



Newsletter

The Personal Ordinariate of
Our Lady of the Southern Cross
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Christmas - Epiphanytide




Inside This Issue

Page 3
Goings-On

Page 4
Seminarian Snippets

Page 6
“Vanishing in Plain Sight” - A Cancel Culture Victim

Page 8
Answering Anti-Christian Objections - Part 1

Page 10
Part 2

Page 13
January Calendar

The Ordinary’s Message

We are still finding it a challenge to be celebrating the Nativity when the idea of a white Christmas is a receding memory. It’s just not supposed to be 35 or 40C outside when we’re singing Christmas Carols!



And speaking of Carols, I don’t think I’ve heard in Australia a peculiar Canadian Christmas Carol written by Saint Jean de Brébeuf, the 17th century Jesuit martyr: the Carol being *Jesous Ahatonia* (Jesus is born). The words, written originally in the Huron language by Brébeuf, wouldn’t really work very well here in Australia, “‘Twas in the moon of wintertime, When all the birds had fled...”

Happily, *Christmas-in-the-summer* is largely offset in that the same care and attention goes into making certain that churches are appropriately decorated to celebrate the annual festival of the Birth of Jesus. Recognising also that, although it *might* snow in Bethelhem in December, the average daytime temperature is 14C, thus the enfleshment of God is certainly not dependent on there being snow on the ground!

And of course, it is that staggering reality of God entering time and space, entering His creation as a human Baby, which should occupy our thoughts wholly. As much as Christians have always pointed to the Resurrection as the central and unique differentiator, for me, at least in a cosmic sense, the mind-boggling truth of the Incarnation is far more unique against all other religions and philosophies. What a great sadness that, through the mists of time and against recorded history, more and more people reject Him.

Which brings us to some calendrical gymnastics in terms of the first of the two traditional *end dates* for the Christmas season – the Epiphany and/or Baptism (the other being the Presentation

in the Temple on 2 February). In recent years, against dwindling attendance, even on Sundays, many western Catholic Bishop's Conferences have taken to *floating* the Epiphany from its proper date of 6 January to the closest Sunday to that date. That means this year that the Solemnity is transferred all the way back to 2 January. Recognising that many of our communities have access to *borrowed* church buildings only on Sundays, we have little recourse but to accommodate that transferred date. If however, you are part of a community that is able to celebrate weekday Mass celebrations, I am hopeful that you might keep the Epiphany on the 6th. We have structured the Ordo to accommodate either possibility.

Of course, moving the Epiphany back to the 2nd means that, against the traditional 12 Days of Christmas, we shall only *see* eight days. And, how long has it been, if ever, that you might have had explained to you the interesting history of the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas?" From the Catholic News Agency:

"The song, 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' is an English Christmas carol. From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of the Church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember. To fit the number scheme, when you reach number 9, representing the Fruits of the Holy Ghost, the originator combined 6 to make 3, taking the 6 fruits that were similar: the fruit in each parenthesis is the that was not named separately. There are actually Twelve Fruits of the Holy Ghost.

"The 'True Love' one hears in the song is not a smitten boy or girlfriend but Jesus Christ, because truly Love was born on Christmas Day. The partridge in the pear tree also represents Him because that bird is willing to sacrifice its life if necessary to protect its young by feigning injury to draw away predators.

"According to Ann Ball in her book, [HANDBOOK OF CATHOLIC SACRAMENTALS](#):

The two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments.

The three French hens stood for faith, hope, and love.

The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The five golden rings represented the first five books of the Old Testament, which describe man's fall into sin and the great love of God in sending a Saviour.

The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.

Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit-----Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.

The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.

Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit-----Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience [Forbearance], Goodness [Kindness], Mildness, Fidelity, Modesty, Continency [Chastity].

The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.

The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful Apostles.

The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in The Apostles' Creed.

Original Source: Fr. Calvin Goodwin, FSSP, Nebraska

The Right Reverend Monsignor Carl Reid, PA
Ordinary



Goings On About the Ordinariate
Father Lyall John Cowell
1949-2021



Father Lyall and his wife Gilda

Born in Mullumbimby in New South Wales, Father Lyall was ordained as an Anglican priest in 1973 in Townsville after having obtained his diploma in Theology from the Australian College of Theology. Following that, he served in parishes in Queensland, South Australia and Victoria, with an interregnum when he worked in Education and Aged Care. In 2004, he became a military chaplain, a position in which he served for several years. After the promulgation of Pope Benedict XVI's 2009 Apostolic Constitution, *Anglicanorum coetibus*, Father took up the Pope's generous invitation, and was received into the Catholic Church and ordained priest in late 2012 at St Stephen's Cathedral in Brisbane. Although there was not

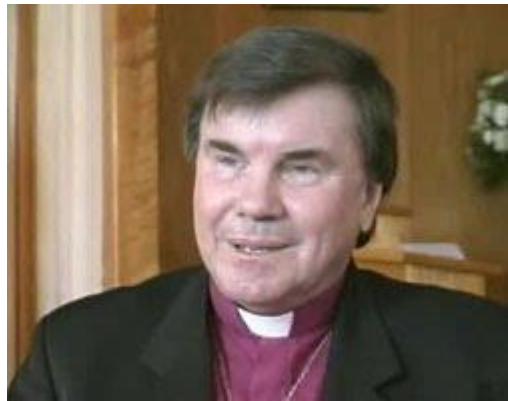
an Ordinariate community under his care, he generously stepped in from time to time to supply for some of our Queensland communities.

Requiescat in pace!



John Hepworth 1944-2021

Born in Adelaide, South Australia where he began his seminary studies in 1960 at St Francis Xavier Seminary. Although ordained a Catholic priest in that diocese in 1968, he left the Catholic Church not many years later and was ordained as an Anglican clergyman in 1976.



During his time as Primate of the TAC

Of most import to the Ordinariates is that, during his tenure as the Primate of the Traditional Anglican Communion (TAC), he did the lion's share of work on the TAC petition that was delivered to Rome in 2007 by (then) Bishops (now Monsignors in the Ordinariates) Robert Mercer and Peter Wilkinson.

Diagnosed earlier this year with motor neuron disease which progressed quite rapidly, he was, happily, reconciled with the Catholic Church only days before his death on 1 December. Although he never officially joined the Ordinariate, what with that issue of reconciliation being unresolved until very near the end, he maintained a keen interest and was fully supportive. As his request, the funeral requiem was celebrated in the Ordinariate Form by Father Neville Connell in Adelaide.

May he rest in peace.



Seminarian Snippets

Thoughts from the desk of a seminarian

Bradley Le Guier for the Ordinariate of Our Lady of the Southern Cross



During Advent I was on my annual pastoral placement at St Jerome's, Punchbowl NSW, a parish of the Archdiocese of Sydney. At the Seminary of the Good Shepherd, part of the formation includes this annual monthly-long placement – a bit like work experience. It's an opportunity for us to step back from our academic study and formation, so as to spend more time focusing on our pastoral formation.

The placement is an opportunity to observe the life and ministry of the parish priest, and get involved in the life of the parish and its members. I've been thankful for the variety of things I have been able to get involved with here at St Jerome's.

First of all, it has been good to get an idea of what a priest's day is like. Each day was different, though some had more activity than others.

It was helpful to get a sense of the rhythms of the parish, especially in Liturgy and prayer, and finding how I can merge myself into that rhythm. We had Mass and the Rosary at the same time during the week, which gave a stable rhythm to each morning.

During the day, we might have had a wedding, funeral, or baptism, though thankfully not all on the same day. These all helped me to understand more of the priest's liturgical and sacramental ministry. It also helped me to see the many different sides of the priest's pastoral ministry: being present to and for people in both their joys and sorrows.

I observed some of the regular visits the priest made to parishioners, and sometimes, that they made to him. Sometimes we had a coffee with the people after Mass. It was important for me to note that his ministry doesn't stop once 'the Church was locked'.

I visited the Parish Catholic Primary School a few times, and spent some time with the students and teachers. I was able to visit the classroom for a Q&A session with the students. They asked me questions about why I am in Seminary, and what is it like to be a seminarian. Most of them thought that the priest (and the seminarian, by extension) spend all their time in the Church, even sleeping there. Perhaps a more monastic part of me wishes this was true! I shared with them about my life, family, hobbies, and some other things about myself. I also spent some time with the teachers.

Unfortunately, due to COVID, I wasn't able to spend as much time with the students and teachers as I would have liked. I was always quite conscious of the School, partly because it was next door to the Church and Presbytery, but mainly because the School used the theme tune from the film *Jurassic Park* to mark the end of recess and lunch, rather than a school bell. Nothing against John Williams, but one can only listen to that theme so many times before it gets repetitive...

While I was on placement, the Archdiocese of Sydney had a number of Ordinations: five deacons, two priests, and one bishop. It was very exciting and consoling to see these men I have been in Seminary with ordained, one of them as a bishop! Bishop Danny Meagher, the new Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney, is the former Rector of the Seminary of the Good Shepherd.

Given my recent Installation as an Acolyte on the 31st of October, I was able to lead Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The Parish offered this on most weeknights as a special

Advent initiative. I reflected on the ministry of Lector and Acolyte in the previous issue of the Ordinariate Newsletter, and wondered how the ministry of Acolyte would change my ministry inside and outside of Mass. The answer, I think, was to bring people closer to Jesus Christ, who is fully present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. This meant leading Exposition on weeknights, which became part of the rhythm.

At Christmas, we celebrate the Incarnation. We celebrate the coming of Emmanuel, God-with-us. Our faith teaches us, and indeed we believe, that Jesus Christ is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. The Eucharist is not a symbol, nor bread: the Eucharist is Jesus, His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. Emmanuel has indeed come. He comes to us at Mass, and He waits for us in the Tabernacle!

I encourage you to spend some time with Jesus this Christmas. Many churches offer Exposition or Adoration, or leave the church open during the day. Consider making a pilgrimage, as the Magi did: “O come let us adore Him!” Though, there is no need to worry whether Woolies sells frankincense, gold, or myrrh.

All in all, I had a great placement. I’ve been consoled spending time in the parish, and especially spending time with the people, seeing how Christ truly has come: Emmanuel is with us, and He is active in the lives of His people. All of this has given me consolation and a greater confidence in my vocation. It has been an abundantly generous gift from God at the end of what was no doubt an interesting year – thanks be to God.

So, what’s next? I’m on break until the Seminary recommences in early February, and I’ll be staying in NSW for that time. I had wondered about going on a road trip, but given the situation in NSW, I may have to postpone that. In terms of ‘road trips’ of a more ‘literary variety’, I’m planning on reading J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, and the complete poems of Banjo Patterson.

Thank you for your prayers during my placement. Please keep me and my formation in your prayers, and know that you are in my prayers also.

Bradley Le Guier is a seminarian for the Ordinariate of Our Lady of the Southern Cross. He is in his Third Year of formation for the Priesthood at the Seminary of the Good Shepherd in Homebush, New South Wales.

Bradley is from the Ordinariate Community of Sts Ninian and Chad, in Perth, Western Australia.



Annual Vocations Appeal



It's Your Call

It is difficult to determine an exact number in terms of donations to the annual Vocations Appeal that began on the First Sunday of

Advent, as not all electronic donations included “Vocations” in the notes. At the end of December the total exceeds \$20,000. Many thanks to all of the generous donors!

And a reminder that the appeal, in reality, never actually ends. Donations to Vocations are most gladly accepted anytime during the year.

Thou Art a Priest Forever

J.B. Henri Lacordaire, OP

To live in the midst of the world with no desire for its pleasure...

*To be a member of every family yet belonging to none...
To share all sufferings; to penetrate all secrets; to heal all wounds...
To daily go from men to God to offer Him their petitions...*

*To return from God to men to offer them His hope...
To have a heart of fire for charity and a heart of bronze for chastity...
To bless and be blest forever.
O God, what a life, and it is yours,
O Priest of Jesus Christ!*



Anniversaries This Month



ORDINATIONS

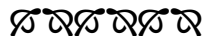
Fr Raphael Kajiwara – 15 January
Deacon Neville Rohrlach – 20 January
Mgr Carl Reid – 26 January

BIRTHDAYS

Fr Kenneth Hagan – 17 January
Fr Owen Buckton – 24 January

O Jesus, Eternal Priest, keep Thy priests within the shelter of Thy Sacred Heart, where none may touch them. Keep unstained their anointed hands, which daily touch Thy Sacred Body. Keep unsullied their lips, daily purpled with Thy Precious Blood. Keep pure and unworldly their hearts, sealed with the sublime mark of the priesthood. Let Thy Holy Love surround them from the world's contagion. Bless their labours with abundant fruit, and may the souls to whom they minister be their joy and consolation here and their everlasting crown hereafter.

Mary, Queen of the Clergy, pray for us: obtain for us numerous and holy priests. Amen.



Although most of us quite possibly do not spend much time thinking about what has become known as the “cancel culture,” perhaps we should. The following article relates just how suddenly and unexpectedly it might happen to even the most upstanding in our society. And no, we should not shy away from our Christian vocation to be a witness to the Good News for fear that the same thing might happen to us. We all are called to share the news of the kingdom with everyone with whom we come in contact.

Vanishing in Plain Sight

Elizabeth A. Mitchell – December 18, 2021

This column first appeared on the website [The Catholic Thing](http://www.catholicthing.org) (www.catholicthing.org).

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Planes are disappearing from the skies, stocks are disappearing from the shelves, and workers are disappearing from their jobs. It is happening all around us. Wherefore vanish these, purgatorial shadows?

It happened to me just days ago. I noticed that I vanished. It began one quiet afternoon during a discussion with my supervisor at the

assisted living home where I work two evenings a week. Mid-sentence, I noticed that she was looking through me, as if I were not sitting right in front of her. She was looking past me, to the empty space she saw. She saw it in my future. Her gaze was a mix of pity and regret. She was seeing what I did not then know; she was seeing that I would soon vanish.

Her look suggested Dickens's description of Marley's ghost: "His body was transparent, so that Scrooge, observing him, and looking through his waistcoat, could see the two buttons on his coat behind." (Stave One, *A Christmas Carol*)

The next time I arrived for my shift, my name was gone from the work schedule. Not crossed out, or re-assigned, just gone. I was not on the schedule because I did not exist. Left on the desk, with my name highlighted, was a Religious Accommodation Request Form. I had not requested this form. I had not checked any box on any paperwork. But there it was, in the community-wide staff notebook, with my name written next to the words "must prove religious exemption." Highlighted. With an asterisk.

We often think, erroneously, that during the Second World War European Jewry were summarily rounded up, sent to the concentration camps, and killed. But it did not happen that way. Not at all. First, the Jews were marked as different. They received their yellow stars. They were categorized as "non-Aryan."

Then the restrictions began. You could not ride a bicycle or frequent certain movie houses. You could no longer attend the local school. Your every aspect of day-to-day life took place in a segregated reality.

And then, the Jews began to vanish. They vanished from their jobs, they vanished from the streets. Children coming home from school would find their parents gone.

And those around them? Those who saw these people, law-abiding, productive citizens, suddenly nowhere to be found? Did they inquire about the disappearances? Most pretended not to notice. Safer not ask; better to mind one's own business.

And so, out in the open, before the world's very eyes, the Jews of Europe vanished.

And now, today, in the middle of a prosperous nation, NFL commentators, nurses, doctors, pilots, police, are quietly vanishing. Law-abiding citizens. Loyal employees. The ones who came on time, and

stayed late, and worked heroic hours during the crisis, and loved their profession. Gone.

So, now, as I vanish, I am supposed to prove my right to exist. It does not matter that my name is on the Employee Thank You board. It does not matter that I know the names of the staff, the residents, their dogs, their grandchildren, and their favorite ice cream flavors. Those human connections are secondary. They do not matter if you do not exist.

The Religious Accommodation Request Form provided a space to "Describe the religious belief or practice that necessitates this request for accommodation." And so, on the three lines provided, I wrote:

"From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person – among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life." (#2270 *Catechism of the Catholic*



La Décalcomanie by René Magritte, 1966
[Centre Pompidou, Paris]

Church, reference to Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum vitae*, I,1, by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger)

If I were being shown the door, at least I would leave with the most vulnerable at my side and Ratzinger's words on my lips. I wanted to print the bold *Statement of the Catholic Bishops of Wisconsin on the Protection of Conscience*, but my computer access had been closed. Ghosts, after all, can't log in.

And so, it begins. I walked into the balmy

evening unsure if I will walk back into the assisted living residence. Like so many facing a similar fate, I wait for a call, or a text, or an email, or a notification of some sort, declaring me fit or unfit for duty.

Most likely, I will have to “obtain supporting documentation regarding my religious practice and beliefs to further evaluate my request for a religious accommodation.” It was, after all, under these words that I placed my signature.

To prove that I am Christian. We were asked, recently, at the school where I teach, to think about our lives, and to review whether there would be enough evidence to convict us of being Christians. We all said we hoped that there would be enough evidence.

In her letter to Pope Pius XI of April 20, 1933, written just prior to the loss of her teaching job for being non-Aryan, before she

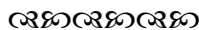
was given a yellow star or forced to flee her homeland, and before she was arrested, deported, and killed for her fidelity to the Catholic bishops’ protest of the deportation of Jews, St. Edith Stein prophetically declared:

For the time being, the fight against Catholicism will be conducted quietly and less brutally than against Jewry, but no less systematically. It won’t take long before no Catholic will be able to hold office in Germany unless he dedicates himself unconditionally to the new course of action.

And, indeed, it has not taken long. In our own world, in our own day, in a shockingly short span of time, many committed Catholics, Christians, and other witnesses of conscience, are quietly holding onto their convictions, and vanishing from our midst in plain sight.



Dr. Elizabeth A. Mitchell, S.C.D., received her doctorate in Institutional Social Communications from the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome where she worked as a translator for the Holy See Press Office and *L'Osservatore Romano*. She is the Dean of Students for Trinity Academy, a private K-12 Catholic independent school in Wisconsin, and serves as an Advisor for the St. Gianna and Pietro Molla International Center for Family and Life and is Theological Advisor for Nasarean.org, a mission advocating on behalf of persecuted Christians in the Middle East.



Answering Anti-Christian Objections

Anthony Esolen – 16 December 2021

This column first appeared on the website Crisis Magazine (www.crisismagazine.com).

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Recently, a radio talk show host for the Australian Broadcasting Company invited a Catholic professor whose field is the New Testament to speak about the stories surrounding the birth of Jesus. The host, himself not a believer, was delighted with the show and said that he had always felt the Christmas stories to be deeply moving. His audience reacted with fury, sending him a veritable spree of insults without rhyme or reason. Imagine the irrational hatred that a demon-ridden soul might puke up from the heart of Hell. That was what it was like.

We had better get used to it.

How to deal with it? I have two suggestions. One is to heap truths upon their heads. The other is to heap songs upon their heads. I’ll deal with the first one here.

The insults, I said, had no reason to them. But they did have pseudo-reasons, slogans, “memes,” historical fictions, and creatures of the imagination. We can and should deal with these summarily, taking them seriously because our addled brothers and sisters are possessed by them, but otherwise treating them as they deserve. Here are a few, followed by my responses.

“You people believe in a Sky God.”

Not at all. St. Augustine said more than 1600 years ago that the “heaven of heavens,” which is the presence of God, is not the heaven we behold with our eyes. The skies and all the stars in them are creatures, no less than sheep and oxen and birds and fish are creatures. That is what the sacred author of Genesis is getting at when he says that God created the heavens and the earth. Heaven is beyond all created space and time.

“Look what the Church did to Galileo.”



[Image Credit: Unsplash]

The secular world has done worse things to a greater number of scholars on one good day than the Church did to Galileo. If somebody wants to sentence me to a villa for diplomats in Florence, and give me my books and my tools, and pay for my expenses, I’m ready to go. Tell me what crime I have to commit. But the Church was not bound to the geocentric view of the solar system. Nicholas of Cusa had suggested, more than a century before Galileo, that the earth moves about the sun. He was a cardinal of the Church, and he enjoyed the highest esteem. The Church forbade Galileo to teach heliocentrism as fact, since he had not proved it to be so. He could continue to teach it as a theory or as a model that predicted the motions of the earth and the other planets. Now let’s go to State University and say aloud that a man can’t become a woman by wishing really hard. Let’s see what happens.

“Easter is a pagan myth about new life in the spring.”

What have you got against Jews? Jesus was crucified during the days of the Passover

feast. That feast commemorated the liberation of the Jews from slavery in Egypt. It had nothing to do with sowing or reaping or April showers bringing May flowers. Read in Exodus the account of the feast and the prescriptions for celebrating it. It is all about slavery and freedom, about exile and a homeland.

“The ancient world is full of accounts of dead people coming to life again.”

Name one. Do you find one in Livy? Plutarch? Herodotus? Thucydides? Polybius? Tacitus? Sallust? Anything in the historical record?

“Religion is the cause of more wars than anything else.”

Outside of Islam and the Thirty Years’ War, name a single war that was mainly about religion. Take America: The Revolutionary War? The War of 1812? The Civil War? Either world war? Mexico, Spain, Korea, Vietnam, Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan? The native Indians in America fought all the time. None of it was about religion. Rome was at war almost constantly for 1200 years, somewhere or other. None of it was about religion. The ancient Greeks fought each other all the time, and they shared the same religion. Men fight for wealth, power, glory, and land; they fight out of fear, blood-lust, vengeance, ambition, and boredom. That’s what history teaches.

“You people are judgmental.”

What you really mean is that Christians still hold to some moral views that were commonplace the day before yesterday—views about sex, marriage, and the raising of children. If new views on these things have made everybody happy, they sure don’t show it. The marriage and divorce statistics don’t show it. Popular culture doesn’t show it. Sing your favourite love song composed in the last year. Can you think of any? God is merciful, but He’s not going to let us keep pretending that good is bad and bad is good. We are called to be merciful to persons and unflinchingly committed to the truth.

“That’s only your truth.”

If you say there is no objective moral truth, why are you even arguing with me? You have nothing to say one way or the other—nothing to say to a murderer, a Nazi, a rapist, a thief, or any evildoer. But you are better than that. You don't really believe that no moral truth exists. People want there to be no truth as regards the sins they like. When it comes to sins they don't like, it's a different story. A fornicator doesn't like to have his wallet snatched.

"Your priests..."

What do you call it when you prejudge a large group of people by the sins of a few? Isn't there a word for that?

"But the victims were children."

Vicious and despicable. But your concern for children doesn't go far enough. Why stop with gay priests going for boys? Why not go on to talk about abortion, fatherless homes, divorce, and porn in the public square? People violate the moral law in all kinds of destructive ways.

"You're changing the subject."

The subject was the welfare of children.

"Well, you only believe in God because real life is too hard for you."

If believing in God makes life easier, why do you shy away from Christian morality, regardless of whether you believe in God? But if you find Christian morality too demanding, you should be honest about it. Meanwhile, you've begged the question. If God exists, then to fail to believe in Him is to run from reality.

"I believe in the Big Bang."

So did Fr. Georges Lemaître, the Catholic priest and physicist who first proposed it. What is your point?

"The point is that the universe did not have to be created."

Nothing comes from nothing.

"That is what Christians say."

No, that is what the ancient atomists said. They were the first atheists. It is also what logic says. But you're not really interested in astrophysics. Be honest. You want to live your life as you please, and that's it.

"What's wrong with that?"

What have you got against the Iroquois?

"I don't understand."

Every culture in the world, from prehistory to the present day, promotes some things as good and condemns others as evil. That includes things about sex, wealth, vows, courage in battle, self-denial, worship, everything. What have you got against Confucius, or the Buddha, or the Shinto sages, or aboriginal wise men? What have you got against all of mankind? We are touching on something called the natural law.

"That's too esoteric for me."

I thought Christians were simplistic. Now you say you can't follow their arguments. Let's start over. Would you like to read Augustine's Confessions?

"All breast-beating and moaning over sin."

I was thinking about the last four books, on memory and intellect, form and matter, the nature of creation, and time and eternity.

"Well..."

It might change your life. It changed mine. Don't be afraid!



Heap Songs Upon Their Heads

Anthony Esolen – 27 December 2021

This column first appeared on the website Crisis Magazine (www.crisismagazine.com).

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In my [previous article](#), I said I had two recommendations for how we might deal

with people who are so irrationally hostile to religious faith that they could not even put up

with a secular talk show host, for the Australian Broadcasting Company, discussing with a New Testament scholar the stories about the birth of Jesus. The reactions to the program were bizarre—a flailing of anger and contempt and, though no one would admit it, bad conscience and fear.

So, my first recommendation was to *heap truth upon their heads*. This second one I like better. It is to *heap songs upon their heads*.

I was in an antique store today, and the proprietors had the radio turned on to a station playing the top fifty songs on the charts in December from the years when I was a small boy. “Monday, Monday,” sang The Mamas and the Papas, with their clear voices and the intricate harmonies they made sound easy. I needn’t say that the song is a *great* work of art. It doesn’t pretend to be. But *it is a work of art*, and a very good one; it has its modest and attractive beauty. And just here is where our current world must hang its head in shame. We are the most beauty-starved people, I am persuaded, who have ever trod the earth.

Sure, I know that the aboriginal tribes of North America had no great architecture. There was no Salisbury Cathedral on the Missouri River. If you wanted a marble statue of Hiawatha, you had to wait until the classically trained Augustus Saint-Gaudens made one for you. But the natives, like the people of all human cultures before our time, had song and poetry, the fundamental and universal human art; and they took their ornaments of dress seriously; and they lived outdoors, in that world of great beauty—sometimes subtle, sometimes spectacular, sometimes terrifying. We live indoors—and we have no songs passed down from one generation to the next.

The peasants on the mountain where my father’s people lived (Caserta Vecchia, Italy) went to their church on a Sunday and were immediately in the midst of ancient and tremendous beauty, and that was before they heard a single word of the Gospel, or before they heard a single note from the choir. The

typical unbeliever of our time never has such an experience. The typical *believer* of our time, given what we have done to strip our churches bare of good and great art, whether musical or poetic, whether in painting or sculpture or architecture, hardly has such an experience. So then: let us give ourselves over to beauty, and let us *burden the secular world with it*.



[Image Credit: Shutterstock]

I am, of course, speaking in jest—partly. A few nights ago, the students from Magdalen College of the Liberal Arts came by our house to regale us with Advent and Christmas songs: “People, Look East,” “Joy to the World,” “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing,” and others. Now, in a normal human culture, it is common to hear your neighbours singing. It is not common among us. I will wager that very few of us, to take one example, have ever heard a group of boys singing—we hardly know what that sounds like.

In any case, the students at our college sing very well because everyone takes part in the choir, and when they sang the carols and hymns, they sang them in harmony, sometimes adding a special descant for the climactic final verse. And while they were singing, and being cheerful about it, a few of my neighbours stayed around to listen. That included people who have just moved in, whom I don’t know yet. There is something immediately and powerfully attractive about young people having fun and singing their hearts out; and something additionally powerful when they are singing hymns.

Here I might complain about how wretched are most of the contemporary hymn-impostors in *Glory and Praise*, *Gather*, and *Worship*, and the clumsy, stupid, often ungrammatical, sometimes heretical, and always unnecessary grubbing of the old hymns the editors engage in. For most Catholics themselves have very little notion of the richness of English hymnody. Let us then take for granted that you aren't going to attract anybody by schmaltz because everybody has heard that stuff. We want to give people *what they have not heard* but what will stir a sympathetic chord in their souls; because whether they know it or not, and even whether it pleases them or not, their souls are made for beauty.

Imagine if my students had sung—and they are quite capable of it—Victoria's *O Magnum mysterium*. My neighbours would have been more, or other, than pleased. They would have been stunned. They would not have been able to think, "This is silly," or "This is pleasantly sentimental," or "This is charming, but childlike." The first emotion that Victoria's composition stirs is fear, and not the jiggered neural thing that noisy action films make but a brooding, powerful, sacred terror, as if you had entered a door and come into a different universe, a true one. The music soars and ends in a joy that is inseparable from the sense of solemnity and holiness. Most people in our time *will never have heard anything like it*.

This is what I mean by taking our faith into the public square. You go into the public square. You traverse the streets in procession. You stop for prayer and for song. Or you take your choir outdoors, wherever

people will pass by. You sing. Again, even though singing is natural to every human culture, most people in the post-Christian and post-cultural West do not sing. They know no folk songs. They know no hymns.

We do not want to make our faith familiar. The gas station is familiar. The town dump is familiar. When we heap our enemies with songs, we show ourselves to be strange, and in an arresting and appealing way. For man cannot thrive in a world where all things are mud. Modern materialism is a philosophy of mud; call them quasars or quanta if you like, but mud is mud, unless it has been touched into existence by God.

Modern materialism is a philosophy of death. The whole universe is running down like an old clock. So is your body, once you have passed your noonday prime. Forget the familiar things. The faith is strange—as all of the truest and most powerful stories are. We have a task that no missionary of old ever had. He had to meet cultures where they were. We have no real culture to meet. He had to lift up the human things to Heaven. We have to supply the human things to begin with.

We are almost the only people remaining in the West who will sing for devotion, contrition, gratitude, love, and joy. It is like saying that we are almost the only people left who enjoy racing about on two legs. Let us then do it, in the open. Some of those who see and hear us will grumble and go off to a dank cell somewhere. But others will say, "I don't know what they have been drinking, but I want some of it." And we have the best drink, too.



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January – The Month of the Holy Name of Jesus



For the Readings at Mass and the Daily Offices please refer to the Prayer Resources tab on the Ordinariate web page (www.ordinariate.org.au)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 January Mary, the Holy Mother of God
2 January EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (transf.)	3 January Feria of Christmas 2 (<i>The Most Holy Name of Jesus</i>)	4 January Feria of Christmas 2	5 January Feria of Christmas 2	6 January Feria of Christmas 2 <i>Or</i> EPIPHANY OF THE LORD	7 January In the Epiphany Octave (<i>Raymond Penyafort, Priest</i>)	8 January In the Epiphany Octave (<i>St Mary on Saturday</i>)
9 January BAPTISM OF THE LORD	10 January Feria of Epiphany I	11 January Feria of Epiphany I	12 January Feria of Epiphany I (<i>Benedict Biscop, Abb</i>)	13 January Feria of Epiphany I (<i>St Hilary, Bp & Dr</i>)	14 January Feria of Epiphany I	15 January Feria of Epiphany I (<i>St Mary on Saturday</i>)
16 January SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY	17 January St Anthony, Abbot	18 January Feria of Epiphany II (<i>St Wulfstan, Bp</i>)	19 January Feria of Epiphany II	20 January Feria of Epiphany II (<i>St Fabian, Pope & Mtr</i>)	21 January St Agnes, Virgin & Martyr	22 January Feria of Epiphany II (<i>St Vincent, Dn & Mtr</i>)
23 January THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY	24 January St Francis de Sales, Bp & Dr	25 January CONVERSION OF ST PAUL	26 January Australia Day	27 January Ss Timothy & Titus, Bps	28 January St Thomas Aquinas, Pr & Dr	29 January Feria of Epiphany III (<i>St Mary on Saturday</i>)
30 January FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY	31 January St John Bosco, Pr & Dr					

The Holy Father’s Intention for January: For true human fraternity, “We pray for all those suffering from religious discrimination and persecution; may their own rights and dignity be recognised, which originate from being brothers and sisters in the human fraternity.”