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## **DIOCESAN CIRCULAR – February 2010**

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### **PHILOSOPHY AND THE CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN – 28**

#### **John Duns Scotus - 'The Subtle Doctor'**

*'As for those wingy mysteries in divinity, and the airy subtleties in religion, which have unhinged the brains of better heads, they never stretched pia mater of mine.'*

Sir Thomas Browne (1605 – 82) *Religio Medici*, pt. I, 9

#### **I His Life**

I regard the theologian and philosopher John Duns Scotus (circa 1265 – 1308) to be the brilliant courageous Franciscan monk who strove to stem the rapidly rising tide of secular thought and reason which characterised the closing years of the high Middle-Ages. It was his finely nuanced arguments in defence of the traditional doctrines of the Catholic Church that had justifiably earned him his popular title - the 'Subtle Doctor'.

His earliest biographical details have remained somewhat uncertain. That he was Scottish is certain, but the precise date and place of his birth are less so. The village of Duns in Berwickshire is usually now officially held to be his birthplace but in the past Littledean, a hamlet near Maxton in Roxburghshire, has also laid claim to him as its native son.

Immediately after his birth he was baptised, and named after St John the Evangelist. It is said that little John's earliest Christian education was carefully shaped by his devout parents, his parish Priest, and through his frequent contacts with the Cistercian religious of Melrose Abbey. Despite his sincere desire to study the faith more thoroughly he appears to have been by nature somewhat slow of understanding. It was in desperation, and after much prayer, that he finally turned to the Blessed Virgin to heal him of this intellectual dullness - and Mary, the mother of God, duly appeared to him and granted him his request.

In 1278 he entered the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor in Dumfries, where his uncle was the Superior, and took the habit in 1280. He was subsequently ordained Priest, on March 17<sup>th</sup> in 1291, at St Andrew's Church of the Monks of Cluny, in Northampton. Soon after his ordination he was sent to the University of Paris for further studies and there he began to compile his erudite commentaries on Peter Lombard's Book of Sentences.

On returning once again to Britain he continued his formal studies at Merton College, Oxford, and in 1301 was appointed Professor of Theology at the University in that city. His views, however, were often considered to be so contrary to the 'approved' teaching of that institution that he was thought by many to be a fool, and he and his followers were dubbed 'dunces' (i.e. those whose ideas were so lacking in sound reason as to be considered ridiculous). He shortly thereafter returned to the University of Paris, and there obtained his Doctorate in Theology. Having subsequently assumed a professorship he quickly established himself as one of the greatest of the medieval scholastics.

During the night of the Lord's nativity, in the year 1299, while John was immersed in prayer and meditating upon the Incarnation, the blessed Mother materialised before him and placed the infant Christ in his arms. The baby Jesus, having first gently embraced him, fondly kissed him upon his cheek. Thereafter, John never

doubted that Christ's Incarnation was the supreme manifestation of God's love for the world which had been decreed from all eternity.

While he was in England John Scotus had consistently taught the truth of the 'privilege' of the Blessed Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception without evoking any noticeable academic opposition - but now in France this situation was dramatically changed. At the University of Paris the authorities admitted only to the 'purification' of Mary in the womb. By strictly adhering to their position on (i) the universality of sin, and (ii) the universal efficacy of Christ's Redemption, most academics in Paris had concluded that the Blessed Virgin Mary was also necessarily stained by sin (albeit if only for an instant) and thus needed to be redeemed.

John Scotus was duly summoned to appear before the entire academic community to defend his position in a public debate. A failure to convince the opposition in this setting would have led to his immediate expulsion from the University. While on his way to join the dispute he passed before a statue of the Blessed Virgin and asked for her intercession on his behalf. He was doubly favoured with a slight bow from the statue and an audible assurance that she would provide him with all the strength he would require for the coming ordeal. Dr. John Duns Scotus triumphed magnificently and it was in Paris that he first became popularly known as the 'Marian Doctor'.

He was sent to Cologne by the Franciscan Minister General, principally to lecture in the Franciscan house of studies in that city, but partly also because of the political problems he had caused in Paris (and probably also because of doubts that had been cast on his theology by his many vengeful opponents). He died in Cologne on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 1308, and was interred in the Franciscan Church. He was called 'blessed' almost immediately after his death.

## II His literary Works

In Oxford he commented on the '*Sentences*' and began his greatest work, the '*Opus Oxoniensis*', which arguably contains the finest examples of his thinking (although it is quite possible that some of his disciples may have contributed to the final manuscript). His '*Reportata Parisiensia*' resulted from his faithful disciples' desire to assemble together his many partial accounts - in order to give a comprehensive record of his teaching. The '*De primo principio*' is authentic, as are also his '*Quaestiones Quodlibetales*', the forty-six '*Collationes*', and the first nine books of the '*Quaestiones subtilissimae super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*'.

Certain other works, previously attributed to Duns Scotus, are now actually considered to be inauthentic; the '*Grammatica speculativa*' (by Thomas of Erfurt), the '*De rerum principio*' (by Godfrey of Fontaines), the '*Metaphysica textualis*' (by Antoine Andre), the '*Conclusiones metaphysicae*', and the '*Commentaries on Aristotle's Physics and Meteorology*' all fall into this category.

## III A Brief Summary of his Philosophy and Theology

John Duns Scotus founded his philosophy upon already existing reconstructions of the work of St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas, but as a serious and constructive original thinker, he was not satisfied to merely repeat their conclusions. His own mind was undoubtedly supremely subtle and penetrating, and he remained a faithful servant of the truth throughout his life. From his independent thinking flowed new and creative ideas on all major philosophical and theological problems and thus the 'Scotist' School of Theology was born.

He believed that intellectual understanding is derived from sensation through a process known as abstraction. He distinguished, however, between: (i) the 'proper' object, and (ii) the 'de facto' object, of the intellect. The proper object is the entire field of 'being' - through which the intellect can know immaterial essences (i.e. even without the aid of sensation). In the field of 'fact', or of the 'actual object' - the conditions that cause the intellect to move are only those things that are presented via sensation. It is the passage between sensation and understanding (as ideas and concepts) that is known as abstraction.

Metaphysically, Scotus believed that existence belongs to matter independent of form, and that no real distinction can be made between essence and existence. Matter he considered to be a constitutive element of all beings, even of the separate forms such as angels (in whom spiritual matter is present). He differed significantly from St Thomas in his views about the 'principle of individuation', believing that individuality must be derived from the form (which is the basis of being), rather than quantity, which is an accident - and which he said, therefore, reduces Aquinas' view of individuality to that of an accident.

For Scotus the individual object (e.g. my little dog Goonie) is different from all other objects (dogs) because of its individuality - and not because of the amount of matter that it contains. He agreed that universals exist before things, in the mind of God, as divine forms or ideas. When the things themselves come into existence the ideas, or universals, have their being within them and make them precisely what they are. Furthermore, when a thing itself is not present, the universals can still exist in our minds, as concepts or ideas which apply to all things of the same kind (e.g. all dogs).

John Duns Scotus maintained that a man is different from an animal because there has been added a specific difference, which he called 'humanity'. Both men and animals have life, but when humanity is added to that life - then we have a man. Socrates was a man, and he resembled other men in many respects. Although both may have life, Socrates will always be clearly distinguishable from Goonie, and any other animal, in that Socrates has humanity. But Socrates is also different from all other men. This difference, Scotus said, was due to Socrates individual character, or his 'individuality'.

In contrast to St Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus taught that if the human will were inferior to the human intellect, having to look to it for direction, then it could not be considered to be truly free. Therefore, for the human will to be wholly free it must be superior to the intellect. The will, according to Scotus, is completely free and so can itself make sound decisions between sense and the moral law. The will, therefore, must be the highest faculty of the human soul - higher, that is, than the intellect. This leads one inevitably to the logical conclusion that the will is the final determiner of right and wrong. What the will determines to be good is good, simply because the will says that it is good.

When this doctrine is carried over to the idea of God's nature then it suggests that His will is also superior to His intellect. Right is now right simply because God wills it to be so - and not because it is right in terms of reason. God created certain things right, but He could equally well have willed the opposite to be right - and all is according to His arbitrary will. This is clearly the extreme of the position that the divine will is free. As long as the will is influenced by the intellect or reason, it cannot be wholly free. If, however, the will is also free of reason, then it has reached the peak of freedom.

This seems to have been the general direction of Scotus' thinking, although he drew back from the final logical results of this argument - which would have been absolute chaos, with every human will being a law entire unto itself. Nevertheless he held tenaciously to the idea that the human will is free and not subject to the intellect.

God alone is pure Spirit and is without matter: He is form untouched by matter. He is pure energy and is the conscious cause of the universe and, furthermore, He had a divine purpose in creating and ruling it. He is infinitely Will - and His Will is perfectly and completely free. Thus, He can 'Will' or 'not Will' just as He pleases. It was from this premise that John Duns Scotus developed his theories about human society and the State.

Society is a creation of God; and it is what it is because He created it to be so. He could have created a different sort of society (e.g. one having different laws) simply by wishing to do so. This is a far cry from the sophistic notion of a State which arises as a result of agreements made between men. The State therefore, in the mind of Scotus, is a creation of God and not of necessity, and men must abide by its laws or suffer divine punishment. It appears, however, that he did not accurately anticipate that the inevitable consequences of his hypotheses would be to give extraordinary powers to existing States and their rulers. They could legitimately have claimed direct authority from God for all of their decisions and actions, and have capitalised further upon this with threats of eternal punishment.

Theologically, John Duns Scotus went further than St Thomas Aquinas by limiting the influence of human reason. He did not, for instance, believe that any Church dogma could be proven by the application of human intellect or reason alone, having imputed it divine revelation. Nevertheless he did hold that traditional Church teachings were in perfect harmony with reason. If, through reason a conclusion was reached that failed to agree with Church dogma, then the intellect had to be prepared to bow to the superior ecclesiastical authority - and admit its error.

Even though many of his contemporary Christian thinkers happily accepted the theory of two-fold truth, it was evident to him that knowledge derived from divine revelation was always to be considered superior to the derivative truth which came from experience and reason. In theory the result of this teaching should have been

that pure human reason should have been prepared to accept correction by the Church - but in practice she was seldom powerful enough to suppress all secular opposition.

We have now come to the point in this protracted series when the Middle-Ages are drawing to a close and the Renaissance period is about to dawn. Before passing on directly to consider William of Ockham (yet another medieval Franciscan religious philosopher), however, I thought that I might usefully devote the next month's issue to a brief general overview of the developments in Christian philosophy that took place from the days of the Roman Empire until the end of the Thirteenth century.

This intention assumes that Bishop Carl, as the editor of the 'Diocesan Circular', wishes me to continue with these monthly 'scratchings'. Any strong opinions in favour of putting a quiet and merciful end to any further such suffering on the part of our regular readers should therefore be addressed to Bishop Carl as soon as possible.

God bless you all in the year 2010.

Fr David Skelton A/CSWG



### FROM MAGGIE'S KITCHEN



With such frigid mornings and an uninsulated house to work in, my husband is keeping winter hours: dinner at noon and construction thereafter, sometimes till late evening, interrupted only by vespers and maybe a bite to eat. The temptation for me during his work hours is endless computer games followed by a mad evening rush to do everything I had hoped to get done that day. So, as part of my own personal makeover, I'm dedicating my evenings now to recreational reading, thereby forcing my workday back into its proper place.

The bookmobile, however, doesn't carry much I care to read, and I have a terrible memory for authors' names and book titles, so I can't effectively put in requests. I tried a Sue Grafton mystery. Unengaging in all respects -- I gave up a third the way through. (Why, by the way, is this *genre* so dominated by women, and not a Dorothy Sayers in the lot? P. D. James I like, and Ellis Peters, but I've read all their books and unlike Sayers' *Nine Tailors* they're mostly not candidates for re-reads.) I tried (again) a Susan Howatch novel. It was okay -- at least it didn't begin in the bedroom -- but in the end not exactly satisfying, despite its English-church setting and half-hearted put-down of J.A.T. Robinson's *Honest to God* (which has proved to be anything but the short-lived theological fad she suggested it was).

So in desperation I picked Chesterton's *Father Brown* off my own shelves. By the end of the first story ("The Blue Cross"), I knew what I'd been missing. Not the mystery aspect -- over the years I've read through this volume two or three times -- but the *Weltanschauung*, the profoundly Catholic world-view of Gilbert Keith Chesterton. I've never heard of anyone being converted by reading *Father Brown*, but for the life of me I can't understand why not. It would seem to me to be ready-made for evangelizing our "post-modern" age (or whatever you call the present atheism-by-default). Neither soft-peddalling nor strident, Chesterton was content to rest his case in the truth.

Despite all the slanders, scandals, and betrayals our Roman brethren are having to endure, they still possess that same truth, and the opportunity to rest in it, unswayed by worldly accusations and demands. In the eyes of the world, which prefers an inconsequential Dalai Lama, Benedict XVI chooses impolitic times for word and action: a scholarly comment on Islam which sparked (well-orchestrated) riots around the world; an expressed desire that Israel and Palestine give each other the time of day, which ignited anger on both sides; promotion of the cause of Sainthood for Pius XII, which has horrified Jews and others (though not all -- many Jews and others are up-to-date on Pius XII's considerable work to save Jews from the Holocaust without blowing his cover and rendering himself useless). So be it. The Church, as represented in this case by the Pope, is necessarily out-of-step with the Age, in order that the Age may come to the divinely-informed *Weltanschauung*.

I don't know about you, but this is where I'm happy to be throwing in our TAC lot. "Bid thou our sad divisions cease," says the Advent hymn, "and be Thyself our King of peace." May February 2, as the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, be also the feast of the purification of the Church for which she is the

icon. May it, as the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, be also the feast of the presentation of His One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church before the Throne of God.

On that day, also known as Candlemas, I hope to serve *Navettes*, the little boat-shaped cookies baked on that day by the *Four des Navettes* of Marseilles, France, since 1781. The boat will remind me of the long voyage the TAC has been on, soon to be completed, God willing!

### NAVETTES

By next year, I hope to have located the *Cretons de la Chandaleur* of Saguenay - Lac St-Jean, Quebec. For this year, the cookies:

Sift together 4 cups flour, 1 cup sugar, and a pinch of salt. Make a well in the centre; into it put 3 eggs, 5 Tbsp soft butter, and 3 Tbsp orange flower water (if you can get it; otherwise just water). Work well with hands, gradually adding water (about 3 Tbsp) to form a fairly firm dough. Let rest an hour in a cool place.

Divide dough into 25 small balls; roll each ball into an elongated oval, pinching the ends to form a boat (shorter and fatter than a canoe). Make a lengthwise slash down the centre top for the boat's interior. Place boats on a buttered-and-floured (or baker's parchment-covered) baking sheet; let rest another two hours. Preheat oven to 350 degrees, brush the boats with a mixture of 1 tsp milk or water and an egg yolk. Bake until lightly browned - about 20 minutes, but keep a sharp eye on them. Traditionally eaten after the Candlemas procession, if you have one.



### DIOCESAN NOTES AND NEWS

- Mrs. Joan Grant, wife of (predeceased) Fr Colin Grant, died on January 14. The Grants were founders, along with George Mealey (later Father), of our parish in Edmonton. Where Victoria was our first Canadian parish, having celebrated its inaugural service in October 1977, followed a few months later by Ottawa – Edmonton and Montréal were not far behind. Fr Colin and Joan attended our first Synod in Winnipeg in 1979. Joan was a Falkland Islander by birth. I remember her enormous, wide-brimmed hats that she would wear to services at Synod.
- Our Primate, Archbishop John Hepworth, released a statement on January 17 concerning progress towards the implementation of the Apostolic Constitution – *Anglicanorum Coetibus*. In his statement, he mentions that he hopes to send out a commentary on the Norms that accompanied the Constitution. His statement was sent to all of our clergy and Diocesan Council members, suggesting that they distribute it freely to our membership. If you have not seen it, please ask your priest for a copy.
- In response to the devastating earthquake in Haiti on January 12, the outpouring of support to aid agencies is truly commendable. If you have not so done, but would like to, the need will still be present for quite some time to come as the destruction is so complete to the infrastructure in Port au Prince. Along with Lifesite News, we might suggest that aid be directed via Christian agencies, especially those that are supportive of the right to life. One such agency that they recommend is:
  - Cross International Catholic Outreach  
370 W. Camino Gardens Blvd.  
Boca Raton, Florida 33432  
561-392-9212  
<http://www.crosscatholic.org>  
97% of donations made to Cross International go to the programmes or relief efforts.

Of course, Cross International is a US based agency, and if you are concerned about a receipt, you might then consider a few well-known Canadian agencies, who are openly Christian in their values and ideals. As with most other recognized charities, the Canadian government will, for a time, match donations made to either of the following:

- Christian Horizons  
CORPORATE OFFICE

25 Sportsworld Crossing Road  
Kitchener ON N2P 0A5  
Phone. (519) 650 0966  
Toll Free. 1 (866) 362 6810  
<http://www.christian-horizons.org/index.html>  
98% of donations will go directly to Haitian relief efforts.

- World Vision Canada  
1 World Drive  
Mississauga ON L5T 2Y4  
1-866-595-5550

<http://www.worldvision.ca/Pages/Home.aspx>

82% of donations made to World Vision go to programmes or relief efforts.

- Fr David Skelton mentions above that he would encourage readers to contact me with their feedback on his series on philosophy. I have heard from several about the country. Some are enjoying his series very much indeed and would not like to see him stop; others admit to it being a bit over their heads, but without suggesting that it stop, as they recognize the benefit for others. And you? Oh, by the way, it is best, if you wish to contact me via email, to do so directly to my personal account ([carl.reid@sympatico.ca](mailto:carl.reid@sympatico.ca)) rather than the Diocesan office email address. We have only one computer at the office, being used for all of Jim Spencer's secretarial duties, as well as the financial data. Therefore, I do most of my virtual paperwork at home, and only stop in to the office a few times per week to sign cheques and such and deal with other matters that are sent to the office.



#### St. Bede's College News

This past November, another week long gathering of St. Bede's College faculty and students took place, this time in Calgary – the first time that an intensive week had been held outside of Victoria. Since three of our postulants, as well as the Dean of the College (Fr. Colin O'Rourke) and a couple of other profs, live in Calgary, it made sense to try holding a week there, and it seems to have been a positive experience for all concerned.



This was my first visit to Calgary (unless transferring flights in the airport counts), and I enjoyed the chance to spend some time fellowshipping with some of the Anglican Catholics there. In particular, I had a chance to spend a couple of days visiting with seminarian Glenn Gallenkamp, his wife Sister Catherine (a member of the Servants of the Sacred Cross), and their four sons. They picked me up at the airport early on the first Sunday morning, and took me with them to All Saints' Church, one of two ACCC parishes in the city. That afternoon, I settled into the FCJ Centre, a Roman Catholic retreat centre in the heart of Calgary (right across the street from the RC cathedral). The FCJ Centre has hosted at least one

gathering of our western clergy, and some of them have had personal retreats there – it is a beautiful facility, with wonderful grounds and what I considered to be a very beautiful chapel. (Although I am told that a great deal was lost in the post Vatican II renovation, it is nonetheless one of the better examples of contemporary chapel design that I have seen – very peaceful and dignified, and with excellent acoustics!)

Our usual busy schedule began in earnest on Monday morning. We took four subjects during the course of the week: (1) Ecclesiology, with Fr. Ernest Skublics (priest-in-charge at All Saints'); (2) History of Liturgy, with Bp. Carl Reid (Ottawa); (3) Christology, with Fr. Colin (Academic Dean, and rector of Christ the King, Calgary's other parish); and (4) Ascetical Theology (spiritual disciplines, etc.), which was facilitated by Fr. Shane Janzen, making use of video lectures by Fr. David Ousley (a TAC priest from Pennsylvania), as well as

giving ample time for the faculty as a group to answer various questions posed by the postulants.

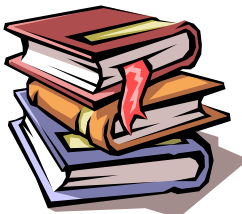
It was a great pleasure to have Bp. Carl Reid present for the first time – first of all, simply because it’s wonderful that our bishops are able to take so much personal involvement in seminary education; but also because he brings a highly disciplined mind, and a great passion for the subject of liturgy to his presentations. Fr. Skublics was also a new face; he brings a tremendous amount of experience in theological education, having been sometime Dean of Theology at Mount Angel Abbey in Oregon, as well as the author of various books and articles on ecclesiology, Eastern Christian theology, and ecumenism. He also brought a great passion to his lectures, but also a tremendous sense of balance and nuance – especially in how he handled discussion about the our dialogue with the Holy See. As someone from an Eastern European background, who has taught theology both in the Roman Catholic and Anglican contexts, and has extensively studied Eastern Orthodox dialogue with Rome, Fr. Ernie was able to draw deeply on his own personal experience. Drawing largely on the work of Orthodox writers such as Fr. John Zizioulas, he spoke of the importance of unity to the very essence of the church. But he also stressed that importance of maintaining the integrity of our own tradition and heritage. A model of “communion”, as I understood Fr. Skublics, is one of unity in diversity, where churches have legitimate differences in non-essential matters, but while retaining communion with each other, and being willing to genuinely place themselves under the authority of the whole Catholic Church in some way – this authority being symbolized by the ministry of the Bishop of Rome, who has a duty to serve and protect the unity of the Church’s Episcopacy. These are simply my own thoughts, of course, and I cannot speak for any of my fellow students, I think that Fr. Ernie’s basic approach was very well received – *i.e.*, that one must have a strong loyalty both to our “particular church” (our own Christian tradition) and to the unity of the universal church as a whole.

The week wrapped up for most of us on Saturday afternoon, although Bp. Carl, Glenn, and myself were able to visit Medicine Hat the following Sunday for a Confirmation – Bp. Carl conferring the laying on of hands on behalf of Bp. Peter, Glenn serving as subdeacon, and your humble scribe as organist. This is the third intensive that I have participated in, and I am happy to report that a great deal of progress is being made – the lectures are going smoothly, and the group of postulants is continuing to grow closer as a body. However, great obstacles remain – although one of our seminarians is retired from secular employment, the rest are not, and must balance their studies with other work commitments; most of the seminarians are married, and one is planning to marry. Although there is a group of willing men who want badly to serve the church in the priestly ministry, we must continue to pray that God will give us the resources to pursue our studies as actively, and as faithfully as possible. We have an excellent group of highly educated and experienced faculty, who are willing to do their best to prepare us, and we believe God has called us. We depend very much on the response of God’s people, to enable us to answer that call. Most importantly, we ask for your continued prayer, that God will form us into the sort of clergy he would have us to be.

On behalf of the seminarians of St. Bede’s College,  
Michael D. Trolley, Ottawa



### FATHER BOB’S BOOKS



By the time that we are out of February, we shall be almost a third of the way through Lent. We shall have been exhorted to “...the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance, by prayer, fasting, and self-denial, and by reading and meditation upon God’s holy Word.”<sup>1</sup>

I want to draw your attention to the “prayer” part of that sentence and toward a book on the topic-- *Prayer: The Mission of the Church*<sup>2</sup> by Jean Cardinal Daniélou to whom we looked last month and to whom I promised to return. Daniélou’s has not written a large book, but it is a helpful one. It is written in short chapters and sections suitable for a reflective reading. I have the notion that the book could be summarized in the words:

<sup>1</sup> p. 612, BCP (Canada) 1962

<sup>2</sup> Daniélou, Jean, *Prayer: The Mission of the Church*. Trans. David Louis Schindler. Ressourcement. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1996 . ISBN 0-8028-4105-8, pp124

“OUR Lord Jesus Christ said: Hear O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”<sup>3</sup>

Cardinal Daniélou began the *Introduction* to his book by saying:

“Prayer is a time of contemplation and silence in a setting that helps us disengage ourselves from life’s immediate concerns. It is an opportunity to live more closely to God, to dwell in his presence, and to nourish ourselves with his Word. The goal of prayer is not to seek ecstatic experiences; rather, it is to discover something profound, something substantial, something that fortifies our faith and animates our zeal for souls. In this sense each person prays for him- or herself, because prayer is first the soul’s encounter with God.

“On the other hand, it is also an opportunity to recall our responsibilities before the Church and to ascertain better how to fulfill them. In this sense, prayer bears on the problems of the Church in the world and what part we must take in them.”<sup>4</sup>

The book proper begins with a discussion about the meaning of God and Adoration but certainly not an academic discussion. He draws insightfully from the Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church. The discussion is more about relationships than propositions. He writes, “Prayer thus becomes, as Dom [Columba] Marmion says, ‘the blossoming of our feelings that result from divine adoption.’ It consists in developing the theological virtues, those new dispositions that result from the fact that we are children of God. For a Christian to pray is to *make an act of faith, hope, and love.*”<sup>5</sup> We discover in prayer who God is and who we are and here I am reminded of the Preface to the BCP (Canada) 1962 where it is written, “It is in that faith [i.e., that faith expressed in the Solemn Declaration<sup>6</sup>] that this Book of Common Prayer is offered to the Church, with the hope that those who use it may become more truly what they already are: the People of God, that New Creation in Christ which finds its joy in adoration of the Creator and Redeemer of all.”<sup>7</sup>

Speaking of “faith”, Throughout, Daniélou reminds us that “Faith does not consist in the belief that God exists, but that God intervenes in history.”<sup>8</sup>

Daniélou speaks of the Lord’s Prayer, of Advent in a variety of aspects, of humility, of hope, of God’s Plan and then he draws us along to mission.

There is a movement through the book from “The Primacy of God” to the discussion of “Advent and Hope” to “The Mysteries of Christ the Redeemer” and finally to “The Growth of the Church”

“Prayer is related to mission because it is to the extent that we have discovered who God is and how much a knowledge and love of God is constitutive of a comprehensive humanism and a full and complete existence that we suffer from, and are struck by, situations in which God is not known or loved.”<sup>9</sup>

I mentioned Daniélou’s introductory sentence, “Prayer is a time of contemplation and silence in a setting...” I would suggest for further reading two more books touching on contemplation and silence. These are *The World of Silence*<sup>10</sup> by Max Picard and *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*<sup>11</sup> by Josef Pieper.

More next month including *Called by God*—a recommendation from Bishop Robert Mercer, CR

God bless!

Fr. Robert S.H. Mansfield, SSC

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<sup>3</sup> p.69, BCP (Canada) 1962

<sup>4</sup> p xv, Daniélou

<sup>5</sup> p. 7, Daniélou

<sup>6</sup> p. viii, BCP (Canada) 1962

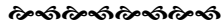
<sup>7</sup> p. vii, BCP (Canada) 1962

<sup>8</sup> p. 38, Daniélou

<sup>9</sup> p. 95, Daniélou

<sup>10</sup> *The World of Silence*. Picard, Max, (originally 1952 Chicago: H. Regnery), this edition – preface Gabriel Marcel; Wichita, KS, Eith Day Press ISBN 0-9717483-1-4; pp. 231

<sup>11</sup> *Leisure, the basis of culture*. Pieper, Josef, 1998, introduction by Roger Scruton, new translation by Gerald Malsbary. South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine’s Press., ISBN 1-890318-35-3 pp xvi, 160



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One of the world's best-known critics of the Harry Potter series has produced an insightful analysis of the best-selling Twilight series of novels written by Stephenie Meyer. Author, artist and speaker Michael O'Brien argues convincingly that the latest vampire novel series dangerously twists evil into good and may even be demonically influenced.

O'Brien points out that the books have garnered immense popularity having sold more than 85 million copies and having been translated into 38 languages. "This, despite the fact they are poorly written teen romances, pulp fiction with a twist of supernatural horror combined with racing hormones and high school boy-girl relationships."

Explaining the root, of "how such a thinly plotted bloody mess has managed to obtain such an enormous worldwide following," O'Brien suggests that it is driven by romantic fantasy charged with powerful stimulation of the senses.

"In the Twilight series the main characters are highly attractive young people. For example, Bella describes Edward as 'excruciatingly lovely and forever seventeen.'" In the two films released to date, Edward is acted by the 'narcotically beautiful' Robert Pattinson, as one feminine commentator put it. Jacob Black's handsome face is matched by shirtless exposure of his muscled torso, as is the case with others in his werewolf pack. Bella, acted by Kristen Stewart, is very pretty (though not quite as much as her vampire friends). The Volturi look like exotic, exceedingly pale fashion models.

"Physical beauty is the glue that holds the whole banal tale together," writes O'Brien. "If one were to dim down the prettiness and subtract the horror from these four novels and their films ... they would become no more than mind-numbing Harlequin Romances for very immature teenage girls."

The Potter critic, who was sought out by CNN and much of the world's media for his analysis of JK Rowling's works, sees a moral danger in Meyer's books as well. "The sexual attraction and the appeal to romantic feelings, combined with the allure of mystery," he says, "all obscure the real horror of the tale, which is the degradation of the image and likeness of God in man, and the false proposal that consuming the lifeblood of another human being bestows life all around."

Quoting E. Michael Jones on the subject, O'Brien notes that Vampirism is the anti-thesis of Christianity, "Both Christ and Dracula deal with blood and eternal life. Whereas Christ shed his blood so that his followers could have eternal life, Dracula shed his followers' blood so that he could have eternal life."

But beyond the evidence in the books, O'Brien points to Meyer's own accounts of the inspiration for her novels to warn of its questionable revelation.

Meyer said she received the main characters in a dream, and that they were "quite literally, voices in my head" as she wrote the novels.

O'Brien also cites author Steve Wohlberg on the subject who drew out the eerie similarities between Rowling's inspiration for Potter and Meyer's for Twilight, both beginning with an unusual dream. "The character of Harry Potter just popped into my head, fully formed," Rowling reflected in 2001. "Looking back, it was all quite spooky!" She also stated to inquiring media that the Potter books "almost wrote themselves."

Writes Wohlberg: "When those mesmerizing tales first burst into the brains of these two women, neither was an established writer. Both were novices. They weren't rich either. Now they are millionaires many times over. Their experiences are similar, with common threads. Both of their novels are permeated with occultism. Based on this, it's appropriate to wonder, is there a supernatural source behind these revelations? If so, what is it?"

O'Brien quotes Meyer for a clue to the answer. "After her unexpected rise to stardom, she later confessed: 'I actually did have a dream after Twilight was finished of Edward coming to visit me-only I had gotten it wrong and he did drink blood like every other vampire and you couldn't live on animals the way I'd written it. We had this conversation and he was terrifying.'"

Twilight's embedded spiritual narrative, O'Brien concludes is this: "You shall be as gods. You will overcome death on your own terms. You will be master over death. Good and evil are not necessarily what Western civilization has, until now, called good and evil. You will define the meaning of symbols and morals and human identity. And all of this is subsumed in the ultimate message: The image and likeness of God in you can be the image and likeness of a god whose characteristics are satanic, as long as you are a 'basically good person.'

"In this way, coasting on a tsunami of intoxicating visuals and emotions, the image of supernatural evil is transformed into an image of supernatural good."

Read <[http://www.studiobrien.com/writings\\_on\\_fantasy/twilight.html](http://www.studiobrien.com/writings_on_fantasy/twilight.html)>O'Brien's full analysis on his website.

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