

Concerning Roman Catholicism

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Prefatory Note

Collected here are five essays written between 2015 and 2019 which concern Catholicism and spirituality in general. Several of the essays contain reminiscences about my Catholic upbringing and my time as a Catholic monk. The internet links in the footnotes were valid as of January 2019.

David Myatt
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In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church

Part One

Listening to *Messe De La Nativité: Gaudeamus Hodie; Puer Natus Est Nobis* - performed by Ensemble Gilles Binchois - I am so reminded how the Roman Catholic Church inspired such numinosity, such beauty, century following century. For it is as if such music presenced the Divine to thus remind us, we fallible error-prone mortals, of another realm beyond the material and beyond our own mortal desires.

Such presencing of the Divine - such a numinous reminder of our fallibility, century following century, as for example in *Kyrie Orbis Factor* as performed by Ensemble Organum - seems to have become somewhat lost in all the recent Media propaganda about how some Catholic priests and monks have allowed their personal desires to overwhelm such a presencing of the numinous and which presencing of the divine is and was manifest in compassion, empathy, and a personal humility.

Lost, in all the Media propaganda, because I from personal experience know that such incidents are perpetrated by a minority of individuals and that the vast majority of Catholic priests and monks are good individuals who strive, who often struggle, each in their own way and according to their physis, to manifest the virtues of compassion, empathy, and humility. That so many writers and readers of such Media propaganda in this our modern world seem to commit the fallacy of *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter* no longer, unfortunately, surprises me.

In respect of personal experience I have to admit that I was somewhat dismayed by a recent report issued by a government sponsored Inquiry Panel. For I personally had known two of the individuals mentioned in that report, knowing from personal experience in a certain monastery that they, and the few others like them over the years, were the exception out of dozens and dozens of other monks and priests there. I was also somewhat dismayed by what I felt was the personal opinion of the authors of that report - stated in their "Conclusions" - that those involved in placing their personal desires before compassion, empathy, and humility, are "likely to be considerably greater than numbers cited in the convictions" since no evidence was presented to substantiate such an opinion. Another example of individuals committing the fallacy of *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*? Probably.

But why does someone who has developed a somewhat paganus weltanschauung – the mystical individualistic numinous way of pathemathos – now defend a supra-personal organization such as the Roman Catholic Church? Because I from personal experience appreciate that for all its many faults – recent and otherwise – and despite my disagreement regarding some of its teachings it still on balance does, at least in my fallible opinion, presence – as it has for centuries presented – aspects of the numinous and which presencing has over centuries, again in my fallible opinion, had a beneficial affect on many human beings.

As I wrote some years ago in respect of visiting my father's grave in Africa:

"Once I happened to be travelling to an area which colonial and imperialist Europeans formerly described as part of 'darkest Africa'. Part of this travel involved a really long journey on unpaved roads by bus from an urban area. You know the type of thing – an unreliable weekly or sporadic service in some old vehicle used by villagers to take themselves (and often their produce and sometimes their livestock) to and from an urban market and urban-dwelling relatives. On this service, to a remote area, it [seemed to be] the custom – before the journey could begin – for someone to stand at the front and say a Christian prayer with every passenger willingly joining in.

It was quite touching. As was the fact that, at the village where I stayed (with a local family) near that grave, everyone went to Church on a Sunday, wearing the best clothes they could, and there was a real sense (at least to me) of how their faith helped them and gave them some guidance for the better, for it was as if they, poor as they were, were in some way living, or were perhaps partly an embodiment of, the ethos expressed by the Sermon of the Mount, and although I no longer shared their Christian faith, I admired them and respected their belief and understood what that faith seemed to have given them.

Who was – who am – I to try and preach to them, to judge them and that faith? I was – I am – just one fallible human being who believes he may have some personal and fallible answers to certain questions; just one person among billions aware of his past arrogance and his suffering-causing mistakes." [1]

Is to not judge others without a personal knowing of them, to not commit fallacies such as *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*, and to allow for personal expiation, perhaps to presence the numinous in at least one small and quite individual way? Personally, I am inclined to believe it is.

Pietatis fons immense, ἐλέησον
Noxas omnes nostras pelle, ἐλέησον [2]

2.x.18

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[1] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2012/10/30/just-my-fallible-views-again/>

[2] "Immeasurable origin of piety, have mercy. Banish all our faults, have mercy." Kyrie Orbis Factor.

Although the Greek phrase Κύριε ἐλέησον is considered to be a Christian doxology, deriving from the Old Testament, it is possible that it was a common phrase in Greco-Roman culture, with origins dating back to the classical period, for it occurs in the Discourses of Epictetus – Book II, vii, 13 – in relation to a discussion about divination,

καὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλούμενοι δεόμεθα αὐτοῦ κύριε ἐλέησον

and in our invocations to the theos our bidding is: Master, have mercy.

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Part Two

Expiation And Penance

Two of the guiding practical principles of living as a Roman Catholic seem to me, on the basis of personal experience and fallible understanding, to be expiation and penance, related as they are to what was termed the Sacrament of Confession – now re-named the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation – and thence related to one of the founding principles of the Roman Catholic Church: that an ordained Priest has the religious

authority [1] to give absolution for the "sins" [2] a person has committed, and the authority to specify what penance is required for expiation, but which absolution is dependant on the person making a full and truthful confession and being repentant.

Such personal confession, penance, and expiation, are evidential of how a practising Catholic interacts with the Divine and is thus personally reminded of what is spiritual, eternal, numinous, and beyond the causal everyday world. As I wrote in my essay *Numinous Expiation*,

"One of the many problems regarding both The Numinous Way and my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done [...]

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site." [3]

This personal - and via the Confessional, this priestly - connexion to the Divine, with the attendant penitence, penance, personal expiation, seems to me to have been somewhat neglected when non-Catholics, and even some Catholics criticize the Roman Catholic Church for their past response to those accused of placing their personal (often sexual) desires before compassion, empathy, and humility.

That is, such criticism is secular; based on what is temporal, causal, such as some secular law or some personal emotive reaction, with the spiritual - the eternal - dimension to mortal life unconsidered. Which spiritual dimension is for Catholics based on allowing for personal expiation by spiritual means such as confession, penitence, and penance.

This allowance for such personal expiation by such spiritual means is what, according to my fallible understanding, informed the treatment by the Catholic hierarchy of many of those accused of placing their personal desires before obedience to their God.

For judgement according to such a spiritual dimension was, rightly or wrongly, often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment. Understood thus, there were no – to use a vernacular term – "cover-ups", just the application of certain spiritual considerations, considerations which are the foundations of the Catholic faith based as such considerations are on the belief in the Eternal Life – in Heaven or in Hell – which awaits all mortals, one portal to such an Eternal Life in Heaven being, according to Catholic faith, the sacrament of confession.

Another aspect of this Catholic priority of the spiritual over the secular is the sanctity (the seal) of the confessional and which sanctity is adjudged to be more important than secular laws relating, for example, to disclosure of or information regarding actions deemed to be criminal.

As for my personal opinions on the matter, I have none, for who am I – with my decades of hubris, my knowledge of my plenitude of mistakes – to judge others, to judge anyone? I have tried to rationally understand both the secular and the spiritual dimensions involved, having personal experience of both, and as so often these days remain somewhat perplexed by our human nature and by the need so many humans, myself included, still have for a belief in a spiritual dimension whereby we can connect ourselves to the numinous, to the Divine – however the Divine is presented to and in us – enabling us to perhaps find some peace, some happiness, some solace, some answers, among the turmoil, the suffering, the chngement, of the secular world.

My portal to the spiritual remains 'the way of pathei-mathos', the way of striving to cultivate, striving to live by, the virtues of humility, empathy, compassion, honour, non-interference, and self-restraint. A very individual way devoid of mythoi and anthropomorphic deities.

Perhaps it would be easier to believe in God, to accept again the Catholic expiation of the sacraments of Confession and the Mass. It would perhaps be even easier to accept some tangible votive wordless means in the form of offering some paganus propitiation, some libation, some talismata left, at some numinous paganus site.

But as Aeschylus so well-expressed it,

ἔστι δ' ὄπη νῦν
ἔστι: τελεῖται δ' ἐς τὸ πεπρωμένον:
οὔθ' ὑποκαίων οὔθ' ὑπολείβων
οὔτε δακρύων ἀπύρων ἱερῶν
ὄργας ἀτενεῖς παραθέλξει [4]

What is now, came to be
As it came to be. And its ending has been ordained.
No concealed laments, no concealed libations,
No unburnt offering
Can charm away that firm resolve.

Which type of sentiment I feel philosophers such as Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius also sought to express.

4.x.18

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[1] Qv. John 20:22-23,

λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἃν τινων ἀφῆτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφέωνται
αὐτοῖς ἃν τινων κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται

Receive Halig Spiritus: if you release anyone from their errors,
they are released; if you hold onto them, they are held onto.

In regard to the term Spiritus, in my commentary on John 1:31 I wrote:

τὸ πνεῦμα. Almost without exception, since Wycliffe's Bible the Greek here has been translated as "the spirit", although the ASV [the Anglo-Saxon Version] has gast (gast of heofenum), whence the later English word 'ghost'. However, given what the terms 'spirit' and 'ghost' - both in common usage, and as a result of over a thousand years of Christian exegesis - now impute, it is apposite to offer an alternative and one which is germane to the milieu of the Gospels or which at least suggests something of the numinosity presenced, in this instance, via the Gospel of John. Given that the transliteration pneuma - with its modern association with terms such as pneumatic - does not

unequivocally suggest the numinous, I have chosen spiritus, as referenced in respect of gast in Wright's *Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies*.

In regard to the translation Halig Spiritus, in my commentary on John 5:33 I wrote:

I have here used the Old English word Halig - as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' - to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from halig and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* - in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' - may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized.

[2] As I have noted in several essays, and in my translation of the Gospel of John, I prefer to translate the Greek term ἁμαρτία not by the conventional 'sin' but rather by 'error' or 'mistake'. As I wrote in the essay *Exegesis and Translation*,

One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is sin. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided.

One of the oldest usages of the word sin - so far discovered - is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of syn is used:

Ʒæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn Ʒæt mon Ʒæs

wenan scyle be Gode

The context of the original Latin of Boethius is cogitare, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect - an error, wrong - to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as Beowulf, the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis.

Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: "Let he who has never made a mistake [Αναμαρτητος] throw the first stone at her."

ὡς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἠ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied "Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those."

The essay is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2013/04>

/26/exegesis-and-translation/ and was included as an Appendix to my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander* (ISBN 978-1495470684)

[3] The essay is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/numinous-expiation/>

[4] Agamemnon, 67-71

Persecution And War

A Remembering

Reared as a Roman Catholic, educated for a while at a Catholic preparatory school and then - again for a while - at a Catholic boarding school, I remember the history taught by our teachers and Priests of the centuries-long persecution of English and Irish Catholics that began in the 16th century. There were stories of martyrs; of recusants; of secret Masses; of anti-Catholic polemics and propaganda; and of the monks who - after the suppression of the monasteries, the theft of monastic lands and wealth, begun by a tyrannos named Henry - escaped to France and founded monasteries such as the one at Dieulouard in Lorraine.

There thus was engendered in we Catholic children a feeling of difference, aided by the fact that our Mass was in Latin, by our sacrament of confession, by the practice of Gregorian chant, and by the singing of hymns such as Faith Of Our Fathers with its memorable verses

Faith of our Fathers living still
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword [...]
We will be true to thee till death [...]

Our Fathers, chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free [...]
Faith of our Fathers, Mary's prayers
Shall win our country back to thee

This feeling of difference was forcefully remembered when I in the early 1970's - during The Troubles - ventured to visit Northern Ireland; when I in the mid-1970's and as a Catholic monk spent several weeks staying at a Presbytery in Dublin; and when I in the mid-1990's - before the Good Friday Agreement - visited Derry.

Forcefully remembered because I listened to accounts of the burning of Catholic homes by Protestant mobs in 1969 and the subsequent flight of hundreds of Catholic families to the Irish Republic where they were housed in refugee camps; listened to witness accounts of the killing of eleven Catholics, including a Priest, by the British Army in Ballymurphy in 1971; listened to witness accounts of the killing of fourteen Catholics, again by the British Army, in Derry in 1972; and listened to stories of the persecution of Irish Catholics under British rule.

Such a remembering, such a childhood feeling of difference, formed part of the years-long personal and philosophical reflexion that occupied me for several years as I, between 2006 and 2009, developed my 'numinous way' and then between 2011 and 2012 gradually refined it into the 'way of pathei-mathos', with the core of that reflexion concerning matters such as extremism, my own extremist past, war, prejudice, intolerance, and persecution.

War And Combat

Familiar as I was with ancient works by Thucydides, Herodotus, Livy, and others; with many works concerning more recent European history by modern historians, as well as with personal accounts of those who had fought for both the Allies and the Axis during World War Two, I recalled some words of Cicero:

"Aliis ego te virtutibus, continentiae, gravitatis, iustitiae, fidei, ceteris omnibus."

"because of your other virtues of self-restraint, of dignity, of fairness, of honesty, and all other such qualities..." [1]

Which led me to consider making a distinction between war and a more personal combat, between a modern *krieg* and the Old Germanic *werra*, given that war, from my reading of and admittedly fallible understanding of history, seemed to me to involve - by its very nature of necessitating killing and causing injury - intolerance, hatred, a divisive sense of difference often involving "us" believing we were "better" (or more civilized) than them, our enemies, thus leading to a dehumanization of "the enemy". A divisive sense of difference and a dehumanization often aided (particularly in modern times) by polemics, rumour, and propaganda; and a divisive sense of difference, a dehumanization, together with polemics, rumour, and propaganda, which I knew from my

own decades of political and religious activism formed a core part of all types of extremism.

The distinction I considered was that personal combat unlike war did not involve large armies fighting against each other because of some diktat or personal agenda by some tyrannos or because of some ideology or religion or policy of some State or government. Instead, combat involved small groups – such as clans or tribes or neighbours – fighting because of some personal quarrel or some wrong or some perceived grievance.

But the more I considered this supposed distinction between combat and war the more I realized that in practice there was no such distinction since both involved principles similar to those of the Ancient Roman *Leges Regiae* – qv. the *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius – where someone or some many possess or have acquired (through for example force of arms) or have assumed authority over others, and who by the use of violence and/or by the threat of punishment and/or by oratory or propaganda, are able to force or persuade others to accept such authority and obey the commands of such authority.

This acceptance by individuals of a supra-personal authority – or, more often, the demand by some supra-personal authority that individuals accept such a supra-personal authority – was manifest in the Christian writings of Augustine (b.354 CE, d.430 CE), such as his *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* where in Book XIX, chapter xiii, he wrote of the necessity of a hierarchy in which God is the supreme authority, with peace between human beings and God requiring obedience to that authority; with peace between human beings, and civil peace, also of necessity requiring obedience to an order in which each person has their allotted place, "Ordo est parium dispariumque rerum sua cuique loca tribuens dispositio."

Which hierarchy and acceptance of authority led Augustine to describe – in book XXII of *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* – the concept that war requires the authority of a person (such as a monarch) who has such "necessary" authority over others. This concept regarding war has remained a guiding principle of modern Western nations where the authority to inaugurate and prosecute a war against perceived enemies resides in the State, and thus in modern potentates who have seized power or in elected governments and their representatives such as Presidents and Prime Ministers.

Authority And Society

In the nations of the West, such a hierarchy of authority applies not only to war and its prosecution but also to changes, to reform, in society [2] for there is, as I mentioned in *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*,

"a hierarchy of judgement involved, whatever political 'flavour' the government is assigned to, is assumed to represent, or claims it represents; with this hierarchy of necessity requiring the individual in society to either (i) relinquish their own judgement, being accepting of or acquiescing in (from whatever reason or motive such as desire to avoid punishment) the judgement of these others, or (ii) to oppose this 'judgement of others' either actively through some group, association, or movement (political, social, religious) or individually, with their being the possibility that some so opposing this 'judgement of others' may resort to using violent means against the established order." [3]

In the way of pathei-mathos authority is personal, based on individual empathy and a personal pathei-mathos; both of which have a local horizon so that what is

"beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience [our pathei-mathos], beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals - is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." [4]

In practical terms this means trying to cultivate within ourselves the virtues mentioned by Cicero - self-restraint, dignity, fairness, honesty - and implies we have no concern for or we seek to cultivate no concern for supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority - whether political, religious, or otherwise - and thus move away from, try to distance ourselves from, the consequences of such supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority manifest as the consequences are and have been, throughout our history, in war, prejudice, intolerance,

unfairness, extremism, and persecution in the name of some ideology, some religion, or because someone has commanded us to persecute those that they and others have declared are "our" enemies, and which war and persecutions are often, especially in modern times, accompanied by propaganda and lies.

Thus in the case of my Catholic remembering, those soldiers in Ballymurphy and in Derry shot and killed civilians, women included, because those soldiers believed them to be "enemies", because propaganda had dehumanized those enemies; because those soldiers were part of and obeyed a hierarchical, supra-personal, chain-of-command by being there armed and prepared to use deadly force and violence against individuals they did not personally know; and because in the aftermath of those killings, and for years afterwards, they were not honest and hence did not contradict the propaganda stories, the lies, about those events which some of their superiors and others circulated in an attempt to justify such acts of inhumanity.

Yet for me the real tragedy is that events similar to those of my very personal remembering have occurred on a vaster scale millennia after millennia and are still occurring, again on a vaster scale and world-wide, despite us having access to the wisdom of the past, manifest as such wisdom is, for those reared in the West, in the Agamemnon of Aeschylus, in the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles, in the mythos of Μοῖραι τρίμορφου μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες [5], in many of the writings of Cicero, in Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτόν by Marcus Aurelius, in the numinous beauty of Gregorian chant, in the music of JS Bach, and in so many, many, other writers and artists ancient and modern.

Ða sceolde se hearpere weorðan swa sarig
þæt he ne meahte ongemong oðrum mannum bion
(XXXV, 6)

9.ix.18

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[1] M. Tullius Cicero, *Pro Murena Oratio*, 23. My translation.

[2] By 'society' in the context of this essay and the way of pathei-mathos

is meant a collection of individuals who dwell, who live, in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws and the same institutions of authority. Modern society is thus a manifestation of some State, and States are predicated on individuals actively or passively accepting some supra-personal authority, be it governmental (national) or regional (county), or more usually both.

[3] "Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos". *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. Fifth edition. ISBN 978-1484096642.

[4] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*. 2015.

[5] "Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies." Aeschylus (attributed), Prometheus Bound, 516

Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West

The letter written by Pope Francis, dated 1° de enero de 2019 and sent to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, seems to me to encapsulate two of the metaphysical contradictions of the modern Western world in regard to the numinous and the profane.

For in the letter Pope Francis, commenting on what the Media has described as "the scandal of clerical abuse" within the Roman Catholic Church, wrote that

La credibilidad de la Iglesia se ha visto fuertemente cuestionada y debilitada por estos pecados y crímenes, pero especialmente por la voluntad de querer disimularlos y esconderlos. [1]

and also used Biblical quotations in support of his arguments.

The use of the phrase pecados y crímenes - sins and crimes - seems to indicate an acceptance of the metaphysical equality of Church and State: of a sin, as defined by the teachings of the Church, and of a crime as defined in laws made by some State [2].

Sins And Crimes: Sacred And Secular

Pope Francis provides the context for one metaphysical contradiction, for in respect of the response he believes is required regarding such "sins

and crimes" he writes

Hoy se nos pide una nueva presencia en el mundo conforme a la Cruz de Cristo, que se cristalice en servicio a los hombres y mujeres de nuestro tiempo [3]

That is, there should be a change, a new presencing, and one that serves the people now; the people of our epoch, of our age, of the 'times' in which we now live.

This is the epoch in which the Media, using such expressions as a "culture of abuse" - cultura del abuso - can question the credibility of the Roman Catholic Church, and by repetition of particular instances of abuse and the reporting of other ones, demand not only a response from the hierarchy of the Church but a response that conforms to the popular, or to the Media created, expectations of the epoch. Which expectations are that secular justice - as understood and as implemented by the State - has a higher priority than *judicium divinum*, the divine justice of God or of the gods.

Which divine justice was, at least according to my fallible understanding and as I noted in part two of my *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, "often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment" especially as personal confession to a Priest, personal penitence, and undertaking the penance prescribed were, in the Roman Catholic Church, a connexion to the Divine. Hence why many of those who, via the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, confessed to abuse were not "publicly named and shamed" by the Catholic hierarchy, were not brought to the attention of State authorities, but instead given penance and, in some instances, quietly moved and expected to begin a new penitential life in the service of God.

That Pope Francis uses the expression cultura del abuso and writes that la credibilidad de la Iglesia se ha visto fuertemente cuestionada y debilitada por estos *pecados y crímenes* suggests to me at least two things. First, that the move toward the change he suggests is in part at least placatory, in conformity with our epoch with its powerful secular Media and its powerful modern secular States; and second that the religious, the numinous, the spiritual, balance presenced for millennia by aspects of the Roman Catholic Church [4] - the devotion to the sacred over and above the secular - is continuing to be lost within the Roman

Catholic Church, with *judicium divinum* and the secular justice of some State now apparently considered by the Pope as metaphysically equal. Hence why in a speech to the Roman Curia in December 2018 he said that those who abused children should "hand themselves over to human justice." [5]

A Revealed Religion

The second metaphysical contradiction, between the sacred and the profane in the modern world, which the Papal letter reveals is the unsurprising and traditional use of Biblical quotations in support of, and to frame, the presented suggestions and argument.

This reliance on written texts and reliance on their exegesis and thus on the varied interpretations that result [6] is an implicit part of all revealed religions from Judaism, to Christianity, to Islam. Since these interpretations can vary and have varied over the centuries the result is schism, reformation and counter-reformation, leading as these did in the past to such things as the suppression of the monasteries, the theft of monastic lands and wealth, and the persecution and martyrdom of Catholics, by a tyrannos named Henry; and leading as they have in more modern times, to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, and to the proliferation of Christian sects and denominations who have diverse views about such matters as same-gender love and abortion.

Such reliance on such texts, such varying interpretations, are as I have noted elsewhere the fundamental weakness of revealed religions [7] with, in my fallible view, the sacred - the numinous - unable to fully be presented by such religions.

Thus it does not surprise me that the Roman Catholic Church apparently now considers *judicium divinum* and the secular justice of some State as metaphysically equal since the conflict between varying interpretations, the apparent desire for placatory reforms - of being "a new presence in the world" - as a consequence of Media attention, and the increasing move away "in this epoch" from a belief in the superiority of *judicium divinum* (the primacy of the sacred) are necessary consequences of the dialectic of exegesis.

Which is one reason why my personal spiritual belief is now not that of Catholicism even though I sense that Catholicism does still presence

some aspects of the numinous.

Instead, I incline toward an apprehension of the divine, the sacred, which is paganus and thus individual, undogmatic, and empathic, since my paganus metaphysics is that of

(i) an (often wordless) awareness of ourselves as a fallible mortal, as a microcosmic connexion to other mortals, to other life, to Nature, and to the Cosmos beyond our world, and (ii) a new civitas, and one not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence καλὸς κάγαθός and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous. [8]

7.i.19

Extract from a reply to someone
who enquired about a Papal Letter in relation to my text
In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church

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[1] "The credibility of the Church has been seriously questioned and undermined by these sins and crimes but especially by a desire to hide or to disguise them."

The official Vatican translation is "The Church's credibility has been seriously undercut and diminished by these sins and crimes, but even more by the efforts made to deny or conceal them."

[2] By the term State is meant the concept of both (i) organizing and controlling - over a particular and large geographical area - land (and resources); and (ii) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area.

[3] "Today, what is asked of us is to be a new presence in the world that, in conformity with the Cross of Christ, is made clear in service to the men and women of our epoch."

The official Vatican translation is "What is being asked of us today is a new presence in the world, conformed to the cross of Christ, one that takes concrete shape in service to the men and women of our time."

[4] As I noted in part one of my *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*,

"Listening to Messe De La Nativité: Gaudeamus Hodie; Puer Natus Est Nobis - performed by Ensemble Gilles Binchois - I am so reminded how the Roman Catholic Church inspired such numinosity, such beauty, century following century. For it is as if such music presented the Divine to thus remind us, we fallible error-prone mortals, of another realm beyond the material and beyond our own mortal desires."

[5] Catholic News Agency, December 21, 2018.

[6] Qv. my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, and *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*.

[7] Qv. (i) *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*; (ii) *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*; (iii) *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*.

[8] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*.

Catholic Still In Spirit?

Perhaps I remain, partially at least, a Catholic in spirit - in my heart - though not, most of the time, in words and deeds. For while I intellectually and empathically disagree with the teachings of the Catholic Church on many matters - such as homosexuality, contraception, and on divorcées who have remarried being excluded from Holy Communion (unless they have resorted to a Papal Annulment) - I still find myself in my inner weakness not only sometimes frequenting the Lady Chapel of my nearest RC Church - lighting a candle, kneeling, and in reverent silent contemplative prayer remembering, in the felt presence of The Blessed Virgin Mary, those now dead loved ones such as my mother and father and Sue and Francis, and those other women hurt by my selfishness - but also traveling several times a year to where Gregorian chant is sung and where the Tridentine Mass is celebrated, bringing as such Latin chant and such a Latin Mass still do, in me, a renewed awareness of the numinous and a renewal of such humility as I strive - and sometimes still so often fail - to remember and feel.

There seems to me no intricate and difficult interior problem here derived from my somewhat pagan way of *pathei-mathos*, for that way is essentially - for me, even born as it is from my own *pathei-mathos* - rather intellectual, a *perceivation*, lacking as it does something outward, practical, supra-personal, and communal, to presence the numinous and thus affect one's very being in a spiritual way. So I seem to now exist - and have for several years existed - between two worlds: apparently emotionally needing something practical, living, and spiritual beyond myself and my intellectualism, and yet knowing in a rather unemotional manner that it is the way of *pathei-mathos*, and not Catholicism, which is my *weltanschauung*.

No intricate and difficult interior problem, no inner dichotomy, because I know the many flaws in my *weltanschauung* and in myself; and one cannot intellectually create some-thing - manufacture some-thing devoid of $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ - to presence the numinous. For it seems to me that such a presencing has to evolve, organically, over causal time, because it has been wordlessly presenced in other mortals and then kept alive because also felt by some of a newer generation. Will - can - such a presencing of the numinous arise from that way of *pathei-mathos*? Most probably not, intellectual and so very personal as it is.

So the need for some inner, numinous, sustenance remains; for fulfilling as a lot of classical music – such as the Cantatas of JS Bach – is and are, and fulfilling as walks alone in wild and rural Nature are, I sense a yearning in me for something more: some wordless intimation of the Divine which betakes me so far away from my still egoistic self that I am both awed and humbled again, as I often was in Winter wandering a darkened cloister as a monk in that quiet contemplative time between Matins and Lauds.

2015

Extract From A Letter To A Friend

cc David Wulstan Myatt 2015-2019

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