

Southwark's rich Catholic history

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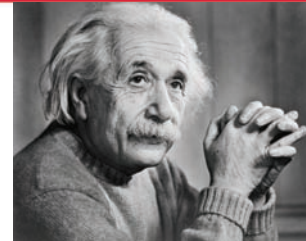
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## England to be re-dedicated to Our Lady



*Pictured, the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham is carried through the streets of central London to Parliament during the March for Life last year.*

### Greg Watts

England is to be dedicated to Our Lady, just as it was under King Richard II in 1381.

The re-dedication will take place across the country on Sunday, 29th March, and is fulfilled by a communal act of prayer through the reciting of two specially written prayers, "The Angelus Promise" and "The Act of Entrustment", ideally at 12 noon. Schools are invited to take part in the re-dedication on Monday, 30th March.

People are being invited to "host" a re-dedication, either in their home, in a church, school, or anywhere else. So far, St George's Cathedral; St Bede's, Clapham; the parish of Westerham and Biggin Hill; and the Friends of the Holy Father prayer group at St Anselm's, Tooting

Bec, have agreed to host a re-dedication.

Mass will be celebrated on 29th March at the Catholic National Shrine and Basilica of Our Lady at Walsingham followed by a procession with the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham to the site of the original Holy House in the Priory grounds, where the re-dedication will take place.

Those who take part in the re-dedication will receive a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions, which include receiving the Eucharist and praying for the pope. These must be carried out within seven days before or after the re-dedication.

The first dedication was made by King Richard II in Westminster Abbey as he sought the protection of Our Lady in the face of the Peasants'

Revolt in 1381. Richard, who was crowned king at the age of ten, was just 14 at the time. At this point, England received the title "Mary's Dowry", (the title is believed to originate in the time of St Edward the Confessor in the 11th century) meaning that England was "set aside" as a gift, a dowry, for Our Lady and placed under her guidance and protection.

The Wilton Diptych, a small portable altarpiece completed around 1395, and which now hangs in the National Gallery, depicts Richard II being presented to the Virgin and Christ Child by St Edmund and St Edward the Confessor, England's patron saints at the time, and his personal patron, John the Baptist. The Cross of St George is carried by a nearby angel. At the meeting of the Bishops'

Conference in November 2017, the proposal from the Catholic National Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham, that a Dowry tour be undertaken around all the Catholic English cathedrals, was agreed. The purpose of the tour was three-fold:

- To promote the understanding of the message of Our Lady at Walsingham and to encourage pilgrimage to the shrine.
- To have a triduum of prayer for each diocese in its cathedral.
- To promote an understanding of the ancient Marian title of England, Mary's Dowry, leading to the re-dedication on the Sunday after the Annunciation on the 29th March 2020.

The tour will have visited all of the dioceses in England before the date of the re-dedication. It visited

St George's Cathedral last February. The final visit will be to Westminster Cathedral from 19th - 22nd March.

Amanda de Pulford, who runs courses at Minster Abbey in painting icons, has produced a dowry painting. It is hoped that Pope Francis will be able to bless it in Rome this month.

After the re-dedication in Walsingham, the painting will begin a journey to every parish in England.

For more information, visit [www.behold2020.com](http://www.behold2020.com), which offers a range of resources for the re-dedication.

• See p2 for Cardinal Bernard Griffin's act of consecration of England and Wales to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1948.



# Reconnecting with our childhood

## Bishop Paul Hendricks

“So they went off together. But wherever they go, and whatever happens to them on the way, in that enchanted place on the top of the Forest, a little boy and his bear will always be playing.”

The closing words of *The House at Pooh Corner* hint at a magical period of childhood, forever preserved. Though our memory of it may grow dim, perhaps there is a sense in which that magical place remains deep within us, capable of being rediscovered when the time is right.

I was reminded of this recently while watching the film *Goodbye Christopher Robin*. The instant popularity and the phenomenal sales of *Winnie the Pooh* and A.A. Milne’s other children’s books, suggest that they unwittingly tapped into something very profound in the mind of their readers.

Some of this may have come from a desire to reconnect with all that is normal, peaceful and wholesome – at a time when the lives of so many had been shattered by the horrors of the First World War. Perhaps there was also an awareness that the war had permanently discredited the old certainties and the established values, leaving a sense of lost innocence and a

vanished world.

Milne himself was one of the many who never truly recovered from his experiences in the trenches. His move from London to Sussex was partly motivated by a desire to get away from the noise and the crowds, which often triggered what we’d now call ‘post-traumatic stress’.

He also wanted some peace and quiet in which he could write a book on the theme that was so dear to his heart – to argue the need for an organisation to ensure that nations did not have to resort to warfare in order to resolve their conflicts.

At first, though, inspiration was lacking and he made no progress. Then, in a sense, he was forced out of himself by a combination of circumstances which left him and Christopher Robin (known in the family as “Billy Moon”) to look after themselves.

For the first time, they connect on a personal level, wandering around the woods, playing games and doing all the sorts of things you might imagine from the books: playing poohsticks, finding the ‘North Pole’ and building a house of sticks for Eeyore. After a time, they are joined by Milne’s friend Ernest, the E.H. Shepherd whose drawings would become so essential

to the appeal of the books themselves.

Unfortunately, the very popularity of the books makes huge demands on the family, and especially on Billy himself, as he’s shunted around from one publicity event to another. He feels increasingly that the public character of Christopher Robin is taking over his life – and he begins to feel exploited, even by his father.

After many tribulations, including boarding school and the Second World War, Billy finds a sort of peace with his past, but only by resolutely saying goodbye to Christopher Robin!

The tendency of adults to idealise childhood has often been commented on, but perhaps this is inevitable. The past only takes shape in our mind as we look back on it – and we become fully conscious of it only at the moment when we realise that it is already passing away.

Milne’s readers were moved by his stories, because they found in them some sort of answer to their own emotional issues. I suspect that it is much the same with the stories that stir our own imagination – and that, in contemplating art of any sort, an awareness of our own responses can help us better understand ourselves.

## Act of consecration

# ‘O Mother of Mercy, obtain peace for us from God...’

On 16th July, 1948, on the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, in the abbey grounds at Walsingham, Cardinal Bernard Griffin offered this act of consecration of England and Wales to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

“Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, Refuge of the Human Race, Victress in all God’s battles, we humbly prostrate ourselves before thy throne, confident that we shall receive mercy, grace and bountiful assistance and protection in the present calamity, not through our own inadequate merits, but solely through the great goodness of thy Maternal Heart.

To Thee, to thy Immaculate Heart in this humanity’s tragic hour, we consign and consecrate ourselves in union not only with the Mystical Body of thy Son, Holy Mother Church, now in such suffering and agony in so many places and sorely tried in so many ways, but also with the entire world, torn by fierce strife, consumed in a fire of hate, victim of its own wickedness.

May the sight of the widespread material and moral destruction, of the sorrows and anguish of countless fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, and innocent children, and of the tortured and agonised souls in danger of being lost eternally, move thee to compassion.

O Mother of Mercy, obtain peace for us from God and above all procure for us those graces which prepare, establish and assure that peace!

Queen of Peace, pray for us and give to the world the peace for which all peoples are longing, peace in the truth, justice and charity of Christ. Give peace to the nations and to the souls of men, that in the tranquility of order the Kingdom of God may prevail.

Extend thy protection to the infidels and to all those still in the shadow of death; give them peace and grant that on them, too, may shine the sun of truth, that they may unite with us in proclaiming before the one and only Saviour of the world “Glory to God in the highest and peace to men of good will.”

Give peace to the peoples separated by error or by discord, and especially to those who profess such singular devotion to thee and in whose homes an honoured place was ever accorded thy venerated image (to-day perhaps kept hidden to await better days): bring them back to the fold of Christ under the one true shepherd.

Obtain peace and complete freedom for the Holy Church of God; stay the spreading flood of modern paganism; enkindle in the faithful the love of purity, the practice of Christian life, and an apostolic zeal, so that the servants of God may increase in merit and number.

Lastly, as the Church and the entire human race were consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, so that in reposing all hope in Him, He might become for them the sign and pledge of victory and salvation; so we in like manner consecrate ourselves forever also to thee and to thy Immaculate Heart, Our Mother and Queen, that thy love and patronage may hasten the triumph of the Kingdom of God and that all nations, at peace with one another and with God, may proclaim thee blessed and with thee may raise their voices to resound from pole to pole in the chant of the everlasting Magnificat of glory, love and gratitude to the Heart of Jesus, where alone they can find truth and peace.

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### Area bishops Kent

The Kent pastoral area is awaiting the appointment of a new bishop. In the meantime, matters concerning it should be directed to its episcopal vicar, Canon John O’Toole.  
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# Canon John is Kent's new episcopal vicar

Canon John O'Toole has been appointed as episcopal vicar for Kent.

Canon O'Toole has worked at the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales since January 2015 as national ecumenical officer and Secretary to the Department for Dialogue and Unity.

Prior to this, he had been dean of St George's Cathedral.

He will take over the role from Monsignor Matthew Dickens at the start of this month and remain in it until a new auxiliary bishop is appointed by the Holy See.

Canon John admitted that he was surprised when he received the news of his new appointment. "I first heard the idea suggested when I met Monsignor Matthew in the autumn to discuss my return to the diocese at the end of January 2020 after

finishing my five-years at the Bishops' Conference as the national ecumenical officer."

Canon John, who was born in Dublin, grew up in Chatham from the age of eight and attended St John Fisher School. He was ordained at St Michael's church in Chatham in 1978.

"Ironically, I have never had an appointment in Kent since my ordination as my appointments have been either in the south-west or south-east areas of the diocese or outside the diocese," said Canon John.

"I have enjoyed all my appointments and so I am looking forward to what will be a new chapter in my life and ministry - but without fully realising what being an episcopal vicar will have in store for me."



## Major Becket exhibition announced to mark 850th anniversary of martyrdom

The British Museum is to stage a year-long programme of events in London and Kent to mark the 850th anniversary of the murder of St Thomas a Becket in Canterbury Cathedral.

"Becket2020" will include a major new production of T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* in Canterbury Cathedral in October in conjunction with The Marlowe Theatre.

The Cathedral will also host a special choral evensong service to commemorate Becket's martyrdom.

The Museum of London will display a selection of their collection of pilgrim badges, and visitors will be encouraged to undertake their own mini-pilgrimage through the museum's Medieval London Gallery from 14th February through to October 2020.

The programme of events culminates in the first-ever major UK exhibition to explore Becket's life, death and legacy which will open at the British Museum in October. Highlights include a number of



reliquaries which once contained precious relics of Thomas Becket.

St Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral by four knights with close ties to his former friend King Henry II.

Becket was canonised by Pope Alexander III and his shrine at Canterbury became a major centre of European pilgrimage before being destroyed on the orders of Henry VIII in the early years of the English Reformation.

## Diocesan picnic at Aylesford

Archbishop John is inviting parishes to a diocesan celebration in June at The Friars, Aylesford, to mark "The God Who Speaks: The Year of the Word."

The event will be held on 27th June, beginning with Mass at 12 noon and followed by a picnic and barbeque. There will also be a keynote speaker and a programme of events.

On the day before, Archbishop John will be celebrating a similar day with the young people of the schools and college in the diocese.

## Catholic MP speaks of knife horror

In her maiden speech in the House of Commons, Catholic Florence Eshalomi, Labour MP for Vauxhall, spoke about going to the aid of a 15-year-old who had been stabbed.

"I was one of the first people on the scene," she said. "I made the frantic phone call to the emergency services, as I and two other members of the public tried to stem the flow of blood from the young boy."

"I was scared. I was sad, because some members of the public walked past. We cannot become desensitised to the issue of knife crime. Young people in my constituency are being groomed for violence, and there has been an increase in fatal stabbings over recent years."

"In this Parliament, I will continue to speak up for investment in youth services and creating positive opportunities for our young people, so that they do not see



selling drugs as a way to make money."

Ms Eshalomi was elected last December. She grew up in Brixton in a single parent family. She attended St Helen's RC Primary School, Bishop Thomas Grant Secondary School in Streatham, and St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College in Clapham, where she took her A-levels. She is a parishioner of Our Lady of the Rosary Church on Brixton Road.

## Help for seafarers

Stella Maris Apostleship of the Sea has launched a new directory of port chaplains around the world.

The directory lists the contact details of 230 chaplains in 300 ports and terminals in 41 countries. Among them is John Fogarty, port chaplain to the Medway and Dover.

The directory helps seafarers get quick access to pastoral and practical support wherever they are in the world. It also highlights the ports, including Sheerness, in which Stella Maris seafarers' centres are located.



Stella Maris CEO Martin Foley said, "Stella Maris has the largest ship visiting network globally and our experience shows that face-to-face contact is unique and irreplaceable. This directory provides seafarers useful points of contact should they need urgent support and assistance."

This year, Stella Maris, which was founded in Glasgow, celebrates its centenary.

## Swanley Catenians' milestone



The Swanley circle of the Catenian Association recently held their 400th Circle meeting with a celebratory dinner attended by members, wives and clergy from local parishes. Also present was the Kent Catenian provincial president Michael Reidy.

The Catenian Association is an organization of Catholic laymen whose primary purpose is to establish a network of friends, which enhances their family life, strengthens their faith and sustains them in difficult times. Members support each other, the Church, young people and those in need.

• To find out more, visit [www.kentcatenians.org](http://www.kentcatenians.org) or email: [info@kentcatenians.org](mailto:info@kentcatenians.org).

## New cathedral website

St George's Cathedral has a new web site.

The site contains details on all services and events, as well as parish news, choir details, information about the history of the cathedral and how to get in contact or hire the Amigo Hall.

Canon Richard Hearn, dean of the cathedral, said the web site allows the cathedral to welcome virtual visitors from around the world who are unable to visit it in person.

The web site's contemporary design is thanks to the work of Glow New Media and the cathedral staff. Its mages have been provided by Marcin Mazur and Seb Budner, who is also one of the cathedral choir lay clerks.

[www.stgeorgescathedral.org.uk](http://www.stgeorgescathedral.org.uk)

## Coulsdon Bible initiative

St Aidan's parish in Coulsdon is celebrating "The God Who Speaks: The year of the Word" by giving those attending Mass small scrolls containing Bible verses. The scrolls mark key points in the liturgical year and are focused on the theme of the week's readings. The idea was sparked by Pope Francis urging Catholics to carry a Bible in their pocket.

A parishioner has created a set of lectionary covers designed for the various liturgical seasons, each one embroidered in gold work. The cover designs draw inspiration from ancient works of art, such as the Lindisfarne Gospels, and also incorporate a modern flourish.

# Archdiocese confirms West Malling closure

The archdiocese has decided to sell St Thomas More church in West Malling and the adjacent The Hermitage and nursery.

The decision has been made because of the cost of repairs to the properties and on going maintenance. It follows consultations over several months with parish priest Fr Peter Soper, representatives of the parish and trustees of the archdiocese.

Alternative arrangements will be made for the celebration of Mass in West Malling.

Following Archbishop John's letter to parishioners in December about the sale of the site, an online petition was begun to save the church.

In January, Archbishop John issued a clarification statement in which he emphasised the the parish would continue. "The letter never proposed the closure of the parish, but the relocation of liturgical, spiritual and pastoral provision for the Catholic community of around 250 people who attend Mass each weekend across three Sunday Masses."

Fr Peter Soper said, "A church is not about a building, it's about the people. I believe that we have the strength to go forward."



Fr Peter Soper outside St Thomas More church.

## Candle ban after child hurt in Addiscombe church

Following a child being injured during a school nativity service at Our Lady of the Annunciation Church, Addiscombe, just before Christmas, the diocese has banned the use of lighted candles in churches by external organisations.

A pupil from St Thomas Becket Primary School had to be taken to hospital by air ambulance when the costume he was wearing caught alight from the candle he was holding.

Battery operated candles are allowed to be used in churches.

## Lord Butler offers classic advice during Streatham school visit

Lord Robin Butler spoke of the value of studying the classics in a lecture to pupils at Bishop Thomas Grant School in Streatham.

Speaking in the school's packed theatre, Lord Butler, a former private secretary to Margaret Thatcher and cabinet secretary to both John Major and Tony Blair, described how he liked puzzles as a child and enjoyed puzzling his way to the Latin roots of English words.

When he started to write his own Greek and Latin verse he discovered his facility with words, and once armed with the knowledge of these languages he set off on his travels to discover the classical world for himself.

He revealed to pupils how his encounter with the art, sculpture and literature of



ancient Greece awakened the romantic in him when he proposed to his wife on the Acropolis in Athens.

## Choose your favourite piece of scripture

To mark the year of "The God who Speaks", the Centre for Catholic Formation in Tooting Bec is inviting people to say what their favourite passages of scripture is and why it is import.

Later in the year, the Centre is planning to produce a booklet containing the entries.

To take part, post your choice to TGWS, 21 Tooting Bec Road, London, SW17 8BS, or complete the form on the Centre's web site, at [www.ccftootingbec.org.uk](http://www.ccftootingbec.org.uk).

## University appointment

St Mary's University in Twickenham, has announced the appointment of Anthony McClaran as its new vice-chancellor.

Mr McClaran joins St Mary's from the Australian Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, where he has served as chief executive since 2015.

He began his career at the University of Warwick and has held senior roles in Hull and Gloucestershire universities.



## Top tips from fashion designer

Students at St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College in Clapham were given some tips on their future careers by leading fashion designer Harold Kensington.

Harold studied BTEC Art and Design at St Francis Xavier before going to study at the London College of Fashion.

Since leaving college he has worked for Holly Fulton, Diane Von Furstenberg and Celine, where he met Kanye West, and was hired as senior womenswear designer for Yeezy.

He founded his own collection in 2016.

"The college doesn't make the student, you need to apply yourself," he told students. He also gave advice about working in a career in fashion and the importance of individual goals as well as working in a team.

## Polish concert at cathedral

A Polish concert celebrating Mary the Mother of Jesus will take place in St Georges Cathedral in May.

Organised by the Relief Society for Poles Trust, the "Maryja Matka" (Mary Mother) concert, dedicated specially to all mothers, will feature spiritual and contemporary songs, sung in both English and Polish.

Among those performing will be top pop and jazz singer Stanislaw Soyka, Karolina Leszko, who sang a duet in Krakow last year with Michael Buble, and the Polish Educational Society Schools Choir.

The concert will take place at 4pm on 23rd May.



Karolina Leszko will be among the performers



## Panic breaks out in Gravesend

Students from Christ the King Sixth Form College in Sidcup and Brockley were taken to The Panic Room in Gravesend to help them prepare for their BTEC exam in business marketing.

The students were asked to use their

problem-solving skills to break out of the themed rooms.

After this, the managing director of The Panic Room delivered an inspiring talk and Q & A on how they could market their business.

## Did you know...

The Pilgrim is now available online, making it possible to read all the editions since it was launched in 2011. To view it, visit the diocesan website at [www.rcsouthwark.co.uk](http://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk) and click on the link on the left hand side of the page.

## We want your news!

Email your stories to [pilgrim@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:pilgrim@rcaos.org.uk) or telephone 0208 776 9250.

# Discovering the fascinating history of Southwark

Joanna Bogle

Southwark diocese takes its name from the Southern bank of the Thames. It's a stretch of London that often gets neglected when the story of London is being told. And yet some of the most important events in our country's history took place here.

Some sixty years before the Norman Conquest, a major battle on London Bridge saw the defeat of pagan Viking invaders. King Olaf, who had led an earlier successful Viking invasion up the Thames, had become a Christian along with all his forces, as part of a peace treaty with the Saxons.

Now, in this new battle, he led the Saxons to victory against the new invaders - and pulled down London Bridge in the process. The story is that he put troops on to barges, topped with thatch, and they threw strong ropes around the struts of the bridge and rowed hard upstream, toppling the bridge so the Danish invaders couldn't take the city.

A later Saxon king wrote a poem about it... and some people believe that is the origin of the famous song 'London Bridge is burning down...'

The crucial bit is the last line: 'My fair lady!' The Battle of London Bridge was won on 8th September, which is the feast of Our Lady's birthday, and so Olaf and his team credited Mary's intercession for their victory.

There is a statue of St Olaf - he was canonised a century or so later - in the church of Our Lady of La Salette in Bermondsey, not far from London Bridge. A rather pleasing 1930s office block also carries his name and a fine picture of him on its corner wall, from where there is a walkway to the



Southwark Anglican cathedral

riverside.

Incidentally, 'sey' is a Viking name and always indicates an island - think of Anglesey off the coast of Wales, or Molesey, near Kingston. Bermondsey means 'beer island' and beer was brewed here until very recent years.

Further down-river at Greenwich

is the site of the martyrdom of St Elphege. He too belongs to Saxon times. An archbishop of Canterbury, he was captured by the Vikings and held to ransom.

The faithful people of the diocese wanted to pay the ransom but St Elphege would not let them, pointing out that the money would

go to further pagan raids and associated crimes and debaucheries. So the brave archbishop was killed - and it was a rather grim death, too. The furious Viking marauders who had captured him threw heavy rocks, filth, bones, and mud at him until he perished from his wounds. Walk back upriver towards

Waterloo and you will find the ancient church of St Mary Overie - now the Anglican cathedral - which has associations with the Harvard family, who emigrated to America and established the famous university that carries their name - and with Geoffrey Chaucer of the *Canterbury Tales*.

Not far away is the Catholic Church of the Most Precious Blood - known as MPB to locals - which has made history in recent years as it has one of the first shrines to newly-canonised St John Henry Newman. He was born just across the river, in a house that stood at the back of the Bank of England, where a blue plaque marks the fact.

Inland from the river stands our Cathedral of St George. It has lots of stories associated with it - most notably about its severe damage by bombing in World War II and subsequent rebuilding.

But did you know that its original architect, Augustus Welby Pugin, later became mentally ill and went to the Bethlehem Asylum, which stands opposite? It is now the Imperial War Museum, but for years was a famous mental hospital and gave us the word 'bedlam'.

It is rather bleak to think of Pugin lying there, perhaps glimpsing his masterpiece occasionally from a window...

When I lead History Walks around London, people always assume that it's only the 'famous bits' that are likely to be of interest.

But Southwark has many stories to tell. Come and join us on a walk around the archdiocese one day!

For more information, visit [www.catholichistorywalks.org](http://www.catholichistorywalks.org) or send an email to: [catholichistorywalks@gmail.com](mailto:catholichistorywalks@gmail.com).



St Olaf House near London Bridge

"St Olaf credited Mary's intercession for his victory... and a rather pleasing 1930s office block now carries his name ..."



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Join us on the journey ...

The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has designated 2020 as a year to focus on the Bible and "The God Who Speaks", inviting Catholics to rediscover the Bible and gain new insights. To support this initiative, throughout the year a number of special events will take place in Southwark archdiocese. Here, Greg Watts looks at the contribution of Fr Raymond E Brown in the understanding of the Bible

# How to understand the Bible

Fr Raymond E. Brown, who died in 1998, was regarded as one of the most influential Catholic biblical scholars of modern times. His illustrious career included working on the Dead Sea Scrolls at American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, attending the Second Vatican Council as an expert, and being Auburn Professor of Biblical Studies at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

He wrote over 40 books, including *An Introduction to the New Testament* and *The Gospel and Epistles of John*, edited the *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, and served on the Pontifical Biblical Commission.

In 2018 Donald Senior published a biography of him, *Raymond E. Brown and the Catholic Biblical Renewal*.

Here are edited extracts from Raymond E. Brown's 1990 book, *Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible*.

**Q. The description of the Bible as the word of God is not particularly clear. Am I wrong in thinking that "word of God" means different things to different people?**

In analysing "the word of God" let me begin with the "God" part of the description. What is being said is that this body of work comes from God, or is related to God in a unique way. God supplies guidance in many ways, for example, through the Church, through official teaching, through families. And, of course, he supplies guidance, not only in the Christian religion, but in Judaism, and in other religions. God is never silent to those of good faith who seek Him.

But in the Judeo-Christian tradition about the Bible, God has given his unique guidance in preserved written form, which constitutes his dealings with Israel and the Early Church.

If we turn to the "word" part of the description, we are allowing

that there is a human element in the Bible. People speak words and make audible sounds, and every word in the Scriptures was written down by a human being. A human being thought of the biblical words, and they reflect meaning and experience in the human author's lifetime. Thus if I may speak broadly, there is a type of incarnate aspect to the Scriptures: God has conveyed His guidance in and through human words. It is probably the "word" aspect of the description that provokes the diversity of approach as to what "word of God" means.

A literalist approach assumes that God dictates almost to the degree that the words themselves come from God and are merely handwritten by the human being. A more subtle form of this has at least a mental dictation by God. The greater degree to which one allows a true human composition and human choice of the words, the more one recognises the combination of the truly divine and the truly human in the Scriptures.

The literalist approach has implications about lack of error and a totality of knowledge in the Bible, including scientific and historical

knowledge. Every statement in the Bible must be literally true and complete. The more that one allows a true human element in the Scriptures, the more one can allow for limitations of knowledge and, at times, errors.

**Q. What do you mean by speaking of the Bible as a library?**

Often we speak of "the Bible" in the singular as if it were one book. That pays tribute to the divine origins. Nevertheless, the Bible is a collection of some 70 books (In the Roman Catholic estimation 73; in the Protestant estimation 66). But my "library" approach is not concerned only with the number of books; what is important is the recognition that the Bible contains books of different literary genres, written at different times and different places.

Perhaps the Old Testament books took shape 800 or 700 years before Christ, even though some of the traditions that are preserved in them were written hundreds of years earlier; the last New Testament book to be written was probably in the early second century. That is why one tends to estimate a thousand years of

written composition.

In this period of time, biblical authors would have been facing very different problems and would represent different stages of theological perception that would condition the way in which they reported God's revelation. We are not to assume that the human author was the whole issue. The part of the issue that was seen by him was shaped by what would be of help to his contemporaries. The idea that God was speaking through the human author ie, communicating, does not remove that limitation, because God always deals with people as they are and respects their humanity.

**Q. What practical effects result from considering the Bible as a collection of books in a library rather than as one book?**

Here terminology has great practical effects. When somebody comes up to me and states, "The Bible says this," my first tendency will be to respond, "Which book of the Bible?" On a given topic, one can have biblical authors responding very differently to the same issue.

Moreover, an approach to the Bible as a library affects the expectation of the readers as they open the pages of a particular

author. In a modern library, books are on the shelf according to their subject matter: there is a section for history, for biography, for novels, for drama, for poetry, etc. If one walks into a library and asks for a book, the first question from the librarian will be, "What kind of book?" That also is a very important question to ask in reading the Bible.

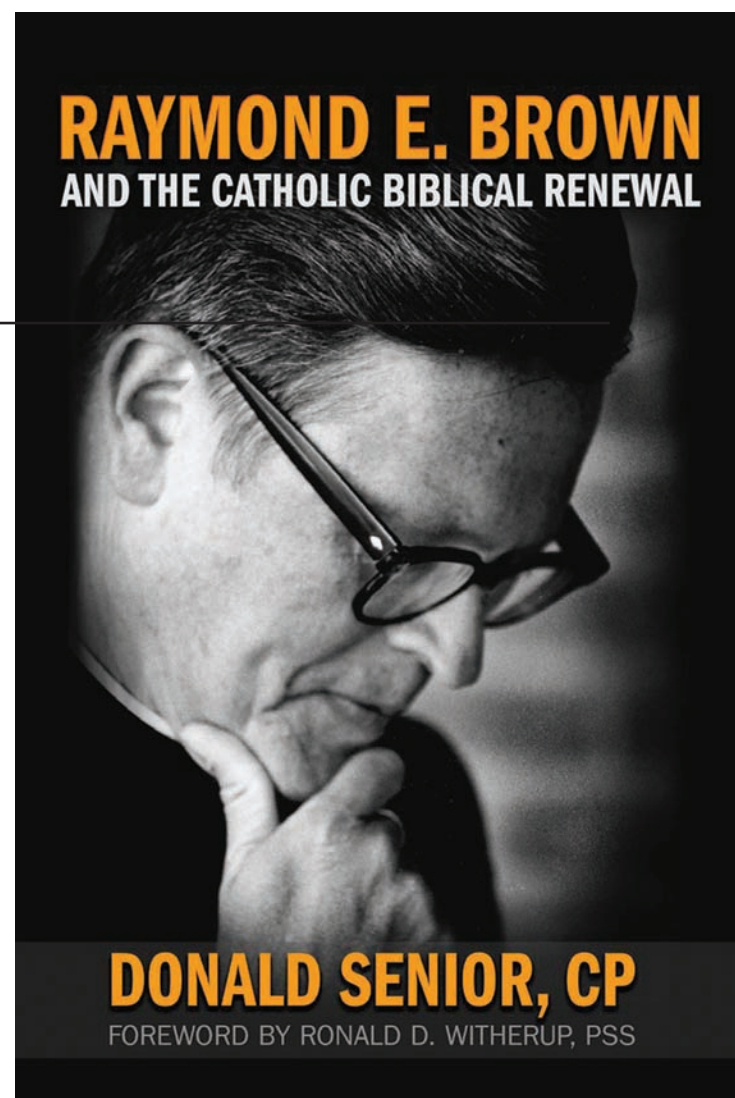
Some of the most serious mistakes of biblical interpretation have flowed from an assumption, quite unwarranted, that all the books of the Bible are history. Today, books have dust jackets that tell the reader the genre of the book, and readers automatically adjust their mindset to an expectation in light of that information.

No one picks up a Sherlock Holmes story and expects to read an accurate history of a character who lived in London at the end of the last century. The biblical books do not come with dust jackets, and an important task of scholarship is to supply an introduction to each book that helps to identify it.

People have wasted time measuring fish gullets in order to prove the historicity of the Book of Jonah. An introduction that tells the reader that this is a parable, not history, saves a good deal of confusion.

**Q. Don't we believe any more in the inspiration of the Bible?**

Certainly I do. And so far as I know, most centrist biblical scholars would not reject that terminology, provided its implications are understood correctly... Often it is thought that inspiration makes everything history. It does not; there can be inspired poetry, drama, legend, fiction, etc. If the Book of Jonah is a parable and not history,



*Fr Raymond E. Brown at work. He compiled a concordance for the Dead Sea Scrolls (pictured facing page) some dating back to the third century BC, which were discovered in the Qumran Caves in the Judaean Desert on the northern shore of the Dead Sea between 1946 and 1956.*



One of the manuscripts that make up the Dead Sea Scrolls

then God's inspiration makes it an inspired parable. The truth that it conveys about God's desire to convert all nations to the recognition of His name and to a moral way of life that will bring them happiness is a truth that we can accept as God's inspired word for us.

Inspiration does not mean that we have to believe that a historical figure named Jonah was swallowed by a large fish. We would have to deal with the factuality of that only if the Book of Jonah were inspired history. Similarly, if the first chapters of Genesis are not classified in the branch of the library called science, but in the branch of the library called religious lore and legends, we would still accept the creation of the world by God as the inspired truth conveyed by those chapters.

We would not, however, have to accept the Genesis description as a scientific account of the origins of the world. It could be an account that the author learned from the legendary imaginings of his people and of other peoples and that he used to convey the truth he was really interested in, namely, that God is sovereign of all and creator of the universe. Thus there is no contradiction between acceptance

of inspiration and acceptance of different literary genres, or forms, or styles in the Bible.

**Q. But how far do we go in not taking biblical stories literally? What about Adam and Eve?**

When I was in seminary I was

taught a very literalist approach to the existence of Adam and Eve. In part that was because of a response of the Roman Pontifical Biblical Commission at the beginning of the century specifying that certain parts of the Genesis story should be taken literally, including the appearance

of the devil in the form of a serpent.

We were told that we had to accept as factual that the first woman was formed from the first man and there was a unity to the human race in the sense that all human beings were descended from

that first set of parents.

The issue of whether there was one or many sets of parents is partly a scientific issue, and therefore when speaking religiously we should be wary of aligning ourselves too firmly with one or the other scientific position since neither is proved.

The genuine concern in the Adam and Eve story is that, whether there was one set of parents or more, they were all created by God in the sense that God breathed into them a living soul.

Furthermore, they were created good, not evil. Nevertheless, there is in human beings a basic sinful tendency which goes beyond personal sins we may commit; and this basic tendency towards evil is part of the corruption that human beings have introduced into the world, not an endowment of God.

Thus we could preserve the core of the concept of "original sin" (even if that terminology is not technically biblical but reflects more the articulation of St Augustine and other early Church Fathers). We could also recognise how well the ingenious biblical story of Adam and Eve conveyed the idea of sin and its origins and not think that we will find a better modern substitute for telling that story.

## THE CATHOLIC BIBLE'S BOOKS

OLD TESTAMENT	1 <b>Gn</b> GENESIS 10	2 <b>Ex</b> EXODUS 40	3 <b>Lv</b> LEVITICUS 27	4 <b>Nm</b> NUMBERS 38	5 <b>Dt</b> DEUTERONOMY 34	6 <b>Jos</b> JOSHUA 24	7 <b>Jc</b> JUDGES 21	8 <b>Rt</b> RUTH 04	9 <b>1 Sm</b> 1 SAMUEL 31	10 <b>2 Sm</b> 2 SAMUEL 24		
	11 <b>1 Ki</b> 1 KINGS 22	12 <b>2 Ki</b> 2 KINGS 25	13 <b>1 Ch</b> 1 CHRONICLES 29	14 <b>2 Ch</b> 2 CHRONICLES 36	15 <b>Ez</b> EZRA 10	16 <b>Ne</b> NEHEMIAH 13	17 <b>Tb</b> TOBIT 14	18 <b>Jdt</b> JUDITH 16	19 <b>Es</b> ESTHER 10	20 <b>1 Mac</b> 1 MACCABEES 16	21 <b>2 Mac</b> 2 MACCABEES 15	22 <b>Jb</b> JOB 42
	23 <b>Ps</b> PSALMS 150	24 <b>Pr</b> PROVERBS 31	25 <b>Ec</b> ECCLESIASTES 12	26 <b>So</b> SUF OF SOLOMON 18	27 <b>Wis</b> WISDOM 14	28 <b>Sir</b> SIRACH 31	29 <b>Is</b> ISAIAH 66	30 <b>Je</b> JEREMIAH 52	31 <b>Lm</b> LAMENTATIONS 05	32 <b>Ba</b> BARUCH 08	33 <b>Ek</b> EZEKIEL 48	34 <b>Dn</b> DANIEL 12
	35 <b>Ho</b> HOSEA 14	36 <b>Jl</b> JOEL 04	37 <b>Am</b> AMOS 09	38 <b>Ob</b> OBADIAH 05	39 <b>Jh</b> JONAH 04	40 <b>Mi</b> MICAH 07	41 <b>Na</b> NAHUM 03	42 <b>Hk</b> HABAKKUK 03	43 <b>Zp</b> ZECHARIAH 14	44 <b>Ha</b> HAGGAI 02	45 <b>Zc</b> ZECHARIAH 14	46 <b>Ml</b> MALACHI 04
<b>INFO</b> "Bible" comes from the greek βιβλία ("The books"). The Catholic Bible contains 73 books: 46 from the Old Testament and 27 from the New Testament.												
NEW TESTAMENT	47 <b>Mt</b> MATTHEW 28		48 <b>Mk</b> MARK 16		49 <b>Lk</b> LUKE 24		50 <b>Jn</b> JOHN 21		51 <b>Ac</b> ACTS 28			
	52 <b>Ro</b> ROMANS 16	53 <b>1 Co</b> 1 CORINTHIANS 16	54 <b>2 Co</b> 2 CORINTHIANS 13	55 <b>Ga</b> GALATIANS 06	56 <b>Ep</b> EPHESIANS 06	57 <b>Pp</b> PHILIPPIANS 04	58 <b>Cl</b> COLLOSSIANS 04	59 <b>1 Th</b> 1 THESSALONIANS 05	60 <b>2 Th</b> 2 THESSALONIANS 05	61 <b>1 Ti</b> 1 TIMOTHY 06	62 <b>2 Ti</b> 2 TIMOTHY 06	63 <b>Tt</b> TITUS 03
	64 <b>Pm</b> PHILEMON 01	65 <b>Hb</b> HEBREWS 13	66 <b>Ja</b> JAMES 05	67 <b>1 Pe</b> 1 PETER 05	68 <b>2 Pe</b> 2 PETER 03	69 <b>1 Jn</b> 1 JOHN 05	70 <b>2 Jn</b> 2 JOHN 01	71 <b>3 Jn</b> 3 JOHN 01	72 <b>Ju</b> JUDAS 01	73 <b>Re</b> REVELATIONS 22		
	<b>KEY</b>		<b>PENTATEUCH</b>		<b>SAPIENTIAL</b>		<b>MINOR PROPHETS</b>		<b>PAULINE LETTERS</b>		<b>GENERAL LETTERS</b>	
<b>HISTORICAL</b>		<b>MAJOR PROPHETS</b>		<b>GOSPELS</b>		<b>REVELATIONS</b>		<b>Number</b> <b>Symbol</b> NAME Chapters				

*‘Often we speak of “the Bible” in the singular as if it were one book. That pays tribute to the divine origins. Nevertheless, the Bible is a collection of some 70 books... but my “library” approach is not concerned only with the number of books; what is important is the recognition that the Bible contains books of different literary genres, written at different times and different places.’*

# My Parish: St Augustine of Canterbury, Royal Tunbridge Wells

Rev Kevin Dunne

**The area:** Tunbridge Wells was awarded the title "Royal" by King Edward VII because his mother Queen Victoria liked visiting the town very often. Our main shopping centre is also named after her.

The parish is made up of Tunbridge Wells plus Hawkenbury and High Brooms, together with the villages of Rusthall, Langton Green, Speldhurst, Peshurst and Groombridge. The River Grom runs through the area, with south of it being in Sussex and Arundel & Brighton diocese and north of it in Kent and the diocese of Southwark.

**Catholic population:** Our parish numbers about 4,500 and our Sunday Mass attendance about 850. The congregation is very international. Apart from the usual mix of English, Irish and Italian, we now have a large number of people from the Philippines, Poland and the Kerala region of India.

We have five Masses at the weekend, including Saturday evening. We have two morning Masses every day, plus an evening Mass on Fridays. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is held from 8am to 8pm on Mondays and Fridays and 8am to 1pm on Tuesday and Thursdays.

Sunday worship is organised for the children at our family Mass by our parish catechist and the rosary is said after the 10 am Mass each day for a different intention each week.

**Local Catholic schools:** St Augustine's Primary School in Wilman Road and St Gregory's Comprehensive school in Reynolds

Lane, which cover the Tunbridge Wells deanery area plus north east Sussex. The private school of Beechwood Sacred Heart in Pembury Road is an all-age school.

**Parish groups:** We have 76 extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Apart from assisting at all the Masses, there are 24 who take Holy Communion to parishioners in the care homes, nursing homes, and their own homes every week. We have a large group of readers, two choirs, one for the family Mass each week and a traditional choir for the 11.15 am Mass, which is sung in English and Latin on alternative months.

A unique second collection is taken every week. It started after the church had been paid for; the then parish priest decide to carry on with the collection and support charities, local, national and international. The collection raises about £800 each week. If there is an international disaster, it goes up to about £2,000, which is then sent to Cafod, which distributes it on behalf of our international committee.

We are twinned with a parish in Kompong Thom, Cambodia, which some parishioners have visited. Our support is financial and prayerful. We have had a Cambodian priest in our parish and we arranged for him to have English lessons.

On Harvest Sunday, all the local churches and schools send their contributions to St Augustine's, which we distribute to all the needy throughout the year. We also get other contributions throughout the year, so we operate our own foodbank.

Together with other churches we provide food every night in the local car park opposite the church for



people in need, such as those who are alcoholics, are drug dependent, or sleeping rough.

The evangelisation team organises talks about the faith and creates leaflets and prayer, which are distributed in the town. We promote 24-hour exposition with the Blessed Sacrament.

There are four prayer groups in the parish: Cenacolo, Charismatic, Christian mediation and Mothers Prayers. We also have very active Rainbows, Brownies and Guides, and Beavers, Cubs and Scouts.

**Parish history:** The parish, or mission, was set up by the Jesuits. The church was built in 1838. By

1967 it was not large enough for the growing community, so the site was sold to Tesco. It was another seven years before a new church was built. For the first years Mass was celebrated at St Gregory's school and Beechwood Sacred Heart school. When our new parish hall over the Tesco store became available it became our new Mass centre, and was affectionately known as 'St. Tesco'.

With great delight our new church was built 1975 and blessed by Archbishop Cyril Cowderoy.

**Parish Clergy:** Our parish priest is Canon Peter Stodart, who has been with us for 15 years. He is also Dean

of Tunbridge Wells.

He is assisted by Fr Josaphat Ezenwa, from Nigeria, who has been with us for 23 years, and Fr Emanuel Onwu, who arrived last year and who is also from Nigeria.

I have been married to Jean for 58 years. We have three children, six grandchildren and three great grandchildren. I am retired after working for 40 years with British Gas and have been a deacon for 31 years. I've also been chaplain to St Augustine's school.

Previously, I was assistant director for the permanent diaconate and the archbishop's delegate for the pastoral care of permanent deacons and their wives.

## It's a wrench to lose my car... but it's the right choice

Lucy Russell

I've sold my car. It was quite an emotional experience. I learned to drive when I was 17, but I never liked driving much. The night before my test I prayed to God, asking for help just to get through it and pass, promising never to take any unnecessary risks.

I had started to take lessons, like all of my friends, because we were teenagers and it was a rite of passage. But for me it became something I just wanted to achieve and put on my CV. I passed, and gave up driving almost immediately. It was easier and cheaper to use public transport to get over to St Edmund's School in Dover, where I was taking my A Levels.

It wasn't until my son James was four and starting school at St Mary's that I needed a car to get him to and fro. So, in 2010, I bought a second hand automatic Renault Modus. My godfather came out in it

with me a few times to build my confidence up - it had been 16 years since I had taken my test.

It all came back - driving must be just like riding a bike. For the last ten years I have nipped around the local area, taking the boys to school, clubs and birthday parties.

Just before Christmas, however, my car broke down - which it had started to do more often. I was using it less and less and it was costing more and more to keep on the road. I only actually needed it to take Edgar to school three mornings a week.

**"You're not Voldemort... it's not got part of your soul in it..."**

I get a lift to work with my husband, and my mum takes Edgar on the two days I teach. I walk to meet him in the afternoons because I think the exercise does us both good.

Keeping a car on the road for three short journeys a week plus an occasional trip to the swimming pool in St Margaret's or for a massage in Sandwich didn't make good financial sense.

There was something else, too. A few months ago I had been sitting at a busy junction in upper Deal with the windows down, thinking about the environmental impact of driving as I struggled to breathe in the fog of car fumes. Selling my car made more sense than keeping it going.

But giving it up was more of a wrench than I expected. That little car was the one I drove each of the boys to school in on their first day. It saw ten years of milestones. When we cleaned it out to sell it,



we found conkers and fir cones and stars that had been earned at swimming lessons.

"You're not Voldemort," said James, referring to the horcruxes created by the antagonist in the Harry Potter series to achieve immortality - using dark magic to split his soul into separate pieces

and put into different objects.

I wondered what scripture had to say about possessions. One particular quote struck me from St Luke about earthly possessions being used for heavenly purposes, "And so I tell you this: use money, tainted as it is, to win you friends, and thus make sure that when it fails you, they will welcome you into eternal dwellings" (Luke 16:9). We are advised to use what we have for the benefit of others.

My car was a part of my identity and gave me freedom and independence, but James was right, it didn't contain any part of my soul. It wasn't a part of me.

Selling it marks the end of one chapter and the beginning of a new one. This year Edgar will start secondary school and James will start his GCSEs. Life is moving on. So, looking to the future, I am thinking of a little electric car that, in three years, I can insure James on and share with him.



# Catholics need to know the Bible

**Father Ashley Beck**

Many of you know that in September, the Catholic Church in England and Wales launched a special year entitled "The God who Speaks."

This is a year devoted to the Bible, and the year marks the 1,600th anniversary of the death of St Jerome. Jerome was the theologian in the fourth and fifth centuries responsible for what became the standard and official Latin version of the Bible.

This is known as the "Vulgate". Jerome made use of some existing versions of the Bible in Latin (particularly for the New Testament) but also made many fresh translations from the Hebrew and Greek versions. The Vulgate became the standard Latin text of the Bible for many years, and was revised in 1979.

This special year of the Word is being organised by the Bishops Conference in collaboration with the Bible Society - you can download excellent material from [www.godwho speaks.uk](http://www.godwho speaks.uk), and some very good printed material has already been sent to parishes.

I don't want to replicate the official material here; rather, I would simply suggest you go to the site yourself. A number of special events are being organised within the diocese and details will be given



in your deaneries.

But the whole of my series of monthly articles this year will be devoted to exploring the Bible and its place in the Church and our lives, so I hope you will find it a helpful supplement to the official material.

For all Christians the Bible today is really at the heart of a paradox. On the one hand, modern technology has actually made it easier for most people in this country to access the Bible than ever before. You can download almost every translation and many commentaries - although as with everything else, some material you find online needs to be treated with caution or discarded.

What's more, Catholics hear in

church at Mass much more of the Bible than in the past. Before the revision of the pattern of Mass readings in 1969 most Catholics, for example, hardly ever heard the Old Testament read in church. There was only normally one reading at Mass before the gospel and it was almost always New Testament.

But in spite of this, most people know the Bible far less well than in the past. Fewer people go to church, and the Bible no longer plays the part it once played in schools which are not 'faith schools'.

You see the effects of this regularly at funerals and weddings, where people want to have poems or other material read which they find helpful (for example, "Death is

nothing at all"), so unfamiliar are they with the Scriptures.

Moreover, Catholics who come to Mass, while they hear more of the Bible read than in the past, and in modern, intelligible English, probably still have a long way to go in terms of knowing the Bible properly.

One simple question: how many of you reading this article actually possess a copy of the Bible? I don't ask this to make you feel guilty, but a good thing to do in this special year of the Word, if you haven't got one, would simply be to buy one.

This goes back a long way. Monsignor Ronald Knox, who produced a very fine translation of the Bible just after the Second World War, wrote once that when he was visiting a parish to preach and resting in the presbytery before the service he asked the parish priest for a Bible in order to check a reference. After a very long period of time the priest came back with one, blowing the dust off the volume.

But here we need to be careful - make sure you buy a Catholic Bible. I stress this not to be rude about other Christians, but simply because our Bible is not the same as most of those published in this country for Anglicans and Protestants.

This is because at the Reformation some Old Testament books (those which were only in the Greek

original and not the Hebrew) were removed by Protestant Reformers, whereas they remained in Catholic Bibles.

So you should get a good modern Catholic Bible in English that is easy to read, such as the various versions of the *Jerusalem Bible* (the original 1966 version is the one we use at Mass in this country. A very good new revised version has just come out, the *Revised New Jerusalem Bible*) - or the latest version (2006) of the *Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition*, or the *Catholic Community Bible*.

There are also some very good children's Bibles, and your clergy should be able to advise you.

In this series we will look at the some of the overall issues surrounding the ways in which we read the Bible, and at some general features of the books of the Bible themselves.

• See pages 6 & 7

Fr Ashley Beck is assistant priest of St Edmund's, Beckenham, and teaches at St Mary's University, Twickenham. For details of the MA degree in Catholic Social Teaching at St Mary's University, contact Fr Ashley on [ashleybeck@stmarys.ac.uk](mailto:ashleybeck@stmarys.ac.uk) or go to [www.stmarys.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses-london/catholic-social-teaching](http://www.stmarys.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses-london/catholic-social-teaching).

## Loneliness - the scourge of our modern world

**Sister Janet Fearn**

*"All the lonely people  
Where do they all come from?  
All the lonely people  
Where do they all belong?"*

The Beatles sang of Eleanor Rigby, a lonely woman who died alone, unmourned and presumably unloved, buried by an equally lonely priest, Fr Mckenzie, whose constant efforts to reach out to others remained unheard and fruitless.

Some years ago a woman's body was discovered in her house, sitting in front of the television where, post-mortem results revealed, she had died three years earlier. In all of that time, nobody had checked why she had not been seen. Her only companion had been the television, which continued to broadcast programmes long after the woman died. That was loneliness.

Regardless of our circumstances, loneliness is something that few, if any of us, escape. It can be soul-destroying, removing the joy and energy from life. Even those who, on the surface, might seem to have everything can often harbour an unfathomable depth of unshared pain.

Sometimes, religious belief and belonging to a faith community make a difference, helping us to shoulder our burden and find hope even when we are not ready to reveal our achingly lonely heart.

There is a difference between solitude, loneliness and being alone. Solitude and being alone can be massive powers for good. Most of us know what it is like to be alone but not lonely. Likewise, we might be in the middle of a bustling crowd and discover it to be the loneliest experience on earth.

We all have times when we need to be alone. It is incredibly difficult, for instance, to write thoughtfully in an office filled with people, each busy (and sometimes chattering) about their own affairs. We also know the longed-for peace and quiet of the



garden or a cup of coffee with the newspaper.

We value the time and place for praying with others in church, but also those moments when we can be alone with the Lord, quietly together with nobody else around to interrupt the tranquillity. Those occasions of aloneness are times of solitude, not of loneliness. If you like, it is the difference between Jesus choosing to climb a mountain to be alone in prayer with his Father and his agony on the Cross when he cried out, "My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?"

Loneliness is not solitude. Do you remember Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations, a Nobel Peace Prize winner and, quite possibly, a mystic? He wrote: "What makes loneliness an anguish is not that I have no one to share my burden, but this: I have only my own burden to bear."

Loneliness is painful. Solitude is beautiful

and like a glass of cold water on a hot day.

On 18th September 1961, in what might or might not have been an assassination, Hammarskjöld was killed in a plane crash over Zambia. In 2011, on the 50th anniversary of his death, the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, wrote, "What made Hammarskjöld withstand the enormous pressures of his office and kept him together as a person was his deep spirituality and devotion to God."

Through his deep relationship with God, Hammarskjöld - a Swedish Lutheran - was able to distinguish between loneliness and solitude. He also saw beyond loneliness to something greater, writing, "Pray that your loneliness may spur you into finding something to live for, great enough to die for".

A similar thing can be said of another Lutheran, Paul Tillich, a German and one of the greatest Protestant theologians of the 20th century. Like Hammarskjöld, he reflected on loneliness and solitude: "Our language has wisely sensed the two sides of being alone. It has created the word loneliness to express the pain of being alone. And it has created the word solitude to express the glory of being alone."

St Teresa of Calcutta wrote: "The greatest disease in the West today is not TB or leprosy; it is being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for.

"We can cure physical diseases with medicine, but the only cure for loneliness, despair, and hopelessness is love. There are many in the world who are dying for a piece of bread, but there are many more dying for a little love. The poverty in the West is a different kind of poverty. It is not only a poverty of loneliness, but also of spirituality. There's a hunger for love, as there is a hunger for God."

Apparently, in Britain, one in ten people suffers from chronic loneliness in an era of frenetic social networking. Anybody connected to Facebook, Linked-in or similar

sites is bombarded with friendship requests to become a "friend" but without engaging in the deep and meaningful communication which creates and nurtures true friendship.

Social networking sites allow us to collect hundreds of so-called friends. Real friends, however, are rare and precious jewels which cannot be gathered as if they were pebbles on a beach.

Friendship takes time. Friendship means sharing and caring at a deeply personal level; taking the risk of being seen "warts and all" in a mashed-up mess; trusting that our vulnerability and confusion will be cherished, protected and defended. Real friendship is a unique and irreplaceable treasure.

Socialising and the "me" culture often replace the primary relationship with a loving God and of a lifestyle in which I am not the centre of my own universe.

Pope Francis asked: "How many of our adolescents and young people sense that these is no longer any of that wine [of "strong love, fruitful love and joyful love"] to be found in their homes? How many women, sad and lonely, wonder when love left, when it slipped away from their lives? How many elderly people feel left out of family celebrations, cast aside and longing each day for a little love, from their sons and daughters, their grandchildren, their great grandchildren?"

We all experience loneliness at one time or another, but it need not be fatal. We need not become an Eleanor Rigby or a Fr Mckenzie.

Sometimes loneliness is simply another way of describing the times when, wallowing in my own misery (occasionally self-created), my eyes and heart are closed to those around me.

Perhaps "all those lonely people" are just waiting for my smile - and guess what? In reaching out to others, they reach out to me and strangers become friends.

# God, science and Einstein

Greg Watts talk to Alister McGrath, Professor of Science and Religion at Oxford University, about his latest book, *A Theory of Everything (That Matters)*, in which he explores the thinking of Albert Einstein.

**GW:** Remind us in simple terms why Einstein was such a major scientific thinker?

**AM:** Einstein was one of the most original and iconic scientific figures of the 20th century. He has appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine no fewer than six times and was lionised as its 'Person of the century' in 1999.

His equation  $E = mc^2$  has become the best-known scientific formula of all time

**GW:** What kind of concept of God did Einstein have?

**AM:** Einstein saw God as a mind behind the universe, the origin of its rational structure, its order and its beauty. But he did not believe in a "personal God." Atheist apologists often interpret this to mean that Einstein did not believe in God at all. This is clearly wrong. As Max Jammer, a personal friend of Einstein and Professor of Physics at Bar-Ilan University in Israel, points out in the most thorough and reliable examination of Einstein's religious views to date, Einstein "never considered his denial of a personal God as a denial of God" and was puzzled why anyone would even make this suggestion.

**GW:** What was Einstein's religious background?

**AM:** Einstein was born into a Jewish family, but does not appear to have been religiously observant in any way.

**GW:** How did the Churches respond when Einstein announced his theories?

**AM:** Most found it difficult to understand the science! In 1929, Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein asked Einstein whether he believed in God. Einstein's famous response was this: "I believe in Spinoza's God, who reveals himself in the orderly harmony of what exists, not in a God who concerns himself with the fates and actions of human beings."

**GW:** What do you think scientific knowledge has added to religious knowledge, especially in Christianity?

**AM:** Science amplifies the basic Christian idea that God created an ordered and beautiful world. It offers us a rich and powerful understanding of the created order, which helps us to understand why science works so well in many ways, while at the same time helping us appreciate the limits of science.

Einstein was very clear that science could help us understand how the universe functioned, but not what it meant. Christianity offers an intellectual and imaginative framework which helps us appreciate the meaning of the universe, and also our own individual meaning within that.

*"Einstein saw God as a mind behind the universe, the origin of its rational structure, its order and its beauty. But he did not believe in a "personal God." Atheist apologists often interpret this to mean that Einstein did not believe in God at all. This is clearly wrong"*  
Alister McGrath

**GW:** Broadly speaking, how would you describe the relationship between science and religion in the academic world?

**AM:** Fifty years ago, it was widely assumed that science and religion were in conflict, and the academic research literature was generally supportive of this view. But all that changed during the 1990s. The Oxford historian John Hedley Brooke has argued that serious scholarship in the history of science has revealed "so extraordinarily rich and complex a relationship between science and religion in the past that general theses are difficult to sustain. The real lesson turns out to be the complexity."

Brooke's analysis has found widespread support within the scholarly community. The leading Australian historian Peter Harrison has pointed out that "study of the historical relations between science and religion does not reveal any simple pattern at all," such as the myth of the "conflict" or "warfare" narrative which had been so influential.

Harrison notes, however, that for most of the time religion seems to have facilitated and encouraged scientific inquiry.

**GW:** In general, how well do you think the Churches have embraced scientific discoveries?

**AM:** The Churches are often cautious about embracing scientific discoveries, partly because of a lack



Professor Alister McGrath

of confidence in their understanding of science, and partly because the appreciation of the moral and religious significance of scientific innovations needs careful reflection. Many, for example, remember the 1989 "discovery" of "cold fusion", which some scientists prophesied would solve environmental pollution issues in energy production by providing a limitless and inexhaustible source of clean energy using only seawater as fuel. "Cold fusion" is now generally regarded as a theory that arose from mis-interpretation of experimental data.

**GW:** How do you see science and religion developing in the future? Do you think they will grow closer or drift further apart?

**AM:** It is impossible to predict this. The critical issue is the number of active scientists who also have religious faith, and are thus able to explain why they see both scientific and religious commitments as enriching and compatible. The dominant media narrative is that of the incompatibility of science and faith. Although this is complete nonsense, it is highly influential. Much of media culture remains locked into this approach.

**GW:** What could the Churches do to incorporate scientific insights more into its theology?

**AM:** I think the real issue is how the Churches explore how science enriches their theology - for

example, by discovering how the beauty and complexity of the natural world resonates with a Christian doctrine of creation.

However, I do think that the Churches also need to reflect on how a scientific culture's emphasis on justified belief, resting on evidence, applies in a religious context. There is growing public scepticism concerning the rationality of religious belief, and the Churches need to reflect on how best they can show that religious belief makes sense of our world and our lives, while resting on reliable foundations.

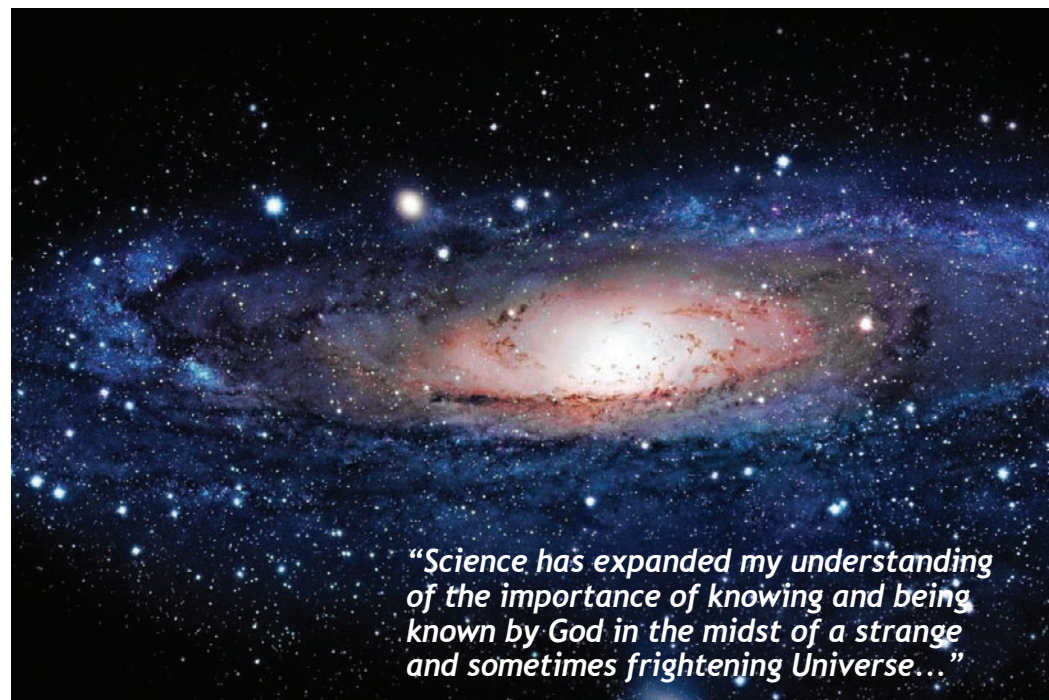
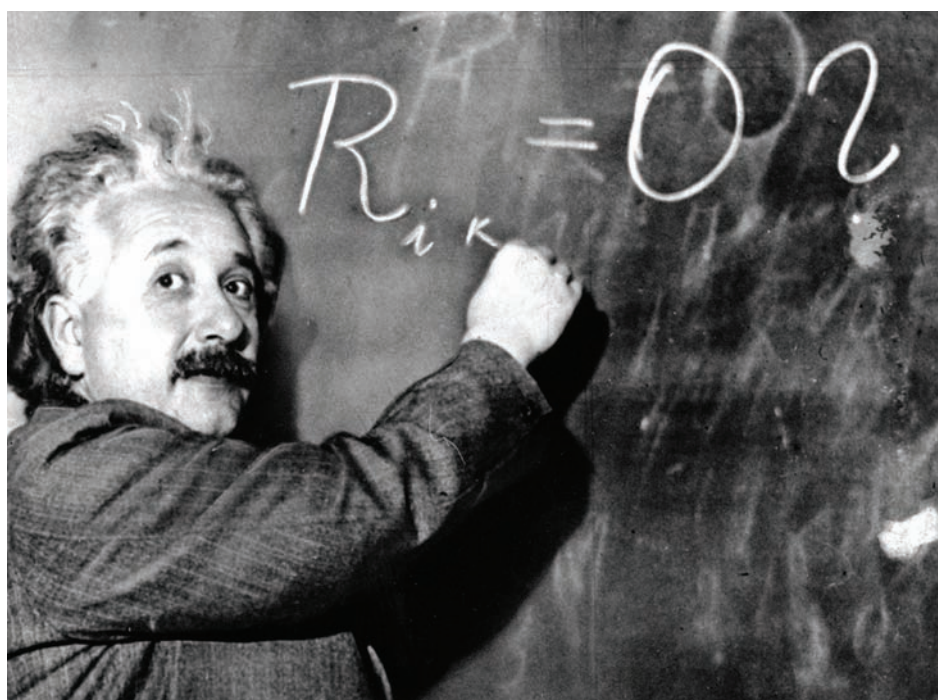
**GW:** How has science enriched your own faith?

**AM:** In many ways - perhaps most obviously by expanding my understanding of the importance of knowing and being known by God in the midst of a strange and sometimes frightening Universe.

I often reflect on Psalm 19:1 - "The heavens declare the glory of God." The vastness and beauty of the night sky help me appreciate the glory of God, offering me an imaginative enrichment of my vision of God.

The Psalm exults that we are named and loved by the God from whom all things come.

Our lives are touched by transcendence, in that God chooses to relate to those whom he created - a theme often explored in terms of the doctrine of the incarnation.



# Launch of Fatima devotion



The national statue of Our Lady of Fatima visiting St George's Cathedral in 2017.

## Donal Anthony Foley

The centenary of the Request for the Fatima Five First Saturdays Devotion will be launched in England with a Mass at 2pm on Saturday, 22nd February, at Westminster Cathedral.

This commemoration is part of the work of the World Apostolate of Fatima (WAF) in England and Wales in promoting this devotion, which was requested initially by Our Lady in July 1917, and then in more detail when she appeared along with the Child Jesus at Pontevedra in Spain to the Servant of God Sr Lucia, one of the three seers of Fatima, on 10th December 1925.

The event takes place three years after the very successful visitation of the national pilgrimage Virgin statue of Our Lady of Fatima to Westminster Cathedral. Cardinal Vincent Nichols presided at Mass, during which he reconsecrated the country to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Up to 3,000 pilgrims were able to venerate the statue and show their love and devotion to Our Lady.

The Five First Saturdays Devotion is about reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and involves going to confession, receiving Holy Communion and reciting five decades of the rosary. It also involves keeping Our Lady

company for a quarter of an hour while meditating on the mysteries of the rosary, with all these being done with the intention of making reparation to her.

If a person does this on the first Saturday of five consecutive months, then in return Our Lady promises to assist them, at the hour of death, with all the graces necessary for salvation.

In other words, this is a promise of the grace of final perseverance which is a great grace and a guarantee of heaven.

The centenary of this wonderful promise will occur in December 2025, and WAF is commemorating this event with a five-year programme of preparation. Each year will have a different point of reference and theme.

For this year, the theme is taken from the greeting of the Angel Gabriel to Our Lady at the Annunciation, "Hail full of grace" (Luke 1:28,) and the point of reference is a remembrance of the need for reparation against the blasphemies against the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

The catechetical focus for the year is the importance of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, which was promulgated by Pope Pius IX in *Ineffabilis Deus* in 1854.

It is, therefore, providential that

three years after the centenary of the Fatima apparitions in 2017 we have the chance to celebrate the Five First Saturdays Devotion, which is of great importance for our times.

This is because not only is it an excellent practice in itself, but also because it was linked by Our Lady with the conversion of Russia and the promised period of peace for the world.

In addition, for those who take up the devotion and then carry it on beyond the initial five first Saturdays, it means that they develop a commitment to frequent confession, attendance at Mass, and a meditative way of reciting the Rosary.

If enough people around the country can be persuaded to take up this devotion, then it will surely lead to a great spiritual boost for our parishes and dioceses and help to bring about the renewal of England as Mary's Dowry.

Please show your love and devotion for Our Lady by attending the launch Mass at Westminster Cathedral, when you will have the chance to see the national pilgrim statue of the Immaculate Heart and be blessed by the relics of Saints Jacinta and Francisco.

**Donal Anthony Foley is a board member of WAF England and Wales.**

*"If enough people around the country can be persuaded to take up this devotion, then it will surely lead to a great spiritual boost for our parishes and dioceses and help to bring about the renewal of England as Mary's Dowry..."*

## Diary dates - February

If you have an event, e-mail details to us at [pilgrim@caos.org.uk](mailto:pilgrim@caos.org.uk)

**2:** Catholic history walk along the Thames to the Tower of London. Meet at 3.30pm, Church of the Most Precious Blood, O'Meara Street, SE1.

**4:** "Mary in the Plan of God", a talk for young Catholic adults by Fr Michael John Galbraith, 7 pm, 24 Golden Square, W1, followed by a Q & A and cheese and wine.

**9:** Catholic history walk, Parliament and Westminster. Meet 3.30pm pm on the steps of Westminster Cathedral, SW1.

**18:** Virgin Mother of God, a talk for young Catholic adults by Fr Stephen Dingley, 7 pm, 24 Golden Square, W1, followed by a Q & A and cheese and wine.

**21:** Catholic history walk to the birthplace of St John Henry Newman. Meet at 5 pm at the Newman shrine, Church of the Most Precious Blood, O'Meara Street SE1.

**22:** Pre-Lent day of reflection for religious communities in Southwark, "Contemplating the Word of God," a talk by Mother Nikola Proksch, Prioress of Our Lady's Priory, Minster, 10.30 am - 3.30 pm, St Peter's Residence, Meadow Road, Vauxhall SW8. For more details, phone Sister Patricia on 07973 950755.

**22:** Catholic history walk around the City. Meet at 2 pm at the Church of Our Lady of La Salette, Melior Street, SE1. Families especially welcome, as this walk includes information and fun for any children who come along


**29:** Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, for those due to be baptised (and receive the other sacraments of initiation) and those due to be received into the Church at the Easter Vigil, 12 pm - 2 pm, St George's Cathedral.



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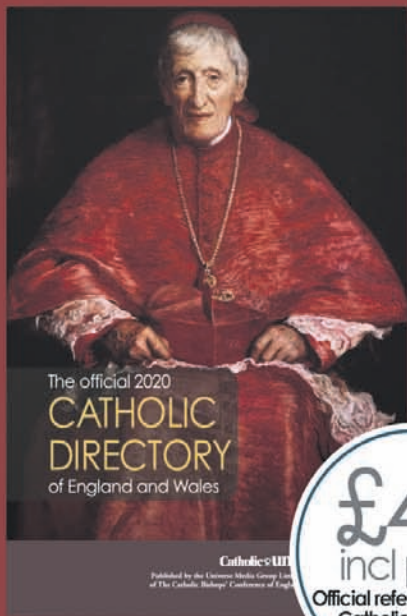
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# Why abortion is wrong

**Paul De Marco**

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,” says the book of Jeremiah. This beautiful quote shows that God loved us even before He formed us in our mother’s womb. We also know from scripture that human life is distinct from all other forms of life on earth because in Genesis it is written: Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...”

So, given the unique nature of human life, it is deeply troubling that there were an estimated 56 million induced abortions worldwide each year between 2010 and 2014, and it’s thought that one-in-four pregnancies around the world now ends in abortion.

Whenever this subject is raised in the media, pro-choice campaigners are quick to highlight cases where the mother’s life would have been in danger had she not had an abortion, or where there were foetal abnormalities, or where a woman had fallen pregnant after having been raped.

However, research suggests that these three categories combined account for only three per cent of all abortions. For example, in England and Wales in 2017 there were 192,900 abortions, of which 1.7% were carried out because of foetal abnormalities, the most common of which was Down Syndrome.

The truth is that nearly all abortions are carried out for purely socio-economic reasons. Abortions in the UK can still be carried out up to 24 weeks, despite the fact that about 60 per cent of all babies born prematurely at 24 weeks now survive!

Pope John Paul II released the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* on 25th March 1995, on the inviolability of human life. Part of his encyclical covered the practice of abortion. Here are three key points he made:

“Among all the crimes which can be committed against life, procured abortion has characteristics making it particularly serious and deplorable. The Second Vatican Council defines abortion, together with infanticide, as an ‘unspeakable crime’.”

“The texts of sacred scripture never address the question of deliberate abortion and so do not directly and specifically condemn it. But they show such great respect for the human being in the mother’s womb that they require as a logical consequence that God’s commandment ‘You shall not kill’ be extended to the unborn child as well.”

“Given such unanimity in the doctrinal and disciplinary tradition of the Church, Paul VI was able to declare that this tradition (regarding abortion) is unchanged and unchangeable. Therefore, by the authority which Christ conferred upon Peter and his Successors, in communion with the Bishops - who on various occasions have condemned abortion and who in the aforementioned consultation, albeit dispersed throughout the world, have shown unanimous agreement concerning this doctrine - I declare that direct abortion, that is, abortion willed as an end or as a means, always constitutes a grave moral disorder, since it is the deliberate killing of an innocent human being.”

It’s interesting that the accidental harming or killing of an unborn child



Pope John Paul II kisses the feet of the famous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe during his visit to Mexico in 1999.

is described in Exodus 21:22: “If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman’s husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.”

So it’s clear from this text in Exodus that the protection of the unborn child was enshrined in Mosaic law. Abortion was also described by Tertullian, one of the early theologians of the Church, in chapter 9, verse 8 of his work, *The Apologeticum*, written around 197 AD: “In our case, a murder being once for all forbidden, we may not destroy even the fetus in the womb, while as yet the human being derives blood from the other parts of the body for its sustenance. To hinder a birth is merely a speedier man-killing; nor does it matter whether you take away a life that is born, or destroy one that is coming to birth. That is a man which is going to be one; you have the fruit already in its seed.”

Sadly, our society has become completely numb to the killing of the unborn child, which globally claims the same number of lives as the entire population of England each year. Pope Pius XII described our modern attitude to sin in a radio address on 26th October 1946 to the US National Catechetical Congress in Boston, when he said: ‘The sin of the century is the loss of the sense of sin.’

These words were later quoted by John Paul II at the Synod of Bishops in

October 1983.

We often talk of the lack of positive role models in society, and when it comes to role models for mothers, we can turn to Mary for inspiration. At Guadalupe in December 1531, Our Lady appeared to Juan Diego as an expectant mother, just about to bring the Son of God into the world.

She was wearing a black maternity bow of the same type that the Aztec women wore to show that they were with child, called a ‘*nahui ollin*’. Her womb was an inviolate sanctuary protecting Jesus, and so Mary is surely the perfect model of motherhood and also the protector of the unborn child.

This was affirmed by Pope John Paul II on his visit to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico in 1999, when he entrusted the cause of life to her protection: “Grant to our homes the grace of loving and respecting life in its beginnings, with the same love with which you conceived in your womb the life of the Son of God.”

So, what should our response be as Catholics when discussing an unwanted pregnancy with a friend or family member intent on having an abortion? Of course we need to have great empathy for the person concerned, but our primary thought must surely be to protect the innocent life that she carries, and to gently guide her away from a termination.

We should ask ourselves, “What would Jesus do in this situation?” and then call to mind the words written in Jeremiah: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.”