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DIOCESAN CIRCULAR – February 2011

PHILOSOPHY AND THE CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN – 37

John Locke (1632 – 1704)

*‘Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow.’*

Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888 – 1965) *‘The Hollow Men’* (1925), V.

On 29 August, 1632, John Locke was born in the ancient village of Wrington, about twelve miles from Bristol, in the English county of Somerset. His father, also named John, was a lawyer and a modest landowner who practiced as a country solicitor. He also served as clerk to the Justices of the Peace in Chew Magna, an important village on the banks of the River Chew, and historically closely connected with the Bishops of Bath and Wells.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, in 1642, the senior Locke had taken a military commission as Captain of horse, in the Cavalry of the parliamentary army. Our John's mother was Agnes Keene, the very beautiful daughter of a puritan family engaged in the tanning industry. At the age of seven little John moved with his family to Pensford, a town just seven miles south of Bristol, where his mother was to die in 1654. His father followed her seven years later.

Young John was admitted to Westminster School in 1646, just three years before King Charles I was executed - and England was declared to be a Commonwealth. He 'went Up' to Oxford University in 1652 and entered Christ Church College. He graduated Bachelor of Arts in four years - and gained the degree of Master of Arts two years after that. In 1659 he was elected to a senior studentship and was to become lecturer in Greek, Reader in rhetoric, and Censor of Moral theology at his College.

It was at Oxford that he began his study of philosophy - but he always retained a very lively interest in chemistry and physics. In 1666 Locke met Anthony Ashley Cooper, later to become the first earl of Shaftesbury, and in that same year he was granted a dispensation to retain his studentship without taking holy orders.

At first it seemed most likely that he would develop a brilliant career for himself in medicine, and he did actually collaborate in medical research with the celebrated 'English Hippocrates', Thomas Sydenham. In fact he never pursued the practice of clinical medicine, nor did he continue his promising academic life at Oxford. Instead he chose to become involved with public affairs. In 1667, however, he was engaged to act as medical advisor to Lord Ashley - and to serve as tutor to his son. My little canine companion, 'Goonie', would not forgive me if I neglected to tell you, at this point, why Dr John is his favourite philosopher - and how he successfully 'wormed' his way into Lord Shaftesbury's life and affections.

In 1666 he had supervised a successful operation performed to remove a hydatid cyst from his patron's liver. Hydatid cysts appear in the larval stage of parasites of the genus *Echinococcus*. The definitive host of this small tapeworm is, needless to say, 'the dog' - or, more rarely, other related carnivorous species such as coyotes and wolves. The eggs of the worm are passed out, via the dog's faeces, to enter other herbivorous intermediate hosts - such as sheep, goats, and swine.

Human beings can also be intermediate hosts for this nasty little worm. Ingested embryonated eggs hatch into a further phase known as oncospheres which, upon reaching the intestine of their new host, will penetrate the bowel wall - and so will be disseminated by the blood stream to target organs such as the liver and lungs. The resulting cyst slowly enlarges, often to a great size, and becomes filled with numerous daughter cysts. Thus, the fully developed hydatid cyst becomes a large life threatening loculated space occupying lesion in the unfortunate patient. Surgical removal, even in the present twenty-first century, remains a complex, and often hazardous, undertaking.

In 1671 Locke was among the many English gentlemen who had purchased shares in the Royal Africa Company, which had been 'chartered by the crown' to carry out the slave trade for Great Britain. He sold his shares (at a profit) four years later. From 1675 until 1679 he lived in France. In 1682 he met the philosopher, theologian, and protagonist of women's education, Damaris Cudworth, who was the brilliant daughter of Ralph Cudworth (himself an outstanding Cambridge Platonist philosopher).

In September of 1688 Locke was forced to flee to Holland, by the exposure of the alleged 'Rye House Plot', a protestant conspiracy to assassinate King Charles II and his brother James, because of their pro-Roman Catholic policies. After the accession of William of Orange in 1688, Locke was able to return to England, where he was given some minor government functions. He lived out the remainder of his life in the home of Sir Francis and Lady Damaris Masham, at Oates in Essex. There he died on 28 October, 1704.

Locke's most significant written works are: '*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*', (1689); '*A Letter Concerning Toleration*', (1689); '*Two Treatises of Civil Government*', (1690); '*Some Thoughts Concerning Education*', (1693); and '*The Reasonableness of Christianity*', (1695).

Locke is rightly considered to be a senior figure in British empiricism, but his philosophy is more complex than this might initially suggest. Despite being an admirer of Descartes, he firmly rejected any place for innate ideas in the foundations of his own epistemology. Instead, he concluded that all knowledge comes from sense impressions. This point of view made it essential that he account for the universe as the source of these impressions.

Is there a real world which corresponds to our ideas? And, if there is, how can we - having only ideas - prove its existence? In short, he concluded to his own satisfaction, that there is such a world and that our senses can tell us of it reliably.

Because we do experience the world we are justified in saying that it exists. Though we may not be able to say much about the source of our sensations, we are able to say that the sensations are caused. Thus, the real world must be the cause of our sensations. For example I have an idea of black and white when I observe 'Goonie'. This idea is not born in me - but is caused. From this I am justified in reasoning that the real world contains something which causes in me an idea of black and white (in this example my small dog).

Locke had to admit that even of this we cannot be absolutely certain - for our knowledge of this world is only probable. We can be more certain, however, of the existence of ourselves and of God in the universe - nevertheless all else remains strictly speaking only probable. On this basis Locke argued that we can never have a perfect natural science.

Thus far you will see that Locke has followed Descartes fairly closely. The world is composed of substances, which are the supports of all qualities. When I experience black and white, for example, these qualities have not just floated around in space - but are the actual colour of some distinct thing. This distinct thing is a substance (Goonie).

Locke also agreed that there are two kinds of substance - bodies and souls. Bodies have the attribute of extension, solidity, and impenetrability. Souls, on the other hand, are spiritual substances and so are immaterial.

Souls, minds, and bodies act upon each other. The body can cause happenings in the soul, and what happens in the soul may affect the body. Thus, bodies act upon the mind so that we have experiences of colour, touch, sound and the like. Despite this belief in interaction, Locke's theory of the universe is still a dualistic one. There are minds and there are bodies and while both are substances, they are different kinds of substance - and we can know only the ideas which these substances produce in us through sensations.

John Locke's conception of man's place in the universe is worthy of some deeper consideration. Man is part of the world, but a part that is peculiarly sensitive to the rest of the world about him. His ideas come to him through his sense organs, and by experience. In addition to the two substances of mind and body, there is another spiritual substance, God. God had made the universe out of nothing and arranged for it to be as we find it to be through our experiences.

Man's intellect and reason were, according to the teaching of Dr John, established as the ultimate test of everything in the universe. The outer world exists, and God created it, but Locke attempted to prove all of this happened in such a way that it should be intrinsically 'reasonable' - and so satisfy man's mind. Human reason becomes, then, the final test of revelation. Thereby human reason becomes the 'court of last appeal'; a Man must understand before he can accept any thing as true.

This basic philosophical theory also gave rise to Locke's associated understanding of good and evil. Just as all other ideas come from the outside, and are written on the mind as one would write on a blank sheet of paper, so also is our conception of what is good and evil. Many people who have had the same experiences come to the same conclusions. They agree that certain things are good and others are bad. Furthermore, our parents have usually impressed their own ideas of right and wrong upon us from the earliest days of our lives. Later we may come to believe that such notions are inborn.

In Locke's opinion the human conscience is nothing more than these ideas which we have had for so long that they appear to have been given by some divine power. He also taught that pleasure and pain are natural to man. Nature has decreed that we enjoy happiness and seek to avoid pain. Those things which bring happiness are called good - those things which bring pain are called evil.

But it is not always true that the same act will bring happiness to everyone. Consequently there are laws which we must obey - under penalty of being unhappy if we refuse to comply. Locke postulated that three groups of such laws existed: (i) Divine laws - set by God to determine duty and sin - and for which, if we should willingly break them, we will suffer greatly; (ii) Civil laws - established by the group which constitutes a civil unit - and which determines crime and innocence (guilt being made punishable by these same lawmakers); (iii) Status laws - which are based upon opinion or reputation. These are the greatest in number and are enforced by the simple fact that men cherish their reputations and do not desire the condemnation of society.

But again, we learn what is good and bad by experience; through pain if we do that which is evil and through pleasure if we do what is good. You will note that here Locke was in the ethical tradition of Hobbes - who also made morality largely a matter of enlightened self interest (being good results in the highest return in individual pleasure).

So what did John Locke have to say about the nature of God? While he remained true to his belief that we can have no innate ideas he did allow that we could come to know about God - if we used our natural abilities correctly. He maintained that we could build up a mental image of the Deity out of the other ideas which we possess. By taking our ideas of existence, duration, power, pleasure, happiness, justice, and the like - and then thinking of these as being gathered together and extending them to infinity - we can have an idea of God. God is thus certain ideas which have gathered from experience and extended to infinity.

We may conclude from this reasoning that, according to Locke, God most certainly exists. By man examining himself he will realize that he must have been produced by some being greater than he. God therefore is 'real being' who thinks - and is omnipotent, omniscient, and just. Thus Locke came to say that God is spiritual substance, that is - a third substance in addition to mind and body.

As Creator of the world and man, God established certain divine laws - which man could discover either through studying nature or by divine revelation. Further, God can enforce these laws either by punishments or rewards, in this world or the next - even unto eternity. Morality is based upon the will and laws of God and it is only by

knowing these that one can say whether an action is right or wrong.

To have asked Locke whether a man's will were free or not, would have seemed to him to be as foolish a question as enquiring whether his sleep was swift - or his virtue square. His response becomes truly understandable to us only when we realize that he held the will to be the power of an individual to think his own actions (and to prefer them being done or not done). Thus, if one is able to think about his actions, and is able to prefer one above another, then he has willed. On the other hand, freedom is also a power; the power to do (or to not do) any particular thing - in terms of what he wills.

Men have both powers. They may be able to think clearly about their actions and reach a preference from among them. Furthermore, they may be able to do that which they prefer, or alternatively, they may find themselves unable to act accordingly. Locke holds that God endowed men with certain desires (or an uneasy mind) about what they considered to be the 'goods' in their lives. These determine the will. When an individual determines to do that which is most pressing, and sets about realizing the desire that is paramount, this is to act as he wills to do.

Like Descartes, Locke believed that man arrived at the idea of 'soul' by combining the various operations of the human mind - and supposing a support for them. This support (or ground substance) is soul substance. He set forth his argument for this as follows:

"having as clear and distinct ideas in us of thinking as of solidity, I know not why we may not as well allow a thinking thing without solidity, i.e., immaterial, to exist, as a solid thing without thinking, i.e., matter, to exist especially since it is no harder to conceive how thinking should exist without matter than how matter should think."

Thus he taught that the soul is this immaterial thing which thinks. (I hope that this is now much clearer to you, than it was before it wasn't so clear to you, as it is now - Eh!).

The soul of man is both active and passive according to Locke. It is able to influence and move bodies and, at the same time, it is influenced by bodies so that it has ideas. That it is also immortal, living after the death of the body, was a matter of faith for him - but this is not something of which we can have a clear and distinct idea. It is therefore above reason, supernatural, but can be believed by faith.

Locke's views were entirely opposed to those of Hobbes in regard to men and their relation to the state. He did not subscribe to the theory that men were by nature warlike and self-seeking. What is more, he was strongly antagonistic to the doctrine that monarchs should reign by divine right and govern others just as they willed. Rather, he considered the natural state of all men to be one of perfect freedom and equality. Since all men are free and equal, no one has the right to take away another's life, liberty, or possessions. Men move naturally toward social living - and set up laws in such a way as to be impartial judges - and maintain the common interest of all.

Once the structure of society has been established by the majority, each member is then obliged to submit to the authority of the resulting social contract - however a unanimous agreement is next to impossible in a large group. The purpose of the law, therefore, is to preserve the integrity and public good of the whole. Beyond this, men should be left to be free, for according to Locke there are certain areas into which the law should not extend. He specifically excluded the right to enslave, destroy, or impoverish men.

The makers of the laws ought not to be the ones who also executed them. Consequently he opined that the powers of government should be divided into legislative and executive arms, and that these two be kept strictly separate. The populace ought to have the power to elect, punish, or remove the legislators and the executives, whenever they became convinced that either acted in opposition to the overall public good.

I hope that it is now obvious to you that, whereas Thomas Hobbes was determined to establish a philosophical justification for absolute monarchy and the divine right of kings without accountability to the people, Locke was unwavering in promoting the doctrine of political freedom. This month's philosopher taught that the power of the state should always rest in the people - and that their rulers were merely their servants and so subject to their will. This power can never be taken from the people - nor can they give it up.

Political history shows us that these two points of view continued to appear throughout the eighteenth and

nineteenth centuries. They were, and still are, in constant conflict. Locke's philosophical teaching led to the doctrine of *laissez faire* - that the state ought not to interfere any more than is absolutely necessary in the economic affairs of its members.

In the field of education Locke sought for a system that would train English gentleman, that is to say - youths of breeding and wisdom (quite right too, Sir, I say!). This change he taught would demand the condemnation and rejection of the prior emphasis given to the classics and religion (humbug Sir, I say!). What he actually sought was, of course, a more practical and efficient form of education that would better fit all men for the manifold duties of the world in which they lived (jolly good too, Sir, I say!).

Dr. John, abandoning any attempt to make two dissimilar things influence each other, held that at birth the human soul was a blank tablet possessed of a power to receive impressions from the outside world - and God endowed it with a strong desire for pleasure. Consequently, education should promote the process of learning through pleasurable experiences with the environment. To realize this ideal he advocated physical exercise to harden the body, travel to broaden the experience, and skilled private tuition. In this manner he sought to produce true gentlemen: those who could properly associate with their fellows, be wise in the ways of the world, and be self-sufficient, knowledgeable and pious

In my next instalment I hope to move us on from John Locke, the pre-Enlightenment thinker, to the more radical empiricists, Bishop George Berkeley and David Hume. God bless you all.

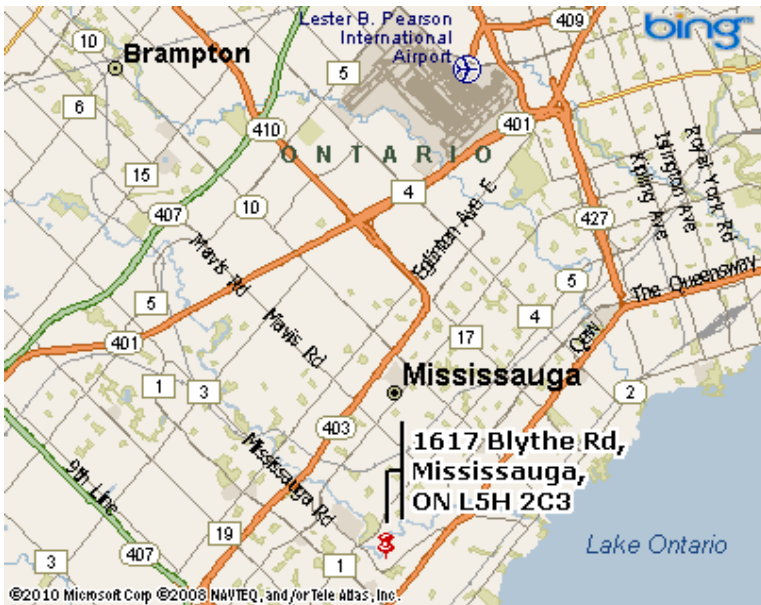
Fr. David Skelton, Life Associate C.S.W.G.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

MAKE PLANS!

IMPORTANT MEETING MARCH 24-26



As we draw ever closer to the realization of our now nearly 34 years of hope for unity with the wider Catholic Church, and specifically the formation of a Canadian Ordinariate under the provisions of the Apostolic Constitution, *Anglicanorum Coetibus*, Archbishop Thomas Collins, our Episcopal delegate and liaison in the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has called for a meeting in Mississauga. The dates - Thursday, March 24 to Saturday, March 26. The location - Queen of the Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga, Ontario (web site: <http://www.qoa.ca> www.qoa.ca). Address: 1617 Blythe Road.

Attendance by as many members (clergy and laity) of the Anglican Catholic Church of Canada (ACCC) is very important, as this may be the only collective meeting, not just between us and the Canadian Catholic Church prior to the actual setting up of an ordinariate, but also other interested people, who are not currently members of the ACCC, will be in attendance as well. Many of them have already been looking to us, in that we have been engaged in the pursuit of this for so many years.

More information will be available during February, and we shall send out specific details to all of our parishes. It would be very good to have representation from across the country, just as they did in Texas before Christmas. In fact, Fr Chris Phillips, whose parish in San Antonio hosted that event, is coming to Mississauga for this, as is Archbishop Hepworth from Australia.



DIOCESAN NOTES AND NEWS

- The Victoria Cathedral parish of St John the Evangelist has a new web site: www.ccsje.org.
- Please update your Diocesan Directory. Father Gérard Trinque has a new telephone number: 1-888-831-4145
- In last month's issue, you may have noticed a conspicuous absence from the photos of Fr Douglas Nicholson's ordination. The Rev. Dr. Henry Stauffenberg, O.S.G. had very much intended to be there; however, the day before the ordination, he slipped in his shower, and fractured his shoulder, also in the process damaging previously inserted pins in the elbow on the same arm. We had just begun to enjoy his book reviews for The Circular; alas, his convalescence, as predicted, is proceeding very slowly. Your prayers please.



FROM MAGGIE'S KITCHEN



I've just rehung the calendar in the kitchen, now that other seasonal hangings are put away. Dean Janzen's commendable ACCC calendar is on the wall here by the computer, where I need it for various church secretarial jobs, but the other one, the one by the fridge, is commendable for its gorgeous icon reproduction, a new one every half-month. To tell the truth, icon calendars have gotten expensive, so I'm now recycling our considerable collection of old ones, matching the days and dates to the present year.

Which by times is about all the matching that's possible. If you follow our church year, either from your Prayer Book or from the ACCC wall calendar (and I hope you do!), you'll find as I have that it doesn't always line up with the Roman or Eastern Orthodox versions of the same which appear on those lovely icon calendars. That's fine with me -- it's always interesting to see how others do things.

But I hope in my heart of hearts that we shall not be required to give up the more than serviceable calendar we presently possess, apart from some additions and minor adjustments. There's a logic to it that's more ancient than the present Roman calendar, at least as the latter is observed in North America. (Apparently their national councils of bishops have the option of being out of step with everyone else. South of the border, Ascension Day is, I understand, still on a Thursday, the fortieth day of Easter; here in Canada, it's been moved to Ascension Sunday, as I discovered when I tried to find a Mass for the Feast.)

So as I was listening on January 6 to EWTN radio's daily Mass, I found that the Epiphany had been moved to the previous Sunday and was supplanted by a newly-sainted Canadian, Br André (whom they referred to as "Blessèd"; I guess they hadn't updated their service books). The sixth was variously referred to as falling in "Epiphany Week" and in an ongoing Christmastide. What anyone is to make of Twelfth Night or the Twelve Days of Christmas is anybody's guess.

On the other hand, my husband reminds me that Bd John Henry Newman also referred to the Epiphany as within Christmastide. Sunday school ran a little overtime this morning, so I wasn't able to avail myself of Fr Lee Whitney's sage and scholarly advice in the matter.

As for "Sundays in Ordinary Time", I'm content to leave them in our Roman brethren's hands. We ourselves have meanwhile been enjoying the full extent of Epiphanytide, all six Sundays, as our Blessèd Lord's human and divine natures are revealed to us, layer upon layer. The architects of the Prayer Book had the sense to follow the pattern of lections established first by Alcuin in his supplement to the Gregorian Sacramentary and subsequently by England's own Sarum Rite.

Why should a calendar matter so much? I guess that's something you understand only as your time is ordered by it. It's another one of those little reminders that we're living in the intersection of this world and eternity. By the way, did you know that the English New Year's Day, well into the eighteenth century, was March 25, the

Feast of the Annunciation, the entry of the eternal Son of God into finite humanity? January 1 is a strictly secular date, marking nothing but the end (in most cases) of the tax year. There are some things our English spiritual forebears got right!

But at the moment, it's neither January nor March, so here's something for the February in between before our attention turns to the Lenten fast.

LIFE CAKES

These large gingerbread cookies are from Austria, for St Valentine's Day. They are often decorated with liturgical symbols, the kind found on church hangings. Sometimes they are moulded (like the Dutch speculaas for St Nicholas' Day), but this very old recipe is designed for rolling and cutting. Cream a cup of shortening (though you may use butter) with a half cup sugar. Sift together 4 cups flour, a teaspoon and a half of ginger, 1/2 tsp cloves, and 1/4 tsp mace; add to the creamed mixture alternately with 3/4 cup dark molasses. Roll out on a floured board or counter and cut into 6-inch hearts. Bake at 300 degrees till done (a long time, over half an hour!). I confess that I prefer the version of gingerbread in the *Joy of Cooking*, and you may have your own favourite. Feel free!



CANDLEMASS

1. I want to read you an excerpt from a seventh century sermon by St. Sophronius (*Orat. 3 de Hypapante* 6.7: PG 87, 3, 3291-3293) on this Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, forty days after His birth. Its other name is the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and it is popularly called Candlemas. So it has four names -- the Presentation, the Purification, and Candlemas, and the Orthodox and Byzantine Christians simply call it 'The Meeting' -- of Christ with Simeon and Anna. But before I read you St Sophronius' little homily, I want to give you some background.

2. First, a bit of social background. In old England this was the day you had to take down all the Christmas decorations and douse the yule log in the fireplace. Robert Herrick in his poem 'Ceremonies for Candlemas Eve' writes,

DOWN with the rosemary and bays,
Down with the mistletoe ;
Instead of holly, now up-raise
The greener box (for show).

Candlemas also marks the midpoint of winter, halfway between the shortest day and the spring equinox.

It also has a connexion with snowdrops. There is an old English rime --

"The snowdrop in purest white array,
First rears her head on Candlemas Day".

In fact so connected with our Lady was this flower that in mediaeval England her statue was removed from the Lady Chapel on this feast and snowdrops were strewn in its place. Today we just put the snowdrops in vases --at least in Victoria!

3. Next some history of the actual Feast. Liturgically the Christmas season lasts for forty days -- until this feast. A great procession in honour of Jesus' Presentation in the Temple was celebrated by Jerusalem Christians at least as early as the late 4th century. It took place, as I said, forty days after Christmas, since the Jewish law required a firstborn son to be redeemed (bought back) and his mother to undergo a rite of purification forty days following childbirth. The ironical thing of course is that Jesus is Himself the New Temple that will replace the one He is entering in the arms of His Mother, He is Himself "the Lamb of God" that takes away the sin of the world", and He is the New Priest of the New Sacrifice of the New Covenant. Likewise Mary is a pure Virgin who doesn't need ritual purification. But they submit to the requirements of the Law as it stands. In St Luke's account of the Presentation in the Temple, Simeon is recorded as proclaiming Jesus as "a light to lighten to the Gentiles." And so when the celebration of the feast made its way to Rome at the beginning of the eighth century, Pope Sergius inaugurated a candlelight procession on this day; several years later the blessing and

distribution of candles was added to the celebration. Hence this day came to be known as Candlemas, and the year's supply of candles was blessed on this day. Simeon's canticle, known as the Nunc Dimittis ["Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace"], is still prayed daily at Evensong, and also at Compline, the last of the Daily Offices.

4. Finally, who was St. Sophronius --the author of the short extract I am going to read to you? He was a simple monk who pursued a life of prayer and sacrifice first in the desert of Egypt, then near the Jordan River, then finally in the Holy City of Jerusalem. He was ultimately chosen to be bishop and Patriarch of Jerusalem in the early 7th century. He valiantly defended the true and full humanity of Christ in the face of the heresy [Monothelism,] which denied that Jesus had a human as well as a divine will. The year before his death in 638, he witnessed the capture of Jerusalem by the Muslims under the Caliph Omar. St. Sophronius is still known as one of the Fathers of the Church.

5. Now here is what St Sophronius preached to his flock as the Muslim Arab invaders were bearing down on Jerusalem.

“Our lighted candles are a sign of the divine splendour of [Christ] who comes to expel the dark shadows of evil and to make the whole universe radiant with the brilliance of his eternal light. Our candles also show how bright our souls should be when we go to meet Christ.

“The Mother of God, the most pure Virgin, carried the true light in her arms and brought him to those who lay in darkness. We too should carry a light for all to see and reflect the radiance of the true light as we hasten to meet him.

“The light has come and has shone upon a world enveloped in shadows; the Dayspring from on high has visited us and given light to those who lived in darkness. This, then, is our feast, and we join in procession with lighted candles to reveal the light that has shone upon us and the glory that is yet to come to us through him. So let us hasten all together to meet our God.

“The true light has come, the light that enlightens every man who is born into this world. Let all of us, my brethren, be enlightened and made radiant by this light. Let all of us share in its splendour, and be so filled with it that no one remains in the darkness. Let us be shining ourselves as we go together to meet and to receive with the aged Simeon the light whose brilliance is eternal. Rejoicing with Simeon, let us sing a hymn of thanksgiving to God, the Father of the light, who sent the true light to dispel the darkness and to give us all a share in his splendour.

“Through Simeon’s eyes we too have seen the salvation of God which he prepared for all the nations and revealed as the glory of the new Israel, which is ourselves. As Simeon was released from the bonds of this life when he had seen Christ, so we too were at once freed from our old state of sinfulness.

“By faith we too embraced Christ, the salvation of God the Father, as he came to us from Bethlehem. Gentiles before, we have now become the people of God. Our eyes have seen God incarnate, and because we have seen him present among us and have mentally received him into our arms, we are called the new Israel. Never shall we forget this presence; every year we keep a feast in his honour.”

To receive the blessed sacrament of the Eucharist with repentance, faith and love, is to have Christ Himself presenting us in union with Him unto our heavenly Father with pure and clean hearts – therefore let your light so shine that men may glorify your Father in Heaven who has given you the true light, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

+Peter D Wilkinson, O.S.G.



On the one hand, some very encouraging news....

On New Year's Day, a devastating terrorist bombing at a Coptic church in Egypt killed 21 people and injured 79 others. Although the identity of the culprits was not known, it was assumed that they were Muslim extremists, intent on targeting those they saw as heretics. Religious tensions immediately rose in the country, and angry Copts stormed streets, battled with police, and even vandalized a nearby mosque. The riots and heightened

tensions between the Muslim and Coptic communities was likely what the terrorists wanted - to divide the Egyptian community and create sectarian strife between different religious groups.

Yet by Coptic Christmas Eve, which took place Thursday night in Egypt, things had changed completely. As Egyptian Copts attended mass at churches across the country, "thousands" of Muslims, including "the two sons of President Hosni Mubarak," joined them, acting as "human shields" to protect from terrorist attacks by extremists. The Muslims organized under the slogan "We either live together, or we die together," inspired by Mohamed El-Sawy, an Egyptian artist.

Egypt's majority Muslim population stuck to its word Thursday night. What had been a promise of solidarity to the weary Coptic community, was honoured, when thousands of Muslims showed up at Coptic Christmas eve mass services in churches around the country and at candle light vigils held outside. From the well-known to the unknown, Muslims had offered their bodies as "human shields" for last night's mass, making a pledge to collectively fight the threat of Islamic militants and towards an Egypt free from sectarian strife.

"We either live together, or we die together," was the sloganeering genius of Mohamed El-Sawy, a Muslim arts tycoon whose cultural centre distributed flyers at churches in Cairo Thursday night, and who has been credited with first floating the "human shield" idea. Among those shields were movie stars Adel Imam and Yousra, popular preacher Amr Khaled, the two sons of President Hosni Mubarak, and thousands of citizens who have said they consider the attack one on Egypt as a whole. "This is not about us and them," said Dalia Mustafa, a student who attended mass at Virgin Mary Church on Maraashly. "We are one. This was an attack on Egypt as a whole, and I am standing with the Copts because the only way things will change in this country is if we come together."

Al Jazeera English covered the attacks and reported from the site of one of the solidarity events where Muslims and Christians stood side by side, protesting discrimination against Copts and calling for an end to violence.

It is a frequent complaint among opinion makers in the United States that the global Muslim community does not condemn and prevent terrorism. New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman has even said that Islam needs a civil war similar to the one the United States fought in order to deal with its extremists. But the truth is that moderate and progressive Muslims all over the world are battling extremism. Here in the United States, one-third of al-Qaeda related terror plots have been broken up thanks to intelligence provided by Muslim Americans. It is up to the press to report these positive stories and not exaggerate the sway that extremists hold over the global Muslim community.

But on the other hand....

MAINSTREAMING MUSLIM BARBARISM

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments as follows:

The pope pleaded with Pakistan yesterday to abrogate its blasphemy law which allows the killing of those who "insult" Muhammad or the Koran; a senior Pakistani leader, Salman Taseer, was assassinated recently for protesting the death sentence of a Christian woman for the "crime" of converting. The pope was immediately condemned by a senior Muslim cleric for "interfering" in the "Islamic ideological state," and the leader of the most powerful Islamic party accused the pope of "insulting" Muslims worldwide. Prior to this, more than 500 "moderate" Muslim clerics and scholars defended the assassin. Not only did 50,000 Pakistanis take to the streets last Sunday in support of the assassination, according to a distinguished Pakistani journalist, "educated and articulate Pakistanis chided Taseer, even in death, for writing his own death warrant." And these were the educated ones!

On Christmas Eve, 38 Christians were killed in Nigeria (2,000 were murdered earlier in the year); on Christmas Day, a Catholic chapel was bombed in the Philippines by an al-Qaida funded group; on Dec. 30, there were 11 bomb attacks on Christians in Iraq (58 were murdered on Oct. 31 at a Catholic cathedral); during the Christmas season, Iran arrested dozens of Christians who were former Muslims; and on New Year's Day, at least 23 Catholics were killed during Mass in Egypt (the killings were justified by clerics in Mauritania, and Iran's official TV organ blamed Jews). Moreover, Saudi Arabia makes it illegal to practice Christianity; Yemen is threatening to expel Christian workers; Christians who feed starving Somalis are targeted for murder; churches

in Indonesia have been ravaged; and two million Christians have been murdered by Sudanese Muslims over the past two decades (many were crucified).

According to Open Doors, which monitors Christian persecution, of the top ten most violent places on earth for Christians to live, eight are run by Muslims, and an estimated 100 million Christians worldwide live in fear.

The central problem is the "Islamic ideological state." There is no such thing as the "Christian or Jewish ideological state." Let's face it-Muslim barbarism has been mainstreamed in the name of Islam.

Jeff Field
Director of Communications
The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights



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