Foreword

Obstacles to Good Listening
Robin Daniels

Robin Daniels worked for four decades as a Jungian analyst. Since his recent death his widow, Katherine, has been preparing a manuscript he wrote, entitled Heart-to-Heart Listening, for publication. In this extract Daniels invites the reader to reflect on what constitutes ‘good’ listening, the obstacles that hinder this, and how it might best be put into practice.

Spirituality and Living

Mary: A New Perspective
Marion Morgan

For those who come to it first as adults, the devotion offered to Mary, the mother of Jesus, in some parts of the Christian Church can seem excessive, even bordering on the blasphemous. In this article Marion Morgan traces the development of her own relationship with Mary, which has grown from tentative beginnings to an appreciation of Mary as a mother and as a female role model.

Praying the Rosary
Anonymous

A set of rosary beads can be seen as a quintessential feature of traditional Roman Catholicism, partially eclipsed by new prayers and devotions growing up after the Second Vatican Council, yet always available for rediscovery. In this article an anonymous author describes what the rosary has meant to her over many years, and how the practice might be further developed.

Anne Carr, Sparrows and the Spirituality of Providence
Robert E. Doud

Talking about the providence of the God whom he knew as Abba, Father, Jesus used the image of a single sparrow whose death does not escape the divine notice. For Anne Carr, a US theologian and teacher who suffered from a recurrent brain tumour, this was an image that spoke powerfully. Robert Doud traces the roots of her writing on this theme.

Michel de Certeau and the Spirituality of St Ignatius
Dominique Salin

Michel de Certeau was, according to Dominique Salin, ‘one of the five most outstanding Jesuits of the twentieth century’. Originally a historian of spirituality, he later combined this with studies in psychoanalysis, sociology and semiotics. For a number of years he edited Christus, the journal in which this article first appeared. In it, Salin traces the influence of Ignatian spirituality on Certeau’s thought.
Breaking Down the Dividing Wall
Yaaro Lesjay

In the Our Father Jesus encourages us to ask that our sins may be forgiven ‘as we forgive those who trespass against us’. Even in situations of abundant good will, it may be decades before such forgiveness can firmly take root. Yaaro Lesjay uses an imagined dialogue between a priest and a theologian to describe what such a process of coming to reconciliation might look like.

Theological Trends

Personal Resurrection into the Mystical Body of Christ
Joseph A. Bracken

In recent decades Christians have frequently been criticized for focusing on personal salvation to the detriment of corporate engagement in combatting social evil. Joseph Bracken uses St Paul’s image of the mystical body of Christ to argue for a more communitarian understanding of life after death, with sharp implications for the way in which Christian discipleship is lived here and now.

On Foot with St. Ignatius of Loyola: My Experience of the Camino Ignaciano
Oscar Momanyi

In recent years a new pilgrimage route, the Camino Ignaciano, has been developed in northern Spain to complement the better-known Camino de Santiago. Such routes can be walked in different ways: as a holiday-maker, for the sake of fitness, or as a spiritual exercise. Oscar Momanyi reflects on what it means to make such a journey as a pilgrimage, and how its effects persist in everyday life subsequently.

The Question of Miracles: A Case for Evidence-Based Medicine?
Una Canning

In much of the contemporary world, science offers the paradigm of reliable knowledge. The occurrence of miracles, which, by definition, fall beyond the realm of science, challenges this paradigm. Here Una Canning, a public health analyst, offers a personal exploration of how these two different ways of looking at the world might be brought into fruitful conversation.
**Book Reviews**

Jos Moons on a new history of Vatican II
Peter Davidson on the *Imago primi saeculi*
Thomas McCoog on church history and how it affects the present
Nicholas Steeves on spirituality and coping with cancer
Oliver Rafferty on the diaries and letters of John Delany
Grégoire Catta on John Courtney Murray and Vatican II
Joseph A. Munitiz on the stations of the cross
Gerry O’Hanlon on Ireland and Vatican II
Luke Penkett on Celtic daily prayer

**FOR AUTHORS**

*The Way* warmly invites readers to submit articles with a view to publication. They should normally be about 4,000 words long, and be in keeping with the journal’s aims. The Editor is always ready to discuss possible ideas. The 2016 Special Issue will be on spirituality and Europe, and the 2017 Special Issue will commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation by looking at the reception of Ignatian spirituality across different Christian denominations. Articles in these areas will be particularly welcome.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The article by Dominique Salin on Michel Certeau appeared in *Christus* (January 2016), and we are grateful to the editors for permission to publish a translation. The scripture quotations herein are generally from the New Revised Standard Version Bible © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

**ABBREVIATIONS**

- **Constitutions** in *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996)
- **Exx** *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, translated by George E. Ganss (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992)
- **MHSJ** *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu*, 157 volumes (Madrid and Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Jesu, 1898–)
When I studied theology in preparation for ordination, there were two basic approaches to the subject. One, ‘from above’, began with revelation—what God had chosen to reveal to us—above all in scripture. The other, ‘from below’, started with human experience, for instance in prayer or in the encounter with the natural world, to discover what could be learnt about God in that way. In fact, most developed theologies draw on elements of both approaches, even if the proportions of each vary. But typically individuals, groups and even whole Churches show a preference for one over the other.

As a journal, The Way more frequently starts from ‘below’ than ‘above’. Its mission statement, found inside the front cover of each issue, presents it as ‘a forum in which thoughtful Christians … can reflect on God’s continuing action in human experience’. Such an outlook is well represented in the present issue. Yaaro Lesjay looks at how it is possible to be reconciled with another person when a deep hurt has been inflicted, and sees God at work in the process. Robin Daniels considers the use of empathetic listening, a skill practised in both psychotherapeutic and spiritual accompaniment settings, and some of the elements that can interfere with its effectiveness. The theologian Anne Carr was affected by a brain tumour that recurred repeatedly, and Robert Doud shows what this experience taught her about a provident God.

Ignatian spirituality—central to the concerns of The Way—is often characterized as a spiritual attitude rooted in experience. Michel de Certeau was one of the greatest proponents of this spirituality in the twentieth century and, in an article translated from the French, Dominique Salin describes how this led him to a more optimistic view of the world than that espoused by many of his contemporaries. Oscar Momanyi reflects on literally following in Ignatius’ footsteps on the Camino Ignaciano, and describes the lasting effects that this pilgrimage has had on him.

In the New Testament, Mary is presented as a figure who pondered deeply on her own experience of God, from the joy of knowing herself called to be God’s mother to the pain of standing by her son as he died on the cross. Over the years Marion Morgan has come to find, rather, at first, to her own surprise, that this makes Mary a useful female role model. An author who wishes to remain anonymous shares her own
experience of a traditional prayer-form, the rosary, and indicates how it might be further developed to support this kind of reflective exploration today.

Ultimately, though, our own experience can only take us so far on our journey to God, and an approach ‘from above’ is also needed to complete the picture. Una Canning moves from her own experience of terrible loss to consider the existence of miracles, which lie, by definition, beyond everyday human experience, asking whether and how they can be understood within a scientific framework. Joseph Bracken looks further, to think through continued human existence after death. Using an image borrowed from St Paul, he is led back to conclusions about how we should live together most fruitfully on this side of the grave.

Whether you choose to begin your quest for knowledge about God from what has been revealed ‘from above’ or from what you have experienced ‘from below’ is of little importance in the end. Ideally the two approaches complement one another, leading to a knowledge that is deeper than either alone could provide. We live in a world ‘charged with the grandeur of God’, as Gerard Manley Hopkins noted. The ultimate end of any theology is to become more aware of the reality of that grandeur, using whatever conceptual tools may best be suited to the task.

Paul Nicholson SJ
Editor
OBSTACLES TO
GOOD LISTENING
Robin Daniels

The author of this article was a Jungian analyst who trained at the Westminster Pastoral Foundation when this institution was trailblazing an integration between the healing ministries of the Church and psychotherapy. He spent some forty years in private analytic practice and was much appreciated. On his death, at the age of 71, his widow, Katherine, undertook the posthumous publication of his works. The following is an extract from a book entitled Heart-to-Heart Listening, intended as a resource for the Year of Mercy.

LISTENING IS IMPORTANT to all of us, in various spheres of life: with members of our family, in social life, in a pastoral—or, indeed, any professional—role, and particularly in ministry and spiritual direction. The basics of good listening—found in the therapeutic model—can aid fuller listening in most forms of relationships: with friends, partners, parents, parishioners, teachers and work colleagues. No matter how experienced we are, we can always learn to be better listeners.

It may be helpful for you to assess your own listening powers by considering the following typical obstacles, as prompts for self-enquiry, and to aid continuing self-observation while listening to people. For adults, relearning how to listen begins by unlearning—shedding negative habits and patterns in a fundamental re-examination of how we relate.

Body Language

Be very watchful of your body language. Obstacles to good encounter include:

- a restless, fidgety manner;
- many glances at watch or clock;
- eye-contact that is infrequent, or so long that it becomes a stare;
- breaking connection to check electronic devices or, worse, take a call.
Time Pressures

If speaker and listener do not have enough time to meet at depth, and yet meet anyway, one person (or both) is likely to feel impatient, thereby putting pressure on the speaker and hampering encounter. To avoid disappointment or rush, both parties can be helped to articulate the amount of time they have available. Two of the preliminaries needed for real contact are a sense that the listener is trustworthy and security of time.

Careful joint judgment is needed so that the length of each meeting does not overtax the concentration, emotional stamina and absorption rate of either person.

Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one to another ... wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ received us to the glory of God. (Romans 15:5–7; KJV)

Distractions

These may come from external factors, such as the speaker’s mannerisms, or from internal ones—the listener’s thoughts and feelings, sometimes leading to self-preoccupation. These intrude on that inner space which is so necessary if one is to be receptive to another person.

Tiredness

The more tired you are, the more inappropriately verbal you may be, because so much energy and continuous self-observation is needed to
attain, and then retain, an attentive stillness. This is especially hard when faced, for example, with a self-pitying tone or mood. Tiredness often leads to impatience and to interventions that are too frequent and/or too long. Tiredness also makes it much harder for a listener to bear a speaker’s repetitions, such as when grieving, or after a shock or trauma, or if the speaker is stuck in a groove and seems unable to move on.

For these reasons nothing is more important for relaxed and alert creative listening than the constant nurturing of one’s own energy: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. This requires space, inner and outer: time to rest and reflect; time to be renewed in any wholesome way; and time for the comfort of being listened to by family and friends, or by a work supervisor or counsellor if necessary, and especially, if one has faith, by God.

**Stock Responses**

‘Don’t worry’ is very often a verbal blemish, for two main reasons. It may be heard by the speaker as presumptuous, patronising, possessive or invasive. And even when it is reasonable advice, it betokens a lack of empathy for, and understanding of, the speaker’s own feelings of doubt or despair. We invest so much in our feelings. Even when seemingly wrong-headed or self-pitying, if feelings are not heeded and respected, then a large part of the speaker’s identity is not being heard.

‘I know how you must be feeling’, however well-intentioned, is not a necessary statement. Speakers will know if you are with them, alongside them, at both emotional and intellectual levels. Verbal assertions and assurances of support count less than that more profound reassurance received from your whole person and presence.

**Superficial Listening**

One-dimensional listening attends only to the surface material, and its overt message and more obvious signals. There could be many reasons for this, ranging from inexperience, or relative lack of training as a listener, to a wish to avoid negative feelings and/or sad and painful subjects.

**Diverting the Speaker’s Line of Thought**

Some listeners have a tendency to intervene at a tangent, introducing a radically new topic (which the speaker is not at that moment ready to absorb and work with), rather than following one step behind the line and flow of the speaker’s thoughts and feelings. In good listening, as in many areas of life, the timing is all.
**Labelling**

Labelling the speaker (either to oneself or out loud), as ‘a worrier’, or unduly ‘anxious’, is to be avoided. Preserving a flexible and adaptive view of the speaker allows room for potential and change. Watchfulness over what you say is important because, like material labels, verbal labels have strong adhesive, and can get stuck in the speaker’s mind, which may already feel bound and strapped by a negative self-image.

The listener’s attitude is the primary factor: more crucial than choice of method or technique. The Sufis speak of ‘seeing with the eye of the heart’. In the insight attributed to Hippocrates, ‘I prefer to study the person who has a disease, rather than, primarily, the disease a person has’. A listener who values the person first, and sees the presenting problem as secondary and in relation to the person, gives the speaker space to relocate the central area of assessment and responsibility in the self, rather than in other people. The centre of gravity is moved from outside to inside.

The more emotional space there is, the more speakers feel free to be themselves. The ultimate aim of all rich relationships is to allow and encourage the other person to find, and express, his or her own voice, his or her God-given uniqueness. This is only possible in an atmosphere and climate of freedom, grace and spaciousness.

**Judging**

Moralising or being judgmental—outwardly or inwardly, or both—severely hampers the warm, open-hearted and tolerant attitude and acceptance which form the foundation of good listening and healthy encounters generally. Acceptance of speakers includes their thoughts and feelings, their values, personality and behaviour. Even the internal type of moralising, which is not articulated, will be instinctively felt by the speaker, and will usually close off whole areas of self-disclosure. When there is a spirit of mutual trust, the speaker may feel free to reveal personal material—such as sad memories, loss, guilt, shame or fears—possibly for the first time. This is one of the listener’s prime privileges.

Compassion comes from escaping the narrowness of opposing categories: ‘attractive’ or ‘unattractive’, ‘like’ or ‘dislike’. This relative detachment requires a balancing act, because it is part of our basic biological drive to be drawn towards beauty, truth and goodness. The listener needs to attend to his or her own emotions and reactions, but not become caught or trapped by them.
Any tendency towards moralising, or imposing the listener’s own values or standards, even in subtle ways, might prompt the listener to do more self-work: for example, seeing in the speaker unwanted aspects of him- or herself.

**Projection**

Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the log that is in your own eye? (Luke 6:41; RSV)

Projection is, literally, throwing in front of oneself. It is the process by which specific wishes, impulses or other (usually unwanted) aspects of the self, inner or outer, are supposed or imagined, largely unconsciously, to be lodged exclusively in some other person or object.

Projection is preceded by what psychologists call ‘denial’ of the unwanted characteristic or impulse, and a desire to unburden and to escape from one’s shadow (or repressed) side. However, projection is sometimes looking to another person or people, often in an idealized (and therefore unrealistic) way, to make up for longed-for qualities or positive attributes in oneself.

According to the ground-breaking theories and insights of the psychoanalyst Melanie Klein, the origin of projections can usually be traced to early babyhood, when the infant is being breastfed and perceives the mother as having, and proffering, one good breast and one hateful or fearful breast.¹

**Transference**

Transference can be described as a wholesale form of projection. Transference is the re-enactment, usually as repair work, of a previous relationship, usually with a parent or a sibling. In transference, the speaker displaces on to the listener aspects of, and feelings about, a person who was, or still is, important and significant.

The essence of transference is that the speaker views and treats the listener, especially in the early stages of their relationship, as if the listener really were the person towards whom the original, intense emotions were felt. This person who is being displaced or transferred can be a positive or a negative figure: friendly and benign or cursed and resented. Transference

is an unconscious ploy to draw (or drag) another person into the drama of one’s life.

The listener will experience his or her own counter-transference (the reactions and fantasies evoked by encountering the other), and would do well to listen to and register these—both as prompts to self-work, and as the most valuable sources of information about the speaker’s current difficulties and manner of relating to significant others.

**Typecasting**

Typecasting people or situations leads to assumptions which may not be on target, and to a tendency to think in terms of stereotypes, thus missing the speaker’s individuality and uniqueness or the complexity of the scenario under consideration.

> What thing so good which not some harme may bring?²

Just as failure brings challenges, so does success. There is no unmixed blessing. A new opportunity may be seen by the speaker in an ambivalent way—as a potential test or threat, as well as possible joy. No gain is risk-free. And so, when, for example, he or she hears about an engagement or a pregnancy, a listener would do well to blend congratulations with careful, waiting observation for any underlying apprehensions.

**Statements**

When listening to adults, open questions should usually be chosen in preference to making statements and assumptions. For example, to say to someone as a greeting, ‘You are looking well’, is well meant, but could be premature. The person’s appearance may be better than his or her health, feelings or circumstances.

If the listener makes a statement, this carries a risk. It may rob speakers of self-discovery by describing things in their own way, and in their own words. Continuous self-discovery (by both participants) is the most rich and rewarding element in the whole process of dialogue.

There is another reason why questions should precede statements. You may not be an accurate reader of another person’s feelings. Appearance may be worse than reality. For example, what may seem to you like a

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depressed tone of voice may just be a sign of tiredness. To label feelings inaccurately is to cast oneself as ‘the authority’ on another’s inner world. To do so may recapitulate a misnaming of feelings by parent figures, leading speakers to doubt and distrust their own reading of their emotional life.

Questions put with a sense of genuine interest, and in an open-ended way—How are you? or How are you feeling?—are to be preferred to You sound … , or Are you … ? Let speakers identify and describe their own feelings, in their own way and time. If and when he or she comments, the listener should gently nudge; and, where possible, rephrase a would-be statement into the form of question. An unselfish listener has one aim, and one aim only: assisting speakers to interpret themselves to themselves.

Being listened to with deep attention is a life-changing and a life-enhancing adventure, an inner journey of joy and self-discovery, a finding of one’s authentic, original self, freed at last of conditioning—by family, schooling, workplace, society’s trends, fashions and shallow values. This is the route to true liberation.

In the cloud of the human soul, there is a fire stronger than the lightning, and a grace more precious than the rain.3

Proving Oneself

Probably the biggest and most frequent trap for a listener is over-activity. This is often triggered when a speaker seems stuck in a life groove. Listeners may mistakenly see this impasse as a reflection of their own ineffectiveness in the relationship; and—to prove themselves—insecure listeners may try to force change, or the pace of change. What my analyst once said about psychotherapy applies, with equal wisdom, to listening in any form or setting: You achieve more by doing less.

Total listening or complete cure are not realistic goals. Often, the most you can jointly achieve is for the speaker to face, accept and come to terms with past or present grief, or pain, or illness. Whatever resists cure will have to be more patiently endured—perhaps for the rest of the person’s life.

Always remember and keep in mind that you are not the prime healing factor. Inwardly kneeling at the feet of your Maker, and opened to God’s power and mercy, you are a channel of God-given insight and compassion, flowing through you.

Advice

A core danger of advice is that it may be based on what has worked for the listener or someone known to the listener. These solutions and ways forward may not be appropriate for the speaker. Another major disadvantage of advice is that it tends to foster dependence.

Rather than giving advice, especially if unsought by the speaker, the farthest a listener should usually go is to review options with the speaker, so that the speaker can decide and determine his or her own path, however slowly and unsteadily, and however painful the journey. In the charting of their own path, speakers may become more able and more aware advice-givers to themselves. The long-term goal is to strengthen speakers’ confidence in making choices and decisions.

Responses which encourage self-listening, self-awareness and self-expression are more enabling than directional guidance. Such responses by the listener assist newness, self-finding, adventure into the self, a greater sense of self-worth and tolerance of one’s limitations. A listener who is non-possessive and non-authoritarian is content to be a catalyst, respecting the autonomy of the speaker as a self-directing person. The core and essence of good listening is to support and accompany speakers while they connect or reconnect with their own unique wisdom and self-belief.

The true teacher knocks down the idol the student makes of him.\(^4\)

The adventure of self-discovery has much in common with creative processes: these recapitulate the spontaneity and the spirit of exploration found in childhood learning, with its increasing sense of power and mastery.

Controlling

There are many drawbacks if a listener tries to direct the course and shape of an encounter. To be asked leading (rather than follow-up) questions may be felt by the speaker as intrusive, even invasive, putting him or her on the defensive, and hindering free and open self-expression and self-disclosure. The topic that the listener thinks is interesting or important may not be the subject of paramount concern to the speaker.

Creative listening does not use or abuse power, or even seek power. Listening, when dedicated to its true purpose and vocation, uses its innate strength to empower.

\(^4\) Attributed to Mevlâna Jalâluddin Rumi.
Now the greatest good that we can do to other men is not the gift of a treasure of our own, but the revelation of something which was theirs already.\(^5\)

**Doing**

If you are too much in the mode of doing and advising, you may be avoiding your own feelings and memories. In effect, you are saying to yourself: *I won’t let your hurt remind me of my hurt.* An over-emphasized helper role creates a duality, a gap, between the supposedly strong helper and the supposedly weaker recipient. This gap reinforces dependence. Dependence hampers growth in each of the two people as individuals and distorts the balance of their working relationship.

A good listener is reliable and dependable, ready to yield the ego’s desire to control, and thus is willing to let go graciously when the span of meetings has come to a natural end. The central aim of an unselfish listener is to reinforce the speaker’s own authority and originality, and to elicit the speaker’s innate wisdom, so that the speaker may listen to his or her inner voice, and his or her own wisdom, and learn from it.

Keep replacing the anxiety or compulsion to *do* with the courage to *be*.

**Seeking Solutions**

The listener may see a valid solution to a problem, sometimes weeks or months before a speaker. This possible solution is often best kept to him- or herself, so that speakers do their own finding, in their own way, and at their own pace. Strong growth needs—depends on—strong roots.

Self-realised solutions are more readily owned and acted on, and are more likely to bring long-term benefits than the adoption of what someone else suggests—however respected and experienced the other person is, however useful his or her suggestions, and even though there might be short-term gains for the speaker if the listener were to offer advice.

Listeners will therefore be reluctant to relate how they or someone they know has coped or dealt with a similar situation. What worked for one person may not work for another; and being offered a ready-made, second-hand idea may, then or later, seem to the speaker likely to erode his or her sense of uniqueness.

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Education and business life foster, encourage and reward problem-solving: the search for practical and pragmatic answers. But some parts of an individual person’s life pattern resist outer change, and thus resist solutions. In some cases, the most to be aimed for is a shift in attitude towards more understanding and acceptance, coming to terms both with one’s own limitations and with the constraint of circumstances.

Salvation does not necessarily or always come in the form of solution. But it may be healing if speakers share with the listener their own sense of the scale and intensity of a life problem, and its seemingly impenetrable or intractable nature. Hope comes not only from finding meaning, but also from bonding and belonging, having a fellow traveller by one’s side, and feeling understood, respected and accepted.

**Expectations**

Lightly held hopes, for the listener, are a vital part of the tone and quality of relaxed concentration and hovering attention. It is one thing to have lightly held hopes for the well-being of another person’s life. It is quite another thing for a listener to bring to a relationship his or her own expectations, for example about the possibility of change or the pace of change.

The safest and soundest approach is consistently to leave to the speaker the core initiatives, such as aspects of decision-making, and also the choice of main subjects or themes, both within each encounter and in the overall relationship. *The listener’s central focus should be on care, not cure.*

Expectations have two main defects: they are often rigid, and too high. By contrast, hopes tend to have a living, flickering quality, but may nonetheless be deeply ingrained and influential in the psyche (in a positive, life-giving way). Hopes nourish if they retain some flexibility—lightly clasped, not tightly gripped. Expectation narrows; hope widens.

**Over-Reacting**

Just as an instrumental player can create a musical note from a wide spectrum of sound, from very soft to very loud, so a person-to-person listener has all-important choices to make: not only whether and when to speak, but also, for each response or intervention, how to grade and select with care the strength or weight of expression as to tone and content. The potential range extends from the subtle and allusive to the overt and blatant.

A frequent error of technique is to make an overstated response. Over-reacting—especially if the topic is emotive—may result in the listener taking a position or stance that is difficult to amend or retreat from. By
contrast, an understated response, at least initially, is almost always safe: it enables the listener to find the apt tone during future exchanges, and it gives emotional space to the speaker.

Research shows how quickly both body and mind react to a threat, actual or possible. Studies of psychogalvanic skin-response have shown how sensitively people respond to even a minor lessening of a listener’s degree of acceptance, or to a single word which, in meaning or in the tone spoken, is only slightly stronger than the feelings the speaker is currently experiencing.

**Over-Identifying**

A listener should avoid extremes: being too distant from, or too close to, the speaker, or to the mood or content of the encounter. A frequent danger for listeners is in getting over-stimulated by what they are hearing. This over-involvement may come, for example, from curiosity about some aspects of the material; or because something said jars or offends; or, which often happens, because what they are being told finds an echo in their memory.

If you do hear such an echo from your own life, past or present, you can usefully draw from your own experiences: the use of memory can assist you in showing empathy. But, at the same time, keep in your mind and approach a clear distinction between yourself and the other person, your life and the equally unique life of the speaker. And be especially careful, when you find parallels, to avoid the trap of projecting causes and outcomes from your own experience on to the other person.
Over-tiredness is often a sign—a warning—of being emotionally over-involved, or of being too active during meetings, or both.

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:4; RSV)

**Unintegrated Parts of the Self**

Aspects of oneself can get in the way of pure listening and of true, unimpeded encounter. Such obstacles might include an unfulfilled side of yourself, which you are attempting to live out vicariously in and through the speaker; or an insecure side, which seeks false power by wanting to control or even dominate; or a defended side, an unwanted part of yourself; or a sore spot which turns away discussion, or perhaps the very mention, of some particular subjects.

Listening is challenging and potentially life-enhancing, not only for the speaker but also for the listener. Listening inspires work that is never-ending: constant self-listening, willing and brave self-learning, resulting in continuous self-healing. The speaker will sense, and may grow stronger from knowing, that the learning in and from these encounters can be a two-way process.

The healing elements of listening include not only what happens in the speaker—catharsis, the unblocking and easing of repressed memories, and insight, integration, more sense of identity and self-esteem—but also the degree of relatedness the two people attain, often while or after walking together along awkward paths, sometimes bumpy, sometimes steep.

And the healing includes the amount and degree of self-work which each person stimulates in the other. Extending Jung’s famous dictum, ‘Only the wounded physician heals’, it is also true to say that only the continuously-being-healed person heals.⁶

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**Robin Daniels** was a Jungian analyst, musicologist, writer and broadcaster. In addition to his practice as a psychologist he ran marriage enrichment groups, encounter and bereavement groups in church settings and, latterly, a reflecting group for hospital chaplains. He was a former supervisor at the St Marylebone Centre for Healing and Counselling.

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Much has been written about difficulties with seeing God as ‘Father’, but there is little available for people who have had difficulty seeing Mary as ‘Mother’. Relating to Mary was a major problem for me when I was first exploring the Roman Catholic Church having been an Anglican for 25 years.

My own mother developed multiple sclerosis when I was 14, and my father and I cared for her until I finally left home when I was 25, in 1967. This caused me many problems. Although my caring side developed, the frustrations of being ‘on call’, of trying to fix a social life in the remaining time, of feeling guilty when I resented my lifestyle or when I got impatient with her, all took its toll on me. I was also holding down a full-time job. A ‘mother’ came to mean to me someone who always wanted something done whenever I went near her; who prevented me from doing the things I wanted to do; who limited my freedom. This was not intentional on her part: she tried to encourage me to go out and about, but I was always rather stressed when I did so, and simply did not have the energy to enjoy things much.

Looking after her perforce made me more ‘domestic’ than I wished. I always felt she disapproved of me because my ambitions were not necessarily to run a tidy and efficient home and be a good mother myself. Her life had become rather narrow, and anything out of the ordinary worried her. These values were somewhat reinforced by the evangelical church the family attended. All in all, when I had finally left home (for my own health reasons) and come to Bristol to explore life and other ways of living it, the last thing I wanted on the horizon was another mother. It may have been what I needed, but it was most certainly not what I wanted.

After two years of exploring my faith, I came to the Roman Catholic Church for instruction. Relating to Mary was a problem, both emotionally
and also theologically. The theological problems gradually resolved as I ‘grew’ in the Church—I was received in October 1969. The emotional problems remained.

At the beginning, it came to me that I could relate to Mary as an older sister. Older sisters are great, in my mind. They have more experience, and so can give advice and perspective on things, and stand up for you on occasions. But they have no authority over you, so you can disagree or argue with them without major repercussions. They can take the pressure off you, and you can ask them for help. So that is how I started to relate to Mary.

One other problem was that I felt slightly jealous of Mary’s closeness to Jesus. Coming from a background where one’s own personal relationship with Jesus was heavily emphasized, I did not really want her ‘intruding’ on ‘my’ relationship with him. Why did I have to go through her to relate to him? It felt a bit like having a mother-in-law who wouldn’t let go!

I have found shades of this same problem with other enquirers coming into the Roman Catholic Church. If they have a Christian background, they want to pray to God the Father or the Holy Spirit or Jesus in their available prayer time, and not necessarily to Mary. I find it is good to remember that it took time for the devotion to Mary to grow within the early Church. I certainly found that it took time to grow in my own developing life within the Roman Catholic Church.

But over the years it has grown, although not in a ‘straight line’ sort of development. Almost from the beginning of any instruction in the faith, you are introduced to simple prayers to Mary. When you start attending Mass, the devotions of people at the Lady Altar are hard to miss, and there are announcements of feast days or memorials, pilgrimages and days of prayer, apart from the weekly prayer in the bidding prayers. Mary is quite obviously part of the package.
The strange thing that I found is that it is very possible to enjoy and appreciate these devotions and references without actually agreeing to them intellectually. Quite early on in my journey, the church I was attending took part in a public procession through the city centre, praying the rosary. Although I did not take part, I saw that it was obviously meaningful to those who did participate. I never did discover what the general public thought of it.

I am particularly interested in the ways in which Mary is presented to outsiders as I now lead the parish RCIA group. I find that some enquirers simply accept Mary with all her comforting accoutrements (statues, processions, hymns and so on) while others, as I did myself, find great difficulty in justifying the attention we pay to her and the doctrines surrounding her. Of course, many Catholics have the same difficulties!

**Theological Problems**

Problems with Mary can be exacerbated by the apparently ‘fanciful’ doctrines that now refer to her. Though they are consistent with scripture, I defy anyone actually to prove them from scripture on the evidence available. I say ‘fanciful’ because pictures of Mary being literally crowned in heaven are obviously drawn from human imagery; this by no means invalidates them, but it can create more problems for the sceptic.

In his book *Models of the Church*, Avery Dulles says:

> I draw the conclusion that a balanced theology of the Church must find a way of incorporating the major affirmations of each basic ecclesiological type. Each of the models calls attention to certain aspects of the Church that are less clearly brought out by other models.

And a little further on he adds:

> In order to do justice to the various aspects of the Church, as a complex reality, we must work simultaneously with different models. By a kind of mental juggling act, we have to keep several models in the air at once.

I find these remarks helpful in our consideration of Mary. Avery Dulles pays attention to five main models of the Church: the Church as Institution; the Church as Mystical Communion; the Church as Sacrament; the Church as Herald; and the Church as Servant. The easiest model to use,

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1. Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.
and hence to provide a context for Mary, is the model of the Church as the gathered People of God. I see this as a sort of prelude to experiencing the Church as Mystical Communion.

It is firmly stated in scripture that Mary joined with the disciples in prayer after the resurrection and was present with them when the Spirit came in visible form at pentecost. This is an essential ‘base position’ for any further reflection, particularly when speaking with people from an Evangelical tradition. Mary is also present on other occasions recorded in the Gospels. Most importantly, Mary is the actual mother of Jesus, which is important for the later model of Church as Mystical Body.

Above all, then, Mary is a member of the Church. Her other titles and honours all stem from this. As a member of the Church, she also is missionary and a servant—no one can dispute this! She is the one who first presented Jesus to the people of the world. She is the original bringer of Christ—she was his mother.

As a member of the Church, she is also a prime example of a Christian. What is said of her should also, in a lesser way, be applicable to us. She was born holy. The seeds of holiness are planted in us at baptism and, by the end of our earthly life, we should have grown somewhat in holiness. She is in heaven, body and soul. We believe that, in the fullness of time, we also shall be in heaven, body and soul. We also will be rewarded and honoured appropriately for our earthly activities and struggles.

Maybe we can also come to share in her mothering role in the Church, encouraging and supporting and nurturing others, and being cared for in return. This in no way diminishes Mary’s unique role in the Church, just as sharing in Jesus’ work in the Church in all its aspects does not diminish his unique work of salvation. It may even be that if more of us saw ourselves
as ‘mothers’ (or even ‘grandmothers’) in the Church, there would be less rivalry and antagonism among its somewhat fractious children.

Ultimately we also share with Mary in the contemplation of the wonders of the Trinity. We are all created beings. All our souls join in united voice in declaring: ‘Our souls magnify the Lord; our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour’.

The institutional model of the Church at first sight brings few insights into the person and roles of Mary. Its main role seems to be in affirming and validating the various doctrines concerning her. It also plays a role in sanctioning and regulating devotional practices and investigating and assessing the reports of her various ‘appearances’. Of course she is present in an unseen way, as she is present in the whole Church.

When we consider the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ, then it follows that Mary, as the natural mother of Jesus, takes on, in a fairly easy logical progression, the role of spiritual mother of the Church. This is reinforced by the dialogue in John’s Gospel between Jesus and John: ‘Here is your son …. Here is your mother.’ (John 19:25–28) The problem I find is that, although this makes a certain sense, the true depth of meaning can only grow in a person as he or she receives the sacraments within the Church, and this takes time. As I have said, the Church itself took centuries before it was able to define the main doctrines that we now almost take for granted. The Church as Sacrament and the Church as Mystical Body are, I think, concepts that we grow into as we grow within the Church.

**A Growing Relationship**

Over the many years since I was received into the Church, my relationship with Mary slowly developed. In time, I began to know her also as ‘mother’. I could pray at the Lady Altar in churches and find comfort. I had a much deeper understanding of her role in the life of the Church. Whatever my personal opinion of some devotions and pictures, I have no doubt regarding the reality of the experiences of countless people who encounter Mary through these very images and practices.

Having said that, I still felt that, deep inside, there were parts of me that Mary did not appear to reach: the more masculine side of me, the side that wants to explore, the analytical part of my brain. The fulfilment and satisfaction I experience when I have organized something at work successfully, or when I feel truly alive after a good discussion: it is then that I do not want to implore for help in struggling through this ‘vale of
tears’. Mary shares out sorrows, yes—but how does she share in our joys and successes? How do we really think about her?

Doctrines regarding Mary’s great sanctity and purity, not to mention her immaculate conception, are not always the most helpful or even the most meaningful ways of thinking about her. Questions that come to mind are: what was she really like? Was she musical? Did she laugh? How did she relate to the other villagers? She was a human person—not just a function. What was she like in her ‘off-duty’ moments? She may be universal mother but she can never be only a mother. She is herself, who is also a mother.

Our house has a small garden which backs on to the main railway line between London and Penzance. On selected days in the summer, steam trains come puffing up the rail taking people on excursions to the Devon coast. As they pick up speed it is hard not to get excited with them. One morning I had a lovely image of Mary sitting on the engine with hands in the air calling Whoopee! It stayed with me for the rest of the day!

**A Female Role Model**

I now share a house with, and care for, an autistic adult. He came to the parish some forty years ago. As his parents grew older he related more and more to me, and eventually, with his parents’ help and consent, we moved into where we are both now living. So, once again, I am a carer, and once again I am restricted by the limitations of the situation. This time I do not mind. I have respite care for him when I need it, as well as on a regular basis, and can still pursue my own interests when I wish. But making a residential retreat is difficult, as I would have to take him (and our dog) with me: without going into details, it just does not work. So what we do is to rent a cottage somewhere and all go there. I take a book and the Bible and do specific meditations morning and evening, making notes as I go. And it does work! The Lord adapts to the circumstances, and I always come back refreshed and renewed.

Last year, I thought I would start by answering a question I had read in the April 2015 issue of *The Way*, in the article on ‘Ignatian Spirituality and Christian Feminism’ by Maria McCoy: have you a female role model? Pondering this proved very fruitful. Again, I realised that thinking about Mary as mother in the home at Nazareth, or as mother enabling us to be and grow into the person we were meant to be, was helpful, but still did not go far enough.

Then, one morning, I was meditating on Jesus’ reply to the woman at the well, that he would give us living water that would spring up inside us.
And I thought of many people, all with this living water springing up, and how it would water and soften the earth around them. Then I asked where the water came from, and I saw deep, dark caves with a river flowing through them. And I could bathe in the river and immerse myself in it, with joy. And I looked round and there was Mary, doing the same thing. She was dark, with long dark hair, and she was laughing and shaking the drops out of her hair and bathing in the river and the fountains, and in the deep river pools. She was simply being herself, having stripped herself of all her roles: separate from me, but in union, in deep companionship. No doubt there were other women there as well: it was a women-only bathing place. I did not pursue the image further.

Of course Mary simultaneously retains all her roles, privileges and titles. But this, to me, is the ‘core’ of Mary—as it is the core of all of us. She is a child of the Father, created in the Trinity, living in the Spirit, eternal spouse of the Holy Spirit, as well as being Mother of God. She joins us in contemplation of God and in enjoyment of all that God has created. But I now at last have a deep reference point for my relationship with Mary. Without denying any of her other attributes and roles, she is deeply, thoroughly human and, as such, kin to all of us.

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PRAYING THE ROSARY

Anonymous

Unlike really devout families, mine did not go in for the nightly rosary when I was a child; not, that is, until the great post-war Rosary Crusade, when a wave of piety swept through the parishes and had us all on our knees every evening—until the enthusiasm gradually died away. For me, the rosary was a rather tedious ritual associated with Benediction, when it was usually followed first by the ‘Hail, holy Queen’ and then by a litany. The two-part murmuring of rosary and litany had a hypnotic rhythm. The title of each mystery was announced, but there was little sense that people were actually meditating on a particular gospel event. It was usually said far too fast for anything like meditation. As children we greatly valued a high-speed priest: the congregation, like a well-trained orchestra, adjusted to his tempo and it could be all over and done with in five minutes. To the outsider it would have seemed like pious mumbo-jumbo. And yet, looking back now, I can see that, even at its most mechanical, there was something sacramental about it. The sheer physicality of all that kneeling on hard benches or cold kitchen floors, the feeling of the beads as they slipped through your fingers, the voices rising and falling in repetition, all contributed to a sense of otherness, a feeling at moments of being outside time.

Although I rarely said the rosary privately, except before exams, I treasured the pearly-white rosary I had been given for my First Communion and I always carried it in my pocket or schoolbag—just as I always had a bunch of medals pinned to my vest, so that I rattled when I ran. It was with superstitious dread that, years later, at a time when I felt alienated from the Church and had stopped receiving the sacraments, I came upon the rosary I had inherited after my father’s death broken into small pieces, though I had not handled it in years. This dread, however, took me back to the confessional. So perhaps it was grace, not superstition, after all!

Learning to Drive

Strangely enough, it was learning to drive that brought me to a livelier appreciation of the rosary. I found there was no better way of coping with
those endless stretches of motorway than by saying the rosary. On a long run, I could get through all fifteen (as they were then) decades, with my finger-tips on the steering-wheel instead of the beads. And because this was a very private, enclosed world, I found myself, like a religious in her cell, able to meditate in a variety of ways. I developed a four-layered method which allowed for almost infinite variation. I would begin with the scriptural element—the gospel narrative—and ponder the theology behind it. Then, in an attempt to enter into the minds and hearts of the people involved, I would try to see the event in its historical and cultural setting (and this soon required some background reading, which led to a greater understanding of the Judaic roots of Christianity). The third layer of meditation took the mystery out into a contemporary setting, where the gospel incident has modern parallels (for example the mystery of the annunciation led into prayer for mothers facing an unexpected pregnancy without support). And finally the meditation would home in on my personal need for grace in such circumstances as the mystery suggested at that time. I believe all this made me more receptive to the great diversity in the gospel story and I felt I received many insights in this way. It was also interesting to find that I could ponder in this slow reflective way while travelling at 70 mph!

The fifteen decades had a curved shape in my imagination: swooping down earthwards in the Joyful Mysteries, staying level during the Sorrowful, then soaring upwards again in the Glorious. The Luminous Mysteries, when
they were introduced, were a valuable addition to the terrestrial element and allowed for a much richer meditation on the humanity of Christ in the incarnation. More recently, I have begun to see a parallel between the rosary and the creed, which begins in eternity with the Creation and ends with the life of the world to come: there are the same movements downwards and upwards, with the incarnation at the centre. Perhaps the word ‘creed’ suggested ‘crib’ and ‘cradle’ to me but I see, in both prayers, eternity as being like a crib cradling the humanity of Christ. It is this intermingling of time and eternity which, I feel, both creed and rosary convey.

**The Shadow Side**

Now I have discovered another way into the rosary, which I call the shadow side of the mysteries. During a recent stay in hospital, sleepless nights led to frequent rosaries. It was then that I began to think about something that had been on the edge of my mind for some time: that, although we may name them ‘joyful’, ‘luminous’ and ‘sorrowful’, the first fifteen mysteries are more nuanced and complex than that. The Joyful Mysteries are, it seems to me, shot through with anxiety, threat and warnings; the Mysteries of Light move from the excitement of disciples and crowds towards an increasing menace and darkness; while, in the other direction, the Sorrowful Mysteries are laced, if not with joy, at least with an acceptance that deprives evil of its victory. The philosopher Josef Pieper, in his book *Happiness and Contemplation*, writes of a kind of ‘consent to the world’ as it really is (and implicitly as God wills it) that leads to happiness: ‘This consent has little to do with “optimism”. It is a consent that may be granted amid tears and the extremes of terror.’\(^1\) Christ’s ‘fiat’ in the first Sorrowful Mystery, the agony in the garden, underlies and supports all the rest by his total consent to the approaching passion.

It was this shadow side to the fifteen mysteries that I found myself exploring during those long nights when neither sleeping tablets nor morphine allowed me to sleep. One night, as I took my rosary to say the Joyful Mysteries, a vivid little scenario came suddenly into my head: I saw Mary as being like a young girl in occupied France, during the early 1940s, suddenly receiving a message on a short-wave radio, telling her of a plan to drop a very important agent, that very night, into this

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dangerous and hostile territory. If the agent arrived, she alone would have to receive and look after him. Would she accept the mission? I did not pursue the narrative because that would have been a contrivance but, as a kind of *ligne donnée*, it gave a modern take on the dangerous and rather frightening mission that Mary undertook with her ‘fiat’. The other four mysteries, too, take on a deeper meaning when their joy is seen in the context of an uncaring or hostile world. This dark side—off-stage as it is—seems nevertheless a corrective to the holy pictures with their sentimental prettiness which have often been the background to the Joyful Mysteries.

I really welcomed the Mysteries of Light when they were introduced. Time and again they take me back to the gospel accounts of Jesus’ public life, to build up the detail and draw out new ways of looking at these mysteries. And when I do so—especially in Mark’s account—I realise how swiftly the forces of incomprehension, opposition and menace begin to break through the exuberance and joyful hope of the beginning. Even the radiant, out-of-this-world experience of the transfiguration is framed by the disciples’ incompetence and lack of faith. And in the fifth mystery of the Last Supper, the luminous Last Discourse is surrounded by the darkness of betrayal.

The Sorrowful Mysteries had always been linked in my mind with the stations of the cross, which were an important part of my childhood. As a very small child (four or five, I think), every evening in Lent I used to go hand in hand with Mr Casey, an old Irishman who lived with us, across the railway track to the cathedral for the stations. I loved the way the congregation was involved, turning bodily from station to station, and singing that mournful verse from the Stabat Mater:

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Holy Mother, pierce me through
In my heart each wound renew
Of my Saviour crucified.
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And, as a child, I found the wholehearted abandonment of the prayer we recited after we had contemplated each Station, ‘I love Thee, Jesus, my Love, above all things …’ (so like St Ignatius’ reckless offering, ‘Take, Lord, and receive …’) both thrilling and moving.

It has been pointed out that, after the tremendous, at times almost frenetic, activity of his public life, once his passion began Jesus was totally passive. Most of the verbs in the gospel account are in the passive voice: he was arrested; he was scourged; he was crowned with thorns; he was
crucified. Nevertheless, the ‘fiat’ in the garden contradicts any sense of helplessness, because, by willing what the Father wills, he remained an agent in his own victimisation. It is what Teilhard calls ‘divinised’ passivity, which brings about ‘a mysterious reversal of evil into good’. In the stations, we are reminded how Jesus accepted and carried his cross (a heavy burden, since he fell three times) and, while doing so, paused to speak to the daughters of Jerusalem and also to receive comfort from a compassionate woman. Likewise, in the Sorrowful Mysteries of the rosary, despite their depiction of human brutality, an affirmative bass note can be heard underlying them. It does not diminish one’s sense of the suffering of Christ but fills one with awe at his patience, in both meanings of that word. The Sorrowful Mysteries, then, are cathartic in the Aristotelian sense and leave one purified and peaceful in spirit and mind.

At first, when I came to the Glorious Mysteries, I could see no shadow side. Eternity here really seemed to be penetrating and permeating time. But then, I began to pick up and sympathize with the initial doubts, the amazed incredulity, the fears, as well as the joy, surrounding those post-resurrection scenes for the disciples: the sense of bereavement, despite the promise, at the ascension; the dangerous excitement at pentecost. It is only in the last two mysteries that the glory is undiluted—and yet even here we are left, earthbound, like the disciples at the ascension, straining our eyes upwards.

**The Mysteries of the Gap**

One is always free to invent further mysteries that fit into the recitation of the rosary. The following notes are my attempt to imagine what happened during those terrible hours between Christ’s death on the cross and his resurrection. The utter bleakness of the final station, ‘Jesus is laid in the tomb’, still grabs the heart. In a sense, as a latecomer, I know that all will be well; but in another sense, I do not! During those long hours, it seems to me as if the whole of creation is holding its breath. The disciples, who had been racing forward to what they thought would be a glorious future, are now suspended in a hellish present with only past remorse and no future hope. And what is Mary now pondering? I try to enter into the thoughts and feeling of those left behind.

I was dismayed recently to read about a suggested fifteenth station of the cross—the resurrection. This would be a mistake: that terrible void

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of more than 36 hours is an essential part of the passion story, but it does not seem to get much attention liturgically. In the past, when the churches were open all the time, one could go in and see the emptiness and the gaping tabernacle before going to kneel in the quiet corner where the sacrament was reserved. But now the churches are closed except for the flower team setting up a gorgeous Easter display, which rivals the Christmas crib. We have lost the art of mourning: everything, even death itself, nowadays has to be celebrated.

Yet this period between the death and the resurrection of the Lord can be a rich occasion for solitary prayer. Private meditation on the passion can lead to small devotional acts: for instance, every Good Friday evening, I wash my hair. This may seem a bit eccentric, but in doing so, I am following my mother’s practice and her mother’s before her … and goodness only knows how many generations back, certainly to when the family lived in Ireland. (I do not know whether this is an old Irish custom or whether it was unique to my family. I have heard no other reference to it; even the internet draws a blank.) When, as a child, I asked my mother why she did this, she explained how on the first Good Friday, Our Lady’s hair would be bloodstained from standing beneath the cross and from holding her dead son in her arms. So after the burial, when she went back to where she was staying, she would need to wash, especially her hair. I like to think that my Good Friday hair-wash began with the pious sympathy of a long ago great-grandmother and she passed it down through a chain
of daughters to me—where, I’m afraid, it will end. Such a homely devotion did not arise from any scholarly knowledge of Jewish purification rites but from the musings of an ordinary woman—almost certainly a mother herself—meditating on the passion and imagining Mary in all the sad details of her situation. It is a very private devotion and I do not see it as sentimental. It is a form of remembering—a folk anamnesis.

I am glad Pope Francis is so appreciative of what he calls ‘genuine forms of popular religiosity’. I do not think he is referring to those big public demonstrations—the fiestas, the huge rallies, the grand public processions—but rather to the everyday, pervasive piety in ordinary lives. Popular piety, he says, ‘enables us to see how the faith, once received, becomes embodied in a culture and is constantly passed on’. It expresses itself rather ‘by way of symbols than by discursive reasoning’ and ‘it entails a personal relationship with God, with Christ, with Mary, with the saints’.3 Such was the basis of my childhood faith and in my latter years I find myself returning to it in a different way. What I used to do automatically, I now perhaps do more consciously. And since we are all postmodern nowadays, perhaps a bit ironically!

In my childhood most houses we visited had images of Jesus and Mary in different manifestations—Our Lady of Lourdes, of Perpetual Succour, the Baby Jesus, the Infant of Prague, the Sacred Heart and, of course, a crucifix in every room. But the visual symbols were just the outward sign of the family’s faith. What was more significant was the way prayer punctuated every moment of the day. There were the morning and evening prayers (the first and last conscious acts of the day, usually said kneeling on the cold bedroom floor); the hand dipped in the font near the door to make the sign of the cross as you went out of the house; the grace before and after meals; perhaps the family rosary in the evening; and, for many, daily attendance at Mass. But more significant still was the way that the most ordinary conversations were peppered with mini-prayers—little exclamations such as God willing!, Thanks be to God!, Lord have mercy on him! (or God be good to her!, as my father used to say whenever he mentioned his beloved mother). Karl Rahner once said, ‘I believe because I pray’, and certainly the belief of these simple people was rooted in the prayer that marked every moment of their days.4

3 Pope Francis, Evangelii gaudium, n. 124.
I believe this prayer life ‘fostered the relationships’ to which Pope Francis refers, and especially with departed family members. The souls in purgatory seemed very close because we could help them with our prayers. But also the saints, especially patron saints, were familiar presences in our lives. (When I saw the film *Millions* recently I could identify with the little boy because I was very like him at that age.) In addition, what I call the ‘Irish sacramental imagination’ played around gospel events and added back-stories to the incidents. It was something like Ignatius’ ‘composition of place’, except that it seemed to come more spontaneously than the word ‘composition’ suggests. The added stories in the stations of the cross—the three falls, the encounters—must have arisen from such empathetic meditation on ‘how it might have been’.

**The Mysteries of Grief**

So, in recent years, I have found myself trying to imagine the feelings and behaviour of the various characters in the final stages of the passion story, and most especially of Mary. I could never agree with those pictures of the crucifixion that portray her in a state of collapse—apart, perhaps, from at the heart-breaking moment of Jesus’ death. She was a strong, brave woman and knew exactly how and when to act. The gospel references to her are so few and so slight, and yet we can, in pondering them, learn so much about her—rather as modern scientists can find out so much about a person from a fragment of bone. Mary’s DNA can be found in the gospel fragments.

I found almost immediately that the meditation fell into five sections in my mind and I called them: the descent from the cross; the burial; the return to where they were lodged; the long sabbath; and Mary alone. It is in no way an attempt to fill in historic detail, still less to make fiction or drama. I find I ignore part of the gospel narratives—partly because they are so divergent—but John’s account is perhaps the most helpful. As I have mentioned, these are very Marian mysteries. Luke told us that she ‘pondered’ from the time of Simeon’s fearful warning and from when her young son began to sense his mission. As the beads slip through my fingers, I try to imagine that she is pondering at each stage.

The hours before the death must have been Mary’s Gethsemane, when her entire being cried out, *Does it have to be like this?* I have sometimes wondered whether part of Christ’s agony in the garden was a very human dread that he had got it all wrong—that this is not how it should have been. Such self-doubt, I believe, would fit with his willingness to experience
the entire spectrum of human suffering. And I wonder, too, whether Mary was for a while tormented by the thought that it had all gone wrong. Did Mary, like Jesus, at first pray for the ‘chalice’ to be taken away? And yet, like his, her will had always been perfectly aligned with the will of God and so the cry of petition is soon hushed.

For more than thirty years, Mary had kept things in her heart without receiving answers. Now as her Son hangs on the cross, she too is suspended in a state of ‘unknowing’—a biblical ‘waiting in silence’. But although, in her distress, she may not have been able to give the same ‘fiat’ that Jesus did to his own approaching suffering, she was perhaps able to say with the psalmist, ‘At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love, answer me’ (Psalm 69:13). Such trust that there must be a purpose, that this is what Simeon had meant when he had said that Jesus would be a ‘sign that will be opposed’ (Luke 2:34), could not alleviate the grief but would preserve her from utter despair.

*Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross*

We tend to dwell on the appalling physical sufferings of the crucified Christ when we think of the passion; but for his contemporaries, and especially for his mother and his disciples, the disgrace of such a death must have been even worse than the agony.

With every death, whatever the shock and distress for those involved, the practicalities immediately press in: the death has to be confirmed, the authorities must be notified and funeral arrangements set in motion. With Jesus’ death this is even more urgent because it is late in the day and at sunset the sabbath will begin. But I feel that it is at this point that the shame and infamy begin to be lifted: a soldier’s spear confirms the death and prompts an astonishing eulogy from a centurion; and two influential new disciples appear on the scene, one of them, Joseph of Arimathea, going boldly to Pilate himself to tell him that the man he had interrogated was dead and to call in a favour.

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5 This alignment of Mary’s will to the will of God (like that of the blessed souls in Dante’s *Paradiso*, for whom God’s will is their peace) is what I understand by that unfortunately named doctrine, the Immaculate Conception. From the first moment of her existence her entire being was in harmony with what God planned for humanity—that is to say, she was ‘full of grace’ and so there could be none of the negativity of sin in her. If it is true that Our Lady said to Bernadette ‘I am the Immaculate Conception’, the strange grammar of that sentence is perhaps her attempt to override the absurd fixation that our more literal-minded theologians have had on the sexual act that began her existence and so invite a grander conception!
He and Nicodemus, who had previously been secret disciples for fear of the Jewish leaders, now risk the derision of onlookers and their reputation with those same religious leaders. They organize the deposition, perhaps commissioning the soldiers who had nailed Jesus to the cross to release him from it. Even in her grief, Mary must have felt gratitude for such courageous witness and for the compassionate efficiency of their actions. But there was possibly something more than comfort and gratitude: a first glimpse of a greater purpose and a growing sense that this was not the end.

*Jesus Is Laid in the Tomb*

While some of the women went home to prepare the spices before the sabbath began, Mary stayed to see her Son laid in a tomb. It was a reversal of the Bethlehem scene, when the newly born child was wrapped in swaddling clothes and put in an animal’s feeding-box; now the newly dead man is wrapped in fine linen and laid in a rich man’s tomb. And Nicodemus provided myrrh and aloes sufficient for a king’s burial. Such reverence, despite the need for haste! But as the great stone was rolled to the door of the tomb, it must once again have seemed like the end.

*The Return Home*

The streets would be emptying as they hurried back—just soldiers on patrol, making sure any groups were dispersing. I think I am drawing on some tradition that the Upper Room was in the house of the beloved disciple’s family but, at all events, that is where I imagine them returning. Seeing how destroyed with grief the beloved disciple and Mary Magdalene were, Mary would at this point, I believe, have suppressed her own feelings out of compassion for her son’s friends. Seeing the grief of these two, Mary must have known what to expect when she met the others, who had deserted Jesus in their terror. She would have heard of their flight, if not the denial of Simon Peter, and would realise that their sorrow would be all the greater for their remorse. She knew these men so well as she had worn out her shoes travelling with them throughout Galilee and Judaea, providing for their needs along with the other women disciples. Now these men would hardly dare look at her for shame.

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The Long Sabbath.

‘On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.’ (Luke 23: 56)
It is hard to imagine the disciples resting, but they were devout Jews and the Sabbath has its own timeless rhythm. The ritual observances—the hymns, the readings, the prepared communal meals—would guide them through that long day. But they must have been stunned and beyond questioning or rational thought. I imagine them, as that long sabbath wore on, gradually falling asleep, as once before they did through sorrow. I imagine a different pietà from Michelangelo’s, with Mary’s arms around both Peter and Mary Magdalene.

Mary Alone

From the time she left the tomb until late on the following evening, we can imagine Mary ministering to others. Now, at last, as they slept, she could open up to her own thoughts and feelings. St Ignatius was surely right in saying that the first post-resurrection appearance made by Jesus was to his mother. Ignatius was sensitive to the unique relationship there was between this mother and son: ‘the flesh of the mother was the flesh of the son’; but, as a man, he was perhaps not aware of the powerful bonds there often are between quite ordinary mothers and their children, even into adulthood. There is probably a natural, perhaps biological, explanation for the strange telepathy that at times of crisis can occur between mother and child. I feel sure that Mary, simply as a human mother, began to get the first awareness of Jesus’ resurrection at the very moment that the grave clothes were laid aside. So, when he actually came to her, it would be a confirmation of what she already knew.

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So, that is where I am at present in my meditations when saying the rosary. I feel sure that there are more approaches yet to come. But there are also many times, when preoccupations or tiredness overwhelm me, and then I let the beads slip through my fingers and simply murmur the familiar words, knowing that this, too, is praying the rosary.

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7  Diary, 15 February 1544.
8 Many mothers have had what, at the time, seems a preternatural sense of sudden heightened awareness when something happens to one of their children—even when the ‘child’ is grown up, has left home and lives far away. It has certainly happened to me, both as a daughter and as a mother. As I commented, it probably has some quite natural explanation but it always fills one with a sense of wonder and gratitude.
ANNE CARR, SPARROWS
AND THE SPIRITUALITY
OF PROVIDENCE

Robert E. Doud

ANNE E. CARR BVM (1934–2009) was a native of Chicago and alumna of the former Mundelein College, and a member of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM), a US religious congregation for women. Mundelein College served as the last private Roman Catholic women’s college in Illinois until 1991, when it affiliated with neighbouring Loyola University. Having received an MA in theology from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Anne taught at Mundelein and served there for a time as chair of the religious studies department. In 1971 she completed the doctoral programme in theology at the University of Chicago, where she later taught as well, became dean of the school of divinity, and rose to eminence as a theologian and scholar.

Anne’s life was one of multi-faceted service and ministry. Her scholarship involved theologia,¹ that is, a personal search for wisdom, as well as her lived experience of the spiritual life. She was especially helpful to students in her roles as teacher, dean, and reader of theses and dissertations. A daily communicant at her parish, she helped out in a soup kitchen and ministered to a group of senior citizens who had intense interest in matters of Church and spirituality. She obtained a Certified Nursing Assistant credential and worked during summers at Marian Hall, a care facility for retired sisters, in Dubuque, Iowa. Anne afforded sage and informed advice to her religious congregation and to many who sought her counsel. A popular speaker, she gave generously of her time to parishes who invited her to address their pastoral gatherings.

¹ See Anne Carr, A Search for Wisdom and Spirit: Thomas Merton’s Theology of the Self (South Bend: U. of Notre Dame P, 1988), 7: ‘Merton’s discussions of the real and illusory selves can be understood within the scope of the contemplative theology that he called the “tradition of wisdom and spirit”, theologia in its ancient meaning’.

The Way, 55/3 (July 2016), 37–47
**Theological Development**

There are, perhaps, four main stages in the development of Anne Carr’s theological thought. All four interpenetrate, and vestiges of each can be found in the others. First, there is the emerging expertise she showed in the intricate thought of Karl Rahner (1904–1984). Rahner was a Jesuit theologian who spent many years at the University of Innsbruck in Austria (and later in Munich and Münster). He is widely regarded as the foremost Catholic thinker and theologian of his generation. Anne’s doctoral dissertation, ‘The Theological Method of Karl Rahner’, deals in part with Jesus’ experience of himself, and with Rahner’s theology as involving a christology from above and a christology from below.

The second stage in Anne’s development is that of her book about Thomas Merton (1915–1968), *A Search for Wisdom and Spirit*. This book is about the prayerful mysticism and theological anthropology she finds in the writings of Thomas Merton—the Trappist monk who retrieved the monastic tradition of the Church and reinterpreted it in the terms of contemporary spirituality. *A Search for Wisdom and Spirit* shows the compatibility and complementarity between Merton’s spiritual view of our true and false selves and the anthropology of Rahner. As David Tracy wrote: ‘Her book on Merton was one of the first to insist that the traditional separation of spirituality and theology impoverished both’. It also demonstrates how Merton reached out to other world religious traditions, including Buddhism, Taoism and Sufism, in his quest to experience the mystical path.

The third stage is represented by the feminist theology of Anne’s next major work, *Transforming Grace: Christian Tradition and Women’s Experience*. Here we see Anne’s thoughtful experience of the divine, as she listens to the voices of many other feminist writers, and female and male theologians, as well as to traditional thought about God, Christ and Mary. With her deep and extensive knowledge of feminist literature and theology, Anne addresses the profound need for a theology that represents the most influential feminist thinking but still maintains a hopeful connection with both traditional and revisionist Christian thought.

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2 Carr, *Search for Wisdom and Spirit*, 145–146; In dealing with Rahner’s (and Carr’s) spirituality, we need to keep in mind: ‘... the direct [and not the inverse] proportion that obtains between autonomy and dependence or closeness to God’.

3 David Tracy, ‘Tributes to Anne Carr’, *Criterion: A Publication of the University of Chicago Divinity School*, 42/3 (Autumn 2003), 35.
Humans are made in the image and likeness of God: not only male human beings, as Anne points out, but all human beings. In what is most essential to us as humans, women are not secondary or subservient to men. Very soon, Anne had developed a full-blown theological anthropology that began to adopt ideas seen by the general culture of her time as feminism, even as radical feminism. Her experience of being a woman in a male-dominated Church and academic world was a source for her feminist thinking, as were her academic work and her pastoral experience.

As David Tracy remarked at Anne’s retirement celebration, ‘Anne Carr’s theological vision and her way of life are one’. Anne brought together scholarship and activism, and she generated an appreciation of the close connection between the Christian theological tradition and the authentic feminism of her own generation in the Catholic Church. For Anne, feminism in theory and in active practice grows out of the spiritual tradition of the Church and out of the demands of the gospel. Her activism made her ever more deeply committed to her faith tradition. Never contentious, she was both prophetic and carefully reasoned in her support of women’s rights in society at large and in the Church. She must have suffered some measure of disappointment at her Church’s inability to make progress on issues such as women’s ordination.

In addition to her three major works, Anne co-edited six other books, wrote essays for various collections and made scholarly contributions to numerous journals, such as *Horizons*, for which she served as associate editor, and *The Journal of Religion*, which she also co-edited. She received many

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4 Anne Carr, *Transforming Grace: Christian Tradition and Women’s Experience* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), 117: ‘Both women and men are called to this likeness ....’
5 Tracy, ‘Tributes to Anne Carr’, 35.
6 A seminal development in Anne’s thought was marked by her article ‘Theology and Experience in the Thought of Karl Rahner’, which appeared in *The Journal of Religion*, 53/3 (1973), 359–376. For her,
awards and several honorary doctorates, and enjoyed close professional relationships with the world’s most prominent theologians.

**Providence, Grace, Evolution and Process Thought**

The fourth stage of Anne’s development is characterized by her thoughtful writing about divine providence. This new approach in her work came out of her own experience of sorrow, challenge and illness, as well as her intellectual interest in the ideas of Alfred North Whitehead.

Anne was afflicted in mid-career with a brain tumour that recurred, demanding several surgeries in the course of her life. No doubt the departure of many women and men from religious life—including from her own BVM community—and from the active priesthood, the closing of Mundelein College in 1991 and the shared anguish of many of her friends over these matters were also painful to her. Her insights into providence have as much do with her living faith and personal experience as they do with her theological reflection and expertise.

Providence is concerned with divine care in nature and in human lives, rather than supernatural care and grace. Grace—in contrast to providence but always working intimately with it—is the supernatural life of God that is communicated to human beings sacramentally, and in uniquely personal ways. Providence and grace (the natural and the supernatural) work together inextricably, though human beings are not always aware of them as these blessings and benefits take effect in their lives.

On the traditional view, providence entails a divine plan for creation in which the creator has a masterful and governing influence over everything else. It is taken to imply or include the idea of creation, as part of a design in which God shows divine care for what is created and sustained by God. Providence is the ever-guiding and ameliorating influence of a God who is always creating the universe. For creation should not only be thought of as happening at the beginning of the universe, but can be discovered and discerned at every moment in its life and development,

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7 See Tracy, ‘Tributes to Anne Carr’, 34: ‘With a sure instinct for a central issue of our present time, Anne has proceeded to rethink providence’.


as well as in our own lives, as the sweep of divine influence that prevails throughout all of time and history.

The question of providence is often associated with that of evolution. For some, evolution is a matter of blind chance, random mutation, natural selection and nothing more. But it can also be seen as the way in which God creates the universe, and the way in which nature develops in accordance with God’s concurrence. Evolution has to do with the growth not only of animals and plants but also of stars, planets and galaxies. It includes the creation and development of atoms, molecules, subatomic particles and physical forces. In this continuing creation, God also relies on and works through human action, as we take responsibility for others in need of care and compassion.

In an important paper for the Catholic Theological Society of America—from which the present article gets its title—Anne wrote: ‘In love and in infinite concern, God is attentive to the fall of a single sparrow, vulnerable, responsive, yes, even anguished in our anguish, dependent on human action in history’. She affirms the detailed, intimate reality of God’s providence in the world and in our lives, and the suffering of God in sympathy with nature, and with people when they suffer painful and destructive experiences. And she asserts that God’s plan and providence include and rely upon human action, responsibility and commitment.

The philosopher Alfred North Whitehead took seriously the question of God’s influence in the world. He detected that influence in every speck of reality and in every micro-moment of elapsing time. Whitehead eschewed the idea of a divine creator in the traditional sense; his view of the universe does not include a doctrine of God’s creation of all things out of nothing. Rather he saw God as allowing the world to evolve on its own, but always with God’s saving guidance. God ‘does not create the world, he saves it; or, more accurately, he is the poet of the world, with tender patience leading it by his vision of truth, beauty and goodness’. God does not primarily save the world from sin and perdition, but rather saves each micro-event or micro-moment of existence that the world undergoes, exercises and achieves, preserving the universe by taking its ever self-generated perfection into God’s own inner constitution.

11 Whitehead, Process and Reality, 346.
In her various writings, Anne Carr accepts Whitehead’s dipolar notion of God as having two natures. God takes into the divine consequent nature all the world’s achieved perfection; and in God’s primordial nature, God provides the initial aims or lures by which each momentary modicum of existence completes itself and thus adds itself to the creative advance of nature. Whitehead saw the world’s reality as charged with the presence of God and with these lures of guiding direction coming from God. Indeed, for Whitehead, God is the lure that attracts us ever forward as we venture forth into our lives, ‘the lure for feeling, the eternal urge of desire’.\footnote{Whitehead, \textit{Process and Reality}, 344.}

Both Whitehead and Carr regard providence as an emergent and persuasive influence, rather than a forceful and compelling insistence on an all-directing and predetermined divine plan. Providence is God’s loving and guiding care for all things as manifest in nature, history and culture, and in personal vocation and living. In \textit{Transforming Grace}, Carr quotes from Whitehead’s \textit{magnum opus}, \textit{Process and Reality}, a speculative scheme bringing together science, metaphysics and religion: ‘God is the great companion, the fellow-sufferer who understands’.\footnote{Whitehead, \textit{Process and Reality}, 351, quoted in Carr, \textit{Transforming Grace}, 152.}

When Anne delivered her eloquent talk to the Catholic Theological Society she had already had her third brain surgery and was suffering from the cumulative effects of previous surgeries to remove her recurring brain tumours. It was touching for the audience to hear her message about God’s care for the single sparrow, when she—with all her talent to inspire and educate others—was so afflicted. Anne’s face had been slightly distorted by the surgeries, but the beauty of her shining blue eyes and winning smile were always with her. Her fortitude was a reminder that hovering over the issue of divine providence is the perennial question of whether God has the power to prevent the pain and evil that occur in the world.

\section*{Providence and God’s Self-Limitation}

To a Christian, the notion of providence must be made consistent with his or her beliefs in Christ, grace, sin and redemption. Providence is christological, in so far as all things are disposed towards the incarnation as the arrival of God as partner and participant in human history, culture and community. Viewed christologically, providence can absorb the realities of evil, sin and concupiscence, and still redirect humanity by means of medicinal grace, forgiveness and conversion. And, just as
Christ in his own time and place did not or could not cure all the ills of the world, so God cannot eliminate all of its evil.

Alfred North Whitehead did not view God as having absolute and all-governing power. What is generally called process theology follows Whitehead in attributing to God a pervasive power that is not all-controlling or coercive. God’s power is vast, but its influence is persuasive, not coercive. Thus, when things go wrong in the universe and when misfortune and evil occur, God is not to be held responsible. Anne Carr is not a process theologian in the strict sense, although she enjoys a kinship with Whiteheadian theology. For her, God does retain, in principle, an all-controlling and absolute power. However, God limits God’s own use of power in order to allow the universe to develop on its own, and in order to allow humans the freedom to choose either good or evil: ‘God is the self-limiting creator of human autonomy’.  

If God is self-limiting, the sparrow can fall from the sky, suffer and die, without God’s directly willing any part of what happens. Indeed, God can mourn and suffer with the sparrow in its misfortune. For Whitehead, when misfortune occurs, there is nothing that God could have done to avoid it. For Anne, God can and does suffer sympathetically with the suffering sparrow.

**Heidegger and the Importance of Care**

Whitehead is not the only philosopher who exerted an influence on Anne Carr’s theology of providence. Another was Martin Heidegger

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(1889–1976), the German phenomenologist who also had a considerable influence on Karl Rahner, the subject of Anne’s doctoral thesis. From the point of view of providence as Anne Carr understands it, the philosophies of Whitehead and Heidegger can be seen as mutually enlightening. For the idea of God’s care is explicit but limited in Whitehead, and repressed but prevalent in Heidegger.

Heidegger’s early work *Being and Time* is a long meditation on how our consciousness of time and history is generated by our awareness of death.\(^\text{15}\) In Heidegger, death defines our existential self-awareness, abides in us as our inexorable personal destiny, and is the horizon\(^\text{16}\) of every experience that we have as human beings. Human being is ‘being-towards-death’. For Heidegger and Rahner, and also, at least indirectly, for Carr, our awareness of death and of the brevity of life conditions every human experience whatsoever. Our freedom is experienced as the question of what we shall make of ourselves and of our lives in the span of time allotted to us. With this freedom, we largely create our own experiences, and we grow in genuineness or authenticity as we generate the meaning and value of our own lives. Death, freedom and experience are deeply and closely interwoven themes in

\(^{15}\) Harper and Row, 1962).

\(^{16}\) See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, xxvii n. 4: ‘Heidegger thinks of a horizon as something ... which provides the limits for certain intellectual activities performed “within” it’. But for Rahner, ‘horizon’ means ‘the co-presence in all human experience of the fullness of being—God—as the source and goal of human knowledge and freedom, the unlimited context of all limited human experience’ (*A World of Grace: An Introduction to the Themes and Foundations of Karl Rahner’s Theology*, edited by Leo J. O’Donovan [New York: Seabury, 1980], 192). Carr relates the term ‘horizon’ to ‘the experience of transcendence’ in her chapter, ‘Starting with the Human’, in *A World of Grace*, 20–22.
Heidegger. Whatever providence might mean in his terms, it is meshed into this tapestry of consciousness and being.

Heidegger is not obviously interested in religious themes such as God, grace and creation. However, for him, the most basic experience of all human beings, and the most defining aspect of our humanity is care (Sorge).\(^{17}\) What we care about is not of the greatest interest for Heidegger; for him, the inescapable human trait of caring itself is of the greatest interest. We care about ourselves and about our own lives. We care about the meaning of our lives and, as ‘beings-in-the-world’,\(^{18}\) we care about other people, values, the world itself and matters of importance for us in the world. Care itself is a universal and defining experience. All experiences whatsoever are experiences in which we care in some way.

Here we can see that Anne Carr’s idea of providence has much in common with Heidegger’s understanding of care. Care is closely linked to Heidegger’s ideas about death, about human being as being-towards-death, and about human freedom and authenticity. Our consciousness of our own brevity of life and of our jeopardy in living life explains the intense and anxious care we have for ourselves, our world and others we encounter in the world. So living, we create the meaning of our own lives, but we may also wonder about matters of God and providence: whether we ourselves are cared about, not only by other people, but by nature and the universe itself and, ultimately, by a God who created us, sustains us in life and provides us with gifts and talents, and with the freedom and opportunity to use them to create the meaning of our own lives. Our authenticity may be due, not only to our own creativity, but also to the all-providing presence of God.

For care is not only a characteristic of human subjectivity, concern and orientation to the world. Care is also a matter of the world’s and the universe’s orientation towards us. Coming to us through the world and energizing the world as a horizon of care for us, care is a transcendental property of being itself. Thus, we see that Heidegger’s notion of care is

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\(^{17}\) Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 378; ‘Care is being-towards-death’. For Heidegger, in caring about the totality of our life and being, we care about our death as the completion of life and being. Most valuable and comprehensive is the article by Warren T. Reich, ‘The History of the Notion of Care’, *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, edited by Warren T. Reich, 2nd edn (New York: Simon and Schuster Macmillan, 1995), volume 1, 319–331.

\(^{18}\) The expression “being-in-the-world” designates the fact that, for Heidegger, man’s constitution is intimately one with his relation to the external world: Anne Carr, ‘The Theological Method of Karl Rahner’ (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1971), 23.
closely analogous to what the Christian calls grace. Care comes down upon us like the grace-filled love of God.

It is part of the plan, purpose and providence of God that all men and women are addressed by God’s word, called to God’s grace and invited, however remotely, to membership in God’s Church. Needless to say, this affects deeply the way in which we view the nature, the membership and the mission of the Church. A renewed and deepened idea about providence—that is, the idea that providence is always supercharged with the reality of grace—helps to explain Rahner’s idea of the anonymous Christian, in virtue of which even persons who have no apparent relationship to the Church or the gospel are called to holiness and, perhaps, may be true and authentic members of the Church. As Carr puts it, ‘wherever the grace of Christ, which is an ecclesial grace, is operative in men, there men are anonymously but really related to the Christian church’.

Providence and the Meaning of Suffering

Those who serve in the medical professions or in ministry to the sick can appreciate the consolations brought to patients by belief in divine providence. Their patients give glory to God by accepting the reality that God cares for them, even when they are suffering and even when they may be tempted to give up faith in a caring, loving God. They receive the special grace of rejecting the idea that their suffering is meaningless. Their faith in providence becomes a gift they give to God. All their lives, perhaps, they have received faith as God’s gift to them. Now, in their suffering, patients can give back to God their faith and trust in God, at a time when that faith and trust may be challenged by what they must endure.

God asked a lot of Anne by allowing a tumour to grow in her brain, the bodily home of such a brilliant and saintly mind. This was an opportunity for her faith, her trust, her patience and long-suffering to grow as well. For a long time, she continued to work, to write, even to minister to others who were aged and infirm. Her suffering became a glorious gift that she gave back to God. There may have been moments of bitterness and

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19 See A World of Grace, 187: ‘Rahner argues that true faith can be implicit in loving action, enabled by the grace of Christ and shaped in the likeness of Christ, even though not explicitly aware of Christ as its origin and exemplar’.

discouragement for her, but these did not take power over her life and her mind. She experienced great kindness from others, and in that she gave them—and all who knew her—a great gift. In her suffering she evoked sympathy, and thus she made her friends and colleagues into more caring people.

Perhaps Anne’s most original and insistent teaching on the subject of providence is the way in which she took the qualified idea of God’s power and influence from process thought and used it to arouse and energize our human commitment to change the world for the better. It is up to us to promote and ensure the welfare of our fellow human beings and the surrounding planet, and it is up to Christians to work for the improvement of our Churches. For Anne, God works within the human constitution by luring us towards better action and deeper responsibility in and for the world, persuading us to do the necessary work of correction and amelioration.

MICHEL DE CERTEAU
AND THE SPIRITUALITY
OF ST IGNATIUS

Dominique Salin

MICHEL DE CERTEAU is one of the five most outstanding Jesuits of the twentieth century, after Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and along with Henri de Lubac, Karl Rahner and Bernard Lonergan. At least he is one of those who continue to be written about worldwide. His life as a Jesuit, brief as it was (36 years), provokes exceptional interest thirty years after his death. This is true not only because of the content of his thought, which is to be found in his published writings, but because he was prepared, rather like Teilhard, to venture to the outer limits of academic reflection in relation to culture and orthodoxy. His was a mode of being, a style, that hinted at unexplored forms of freedom.

This why any consideration of the links that Certeau may have with the spirituality of St Ignatius invites one to recall the analyses, notably in the journal Christus, made by this historian of spirituality of the doctrine

1 Born in 1925, he was already a deacon when he entered the Society of Jesus in 1950; ordained to the priesthood in 1956, he died of cancer in 1986. He was appointed in 1956 to Christus (writing twenty articles, numerous comments and book-reviews), and then in 1967 to Études. He began as a historian of spirituality, specialising in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (learned editions of Pierre Favre and Jean-Joseph Surin, La Possession de Loudun [1970; English, The Possession of Loudun, 2000]). In Études he published a number of key articles on the events of May 1968 (‘En mai dernier, on a pris la parole comme on avait pris la Bastille en 1789’), which brought him to public notice. In the seminars he gave at the University of Paris-VIII (Vincennes) then at Paris-VII, but also at the Institut Catholique, he combined his knowledge of psychoanalysis, sociology and semiotics with professional competence as a historian, thus continually broadening the reach of his academic investigations. From 1978 he lectured in religious and cultural anthropology at the University of California in San Diego. In 1984 he was elected to a post at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris and began to teach a seminar entitled, ‘The Historical Anthropology of Beliefs in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, but this was cut short by his death at the age of 63. Among his most important works are La prise du parole (1968; English, The Capture of Speech, 1997); L’étranger ou l’union dans la différence (1969); L’Écriture de l’histoire (1975; English, The Writing of History, 1988); L’Invention du quotidien (2 vols, 1980 and 1994; English, The Practice of Everyday Life, 1984 and 1998); La Fable mystique (2 vols, 1982 and 2013; English, The Mystic Fable, 1992 and 2015); La Faiblesse de croire (posthumous, 1987; English, The Weakness of Believing); Histoire et psychanalyse entre science et fiction (posthumous, 1987); Le Christianisme éclaté (1974); La Culture au pluriel (1974; English, Culture in the Plural, 1997).
of the guide who taught him how to live. But such a study must also do justice to the way in which the very life of Certeau can be judged to be an ‘interpretation’ of that teaching—something like the performance of a great musical score by a virtuoso.

**The Traits of a Spirituality**

The fundamental characteristic, always present, is the optimism—so typically Ignatian—with which Certeau looked upon human beings and their history, upon the whole of creation and society, in spite of so many failures and horrors. In the eyes of Ignatius the human being is not corrupted by original sin, contrary to what the followers of Luther and Jansen may have thought. It is only wounded. The world is the home of God. All human beings, and Jesuits in particular, should feel themselves ‘at home’ (as Jerónimo Nadal used to say: ‘The world is our home’). Much work has to be done to make this house habitable for everyone. One must roll up one’s sleeves and not be afraid to get one’s cassock dirty. And this is how the colleges, the missions, the reductions in Paraguay, the involvement in intellectual and social questions will appear—despite all the ambiguities that historians will be all too ready to point out.

Certeau was a constant traveller in space and in time. A trait that marked him out was his *gout de l’autre*, something he noted as true of any historian: the passion to know the other. Nothing human was foreign to him—least of all, of course, the foreigner. All those who had contact with Certeau—those who attended his innumerable seminars, both formal and informal, and who visited him

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2 Perhaps ‘delight in knowing others’ captures something of this French expression. [Tr]
as research graduates in the flat where he began to live after 1974 (following the example of his first ‘boss’, Maurice Giuliani, the editor of *Christus*)—all were struck by the positive way in which he saw everyone, his benevolence, his ability to listen and respect, his willingness to help and the ease with which he would share his immense knowledge. As his *The Practice of Everyday Life* clearly shows, he could see with new eyes the ‘common people’, traditionally regarded as nothing more than sheep-like consumers by sociologists and those who formulate economic policies. Certeau, however, found in that raw material unsuspected skills in the art of clearing a path of self-determination through the dense undergrowth of social pressures.

‘Le monde est bon. Je bénirai la vie’ (*The world is good. I shall bless life*).

Certeau may not have quoted *A Season in Hell*, but at a time when the university was dominated by existentialism, by various versions of Marxism and by multiple forms, more or less sophisticated, of a weary nihilism, he never believed that hell was others and the world. On the contrary, he believed with all his soul the exact opposite, like Master Ignatius—as had been revealed to him by Henri de Lubac, when Certeau was a student of theology in Lyon.

*The Delight of Freedom: The Spiritual Exercises*

At the heart of a Jesuit vocation lie the Spiritual Exercises. They are the codification by Ignatius of his personal experience while at Loyola and Manresa. His *Autobiography* describes that experience, while the book of the Exercises spells out the process and thus make it available so that others may profit from it. Like all Jesuits, Certeau had made the full thirty-day retreat on two occasions. Then, after his tertianship, he spent a year, 1960–1961, at a retreat centre, Villa Manrèse, in Clamart (on the outskirts of Paris), giving the exercises to others. Some of his articles in *Christus* are proof that, not content with making and giving the Exercises, he had also thought deeply about them. For him, as was the case for most of the Jesuits of his generation—and indeed of later generations—the way in which the Exercises were conceived had been formulated by the philosopher Gaston Fessard. His book *La Dialectique des Exercises Spirituels* (‘The Dialectic of the Spiritual Exercises’), was published in

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4 This is an additional year in Jesuit spiritual training inserted after the final year of studies. [Tr]

5 Available in a Spanish translation (Colección Manresa, 2010), but not in English. [Tr]
1956, the same year in which Certeau was ordained a priest, and two years after the foundation of *Christus* by Maurice Giuliani.

Fessard had greatly renovated the way in which the Jesuits thought of the Exercises. Since the seventeenth century most saw in them a school of prayer or of union with God. Some in the twentieth century thought they were primarily a training session for ‘the service of the Church’. But Fessard suggested that they were in the first place a school for freedom (*une école de liberté*), for at the heart of the Exercises—their real *raison d’être*—is placed the ‘election’, which has to be understood as a free choice—as free at least as is possible given the actual circumstances in which it is made. The Exercises help a person to make a free choice of life. At the end, the retreatant can say, *It is I who have made this choice, I who have wanted it, quite freely*. And such a person can also say, *It is God who has wanted this in me*, because freedom is precisely this: to want as God wants. The French Jesuits—and also other Jesuits—took over wholeheartedly this view of the Exercises as a process, a ‘way of proceeding’, that enables the birth of the free act. It has become standard and a part of the common patrimony of Jesuits in France and everywhere.

There are two articles of Certeau that bear witness to this understanding. In the March issue of *Christus* for 1957, an article appeared with the title, ‘Les Lendemains de la décision. La “confirmation”’ (‘The aftermath of a decision: “confirmation”’).6 Here he outlines the temptations that may threaten someone who has made an election, a person referred to by him, significantly, as ‘the chosen’. Certeau applies this title both to the retreatant, and also, before him or her, to Jesus himself immediately after his baptism.

While 1957 was the year in which the first articles by Certeau appeared in *Christus*, the last one was published in 1973: ‘L’Espace du désir’ (‘The space for desire’).7 This was a magnificent commentary on the ‘Principle and Foundation’ (Exx 23). Here can be found the first signs of many of the great themes which would emerge in *The Mystic Fable* ten years later. In the first place there is ‘desire’, which is called to escape from narrow limits and from clinging adhesion in order to take on the form of a divine ‘indifference’—proper to a God who is ‘always greater’. And to become ‘indifferent’ the human will must in the first place want

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6 *Christus*, 14 (March 1957), 187–205.
7 *Christus*, 77 (January 1973), 118–128.
to be so. ‘To ask for what I want’: the retreatant is invited to do this at the start of each period of meditation. Here one wants to want nothing or, more precisely, to prefer nothing. The will cannot be magnetized simply by what the person alone wants. That must come about thanks to the affectus (or the movements) which are the irruptions of God’s will into the human will. Thanks to the discernment that takes place over several days it becomes possible to establish a new order where before there was disorder.

On the threshold of the Exercises, the ‘Principle and Foundation’ (Exx 23) inaugurates a break with regard to all that has gone before. This cut-off point is the frontier of a space which allows ‘that to speak’ [que ‘ça parle’]. The condition that makes possible the new communication is not one of satisfaction or repletion; on the contrary it is a non-possession, a break, an absence. Moreover, all the zigzags that desire must negotiate in the following weeks—the preambles, compositions of place, colloquies, imaginative evocations of events, applications of the senses—all these ‘operations’ have no other purpose than to make it possible for the desire to be able to speak. The Exercises are not a list of truths to be considered, but a succession of steps to be taken and of discernments to be made. The organizing principle running through the Exercises is the word spoken by the other in order to enable a choice, an election. ‘The text works as a waiting for the other, a space marked out by desire.’ The aim is that there may be room for the other. This ‘other’ is, in the first place, the one who guides, and that person steps aside for the retreatant, who in turn steps aside for the desire that comes from the other.

It was necessary to emphasize the Principle and Foundation of the Exercises, as this is the foundation that makes the Exercises what they are. There can be no doubt that they were for Michel de Certeau the place where he was able to be born from on high. Like Pierre Favre (who, according to Ignatius, was the one who gave the Exercises best), he heard there the voice that was calling him to be born to freedom and to help others to tune their ears to that voice. The trait that most impressed people with Certeau, one that scandalized them at times and always intrigued them, was the sensation he gave of a calm freedom of being. Far from being a safe conformist, he could rarely be found where one expected.

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‘To Find God in All Things’

How is one to be always free enough ‘to find God in all things’? Certeau had his own way of understanding the so-called Ignatian motto (though in fact the formula has a much older history dating back to Eckhart and Ruusbroec). God was for him, as for St Augustine, a reality that cannot be found. Given that God is not confined to heaven but present in everything, one can never end up finding God. To be more precise, to ‘find’, in this case, is to be seeking ‘ever more’, which means ‘ever more universally’. There is a continual relaunching of desire, because God is a love constantly at work in the world. At least, that is how the final contemplation ‘how to attain love’, added to the Fourth Week, presents God.

In an outstanding article published in April 1966, Certeau pointed out that there must always be a tension in every Jesuit—a follower of Ignatius who struggles to live according to the Constitutions of the order founded by Ignatius, the text that is effectively the second pillar of Ignatian wisdom—between the call of the Spirit (found in one’s ‘intention’) and the objective reality of the mission entrusted, with the particular conditions required to carry it out. The examination of conscience and the account of conscience (made by talking to one’s superior) are means to harmonize the two elements. Over all, any particular apostolic enterprise is thought of primarily by Ignatius as a relationship, a constant conversation carried on with God and with others. A perfect example of the ideal Jesuit is Pierre Favre.

So far we have been pencilling in a rough sketch of how Certeau made the spirituality of St Ignatius his own. This points to the way in which such a spirituality can be brought to life by any Christian, for the Exercises are available to everyone. However, as there has been mention of the Constitutions of the Jesuit order, we may reasonably ask what sort of Jesuit Certeau really was.

A Jesuit Way of Being

It is something of a paradox, but it is in his writings dedicated to the Christian condition and experience in general that Certeau delineates, lightly but unmistakably, what was the ‘style’ of being proper to him as a Jesuit.

Going Out and Moving Around

At the heart of the Exercises, just when the election is taking place, the retreatant is exhorted to bear in mind ‘that a person will make progress in things of the spirit to the degree to which they go out of self-love, self-will, and self-interest’ (Exx 189). The expression ‘go out of self-love’ is unusual. And yet, there is no spiritual adventure that does not begin by an exodus, starting with that of Abraham. Certeau makes frequent mention in his writings of the father of all believers. Everything begins with a going-out from oneself, which is never definitive but has to be constantly renewed. Each has to go out from self, from the childhood home and from familiar ways, in order to come face to face with the ‘other’, the stranger, the one who upsets, troubles and, at times, intimidates. That is the price one has to pay if one’s existence is to be fruitful.

However, it is not enough to go out and meet people, to enter into conversation and conversar. One also has to move around, travel, survey, never be at rest. For Certeau, the other guardian figure along with Abraham is the ‘Pilgrim’, found in the Ignatian autobiography. Once Ignatius had recovered from his wound and could walk again, he set off. His wanderings were to last twenty years. Only at the end of the route did he find his goal, the place where God wanted him to be: Rome. But even then, the journey had not ended: during the sixteen years left to him of life, Ignatius did not cease to travel in spirit along with his sons, whom he would send to the four quarters of the world while keeping up with them an epistolary conversar as closely as possible. As he writes in the Constitutions, ‘our vocation is to travel through the world and to live in any part of it whatsoever where there is hope of greater service to God and of help of souls’ (III.2.G[304]). It is not necessary to spend one’s life in aeroplanes in order to fulfil this vocation. Certeau limited
his own travels basically to North and South America. The travelling that Ignatius had in mind was mainly cultural and spiritual. Here also, Certeau was a Jesuit after Ignatius’ own heart. He was anything but a stick-in-the-mud. His published works are proof that he was a great hiker, ready to explore new paths of knowledge, stretching into different epochs, cultures and societies. So much so, that others had difficulty in keeping up with him: where is he? Who is he? What is he really thinking?

The subtitle given by François Dosse to his biography of Certeau is *Le Marcheur blessé* (‘The Wounded Walker’). Just as much as the limping Ignatius, Certeau was also *Der cherubinischer Wändersmann* (‘The Cherubic Pilgrim’) imagined by the seventeenth-century mystic poet Angelus Silesius. It is with an evocation of him that Certeau finishes *La Fable mystique*. The often quoted comment by Certeau is:

The mystic is someone who cannot stop walking and who, quite certain of what is lacking, knows that whatever may be found in a place, it is not *that* for which one searches, so that one cannot settle down and be happy with *that*. The desire creates an excess. One has to go further, to some other place.

Some have thought they could see here a self-portrait of the author as mystic. And that is true enough! The key element here is desire. It is the character of desire to be mystical. Certeau had the grace—thanks, no doubt, to St Augustine, Ignatius, Freud and Lacan—to recognise this fact. The truth is that, however little one may be aware of it, the world is full of mysticism and of mystics. And Certeau himself, as one has to admit, was one of them, but that is not the point.

*Life Common to All*

There are some pages by Certeau, among the clearest that he ever wrote, that give a clue to what was the mystery at the heart of his life and of his enterprises. In the first place, there is the short text entitled ‘L’Étranger’ (‘The Stranger’) which opens his work, *L’Étranger ou l’union dans la différence*. The experience of the disciples on the road to Emmaus triggers

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16 An English title might be ‘The Stranger, or the Union in the Difference’, but this work has not been translated into English so far. [Tr] Along with Certeau’s edition of the *Mémorial* of St Pierre Favre, it is a work familiar to Pope Francis.
a meditation on the other; the desire for the other; and the Christian
adventure in so far as it revolves around a God who is always other, taking
place in a community of brothers and sisters which is called to go out of
itself in order really to be itself. A Christian can only be a Christian in
relation to someone. He or she has constantly to link up with, and repair
ties with, other human beings, especially with those who do not recognise
themselves as Christians.

Another text, much longer, has the title ‘L’Expérience spirituelle’
(‘The Spiritual Experience’). It develops the theme of relationship-with-
the-other that is central to the overall vision of Certeau. It is possible
to summarise it (though too briefly and in far too abstract a way) by
saying that each individual, each group, and each community in history,

\[\ldots\text{ finds its meaning only in relation to that which it is not, and basically}\]
\[\text{in relation with God. This ‘nothing without’ is presented already in a}\]
\[\text{certain sense by Jesus when he says: I am nothing without my Father}\]
\[\text{and I am nothing without you, my brethren, or without a future that is}\]
\[\text{unknown to me. Each of us is capable, to some extent, and in however}\]
\[\text{modest a way, of being open to the infinite, by this conjunction with}\]
\[\text{others (something indefinite) and with God (the infinite). Constantly,}\]
\[\text{the infinite is that which we both receive and lack, that about which}\]
\[\text{we cannot not speak, but which also condemns us.}\]

\[\ldots\]

The infinite, the absolute, the unconditional is not to be sought in some
inaccessible empyrean nor in some exceptional experience. It is present
around us in all that is commonplace, it permeates in mysterious fashion
all our relations, our space, the very differences that divide us and hold us
fast without our really knowing where all that is leading us. The umbrella
term or subtitle that Certeau uses for this situation is ‘la vie commune’
(‘life common to all’). He took this phrase from the fourteenth-century Flemish
mystic Jan van Ruusbroec, and it refers not to life in community, but to
‘ordinary’ existence in so far as it knows itself to be permeated by ‘that
Other … which is ever missing’, quite beyond and quite distinct from any
sensation or particular feeling, and also in so far as that ‘life common to all’
is the very opposite of a solitary life. That is how Certeau understood mystic
existence, the mystic dimension of existence, for himself and for others.

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\[17\] Christus, 68 (October 1970), 488–498; Luce Giard reprints it as an introduction to her new edition
\[\text{of L’Étranger (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1991).}\]

\[18\] L’Étranger, 10.

\[19\] L’Étranger, 11.
It is quite obvious that this is not the terminology of Ignatius of Loyola. Nevertheless, it points to the sort of experience that is evident in the apostolic pragmatism which characterizes Ignatius’ letters and the Constitutions of the Jesuit Order, and which is also present in the pages that remain of his Spiritual Diary.

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These few thoughts are far from delineating all the inspiration that Ignatian spirituality and Ignatian tradition gave to Certeau. More needs to be said about the reflections he published on the relationship that exists between an individual or an institution and a particular tradition. The ideas outlined by him in an article for Christus in 1966, ‘L’Épreuve du temps’ (‘The Test of Time’), allow one to understand the often disconcerting way in which Certeau claimed fidelity with the Church of Rome and the Society of Jesus. They also help to dissipate erroneous views about his notion of a ‘rupture instauratrice’ (‘creative break’) and of the coolness shown towards him by Henri de Lubac. Certeau always wanted himself to be recognised as a grateful disciple of de Lubac, but one wishing in turn to follow him in his creativity.20

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translated by Joseph A. Munitiz SJ

BREAKING DOWN THE DIVIDING WALL

Yaaro Lesjay

Karl Rahner’s essay ‘A Spiritual Dialogue at Evening: On Sleep, Prayer, and Other Subjects’ is presented as a conversation between a priest and a doctor. A similar form—a priest talking to a woman theologian—fits well with the topic here, that of mending broken relationships, especially appropriate in this Year of Mercy. This text traces the pain and struggle of such a relationship, between the priest and his sister, and reflects on the loss of that relationship. In the process it works through the slow conversion of mind and heart that Jesus requires and makes possible—sooner or later. This conversion involves knowing mercy oneself and offering mercy to the estranged person, psychologically and spiritually.

As the sibling relationship described here dwindled and finally ended, the only way out was to rationalise the situation, though enduring a struggle within and reaching stalemate. When the man who was the primary cause of the break suddenly died, the problem began to unwind itself, leading to attempts to regain the lost relationship. This conversation between two confiding, knowledgeable friends itself reflects one of these attempts.

Priest: You know my sister’s story over more than thirty years. But you don’t know what has happened recently. Ella’s husband has died. I found out the news the next day by a text message from a younger brother, who has been in touch with her for as long as I have been out of touch. So I can’t avoid reliving what went on for so long (the struggle between the blood relationship and Christian fellowship) and also what did not happen till now (love, joy and peace). My relationship with her was as good as broken when she broke away from the rest of us, marrying stealthily into a

Hindu family. They were rooted in Hindu culture and a Hindu trade (sculpting idols), though not all of them had religious beliefs themselves.

Theologian: Her story, of course, is yours too, isn’t it? And your story is shared by others like you. You are certainly no exception. There are, indeed, many among us who find themselves in a similar position. I recently heard of a priest going to bless his cousin’s engagement, only to find that the case involved a divorce. He still managed a blessing of a sort—knowing that no one is outside the sphere of God’s benediction, though not knowing how to communicate in such a situation. That, however, was the end of his having anything to do with them.

Priest: I’d have done the same, seeing no possibility of any meaningful relationship. But I am not sure if the younger generation would agree. There was a deacon who left his congregation—I don’t know for what reason. Some time later his father was found to have a terminal illness and he wanted his son to marry before his death. Of course, the marriage could not be blessed in the church because, as a deacon, the son remained bound to celibacy. But a relation who was a devout priest still went travelling for six or seven hours to take part in the celebration, though I don’t know if, on his own or at others’ request, he blessed the couple in his public, priestly role.

Theologian: One may well wonder what theology priests live by and what faith they witness to—a thing that concerns me as a pastoral theologian. I do not think, though, that such a thing would ever happen among women religious in India. The rule of life among sisters leaves no doubt about where they stand in such aberrant situations. It is one aspect of how they respond as a group to irregularities that may bring disorder to the Christian community.
Priest: But the few sisters who know my story used to ask me if I saw Ella on my visits home!

Theologian: Their interest is understandable, and not a matter of mere curiosity. It suggests the second aspect of how women religious typically respond in such situations. They have a way of combining what seems irreconcilable. They would not violate the clear, basic laws governing Christian social living, so they would stay away from a formal ceremony unacceptable to the Church as the community of faith. This derives from a sense of propriety about public deportment within the Church. At the same time, their willingness to associate with people who have walked away from the Church is based on the biblical principle, at once ancient and modern, of the Immanuel: God being with humanity and bridging the infinite abyss caused by sin.

That is to say, sisters tend to make a distinction between public and personal propriety, each of which, they believe, has its own place without having to clash with the other. Spontaneously avoiding the divisive principle of ‘either/or’, they act on the uniting principle of ‘both/and’—a theological principle that is both incarnational and redemptive. The Church, after all, is at once private and public, as it is sinful and holy.

Priest: Perhaps more than religious sisters and brothers, rightly or wrongly, we priests are seen as, or pass for, public figures, giving visibility to the Church. Anyway, I felt very embarrassed and far from pleased when the sisters asked me if I visited Ella, from whom I estranged myself, as far as I was concerned, for purely religious reasons.

Theologian: Their questions gave you a jolt; they unsettled your definite, if uneasy, stand with regard to your sister: your decision that she did not exist for you. They disturbed your peace—a sort of peace, yes, but only an uncertain one because it relied on her unobtrusiveness, her physical distance.

Priest: Yes, her presence would have disturbed me and affected my peace. This is, in a way, the result of my choice: my choice of Christ. She had chosen her man and followed him, privately and publicly. Did she bargain away Christ in the process? Anyway, having chosen Christ, I felt that I had to follow Christ publicly and, I hope, privately too. I only hope I did follow him: ‘Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven’ (Matthew 10:32).

Theologian: I appreciate your sensitivity in the matter of your following of Christ. You feel more sure of following him in the public sphere than
in the private sphere. But you would not have become a man of Christ in public without first adhering to him in your heart, before and during your training as a priest.

**Priest:** I hope it may be so, my friend. But *only the Lord knows; only he knows to judge*. Honestly, the division in the family caused by Ella was not all her own doing, but the fault of a boor of a brother, self-conceited and blind, who almost drove her to desperation! Equally honestly, I wanted to heal the breach for myself; I wanted to reach out to her, certainly, if not to him. I won't bring him up again in our conversation as I don't want to bite off more than I can chew. I must say that Ella was a victim of circumstances partly, if not wholly, of her own making. And so I waited for the day when I could confront her without losing face, hoping her situation would take a turn for the better, for her to untangle and undo the wrong she had committed!

**Theologian:** I know you hoped in the beginning that she would meet you halfway. I remember your sharing with me, long ago, your hope of seeing her return to Christianity and bring up her children in the Christian faith without hindrance, whatever her life-partner might believe.

**Priest:** That was not to be, as became clear with the passing of time. As much as Christ came to bring peace and, indeed, himself became our peace, he also brought disturbance, holy disturbance. Would that it had been happy, too! ‘I have not come to bring peace, but a sword’ (Matthew 10:34): a sword of division among us. There wouldn’t only be the proverbial clash between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, Jesus said, but he himself would be the cause of discord between mother and daughter or father and son!
Theologian: Yes, he did. But even before him the rabbis had spoken in such terms about the upheaval that the Day of the Lord would bring among the people. With his hard saying, Jesus drove home an unsuspected, difficult lesson for his audience: the predicted end-time had come, when some would follow him and others would oppose him, fulfilling the prophecy that Simeon made of him as a child. A host of believers, generation after generation, have proved Jesus right when their families turned against them for their faith in Christ, even to the point of having them put to death.

Priest: But no one wanted me to be put to death! Besides, we Christians today don’t have such a lively sense of eschatological times as those Christians of old.

Theologian: No, surely. Still, in your Christian way of life, because of your stand for Jesus, you had to suffer—suffer the loss of your peace and the love of a dear one—and that not just for a while, but for years.

Priest: It strikes me—perhaps you were leading me on—that my martyred feeling in relation to Ella is not exactly like that of the Christian martyrs and their relations. The hostile families of the martyrs did not believe in Christ, whereas Ella did! So I should not have rejected her outright, without any mitigation or the slightest sign of reconciliation, over so many long years.

Theologian: That is no small insight. But how will you square it with Paul’s injunction to exclude someone who has committed a serious offence from the community’s gatherings? Ella herself perhaps felt constrained to observe this injunction, knowingly or unknowingly?

Priest: In my intentions as well as my actions I have followed Paul’s objective pastoral guidance. Even Jesus advocated excluding offenders this way, and asked his followers to treat the unrepentant as public sinners!

But Jesus also surprised and even shocked the moral-minded public by saying that sinners might make their way to the Kingdom of God while the lawful and righteous might be left out. That has often been on my mind, and has long troubled me. And now it strikes me that perhaps, even if I am conscious of having dealt with Ella according to the law best known to me, I may have only literally kept the law, and I wonder if I have acted according to the spirit of the law. And so I find myself in a Pauline

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3 See 1 Corinthians 5: 1–5.
4 Matthew 18: 15–17.
dilemma. I can’t wrench myself away from wrestling with the thought: ‘I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.’ (1 Corinthians 4:4)

**Theologian:** And how do you think the Lord judges you?

**Priest:** He judges with justice, only ‘greater justice’, the kind G. K. Chesterton spoke of. In our context, it is pleasing justice, pleasing to those who need it for whatever good or, if I may say so, saving reason; and so it is not condemnatory but conciliatory justice. The Lord’s justice, unlike man’s (if not woman’s), is such that it ‘blesseth him that gives and him that takes’, in Shakespeare’s words, so that in the course of justice we all must see salvation!5

Though you asked about me, let me say a word about Ella first. After years of her break with the Church, she did find her way back to it and began taking the sacraments. I was happy, though I don’t know how it happened. The way the Lord’s justice was shown to her, resulting in his justification and reconciliation of her to the Church, made me see the shadow side of my own kind of justice.

Unlike God’s justice, human justice is, more often than not, marred by limited knowledge of the issues involved. It can become too overconfident and presumptuous to be fair and true *hic et nunc*, as Job’s friends learnt from God. Job, the man clamouring for justice, also had to learn a lesson about justice from the God against whom he protested. If, in general, God’s thoughts are far higher than those of human beings, it is nowhere so true as in justice.

**Theologian:** Justice among people must be therefore be judged by checking their kind of allegiance to God, the God of truth, the God of no ordinary truth. When two women wanted justice done by King Solomon regarding their claim to the same child, the real mother evinced a sense of truth and justice far higher, incomparably higher, than the false mother. The mother with the just claim was ready to lose her cause in order to save her child, whereas the woman with the false claim accepted a version of justice that would destroy him!6 Sometimes the more vocal and aggressive the shouting for justice the more spurious the case proves to be. Truth will be the first casualty in causes that only seek to promote an ideology or pet idea, often

5 *The Merchant of Venice*, IV. i. For Shakespeare justice without mercy is such that ‘none of us / Should see salvation’.

enough nourished by aversion and animosity. It is always easier to fight for religious principles than to live up to them, as Georg Lichtenberg observed.\(^7\)

**Priest:** You are touching a raw nerve in me: a sort of aversion, if not animosity, could hide behind the façade of justice. I have already said *the Lord's justice made me see the shadow side of my own justice.* What I mean is this: in the beginning I might have been justified in keeping myself away from Ella; but now I begin to suspect that my stance, continuing unchanged for so long, blessed neither me nor her—let alone her husband—with anything bordering on salvation. I remember the Tamil proverb: the king kills then and there, whereas God will bide and kill. But I never questioned myself as to whether my unrelenting attitude reflected God's forbearing and long-suffering in God's dealings with humans right from the beginning. Because of my unexamined life, a certain aversion had wormed its way into me and tainted my behaviour without my knowing. What is worse, as I sense it now, a spirit of vengeance was lurking in my heart.

**Theologian:** With this insight into your own heart you prove Jeremiah at once right and wrong. For it was he who said so pointedly: ‘The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse—who can understand it?’ (17:9) Can I serve you any further as a sounding-board for your self-discovery?

**Priest:** If only friends like you had helped me long before! Of course the death of Ella’s husband’s has induced me to deal with this long-standing burden—fortunately not alone, but in your company. Never before had I seriously paused to suspect if my heart had reasons that were hidden from my reason, or to doubt whether my thoughts about Ella’s situation reflected God’s. If only I had struggled with God, like Jacob or Job! I cannot but wonder, with regret, if all my prayer has been out of sync with reality!

**Theologian:** But the reality of God is never out of sync with ours. What is more, God creates new reality in ourselves! Never leaving us to our own devices, it is God who heals us when we find ourselves torn or struck down.\(^8\) So the Lord pursues us and knows to wait for the right time—the positive, hopeful aspect of his long-suffering—even if we have fled down the labyrinthine ways of the mind, with its own, all too human, postures and fears and self-defences.

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\(^7\) This is often attributed to the psychologist Alfred Adler, who famously refers to it. See Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, *Philosophical Writings*, translated by Steve Tester (New York: SUNY, 2012), 173: ‘Is it not peculiar that men are so glad to fight for religion and so reluctant to live according to its precepts?’

\(^8\) Hosea 6:1.
Priest: I feel like the bunch of scribes and Pharisees who were so quick to catch a woman in adultery but let the man escape, arraigning her alone before Jesus, all of them seething with zeal for the law about the adulteress, but not the adulterer and his adultery. Jesus saw that the time had come for the woman to be saved, more than she or her accusers thought; he made it known to her. And he let the accusing crowd see that their time for salvation would hardly come as long as they did not know their own sin. They did not know—how could they —what I myself have had to learn concretely only late in my life: that even if our conscience condemns us, God is greater than our conscience and knows everything!

Theologian: That is the way Jesus judges—judging to save and not to condemn, as he explicitly told the poor, victimized woman: just as his Father had purposed in sending him to the world (despite the primordial and proverbial shame of Adam and Eve that led them to judge and hide themselves); just as he went on working to redeem everyone from the condemnation of themselves and others (at the very end even excusing his executioners); just as the Spirit orders and restores from the beginning and continues age after age. All this remains so even while there is, often

9 1 John 3:20.
enough, little or no sign of progressive, incontrovertible transformation in the world!

**Priest:** And so, facing God’s peculiar way of judging, I came to be confronted with the Pharisaic streak in me—the streak that is so common among humans. In the light of the gospel I had to own up my own sins, some of them, shockingly enough, far from small. A Telugu proverb hits the nail on the head: you are a lord when you haven’t been caught; once caught, a robber! If I had been saved from, or only escaped, human judgment and rejection and ignominy—because my sins were not public knowledge—I came to realise, in the course of time, my true need for God’s salvation.

I felt a growing recognition that I needed salvation just as much as Ella, and even her husband, whom I almost loathed. If, on the basis of external righteousness and respectable morality, I once looked askance at them, I don’t dare do so any longer. Though I might have presumed to take the side of God against them in the past when I was not conscious of my sin, I am now wisely aware that *my legitimate place is not beside God but with the sinful souls in need of God’s succour.*

**Theologian:** What you are saying has the resonance of Paul; he speaks about the Jews and the pagans being in the same boat, in spite of the Jewish Christians boasting about their privilege as the chosen race, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, God’s own people. Paul wrote: ‘Do you imagine, whoever you are, that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God?’ (Romans 2:2) That is what has appeared so strongly and shockingly in recent times, as God has allowed the Church and the hidden sins of its priests and religious to be exposed to public scorn. In his last month in office, Pope Benedict considered it necessary to warn the Church against religious hypocrisy and rivalry.

**Priest:** It has come home to me, in my personal situation, that standing on the high moral ground when dealing with the moral failures of others is a sin in its own right, though it is considered respectable. If I need to mete out punishment to other errant souls I must be all the more subject to God’s demands on me, which could be far greater than mine on people such as Ella. God has rightly said in the era of the Hebrew covenant, ‘Vengeance is mine’ (Deuteronomy 32:35). There is always the temptation to play God and to be more jealous than God when dealing with others—a temptation to which friends of Job succumbed with all their apparent good will.
Theologian: Jonah, too, seemed to be intent on the just punishment of the whole of Nineveh. But God’s will was to convert the city and not to condemn it. Jesus revealed the same unfamiliar God as he went about his saving work. ‘He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smouldering wick until he brings justice to victory’ (Matthew 12:19–20): totally unlike Jonah!

Priest: The same kind of ungodly spirit could be found even in Jesus’ chosen disciples. Once two of them, James and John, wanted to call fire from heaven to fall on the Samaritans, who would not let Jesus pass through their land. His rebuke to them—‘You don’t know what kind of spirit you belong to’ (Luke 9:54)—resounded in my heart when I closed my heart to Ella and her family. The reason why Jesus came among humans was not to destroy but to save: ‘I came not to judge the world, but to save the world’ (John 12:47)!

Theologian: That leads us to a whole new perspective on our relationship with God, and also on our relationship with one another. Jesus came into our midst not to save some but to save all, you and me as much as Ella. All stand in need of redemption, without exception, as Abba God let the good Abraham know, undeceiving him through his plea for the ten innocent persons living in Sodom.10 God let Jeremiah know this too. And Jesus let his people know, leaving them in no uncertainty, when he disabused the Jews of their self-righteous uprightness, time and again.11 You know surely—don’t you?—this line from one of the Catholic Letters: ‘It is hard for the righteous to be saved’ (1 Peter 4:18)?

Priest: And so, we can save others in need, not in the supercilious way I adopted in relation to Ella, but if only, or to the extent that, we sense what it is to be saved ourselves, time and again. When we first experience true salvation, we begin to feel the greater need of continued salvation for ourselves! That is why Paul could say not only that ‘the saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners’, but also that he himself was the foremost of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). Without such an appreciation of the salvation brought by the Immanuel’s incarnation our concern for others’ spiritual welfare will

10 See Genesis 18:16–33.
be dubious; it will bear no resemblance to the way Jesus made salvation available and accessible to all without making any exception.

**Theologian:** The reality of incarnation has a very practical bearing on the matter we are sharing. God being holy, absolutely other than what women and men are, God has nothing in common with our human nature.\(^\text{12}\) And yet, God’s incarnation means that God leaves or sheds divine transcendence and assumes our flesh, and shares closeness with our nature so that God may redeem humanity, dwelling within humanity. God who is more inward than my inmost self (*intimior intimo meo*), as Augustine said,\(^\text{13}\) is equally inmost with regard to human society.

**Priest:** And so, in my desire to save people such as Ella, I ought to be far from being distant to them, indeed near, close, intimate to their situation. On the face of it, it is as spontaneously true as it is instinctively unacceptable and naturally repugnant.

**Theologian:** Yes, that is why Christianity, at least in its visible practice, is what it is—bereft of its salt and worthy of being stamped upon! But the reality of incarnation being what it is, we either accept it or not and cannot escape the challenge. Anyone who tries to escape it needs to be confronted.

**Priest:** I know; I can’t deny it philosophically or theologically. I wonder if I’ve subscribed to it psychologically, in my flesh and blood.

**Theologian:** But flesh and blood does not reveal this to us; it is the Abba Father in Heaven who, as he made it happen, will also make it come home to us.

**Priest:** Historically humans have exhibited, more than anything, a skill in building walls (the Berlin wall, the Israeli wall) and curtains (iron or bamboo) between themselves and among themselves. These are huge symbols of the unseen walls and curtains between siblings, in-laws, neighbours, clans, classes, castes and sub-castes (as in India), language groups, races (as in apartheid, overt or covert), religions, states, nations, and so on. I know now that I had built my own kind of wall between myself and Ella and her family, not unlike the Pharisees, whose very name meant ‘the separated’—separated from *hoi polloi* with the avowed purpose of keeping their cherished laws.

\(^{12}\) Isaiah 40: 6–8.

\(^{13}\) *Confessions* 3.6.11.
Jesus says nothing like this, but just the opposite: ‘I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth’ (Matthew 8:11–12). Following such new, universal teaching, made clear by continued revelation, the early Christians began welcoming, in fits and starts, all racial and social groups into their fold. In this respect, in spite of the good beginning, their history ran out of steam and ended up building new walls. The resulting tragedy of our Christian kinds of wall is that, though we call ourselves Christians, we have woefully missed and lost an essential aspect of redemption. But the original tradition grasped it, against all odds and not without struggle. As Paul famously put it, Christ made Jews and Gentiles one: ‘in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us’ (Ephesians 2:14).

Theologian: That was how God in Jesus did justice to all sinful humanity, divided in itself and distanced from God. God had prepared for such justice-making by leading prophets such as Isaiah to proclaim true faith, faith that knows how to do justice, the kind of faith that sees justice as a true religious practice: ‘Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?’ (Isaiah 58:5).

Priest: I found that message from Isaiah so uplifting when I first heard it. While honouring God, the worshippers of God had also to consider those around them, especially those in need and penury, unlike themselves. The commandments of God were not to serve only God’s glory but also the life of the people. St Irenaeus famously said, and we can tirelessly repeat, the glory of God is the living human person, the man and woman fully alive.14 So, as Isaiah makes its clear, those who seek to please God by their devotion should equally please their neighbours in their utter human need.

That can happen only when people associate with each other, deal with each other, face each other without any barrier. The ancient, yet still relevant, challenge of God is ‘not to hide yourself from your own kin’ (Isaiah 58:7). If this challenge once seemed pleasant, I found it hard in my relationship with Ella and her family. The cap fitted me but, squirming, I shirked wearing it. Until recently I failed this challenge, knowingly or unknowingly choosing to turn away from my own kin!

14 See Irenaeus, Adversus haereses, 4. 34. 5–7.
Theologian: No flesh and blood can teach us this spirit, much less train us in it, but the Spirit of the Father by the demonstration of the flesh of the Son who pitched his tent among us (John 1:14). Thus becoming all things to all people, and so being more intimate to humanity than itself (*interior intéimo humanitati*) by virtue of his solidarity with humanity, the Son of God not only said, ‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest’ (Matthew 11:28), but also, ‘anyone who comes to me I will never drive away’ (John 6:37). As he was, he would have us be. So he instructs us with injunctions such as: ‘Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you’ (Matthew 5:42).

Priest: The very last teaching of Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel concerns precisely this.\(^{15}\) His judgment of all people on the last day is based on the judgment that each has delivered on his or her neighbour. Entrance into heavenly fellowship with God and the angels and saints depends on entrance into earthly fellowship with one another, giving each his or her due. And so the practical law comes down to something like this: oblige your neighbours in their situation of need, not only any physical need but all human need.

Theologian: I appreciate the wonderful point you have made. I know that Ella and her family were not in any need of food or drink or clothing or shelter; but they had the far greater human need of acceptance. They

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15 See Matthew 25:31–46.
were strangers among their own kith and kin like you, wanting a sign of recognition, expecting a word of invitation, and waiting for a hopeful gesture towards the path of (mutual) forgiveness.

**Priest:** Normally I would have done all this for strangers. I did not do it for Ella and her family because—this is what I thought till now—they made themselves unacceptable strangers by their choice, by going their way, by showing no sign of turning back. I regret my long-held discrimination.

**Theologian:** What has changed your thinking now, and how? Have you had some new intuition into the un plumbed mystery of the incarnation, more known to us as an idea than a revelation of God.

**Priest:** God becoming man means, radically, that God turns towards those who have turned away from God. God in Jesus was indeed looking into the faces of men and women penetratingly, to befriend them, comfort them, eat with them, call them, chide them, confront them, reveal to them the Abba God, choose them for friendship and intimacy, and send them out to do work like his. By his works all that God incarnate wanted to achieve was to reach out to them in their need and make them look at him in his utter humanity. All through his life he stayed with them, not only at their best but no less at their worst. The worst of the worst started with the betrayal of him by Judas. He did not avoid Judas till Judas avoided him and then, till the end, he did not shun even his accusers and persecutors. Even on the cross he turned his gaze not only to his Abba and his lamenting sympathizers but also on those who were gloating over him, fixed to the cross.

**Theologian:** As I listen to you the poignancy of one of the earliest hymns moves me as never before. The emptying of Christ Jesus, his taking the form, not only of a man but of a slave, with no freedom except to serve God and humans generously and humbly—all this I see like a blind man gaining new sight, or a hardened criminal agonizing over the pangs of conversion.

**Priest:** Paul expressed this divine–human mystery in his typical ways. In the name of all Christians he said, for example, that God proves God’s love for us in that, while we still were sinners, Christ died for us. He also said, in his own name, that Christ loved him and gave himself for him.

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16 Philippians 2:6–8.
17 Romans 5:8.
18 Galatians 2:20.
Christ’s gift was not achieved from above in the company of angels but on earth, where he keeps company ‘among the poorest, lowliest, and lost’, and that face to face, and even cheek by jowl.\(^\text{19}\)

**Theologian**: Tagore’s song reminds me of another celebrated song, the ancient song of the servant of Yahweh,\(^\text{20}\) in its sombre tone. In his passion and death Christ had nothing attractive in his appearance; so victimized, in his suffering and ignominy, he became one from whom others would hide their faces.

**Priest**: In this way he bore the very appearance of sinners, all sinners, even the worst sinners—worse than all the onlookers—so much so that we accounted him stricken, struck down by God and afflicted. They say, or we used to say, that he suffered and died for us sinners to atone for our sins. But, in a way, God does not need any atonement, as God does not punish for the sake of the so-called demands of justice. It is rather humans with a taste for punishing others who clamour for justice and atonement. And so, Christ chose to meet the demands of human justice and punishment and atonement, before religious and political authority, by becoming an accused worse than a brigand and so deserving condemnation to death on the cross.

**Theologian**: This unravels the mystery of the sinner Christ, Christ identified with sin, as Paul shockingly formulated it: ‘For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin’ (2 Corinthians 5:21)! The mystery of God being more intimate to me than myself, more intimate to society than society itself, becomes deeper: God is so intimate to me as a sinner, and to a society full of sin. Christ not only had the appearance of a human being, but of a human being caught out committing sin, in a society where everyone was ready to condemn others, especially others who were different from themselves. We have a prophetic illustration of this mystery of Christ in the Wisdom of Solomon, in the way the ungodly crowd treats the exceptional, righteous person, testing him and torturing him to death.\(^\text{21}\)

**Priest**: Yes, we all turned our own way and Christ followed us; not that he sinned against God or humanity, but he let himself be taken for a blasphemer, troublemaker, wrongdoer, criminal, to the extent that not

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\(^{20}\) Isaiah 53.

\(^{21}\) Wisdom 2: 10–20.
only human beings but apparently also God took him to be so, which made him cry out to God, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ (Mark 15:34) In the forsakenness of sin he was most one with humanity, with the humanity of sinners who had all gone astray.

**Theologian:** I see what you are driving at.

**Priest:** Seeing Jesus, who was not a sinner, forsaken as a sinner, convicted and crucified, I experience an uncomfortable revelation. Jesus’ purpose was not to abandon any sinner, but to save all sinners and help them to abandon their sin. I have been at variance with his purpose; and I have been so unlike him. Though not above sinfulness myself, I had forsaken those whom I saw as sinners worse than myself, for more than half my life!

**Theologian:** In our sort of religiousness we have played many roles: we have been like Judas, betraying innocent blood for greed of some kind or other; or like the religious leaders in the Gospels, not stopping short of any evil in order to achieve their survival; or like Herod, using others only to satisfy our base instincts; or like Pilate, knowing what is right but failing to do it for fear of losing face. Of course, unlike any of these, our roles may, and do, bear our own signature.

**Priest:** Like mine. I only wish that, as I have taken the role of evil ones while playing the good, I could now retract what I have done and take my place beside the Good One to save those who are lost, myself first. He was the repairer of the breach between God and humanity, and I know he needs and seeks companions:

> To love life and men as God loves them—  
> for the sake of their infinite possibilities,  
> to wait like Him,  
> to judge like Him,  
> without passing judgment,  
> to obey the order when it is given and never look back—  
> then He can use you—then, perhaps, He will use you.\(^{22}\)

**Yaaro Lesjay** is a priest from India.

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Away in the loveable west,
On a pastoral forehead of Wales,
I was under a roof here, I was at rest

Gerard Manley Hopkins, Jesuit poet

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PERSONAL RESURRECTION
INTO THE MYSTICAL
BODY OF CHRIST

Joseph A. Bracken

IN HIS BOOK A Theology for the Social Gospel, Walter Rauschenbusch claimed that the traditional focus of Christianity in Western civilisation has been on the need of the individual human being to be redeemed from the effects of sin in and through the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus as the incarnate Word of God. Much more attention, however, needed to be directed towards the strictly social implications of the message of Jesus. For, in his preaching, Jesus addressed the ongoing need for the reform of the sinful structures of society as well as his listeners’ need for redemption from their personal sins. Likewise, Gustavo Gutiérrez, in A Theology of Liberation, emphasized the implications of the message of Jesus for the poor and oppressed of Latin America in their continuing struggle for liberation from unjust economic, political and social structures. Yet, despite the broad influence of these different forms of reform-minded theology within Protestant and Roman Catholic circles, and despite the socially orientated focus of Gaudium et spes and other Vatican II documents, the average contemporary Christian still seems likely to be more focused on his or her personal salvation than on anything else.

For example, many Christians believe that at the time of the last judgment they will possess a transformed version of the physical body that they had during their earthly lives. Relatively little attention is thereby given to the companion notion of resurrection of the body as full incorporation into the mystical body of Christ at the end of their lives and,

above all, at the end of the world. Admittedly, in the post-resurrection gospel narratives, Jesus appears to his astonished disciples looking and acting very much as he did during his earthly life. He unexpectedly appears and disappears in a way that indicates that he is living a different kind of life from the one he lived before his passion and death. But bodily continuity rather than discontinuity still seems to be characteristic of Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances to the disciples. Hence, should not Christians also expect to live a bodily life after death much like the one we enjoy here and now, but free of the pain and suffering that is inevitably part of earthly life? But, if that be the case, what will our relations to others be within the risen life?

In the epistles of St Paul there exists persistent ambiguity about the conditions of life after death, both for Christ and for Christians. In 1 Corinthians 15:35–49, for example, Paul does not elaborate on the difference between the corruptible natural body and the incorruptible spiritual body of those who have been raised with Christ to a new life. Yet in Colossians 1:18 Paul describes Christ as ‘head of the body, the church’ and in Ephesians 1:23 the Church itself is described as ‘the fullness of him who fills all in all’. Thus the Church as the mystical body of Christ is somehow identical with the whole of a transformed creation, and Christians who belong to the Church as members of the mystical body of Christ are active participants in a transformed cosmic reality. Perhaps the difficulty in sorting out what is said both in the gospel narratives and in the writings of St Paul about Christ’s resurrection and life after death for Christians is to be found in an ambiguity about what is meant by the term *body*. Is it primarily an individual reality (a physical organism) and secondarily a collective reality (a community or other organized group of individuals), or is the reverse the case, or is it finally both an individual and a collective reality?

**Rethinking the Notion of Body**

By way of preliminary definition, I propose that a body, whether it be the body of an individual entity or the socially organized ‘body’ of a human community or physical environment, is an organic unity of interrelated parts or members. By organic unity, I mean a unity that is relatively stable and yet capable of change or evolution over time, given changes in its constituent parts or members or changes in the external environment.

For example, genes are molecules that convey genetic information to a cell or mini-organism. Evelyn Fox Keller, in her book *The Century of the*
Gene, notes that in the early years of the twentieth century, genes were conceived of as being like atoms in the physical sciences: inanimate and unchanging entities. But further investigation by molecular biologists revealed that genes evolve in their pattern of individual self-organization over time; they undergo ‘mutations’ in their normal mode of operation. Mutations, in turn, give rise to evolutionary growth within organisms with the Darwinian principle of natural selection working to weed out unfavourable mutations and preserve favourable ones within a given organism. So genes are themselves more like mini-organisms with a developmental mode of operation than mini-things with a relatively fixed mode of operation.

Moreover even atoms turn out to be dynamic unities of subatomic components. Is a subatomic particle a mini-thing or a momentary energy-event with different characteristics depending upon external circumstances? Did atoms originate strictly by chance in the early stages of cosmic evolution, or was there some innate principle of self-organization within each atom so that in its self-constitution it became different from other

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3 Evelyn Fox Keller, *The Century of the Gene* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard UP, 2000), 38: ‘The notion that mechanisms for evolvability could themselves have evolved is a serious provocation for neo-Darwinian theory, for it carries the heretical implication that organisms provide not just the passive substrate of evolution but their own motors of change; it suggests that they have become equipped with a kind of agency in their own evolution. It also strongly implies the operation of selection on levels higher than the gene, and higher even than the individual organism.’
atoms? These are still unresolved questions within contemporary physics. But the fact that they remain unresolved allows us to surmise from a philosophical perspective that what appears to be the case within physical reality may in fact not be the case.

The world in which we human beings live is, contrary to common-sense experience, largely constituted by dynamically interrelated processes rather than by determinate individual things. Admittedly, from moment to moment, we perceive things with stable patterns of existence and activity. But upon further reflection we realise that what we perceive here and now is only the latest moment in an ongoing process that continues to evolve, so to speak, behind the scenes. Every living thing has a definite lifespan in which it initially grows and then, over time, declines in energy levels until it dies. Even composite inanimate things, both natural and man-made, have a limited time-span or duration; in time they wear out and fall apart.

What, then, is the difference between individual and socially organized bodies? I tentatively propose that individual bodies and socially constituted ones are alike in so far as both are time-bound processes or systems of dynamically interrelated parts or members. At the same time, individual and social bodies are different from one another in the way that they are said to relate to one another. That is, within the classical Aristotelian–Thomistic world-view, every entity, however large or small, has its proper place within the pre-established hierarchical order of being. There are strict divisions between non-life, life and rational life. But within a process- or systems-orientated world-view (in which Becoming has ontological priority over Being), less complex lower-order processes exist not for themselves but for eventual inclusion into more complex higher-order processes within the natural order. There are, for example, many sub-processes or subsystems constantly at work within the human body (for example the circulatory system of the blood, the cardiovascular system, the nervous system, the pulmonary system, and so on). But they do not function for their own sake (even though each has its own distinctive mode of operation), but for the sake of the overall life-process proper to a human being.

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4 My reference here is to the philosophical cosmology of Alfred North Whitehead. Convinced that the Aristotelian–Thomistic metaphysics of Being no longer applied to the presuppositions and methodology of modern natural science, Whitehead conceived a metaphysics of Becoming in which the elemental units of reality are mini-organisms (rather than inert bits of matter) that spontaneously organize into hierarchically ordered processes and systems ranging from atoms and molecules to communities and physical environments.
And a human being, in turn, finds himself or herself necessarily involved with other socially constituted bodies simply to survive and prosper in this world. As the poet John Donne wrote: ‘No man is an Iland, intire of itselue .... Any Mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinke; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.’ But beyond being a member of the human community, each human being is also participant in the more comprehensive process or system proper to this earth as a systematically organized unity of interrelated parts or members. With our increasing ecological awareness of our interdependence with other creatures within the cosmic process, we find ourselves ever more forcefully reminded that we are only a single component, albeit an important component, in a vast network of dynamically interrelated sub-processes or subsystems that sustain the world in which we live.

Within this process- or systems-orientated understanding of physical reality, personal resurrection as resurrection into the socially organized reality of the mystical body of Christ makes perfect sense. This is not to deny, of course, that through incorporation into the mystical body of Christ a human being likewise achieves a new individual identity as a transformed human being, but only to deny that personal self-fulfilment is the ultimate goal of incorporation into the mystical body of Christ. An attitude of practical self-denial rather than theoretical self-fulfilment would seem to be the necessary prerequisite for full membership in that higher-order socially constituted psycho-physical reality.

A Systems-Orientated Approach to the God–World Relationship

In Genesis, God is pictured as a transcendent individual entity creating individual human beings—Adam and Eve—‘in our image, according to our likeness’ (1:26). Yet Ephesians 1 and Colossians 1, as already noted, seem to envision a more socially orientated God–world relationship. That is, Jesus as the Risen Lord is the head of the Church, understood not simply as a limited institutional reality but as a symbol for creation as a whole, equivalently the corporate image of God.

Colin Gunton, in his book The One, the Three and the Many, reflects this line of thought when he claims that the doctrine of the Trinity, with

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its emphasis on the ongoing *perichoretic* relations of the three divine persons within the divine life, is the much-needed key to a more sensible understanding of relations between human beings in our contemporary, highly individualistic, secular culture.⁶ Western civilisation seems to be overly focused on the protection of individual rights at the expense of any strong sense of the common good:

> The modern individualistic concept of freedom tends to separate the person from other people, rather than simply distinguishing them from each other in relation. That is to say, it is essentially and irremediably non-relational.⁷

Gunton explains his understanding of *perichoresis*:

> In its origins, the concept was a way of showing the ontological interdependence and reciprocity of the three persons of the Trinity: how they were only what they were by virtue of their interrelation and interanimation, so that for God to be did not involve an absolute simplicity but a unity deriving from a dynamic plurality of persons.⁸

Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa theologiae* similarly described the divine persons as ‘subsistent relations’ vis-à-vis one another:

> Relation in God is not as an accident in a subject, but is the divine essence itself; and so it is subsistent, for the divine essence subsists …. Therefore a divine person signifies a relation as subsisting.⁹

I should like to argue that the three divine persons are one God in so far as they co-constitute a *divine life-system*: the divine persons, in virtue of their subsistent relations to one another, co-constitute their corporate reality as ‘a never-ending communitarian process or system’.¹⁰

Furthermore, in line with the contemporary understanding of *panentheism* (the idea that all things exist in God but remain distinct from God in their own specific mode of operation), I propose that the divine persons, in their perichoretic relations to one another, provide what

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⁷ Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many*, 64.

⁸ Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many*, 152.

⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 29, art. 4.

physicists describe as the primordial energy-field within which the Big Bang took place and the world of creation originally came into existence. Hence, the world of creation is a vast, but still finite, sub-process or subsystem within the primordial divine life-system proper to the divine persons. The overarching God–world relationship is thus a socially constituted reality with the divine life-system as the origin and final goal of a hierarchically ordered evolutionary process constituting the world in which we human beings live.

**The Two Natures of Christ**

As I have explained at greater length in a recently published book, the doctrine of the incarnation is the key to understanding this process-orientated Trinitarian God–world relationship, as well as belief in the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday and in our own eventual resurrection.\(^{11}\) I begin my defence of this threefold proposal by citing the text of the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451:

> We confess one and the same Christ, the Son, the Lord, the Only-Begotten, in two natures unconfused, unchangeable, undivided and inseparable. The differences of nature will never be abolished by their being united, but rather the properties of each remain unimpaired, both coming together in one person and substance, not parted or divided among two persons, but in one and the same only-begotten Son, the divine Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.\(^{12}\)

The workings of Jesus’ human nature are not absorbed into the divine nature that he shares with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Nor, vice versa, are the workings of his divine nature eclipsed by his mode of operation as a human being. Jesus is ‘one person and substance, not parted or divided among two persons’.

Yet how such a juncture of the divine and the human in the life of Jesus is rationally possible is not readily explained in the categories of Aristotelian–Thomistic metaphysics. For, if the ‘nature’ of an individual entity is its substantial form and if the entity can have only one substantial form,\(^{13}\) then the claim that Jesus has two natures, one divine and one human, with each operative independently of the other, seems

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\(^{13}\) Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 76, art. 4. See also John Goyette, ‘St Thomas on the Unity of Substantial Form’, *Nova et Vetera* (English edn), 7/4 (2009), 781–790.
impossible to justify. The doctrine of the incarnation, however, makes quite good sense within a systems-orientated understanding of reality such as I have sketched above. Jesus is only one person, who exercises existence and activity simultaneously within two distinct but dynamically interrelated life-systems, the one proper to his life with the Father and the Son within the divine life-system, and the other proper to the human life-system that he shares with all other human beings. So everything that he does is the conjoint effect of the workings of his divinity and humanity at the same time.

Yet, in their concrete working together from moment to moment, sometimes the divinity is more manifest in what Jesus says and does than his humanity, and at other times the humanity is more apparent than his divinity. For example, during his earthly life the humanity of Jesus was more in evidence than his divinity. Like every other human being, he regularly felt hungry and tired, encouraged or discouraged by what was happening around him. Likewise, in his final days on earth he experienced great physical pain, considerable anxiety and eventually an agonizing death.

In his resurrection and periodic appearances to his disciples on Easter Sunday and afterwards, however, Jesus’ divinity was more in evidence than his humanity. For example, when Jesus appeared to his disciples on Easter Sunday, they did not immediately recognise him. He was a total stranger until something that he said or did made them realise who he was. One thinks of his appearance to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11–18), his appearance to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 23:13–35), the appearance to the seven disciples at the Sea of Tiberias (John 21:1–14) and Jesus’ commissioning of the disciples before his ascension (Matthew 28:16–17).

Christians down through the centuries have likewise faced the issue of the mysterious co-working of the divinity and humanity of Jesus in their communal celebration of the Eucharist. Without it, how can one reasonably believe that bread and wine can truly become the Body and Blood of the Risen Lord? And given that the Eucharist is celebrated at various times and places every day around the world, how can Jesus in his humanity be present in the consecrated bread and wine in each eucharistic celebration except in virtue of his divinity that transcends the limitations of space and time in its mode of operation in this world?

Not just the eucharistic ritual, of course, but all the sacraments of the Church reflect the mysterious co-working of the divine and the human,
first in Jesus and then in the lives of individual Christians. For example, readily available oil and water are used in the sacrament of baptism to symbolize incorporation into the spiritual reality of the mystical body of Christ. Likewise, one receives the forgiveness of sins through a fellow human being who, as an *alter Christus*, incarnates the enduring love of God for oneself at just this point in space and time.

**The Descent into Hell**

The risen Jesus appeared to his disciples on Easter Sunday, no longer simply as the person he was before his passion and death on the cross but as the Cosmic Christ, the Lord of the universe. The very fact that his appearances to the disciples were difficult to describe in common-sense terms is an indication that his divinity had assumed an ascendancy over his humanity from the first moment of his risen life onwards. Moreover, between the time of his death and his appearance to the disciples, a dramatic event had taken place. In the words of the Apostles’ Creed, ‘he descended into hell’. As I see it, this descent was necessary for him to take on the role of the Cosmic Christ.
Karl Rahner imaginatively described the experience of Jesus as descending into hell on Holy Saturday thus:

He descended into this state of death. He endured the nadir of human existence, the ultimate fall into immeasurable depths to which it is subject. And because he submitted to this fate, yielding himself into the hands of his Father, his entry into this eternal love was initially experienced by him as a collapse into the darkness and anonymity of death, into the real and genuine state of being dead.\[^{14}\]

Elsewhere, in a book entitled *On the Theology of Death*, Rahner explored the significance of this traumatic event of first dying and then descending into hell as the ground of being for creation as a whole. Thereby Christ became the innermost centre of creation and was intimately linked both with all human beings and with the rest of the world of creation.\[^{15}\]

I myself argue that in order fully to incorporate his own and our humanity into his divinity, Jesus had first to experience death like everyone else, namely, as the moment when one faces the inevitable incompleteness or finitude of human life so as to accept it for what it is and thereby transcend it through accepting the gift of eternal life offered by the three divine persons. But Jesus, in his descent into hell, also had the further task of experiencing at first hand the finitude and incompleteness of the cosmic process as a whole so as to transcend it by incorporating the world of creation into his divinity and the life of the Trinity.

Thereby Jesus was able to offer the gift of eternal life not just to human beings but to all the creatures of this world in accordance with their finite capacity to accept it. In any event, on Easter Sunday morning, in his appearances to his disciples, Jesus was not simply a miraculously transformed human being who was fully recovered from his harrowing torture and death on Good Friday, but the Lord of Creation, the head of the mystical body: that is, not just the institutional Church, nor even Christianity as a world religion, but the whole of creation in so far as it actively participates with Jesus as the Incarnate Word in the fullness of the divine life.


Resurrection into the Mystical Body

Accordingly, human beings are likewise resurrected, not so much as
miraculously transformed individuals, although that too will be the case,
but as self-giving participants in the mystical body of Christ that embraces
in the first place all of humanity but likewise the whole of creation.
Like Jesus the ‘pioneer and perfecter of our faith’ (Hebrews 12:2), human
beings will no longer be constrained by the limitations of life in a physical
body, with its needs for food, clothing, sleep and relaxation, even though
they will still be recognisable to one another as the individuals that they
were in their earthly lives. Their primary reality, however, will be to co-exist
with Jesus in a vastly larger corporate reality embracing the whole of
creation. The inevitable price of incorporation into this higher-order social
reality, of course, will be a reordering of one’s sense of personal identity,
away from preoccupation with the self and its individual needs and desires,
and towards the common good of life together in a cosmic community.

Perhaps this will be too high a price to pay for some individuals as
they face the challenge of a dramatic shift of values upon their initial
entry into eternal life. If this should turn out to be the case, it may be
possible for these benighted persons to live apart from those who have
accepted the gift of eternal life and are happily living in communion with
the risen Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit. They may find themselves
forming a ‘counter-community’, a mixed group of people, all of whom are
totally absorbed in taking care of their own perceived needs and desires,
and who find life with one another a curse rather than a blessing. One
thinks immediately of Jean Paul Sartre’s sardonic comment: ‘Hell is other
people’. Yet one can also conjecture that, in due time, many, perhaps all,
of the inhabitants of this counter-community would see the error of their
ways, recognise the limitations of life divorced from any positive affective
contact with other people, and convert to the attitude of self-giving love
that is requisite for participation in eternal life as a constituent member
of the mystical body of Christ.

I began by referring to the writings of Walter Rauschenbusch and
Gustavo Gutiérrez, both of whom urge increased attention to the economic,
political and social implications of the gospel message. Yet I also noted
that the focus of many—if not most—Christians, both clerical and lay,

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16 See Jean Paul Sartre, No Exit, a play first performed in 1944 at the Théâtre du Vieux-Columbier in
Paris. The three performers find themselves in Hell but, to their surprise, encounter not physical torture
by devils but mental torment in their painful dealings with one another.
still seems to be located in a much more individualistic approach to Christian life, in which one’s primary task is to do what is right and, at the moment of death, to attain eternal salvation. There is nothing intrinsically reproachable in this attitude towards life but, as Rauschenbusch and Gutiérrez argue in their different ways, it prescinds from the full reality of one’s responsibility to others, especially to those who are in need of help.

Hence, I have tried here to rethink belief in the resurrection of the body in a more explicitly social context, first proposing that the term body itself should be understood in a process-orientated way. The human body and all individual physical bodies are not fixed individual things but ongoing dynamic unities of interrelated components that are themselves interactive sub-processes within the life-system proper to a given entity. Collective bodies are also dynamic unities of interrelated components, but these components are individual entities or self-sustaining processes in their own right. Seen in this light, the mystical body of Christ is a transcendent socially organized reality that includes not only all human beings but all the creatures of this world.

Jesus is the head of the mystical body or the Lord of creation. But to achieve that new ontological status, Jesus not only experienced concretely the finitude or incompleteness of human life in his passion and death on the cross but also, in his descent into hell on Holy Saturday, the finitude and incompleteness of the cosmic process as a whole apart from reference to God as Creator of the universe. Only in virtue of this double insight into the finitude of human and creaturely existence was Jesus, in his humanity, ultimately free from his own needs and desires, and ready wholeheartedly to embrace participation in the higher-order existence and activity of the divine life-system that was his by reason of his divinity as one of the three divine persons. This was not an easy task for Jesus. One senses the intensity of his humanly self-denying decision in Luke’s
account of the agony in the garden when he prays: ‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done’ (Luke 22:42).

In similar fashion I argued that the doctrine of the resurrection of the body for individual Christians should be better understood as full participation in the mystical body of Christ rather than as a personal accomplishment upon entrance into eternal life. This is not to deny that one will also experience eternal life in a transformed human condition, free from all the constraints of bodily life in this world. But the focus of attention, one’s raison d’être for survival after the cessation of earthly life, is to understand and appreciate first what one contributed to human life while in this world, and then what one will continue to contribute in one’s risen life to the growth and ongoing prosperity of an enduring socially orientated reality much bigger than oneself as an individual.

Will this dramatic rethinking of the meaning and value of Christian belief in the resurrection of the body and eternal life lead to any significant changes in the thinking and behaviour of ordinary Christians in the individualistic culture of contemporary Western society? That remains to be seen. But, on the assumption that what one sees as one’s ultimate goal in life normally has a significant effect on how one deals with reality from day to day, it seems to be an enterprise worth undertaking. In any case, Gaudium et spes and papal encyclicals both before and after Vatican II make clear that each of us as a faithful Christian, and all of us together as members of the mystical body of Christ, are called to live lives of service to others, ‘just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many’ (Matthew 20:28).

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ON FOOT WITH IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA
My Experience of the Camino Ignaciano

Oscar Momanyi

An old Spanish royal road—el Camino Real—connects the 21 Franciscan missions in California, stretching from San Diego de Alcalá in the south to San Francisco Solano in the north. But el Camino Real, ‘the royal way’, can also be translated into English as ‘the real way’. After going through the experience of walking the Camino Ignaciano in Spain in the summer of 2015, I felt invited to live out the fruits of that pilgrimage in real life. This way has become for me a symbol of the pilgrimage I continue to walk in my daily life: on the Camino Ignaciano, I was invited by God to walk along el camino real.

I often hear people say after an experience such as a pilgrimage to holy sites that, when they come back home, life continues as usual, remains the same as before they embarked on the journey. But I tend to believe that, even though the feeling of sameness may be there, God continues to work in the hearts of pilgrims as they live their daily lives after the spiritual experiences of pilgrimage. When they come back to real life, God continues to work in them on el camino real, calling them to a continued conversion. The pilgrimage continues in the depths of their hearts, consciously (in reliving memories and graces received) or unconsciously. Only God can say what new spirit is gradually forming.

The first question that came into my mind as I embarked on the Camino Ignaciano was: what is the point of going on pilgrimage? My main reason for going was to gain what St Ignatius of Loyola calls ‘spiritual capital’, which would enable me to grow in the love of God. With this spiritual capital, I would be able to be of service to other people. I found the Camino to be a way of emptying myself to be available to others. It was a healing walk that would enable me to be free to serve.

1 See Constitutions, Formula of the Institute [4].
I brought to the Camino some issues in my life about which I wanted to talk to God and others as I walked. I felt supported and heard by God and my fellow pilgrims as we journeyed together. I felt empowered and loved just the way I am: an imperfect human being yet called to be a Christian. At the end of the Camino, I felt a sense of healing and of God's love pervading my consciousness. The Camino was not just a touristic adventure, but an outward journey leading to an inner transformation that continues throughout my life. Spiritual transformation was taking place slowly, sometimes in undiscernible ways, in my heart and the hearts of the other pilgrims. As I walked in the Spanish summer heat, I was continually reminded to trust that God was the one working in me even when I did not feel God's presence.

The Camino deepened my love for St Ignatius, because of the firsthand experiences that it brought of places where the saint lived his life; as I walked in Loyola, Montserrat and Manresa, I felt permeated by the spirit of St Ignatius. At the end of the pilgrimage, I had a deep desire for intimacy with God like the desire that St Ignatius experienced as he walked the same way centuries before. I learnt many things about myself, St Ignatius and God as I walked. I felt that God always walks with me in the company of my fellow Christian pilgrims. The Christian journey, just like the pilgrimage, is not easy; there are ups and downs, but what is important is to keep going.

The pilgrimage also made me grow closer to Our Lady. We visited many chapels of Our Lady and saw many portraits and statues of her along the way. She was a constant companion to us, helping to increase my devotion and love for the mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I felt her protection and guidance as we walked. We prayed the rosary and sang Marian hymns on several occasions.

The pilgrimage helped me to deepen my trust in God's providence. Each morning we would wake up not knowing what we were going to find ahead of us, but we were always hopeful that we were moving closer to God as we went along the way. The orange arrows and the green plaques were our guide. The arrows pointed towards where we were to go, and we trusted that they would lead us in the right direction. These arrows symbolized for me the people in my life who have journeyed with me, helping me to discover God's will for me. Our guide, Fr José Lluís Iriberri, was such a person. His availability to his mission as a guide to the pilgrims, his love and kindness to us pointed us to God. Reflecting on that experience, I too felt challenged to be an arrow that points others
in the right direction: towards what God wants them to be. I gave thanks to God for sending into my life people who, by their lives of faith, have helped me to follow the Christian path.

During the pilgrimage there were times when we missed the arrows and were lost for a while. In such situations, Fr Iriberri would follow individuals or groups who had lost their way and bring them back on track. This, too, was a powerful image of our Christian life. Sometimes we can lose sight of our Christian way, but God still seeks us out and turns us back to the right direction. As I reflect on this, I am reminded of the parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15, where the shepherd leaves the rest of the flock and goes out of his way to look for a lost sheep and bring it back.

The frugal life that we led throughout the pilgrimage also led me to value God's providence and feel solidarity with the poor. In the hostels where we stayed along the Camino Ignaciano, we had to share what minimal amenities were available. The experience brought to my attention how individualistic I had become. The need to share the things that I have received from God was an invitation as I walked the Camino. Solidarity with the poor and sharing what I have were lessons that I learnt as I walked. It is not always necessary to give something big to the poor, sometimes our presence with them is what God desires rather than material goods.

The experience of praying together each morning and evening during the Mass was significant. Each morning we walked for two hours in silence, meditating on a theme from the Spiritual Exercises that was suggested to us earlier in the day. In that silence, I felt deeply united with God and my fellow pilgrims as we went along. One evening, we decided to walk in silence each praying the Examination of Consciousness. As I walked alongside a fellow pilgrim, I felt the presence of Jesus in my companion, and I reflected on Jesus’ walk to Emmaus with the disciples in Luke 24:13–35. Sometimes it is difficult to recognise Jesus’ presence in our ordinary life experiences until our eyes are opened by reflection and prayer. I felt called to deeper intimacy with Jesus through prayer as I walked. Jesus always walks with us, even in difficult times when we do not sense his presence.

There was a good community atmosphere among the pilgrims. Although we were from different cultural backgrounds, people took care of one another and reached out to those in the group who needed support. We were indeed ‘friends in the Lord’, as the first Jesuit companions called themselves. The Christian journey is a journey of friendship; you make as many friends as you can along the way. Although there were different attitudes among the people in our pilgrimage group, which could
easily have divided us, there was still a sense of understanding and forging ahead with a common mission as Christians. I imagine walking as a lone pilgrim would have been much more difficult. We all need a community to flourish; it is a milieu in which we find joy and fulfilment. I experienced God’s love and care for me in the context of my pilgrimage community, and that community taught me how to be available and caring for others, too.

The diversity of cultural perspectives in our pilgrimage group helped me to appreciate our humanity. Our group was composed of pilgrims from Spain, Vietnam, the Philippines, Mexico, Kenya and the United States of America. We were all brought together as children of God in a common journey. In spite of the diversity in the world, all humans are created in the image of God. Our dignity is bestowed on us by God, and that is why we are all in the Christian journey together. We are all God’s people whatever our race or gender. This does not mean that our diversity is to be forgotten; we celebrated one another’s cultural perspectives as we shared the stories of our lives on the way.

Hospitality to one another, despite being different, was a hallmark of our pilgrimage, and this helped me to discern how to be hospitable to others, especially strangers and the poor. Our *hospitaleros* at the hostels where we lodged taught me first-hand how to care for others even if I do not know them. The word *hospitalero*, which describes any hospitable person or anyone entrusted with caring for another, captivated me because it implies *cura personalis*, the personal care for each individual with whom we come into contact. During the pilgrimage I felt that God was calling me to be a true *hospitalero* to the people I meet along my pilgrim journey.
Eating together was another powerful symbol during the Camino. I remember one day we had walked for many kilometres without finding any shade where we could rest and eat. Then all of a sudden we stumbled upon a little animal shed at a farm. That shed became a blessing to us. We just went in and started eating our lunch there without thinking about how dirty the place looked. What was important for us was that we were united in God and that we were all moving in the same direction. Eating together made us bond together in love. As the pilgrimage continued, I realised that we grew more and more at home with each other, especially during mealtimes. The Eucharist was another ‘eating moment’ that brought us together in a profound way. There are several African proverbs that emphasize the importance of eating together as a way of building communion. For example, there is one which says, ‘those who eat together never eat one another’.

The pilgrimage also involved some suffering: we were walking in high temperatures, over long distances to which I was not accustomed; we had blisters, and aches and pains; and some of our luggage was stolen. Most of the walking we did on the Camino was through desert-like environments, which reminded me of the desert where Jesus was tempted in Mathew 4:1–11. This desert experience was necessary for my slow conversion to being the person God wants me to become. It was an experience of struggle for my soul, out of which a new identity would emerge, through the grace of God. The Camino reminded me that when I am tempted to give up on my Christian pilgrimage I should not give in, but keep going along the path towards God.

The misery and pain of walking in the desert reminded me that I am only human, and that suffering is part of my human life. It helped me to identify with Jesus’ suffering. My attitude towards suffering changed during the Camino. I had a sense that, even as I underwent pain, I was still feeling united with Jesus and the other companions with whom I walked. I do not suffer alone; I suffer with others. I felt pain, but also had a deep sense of joy. I was undergoing a kind of purification, which was to make me a better person in life. It was an invitation to go into the desert, away from everyday comforts, where I could encounter God in a radical way. Suffering is not necessarily a negative thing: good things can come out of it. After death, there is always hope for resurrection. The wounds that I had sustained during my whole life up to the time I went

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on pilgrimage were continually healed as I walked in the presence of others and with God. I felt called to be a ‘wounded healer’, an instrument of reconciliation and service to those in need. As Christians, we are all wounded in one way or another, but by walking together and supporting one another on the way we help to heal one another’s wounds.

The theme of suffering remained with me as I contemplated the passion façade of the Sagrada Família basilica in Barcelona, with its gruesome images of Jesus’ passion, I felt united with Jesus as he suffered on the cross. This reminded me the third week of the Spiritual Exercises, when the retreatant contemplates the passion of Christ by asking for ‘sorrow with Christ in sorrow; a broken spirit with Christ so broken; tears; and interior suffering because of the great suffering which Christ endured for me’ (Exx 203). As I remembered the difficult paths of the Camino, I could see how God continued to give me hope and strength to continue, in same way God does in my Christian life.

Two incidents that illustrate Christian charity have remained with me in a profound way. As we were on our way from Montserrat to Manresa, in very high temperatures, one pilgrim could not cope with the difficult hike. His companion offered to carry him. That was for me an image of how God helps us along the Christian way as we undergo trials and...
temptations. At another point in the journey, some of the pilgrims had lagged behind for a long time. The group ahead wondered what was going on, but they kept waiting. Two of them volunteered to run back and check what was happening to the others. They offered to help them carry their luggage, to lighten the burdens of those weary pilgrims. God cares for us in the same way, carrying for us the heavy luggage that we bear, so that we can walk easily: ‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest’ (Matthew 11:28). The generosity of the pilgrims towards others who were suffering was a challenge to me. I kept asking myself: how do I care for those who need my help? Do I go out of my way to help those in need? These are questions on which I will continue to reflect in my Christian life.

The pilgrimage taught me about caring for the environment as well as for other people. The high temperatures that we experienced as we walked were partly the result of global warming caused by human activities. The summer of 2015 was one of the hottest on record in Spain. Water was another environmental issue of which I became increasingly conscious as I walked the Camino; my appreciation for its value reached a new level as I had constantly to carry enough water to get us through the day. I had previously taken for granted how lucky I was to have water at my disposal all the time. As I walked with a limited supply, I felt a new solidarity with the people who live their whole lives without enough water. I felt challenged to be a steward of the environmental resources that God has bestowed on us, as Pope Francis encourages all people of good will to be in his encyclical *Laudato sì*. The environment is a gift from God that needs human protection in order to support human life. Everything that God created on earth is good (1 Timothy 4:4) and, as God’s children, it is our duty to preserve that goodness. I felt that the preservation of the environment begins with me. Through my own example of good environmental practices I may be able to influence others to do the same. The heat and thirst were a personal call from God.

As we walked along the Way of St Ignatius, we continually met yellow arrows pointing towards Santiago de Compostela while the orange arrows that we were following were pointing towards Manresa. The arrows became for me images of the saints: St James the Apostle and St Ignatius of Loyola. Saints point us to God, but in different ways. They lived their

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vocations in different places and times. They took different paths towards God but, in the end, they were united with God. Even when there are manifold vocations, all Christians are pointed in the same direction—towards God. The ways that we take on our different vocational paths does not matter as long as we are all on our way to God. This led me to reflect on the relationship between the laity and the clergy in the Church. The temptation of clericalism and the abuse of power, to the detriment of the Church, are real. I prayed that I might continue to appreciate the role of the laity in the Church and avoid the temptations of clericalism, since lay and clerical vocations are two sides of the same coin. Both clerics and the laity belong to one people of God, who called them to their corresponding vocational paths.

As we walked on pilgrimage, we came across many churches with diverse architectural styles and devotional works of art. Their Baroque, Romanesque, Gothic and Modernist artistic representations were all symbols through which God communicates to finite human minds God’s presence and love for us. Art became a means by which our hearts were stirred and lifted up towards God, whose beauty surpasses all that human beings can conceive. Our pilgrimage taught us about Spanish and wider European history and culture as well as bearing spiritual fruit.

Three months after completing the Camino Ignaciano, some of us came together to share how God had continued to walk with us in our daily lives, in el camino real. I was filled with joy and awe at how God continued to be present in the lives of my fellow pilgrims. We were continuing to walk together in our different vocations, but with the same vision: looking towards God. We were still in solidarity with one another even though months had passed since our pilgrimage. Our companionship on the road, guided by St Ignatius and Christ, continues throughout our lives. As I sat there listening to the others share their journeys, I realised that what we had embarked on three months earlier was a lifetime’s journey together. We will always grow in the love of God together wherever God sends us on our daily mission of evangelization.

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FIRST PUBLISHED in 1947, C. S. Lewis’s book Miracles: A Preliminary Study is an investigation into the occurrence of miracles. In it, he uses the word to mean an interference with nature by supernatural power. In writing about the ‘supernatural’, Lewis does not mean something that is ‘spooky, or sensational, or even (in any religious sense) “spiritual”’ but rather that it ‘will not fit in’ to the ‘largely mindless system of events called “nature”’. In the book, Lewis contrasts nature with the supernatural and describes people who believe that nothing other than nature exists as ‘naturalists’, and those who believe that there is something else aside from nature as ‘supernaturalists’.

Unlike C. S. Lewis, Augustine of Hippo believed that God, the superior cause, ‘does nothing contrary to nature; a miracle is contrary only to what our minds expect, but God never acts against the supreme law of nature any more than he acts against himself’. In his essay on true religion, written in 390, Augustine declared that miracles had occurred in apostolic times, when the Church was starting out, but did not happen now: ‘If we look for a cause of awe and wonder now, we should contemplate nature … the daily miracles of creation are as great as those of the incarnate Lord’. In his later writings, however, Augustine conceded that miracles do still happen, but ‘if miracles are granted, that is a sign that we are still immature’. He was unsympathetic ‘to those whose religion turns on the veneration of saints and angels, since they may look more for miracles than for the moral example of the saints’ devotion to God’.

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2 Lewis, Miracles, 35.
4 Augustine, De utilitate credendi, 16.34, quoted in Chadwick, Augustine of Hippo, 77.
5 Chadwick, Augustine of Hippo, 78.
6 Augustine, De trinitate, 8.7.11, quoted in Chadwick, Augustine of Hippo, 78.
Nevertheless, many miracles have been attributed throughout the centuries to the intercession of the prayer of saints. Teresa of Ávila, a sixteenth-century Carmelite nun (also a saint and doctor of the Church), in the *Book of Her Life*, describes occasions when she besought the Lord on behalf of others. In one example, Teresa tells her readers of how she prayed to the Lord to restore someone’s sight: ‘Once while I was imploring the Lord to give sight to a person to whom I was obligated and who had almost completely lost his vision, I was very grieved and feared that because of my sins the Lord would not hear me’. Despite her fears, Teresa is able to tell her readers that the Lord’s response was reassuring: ‘He would do what I had asked Him; that He had promised me there wasn’t anything I might ask Him that He wouldn’t do … I don’t think eight days had passed before the Lord gave sight back to that person’. On another occasion, Teresa describes how she begged the Lord to cure a very sick relative with a most painful disease:

I went and was moved to such pity for him that I began to beg the Lord insistently for his health. In this experience I saw fully and clearly the favour the Lord granted me; the next day this person was completely cured of the affliction.

More recent examples of those who claim to have been cured by miracles include Rob Lacey—a missionary and the author of *The Word on the Street*, a powerful modern reimagining of the Bible. Lacey’s wife tells of how his terminal bladder cancer went into miraculous remission as a result of prayer, and he lived cancer-free for four years afterwards. Pope John Paul II regarded his recovery from an assassin’s bullet as a miraculous intervention. Following the attempt on his life in 1981, the Pope linked his recovery with the apparition of the Madonna of Fátima, since the attempt coincided with the date of the Virgin’s first appearance, on 13 May 1917. He remarked: ‘Throughout my long days of suffering, I gave much thought to what it meant, to this mysterious sign that came to me like a gift from heaven’. As his biographer acknowledges, however:

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‘Not everyone at the Vatican shared John Paul II’s faith in the Virgin’s apparition at Fatima. His predecessors John XXIII and Paul VI voiced doubts about the “miracle”.’

Cardinal Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI, describes visions such as those recorded at Fátima and Lourdes as ‘private revelations’, which are ‘influenced by the potentialities and limitations of the perceiving subject’ and should not ‘be thought of as if for a moment the veil of the other world were drawn back’.

**The Issue of Bias in Scientific and Religious Writing**

One of the key concerns in addressing the evidence of effectiveness for medical interventions is that of bias: this includes vested interests in the direction of the evidence, and publication bias for studies reporting statistically significant results. In religious writing, the issue of bias appears less prominent but, as the philosopher John Cottingham shows, it remains significant. Cottingham points to the similarities between what Freud called ‘the omnipotence of thoughts’—the superstitious attempt to control external reality using the mind—and the behaviour of those ‘religious adherents who may pray or go to church in the hope of somehow influencing the way their lives, or those of their loved ones turn out’. He argues that ‘we need to be prepared to subject religious writings to detailed contextual scrutiny’ in order to assess their true ‘meaning and function’.

A recent article in *The Way* describes members of the healing ministry at her church praying for a distraught woman who had been diagnosed with Bell’s Palsy earlier in the day. According to the writer ‘The next Sunday she was well, and remains well to this day’. In the telling of this story, certain contextual elements are missing, such as the medical evidence for Bell’s Palsy, which is a temporary facial paralysis resulting from damage or trauma to the facial nerves. According to the US National Institute of Neurological Disorder and Stroke, ‘With or without treatment, most individuals begin to get better within 2 weeks after the initial onset of symptoms and recover some or all facial function within 3 to 6 months’.

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Even in the case of cancers such as Rob Lacey’s, spontaneous remission is not unknown, with an estimated 1 per cent of certain cancers subsiding of their own accord each year; in the case of infants with neuroblastoma the spontaneous regression of the disease has been well documented.\textsuperscript{18} Despite the uncertain and contingent nature of bio-medical processes new knowledge and understanding emerge all the time; and any failure to acknowledge the emerging evidence when describing inexplicable cures can appear misleading.

**A Prayer Unanswered**

Unlike those of Teresa of Ávila or Rob Lacey, my own most ardent and anguished prayer—for the cure of my terminally ill daughter, Isabella—remained unanswered. Isabella died, from neuroblastoma, a week after her seventh birthday. She was diagnosed in January 2003, and was treated for well over a year with chemotherapy, nine hours of surgery, a bone marrow transplant, radiotherapy and six months of cisretronic acid treatment. In March 2005 she was admitted to Great Ormond Street Hospital in London following a stroke caused by her cancer. Isabella was diagnosed as terminally ill on admission. All treatment options having been exhausted, she was discharged home in the care of the hospital’s palliative care team.

Before her discharge we were given preliminary details of how Isabella’s last days were to be managed, and were advised that her death would be

more or less imminent. In quiet desperation we sought to determine whether we could hold out for the possibility of some new treatment or, even more desperately, for a miracle. Isabella’s consultant responded by gently telling us that, in her experience, the only miracle she knew was when parents managed to get up the next day and carry on with some semblance of a normal life after such devastating news.

Though a miracle was out of the question for the medical experts, this did not deter us as a family from seeking one. With no further medical options, we now set our sights on petitioning the saints, seeking their intercession on Isabella’s behalf for a miraculous intervention from God. We were supported in this quest by family and friends, and even by people we did not know. We received numerous Mass cards from those within the Catholic community, who paid a stipend to their local parish church for one of the daily Masses to be offered for Isabella’s recovery.

We were also given the name of a charismatic faith healer, Eddie Stones, who, along with his wife Lucy, ran a House of Prayer in Galway, Ireland, that held a weekly programme of healing services.\(^{19}\) On 6 April 2005, two days before the funeral of Pope John Paul II, we booked a flight to Ireland.

The healing service began once the evening prayers had finished; speaking in tongues, Eddie Stones laid his hands on people’s heads to invoke healing. As he did so, many (maybe most) fell backwards into the arms of two men who were waiting behind to catch them: such falling is known in the charismatic movement as ‘resting in the Holy Spirit’. My feelings of discomfort at witnessing it did not deter me from joining the queue of people waiting in line to be touched by Eddie Stones and, as he did so, neither I, my husband nor Isabella fell backwards. Immediately after the event, and despite my scepticism, I searched for some outward sign of recovery, looking to see if the cancerous lumps that were emerging all over Isabella’s skull showed any signs of disappearing: a quick glance at the top of her head confirmed that nothing had changed. Having read that a cure could only be called a miracle if it was instantaneous, I anticipated that if we did not see an improvement there and then, it was unlikely to happen later.

The next morning Isabella’s health was no better and she continued to cry out from intense pain, which was alleviated only momentarily by high doses of morphine. As the morphine took hold and Isabella drifted off into a semi-conscious state, we sat in our bed-and-breakfast room and waited.

Feeling empty, we turned on the television and watched the funeral of Pope John Paul II. I became acutely aware of how distant and uninformed I felt about the person who had died and the event that was unfolding on the television screen. I had never taken an interest in the Pope—he had never had any relevance to my life—and, like most ceremonies in the Roman Catholic Church, his funeral was just one more event where I was an outsider looking in on something that I did not quite understand.

I began to question how it was that, having been brought up as a ‘cradle Catholic’ and having attended convent schools run by the Sisters of Mercy both at primary and secondary levels, I had managed to remain so ignorant of what it was that I was meant to believe in. I had received no formal religious education aside from reciting vocal prayers and attending Mass. I also questioned why I found it so difficult to believe in a God who would cure Isabella, despite constant reassurances from those who were strong in their faith that God would do so—but only, it seemed, if I prayed hard enough and had the faith to match!

As the medically predicted deterioration in Isabella’s health continued, and confronting myself as a lukewarm ‘cafeteria’ Catholic faced with the imminent death of a child, I questioned whether my prayers had any integrity, lacking, as they did, the depth and sincerity of practice that I associated with a more spiritual way of life. I found myself trying to strike
a bargain with God: if God would cure Isabella I would reform my way of living and strive to become more spiritually adept. My preconceived notions of what the spiritual life involved are perfectly described by Janet Soskice: ‘… long periods of quiet, focused reflection, dark churches and dignified liturgies. In its higher reaches it involves time spent in contemplative prayer, retreats …. Above all it involves solitude and collectedness ….’

This spiritual life did not, as Soskice concludes, ‘involve looking after small children’. It was not a life with which I was familiar and, if I was completely honest with myself, it was not one that I would have actively pursued or relished: in fact, I secretly dreaded it. More to the point, having secured Isabella's recovery, how practical or possible would it be for me, as a mother of three, to spend long periods of time in solitary prayer, either at home or on retreat? As I prayed for Isabella’s recovery, these thoughts bothered me; it was only years later that I discovered that this view of the spiritual life is not uncommon.

We never got our miracle and, like other parents who have found themselves in similar situations, we sought answers to our unspeakably difficult and painful circumstances: being forced to witness the slow and painful death of our innocent child. The journalist Matthew Engle, whose teenage son Laurie also died from cancer, tells of how initially he regarded Laurie’s death as a punishment:

In the early stages of the illness, I thought—superstitiously maybe—that I was being punished. I thought of all the shitty things I had done, the beggars and Big Issue sellers I had walked by. But Laurie never walked by a beggar; he was the softest touch in the world. He was punished with all the pain.

Similar thoughts of punishment were never far from my own mind. Over twenty years earlier, when I was an undergraduate in London, I had been asked to visit a family from my home town whose seven-year-old child was being treated at Great Ormond Street Hospital for cancer. As I looked at the child, I felt such pain and sadness and could only conclude that such suffering must be a punishment of sorts for the parents.

The day after Isabella's burial we stood at her graveside and an elderly couple walked by. One of Isabella’s younger brothers, Johannes, told them

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that he was visiting his sister’s grave and they told him they were visiting their granddaughter, who had also died from cancer a few months earlier, aged sixteen. ‘People say to me that she is in a better place now’, said the grandmother, ‘but I don’t believe that’. And neither did I.

Suffering as an Obstacle to Belief in God

In the five months leading up to Isabella’s death, and despite my ambivalence on the question of God, I still kept waiting for divine intervention. One evening, as I watched a television programme about the Holocaust, it dawned on me that if God did not come to save the Jews—the chosen people—from the Nazis, why would God bother coming to save Isabella? In the aftermath of Isabella’s death I felt extremely hurt and angry, and became distrustful of this God who appeared to answer one person’s prayer and not another’s.

Recognising that I felt undecided on the question of God’s existence, I could identify with the Nobel prize winner and Holocaust survivor Elie Weisel. Living only for God when he was a child, he declared after the Holocaust: ‘If I told you I believed in God, I would be lying; if I told you I did not believe in God I would be lying’. Weisel was incarcerated in Auschwitz and witnessed horrific atrocities perpetrated on members of his immediate family and other fellow Jews. He describes how his belief in the God of his childhood died alongside those murdered in the concentration camp.

John Cottingham writes:

The ‘problem of evil’ is undoubtedly the most serious obstacle to belief in a Judaeo-Christian-Islamic type of God: a God who is wholly good, all powerful, and the creator of all things. The existence of so much terrible suffering in the world places a fearful onus of response on those who affirm the existence of such a being.

Cottingham identifies two lines of defence adopted by the theist to explain suffering—that of ‘free will’, and the ‘instrumental’ approach. The former argument states ‘that the possibility of evil-doing, with its resultant suffering, is a necessary consequence of God’s creating free beings’; while, according to the latter, the world needs suffering to allow for the possibility of moral growth.

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23 Cottingham, Spiritual Dimension, 26.
In Cottingham’s view neither of these two approaches is sufficiently robust ‘to explain the pervasiveness and the quantity of suffering to be found’, particularly when one considers how much of that suffering is caused by natural disasters rather than the perpetration of bad acts, or how the widespread existence of childhood diseases relates ‘to the moral improvement of the victims’. For Cottingham there is a need for a different way of discussing suffering—one that focuses ‘on the material nature of the cosmos we inhabit’. Taking up Leibniz’s idea of ‘metaphysical evil’, he suggests that ‘even before any question of “sin” or defect or suffering, there is, as Leibniz puts it, an “original imperfection” in the created world …. creation cannot have all the perfections of God’. Cottingham elaborates upon Leibniz’s approach by arguing that our humanity is a natural phenomenon, and that human life emerges from the cosmic flux of ever-decaying material energy:

> It is not as if illness and pain and death and decay are inexplicable features that one might have expected a benign creator magically to eliminate; rather our impermanence, like it or not, is our birthright, essential to our very existence as creatures of flesh and blood.

On Cottingham’s account, the imperfection that God allows in the world is not an indication of God’s indifference, but is to be seen as a withdrawal by God—‘a form of giving way to allow for something other, something imperfect, to unfold’—just as a parent must withdraw to allow a child to develop and to experience growth and fulfilment. To interfere in such a world would be to create one that is ‘two-dimensional, lacking the power and terror and grandeur and danger and vividness and beauty of our material cosmos’.

### Medical Miracles and the Role of Evidence-Based Medicine

In the Roman Catholic Church today, a miracle can only be declared after exhaustive checking by doctors and scientists as to whether any explanation other than a miracle is plausible. As part of the process of becoming a saint, a miracle needs to be linked to prayers made to a person nominated for sainthood after that person’s death. The granting of prayers is seen as proof

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27 Cottingham, *Spiritual Dimension*, 32.
28 Cottingham, *Spiritual Dimension*, 33.
that the individual is already in heaven, and able to intercede with God on others’ behalf.\textsuperscript{29} Theoretically, miracles can be of any type, but the vast majority have been concerned with the miraculous healing of serious medical conditions. For a recovery to be declared miraculous, it must be ‘complete, durable and instantaneous’, with no relapse.\textsuperscript{30} If it is pronounced that the cure is scientifically inexplicable, the Church is invited to decide whether it is a sign of God’s intervention. Recently, however, some have argued that this process has been overtaken by the advance of medical science, as what lies outside the realms of scientific explanation appears to be diminishing. ‘By narrowing the notion of miracles to inexplicable cures’, Kenneth Woodward writes, ‘the church has, in effect, allowed medical science to usurp its own competence to interpret divine signs’.\textsuperscript{31}

Though there may be uncertainties about the causation of disease and the effects of treatment, modern medicine operates relatively successfully on the underlying epistemological principle that health outcomes have preceding causes and that isolating the cause is the basis of effective intervention.\textsuperscript{32} Evidence in clinical medicine is usually dominated by numbers and statistics. This approach gained a firm foothold during the 1940s, when the first randomised controlled trial was carried out to ‘assess the efficacy of streptomycin for the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis’.\textsuperscript{33} The notion of the controlled clinical trial, in which patient groups are compared using statistical methods, is now commonplace, and clinical trials are routinely used to test the effectiveness of different treatments with the aim of improving our understanding of the best way to deal with an illness, usually by comparing the standard treatment with a new or modified version.

It is perhaps surprising, then, that until recently a common criticism of clinical medicine was that much of what was practised did not have the sort of scientific validation that medics might expect. In 1991 an editorial in the \textit{British Medical Journal} argued that only 15 per cent of medical


interventions were supported by ‘solid scientific evidence’—a rhetoric that provided the impetus for the evidence-based medicine movement.\textsuperscript{34}

Evidence-based medicine requires the careful gathering of evidence, usually by means of a systematic review of previously published primary studies that have adopted the randomised controlled trial method. Conventionally, systematic reviews have been defined as ‘a comprehensive search for relevant studies on a specific topic … those identified are then appraised according to a predetermined and explicit method’.\textsuperscript{35} As a systematic review is regarded as a scientific process, the methods must be described in sufficient detail to enable the study to be replicated and get identical results.\textsuperscript{36} In the medical world, a well-conducted systematic review can provide the best available evidence about the effectiveness of a particular type of therapeutic intervention, but it is almost always out of date compared to the primary evidence. As Michael Duff, a theoretical physicist at the University of Michigan states: ‘science is not a collection of rigid dogmas, and what we call scientific truth is constantly being revised, challenged, and refined’.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{34} Dew, \textit{Cult and Science}, 78.
\textsuperscript{36} Canning and others, \textit{Drug Use Prevention}, 13.
\textsuperscript{37} Natalie Angier \textit{The Canon: The Beautiful Basics of Science} (London: Faber and Faber, 2008), 20.
Arriving at the best possible explanation for a particular health outcome in clinical medicine requires detachment and objectivity but, as John Cottingham observes, ‘religious understanding is not attained from a detached, external standpoint’, and to adopt such a stance may be a way of evading the necessary ‘vulnerability and receptivity on which true insight depends’. The scientific method, by its very nature, cannot go beyond describing and conceptualising natural phenomena: ‘science actually “explains” nothing. What science does is describe the world and its phenomenology in terms of its own specialised concepts and models.’ So subjecting religious and metaphysical questions, including that of miracles, to the same approach appears, at the very least, questionable.

**The Use of Scientific Methods to Address Metaphysical Questions**

For those C. S. Lewis describes as naturalists, there is no likelihood of a miracle occurring: ‘nothing can come into Nature from outside, because there is nothing outside to come in, Nature being everything.’ If nature is not the only thing, however, then there is no guarantee that a miracle will not occur. For those who do not believe that nature is everything, there is a means of ‘knowing’—a type of knowledge—that is not part of nature and is prior to nature.

Reason—the reason of God—is older than Nature, and from it the orderliness of Nature, which alone enables us to know her, is derived .... [T]he human mind in the act of knowing is illuminated by the Divine reason. It is set free, in the measure required, from the huge nexus of non-rational causation; free from this to be determined by the truth known.

The moral philosopher Immanuel Kant also believed there was a type of knowing that was beyond nature:

Kant embeds his conception of autonomy in a metaphysical psychology going beyond anything in Hume or Rousseau. Kantian autonomy presupposes that we are rational agents whose transcendental freedom takes us out of the domain of natural causation.

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38 Cottingham, *Spiritual Dimension*, 18.
41 Lewis, *Miracles*, 34.
In the past, the search for the origins of the universe—or Divine reason—has traditionally come from theology and philosophy, but more recently ‘the new scientific atheism’ has expounded the so-called M-theory, which claims to be ‘a complete theory of the universe … developed through physics and science’. Critics of the M-theory argue, however, that ‘a theory of everything’ which focuses on material phenomena such as ‘matter, energy, space and time’ but fails to take account of non-material ones such as ‘friendship, love, beauty, poetry, truth, faith, justice’ (let alone miracles) cannot really be ‘a theory of everything’.

Discussing the notion of a hierarchy of evidence, a World Health Organization document on the ‘social determinants of health’, which describes the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age, observed:

Humans use different forms of knowing and different forms of knowledge for different purposes. There is no necessary hierarchy of knowledge involved until we need to discriminate on the basis of fitness for purpose. This does not mean that all knowledge in general, or of the social determinants of health in particular, is of equal value. It means we have to develop multiple criteria to determine fitness for purpose and to judge thresholds of acceptability, and then critically appraise the knowledge on this basis.

In Albert Camus’ novel *The Plague*, there is an exchange between two of the characters, a Jesuit priest, Paneloux, and an agnostic, Dr Rieux, on the possible reasons for the outbreak of plague. Paneloux is of the opinion that the plague is a punishment from God, whereas Rieux, a man of science, rejects this assessment and instead works towards finding a serum that will contain the disease. Despite the inability of Camus’ characters to agree on the source of the plague, both are profoundly shaken by the death of a child: ‘until then they had been outraged abstractly, in a sense, because they had never looked face-to-face for so long a time at the death throes of an innocent child’. For Rieux, the child is the innocent victim of an indifferent God, whereas for Paneloux the child’s death ‘is outrageous because it is beyond us’. But, Paneloux adds, ‘perhaps we should love what we cannot understand’.

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43 McKenna ‘Church in Dialogue with New Scientific Atheism’, 10–11.
45 Bonnefoy and others, *Constructing the Evidence Base on the Social Determinants of Health*, 34.
In the Warsaw ghetto, Rabbi Shapira preached concrete and immediate divine deliverance to his people in the early months of the Second World War but, as the war progressed and things worsened, there emerged in its place ‘an absolute surrender to the divine will’. As the philosopher Paul Moser has affirmed, ‘an enduring faith in God demands a human resolution of the will to resist falling into despair while being overwhelmed by God’. He argues that this is how faith differs from ‘mere knowledge or belief regarding God’, and that faith involves ‘yielding fully to God’s will, even in the face of death’.

That scientific knowledge is not enough cannot be demonstrated more starkly than by the protracted and painful death of an innocent child from an incurable disease: likewise, the evidence for miracles resulting from religious praxis becomes ever more doubtful as what lies outside the realms of scientific explanation appears to be diminishing. Here more than one kind of knowledge has to be ‘fit for purpose’. What desperate parents such as myself need is a medical science that looks for cures based on the best available evidence, but also a religious outlook offering the possibility of an integrated wholeness that focuses on ‘the practical dimension of the spiritual … a continuous vigilance and presence of the mind’ in the face of so much suffering. This was a view also arrived at by Teresa of Ávila in her more mature years. Arguing against detachment from the world Teresa advised her nuns to be involved in the world: ‘Well now, let them believe me and not be so absorbed … Life is long and there are in it many trials, and we need to look at Christ our Lord [and] how He suffered them’. Adopting the spiritual discipline of attention (prosoche) encourages us to concentrate on those dimensions that make life worth living despite the existence of such terrible suffering.

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51 St Teresa of Ávila, The Interior Castle, 6. 7. 13, in Collected Works, volume 2, 403.
RECENT BOOKS


The Second Vatican Council (1961–1965) is more than its sixteen Constitutions, Decrees and Declarations. From its earliest days the council recognised that it was not only about theological and pastoral content—the *letter*—but also about a certain attitude, or *spirit*. On the first day of the council, Pope John XXIII incited the council fathers to change their mindset when, in his famous opening address, he called them not to be prophets of doom but open to God’s presence here and now, and asked that the attitude of condemnation be replaced with one of mercy. Pope Francis recently recalled this attitude when he proclaimed a Holy Year of Mercy to celebrate and to keep alive the council with which, in his words, ‘the Church entered a new phase of her history’.1 Interestingly, he quoted Pope John’s words on the medicine of mercy, to which he added Pope Paul VI’s statement that the council’s spirituality is that of the Good Samaritan. Clearly, for Pope Francis, too, the council is not only words but also an attitude.

Although the council fathers themselves repeatedly referred to ‘the spirit of the Council’ and ‘the spirit of John XXIII’, during the subsequent period of reception the idea of a ‘spirit’ quickly became controversial. On the one hand, some called upon the conciliar spirit while bypassing the texts and, on the other, some focused on the texts but ignored the spirit. The Roman Curia, understandably perhaps, has been especially of the latter tendency, and as a consequence ‘development’ and ‘discontinuity’ have become dirty words. To prove that something did happen and that there was a certain ‘spirit of the Council’, scholars have started to delve into the history. Giuseppe Alberigo edited an impressive five-volume series, *The History of Vatican II* (1995–2001; English edition, 1996–2006), and John O’Malley wrote a seminal page-turner, *What Happened at Vatican II* (2008).

The book under review here, *Vatican II: The Complete History*, fits in well with Alberigo and O’Malley, and highlights both the history and the spirit of the council. Being ‘the first illustrated history of the Council’, as the cover announces, it is unique in telling that history in images as well as words. For example, we see a double-page spread of the crowds at the moment of Pope John’s famous ‘Sermon on the Moon’, in which he invited the faithful to embrace their children on his behalf, and through it we can sense

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1 Pope Francis, *Misericordiae vultus*, n. 4.
something of the rapture of the moment and the love of ‘the good pope’. Another photograph shows an assignator locorum sitting on the bottom row of the stands, having a break after finishing his task of assigning places to the council fathers. The picture speaks of the complexity even of simple things such as who sits where. We see an image of the sober commemorative episcopal ring, without a gemstone, that the fathers were given by Paul VI at the end of the council. It symbolizes the council’s move from the pompous atmosphere of a royal court—illustrated by images of bishops with mitres taller than their heads—to a more theological ecclesiology and praxis.

Further, the book contains ‘road map’ overviews of, for example, the stages of the preparatory period and the progress of council documents from draft to promulgation, revealing the long and wearisome process involved. In addition, an overview of the provenance of the council fathers by continent shows how European the council still was. And the table with the respective numbers of council fathers belonging to various religious orders and congregations reveals that, surprisingly, most numerous were not the Jesuits (51 members) or the Dominicans (36) but the Franciscans (90).

The story of the council is presented in 52, mostly brief, chapters. Of course, a fair number of these are consecrated to the council itself: its announcement and preparation; the programmatic opening address by John XXIII; the fate of the drafts on the Sources of Revelation and on the Church (to be rejected); the pivotal role of the Secretariat for Christian Unity; the developments in theology concerning the bishop (collegiality) and other Christian Churches (ecumenism); the almost Copernican change of attitude towards modernity and society in Gaudium et spes; and so on. Yet as history implies awareness of context, the reader is also introduced to the early councils in the East and in the West, to Vatican I, and to their place in world history. Another chapter draws attention to the remarkable number of synods, councils, assemblies and conferences held by various Christian Churches in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In addition, an unexpectedly large number of chapters is devoted to factual, formal and practical aspects of the council, such as the transformation of St Peter’s into a council hall, the seating plan, the number of participants and where they came from, the council regulations, the commissions and their members, the residences of the bishops, the various informal groups and the observers and guests, and so on.

This book is a valuable new resource complementing the existing body of historical introductions. One should perhaps overlook its presumptuous subtitle, The Complete History, as the book is not complete. It does not provide a running narrative—for this one should turn to O’Malley—nor scholarly detail and footnotes—for this one should consult Alberigo—and its treatment of historical-theological issues is best characterized as succinct.
Nonetheless it is an attractive volume, both for scholars and for interested lay people. For precisely such a visual approach is particularly conducive to commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of a council which consisted not only in letters but also in a spirit. Such an anniversary deserves to be celebrated by gazing and wondering as well as with information and debate.

*Jos Moons SJ*


This mighty folio is another triumph for St Joseph’s University Press in their continuing series of richly illustrated books offering informed analysis of the great cultural achievements of the pre-suppression Society of Jesus, especially those in the visual arts. The focus of this volume is one of the greatest examples of European book production of the Baroque period: the *Imago primi saeculi*, whose title might be translated as ‘A depiction of the first century of the Society of Jesus’.

This was issued from the press of the royal printer of the Spanish Netherlands, one of the greatest printing-houses of Europe, the Plantin-Moretus Press in Antwerp, whose early modern printing workshop survives almost intact and can be visited to this day. All the skills of the Antwerp school of draughtsmen and engravers were at the disposal of the Jesuits of the Low Countries, and they used them to the full in the 127 copper-engraved plates of the *Imago*, all of which are reproduced in this volume, together with elegant and informative translations of the texts in Latin, Greek and (in a few cases) Hebrew which originally accompanied them. (There is also a CD included with the volume, reproducing all the illustrated pages of the original volume in facsimile with the original-language texts.)

It is wholly typical of the period that a great book of baroque celebration should be a book of emblems—a characteristic and universally popular art form of the period and one in which the Jesuits (who were themselves among the great taste-makers of the Baroque) particularly excelled. An emblem is a ‘speaking picture’—a tripartite artefact consisting of picture, short motto and verse or prose explanation of how the two (which often bear a paradoxical or enigmatic relation to each other) can be understood to make up a statement. There is sometimes also a title for the whole giving a clue as to how the elements will relate to each other.

The devising of emblems was a frequent element in Jesuit education in the early modern period, and many Jesuit colleges would display painted placards
with emblems devised by the students on prize days, usually expounding a set of ingenious variations on a moral or spiritual theme. Those produced in the Low Countries were particularly elaborate and elegant, but emblems formed a part of Jesuit education and Jesuit cultural production worldwide. To take a few examples from the *Imago*, apart from the irresistible image of the Jesuit educator as a mother bear licking her formless, furry cubs into shape, Chastity is extolled through the image of the scriptural burning bush, with the motto ‘burning, it is not consumed’. The chaste heart is expressed visually in a particularly elegant design in which the sun-radiance surrounding the Hebrew name of God is reflected in still water, with the motto ‘the chaste heart is the mirror of God’. One last, particularly poetic use of image and motto must bring this set of examples to a close: the Society’s virtuous avoidance of worldly honours is expressed in an engraving of a night sky radiant with stars and the motto ‘In dim light the stars shine the brighter’.

In a culture where the emblem was prized, cultivated and esteemed, it was inevitable that this triumphal and beautiful book should attract a great deal of attention, not all of it positive by any means, and it is this contemporary response which is explored in the informative, expert essays which introduce the volume. These encompass much skilled writing about the emblem tradition, much cogent and fascinating exposition of the response to this work, as well as detailed study of the sense of self and self-presentation which is expressed by its elaborate visual and verbal sequence of statements.
The introductory overview of the whole enterprise is given by the highly respected series editor, John O’Malley, who also offers a summary of the rich assembly of essays brought together in the volume. Michael Putnam then gives a particularly comprehensive consideration of the emblematic frontispiece to the whole volume and to the opening emblem, thus including a detailed exposition of the ways in which emblems work in the minds of their devisers and their readers. The culture wars that were triggered by the publication are the subject of a magisterial essay by Marc Fumaroli, ‘Classicism and the Baroque—the *Imago Primi Saeculi* and Its Detractors’, reminding its readers that the envy and dislike triggered by Jesuit success, and the baroque celebration of that success, were a considerable force in early modern Europe. Jeffrey Muller then offers a rounded consideration of the Jesuit uses of the arts in Flanders, a province where the Society was particularly active, where it enjoyed a considerable degree of patronage and support, and where it could draw on the extraordinary flowering of the visual arts common to the Protestant and Catholic Netherlands alike. A group of emblem experts from the University of Leuven—Marc van Vaeck, Toon van Houdt and Lien Roggen—then offer a consideration of the *Imago primi saeculi* ‘as emblematic self-presentation and commitment’. The three scholars who have translated the Latin, Greek and Hebrew verses of the *Imago* conclude the introductory material by offering an account of their originals: Michael Putnam for the Latin, Alexander Sens for the Greek and James P.M. Walsh for the Hebrew.

After this comprehensive sequence of introductory essays, the images themselves are reproduced—the standard of reproduction, as always with this publisher, is impeccable—with their original texts laid out as in the 1640 publication, but rendered into readable, often elegant, English. Thus the modern reader can reproduce, without linguistic obstacle, the experience of the seventeenth-century reader, absorbing text and image as a single and integrated artwork. The fascination of the experience is not easily explained: it is a kind of modest time-travel to focus intensely on an art-form and style which were cultivated with utter seriousness by the most cultivated minds of early modern Europe and, in yet another context, to marvel at the range, reach and achievement of the Society of Jesus.

*Peter Davidson*


978 1 4422 5002 4, pp.248, £16.44.

Two statues outside the US National Archives in Washington, DC, advise passers-by to ‘Study the Past’ because ‘What is Past is Prologue’, as Shakespeare
explained in *The Tempest*. Few note the statues; fewer still heed the advice. Thus we as individuals, Churches and nations stumble from conflict to disaster because, in George Santayana’s often paraphrased remark, ‘Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it’.¹ Cannot remember? Or will not remember? A prevailing exceptionalism apparently renders us immune from historical vicissitude, and allows us to subscribe to a Henry Fordian ‘history is, more or less, bunk’. But a serious person who, echoing Cicero, prefers to know what happened before his or her birth, so as not to remain a child, will enjoy—and benefit from—this new collection of articles by the foremost contemporary Jesuit historian: articles that confirm William Faulkner’s shrewd observation, ‘the past is not dead. It’s not even past.’²

In addition to his scholarly articles and monographs, O’Malley has often written for a non-specialist reader, someone more at ease with *The Tablet* or *America* than with *Theological Studies* and *The Heythrop Journal*. His clear, insightful *A History of the Popes: From Peter to the Present* (2009), and succinct (only 160 pages!), accessible *The Jesuits: A History from Ignatius to the Present* (2014) are well received and popular.

Here O’Malley has added an *ego histoire* epilogue to a collection of seventeen articles, eight of which originally appeared in *America*. He has subdivided the articles into ‘The Papacy and the Popes’ (for example, papal job descriptions, cardinals in conclave, the papalisation of Catholicism), ‘Two Councils: Trent and Vatican II’, ‘The Church at Large’ (for example, excommunicating politicians, celibacy and the Catholicism of the medieval university). In case someone wonders why the collection contains nothing on the Society of Jesus, the author explains that a selection of such articles recently appeared as *Saints or Devils Incarnate? Studies in Jesuit History* (Leiden, 2013). One should not be surprised that O’Malley revisits the councils of Trent and Vatican II, his more recent areas of research (*What Happened at Vatican II* [2010] followed by *Trent: What Happened at the Council* [2013]).

In recent years various historians, theologians and Catholic commentators have debated the legacy of the Second Vatican Council, especially as the fiftieth anniversary of its closure approached. In the intervening decades, Vatican II (and particularly its so-called ‘spirit’) has often been a slogan embraced with pride or repudiated with scorn by members of the Roman Catholic Church. As the early Corinthians followed either Paul or Apollos, their more recent co-religionists identified themselves, through gestures, coded language and popular theology, either with Vatican II or Trent, at times with a venom formerly only reserved for non-Catholics.

O’Malley considers the ‘myths and misunderstandings’ of each council. Much did in fact happen, but some decisions and decrees are more significant and important than others. More important still for the author is the dominant—not universal—conciliar mentalité, which he uncovers in three areas: history, structure and language.

Unlike earlier councils, Vatican II, he argues, possessed a leitmotif: aggiornamento. The council affirmed that ‘tradition … is not inert but dynamic’ (p.120). That realisation permeates discussions on proper relations between the universal and the local, the centre and the periphery, ‘papal primacy and the authority of residential bishops’ (p.122). This relationship, he admits, is developed only once in a short paragraph: ‘It is not the documents, therefore, that reveal how hot the issue was but the narrative of the battles for control of the council itself’ (p.125). To ascertain that temperature, O’Malley refers the interested reader to What Happened at Vatican II.

All those familiar with conciliar decrees have noticed stylistic changes introduced at Vatican II. Instead of canons often peppered with anathema sit, Vatican II’s preferred genre is the panegyric: ‘the painting of an idealized portrait in order to excite admiration and appropriation’ (p.129). The vague, amorphous ‘spirit of the council’, O’Malley argues, can be explicated and verified ‘by paying attention to the style of the council, by paying attention to its unique literary form and vocabulary, and by drawing out the implications of the form and vocabulary’ (p.132). In his consideration of the council’s literary genre and vocabulary, O’Malley concentrates on the gradual introduction of the word ‘dialogue’, borrowed by Pope Paul VI from the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber. One small word, perhaps, but ‘a major language event in the history of the church. It represents a language reversal, from monolog to dialog.’ (p.145) No longer did the Church employ the ‘language of alienation and condemnation’; instead it favoured ‘reconciliation and mutuality’ (p.145). Here one recalls Pope Francis’s insistence on forgiveness and mercy. For O’Malley, the most significant difference between Trent and Vatican II was the language of discourse. The Church no longer commands but invites, does not threaten but persuades. Critics who may remain unimpressed should consult his larger work.

Fashions come and go even in the field of historiography. Twenty years ago ego histoire was very popular in France. Perhaps because Anglo-Saxon historians are not formed in a Pascalian-Cartesian tradition, such introspective combinations of autobiography and historical interests are rare in the English-speaking world. One notes with a wry smile that O’Malley’s decision to specialise in Italian history was more rooted in his fondness for gelato than calculation. The smell of ‘petit madeleines’ unleashed Marcel Proust’s memories; the taste of Italian gelato charted O’Malley’s future. The articles
collected here remind us of how grateful we are for this Caravaggesque ‘gelateria experience’ (p. 214).

Thomas McCoog SJ


Beyond its author’s death, *Into Extra Time* reaches readers in a special, caring way. When Michael Paul Gallagher was diagnosed with cancer for a third time in January 2015, at the age of 76, he went on jotting down the contradictory spiritual motions that crossed his heart as he always had, in typical Jesuit fashion. Though the word ‘cancer’ now bears less social stigma than it once did, patients still seldom share in writing their daily joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties. Gallagher, however, had become so attuned to the music of St Ignatius’ personal account of his convalescence in Loyola that it must have seemed obvious: once he knew how grave his illness was, he made sure that his ups and downs, his ‘spiritual music’, could be set to words and shared with others. A true teacher, as ever, but also a real spiritual guide.

To some extent, *Into Extra Time* is geared towards those who suffer from long-term or fatal illnesses. The ‘cancer diary’ in the book’s last fifty pages is both grim and grinning. Gallagher is frank about his long, slow slide towards death and into the hands of God. He shares confusion and consolation on the bumpy road of faith as he sees death loom ever larger. Never self-pitying, the book sets forth simple, vital questions: how much should I tell loved ones about my malady? How is God close to me as I suffer? How can I plough through fog for so long and be suddenly met by God’s tender love and soaring light—‘waves of fog—shafts of light’ (p. 83)? How should I let go and give myself over day by day? These open questions will come to meet the lives and agonizing issues of seriously ill patients and their loved ones—and console them on their way. True to Ignatius, this diary shares concrete experiences in body and in soul, so that others may learn from them and grow. It is a clear instance of how suffering can be geared towards producing some good: the good of helping souls, *ayudar a las almas*, as St Ignatius held dear.

But the book does not merely address the sick in body or in mind. It speaks to all of us who toil to find God’s presence in our lives. Gallagher had a special knack for that typically Ignatian trade: spiritual guidance. In Ireland and in Rome many benefited from his wisdom, wit and wry humour. In the pulpit, in the confessional, in the lecture hall, in his office carefully listening to students and staff, Michael Paul Paul knew how to bring
the best out in people and, therefore, how to bring them to God. He says as much in his book: after life-changing experiences as a young man in secularised France and, later on, in poverty-stricken Latin America, he had a soft spot for those whom life had led towards unbelief. More largely, he possessed a quiet but deep zeal to bring the unbelieving part of every man and woman back to God’s mercy. This mission unmistakably makes its way into Gallagher’s last book. This mission, in fact, is the book’s very stuff.

*Into Extra Time* plainly tackles unbelief, like much of Gallagher’s prose. This time, he frames it in the experience of suffering and dying, a situation which is, for more people than ever today, a faith-toppling scandal. Typically low-key but unrelenting, Gallagher sets out to help us imagine God as tender and caring—challenging, yes, but provident and present, too. His is an easy book to read, because it never seeks to systematize theology or win an argument by clever rhetoric. It never pushes God in your face. But it is nevertheless a deep work, one that lingers on and tickles you from inside, because it stands at the cusp of the heart, at that frontier where faith and unbelief dance together, back and forth. Gallagher’s simple images and wonderful Irish way with words slowly chip away those awful idols of God that have somehow built up in our minds and hearts, whether through lame preaching, bad art or the wiles of the proud modern heart that will not make way for God. Through aphorisms, anecdotes and advice, a softly delineated, amicable God appears, advancing without arrogance and asking to befriend us.

Gallagher read and taught literature long before he read and taught theology. Poetry and prose thus appear in his book as simple but efficient tools to make God real to his readers. John Henry Newman was a long-time ally of Gallagher in bringing people to think more about the implicit reasons that lead them towards or away from God. As an heir of Newman, Gallagher firmly held that cultural representations and personal imaginations foster or hinder faith much more than elaborate theological ideas and quarrels. Ever faithful to this conviction, Gallagher calls poets to his aid, even those who are (nominally) unbelievers, with their fresh, direct questions. ‘And did you get what you wanted from this life, even so? I did. What did you want? To call myself beloved, to feel myself beloved on the earth.’ (p.68) This inscription from the tombstone of the US poet Raymond Carver—an openly unreligious man—is one of many quotations that Gallagher’s book compellingly uses to touch his reader’s heart and mind.

One of the challenges of reading *Into Extra Time* is that it will make you sit down and think. Its aphorisms always seem simple and unassuming, not unlike Japanese *koan* or the desert fathers’ and mothers’ maxims—not unlike Jesus’ parables. But once his reader is hooked, Gallagher’s profundity starts operating, changing you from the inside—and for the
better. The reader is indeed taken ‘into extra time’—into God’s time, into
the game the perseverant divine Lover plays with fickle but beloved human
beings. This alone makes Gallagher’s short book well worth anyone’s time.

Nicolas Steeves SJ

Thomas J. Morrissey, From Easter Week to Flanders Field: The Diaries and
978 1 9102 4811 9, pp.152, £9.99.

The subtitle of this work is slightly misleading, since John Delaney’s diaries
and letters comprise only two of the four chapters in this short book.
Delaney, a Jesuit scholastic studying theology at Milltown Park, Dublin,
kept a diary during the momentous events known in Ireland as the Rising,
of Easter Week 1916. For six days a group of rebels, led by Patrick Pearse
and others, kept the might of the British empire at bay amid scenes of
destruction and carnage not to be seen in British cities until World War II.

The opening and final chapters of the work give the outline of Delaney’s
life before and after the diaries and letters for the period 1916–1919. The year
after his ordination in 1916 he joined the British army as a chaplain and was
demobilised two years later. Delaney came from a Dublin working class family
but was determined to be a priest. He entered the Jesuit Apostolic School
at Mungret College near Limerick. In 1904 he graduated with a BA from the
Royal University of Ireland and in that year he joined the Jesuits in Belgium
with a view to becoming a missionary in Ceylon. He spent several years as a
scholastic in that paradise island, teaching at St Aloysius College, Galle. It
is not without significance that the Jesuit superior of the college could write
of the three Irishmen under his charge that they were ‘not like the Irish in
Ireland: here they are more English than the English themselves’ (p.16).

By contrast, the diary reveals a certain amount of anti-English and anti-
Protestant prejudice. In reference to the latter, Delaney tends to call Protestants
‘sour faces’. He records the statement of one English Jesuit in Dublin during
Easter Week that, having witnessed the scenes in Dublin, he realised for the
first time ‘what loyalty in Ireland means, and I recognise that to sing “God
save the King” in Dublin [means] to sing “To Hell with the Pope”’ (p.42).

The diary begins on Easter Sunday, 23 April 1916, with the fact that the
Irish Volunteers had been told that manoeuvres that day were cancelled by
the expedient of an advertisement to that effect in the Sunday Independent
newspaper. In general, the diary consists of Delaney’s contemporaneous
recording of the impressions he garnered walking around Dublin from Easter
Monday, the day when the Rising actually began, often in the company of
at least one other Jesuit. He was so impressed with the fires raging in Dublin, which he observed from the roof of the Jesuit residence in Ranelagh, that he could write, ‘Ypres, Louvain, Rheims, were before our minds’ eye in a moment that we thought war has come to us at last’ (emphasis in original, p.53).

The diary is useful for the sense it gives of the utter confusion that reigned in Dublin during the Rising. In the midst of that confusion, Delany records the circumstances of widespread looting. He also adverts to the fact that all sorts of rumours persisted, such as that on Easter Tuesday the city morgue was full of dead bodies—in fact there were only four, none of which had any connection to the rebellion (p.36). It was also said that by Saturday 29 April, the rebel headquarters, at the General Post Office, had been taken over by the Unionist private army, the Ulster Volunteer Force (p.59). Prior to this, it was asserted that the Lord Lieutenant had been taken prisoner in the vice-regal lodge: this was also untrue.

Delaney demonstrates a certain compassion for the British soldiers whom he encountered, but denounces Dublin Protestants who gave information to the British about the rebels and he records how the British army, so far as Dublin Protestants were concerned, had saved them from ‘a Popish plot’ (p.40). There are a number of important vignettes that Delaney has recorded. Bishop Nicholas Donnelly (auxiliary bishop of Dublin 1883–1920) saved a number of wounded individuals in Haddington Road by marching into the middle of the street with his hands up and shouting, ‘I will remain here ‘till all the wounded are removed’ (p.47). Delaney asserts that the British military went into Sir Patrick Dunn’s Hospital and from there fired upon the insurgents in Boland’s Mill. He also knew on Easter Saturday that the leaders of the Rising would be executed, since a British officer had assured him that this was ‘the mind of the army’ (p.67).

Delany’s time as an army chaplain (chapter 3) is reported largely by way of letters to the Jesuit provincial in Dublin and to his mission superior in Ceylon. He was exposed to the horrors of Passchendaele, 31 July–10 November 1917, in the course of which two notable Irishmen, Willie Redmond, MP (brother of the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, John Redmond) and Thomas Kettle, a former MP, an economist and a poet, were killed.

There are a number of telling anecdotes about Delaney’s ministry to the wounded and the dying. He was especially impressed with the US Catholic soldiers whom he met, writing: ‘people will see that Republicanism does not mean French anti-clericalism and that a man may be broad-minded and a Catholic at the same time’ (p.94). Delany was awarded the Military Cross for bravery displayed at Fontaine aux Bois, Landrecies, on 4 November 1918.

There are a number of instances in which the critical apparatus of the book is inadequate: newspapers and military reports, and places where direct
speech is given, with no indication as to the sources. There is also one major faux pas. A paragraph of seven lines on Delaney’s view of the war is reproduced as part of a letter written in February 1918 (p.100), and reproduced again as part of a letter written on 13 June 1918 (p.108). From internal evidence, it was clearly written in June rather than February.

The final chapter is interesting only in so far as it gives a glimpse of an Irish Catholicism that is no more. But this is a useful and timely book, and Thomas Morrissey is to be commended for rescuing John Delaney from the obscurity of the Irish Jesuit Archives.

*Oliver Rafferty SJ*


2015 marked the fiftieth anniversary of *Dignitatis humanae*, Vatican II’s Declaration on Religious Freedom. To mark the occasion, Barry Hudock has offered a remarkable account of how the US Jesuit theologian John Courtney Murray (1904–1967) shaped this ground-breaking document. Hudock’s historical account is filled with details about personalities and about the politics behind the scenes. It also enables us to understand the theological and ethical arguments at stake. Its contribution is timely, given that issues regarding the family, healthcare and the place of Islam have provoked renewed discussion of the relationship between religions and the state on both sides of the Atlantic.

Murray’s reputation in the United States rests chiefly on his book *We Hold These Truths* (1960), where, arguing from classical natural law theory, he shows the compatibility between Roman Catholicism and US democracy. The book quickly became a best-seller, and a major resource for Catholics aspiring to escape ‘ghetto Catholicism’ (p.103); it even led to Murray’s making the cover of *Time* magazine. But Murray’s most significant and consequential theological work had been done earlier, in a series of articles which had led to his being silenced by Roman authorities for a while.

Before the council, Catholics were generally opposed to the idea that religious freedom was a universal right, on the ground that there was only one true Church. In an ideal situation, a government would declare itself and its nation Roman Catholic; it would defend and support the Catholic faith; and it would prevent public worship by non-Catholics. Given the realities of a modern world, with Catholics often in a minority and governments led by non-Catholics, some element of accommodation was morally permissible, but only as second best.
Murray moved decisively beyond this position. In various articles published from 1945 onwards in the Jesuit journal *Theological Studies*, of which he was the chief editor, he developed a historical argument about different political contexts. The nineteenth-century teachings of the Church were formulated against a strand of liberalism inherited from the French Revolution which had associated religious freedom with two principles: the absolute autonomy of individual reason, and the juridical omnipotence of the state. But the Anglo-Saxon strand of liberal democracy had generated a different conception of religious freedom rooted in a different principle: the limitation of government’s competence in matters of religion. The latter, argued Murray, was in full accord with Catholic doctrine: it reflected Pope St Gelasius I’s distinction between temporal and spiritual powers. In a democracy such as the United States, the protection of civil liberties, including freedom of religion, in fact served to affirm the distinction between the spiritual and the temporal.

Hudock documents the struggle this doctrine provoked, its initial condemnation and its final vindication at the council. In the 1950s, Murray encountered some fierce opposition from his fellow theologians Francis J. Connell and Joseph C. Clifford, the chief editor of *The Ecclesiastical Review*. They took the issue to Rome, and found support at the highest level in the person of Cardinal Ottaviani, who was soon to become the head of the Holy Office and one of the leaders of the minority at the council. Although it was never officially published, a condemnation of four errors in Murray’s work was issued by the Holy Office. From 1955 onwards Murray was asked by his superiors not to publish anything on religious freedom without the approbation of the Roman Jesuit Curia; for practical purposes he was silenced on the topic.

However, when the US bishops entered the aula of the council in October 1962, they were convinced that an official affirmation of religious freedom was crucial for the future of the Church in their country. They worked for it, very quickly drawing on the ideas of Murray, who was appointed a *peritus* in 1963. Murray contributed to the writing of *Dignitatis humanae*, and prepared many of the speeches made by US bishops. His historical argument finally convinced an overwhelming majority of council fathers. Another more theological and biblical approach, supported by the French bishops and by *periti* such as Congar, can also be seen in the final version, but Murray’s line remained decisive. Murray was the great facilitator, enabling the experience of a culturally peripheral part of the Church to influence the whole Body of Christ. However, exhausted by his engagement during the council years, Murray died, after his third heart attack, in 1967, too early to appreciate fully the lasting influence he had left on the history of the Church in the United States and on Catholic doctrine universally.

Murray’s story is fascinating, and needs to remain in our memories. We can be grateful to Hudock for telling it so well.

*Grégoire Catta SJ*

Although (and partly because) the author, Fr Daelemans, is a good friend, I hesitated before agreeing to write this review: my initial impression was that there were too many words and his book referred to musical items which I felt ill-equipped to appreciate. However, the text he provides on each station of the cross is in fact short and, once I had plunged into this little book, my admiration grew constantly.

At first glance it is a ‘Way of the Cross’: but the author takes as his visual guide an astonishing set of stations sculpted in bronze by a German artist, Werner Klenk. These merit a place alongside the great artistic stations produced in the twentieth century by Frank Brangwyn and Eric Gill. They are imbued with such a deep spiritual strength that their message almost requires no words. And yet, the reflections that Fr Daelemans has written to accompany them are, in turn, of wonderful depth and richness. It would be best to regard them as poems, and the careful layout of the lines emphasizes this aspect. The fifteen stations—that for the resurrection (Joy) being added to the traditional fourteen—are divided into four sections (echoing the Four Weeks of the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises*), and there are constant quotations from those *Exercises*. It is possible to expand each reflection with the scripture readings listed, and a piece of music (Bach, Handel, Fauré, Pärt, and so on) is suggested to accompany the period of prayer or discernment devoted to each.

The book is basically an aid to prayer, one steeped in the tradition of both Ignatius and the Bible. It has been written by an unusual scholar and musician, originally trained as an architect but, since his entry into the Society, a very competent theologian. He lectures in the University of Comillas, Madrid, on the Holy Spirit and on sacramental theology, and has published one remarkable book on the spirituality and theology of modern church architecture. He enables us to see through his sensitive eyes aspects of the stations than many of us would fail to notice. I can only hope that other readers will find his new publication as helpful as I have done.

*Joseph A. Munitiz SJ*

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This is a collection of 22 essays, edited by the theologian Niall Coll, with the aim of assessing the impact of the Second Vatican Council on Ireland. There is a particular focus on the future and ongoing renewal of the Roman Catholic
Church in a rapidly changing context, which includes the impetus that Pope Francis has given to conciliar teaching. The target audience is the interested general reader and the accessible style of the essays is in line with this aim. The authors are drawn from the ranks of scholars, pastors, educationalists and people prominent in the life of the Catholic Church in Ireland. There are also two significant Protestant voices (Archbishop Richard Clarke and Patrick Mitchel), whose substantive contributions greatly enrich the collection.

The essays are grouped under three headings, the first being ‘Retrospectives’, comprising mainly historical perspectives (see especially the trenchant piece by Oliver Rafferty) and some interesting memoir-like pieces (from the late and well-respected ecumenist Gerry Reynolds, and Paul Andrews). In this section Baroness Nuala O’Loan, in writing about liberation and authenticity, is one of the few authors to draw attention to the neglected role of women in the Church. The piece by Richard Clarke is a well-argued case for the progress made in the ecumenical movement since Vatican II, despite the more usual laments about an ecumenical winter. Clarke’s itemisation of the theological agreement achieved in this period may be a challenge to those who consider that the gulf between progressives and conservatives within the Church is permanently unbridgeable.

The second section, ‘Theological, Pastoral and Social’, contains a richly programmatic piece by the theologian Eugene Duffy. Duffy sets out to show how one might re-image the Church in Ireland in accordance with a Vatican II approach and in the new space opened up by Pope Francis. He cogently argues that the sacramental and missionary nature of the Church leads to a synodal and collegial model, informed by prayerful discernment and with a particular focus on real solidarity with the vulnerable in society. Duffy’s magisterial analysis does not conceal the underlying challenge for leadership, in particular, but also for all members of the Church, in acknowledging a more shared responsibility in the light of baptismal rights and duties. His outstanding essay—and the recent Synod of the Catholic Church in Limerick, in which he participated—are signs of hope not just for the Church in Ireland but also more widely.

This section also includes substantive pieces on human rights (Colin Harvey) and the preferential option for the poor (Aidan Donaldson)—very much part of the agenda of Vatican II and of Pope Francis. The piece by Mitchel, who is principal of Belfast Bible College, brings a clear-eyed outside view from a critically sympathetic source. His remarks about how change occurs in the Roman Catholic Church are particularly striking in the light of the fall-out from the apostolic exhortation Amoris laetitia and the controversy over whether it involves doctrinal change. Mitchel rejects the position of some Protestants who hold that ‘Rome never changes’, and goes on to quote fellow evangelical Professor Tony Lane:
The Roman Catholic Church … has in the last generation changed more than the great majority of Protestant churches. This reality is often obscured by the Roman method of changing, which is not to disown the past but to re-interpret it. If Protestants expect Rome to disown Trent they will have a long wait; if they want to see Trent reinterpreted we need only to look around. (170–171)

It is good also to see a piece in this section on media and the Church (by Michael Kelly, editor of The Irish Catholic).

The final section is on Catholic education, a particularly neuralgic theme in Ireland today, given the new claims of secularism and the challenge to the Church to be true to its ethos in a way which interrogates the liberal assumptions around limiting religion to the private sphere. Of particular interest here is the piece by the theologian Eamonn Conway, with its perceptive observations about the temptation to a kind of ‘inner secularisation’ within Catholic schools and colleges. On a broader front Coll himself has a wide-ranging piece on the path of interfaith dialogue since Vatican II and its bearing on Catholic education.

There are some real gems in this collection. It is geared towards an Irish audience but parts of it at least will be of interest beyond Irish shores. Many congratulations to editor and contributors.

Gerry O’Hanlon SJ


In 1994 the Northumbria Community brought out their original collection of Celtic Daily Prayer, to be followed a couple of years later, by Celtic Night Prayer. The 2002 edition of Celtic Daily Prayer brought both books together and now we have a second volume, whose title, Farther Up and Farther In, cleverly allows room for a third, should that be envisaged. Clearly there is a reading public that would welcome such a venture.

Book one, The Journey Begins, differs little from the 2002 publication. The ordering and presentation of the prayers have received the most attention. For those of you who are new to Celtic Daily Prayer, after an opening invocation and introduction, ‘About this book’ (which addresses a number of questions: where do these prayers come from? Why is it called ‘Celtic’? Who are the Northumbria Community? How might I best use this book? Is it for personal or group use? And, most pertinently: is it for me?), we have the Daily Office (Morning, Midday and Evening Prayer, and
Compline). The meditations for each day of the month, which used to follow Compline, are now, more practically, sandwiched between Evening Prayer (which uses the meditations) and Compline (which doesn’t). We then have orders of service for Holy Communion and Shabbat, seasonal prayers, rites of passage (including prayers for the christening of a child, marriage, mid-life and preparation for the death of a loved one), blessings and graces, resources for saints’ days and festivals, and two series of daily readings, before the volume ends with cross-references, sources and acknowledgements, bibliography, and contact details for the Northumbria Community. The Shabbat section now has its Havdala, the ending prayers. There is a section on liminal space included with that on rites of passage. The times and seasons now come after Holy Communion and Shabbat, again a more sensible placing.

The second volume begins in exactly the same way as the first, with the Daily Office—now with musical settings that are both singable and memorable. Some of the settings are available separately, in a volume published by the Northumbria Community itself. The meditations for each day are new. There are some beautiful additions to the section on Holy Communion, including a service of healing with Eucharist. As with book one, now come times and seasons, with entirely new prayers including some for Holy Week, midsummer and Michaelmas. Rites of passage then follow, with new material filling similar wineskins to those found in book one. In this part the section on singleness stands out for its pastoral use, since so few books of prayer acknowledge single people and this one does so sensitively yet boldly. There is a completely new section on themed prayers and liturgies, including material on studying and working, home, community, peace, journeying, healing and ‘As night falls’. There are more blessings and graces, more resources for saints’ days, and a further two series of readings.

There is a plentiful blend in these two books of authentically Celtic prayers and contemporary prayers written in the Celtic style, and this blend reflects the nature of the Northumbria Community. Although ancient prayers form the bedrock of the community, it is also open to spiritual writers whose work is Celtic in feeling, thought and expression. Each of the prayers and readings is given its source in the closing pages so that the reader may see at a glance where each item comes from, and the bibliography from book one has a useful supplement. Just as the Northumbria Community continues to grow and flourish, so in the second book we are taken deeper into its spirituality, which has grown out of its experiences in seeking God down through the years and from across the world, and we are the richer for it.

Luke Penkett
Seeking direction?

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