reader's mind the healthy conviction that, after all, whatever mysteries may appertain to mind and matter, and notwithstanding grave doubts as to the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel, it is bravery, truth and honour, loyalty and hard work, each man at his post which makes this planet inhabitable.

— Augustine Birrell, *Collected Essays*

Observing her at the Lourdes Grotto, her death seemingly certain, her faith strong, Carrel was moved to pray for a cure – if only by auto-suggestion or religious hysteria. Instead, he was to witness a miracle authenticated after rigorous tests.

When he visited her later in hospital, he found her sitting up in bed, 'with bright eyes and glowing with vitality... such inexpressible serenity flowed from her that it seemed to light up this pathological place with joy'.

The light continued to shine. When Carrel asked his patient, 'What will you do now that you are cured?' he expected her to speak of marriage and a family. Instead, she said: 'I shall join the Sisters of St Vincent de Paul and nurse the sick'.

Her light was to help Carrel return from scepticism to faith. But his scientific colleagues persisted in scepticism so strongly that Carrel felt compelled to leave France for New York, the Rockefeller Institute and his Nobel Prize for Medicine.

His noblest testament remains *Man the Unknown*. A French publisher rejected it, saying, 'It is magnificent but there aren't fifty people in France who would read it.' Harpers (now Harper-Collins) published it and it sold one million copies in nineteen languages.

And the secret of its success? The way Carrel, the scientist, spelled out the ominous cracks already apparent in 'Modern Scientific Culture' – cracks that have certainly not closed with the years, cracks which may only be bridged by faith in a providential God to whose creatures and creation we all have a duty of co-operation and care.

In an Afterword, Paul Glynn quotes Francis Thompson's poem, *In No Strange Land*:

The angels keep their ancient place –

Turn but a stone and start a wing!

'Tis ye, 'tis your estranged faces  
'That miss the many splendoured thing.

Part of the many splendoured thing is surely the merciful visions of Our Lady and her miracles as described by Paul Glynn.



IAN MACDONALD is the pen-name of a prominent Sydney journalist and author.



## The Charter of Earl Roger of Shrewsbury, 1083 AD


**I** ROGER, by the Grace of God, earl of Shrewsbury, desiring to honour the monastery of the holy father St. Evroult, hereby give thereto, for the repose of my own soul and those of my ancestors, as follows: I order that every year, at the beginning of Lent, thirty shillings sterling of Maine be paid out of my rents at Alençon, for lights to be burnt day and night in the church of St. Evroult, before the crucifix of the Lord. I also grant to the monks, out of my own rights, free passage at Alençon, and release them from all tolls and customs throughout my territories; and I give right of pasture for the monks' swine in all my forests for ever. At Echaufour, I irrevocably give one plough land, and the tithes of the mill and of all the rents of that place; and I freely add of my own part the tenth of the fair at the Planches. Of my own free will and for the love of God I grant the church of Radon and all the tithes which William Sor gave to St. Evroult, and the church of St. Jouin, and all the tithe which Reginald the priest gave, and Odo de Peray released; and the altar of St. Leonard, in the church of Baliol, and one part of the tithe of the same village, and the land which Reginald de Baliol, and Aimeria his wife, my niece, gave to the monks. Likewise, in England, I give two manors, Onne and Merston, in Staffordshire, the tithe of my cheese and wool at Paulton, and all that I have at Melbourne, in Cambridgeshire, and one hide of land at Grafham in Sussex, and the land of Wulfine, the goldsmith, at Chichester. Moreover, I confirm whatever Warin my viscount, and William Pantulf, and Hugh de Medavi, and my other mesne-tenants have before given to St. Evroult, in England or Normandy. All this, with the consent of my sons Robert de Belesme, Hugh, and Philip, I thus grant, before God, for the repose of my soul, and of those of Mabel and Adeliza my wives, and those of my ancestors, and my future heirs, and ratify this instrument with the sign of the cross, and whosoever shall diminish, annul, or abstract, the premises, let him be anathema.'

Earl Robert granted this character, and ratified it with its signature; and after him it was subscribed at Alençon by his sons, Robert and Hugh, and Philip the Scholar, and by others, his chief officers, Robert, son of Theobald, and Hugh his son, Gislebert, the constable, Hugh the son of Turgis, Fulk du Pin, Engelbert, the master of the household, Reginald de Baliol, William Pantulf, Od de Pire, and several others.

— Ordericus Vitalis, 1075-1150, *Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy*.



## An infallible way to sink the ship of state

 HERE is a frigate attacked by a corsair of immense strength and size, rigging cut, masts in danger of coming by the board, four foot water in the hold, men dropping off very fast; in this dreadful situation how do you think the Captain acts (whose name shall be Perceval)? He calls all hands upon deck; talks to them of King, country, glory, sweethearts, gin, French prison, wooden shoes, old England, and hearts of oak: they give three cheers, rush to their guns, and, after a tremendous conflict, succeed in beating off the enemy. Not a syllable of all this: this is not the manner in which the honourable Commander goes to work: the first thing he does is to secure 20 or 30 of his prime sailors who happen to be Catholics, to clap them in irons, and set over them a guard of as many Protestants; having taken this admirable method of defending himself against his infidel opponents, he goes upon deck, reminds the sailors, in a very bitter harangue, that they are of different religions; exhorts the Episcopal gunner not to trust to the Presbyterian quarter master; issues positive orders that the Catholics should be fired at upon the first appearance of discontent; rushes through blood and brains, examining his men in the Catechism and 390 Articles, and positively forbids everyone to sponge or ram who has not taken the Sacrament according to the Church of England. Was it right to take out a captain made of excellent British stuff, and to put in such a man as this? Is not he more like a parson, or a talking lawyer, than a thoroughbred seaman? And built as she is of heart of oak, and admirably manned, is it possible, with such a captain to save this ship from going to the bottom?

— Sydney Smith, [1771-1845] wit, co-founder of the *Edinburgh Review* and Anglican Clergyman, quoted in *The Smith of Smiths*, by Hesketh Pearson, 1934.

## Statue of Lenin in the Blue Mountains

# COMRADELY CELEBRATIONS

By GILES AUTY



It may seem impolite to suggest that even prominent Australians can often be dangerously historically ignorant or naïve.

Yet what other conclusion could one possibly draw from the recent unveiling of a statue of Lenin in the small Blue Mountains town of Leura in NSW?

The statue was imported from Latvia at considerable expense by Sydney barrister Clive Evatt for the grounds of his enormous house and political, toy and railway museums. All of the last charge for admission nonetheless following the best capitalist traditions.

Unsurprisingly, the house's political museum centres on the deeds of a famous family's most famous - or infamous - member: Herbert Vere Evatt, known otherwise as 'the Doc'. This particular Evatt achieved what some regard as his 'finest hour' when he thwarted the attempts of Robert Menzies to outlaw the Communist Party of Australia in 1950-51.

Since I have already commented unfavourably elsewhere on the establishment of a statue of Lenin - dedicated on its plaque to 'The people of Australia' - in what is ostensibly a free western democracy, I do not wish to labour the point. (I wrote, in fact, in Brisbane's Courier Mail on July 13th.)

However, the statue could hardly be seen as anything less than an affront by the many thousands of Australians who are refugees not only from the Baltic states of the former USSR but from the Ukraine and elsewhere in the former Soviet Union. I do not think I would be overwhelmingly pleased either if I were a former Australian serviceman who had fought either in Korea or Vietnam.

But the largest group to whom the statue gives at least symbolic offence is, of course, Christians. Lenin, like all other communist dictators - and communist regimes - was notable for brutal repressions of all arms of Christianity.

With the collapse of communism in Northern Europe at the end of the 1980s, archives have at last become open to western investigators which reveal the full extent of the atrocities, terror and repressions inflicted on the unfortunate inhabitants of all the former, so-called, 'Iron Curtain' countries.

If there is any one book which all Australian Catholics and their children need to read it is *The Black Book of Communism* published in 1999 in an English translation by Harvard University press. At roughly ten dollars per 100 pages of horrifying information, this 800 page book should be required reading not only for every Catholic but for every university student of any subject at all throughout the whole of Australia.

Only Australian immigrants from such states as the former USSR, Poland, Romania, Hungary, Albania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, China, Cambodia, Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan will probably fail to be astonished and utterly horrified by the book's calm and dispassionate findings.

What is the most horrifying statistic of all?

From the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 to the end of the 20th century, roughly 100 million people perished as a direct consequence of what might politically be called international communist 'social engineering'.

The lives of hundreds of millions of others were also blighted by terror, torture and an absolute lack of personal, intellectual or religious freedom.

Such facts hang over the heads of the inhabitants of the free world like a black cloud which, though many may choose to ignore it, will not simply blow away.

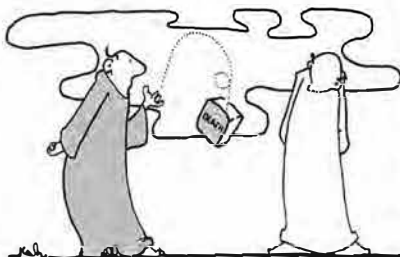
In Australia, in the meantime,

## Gamblers Beware!

WITH most Australian states boasting Casinos that allegedly attract tourists and most decidedly strip ordinary citizens of their hard-earned cash. *Annals* recommends that the following warning of the Roman poet Horace could well be chosen as a motto outside the gambling halls - to warn those entering, and to remind those inside of their destiny: 'Omnes eodem cogimur: omnium versatur urna -

serius, ocius, sors exitura' - 'All of us are tossed around, alike: the wheel of death turns for all: sooner or later our number will come up.' Gamblers would find this a sobering thought, and Roulette may take on a different aspect. Horace spoke of death as a lottery (= system of casting lots): 'the

capacious lottery urn of death throws out every name in turn.' Death is the one gamble that will definitely win. But are we prepared to win it? - Ed.





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— Editor, *Annals*

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much of the daily press concerns itself melodramatically with what are generally the non-issues of Australian life: what precise form an Australian republic should take, who will be the next director of ceremonies at Sydney's Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras, are Australian rugby players the greatest (as well as the most over-paid) in human history etc, etc?

In my worst nightmares as a journalist working in this country, I envisage a front-page newspaper headline — possibly in *The Age* or *The Australian* — which will read JOHN HOWARD FAILS TO RETURN BORROWED HANKERCHIEF. Two solid pages of political comment and analysis will follow.

Australia is physically isolated, as we all know. But is there any genuine compulsion for so many of its inhabitants to exist in a state of semi-permanent misapprehension, apathy and absolute ignorance of international history and affairs?

Christians, as a whole, are enjoined by their faith's founder to care for the physical as well as spiritual welfare of their human fellows. Thus no-one in his or her right mind recommends uncaring capitalist exploitation, ruination of our physical environment nor oppression of the poor self-defined minorities.

Fortunately for us, all of these matters can be addressed and fine-tuned where necessary within the framework of liberal, western democracies. We are also spiritually free.

It is my considered view that only a lunatic or invincibly ignorant adolescent would contemplate replacing even an unsatisfactory democratic society with any form of left-wing (or Right-wing) totalitarian regime.

I must admit, therefore, that I am none too impressed by the presence of a doting remembrance of Lenin only a short way from where I currently live.

So far, at least, I suppose I must be thankful that it has yet to be joined by any similar commemoration of Pol Pot.

GILES AURY was born in the UK and trained privately as a painter. He worked professionally as an artist for 20 years. Publication of his *The Art of Self Deception* swung his career towards criticism. He was art critic for *The Spectator* from 1984 to 1995 when he became national correspondent for *The Australian*. Currently he is writing for the *Courier Mail*.

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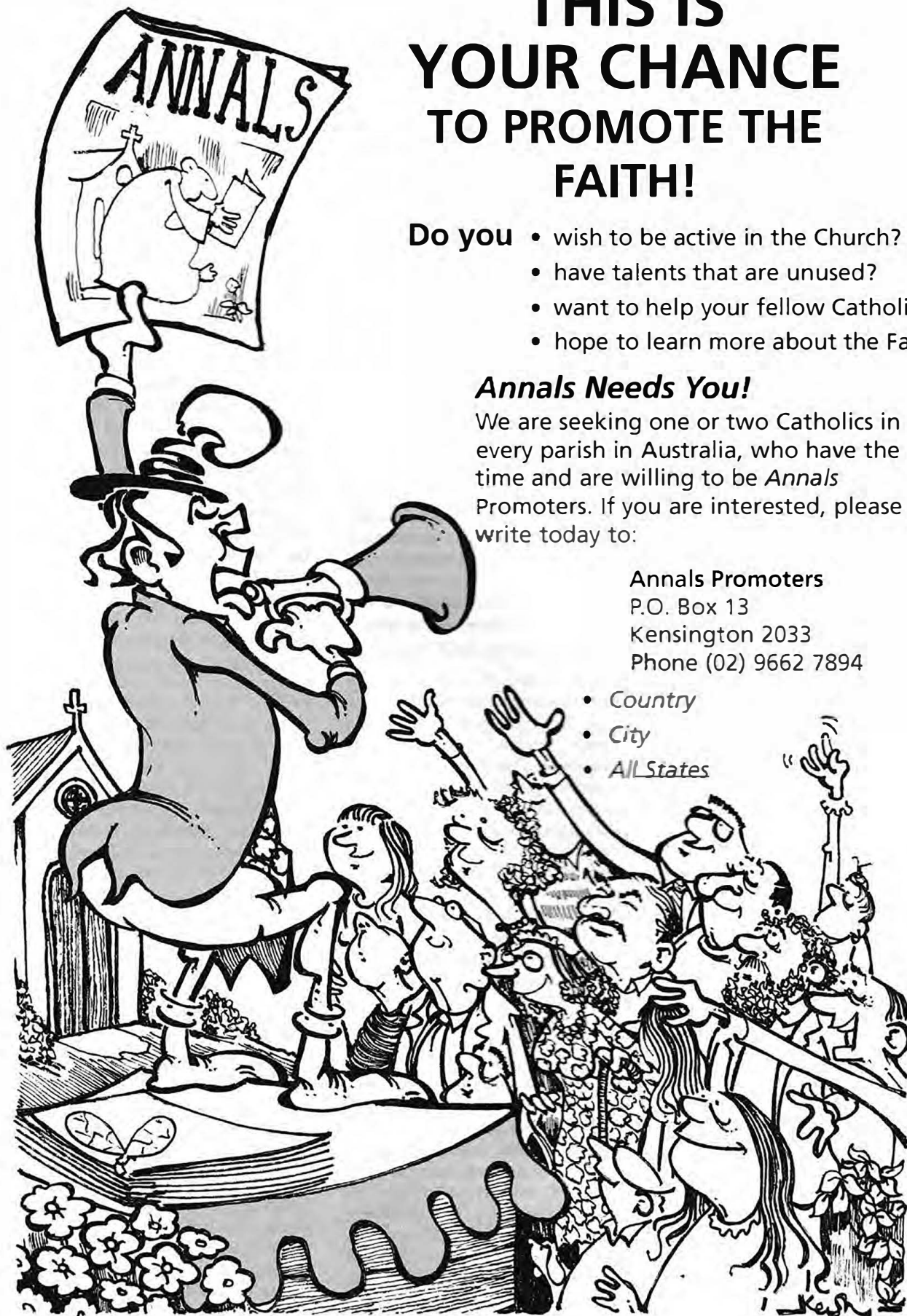
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(Source: CRTN Information Service, edited by Catherine Ancion for Aid to the Church in Need, Königstein, Germany.)

### **Call for end to ethnic cleansing in Indonesian Borneo**

Christian and Muslim leaders in Indonesian Borneo, including Catholic Bishop Leo Laba Ladja of Jayapura, have called for an end to ethnic cleansing in Central and Western Kalimantan and a peaceful solution for the region, 'which ensures human dignity and equal rights for all. It has become clear to us that the use of violence tends to be more and more the only way problems are dealt with,' the religious leaders wrote. 'And it is very clear to us that one act of violence is followed by another so that the atmosphere of daily life increasingly lacks humanity.' According to local sources, the ethnic clashes in Indonesian Borneo are caused by the rivalry between local Dayak tribesmen, also known as 'headcutters', and the more prosperous Madurese immigrants, who have been accused of showing little respect for Dayak customs. In 1999, the Dayaks decapitated more than 3,000 Madurese in a violent ethnic conflict. Earlier this year, 500 people were killed in further ethnic clashes. Thousands of Madurese have fled their homes in Kalimantan. However, they are not even safe in government camps, where they continue to face Dayak attacks.

### **Vietnam confiscates Catholic church to build museum**

The Vietnamese Communist government has ordered the confiscation of the parish church of Thanh Quang, near Da Nang City, to replace it with a museum, according to the

Free Vietnam Alliance, a local rights group. Father Nguyen Huu Long, Thanh Quang's parish priest, was ordered to vacate the premises by June 25. Despite strong government pressure, Father Long was backed by Archbishop Nguyen Binh Tinh of Da Nang and local parishioners in his opposition to give up the church. On June 25, thousands of Catholic faithful gathered around the Thanh Quang church to celebrate a solemn Mass, presided over by four local priests. Intimidated by the congregation's size, security officers did not take any measures to gain control over the church. However, they took pictures and video films of the crowd. On June 29, Father Long delivered a petition to the local authorities with 200 signatures against the museum project. In the meantime, the parish's telephone line has been cut off, which is interpreted by the Free Vietnam Alliance as a sign that the government might plan to use force against the Catholic protesters.

### **Missionary nun says most children in Zimbabwe are affected by AIDS crisis**

Interviewed by CNS at the UN General Assembly on AIDS in New York, Dominican Sister Patricia Walsh, health coordinator for Zimbabwe's Conference of Religious Superiors, stated that almost every child in Zimbabwe is affected by the AIDS crisis. According to official estimates, which are probably too low, Sister Walsh said, the HIV infection rate of adults in Zimbabwe is 26%. She explained that AIDS is spreading so rapidly because of the high level of promiscuity among migrant and travelling workers, who visit prostitutes when they are away from their wives. Despite AIDS awareness programs, Sister Walsh said she had seen few changes in people's sexual behavior, but rather 'a kind of fatalistic attitude'. She noted that when children are not infected at birth, they often spend their childhood looking after sick and dying parents. Once orphaned, children often 'have no way of earning a living except through sex.' Sister Walsh expressed her appreciation of the fact that governments are finally addressing

AIDS as a global problem, since this makes humanitarian workers feel less isolated. She also mentioned that she is currently working for a trust fund that tries to help rural children cope with a parentless life on Zimbabwe's 3,000 commercial farms.

### **Chicago: After heated debate, Catholic sports league finally accepts black Catholic school**

After a month of heated debate, a Catholic sports association in Chicago has finally voted in favor of the admission of St. Sabina's, a predominantly African-American inner-city school, into its league. The association, known as the Southside Catholic Conference, had initially rejected the participation of St. Sabina's in its sports activities, on the basis that it would be too dangerous to organize competitions in the school's mainly Black neighborhood. In a June 10 column for 'The Catholic New World', Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago commented that the 'concern for safety and fear of violence are legitimate fears, but the words are, as we all know, often code words to mask racism.' Father Michael Pflieger, pastor at St. Sabina's, said the children of the school had had mixed reactions about the entire affair. Fortunately, he had been able to give their unpleasant experience a pedagogic twist. 'If something is done that you believe is unjust, you stand up and fight; you don't walk away,' he allegedly told them. 'And if you do, you'll win.'

### **Movie on tortured French nun in Argentina**

While the media are again talking of Captain Alfredo Astiz, one of the most notorious torturers of Argentina's former military regime, a film on one of his victims, French Sister Alice Domon, has been moving audiences in Buenos Aires for the past two months. The film, titled *Yo soy Alice* (I, Sister Alice), is based on Sister Domon's correspondence since her arrival in Argentina in 1967. Sister Domon was arrested in 1976, together with a fellow religious of the 'Foreign Missions

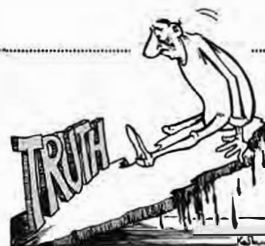
Institute of Our Lady of la Motte', Sister Leonie Duquet, and several lay activists after helping Argentinian mothers find out the truth about their 'disappeared' children. They were denounced by Captain Alfredo Astiz, who had been able to infiltrate their group. Accused of Communist subversion, Sisters Domon and Duquet were raped and tortured by Astiz, before being killed in December 1977. Both nuns became as famous as their torturer, who was given a life sentence by a French court in 1990. However, Argentina has refused to extradite Astiz on the basis that all crimes committed on Argentinian territory should be judged by an Argentinian tribunal. A few days ago, Astiz turned himself in to the Buenos Aires police, after Italy issued an international search warrant against him. However, the chance that Astiz will ever be judged at this stage is very slight, because of Argentina's special amnesty law for military personnel, accused of human rights abuses under the country's former regime.

### **Increasing number of French are visiting monasteries**

An increasing number of French citizens are spending short periods of time in monasteries and convents. According to a survey conducted by French Catholic newspaper 'La Croix', about two thirds of the short-term monastery visitors are women and more than a third are aged between 40 and 65. About 60% of the monastery visitors come by themselves and 40% in groups. 41% of the convents have also had an increase in the number of requests for long-term stays.

### **Religious condemn shooting of young protester during G8 summit in Genoa**

Religious participating in the 'Genoa Social Forum' have declared themselves shocked and saddened by the violent rioting during the G8 summit in Genoa, Italy, which caused the death of a young anti-globalisation protester. Jesuit Father Giovanni La Manna, organiser of a prayer and fasting day on July 20 for the world's poor in Genoa's



## **Weighty truths**

IN Russian the most popular proverbs are about truth. They express the not inconsiderable and bitter experience of the people, sometimes with astonishing force. One word of truth outweighs the whole world. And on such a fantastic breach of the law of conservation of mass and energy are based my own activities and my appeal to the writers of the world.

— Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *One Word of Truth*, Nobel Speech, 1970.

Franciscan Church of Boccadasse, denounced the 'terrible incidents which have harmed the credibility of a peaceful protest movement. We are saddened by the death of the young man who certainly came to this city with different hopes. The violence of a minority group should not compromise the credibility of the anti-globalisation movement, which exists all over the planet.' Father La Manna expressed his concern that the anti-globalisation riots during the G8 summit could be manipulated to divert the public's attention from real Third World issues. He also wondered why the Italian police had not yet been able to isolate the extremist groups, responsible for the violence, on whom they claim to have information. The Scalabrini missionaries and the Italian branch of Caritas have also called for an end to the anti-globalisation violence and a more intelligent struggle through 'ideas, words and prayer'.

### **For the first time, BBC hires agnostic religious programming director**

For the first time in its history, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has hired a non-Christian as the Head of its Religion and Ethics department. Born of a Jewish father and Catholic mother, Alan

Bookbinder, 45, describes himself as 'an open-heart agnostic', who shares 'religion's profound concern with the big questions: how to combat human frailty, how to deal with suffering, how to face death, how to bind as a community, and how to find self-knowledge.' He will succeed Anglican Rev. Ernest Lea, who ran the Religion and Ethics department for 22 years. Bookbinder is currently an executive producer in the BBC's Science department, where his credits include the multi award-winning series *The Human Body and Brain Story*.

### **Cairo government bans two newspapers guilty of offending coptic community**

On Wednesday, a Cairo court banned two Egyptian newspapers, the weekly al-Nabaa al-Watany newspaper and its sister publication, Akher Khabar, for publishing graphic images of the alleged sexual misconduct of a defrocked Coptic Orthodox monk, Adel Saadallah Gabriel, at the historical monastery of Assiut. This resulted in vehement protests last month by Coptic Christians, who felt that the newspaper group had offended their religion. The Coptic Church has also denied that the photographs were taken at the monastery. 'The constitution allows press freedom as long as it is responsible, to serve society and not to tamper with its morals and beliefs,' said Magdi el-Agati, the presiding judge at Cairo's administrative court. 'If the press diverts from this road, it is the duty of the judiciary to steer it back to the right track.' According to local observers, the Egyptian government wishes to avoid increasing tensions between Egypt's Coptic minority and the Muslim community, which have led to violence in the past. On Sunday, Mamdouh Mahran, the editor-in-chief of al-Nabaa al-Watany and Akher Khabar, who was strongly criticised by local press and journalism associations, will be tried in a state security court for disturbing the peace, inciting religious sedition and printing indecent pictures. If convicted, he could be sentenced to up to 10 years in jail.





An essential form of teaching sometimes overlooked

# THOUGHT, VISUAL ACUITY, AND PICTURE BOOKS

*This is the second article in a 4-part series on the importance of fine literature for children. In her first essay, *Holding Patterns*, SUSAN MOORE discussed the role of picture books in fostering closeness and encouraging thoughtful conversations between young children and adults. Here, amplifying on benefits conferred by picture books, she focuses on boys and girls whose school histories are marked by failure—especially in reading and writing.*



VER the past two years I've spent most of my waking hours thinking about and working with half-numbered boys and girls and their parents. All of them have been very slow readers and writers, all have found many aspects of schooling a torture, and most have been unusually patient and kind – like Maybeth in Cynthia Voigt's revered Tilleman series. Instinctively, when I first began spending time with these children I used wordless picture books to find out as much about their troubles as I could.

Not only did our conversations disclose a great deal about what each child could and could not see and do; but they showed me how to draw on their revealed strengths in designing instructional programs for them. To my amazement an 11-year-old who had never before read anything during her free time began to read compulsively. A Year 5 girl participated in class for the first time, confident that she had something worthwhile to say. Still others (all boys) began revealing more and more about their skills in extra-curricular areas and their need to fine-tune them.

Thanks to cognitive science, a great deal about the right- and left-brain dysfunction responsible for failures to meet conventional academic expectations is now known. Children with grave right-brain difficulties typically suffer from sensory deprivation that generates bland and sketchy speech, poor visualisation, and an incapacity

either to conceive of possibilities or to solve problems of human conduct. Those with serious left-brain difficulties, in contrast, are too bombarded by sense impressions to process information slowly, sequentially, and coherently unless it can be immediately linked to sound existing visual and kinesthetic knowledge.

Through what it reveals about deep needs, work with picture books provides essential forms of teaching previously missed out on by students in both categories. Because it encourages skilled adults to make accurate inferences about a diverse range of cognitive skills from what these children say in response to visual stimuli, this work leads incrementally into many forms of productive activity, and it radically increases self-esteem – normally the biggest problem for children with special needs.

For poor readers, books that tell compelling stories through pictures are a particularly felicitous resource. Both for testing and instructional purposes, they confer the security on which significant results depend. As well as allowing boys and girls to talk freely about things that they know without experiencing the stress of having to deal with the printed word, they yield precise information about their powers of reasoning.

Over the past 24 months I have used three wordless picture books with exceptional appeal to gather essential data about the minds and hearts of children who have badly needed immediate help: Raymond Briggs' *The Snowman* (U.K.), Peter Collington's *A Small Miracle* (also U.K.), and Jeannie Baker's *Window* (Australian). Briggs' classic, whose most memorable dressing up and flying scenes could well have inspired similar ones in *E.T.*, is about a night shared by a boy of about nine or ten with a snowman he has made the day before. Collington's book is a Christmas parable that children with strong Christian formation love. Baker's is a strong plea for environmental sanity.

Of the three books, Collington's is the overwhelming favourite of the children (and adults) to whom I have introduced them. Children in the middle years of school with a strong interest in science, particularly biology, adore Baker and spontaneously offer remarkably precise information about every bird, plant, and inanimate object in her rural – increasingly polluted – world. Artistic girls and boys as young as



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## Witnessing to the Faith



COLLEAGUE told me a story recently that shows what real missionary zeal looks like. This colleague was living in California, in Beverly Hills at the time, in one of the city's last rent-controlled apartments. The neighbourhood was heavily non-Christian, and every Sunday he and his family would be the only ones on the block who showed up at Mass. One Sunday morning he had to leave in the middle of Mass and run home for a bottle, or diapers, or something for the baby – and as he pulled up near his home, he saw a young man in a starched white shirt with his two young children, going from door to door with a Bible. He was a member of some Evangelical church, and of course, he wasn't having much luck. He would knock on a door, say a few words about Jesus, and sometimes the people were polite, and sometimes they weren't. But in every case, the young man had the door closed in his face ... and so he moved on to the next house with his children.

This colleague of mine forgot all about the diapers. He watched the young man and his children for about 20 minutes. And it left an impression on him that remains in his heart to this day. You see, that young Evangelical man was not only unafraid to be humiliated for the Lord. He was *unafraid to let his children see him humiliated*. That's witness. That's confidence in the truth of the Gospel. There's a lesson here: Defending the faith means first of all preaching the faith. And if we Catholics lose people to the Fundamentalist sects, we have no one to blame but ourselves for letting the fire for God go out in our own hearts.

But it's not enough just to preach Jesus Christ and teach the faith. It's also our job to actually bring others into a real, eternal friendship with God. And what creates this new relationship with God? Baptism – in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Sacrament of Baptism matters. In fact, all of the sacraments matter enormously, because they're the normal means by which our Father shares His mercy and love with us.

Through the waters of baptism comes the gift of the Holy Spirit. And because of this gift, baptism gives us new life in Christ, washes away our sin and incorporates us into the community of faith. Baptism commissions and empowers us as apostles. It's at the heart of the Second Vatican Council's teaching about the role of lay people.

– Archbishop Charles Chaput, of Denver, Colorado, USA *Speaking The Truth in Love*.





## Clouding the issues

**T**HE fact that ghosts prefer darkness no more disproves the existence of ghosts than the fact that lovers prefer darkness disproves the existence of love. If you choose to say, 'I will believe that Miss Brown called her *financé* a periwinkle or any other endearing term, if she will repeat the word before seventeen psychologists,' then I shall reply, 'Very well, if those are your conditions, you will never get the truth, for she certainly will not say it.' It is just as unscientific as it is unphilosophical to be surprised that in an unsympathetic atmosphere certain extraordinary sympathies do not arise. It is as if I said that I could not tell if there was a fog because the air was not clear enough; or as if I insisted on perfect sunlight in order to see a solar eclipse.

— G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*.

four or as old as fourteen take enormous delight in everything that Briggs' boy and snowman do together—though, one and all, they sigh audibly in response to a sad ending that, nonetheless, seems right and just to them.

Youngsters from three to fifteen who have received essential religious instruction generally ask to re-read Collington on their own as soon as our discussion of it has ended. Indeed, with each early re-reading, new snippets of meaning emerge for them. Although this happens with Briggs and Baker too, the reason for *A Small Miracle's* remarkably satisfying effect is that the tough story it tells is so full of hope. Like *The Snowman*, and unlike *Window*, it has a real plot, and it dramatises joy as well as pain. But because it functions—as all parable does—on different levels at once, its gradually unfolding riches are incomparably sweet, like the rose.

Last year, in a brilliant scholarly article written seven years earlier, pure mathematician James Franklin

of the University of New South Wales suggested that all thinking is inference from pictures in the mind. Hence mental visualisation is crucial to scientific, as to all, reasoning. Over the centuries, intellectual exploration at its most imaginative has involved close scrutiny of lines and curves, graphs, maps, diagrams (e.g. of family trees or the musical scale), art and architecture.

Implicitly, this fact reveals why every kind of 'seeing' matters so much, and why, as observers, we all require continuing instruction. Sharing Blake's *Songs of Innocence* with at-risk children in the visual form in which they were first published—of course, as etchings—seems to me

Step No. 3 in a course of instruction beginning with wordless picture books. Step 2 involves close study of some of the fine books with words and drawings that book lovers automatically keep close to their hearts.

To my chagrin, I didn't read *Wind in the Willows* (whose pictures are enchanting) through to the end until last year. When I was a child growing up in New Jersey in a lower middle class, largely Jewish, suburb, I was mystified by many of its turns of phrase, which were too British to mean to me what they have meant to many Australians. One of the best classroom teachers I have ever witnessed compelled me through example to have another go. She is now Acting Head of a primary school in my part of Sydney where at-risk children need more attention than it is possible to give them in large mainstream classes.

One day last spring, when I was discussing Toad's more infuriating traits of character with one of her students, a Year 6 child (whom I shall call Rebecca), we began to ~~contrast~~ garden varieties of nastiness with the misbehaviour – never 'mean' – of Grahame's naughtiest ~~haves~~. Since rebellion takes many forms, I wanted her to begin to reflect on key differences among them. In this context, musing on events in life that are beautifully illuminating, I told her a story about something that had happened to me when I was 6.

What I wanted her to see on this occasion and on others – and she did – was that I considered her observations about literature and life much more important than the progress she was making in note taking and summary, which she needed a lot of help with. At each successive meeting our discussions told me more and more about her character. As we looked together at increasingly demanding books containing pictures, her goodness of heart surfaced as it hadn't done before at school. This led to voracious reading: in her life, a first.

The story that I told Rebecca was about a surprise birthday party that my mother had given me in the back garden of our semi-detached house. One of the organised activities was a

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circle game, played to music, in which the girls chose the boys. I entered it late because I was so busy talking animatedly to somebody that I didn't realise choosing had started. By the time I had to name a partner, all of the best-liked boys in the class had already been picked. Every child nearby was watching me, curious about what I would do.

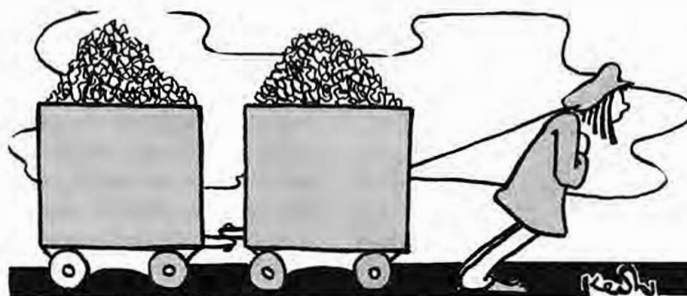
Faced with a choice between a highly intelligent, awkward and unpopular Jewish boy (whom I liked very much, and who committed suicide in his early forties after a killing on the stock exchange followed by a late, disastrous marriage) and a black boy, lovely, who was a neighbourhood friend regularly ostracised because of his race, I chose the black boy. I felt that if I didn't, he would be too stricken to survive the party. Immediately after I picked him, the best-looking boy in the class, idolised by many girls, said, 'Poor Susan! The birthday child, all dressed up, and she has to dance with a nigger!'

'Did you cry?' Rebecca asked me. 'No,' I replied. 'I don't cry very often. Tears are a divine gift. But you see that I have never forgotten what happened on this day so many years ago, and nothing like it ever happens to Toad, Mole or Ratty when they are with each other or with other mutual friends.' 'You must have been very strong not to cry,' she said after only the briefest of pauses. Whereupon my eyes filled with tears so uncontrollable that I had to wipe them away before resuming our discussion of Kenneth Grahame.

Losing my composure like this had never happened to me before with a pupil – though it brought to mind an occasion in my life as a teacher educator when a group of students who had just looked at the ending of *Middlemarch* with me lost theirs to such a degree that they were unable to leave their seats. Much later I realised that this moment with Rebecca had been the decisive one in our meetings together, and in my novitiate on picture books.



DR SUSAN MOORE is a grandparent raised in America, who has lived in Australia for 35 years. Her most recent book is *Text Types: A basis for Classroom Study* (Five Senses, Sydney). Parts of this essay first appeared in the *Australasian's Review of Books*.



## Lost Generations of British Children

UP to early in the nineteenth century, the conditions of child labour were so inhuman that the story of them is almost unbelievable at the present day. There was no public or organised supervision of their work. There was free and unrestricted traffic in the use of children. Little ones of four and five years of age were employed in factories all day long, that had no time for play, no education, no recreation of any kind. In coal mines the conditions were even worse. Children of seven or eight were taken down the shafts before sunrise and did not come up again till after sunset. They rarely saw the light of day. The darkness of the night was followed by the darkness of the mine.

Boys and girls as young as five were hired out to farmers, herded in barns regardless of any claims of sanitation or decency and driven in gangs to work on the farms.

At a meeting of the Social Science Association in 1870, Mr George Smith presented a lump of clay weighing forty-three pounds. This he had taken from a boy of nine who had daily to walk twelve miles in a brick yard, half the distance carrying this weight. Here are extracts from the fourth report of the Children's Employment Commission of 1862. A boy of nine worked at hardening and tempering steel, from 7am till 9.30pm. Four nights a week he worked till midnight. Another boy of nine sometimes made three twelve-hour shifts running, another of thirteen worked from 6pm till noon next day.

These facts did not shock contemporary opinion, as witness the following from the press of the day.

*The Edinburgh Review* of 1819 says: 'After all, we must own that it was quite right to throw out the Bill for prohibiting the sweeping of chimneys by boys, because humanity is a modern invention; and there are many chimneys in old houses that cannot be swept in any other manner.' *The Gorgon*, a Radical paper, sneers at Parliament for 'its ostentatious display of humanity in dealing with trivialities like the slave trade, climbing boys, and the condition of children in factories'.

Chimneys were at this time swept by sending boys to climb inside with a brush to remove the soot. If the poor child got wedged in the narrow space, his ascent was hastened by lighting straw beneath him and thus driving him up. Death often resulted. Orthodox opinion saw nothing inhuman in this.

— L.A. Parry, *The History of Torture in England*.





(Source: CRTN Information Service, edited by Catherine Ancion for Aid to the Church in Need, Königstein, Germany.)

### **France returns ancient cross and religious book to Ethiopia**

The French authorities have returned an ancient cross and religious book to the Ethiopian authorities. The cross, which was 800 years old, was stolen in 1981 from the historical Lalibella church of St. George in the West of the country, while the sacred book, which was one century old, disappeared in 1991. The two religious objects, which were part of the church's religious treasure, were officially returned on July 19 to Ethiopian religious dignitaries. In May 1999, Belgium also returned an 11th century brass cross from the same region, stolen by an Ethiopian merchant, who sold it to an unsuspecting Belgian art collector for US\$ 25,000. During the same period, Italy returned a century-old watch to the Ethiopian authorities, which used to belong to a major figure of the country's history, the Empress Taitu.

### **Marian apparitions could reconcile country, Rwandan bishop says**

Bishop Augustin Misago of Gikongoro, Rwanda, has expressed his hope that the recently recognized apparitions of Our Lady of Kibeho would contribute to national reconciliation in his country, heavily traumatised by the 1994 ethnic genocide of Tutsis and moderate Hutus. 'I hope that through Our Lady, Kibeho will become a center for national reconciliation,' Bishop Misago said in a statement about the official recognition of the 1981 apparition of the Virgin Mary in Kibeho to three

young women: Alphonsine Mumureke, Nathalie Mukamazimpka and Marie-Claire Mukankango. Bishop Misago, who wrote a book on the apparitions, was acquitted of genocide charges last year, following an attempt, according to the local Church, to falsely accuse him of complicity in the massacres. When asked about the Virgin Mary's apparition as an African woman speaking the local language, Bishop Misago said that it 'is quite natural for Our Lady to speak in the local language. In France she would speak French, in England English, because Mary is close to all peoples of all cultures.'

### **Catholics in Russia call for a papal visit**

Encouraged by Pope John Paul II's recent trip to Ukraine, Russian Catholics are becoming increasingly open about their wish to receive a visit from the Holy Father. The Pope's recent presence in Kiev and Lviv was a 'source of great joy to the

Russians', Viktor Krul, editor of the Catholic weekly, 'Svijat Evangelija', commented to 'Fides'. Krul also noted that an increasing number of Russian Catholics feel that Pope John Paul II should not seek the approval of Moscow Patriarch Alexei II before visiting their country. Patriarch Alexei, who is the leader of the powerful Russian Orthodox Church, has repeatedly accused the Catholic Church of proselitism in 'traditionally Orthodox' countries. He was also vehemently opposed to the Holy Father's trip to Ukraine on June 23-27. On Wednesday, Vatican Spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said that it was 'almost certain' that Pope John Paul II would visit Russia in the near future, noting that a visit to Moscow remains 'one of the priorities of his Pontificate.'

### **Nigerian Christians call for constitutional guarantees for religious liberty**

During a June 30 meeting in Kaduna, Nigeria, Saidu Dogo, the secretary general of the northern Nigerian chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria, called for more constitutional guarantees to ensure religious liberty in the country. The Christian Association of Nigeria is an umbrella organization representing both Catholic and Protestant denominations. No less than 13 northern Nigerian states have already adopted the traditional Islamic Sharia legislation or are planning to do so in the near future. This has led to violent clashes between opponents and defenders of the Sharia, which not only prescribes penalties like amputation, flogging and stoning, but also imposes restrictions on male-female interaction, alcohol consumption and dress codes. The Christian Association of Nigeria is currently concerned that Muslim governors in the mostly Islamic north might find a loophole in the constitution which would enable them to adopt Islam as a state religion. The Association also wants the powers of Sharia courts to be limited to family and personal matters, leaving criminal cases to non-religious courts.



### **Viking ships**

**W**e are not confined to written sources for our knowledge of the Viking ships. In Norway more than one Viking ship has been found, the most famous being those of Gokstad and Oseberg, both from burial mounds on the shores of Christiania or, as we must learn to say, Oslo Fjord. They owe their preservation to the fact that they were used as burial chambers for the persons to whom they belonged. The oldest of these vessels is the Gokstad find. It is clinker-built with seats for sixteen pairs of rowers and is 78 ft. long and 16 ft. broad amidships. In form and workmanship it is not surpassed by modern vessels of a similar kind and, to judge from the remains found in it, it must date from about A.D. 900.

— A.P. Newton, *Travel and Travellers of the Middle Ages*. London, 1926.

By James Murray

## Facing the Music

Musical instruments are a last focus of craftsmanship. Appropriate, therefore, that Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson should have crafted an eloquent documentary about the threat to music inherent in penny-pinching university budgeting, imposed by government ukase.

Central is Professor Anne Boyd, head of the University of Sydney Music Department. She battles departmental death by a thousand cuts, teaches talented students, argues with colleagues and seeks corporate funding. In one scene, she tries for scholarship sponsorship from a bank. No need to ask which bank, the one where Marley's ghost rattles his chains and cash boxes unavailingly.

Here the barbarians are not at the gates, they are within the citadel. Boyd personifies courage as she confronts them, stating that she cannot bring herself to close doors of knowledge in the face of the young. The stress brings her to breakdown. Her colleague Winsome Evans has a heart-attack.

No countervailing statements from the powers that be; getting the colour-balance right on their red faces might have been a problem. Despite everything, Boyd continues to compose. Her choral piece, *Jesus Reassures His Mother*, soars to show what originally inspired the foundation of universities: the glory of God, not Mammon. PG



## Shrek

This DreamWorks computer animation cartoon is the funniest and most threatening film of the year so far; funny because it works on two levels: adults can enjoy the witty jokes, children, the antics; threatening because its success may affect the future of live actors.

Shrek, looking like a cross between a green-tinged Martian and an earthy spud, is ordered by the local king to find him a princess. But

she is not what she appears to be. Shrek is voiced by Mike Myers doing a Billy Connolly accent. Cameron Diaz voices the princess. Other voice actors include John Lithgow and Eddie Murphy. PG.



## Lantana

The title is metaphoric of moral tangle and bright flowers of hope. The film is slow paced. But distillation is a slow process. And director Ray Lawrence, in a welcome return to features, distills the potent essence of fidelity and infidelity in a quartet of marriages. Writer Andrew Bovell's characters begin a dance to the music of memory, the memory of a murdered child. Her grieving parents are John, an academic (Geoffrey Rush) and Valerie, a psychotherapist (Barbara Hershey).

Among her patients is a homosexual, Patrick, (Peter Phelps) who sets a theme of suspicion running and Sonja (Kerry Armstrong). She is married to Leon (Anthony Lapaglia), a hard-driving cop, off-sided by Claudia (Leah Purcell) and having a shabby affaire with Jane (Rachel Blake) who in turn is separated from Pete (Glenn Robbins). Lantana indeed. By contrast the marriage of Nik (Vince Colosimo) and Paula (Daniela Farinacci) appears all children and suburban simplicity. But little is as it appears, including a mystery man (Russell Dykstra). Impossible to single out one player from the rest. All shine as ensemble players of classic calibre. MA15+



## Silent Partner

Director Alkinos Tsilimidos based his debut film on Daniel Keene's play of the same title about a couple of desperates, John and Bill, given a greyhound. Here David Field and Syd Brisbane make Keene's tragic-comic dialogue their own.

Their racing efforts on behalf of a Mr Silver add disaster to their desperation, leaving them to be sustained by what they began with: their mateship. The dog? It dies of an overdose of booster drug: Olympian theme in a slum location. MA 15+



## One Hundred Steps

Mafia movies have become a film industry sub-genre. But Marco Tullio Giordano's film, shot in Sicily, has raw honesty that shows Hollywood's *Godfather* series for what it is: overwrought faction, based mainly on the imaginings of Mario Puzo.

Giordano sets his film in 1968 when rock music and student rebellion shocked the world but not the imperturbable power of the mafia. Peppino Impastato, born into a mafia family, rebels against that power and

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criticises the local mafia capo, controller of everything from municipal bribery to drug trafficking. Peppino, played by Luigi Lo Cascio, is noble, heroic and doomed.

He also campaigns under the red flag of Communism. Giordano does no justice to the irony that under the tyranny of that flag in the Soviet Union, a more ruthless mafia was being bred. *MA 15+*



### Liam

In the title role, Anthony Borrows carries this film. It's a heavy load for a wee fellow. Jimmy McGovern's script and Stephen Frears direction intercut obsessively between Liam's school preparation for his First Communion (all hellfire and a glowing priest) and his family (breaking because of unemployment).

The period is the 1930s, the setting Liverpool. The Depression was the Depression, not a manifestation of economic rationalism. Liam's father (Ian Hart) reacts by joining the anti-Semitic, black-shirted British Union of Fascists, a move with disastrous consequences.

The film's lack of balance may derive from McGovern writing of a period twenty years before he was born, a baby-boomer of sorts. Yet whatever its weaknesses, it does show how worthy individuals can be systematically trapped into poverty rather self-induce it. *M*



### Russian Doll

Natalia Novikova plays the doll, but by no means woodenly in this comedy by Stavros Kazantzidis and Allannah Ziserman. Indeed Novikova's performance as a Russian immigrant is so blithe and light, it lifts that of her co-stars, Hugo Weaving as a single 'lapsed Catholic atheist' and David Wenham as a married Jewish publisher, both of whom court her.

Bondi's Russian and Jewish communities provide vivid background. Omitted what might have been a fascinating scene: the reaction

of a rabbi on being asked to preside at the synagogue wedding of the aforesaid 'lapsed Catholic atheist' and a non-practising Russian Jew. *M15+*



### When Brendan Met Trudy

Writer Roddy Doyle and director Kieron J Walsh visit Woody Allen country for this brisk comedy about an uptight school teacher (Peter McDonald) obsessed with movies. Into his life ricochets a free-spirit (Flora Montgomery) more interested in life whether she is a-bed or a-burgling. McDonald and Montgomery create a warm-to-passionate duet, cross-referenced to old movies (*Breathless*, *The Searchers*, *Sunset Boulevard*). Doyle himself was a teacher before becoming a best-seller. On occasions, he cannot resist the kind of schoolroom impudence, he must have to deal with professionally, as in his use of the hymn *Panis Angelicus* in a shameless, punning link to an older Ireland, symbolized by the great tenor John McCormack. *M15+*



### Bridget Jones's Diary

The team behind *Four Weddings and a Funeral* and *Notting Hill* continue with the magic formula of casting an American actress in a terribly, terribly English story. Andie MacDowell and Julia Roberts were allowed to retain their nationality. Renee Zellweger has the more difficult task of playing a plump, desperate and dateless upper-class Englishwoman. She gets the accent right, but not the way the upper-class English, no matter how desperate, are always on.

Effectively this is a Restoration comedy in modern dress, based on Helen Fielding's best-seller. Bridget's caddish suitor is played by Hugh Grant, in the style that makes him the only actor in the world capable of transforming his own hair into an ill-fitting wig. Colin Firth is the upright suitor, Darcy (in-joke deriving from his role in *Pride and Prejudice*). *M*



### Heartbreakers

Hilarious. Or at least to the extent of Gene Hackman's sketch of a tobacco mogul, William B Tensy, a walking, coughing spluttering advertisement against the product that has made him rich. The rest is a female version of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* with Sigourney Weaver and Jennifer Love-Hewitt in the parts played by Steve Martin and Michael Caine. Martin and Caine were con-artists, targeting rich women on the Riviera. Weaver and Love-Hewitt target men in Miami with a little help from Anne Bancroft who also steals the picture while Ray Liotta wonders what he's doing in it. *MA 15+*



### Swordfish

Never mind the implausible plot, feel the explosions as right-wing conspirators seek funding for their nefarious schemes by way of computer hacking. John Travolta is the leader of the cabal. Haile Berry is his seductive executive assistant. And Hugh Jackman is the scruffy whiz who electronically transfers the necessary funds from Bank A to Bank B without a glitch, a single queue or a tax demand. *MA 15+*



### State and Main

Director David Mamet's tack-sharp direction of this black satire matches his script. Mamet, a successful stage playwright before he hit Hollywood (or Hollywood hit him), has not been overwhelmed by the encounter. His script cuts to the cynical heart of film-making as a production crew and cast invade and destroy the placidity of a classic small town with antics inspired by the notion that talent is an excuse for any and all excess. The cast includes Alec Baldwin (also executive producer), Sarah Jessica Parker, Charles Durning, Phillip Seymour Hoffman, Patti Lupone and William H Macey. All are in top form in this low comedy. *MA 15+*



## The House of Mirth

Terence Davies conjures a splendid film from Edith Wharton's novel of the American rich. He also conjures an equivalently astonishing performance from Gillian Armstrong, enabling her to make the risky shift from a television hit show (*The X-Files*) to movies.

Armstrong brings a doomed, icy beauty to the role of Lily Bart, an heiress seeking a suitable husband, and finding only a deceit of socialites, played with elegant venom by the likes of Laura Linney, Elizabeth Montgomery, Dan Aykroyd and Anthony LaPaglia. PG



## Pearl Harbor

Ben Affleck. Josh Hartnett and Kate Beckinsdale form the fictitious love triangle designed to attract young audiences to the realities of Pearl Harbor. The sustained attack sequence is more vividly realised than the love affairs. Only Jon Voight's playing of President Roosevelt matches the scale of the history involved. The Japanese are given benign treatment (box-office speaks louder than true reconciliation). The British are mentioned by way of a plot twist involving Affleck's joining the Royal Air Force for a convenient exit and re-entrance.

No mention of Australia's coast-watchers or code-breakers. Overall the movie is about as close to historical truth as *Carry On Up the Khyber* or *1066 And All That*. M



## Dr Doolittle 2

The equation here is simple: Eddie Murphy + talking animals = a hoot. PG.



## Serenades

Director Mojgan Khadem (script co-writer with Christine Stevens) makes an extraordinary debut with this film about an extraordinary subject: the Afghan cameleers who helped to open up the outback. She

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uses this as the context for a love-story between a Lutheran missionary's son (Aden Young) and Jira, (Alice Haines), the mission-raised daughter of a cameleer and a tribally prostituted Aboriginal woman.

Russell Boyd's depiction of the landscape has a masterly touch, genetic inheritance from the nation's most talented family of artists.

Occasional lapses: Torn between Christianity and Islam, Jira reverts to Aboriginal rituals, implausibly as it happens because she has had no initiation into those rituals. And a hymn about Jesus gets a mocking rendition. No such mockery is made of Afghan-Islamic rituals, including arranged marriage with bride-price. Obviously the fatwah in combination with selective political correctness goes a long way. MA 15+



## Someone Like You

Hugh Jackman has not been so much discovered by Hollywood as mined. Here he is again. This time looking like Marlborough man without a horse but with a constant coffin-nail in his mouth. He plays a devil-may-care cable television floor manager. Creating a standard love triangle with him are Greg Kinnear as a smooth producer and Ashley Judd as a perky researcher. Ellen Barkin plays the chat-show host so effectively, she will probably get one of her own.

The comedy neatly satirises the voracious, parasitic nature of television. Judd ghost writes a sex manual and is then ordered to get the author on the show. She does. She also gets her man. And they both smoke happily ever after. M15+



## Monkey Mask

There are art house films and arty films. This is one of the latter. The script by Anne Kennedy is based on Dorothy Porter's verse detective story. It features (as did *I feel Sexy* and *Better than Sex*) all of Susie Porter (no relation). She plays a tiny but tough cop turned private eye.



Kelly McGillis, (on a Hollywood return ticket) appears as a lecturer in poetry and bisexual La Belle Dame Sans Merci with whom the private eye falls blindly in love (sorry about that). Kept men abound. So do explicit sex scenes. These obtrude, no clunk, too heavily into what could have been a tight murder mystery, set amid the poetasters, culture vultures, modish obscenity and scenery of Sydney.

The PI's toughness is demonstrated on a poet (male) whose main crime appears to be writing verse with a religious element. For the villains of the piece, embraces and kisses, not arm locks before they are brought to justice.

As with any arty film, the reliance is on aesthetics not morality. Thus the villains are castigated not for murder but for subjecting the parents of the beautiful, young victim to the sight of a broken and abused body.

And at the end, Porter in her tough, little leather jacket, tough little jeans and tough little boots strides through the city, a lesbian version of that tough little bloke Baretta (Robert Blake) with possibly a touch of that hapless little bloke Alvin Purple (Graeme Blundell). *R 18+*



### The Ladies Man

Alvin Purple goes black defines this feeble effort about a talk-show host, played by Tim Meadows. Yet another comedy that relies on stalwarts from Saturday Night Live, one of the few American shows not seen here. Count your blessings. *MA15+*



### You Can Count on Me

Writer/director Kenneth Lonergan deals with the small-town re-union of a stay-at-home sister, Sammy, and drifter brother, Terry, orphaned in childhood. Laura Linney confirms her star quality as the sister, a bank official, seeking to create a haven for her brother. He is played by Mark Ruffalo with a mumble and magnetism that recall Marlon Brando in *On the Water Front*.

Matthew Broderick is Linney's new boss, the kind of martinet who'd get a job as a queue marshal in any Australian bank. As it is he marshals Linney into a hectic motel bed while his pregnant wife waits to give birth.

Lonergan has some fun with trendy clerics. At the movie's start, the cleric presiding at the funeral is a woman. But the cleric to whom Linney reveals she is having an adulterous affair is an all too understanding man. She has to demand that he judge her behaviour as sinful. *MA15+*



### The Crimson Rivers

In this serial-killer hunt, the French cops, as played Jean Reno and Vincent Cassel are tough enough to make an *NYPD Blue* squad cry for the Moms. As for the plot, involving neo-Nazis with Olympian eugenic ambitions, this would send the squad screaming off the screen.

At the plot's core is an enigmatic glaciologist played by Nadia Fares. Director Matthieu Kosovitz does make powerful use of his Alpine

locations, fisticuffs and car chases. The climactic confrontation in the mountains with an avalanche thundering down is formidable. *MA15+*



### Lara Croft: Tomb Raider

This thriller starring Angelina Jolie as Lara works astoundingly well, given its origins as a computer game. The locations range from the stately homes of England to Cambodia's Angkor Wat. The stunts are hair-raising, or possibly hair-whitening. Villains pop from behind every statue that is not itself a villain. John Voight, Jolie's real-life father, gets to haunt her as her reel-life father.

Not to be missed, well, not if you want to understand the inevitable sequel. *MA15+*



### Mullet

Writer/director David Caesar's new movie has a low budget and high aims: the examination of a local hero who leaves his nearest and dearest to seek fame and fortune and returns with neither. Well, not quite, his city advertising agency pay-off does enable him to buy a \$1500 vehicle after he hitches into town.

Caesar's evocation of a beachside town (location Kiama, New South Wales) is potent. So, too, is the playing of his cast which includes Susie Porter as a forsaken sweetheart, Andrew Gilbert as the cop who marries her, and the local pub-keeper (and picture stealer) Belinda McClory. Tony Barry and Kris McQuade are superb as a husband and wife who show that marriage is a bridge that can collapse without tension.

Ultimately, however, the film is a gallant failure. The title character played by Ben Mendelsohn is too much the inarticulate slob to convince as a hero charmer. Caesar might well object that this kind of character is true to life. But like other film-makers he has to learn that true to life does not necessarily mean true to dramatic art. *M*



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