

## Papal Gems and Lesser Treasures

### PAPAL GEMS

EXCERPTS from an Editorial in *The Australian* for Monday, 21st July, the day after the Papal Mass at Randwick, where The Editor quotes the Pope, thus:

#### CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

- What will you leave to the next generation?
- Are you building your lives on firm foundations, building something that will endure?
- What legacy will you leave to young people yet to come?
- What difference will you make?

#### IMPORTANT ISSUES

The Pope, *The Australian* went on, posed important questions about **freedom** and **tolerance** becoming separated from truth. Even his negations are in the context of something positive, better, achievable:

- This is fueled by the notion, widely held today, that there are no absolute truths to guide our lives.
- Relativism, by indiscriminately giving value to practically everything, has made 'experience' all important.
- Yet experience, detached from any consideration of what is good or true, can lead, not to genuine freedom, but to moral or intellectual confusion, to a lowering of standards, to a loss of self-respect, and even to despair.

The Editor noted that the Stations of the Cross on Friday, 18th July, "at the city's most striking sights, made as moving, intense a religious experience as any centuries-old shrine in Europe. **Viewed by an audience of about 500 million**, it will help define Sydney for many around the globe and prompt some to venture to Australia."

He summed up the Pope's vision of the world:

- being improved by overcoming interior emptiness, an unnamed fear, a quiet sense of despair;
- the key is a love that is not greedy or self-seeking, but pure, faithful and genuinely free, open to others;
- liberates from shallowness, apathy and self-absorption which deaden our souls and poisons our relationships.

He concluded that it will be a long, long time before Australia sees a week like World Youth Day again.

#### COMMENT by Father Tierney

The Pope took the high moral ground: so should we. He did not condemn, but pointed to a better way.

He posed questions aimed at engendering noble ideas, ideals and action. He transcended all the petty bickering and malice of some Sydney's newspapers, radio and TV, before and after the WYD event.

He could (but did not) quote Tolkien: "Saruman - preferred to gnaw the ends of old plots, when pride and anger were consuming him."

His practical "way forward" out of the mire into which post-Christian societies have sunk is upholding noble-ideas and ideals like Truth, Beauty, Goodness and God.

### LESSER TREASURES

EXCERPTS from Father Tierney's Daily Log Book of Ideas.

#### RELATIVISM

The relativism against which Benedict XVI has set his face is actually **old-fashioned scepticism**. It has so often been the prevailing fad of academics and the media: "nothing can be known, nothing is certain, there is no morality, religion is not true but merely myth."

**Relativism is closely related to other '-isms'**. Its twin brother is subjectivism (= my opinion), and its brothers are atheism (= no God), determinism (= no freewill), and hedonism (= nothing but fun). It is a first cousin of the theological Modernism of demythologization in doctrine, desacralization in liturgy. And consumerism, communism and feminism all thrive on minds weakened by it. As a way of life, relativism leads to gloom, despair and suicide.

Tragically, some aspects of relativism have inflicted practising Catholics. Their spiritual progress grinds to a halt while encumbered with such a crippling and often corrosive philosophy. Chanting mantras does not make them true - they're half-truths - such as:

he has the right to his opinion (and to express it);  
beauty is in the eye of the beholder;  
the evil of the truth that is no longer relevant;  
the greatest good of the greatest number;  
affirmative action and equal opportunity;  
all cultures (and religions) have equal rights;  
'virtues:' of tolerance, sincerity, commitment;  
'virtues' of popularity, consistency, loyalty.

#### DECONSTRUCTING the Deconstructionists

Relativism is underpinned by deconstruction.

Deconstruction is the opposite of **construction**. Its 'contribution' to literature, history and philosophy is purely negative, even nihilistic: it pulls things apart to find out what 'makes them tick', and fails to put them together again.. Then it has the gall and envy to scoff at any positive contribution towards enlightenment.

By questioning the ability of language to represent adequately any external reality, deconstruction empties literary texts of truth, beauty, goodness and God. It asserts the impossibility for any text to communicate a fixed and stable meaning. Its readers are expected to eradicate or 'deconstruct' all philosophical or other concepts when approaching a text. The antidote to deconstruction is to **include its own blah** as well.

Rather than denounce it, deconstruct him! — gently.

"What you were put on earth for? You don't know? You say the question is meaningless... Well, deconstruct your own thinking. Look at what you're missing out on. Delight in the wonder of the world, and in God. Get some uplifting ideas and ideals, and help humanity." "It's safer to bet on God and the soul, because you can't loose the bet," as said Paschal, physicist, philosopher, a man of God.

And finally suggest, "**Let God reconstruct you!**"

## GRAVE ERROR in translation of Vatican II

The insertion of a single word "that" has weakened the Church's teaching on the inerrancy of Scripture:

Since, therefore, all that the inspired authors, or sacred writers, affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully and without error, teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the sacred Scriptures.

*Dei Verbum*, on Divine Revelation (1965) 11.

This quote from VCII is repeated verbatim in our English text of the Catechism of the Catholic Church 107. **Is it ambiguous? or actually erroneous?**

It has led many into falsely thinking that Biblical inerrancy applies only to matters of divine revelation.

Flannery's translation (as quoted in the Catechism) as well as Abbott's earlier on, have inserted into the English a limiting word "that". **It is not in the Latin originals of the Council and the Catechism**, which simply have *veritatem, quam Deus...* which means "the truth which God..." The "that" makes it restrictive.

The translation should read "the truth as God wished it to be set down for the sake of our salvation in Sacred Writings". It is an unrestricted truth.

## SEVEN SOCIAL SINS

Sydney's The Catholic Weekly, 12th April, 1998, quoted Mahatmas Ghandi in 1947, for his grandson:-

- Wealth without work;
- Pleasure without conscience;
- Knowledge without character;
- Science without humanity;
- Worship without sacrifice;
- Politics without principles.

His grandson added three more social sins:

- Rights without responsibilities;
- Violence from inability to deal with anger,
- stemming from inability to build relationships.

## CRUELTY TO BLACKS & BABIES

The Victorian Government's 2008 coming decriminalization of abortion is a worse evil than those disgraceful judges who decreed, in the USA, in 1857:

Can a negro, who ancestors were imported into this country, and sold as slaves, become a member of the political community formed and brought into existence by the Constitution of the United States, and as such become entitled to all the rights, and privileges, and immunities, guaranteed by that instrument to the citizen?

... We think they are not, and that they are not included, and were not intended, under the word 'citizens' in the Constitution, and can therefore claim none of the rights and privileges which that instrument provides for and secures to citizens of the United States. On the contrary, they were at that time considered as a subordinate and inferior class of beings, who had been subjugated by the dominant race of beings, and whether emancipated or not, yet remained subject to their authority, and had no rights or privileges but such as those who held the power and the Government might choose to grant them.

Reprinted from *Endeavour Forum* September, 2008

## THE WORD OF THE LORD

- **Deconstructionist philosophy:**  
Who is this that wraps up windy words in unskilful sentences?  
Job 38:2 and 16:3 DR
- **Sunday:**  
I will go to the altar of God.  
Psalm 43[42]:4
- **Church porch (and sacristy):**  
The Lord is in His holy temple;  
let the whole earth keep silence before Him.  
Habakuk 2:20
- **Seminary portals:**  
Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days, because of the greatness of his love.  
Genesis 29:20
- **Schoolroom:**  
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.  
Isaiah 6:3
- **Workshop:**  
Direct Thou the work of our hands.  
Psalm 90[89]:17
- **Garden:**  
The Lord God took the man and put him in the paradise of pleasure to till it and keep it.  
Genesis 2:15
- **Kitchen;**  
Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty.  
Matthew 25:35
- **Dining room:**  
Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!  
Luke 14:15
- **Bedroom:**  
For He gives to His beloved sleep.  
Psalm 127[126]:2
- **Going forth:**  
Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation.  
Mark 16:15
- **At a neighbour's:**  
Peace be to this house.  
Matthew 10:12
- **Driving:**  
Do unto others as you would have them do unto you for this is the Law and the Prophets.  
Matthew 7:12
- **A helping hand:**  
Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.  
Galatians 6:2

## OBEDIENCE

Obedience can be tricky. Here are some principles:-

The worst disobedience is not stopping at once when told to. In some situations, the result is death.

Non-instant obedience (after a hesitation of seconds or minutes) counts as an isolated good act. It is much better than no obedience at all. But to be the virtue of obedience, it must be habitual, hence 'at once'! Nor is instant obedience the same as blind obedience.