

fraternitas

Ars Gratia Christi

Official Newsletter of The Fraternity of St Genesius, St Mary's Presbytery, Dublin Road, Drogheda, Co. Louth, Ireland.

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A Blessed Christmas to all our Members!

The Fraternity of St Genesius

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The Fraternity of St Genesius is an approved association of the Catholic Church in which its members commit themselves to supporting the men and women of the theatrical and cinematic arts through their daily prayers and sacrifices. In this way, recognizing their role within the Mystical Body of Christ, they participate in the renewal of culture as called for by the Servant of God, Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, and spiritually accompany their brothers and sisters in Christ. The Fraternity was founded in Drogheda, Ireland, on 19th January 2007 and is under the patronage of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and St Genesius, the patron of the theatrical arts.

Fraternity Council

The Fraternity is governed by a Council under the Father Director. Its current members are:

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Fraternitas

Fraternitas is the official Newsletter and magazine of the Fraternity. Published quarterly, it aims to keep members informed of what is happening in the association while providing articles of interest on spiritual and cultural matters. Contributions, be they articles, letters, testimonies etc., are always welcome and will be considered for publication. Contributions can be sent to: Editorial Committee, *Fraternitas*, Fraternity of St Genesius, St Mary's Presbytery, Dublin Road, Drogheda, Co. Louth, Ireland or by e-mail to *info@stgenesius.com*.

Donations

The Fraternity is a non-profit organization and does not charge membership fees or a subscription for the Newsletter. Since it has no source of income it depends entirely on donations to cover the printing of the Newsletter and literature and postage. We would be most grateful if you could send a donation to support us in our work. The Fraternity is a registered charity.

A Prayer at Christmas

Heavenly Father, bless our Fraternity, this family of prayer devoted to the mission of interceding for your sons and daughters.

We give you thanks for all your blessings; make us worthy of your kindness and eager to do your will.

Help us to offer ourselves in prayer and sacrifice, in imitation of your Son, Jesus Christ, who shed his Blood out of love for us to redeem us and enable us to take the places you have prepared for us in your kingdom.

Allow us to participate in his mission as co-redeemers and evangelizers, seeking nothing for ourselves but simply the joy of serving and loving you.

* * *

Father Director will offer his Christmas Midnight Mass for all Fraternity members, their intentions, and for all those we are praying for.

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Fraternity News

Pope Benedict XVI Praises the Fraternity



Pope Benedict XVI has praised the foundation of the Fraternity of St Genesius. During a meeting with the founder and Father Director following his weekly General Audience in Rome on the 29th October last, the Holy Father described the Fraternity as “a wonderful work”. Fr John was leading the first Fraternity pilgrimage to Rome, accompanied by Bishop Smith and forty-nine pilgrims.

Thousands of pilgrims from all over the world gathered in St Peter’s Square for the Audience which began at 10.30am. Despite rainfall early in the morning, the weather cleared up just as the Holy Father arrived. The Fraternity pilgrims were well placed in the square and they managed to greet the Holy Father as he passed. As is the custom, Pope Benedict delivered a catechesis to the assembled crowds first in Italian, and then a summary in a number of languages. Given that this is the Pauline Year, the Holy Father is devoting his catecheses to the subject of St Paul, his teachings and theology.

When the English speaking groups were introduced to the Holy Father, the Fraternity was mentioned and with a roar coming from the members in the square, the Holy Father acknowledged the greeting with a wave. Following the Audience the Pope received a number of bishops who were present, among them our Protector Bishop, Bishop Michael Smith.

Father Director, Fr John was seated in a special section during the Audience and afterwards met and spoke with the Holy Father. He told the Pope about the foundation of the Fraternity and its aims and the Holy Father encouraged him and the Fraternity members in our mission. Fr John then presented the Pope with a copy of the Proto-Icon and a letter from the Council.

Pilgrimage to Rome a Success

The first Fraternity pilgrimage to Rome has been a great success. Forty-five pilgrims, most of them members, spent a week in the Eternal City, flying out from Dublin on the morning of Friday 24th August. Four pilgrims travelled from the United Kingdom and joined the group for part of the pilgrimage.

Fr John, our Father Director, led the pilgrimage and we were accompanied by our Protector Bishop, Bishop Michael Smith. The itinerary was designed according to the traditional pilgrimages to the seven Basilicas of Rome, with visits to other notable sites, among them the Catacombs of St Callistus, Tre Fontane and, Nettuno (shrine of St Maria Goretti). Also included in the itinerary was a pilgrimage to the tomb of St Genesius (pictured below), which is in the Church of Santa Susanna. Given that it is the Pauline Year, a visit to the Basilica of St Paul’s Outside-the-Walls was a priority, and afterwards a pilgrimage to the tomb of Blessed James Alberione, the Apostle of the Media and founder of the Pauline Family.

The group stayed at Casa La Salle, on the Via Aurelia, a guest house run by the De La Salle Order at their Mother House not far from St Peter’s Basilica. The accommodation was good and evening meal was provided – good Italian cooking.

Other activities included a trip to the Vatican museums and the Sistine Chapel, a panoramic tour of Rome and various sightseeing expeditions, including the all-important visits to Rome’s ice cream parlours – the best in the world. On the final evening a farewell dinner was held in a beautiful restaurant on the outskirts of the city.

The highpoints of the pilgrimage were the various liturgies in the Basilicas and churches. Bishop Smith was chief celebrant at Masses in St Peter’s Basilica in the Chapel of the Patrons of Europe in the crypt near





St Peter's tomb; in St Mary Major's, in the Chapel of Our Lady *Salus Romani Populi*; and at St Paul's Outside-the-Walls. He also led Vespers at the tomb of Blessed James Alberione and at the tomb of St Genesius in Santa Susanna. With the group was Fr Vincent Twomey SVD, Professor Emeritus of Moral Theology at Maynooth and renowned theologian. A former student and friend of Pope Benedict, he preached a number of insightful homilies during the week while officiating at Mass in the Chapel of St Laurence at the Sanctuary of the Holy Stairs. Fr John was chief celebrant at the opening Mass in Santa Susanna and at the Shrine of St Maria Goretti. The music was provided by musician Timmy Regan.

The final event of the pilgrimage was Vespers in the Church of Santa Susanna, at the tomb of St Genesius. Bishop Smith led the prayers and during his homily commended the Fraternity for its work, quoting the words of the Holy Father, "It is a wonderful work". Following Vespers, Fr John presented the Bishop with an icon of St Genesius as a token of thanks for his support, and then presented the Bishop with the gift of a gold pectoral cross on behalf of all the members of the Fraternity, to mark his forthcoming anniversary – Bishop Smith will celebrate the Silver Jubilee of his Episcopal Ordination in January.

The group returned home to Ireland on Friday the 31st. Father Director and the members of the Council were delighted with the success of the pilgrimage and it is hoped that another will take place within the next few years. Fr John expressed the desire that the next pilgrimage will reflect the international character of the Fraternity with members from other countries travelling to Rome with us to visit the tombs of SS

Peter and Paul, and to honour our patron St Genesius. The Spring 2009 issue of *Fraternitas* will be a pilgrimage special.

New Hymn to St Genesius Composed

A new hymn has been composed in honour of St Genesius. Written by Timmy Regan, the hymn reflects on the life and conversion of St Genesius and calls on his intercession. The hymn received its first performance at the opening Mass of the Roman pilgrimage in the Church of Santa Susanna, not far from the tomb of the martyr.

Timmy (*pictured below*), a native of Cork now living in Drogheda, spent a number of years in one of Ireland's show bands, Dermot O'Brien and the Clubmen, before launching a solo career. A popular entertainer, he has recorded a number of records. Devoted to St Genesius, he is a friend of the Fraternity and has performed at various Masses. He is currently working on a recording of the hymn which we hope will be available in the near future.



From the Father Director

The Spirituality of the Holy Magi

With his visit to their Shrine in Cologne Cathedral during World Youth Day in 2005, Pope Benedict XVI drew the Church's attention once again to the Holy Magi, not as distant mythical figures, but as men who sought and found God in the Infant of Bethlehem. Fr John reflects on the story of Magi and offers some points for reflection with regards to a spirituality of the Holy Magi.

"A cold coming, we had of it" T.S. Eliot puts these words into the mouths of the Magi in his poem *The Journey of the Magi*. If we take to heart this expression of human weariness we may begin a journey with these mysterious figures from the East to the cave of Bethlehem and to the discovery of the Infant God. When we celebrate the feast of adoration of the Magi we do so in the context of the Epiphany of the God of Israel and of Christ to the Gentiles, as human beings we can also discern a greater symbolism in their representation of humanity in general. The cold journey to Bethlehem recalls another: that from Eden, when man and woman, now faced with the harsh world, must venture out in search of the God they once knew intimately. In our acquaintance with the Magi, one has to wonder if we have become a little too familiar with these mysterious figures from the East and in the process lost something of what they symbolize; but who were the Magi?

First of all they were not kings: that designation comes from Scripture which announced that kings would come to adore the Lord and bring with them gifts of great price and spices and incense. They were in fact Zoroastrian priests and astrologers. Ancient history records the importance of the Magi as an influential group within the Persian Empire. The Magi followed the teachings of the philosopher Zoroaster. We know little of Zoroaster's life, what we know is gleaned from ancient Greek texts and his story is similar to that of Buddha and Mohammad. Persian by birth, at the age of thirty, having lived a careless life, he is believed to have had an enlightenment, and he spent the rest of his life in communication with the deity he encountered, whom he called Ahura Mazda, and preaching the wisdom he had learned. Scholars have found it notoriously difficult to date Zoroaster, and numerous dates have been proposed. He is said to have composed poems which form part of a collection of sacred Greek texts, and scholars are trying to date these in an attempt to find out when Zoroaster lived.

Zoroaster is said to have issued many prophecies, among them one about the birth of a divine child. He told his followers that one day a divine being would be born and he would come to teach the truth. At the moment of his birth a celestial event would take place in the heavens – a new star. His followers, then, took an ardent interest in astrology –

reading the stars to discover the fate of human beings while keeping an eye out for the birth of this divine being. In the year of Jesus' birth some of Zoroaster's followers saw the fulfillment of their prophet's oracle. These men, then, can be seen to represent humanity in general in their search for God, and in the star of Bethlehem God finally sent a sign to announce that he was about to reveal himself to all peoples. If we reflect on this revelation to the Gentiles, we can turn our minds to another, earlier revelation to the Gentiles, before the call of Abraham – to that of Noah. After the flood God made a covenant with mankind in Noah and as sign of this new covenanted relationship a rainbow stretched across the sky. The rainbow and the star are connected – celestial phenomena which usher all mankind into a new encounter and new relationship with God. The birth of humanity's Divine Child, the Infant of Bethlehem is announced by a star, but he himself will become the sign of the New Covenant, he is the new rainbow as he unites God and man in himself. As a rainbow unites heaven and earth: so too Jesus.



The Magi leave their homeland and go west, following the star in obedience to their prophet to meet with the mysterious being whose birth was foretold. They make that journey for all mankind – for men and women of every age who look for God, for the divine, for that which gives meaning to their lives. It is a journey in which they will be transformed, so much so that they will never need to make it again – they will return home by a different way. But that journey is long and arduous. Scripture tells us nothing of the conditions they met or the trials they encountered, but in those days such a long journey was hazardous – robbers were enough to dissuade the traveller never mind the weather and physical obstacles. Eliot need not resort to poetic licence to allow his Magi utter their complaint. The journey of the Holy Magi, as they represent humanity, is one in which man is led to understand that human misery and weariness is healed by Christ, by the Son of God's taking onto himself human nature.

The painting of the Adoration of the Magi by Gentile da Fabriano (*reproduced on the front cover*) is one which provides us with an insight into the human condition and of the journey towards God. Da Fabriano draws on a theme often

explored in paintings of the Magi as representatives of humanity – each of three are depicted as men at different stages of life: young man, middle-aged and old. In this iconography we see the progress of the soul towards God. From the right of the painting: first the young man – very much the Apollo in his grace and beauty and in his stature – in how he sees himself. All the swagger of youth is there and indeed the follies. He makes demands of others to respect him: as he looks for his place in the world he is arrogant. We see, for example, another, a servant, on his knees removing the stirrups of the young magus. We can all identify the follies and arrogance of youth – it is a phase which, we hope, will pass. The demands of the teenager are renowned and often the subject of jokes, but they are at a stage in which they are coming to terms with their budding adulthood – finding their way in the world. In terms of faith, in modern times, they find little interest. One of the challenges of the Church in the world today is that of fostering faith in the young. This is a serious challenge in the West in particular where decades of strident secularism have had their effect. And so our young magus stands before the Christ Child: he is his own man.

The second magus represents middle-age, a time when the experience of life has led men and women to reconsider their place in the world and their place when it comes to transcendent matters. There is a point in everyone's life when the mind and heart open. Secular culture looks on this time as the "mid-life crisis" and it is if there is an absence of faith, but in a life lived in faith it is a time of awakening, of a greater orientation to God. Dante speaks of this time in his *Divine Comedy*: in the opening canto using the image of finding himself in a dark wood "*Midway this life we are bound upon*". Dante tells us, no doubt speaking from his own experience, that this moment can come upon a person quickly – he tells us that he did not know how he got there. From this point he begins his journey through Hell, Purgatory and Heaven – he grows in faith and enters into a process of purification and movement towards God. In Da Fabriano's painting the second magus removes his crown and bows – he is coming closer: he sees who the Child is and his life is now been re-oriented towards Him.

The wisdom of old age – of maturity in faith, is represented by the third magus, the oldest. He kneels, he adores the Child – his crown is on the ground – in the dust. The Child touches his head. This is a moment of the most intimate encounter: man has returned to his God: his life's journey is almost at an end, and even though it may have been as cold and harsh as Eliot suggests in his poem, all of this is known to have been a purification, a preparation: the lines of age and suffering are beautiful in the face of the faithful. These three ages of man are, of course, symbolic, and with some souls they are not dependent on chronology, but on progress in faith and virtue. The Church has many young saints who reached the wisdom of holiness.

And so what can we learn from this? We can discern a spirituality – of the movement of man from the weariness of the human condition to rebirth in Christ – the movement

from arrogance and sin, to humility, abandonment and holiness. The Magi were well placed to represent all of us. In their sincere search for God they are a sign for modern men and women, an encouragement. For many in the West, and now increasingly in the East, faith is being replaced by many things, including consumerism, and so men and women are living empty lives. Many do not yet know it, but when a crisis comes then the absence of faith, of the transcendent in one's life, leaves them cold, arid, lost. Many no longer understand God: even among those who believe God has been redefined in man's image and likeness and it is difficult for the truth of who Christ is to knock down the idol man has manufactured for the divine. Yet the lives of the Magi provide us with hope – God can be found – indeed he is already found. According to tradition, the Magi encountered St Thomas preaching the Gospel and they recognized the one he was speaking about. This tradition tells us that they were baptized and eventually martyred. Christ will always find a way to bring the vision of God to those who seek the truth. The Magi encourage us to trust, to seek, to turn to Christ.

And so, we could say that the spirituality of the Holy Magi is one of orientation to Christ, of conforming ourselves to him, of abandonment. In the difficulties of our lives, in the trials, and most especially in the moments when faith is tested, we may put our trust in God, for he will help us: the star is his sign, the sign of hope, the connection with the heavens where he has a place for us. That star is no celestial body – it is Christ: the Magi were following the glory of God finally revealed and that glory transformed them. This is their message for modern man – look to Christ, follow him, he will not abandon you. Pope Benedict reminded the world in his homily at the inauguration of his pontificate that the Church is alive and it is young: we might open those words and see that it is Christ who is alive and he is the life of the Church and life of every man and woman. The greatest discovery modern man can make is that which St Paul speaks of when he says "*To live is Christ*".

In the last century or so, the Magi have fallen victim to those who did not believe that they were real but say that they were the invention of St Matthew. Yet in Cologne and in other places, a lively devotion has been fostered by Christians. Indeed the route their relics took on their journey from Milan to Cologne in 1164 is marked even today by little shrines, places in which the relics are believed to have rested on their pilgrimage to their new home – these shrine form a pilgrim route to Cologne echoing the original journey of the Magi. Pope Benedict in his pilgrimage to their shrine for World Youth Day in 2005 has revived the Church's devotion to these holy men, and so, as we look to learn from their spirituality, in this Christmas season, it is appropriate to ask them to pray for us and to assist us on our journey to Christ.

Holy Magi, St Casper, St Melchior, St Balthazar, pray for us; guide us on our life's journey to Christ and bring us safely to his kingdom by means of your assistance. Amen.



The Pauline Year

28th June 2008 – 29th June 2009

The Dynamics of Conversion: St Paul and St Genesius

Continuing our series on St Paul during this Pauline Year, Fr John McKeever looks at the conversions of St Paul and St Genesius and reflects on what is at the heart of the mysterious 'events' which won them for Christ.

In this special Jubilee Year commemorating the 2000th anniversary of the birth of St Paul, the Fraternity of St Genesius could not contemplate a pilgrimage to Rome without including a visit to St Paul's tomb on the itinerary. Indeed, the fact that both St Paul and St Genesius became believers in Jesus Christ as a result of a sudden and miraculous conversion experience makes them ideal, if somewhat unlikely partners in the work of evangelisation. Their backgrounds were entirely different: Paul was the arch-conservative Jewish Pharisee who could boast about his religious devotion and his perfectionism in keeping the Jewish Torah; Genesius on the other hand was a pagan and a Roman actor, a member of a class that was not renowned for its piety or moral integrity! However opposed their personal histories may have been, both men stand united by the astounding transformation that the grace of God worked in their lives. Having experienced the presence of the Risen Christ through mysterious, yet overwhelming encounters, both men could emphasise the words that Paul himself wrote: "it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20). For is this avowal not the fulfilment of the promise that is contained in Genesius' dying words: "Our Lord Jesus Christ is God, and we shall have life in his name"?

When comparing the conversions of Paul and Genesius, we should not dwell too long on the details of these events. At a recent catechesis on St Paul during his weekly General Audience, Pope

Benedict warned his listeners not to linger too long on the details of Paul's conversion, such as the blinding light, the falling to the ground, the voice that called out "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" Instead, the Holy Father insisted: "All these details refer to the heart of the event: the Risen Christ appears as a brilliant light and speaks to Saul, transforms his thinking and his entire life." Here we meet the key word that unites the experiences of our two saints: *event*. The dazzling radiance of the Risen Christ blinded Paul, so that in his physical blindness he could grasp the spiritual blindness which his own erroneous preconceptions about God had caused; only then could he say his definitive 'yes' to Christ in Baptism and so be completely healed and able to see physically, mentally and spiritually. Thus Pope Benedict can say: "St Paul was not transformed by a thought but by an event, by the irresistible

presence of the Risen One whom subsequently he would never be able to doubt, so powerful had been the evidence of the event, this encounter." Genesius was similarly converted by a sudden and powerful event: his mock baptism which led him, by God's grace, to completely see and understand the Christian faith. Genesius, like Paul, was not converted by an intellectual argument, or a deepening of his own reflections about religion, or a psychological process. He was converted by a source totally outside himself. He was transformed simply by meeting the living Christ. This lesson from the twin conversions of our saints is of supreme importance for a



Fraternity like ours that exists in order to evangelise. Our work will only be successful if we can help those to whom we minister (be they actors or people of any profession) to meet and experience the living Jesus. His love, his grace, his compassion and his truth must become incarnate in us; otherwise our words will sound hollow and unconvincing. In Paul's words, we will be like *"a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal"* (1 Cor 13:1). As the Holy Father warns, *"Christianity is not a new philosophy or a new morality. We are only Christians if we encounter Christ ... in reading Sacred Scripture, in prayer, in the liturgical life of the Church. We can touch Christ's heart and feel him touching ours."*

To emphasise the importance of the 'event' in conversion, however, is not to negate the importance of catechesis and religious knowledge (also vital elements of the Fraternity's apostolate). When it comes to considering the knowledge that Paul and Genesius had of Jesus before their respective conversions, we can say that they both had it and



they hadn't it! Let me explain. On the one hand, it is evident that both saints knew quite a bit about the story of Jesus Christ and the basic fundamentals of the Christian faith. Paul was present at the martyrdom of St Stephen, so he must have heard Stephen's apologia and his clear explanation of how Jesus was the fulfilment of God's plan of salvation that the Jews had believed in and longed for. He also says in Acts 26:9 *"I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth"*, implying that he knew enough about Jesus in order to oppose faith in him. Similarly, (if we accept the veracity of the Acts of the Martyrdom of St Genesius) Genesius had a good knowledge of Christianity as he had become a catechumen and had stayed long enough to have gathered knowledge of the meaning and performance of Baptism. This means he must have been a

catechumen for quite some time as the early Christians were very protective of their sacraments of initiation. Like Paul, he would have known enough about Christianity in order to oppose it. So we can say that both saints possessed intellectual knowledge of the faith. Yet we can also say they hadn't knowledge as they did not truly *know* the truth that Jesus, the Crucified and Risen One, is Son of God and Messiah, the promised Saviour of the world. Paul admits this in 1 Tim 1:13 when he writes: *"In the past I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a violent man. But I received mercy because I acted ignorantly in my unbelief."* We can conclude that they knew about Jesus and they knew the rudiments of the Church's teaching, but this was totally insufficient because they did not *know Jesus*. And he can be known, not by a progression in our human study and knowledge, but only by a revelation of himself to us by grace. This revelation is what is conveyed by St Paul's words to the Galatians about his knowledge of Christ: *"The Gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ"* (Gal 1: 11-12). Our St Genesius could surely say the same thing!

Pope Benedict has also stressed this distinction between knowing Jesus (which is the fruit of his gracious revelation of himself to us) and knowledge of Jesus (which is often barren in the lives of many so-called believers and does not prevent antipathy to the faith in non-believers). He has said that we cannot consider Paul's conversion to be a mere intellectual progression. Paul's conversion was not the result of him thinking about his Jewish faith and what he had heard about Jesus at a new, higher, level. It was not a result of Paul simply saying: *"Oops, I made a mistake about that!"* He changed because he met Christ. His ego died with Christ on the cross, and he was born into a new existence with the Risen Lord. John Henry Newman's warning that no one can ever be converted to Christ by a syllogism reminds us of the limits of knowledge in the work of conversion, yet the same holy Cardinal valued the importance of reason as well. He knew that we cannot love that of which we have no knowledge, so we must grow in our knowledge of the faith. Yet intellectual knowledge is not enough; knowledge must progress from the intellect to the will so that it may be desired and loved. This movement is the work of conversion, which is a work of grace. In words taken from the Church's liturgy, our goal is to be *"enraptured by the beauty of Truth itself"*. Paul and Genesius were enraptured overwhelmingly, in a manner beyond our

experience. Yet grace is also offered to all of us in sufficient measure so that we can continue the work of conversion in our own lives that was achieved in an instant in our saints' lives. Conversion is always God's own work, even though we have to cooperate with him if it is to be successful. It is therefore mysterious. Whenever we try to engage in the work of conversion, let us keep the examples of Paul and Genesius in mind, and engage with potential converts with great reverence, respect and humility. Let us make sure that we never let our 'knowledge' get in God's way. As Coleridge warned: *"In what way, or by what manner of working, God changes a soul from evil to good, how He impregnates the barren rock – the priceless gems and gold – is to the human mind an impenetrable mystery, in all cases alike"*.

This "enrapture by Truth" is the final aspect of the conversions of Paul and Genesius that I want to consider. Paul, the Pharisee and scholar, desired truth. He wanted to know the God of Israel and the truth of his precepts contained in the Torah. His encounter with Christ was the fulfilment of this desire for truth that his own intellectual labours were unable to achieve unaided. What about Genesius? Was he a searcher for the truth through his work of acting? We do not know. Most Roman plays in his time were skittish or whimsical performances rather than the great tragedies that we know from our studies of the classics. The play about Christianity he appeared in when he was converted was also a satire intended to mock the faith. However, the amount of effort he put into researching his subject, according to the Acts of his Martyrdom, suggests that he was a dedicated professional. Perhaps he was seeking to debunk a religion whose moral code and philosophy of life gravely offended his own sensibilities. After all, many writers and performers attack Christianity today because they are angered by its teachings (especially in the areas of marriage and the family) which they see as illogical and restrictive of human freedom. The Acts state that when he was hauled before the Emperor Diocletian after professing his faith in Christ, Genesius referred to Jesus as: *"The true God, the Light, the Truth and the Mercy of all who have received his gift of baptism"*, so truth and enlightenment may very well have been genuine concerns for him. I believe that we can say that Paul the Pharisee and Genesius the actor were both



seekers, and it was only in Christ that their search found its object.

This is important for us. If we are missionaries to culture, striving to follow in the footsteps of St Paul, albeit humbly and weakly, then we have to see actors, writers, directors, artists and other workers in the domain of culture as our fellow seekers for "enrapture by truth". It is no coincidence that when Trevor Nunn directed *Cymbeline* for the Marlowe Society at Cambridge last year that half his cast were theologians. Nor that when Patrick Stewart appeared on *Songs of Praise* with a school friend who had become a vicar that they could discuss how both of them had shared the same path albeit in two different professions because they both sought to express truth and to further understand the ineffable mystery of man. Both faith and true art seek to lead us to transcendence, to beauty, to truth; and ultimately, to God. The first governors of the BBC understood this when they placed a Latin religious

inscription in the entrance hall of Broadcasting House, which reads in translation: *"This Temple of the Arts and Muses is dedicated to Almighty God by the first Governors*

*of Broadcasting in 1931 ... It is their prayer that good seed sown may bring forth a good harvest, that all things hostile to peace or purity may be banished from this house, and that the people, inclining their ear to whatsoever things are beautiful and honest and of good report may tread the path of wisdom and uprightness."*¹ If only their successors today would abide by such standards!!

Perhaps the alliance between religion and theatre that is symbolised by the twin conversions of Paul and Genesius was best summed up by that master of the pithy phrase, Benjamin Disraeli. He wrote: *"The stage is a supplement to the pulpit, where virtue, according to Plato's sublime idea, moves our love and affection when made visible to the eye."* By the intercession of St Paul and St Genesius, may God grant success to the work of the Fraternity that many workers in the dramatic arts may see in Christ the fullness of truth and the completeness of the humanity they study, so that through their work many people may be renewed in heart, mind and soul.

¹ Translation by Charles Moore, *The Daily Telegraph*, 22.xi.2008.



The Pauline Year

28th June 2008 – 29th June 2009

The Apostle of Paul

In this Pauline Year the Church is reflecting on many aspects of Paul's life and teaching, and not to be omitted are the initiatives he inspired in men and women down through the centuries. One of the most renowned is one of the most recent, Blessed James Alberione, the Apostle of the Media. As one of the saintly companions who influenced the foundation of the Fraternity, Father Director, Fr John Hogan introduces us to the life and spirituality of one of the Church's great founders.

When we were planning the itinerary for the Fraternity's first pilgrimage to Rome I was anxious that a visit to the tomb of Blessed James Alberione should be included. Blessed James was one of the towering figures of the Church in the twentieth century and, I believe, a man who will, in the future, be ranked with the great Saints who assisted in the various reforms of the Church among them St Teresa of Avila, St Philip Neri, St Ignatius Loyola, St Catherine of Siena. Blessed James Alberione, like them, was called to a tremendous mission founding five religious congregations and five institutes to assist the Church in proclaiming the Gospel through the media: these ten foundations are known as the Pauline Family since it is St Paul whom Blessed James regarded as the true father of his foundations. If Paul is the spiritual father, then Blessed James, whom the Paulines call *Primo Maestro* – First Master, could also be called a Barnabas or Timothy of the 20th century since he was in spirit the intimate and companion of Paul.

Thanks to God, our group did visit the tomb, and this visit was, most appropriately part of our pilgrimage to mark the Pauline Year. Following Mass in the Basilica of St Paul Outside-the-Walls, we were met by one of the brothers, Br Giuseppe, who brought us to Regina Apostolorum, the Pauline Family's mother church. There a representative party was waiting to greet us and extended to us their most gracious hospitality. The presence of Blessed James could be discerned in their warm welcome. We spent a wonderful hour there in the crypt chapel where the body of Blessed James lies in a glass casket. After an inspiring talk by Fr Alessandro, the Provincial, Bishop Smith led us in Vespers. When presentations were finished and photographs taken, the Paulines waved us off with the invitation to return to visit them when we are again in Rome.

We are, of course, deeply grateful to the sons and daughters of Blessed James for their most cordial welcome. It was a grace for us to visit them and the tomb of their founder since he is one of the saints



whose example and message has helped form the Fraternity. The Fraternity is, of course, under the patronage of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and St Genesius, but it is also a Pauline foundation – Pauline in the sense that St Paul is our great teacher – the one who in his missionary example and insights into the Mystical Body of Christ forms the theological basis for our spirituality. But Pauline

also in the spirit of Blessed James who asked to his sons and daughters to use the media as the means of preaching the Gospel to modern men and women – to see the cinema screen as their pulpit. Having venerated his sacred remains, a brief introduction to his life for the members of our Fraternity is necessary.



James Alberione was born on the 4th April 1884 in the village of San Lorenzo di Fossano in Italy, the fourth son of Michele Alberione and Teresa Allocco. The family struggled to make ends meet, but as was so often in case in such situations the home was a truly Christian one and James developed a strong faith at an early age. He started his education in the local school at the age of six, and when in town often visited the shrine of Our Lady of Grace there; from this pious practice a profound devotion to Our Lady developed and matured, one which would mark him for the rest of his life. When he was eight years old he announced that he was going to be a priest; and when he finished elementary education, he remained true to his word and entered the seminary in Bra. His time there was difficult and he found himself in the middle of a crisis. He left the seminary, but when the crisis passed he was accepted into the seminary in Alba.

It was when he was in Alba that he had an experience which would dictate the course of his life's work. While participating in a night of Eucharistic adoration organized to welcome in the new century on the 31st December 1900, James felt a call within himself to offer his life and work for the people of the new century: he offered himself to God and he was led to believe that the offering was accepted. This was the defining moment of his life, indeed as he would say himself, at that moment the Pauline Family was born. He understood what he was to do, and so for the rest of his seminary

training as he devoted himself to preparing for ordination and also prepared for this mission. The figure of St Paul loomed large over his intellectual and spiritual formation, and it was in these years that he became a disciple of the great Apostle.

Blessed James was ordained priest on the Solemnity of SS Peter and Paul, the 29th June 1907: he was twenty-three. Assigned to the parish of Nazole he ministered for two years there. It was in that parish that he met a young man, Joseph Giaccardo: Joseph would have an important role to play in the foundation of the Pauline Family. In 1909 James was appointed spiritual director to the seminary in Alba, and while there used his time to study the social sciences, pastoral theology and catechesis. He developed a particular concern for workers, and for those in the media. In 1913 he was appointed the director of the diocesan weekly newspaper, the *Gazetta d'Alba*. So began Blessed James's work in the media.

On 20th August 1914, he formed a new association, the Pious Association of St Paul for the Apostolate of the Good Press: this would develop into the Society of St Paul, a congregation of priests and brothers who used the media and publishing in general to preach the Word of God. Joseph Giaccardo, now renamed Timothy, became James's first priest of the Society. The following year, 1915, he founded a sister association which became the Daughters of St Paul. As these two new institutions were on the road to regularization as religious communities, he founded an association for the laity, the Pauline Cooperators, in 1917. A number of years later, Blessed James was



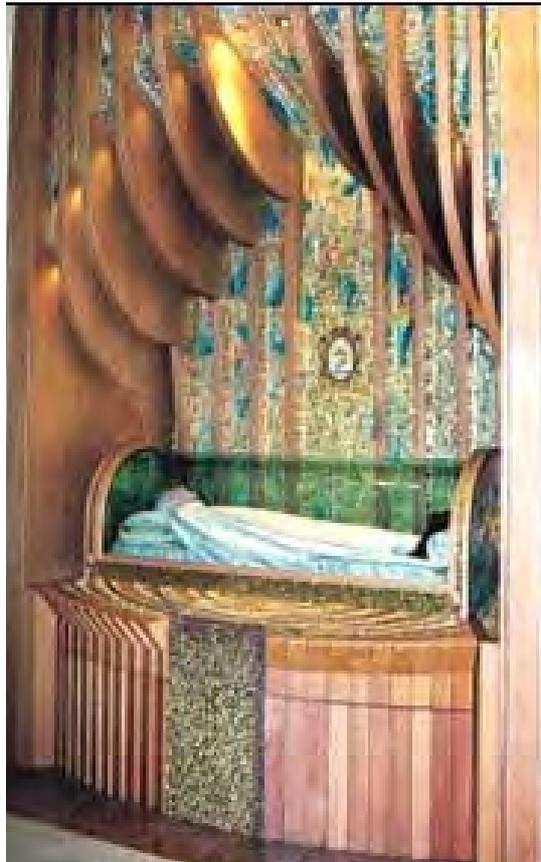
led to understand that the charism given to him by God had yet other dimensions which could not be fulfilled by his two congregations and the Cooperators. This insight led to the foundation of the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master in 1924, a semi-contemplative congregation; the Sisters of the Good Shepherd (Pastorelles) to assist priests in parish ministry, in 1938; and in 1957, the Sisters of the Queen of Apostles (Apostolines) founded to work in the area of fostering vocations. Four more institutes also emerged: one for diocesan priests to include them in the mission and spirituality of the Pauline Family, and three secular institutes for laity.

In 1936 Blessed James moved to Rome and began to build what would become the Mother House of the Society of St Paul. Over the years a large complex developed at the heart of which was the Pauline Family's Mother Church, Regina Apostolorum. For the rest of his long life, he devoted himself to promoting the Christian media and developing initiatives to preach the Gospel through the media. As father of ten congregations and institutes, he had to nurture their growth, inspire the members and encourage them on the road to holiness. Fr Timothy Giaccardo died in 1948, and Blessed James oversaw the opening of his Cause – Blessed Timothy would become the first Pauline to be raised to the altars when he was beatified in 1989. Blessed Timothy had died offering his life to overcome the difficulties Blessed James was having in founding the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master.

Blessed James constantly spoke of the need to evangelise through the media, but also to evangelise the media. Modern communications were sophisticated, but yet, as they are managed by human beings, this sophistication does not imply an objective understanding of Christ and the Gospel: he urges his spiritual sons and daughters to engage in the media in order to bring a proper understanding of Christ and the Gospel, but also to bring to those who work in this area into an encounter with Jesus Christ. This is also the mission of the Fraternity of St Genesius. The media, as a powerful and influential tool, should be in the frontline of evangelization, and

Blessed James, sensing perhaps the communications revolution which was coming, wanted the Church to be ready to use these tools to preach Christ as St Paul used the tools of his age. Perhaps it would be true to say that Blessed James discerned the dawning of a Pauline Age, new missionary endeavours aimed at modern men and women who had forgotten God. Pope John Paul II had the same idea in his efforts to launch the New Evangelization.

Small in stature, large in spirit, Blessed James suffered a great deal in his life, yet his profound love of God and trust in Our Lady sustained him. He had a deep love for the Holy Eucharist and constantly reminded his congregations that they were born



from the Eucharist. He was immensely humbled by the privilege of being a priest, and urged his spiritual children to foster a real love for the priesthood. He always referred to Jesus as his Divine Master, echoing the spirituality of St Francis, and he sought to instill this devotion to the person of Christ among those he met: in true Pauline fashion, he urged them to see that Christ was to be at the heart of all that they did – of *who* they were. His humility and love of Our Lady are revealed in one story of him: once when asked how he, a small seemingly insignificant man, could found such a major undertaking as the Pauline Family and its many initiatives, he simply held up his rosary and said: "*She did it, not me*". In the latter

years of his life he participated in the Second Vatican Council, invited to attend by one of his most faithful admirers, Pope Paul VI, and he saw many of his efforts over the years now being adopted in the Church's plan of renewal. Despite his weakness and bad health, he maintained his passion for his mission, and the Council seemed to boost his efforts.

Blessed James died in Rome, at the Mother House, on 26th November 1971 at 6.26pm. Pope Paul VI had visited him just before his death, consoling the founder with his presence and thanking him for his many years of ardent service to the Church. The Church would reiterate this papal praise on 27th April 2003 when Pope John Paul II beatified this faithful Pauline servant of Jesus the Divine Master.

“But Here the World’s Desire”: Christmas Through Poets’ Eyes

Christmas, as a season of feasts and celebrations, has inspired a rich treasury of literature, and chief among these works is a host of poetry. Journalist Ann Roche gives us a taste of some poems by some of literature’s most loved poets.

I don’t think many modern poets can be writing about Christmas. Or perhaps they are, but not with any great enthusiasm. Poetry is arguably the most idiosyncratic of all forms of literature and tends to be practised by introspective brooders. For this reason it does not encompass the more outward seeking and joyful message of a vital religious perspective.

In 1996 contemporary Irish poet Paul Durcan published a book-sized poem called *Christmas Day*. Alas, God was not at the heart of that particular



Christmas Day and, as erudite and brilliant as the poem was, it remained a cerebral piece of lonely rambling lit only by the dusty glow of black humour rather than the luminous brightness of Christ’s love.

To find Christmas poetry that inspires with lyrical images of Christ’s birth in Bethlehem we are more likely to rely on the traditional works of long-dead poets. In order to present some poetic reflections this Christmas I have read four beautiful Christmas poems by three of the world’s greatest poets: John Donne, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and G.K. Chesterton.

Our first poet, John Donne, born in London in 1572, was an Anglican priest and one of the best known of the Metaphysical poets. He became royal chaplain

and was widely regarded as the most eminent preacher of his time. He was appointed dean of St Paul’s Cathedral in 1621, and died in 1631. Like all Metaphysical poetry his works include strong imagery, psychological analysis, wordplay and paradox.

The language and imagery of Donne’s “*Nativity*” possesses a grand solemnity tinged with fragile beauty. It is not a poem that simply presents a descriptive picture of the scene of Christ’s birth but by its carefully chosen, precise and thought-provoking language, stresses the enormous significance of this birth. The first stanza invites the reader to contemplate the Infant King humbled and lying helpless in a manger. A typically Metaphysical paradox occurs in the second line: Christ is not just a babe in the manger but is the one who “fills all place, yet none holds Him”, that is, He is God, omnipotent and omnipresent, yet now rejected in His human form on earth and deprived of a place in which to be held, deprived of sanctuary.

Seest thou, my soul, with thy faith’s eyes, how He
Which fills all place, yet none holds Him, doth lie?
Was not His pity towards thee wondrous high,
That would have need to be pitied by thee?
Kiss Him, and with Him into Egypt go,
With His kind mother, who partakes thy woe.

Lines 3 - 4 ask us to reflect on how God shows the depth of His pity for His creatures in the Nativity of Jesus by allowing Him to become, not just one of us, but one of the poorest and most abject of us, in this way sharing not in human glory but human misery. The last two lines speak intimately of both the tenderness and the sorrow of the Blessed Virgin whose time of joy turns all too quickly to a time of trial. She too, though she is the Mother of God, shares in our “woe”.

In the fourth and final stanza of “*Nativity*” the three Wise Men, described as “star-led wizards”, again a striking choice of language, approach to greet the newborn Saviour in his place of refuge, “his secret altar touched with hallowed fire”. The reader is encouraged to run and reach the feet of Jesus before them and have the honour of greeting Him with the joy-filled song of the angelic choir.

See how from far upon the eastern road
The star-led wizards haste with odours sweet:
O run, prevent them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at his blessed feet;

Have thou the honour first thy Lord to greet,
And join thy voice unto the angel quire,
From out his secret altar touched with hallowed fire

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was one of the most popular American poets of the nineteenth century. Born in Maine in 1807, he studied at Bowdoin College, where one of his classmates was novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne, author of the classic work *The Scarlet Letter*. A lover of music and travel he experienced two major tragedies in his life. His first wife Mary died after just four years of marriage. His second wife Frances, on whom he based the heroine of his romantic novel "Hyperion", died when her dress caught fire from a match which dropped on it. Longfellow tried to save her but in vain. He died of peritonitis at the age of 75 in 1882 and was the first American poet whose bust was placed in the Poet's Corner at Westminster Abbey.

Longfellow has written two wonderful Christmas poems. In "Christmas Bells" he looks at the problem of human enmity:

And in despair I bowed my head;
'There is no peace on earth,' I said;
'For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!'

But, in the final stanza of the poem Longfellow finds hope and inspiration in the glorious peals of heavenly bells that resound on the night of Jesus' birth:

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
'God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!'

It expresses the triumph of Heaven on that first Christmas Day, rejoicing in the face of adversity. In his poem "The Three Kings" as he reflects on the mystery of Christ's birth the awesome destiny which awaits this Infant is brought home to us:

And cradled there in the scented hay,
In the air made sweet by the breath of kine,
The little child in the manger lay,
The child, that would be king one day
Of a kingdom not human, but divine.

In the final lines of the poem are beautiful – surely the heart of every mother can resonate with the mixed emotions of Mary as she ponders the life of the vulnerable child in her arms which will give uniquely powerful witness to the "joy of life and the terror of death":

His mother Mary of Nazareth
Sat watching beside his place of rest,
Watching the even flow of his breath,
For the joy of life and the terror of death
Were mingled together in her breast.

G.K. Chesterton was an English essayist, novelist, short story writer and critic as well as a poet. Born in London in 1874, he took many paths in his spiritual journey, including forays into use of the Ouija board, before rediscovering Christianity. He eventually converted from Anglicanism to Catholicism and went on to write acclaimed biographies of St Francis of Assisi and St Thomas Aquinas. He died in 1936. Chesterton is renowned as an original writer and his journalism, novels, poems and other words are as avidly read today as they were when he was alive.

Chesterton's offering is his poem "A Christmas Carol", a work which is heartening, touching and powerful in its simplicity. It is far less complex than the poems of Longfellow or Donne, using repetition in various forms, but is arguably more potent for that. Chesterton describes the newborn Christ-Child, whose hair is emphasised in every verse as being dazzlingly bright, like a halo perhaps. Mary is also mentioned in every verse. The structure changes somewhat in the final stanza, adding weight to its message that Christ, though an infant, is also divine ruler over all of nature. I cannot resist but have to include it in its entirety.

A Christmas Carol

The Christ-child lay on Mary's lap,
His hair was like a light.
(O weary, weary were the world,
But here is all aright.)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's breast
His hair was like a star.
(O stern and cunning are the kings,
But here the true hearts are.)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's heart,
His hair was like a fire.
(O weary, weary is the world,
But here the world's desire.)

The Christ-child stood on Mary's knee,
His hair was like a crown,
And all the flowers looked up at Him,
And all the stars looked down.

As Chesterton proves, when introspection mingles with faith and the light of human hope a poet can make something truly beautiful with words and meter.

It's A Wonderful Life!

It is, perhaps, the movie which, for many, is quintessentially Christmas, It's a Wonderful Life with its theme of the rebirth of a man who finally sees his place in the world through the intervention of a heavenly being. Member Carole McGowan shares her thoughts and enthusiasm for this classic of world cinema.

Every time I watch *It's a Wonderful Life* I go through the emotional roller coaster of intense joy, sadness, despair and, above all, hope as the story evolves around the central character George Bailey, portrayed by the great James Stewart. This timeless classic directed by the genius film maker Frank Capra, spans a couple of decades in the early part of the 20th Century in American town called Bedford Falls, allowing the viewer gain insight into the years before the First World, the war itself, the Great Depression of the 30's and its aftermath while following the life of George Bailey from his childhood years into middle age. The first two scenes of the movie are important: in the first we see George saving his brother's life in a drowning accident and, in the second we see how he steered his employer, the pharmacist, from disaster. These two missions of mercy serve to establish George's character and also his fate: as the eldest son of a mortgage lender, he finds himself in a position of reluctantly shelving his own dreams of travel to enter the family business after his father's sudden death.

The love story between George and Mary, played by Donna Reed, is the quintessential love affair between any man and woman. It involves Mary chasing the unsuspecting George who is captivated by her beauty. They begin their married life forfeiting a honeymoon as the recession of the 30's has a major effect on the clients of the business. They go on to create a beautiful family together.

Throughout the film we learn about how George has an unwavering ethical business acumen which highlights the corruption and greed of the local competitor in the town, Mr. Potter. He is characterised as a greedy, socially isolated, bitter man whose caustic personality constantly tries to undermine and discredit George. Contemporary viewers in December 2008 can well relate to how business in Ireland has, in many cases, mirrored Mr. Potter's and how self interest and an individualised morality have contributed to the current recession. Perhaps, if we had more of the George Bailey's in the world we may not be in such an economic mess.

George Bailey lends money to those who would never have been able to have their own home and the town develops a strong social community. This strong sense of community and family values bestowed from the business endeavours that George

and his uncle are engaged in, are evident throughout the movie. However, on the eve of Christmas the business finds itself in trouble due to an accident whereby George's uncle misplaced \$8,000. Unbeknownst to anyone else this money was found by the evil Mr. Potter who decides to withhold the money and use it as a way to finally see the Bailey business fall. In tandem with this unfortunate happening the state examiner is doing an investigation into the company and George is propelled into a deep despair. In his desperation he realises that, financially for his family and the company, he is worth more dead than alive.



Meanwhile, in Heaven, God calls on his angel, Clarence to 'earn his wings' and help the despairing Bailey. The diligent angel gets to work right away and manages to prevent George from ending his life by a clever ploy. George in his rage shouts 'I wish I was never born' his wish is granted and Bailey is then introduced to the world as if he was never born. The town is now called Pottersville, and is a hedonistic cesspit of gambling joints, public houses and dance halls. Mary, his wife, is a local librarian who never married; she is low in confidence and a shadow of her true self. His brother actually dies at the age of 9 in the drowning accident. His former employer, the pharmacist, is a raving alcoholic who spent most of

his life in jail and the Bailey's lending company is long gone. As the new world unfolds for him, George has the unique experience of realising how precious his life actually is and how he, as one single person, had made a major contribution to the world.

We now witness the spiritually reformed George with a new vigour and abundance of joy for life landed back to his real life. He embraces the fact that he may be arrested and sent to prison due to the \$8,000 shortfall: life is different: it is changed. That possibility, however, has been overcome: thankfully, Mary has learned of the problem, so to the townspeople, and they all rally behind the Baileys and raise the money themselves. George's arrest is averted and a party is in full swing. As the closing credits appear, viewers have found themselves caught up in the joy which transcends the television screen and touches your heart. I have watched this movie for many years and anyone I share the experience with feels an overwhelming appreciation for life. The humour in this movie is fantastic and you are promised many real belly laughs as well as a few tears.

This movie is as important now as at the time it was released, the themes this film invoke, are relevant to every human being. In an age of a dearth of positive cultural experiences this movie espouses family values, human resilience and hope. It also highlights how people who are in the situation George found himself in do not want to die they just want to end the pain in their emotional and spiritual lives. The movie emphasises that regardless of what tragedies occur in our lives there is always hope. The world teaches us that we are the sum of our earnings but Christian teaching reminds us of our intrinsic self worth, of the value of our lives, a value which is inherent. Clarence the angel sums it up by saying '*no man is a failure who has friends*', stressing another important theme: our family, our friends and community are here for us in the difficult times and all we have to do is share the problem which may then be halved.

A Christmas without watching *It's a Wonderful Life* would never be the same for me. I encourage all of you to take the time with your family and share this masterpiece.

On the Nativity of Our Lord

What man could know all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ and concealed under the poverty of His humanity? For, '*being rich, he became poor for our sake that by his poverty we might become rich.*' When He assumed our mortality and overcame death, He manifested Himself in poverty, but He promised riches though they might be deferred; He did not lose them as if they were taken from Him. How great is the multitude of His sweetness which He hides from those who fear Him but which He reveals to those that hope in Him! For we understand only in part until that which is perfect comes to us. To make us worthy of this perfect gift, He, equal to the Father in the form of God, became like us in the form of a servant, and refashions us into the likeness of God. The only Son of God, having become the Son of Man, makes many sons of men the sons of God; and on these men, reared as servants, with the visible form of servants, He bestows the freedom of beholding the form of God. For '*we are the children of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that, when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him just as he is.*' What, then, are those treasures of wisdom and knowledge? What are those divine riches unless they are that which satisfies our longing? And what is that multitude of sweetness unless it is what fills us? '*Show us the Father and it is enough for us.*' Furthermore, in one of the psalms, one of our race, either in our name or for our sake, said to Him: '*I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear.*' But He and the Father are one, and the person who sees Him sees the Father also; therefore, '*the Lord of hosts, he is the King of Glory.*' Turning to us, He will show us His face and '*we shall be saved*'; we shall be satisfied, and He will be enough for us.

Until this favor is granted to us, until He shows us what will completely satisfy us, until we drink to satiety of that fountain of life, while we wander about, apart from Him but strong in faith, while we hunger and thirst for justice, longing with an unspeakable desire for the beautiful vision of God, let us celebrate with fervent devotion His birthday in the form of a servant. Since we cannot, as yet, understand that He was begotten by the Father before the Day-star, let us celebrate His birth by the Virgin in the nocturnal hours. Since we do not comprehend how His name existed before the light of the sun, let us recognize His tabernacle placed in the sun. Since we do not, as yet, gaze upon the Son inseparably united with His Father, let us remember Him as the '*bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber.*' Since we are not yet ready for the banquet of our Father, let us grow familiar with the manger of our Lord Jesus Christ.

St Augustine, from his *Sermon on the Nativity*

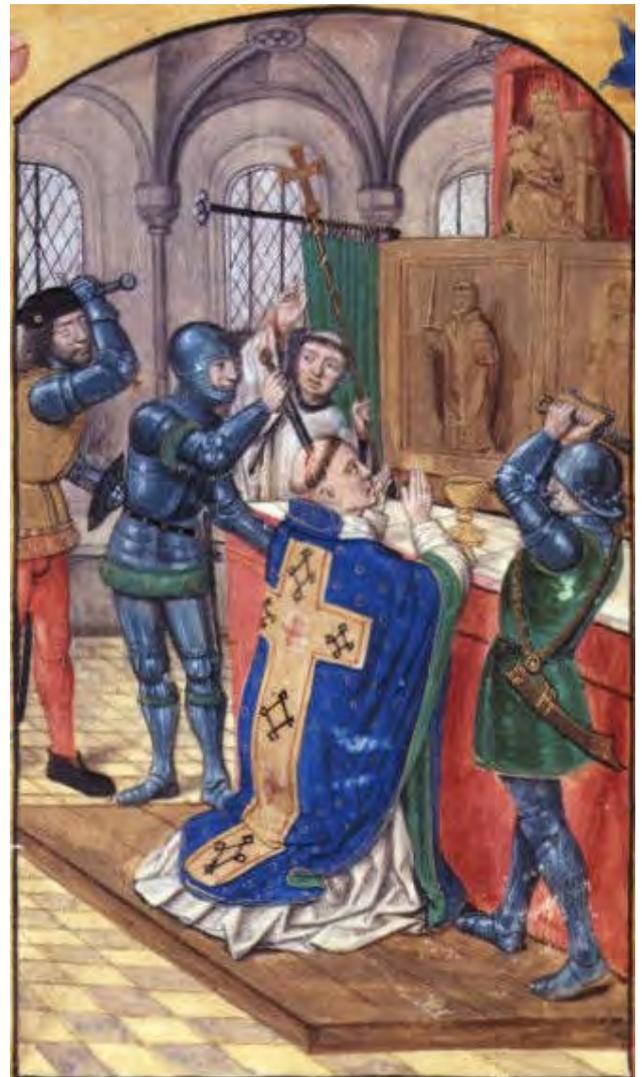
The Christmas Martyr

As we participate in the Christmas celebrations the feasts of a number of martyrs celebrated in the Octave of Christmas draw our attention to the reality that those who gather at the manger are also called to look to the cross. In this article Peter Saunders looks at one of them, St Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was murdered as he was trying to defend the rights of the Church, and whose feast we celebrate on the 29th December.

Canterbury Cathedral is perhaps one of the most impressive buildings in the British Isles. Visiting it a few years ago, I was impressed by the sheer size of the church and its architecture. Much of the Cathedral's magnificence was destroyed during the Protestant revolt against saints and images, and it was in those years that the Cathedral's greatest treasure was lost: not gold, not a painting, but the relics of her most famous archbishop, St Thomas Becket. Canterbury had once been one of Europe's great pilgrimage sites, as pilgrims sought to pray at the tomb of a man who gave his life in defence of the Catholic Church in the face of the tyranny of a king, Henry II. Ironically, it was the tyranny of another king, another Henry, which would lead to the destruction of the shrine and the secret nocturnal removal of the saint's remains by faithful monks intent on saving the precious relics. We do not know where St Thomas's relics are now; the only reminder of his sacrifice is a memorial near the place where he was martyred; yet his memory and sacrifice are still alive.

Thomas was born in London on the 21st December 1118 and baptized a few hours later. Educated first at the Augustinian Priory in Merton, he then studied at St Paul's Cathedral School not far from his home. While he was gifted academically, he was not inclined to pursue learning, preferring to engage in the gentlemanly distractions of the day: swordmanship, falconry, hunting, dancing and learning the skills to become a successful courtier. As was common for young men at the time, he also received the tonsure – the first stage of clerical orders. This was no indication that he wished to enter the priesthood, but a convention to make him eligible to receive or inherit Church benefices while leaving his options open for the future.

When fifteen, Thomas went to the University of Paris, one of the most prestigious places of learning and influence. During his time there he would have heard the renowned St Peter Lombard and controversial Peter Abelard who were teaching there at the time. For seven years Thomas studied, made valuable connections and enjoyed University life which was as vibrant then as now. Returning home in 1140, his family having fallen on hard times, Thomas had to find a lucrative position as soon as possible. For two years he worked as a notary, but



in 1142 following the death of both parents, he was introduced to Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was so impressed with the young man's abilities that he hired him. For the next thirteen years Thomas served the Archbishop, spending some of that time in Bologna studying canon law, was ordained a deacon and later appointed Archdeacon of Canterbury. Thomas was recognized by all as a handsome, liberal and intelligent man of great ability and acumen.

In 1153 the twenty-one year old Henry II ascended the English throne, and after a meeting with Thomas, was so taken with him, appointed him his chancellor in 1155: Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury had also proposed him. The position of chancellor was one of the most important appointments in England and Thomas excelled in the office, he also developed a close relationship

with King Henry and they became firm friends. Henry turned to Thomas as his most trusted advisor who in turn impressed the king with his kindness to others and his charity towards the poor. He was entrusted with numerous important missions and was influential in restoring order to the kingdom. Soon he was a very rich and powerful man. But all was not well with Thomas Becket: by his own admission later he was proud, vain and too fond of the good life: the trappings of power and wealth were his undoing. Neither was he a friend to those who sought to protect the Church's interests and he even opposed bishops who sought reform. As he lay dying in early 1161, the good Archbishop Theobald regretted his decision in recommending Thomas as chancellor. His regrets were further compounded by Thomas's neglectfulness: though Theobald had requested to see him before he died, Thomas did not come to comfort his old benefactor at his end.

It was perhaps the greatest irony of all that Thomas should be the one chosen to succeed Theobald as Archbishop of Canterbury: Henry needed a close friend in the office. When Henry announced his decision to his friend, Thomas's utterance was strange and out of character for him, but would prove prophetic: *"How religious, how saintly is the man you would appoint to that holy see: the love that is now so great between us would be changed to the most bitter hatred. I know that you would make many demands which I could never bear with equanimity"*. All was about to change: Thomas, vain Chancellor of England was about to die, Thomas the saintly defender of the Church was about to be born: this could only have been the action of grace: in a word – conversion. Thomas was ordained priest on the 12th June 1162 and Archbishop the following day; on 10th August he received the pallium from the Pope.

Thomas's conversion was not as sudden as one would expect. As chancellor he had been growing in faith and prayer: his position as Archbishop brought this process out into the open and accelerated it. He took the habit of the Augustinians and ordered his daily life around prayer and meditation, the devout celebration of the liturgy and penitential practices. He was generous to the poor and often washed and fed them himself. He was also intent on reform within the Church. He took his role very seriously and saw the need to defend the Church from his friend's interference. Henry was expecting a puppet Archbishop but soon realized that Thomas was no puppet: he had changed. Very quickly the two came into conflict: within a year of his appointment the two were at loggerheads. On 13th October 1163 Thomas and Henry both attended the solemn enshrining of the relics of the newly canonized St

Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey: it was the last time they would meet as friends.

Thomas had no intention of depriving Henry of his rights as king, but the liberties of the Church were not part of Henry's rights: secular power had had too much influence in the English Church and the Church had merely become a department of State ultimately governed by the king. Thomas's plan of restoring Church liberties was alien to Henry and so two began to clash, first on minor issues but soon on more serious ones and then on the substantive issue itself. Henry first tried persuasion, when that failed he pulled rank and asserted his royal jurisdiction; when that failed he began to inflict penalties on Thomas and the Church. Thomas stood firm while many of the other bishops capitulated. On the 8th October 1164 he was accused of treasonable contempt for the crown and fined. The next day he was ordered to surrender all the revenues of the See of Canterbury. On 12th October he fell ill under the strain, yet the next day he appeared before Henry's court. The king threw a tantrum; the barons condemned Thomas, but the bishops, the Lords Spiritual, refused to endorse the condemnation. With the barons screaming *"Traitor"* Thomas left the court: the crowds outside applauded him and asked his blessing. Despite their support he knew his life was in danger, and so escaped to France. He made his way to Rome: given the manner of his appointment, by a usurping king, Pope Alexander was cagey. Thomas immediately resigned as Archbishop and gave his Episcopal ring to the pope. Alexander was impressed, and recognizing the holiness of the man and his efforts to defend the Church, reinstated him, encouraging him not to abandon God's cause.

Thomas remained in France until 1170, an attempt at reconciliation was made on the 18th November 1169 but the attempt failed: Henry would not consent to the kiss of peace which was a symbol of good faith. A second attempt on the 22nd July 1170 was successful, or so it seemed. Thomas returned to Canterbury on the following 26th November, with his return formally celebrated on the 1st December in the Cathedral where he preached. But he was somehow aware that peace would not last long, and that he had come home to martyrdom. At the same time, over in France, four knights disgruntled by an excommunication placed on them by the Pope for their persecution of Thomas, were complaining to Henry. Henry, boiling over in one of his usual rages cried out: *"Who will rid me of this turbulent priest?"* Henry had no idea, and no intention, that his knights would answer this request: yet this remark sealed Thomas's fate.



The site of St Thomas's martyrdom in Canterbury Cathedral.

Thomas celebrated Christmas Midnight Mass in the Cathedral; during the sermon he spoke of St Alphege, martyred Archbishop of Canterbury and predicted that soon there would be another martyred Archbishop. A few days later, on the 29th December, at about 3pm the four knights arrived from France. Bursting into his chambers, they argued with him and rebuked him for his insults to the king. They demanded that he absolve their excommunications, but he said only the Pope could do so since it was the Pope himself that imposed them. They attacked him verbally over his disloyalty to the king; again Thomas reminded them of his loyalty to Christ and the Church.

The knights stormed out in a fury, but they had no intention of leaving Canterbury – they had gone to get their weapons. When they returned they found the doors of the Archbishop's house barred. Meanwhile the clergy had persuaded Thomas to take refuge in the Cathedral: he would be safe there. At first he was reluctant, but then took their advice. Vespers was beginning. Surrounded by three of his priests, Thomas went into the north choir aisle: he ordered that the Cathedral doors were not to be locked. The knights stormed into the Cathedral: the poor winter light left the building in shadows, and they could not find Thomas. They called out, demanding that the clergy reveal where Thomas was: all remained silent. One voice, however, responded: *"Here I am, no traitor to the king but a priest. What do you seek of me? Behold, I am ready to*

suffer in his name who redeemed me by his blood. Far be it from me to flee from your swords, or depart from righteousness." The knights fell on him and demanded he absolve them of their excommunications: again Thomas said he did not have the power. They threatened to kill him; he responded: *I, too, am ready to die for my Lord so that in my blood the Church may obtain peace and liberty: but in the name of Almighty God, I forbid you to harm any of my men whether clergy or lay."* At first hesitant to kill him in the Cathedral, they tried to drag him out, but Thomas managed to throw them off. As he tried to call them to their senses, one of them, Reginald Fitzurse brandished his sword and struck Thomas on the head, two others followed suit. Thomas fell on his knees: *"For the Name of Jesus and the protection of His Church, I am ready to embrace death."* Richard the Breton struck the fourth, fatal blow cutting open Thomas's skull: the Archbishop fell to the ground.

The knights fled, the clergy ran to the body, the townspeople poured into the Cathedral: their horror and grief was mixed with awe and veneration. The body was carried into the choir by the monks where a vigil was kept throughout the night. The next day it was taken to the crypt where it was undressed and washed. He was buried without a Requiem Mass: Mass could not be celebrated in a desecrated church. When Henry heard the news of Thomas's murder he was devastated. The penalties came quickly. While Henry was not excommunicated, the Pope forbade him from entering a church until papal legates had assessed the sincerity of his contrition. The knights were already excommunicated, but they were formally condemned; and all of Henry's domains were placed under interdict. Henry was eventually absolved and made a penitential pilgrimage to Thomas's tomb in 1174, doing public penance, but the sincerity of his contrition is in doubt – he did not change his position as regards his authority over the Church, but Thomas's successor proved wise, prudent and just as stubborn as his martyred predecessor. The four knights did penance for the murder and were absolved; two attained important offices as Grand Judiciaries; another withdrew to his estates and another, the one who dealt the first blow, Reginald Fitzurse went to Ireland where he founded the McMahan clan of Wexford. And Thomas, the Christmas martyr, was canonized following numerous miracles at his tomb which soon became a major pilgrimage site. He was proclaimed Patron Saint of the English clergy and is acknowledged as a Saint of conversion, devotion to duty, an inspiration to priests and suffering Catholics, and a man of profound holiness, attractive personality and passionate love of God: a man for our times.

The Apostle to the Skeptics

As the Narnia movies fill cinema seats, Christians are rediscovering the works of one of Ireland's greatest writer, C.S. Lewis. Apologist, Oxford don, writer of fairy tales, Lewis has a message for our time and is a cracking good read. Christopher McCamley provides us with a thoughtful introduction to the man, his faith and his work.

The other evening my six and nine year old sons were discussing the names they would take when they made their Confirmation. They're big on planning ahead. Patrick (six) announced that he would pick two names – Ronaldo Staples. While most people could guess where the "Ronaldo" comes from, "Staples" is probably a surprise choice.

Clive Staples Lewis, author of the Narnia stories, had clearly made a bigger impression than I realised. As CS Lewis himself said "A young man who wishes to remain a sound atheist cannot be too careful of his reading". The boys and I have been reading the Narnia stories every evening over the last few months. We've completed the first six and are just starting *The Last Battle*. They have enjoyed them a lot. While they enjoy the stories for themselves, they also enjoy searching for the allegorical references to Christianity (though they don't usually describe it in those terms).

One of the most popular of Lewis's works is *The Screwtape Letters*. The book takes the form of a series of letters from a senior demon, Screwtape, to his nephew, a junior tempter named Wormwood, advising him on methods of securing the damnation of an earthly man, known only as "the Patient". In the body of the thirty-one letters which make up the book, Screwtape gives Wormwood detailed advice on various methods of undermining faith and promoting sin in his Patient, interspersed with observations on human nature and Christian doctrine. Lewis was convinced that understanding the enemy was important in the spiritual struggle. With this in mind I want to quote from one of his nastiest detractors, who, perhaps unwittingly, identifies the benefits of letting your children read the works of Lewis. Philip Hensher (writer, critic and some-time judge of the Booker Prize said:

If I were going to lock away a single thing in the private cabinets of the British Library, have a work of literature removed from the shelves of bookshops and schools everywhere, it would have to be something widely thought of as innocuous, and perhaps even beneficial. It looks like a fairy story about some nicely behaved children, a wicked witch or two and some talking animals, but it is the sheerest poison.

I think I knew there was something wrong with the books when I read them as a child. I couldn't have identified their blunt allegory (the Creation in *The Magician's Nephew*, the Crucifixion and



Resurrection in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Armageddon in *The Last Battle*) but I knew that here were some books with some fairly unhealthy designs on me as a reader. All that guff about Deep Magic and Deeper Magic when that lion comes back from the dead struck me as cheating with the plot, and still makes no sense unless you import great loads of Christian doctrine into it.

Don't give your children C.S. Lewis to read; not the Narnia books, not *The Screwtape Letters*, not that appalling *Is God an Astronaut?* science fiction. It looks like rich fantasy, but it is the product of a mean, narrow little mind, burrowing into their ideas and pooh-poohing them. Give them anything else - *Last Exit to Brooklyn*, a bottle of vodka, a phial of prussic acid, even Winnie the Pooh - but keep them away from *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*.

It would be hard to find a better recommendation for reading them.

As an academic, a professor of English literature, Lewis presented an argument against the then received wisdom that there was a sharp divide between the "dark, ignorant, superstitious" Middle Ages and the "bright and humanistic" Renaissance. For Lewis the divide was between the Old Western Christian culture and the modern, secular atheist world.

Lewis is regarded by many as one of the most influential Christian apologists of his time. *Mere Christianity* was voted best book of the twentieth century by *Christianity Today* in 2000. Due to Lewis' approach to religious belief as a skeptic, and his following conversion, he is regarded by some as a sort of "Apostle to the Skeptics."

Lewis was very much interested in presenting a reasonable case for the truth of Christianity. *Mere Christianity*, *The Problem of Pain*, and *Miracles* were all concerned, to one degree or another, with refuting popular objections to Christianity, such as "How could a good God allow pain to exist in the world?". He also became known as a popular lecturer and broadcaster, and some of his writing (including much of *Mere Christianity*) originated as scripts for radio talks or lectures.

Lewis the man – husband, brother, friend, step-father, tutor – had an influence that was quite extraordinary. Alan Jacobs in his useful work, *The Narnian: the Life and Imagination of C.S. Lewis*, describes his influence on one particular person, the writer and theatre critic, Kenneth Tynan. Tynan is a fascinating character in his own right, a very influential theatre critic in the 1950s and 60s, he successfully championed John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*. In 1963 he became the National Theatre's full-time literary manager with Laurence Olivier the first artistic director. He also had a dark side, the first to swear on the BBC, routinely unfaithful to his wife, producer of the salacious play, *Oh Calcutta*. But an area of light in his life was his connection with C.S. Lewis, his tutor at Oxford in the 1940s. It was not the academic brilliance of Lewis, nor the force of his apologetics (which Tynan said he never brought into his tutorials) but the sheer kindness of the man, who was endlessly patient with a student who had a stammer. He visited Lewis in an almost suicidal state in 1948 and records that since then "every moment of life since then had been a bonus, a tremendous free gift, a present that only the blackest ingratitude could refuse". Christians call this "grace".

Lewis was in many ways a remarkable man – in his lifetime he achieved recognition as a great academic, as a radio personality, Christian apologist, and then author of science fiction and children's fantasy; he also had a tremendous capacity for friendship, kindness and love, and it is these aspects of his life which he would hope to see him through to eternity. When his student Tynan died in 1980 he was buried at his own request in the same graveyard in Oxford. His thirteen year old daughter read some words over his grave, taken from *The Weight of Glory*, a talk Lewis had given in St Mary's in Oxford in 1941.

They are reminiscent of Aquinas's "like so much straw" comment:

The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and what came through them was longing. These things – the beauty, the memory of our won past – are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself, they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshippers. For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited.

Interestingly, as a child, my great discovery was not the Narnia stories themselves but that C.S. Lewis came from Belfast.

Clive Staples Lewis

Born: 29 November 1898, Belfast, Ireland.

Died: 22 November 1963 (natural causes), Oxford.

C.S. Lewis was a high-powered Oxford and Cambridge professor and one of the 20th century's most famous converts to Christianity. An atheist from boyhood, he converted at age 33 and devoted much of the rest of his life to writing about faith. His series of allegorical books known as *The Chronicles of Narnia* remains especially popular with children. (*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the first book of the seven in the Narnia series, was published in 1950; *The Last Battle*, the final book, was published in 1956.)

Lewis taught at Magdalen College, Oxford, from 1925-1954, when he moved to Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he remained until 1963. Lewis and his close friend J.R.R. Tolkien were part of the casual Oxford literary group known as The Inklings.

Lewis died on the same day as Aldous Huxley died and John F. Kennedy was assassinated. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* was made into a 2005 feature film with Liam Neeson providing the voice of Aslan. The follow up, *Prince Caspian* was released in 2008.

Quotable Quotes from C.S. Lewis:

"There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, Thy will be done, and those to whom God says, All right, then, have it your way."

"All that is not eternal is eternally out of date."

"Faith... is the art of holding on to things your reason once accepted, despite your changing moods."

REVIEW

Book Review: *The Quest for Shakespeare*, Joseph Pearce

Hermann Kelly

What began as a whisper, developed into a trickle, became a cascade and has now formed into a full-bodied torrent. The world of Shakespeare scholarship has been shaken in the last century, and the last 15 years in particular, by the growing recognition that the Bard of Avon was a Catholic.

For a playwright who wrote so beautifully, and so copiously, surprisingly little is known about the man himself. American Joseph Pearce is a well-known apologist of the Faith in the Culture Wars and in his latest book, *The Quest for Shakespeare* (Ignatius Press, 2008) he gives us a thorough overview of the evidence which shows that William Shakespeare was raised and lived as a Catholic. In a 216-page hardback, Pearce gathers the evidence and sifts the arguments to draw the conclusion that not only was Shakespeare a closet Catholic during the English Protestant Reformation, a time when political and religious plots swirled around him, but that his dramas and poetry are replete with Catholic imagery and theological allusions. Shakespeare himself, for example, wrote in *The Merchant of Venice*, "The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose" (Antonio to Bassanio, Act I, Scene III): a brave act for a man at a time when *sola scriptura* ideas were becoming prominent.

The main reasons that Pearce gives for his conclusion are the evidence that Shakespeare's parents were both committed recusant Catholic, as was his sister - who never attended Church of England services. Even the schooling he received would have been influenced by the numerous Catholic schoolmasters under whom he studied. He chose marry his wife, also a Catholic, under a clergyman who was identified by the government as a Catholic priest, and while he was in London no evidence exists that he ever attended the obligatory services of the Anglican Communion. Most startling of all, there was a spiritual will found in the 18th century, signed by William's father, professing his Catholic faith at his time of death. Flowing from this Pearce, conjectures that the young dramatist may have met St Edmund Campion as he shied between the shadows of Elizabethan England. I think the thesis of the book suffers from too much speculation

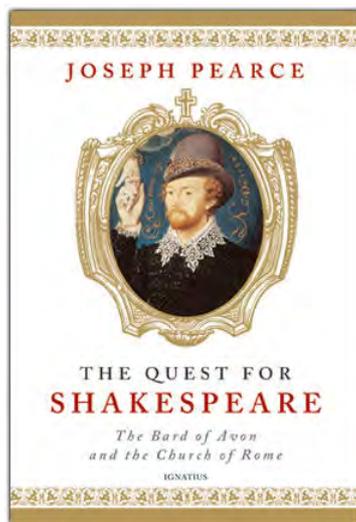
at times - and this is a prime example. However, the author builds his case not just from known facts but also the convergence of a lot of coincidences or inferences. Methinks he should have just let his case rest on the known facts alone and given less time and argument to the other. No doubt he was trying to be thorough, but at times the book can be a bit too involved in detailed argument, and the flow of the narrative suffers for it.

When it describes the Elizabethan strictures placed on Catholics at the time, this book shows how brave the Catholic recusants were and what hardships they had to put up with. A number of English Jesuit martyrs also enter the pages from stage left, giving some idea of the horrible executions they suffered for their faith.

After building a very strong case that Shakespeare held to the religious tradition in which he was brought up, Pearce then launches into an examination of the literary evidence from the playwright's work itself to reveal that he held Catholic sympathies and hence wrote works full of Catholic themes and ideas.

After making a good case that the Jesuit St Robert Southwell wrote a treatise directed at Shakespeare, criticising him

for not using his talents enough to glorify God and show forth his faith in an overt fashion, Pearce in his last appendix examines the lasting Catholic influence that Shakespeare has left us. As an example he takes a close look at *King Lear*. I think that this part of the book should have been greatly increased. Perhaps that shall be step two for the next generation of literary scholars - to show the Catholic influence in his work - rather than show Shakespeare was a Catholic from historical sources. However, throughout his work there is evidence of a clear understanding of Catholic ritual and belief. On top of this, many of his characters are outcasts - just as Catholics would have been at his time; and there is a repetition of the theme of the conscientious individual standing against extreme pressure and tyranny. It is Joseph Pearce's opinion that the more we are aware of Shakespeare's Catholic faith the better we shall understand his poetry and plays. This is an eminently reasonable point which would ultimately call for a revolution in the literary



criticism of probably the greatest playwright in the English language.

Building upon the knowledge of Shakespeare's faith as laid out in the book, it is interesting to think of the outstanding influence that Catholic writers and artists have had on England. Could we even go so far as to say that many of England's greatest artists are Catholic? Going through a litany of greats - how about playwright Shakespeare, Classical Composer Elgar, Composer of Polyphony William Byrd, Prose writers J. R. Tolkien and Cardinal Newman, Poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, Polemicist G. K Chesterton? One could argue - that there are better prose writers than Newman etc, however it is remarkable how Catholics are in the top echelon of English artistic achievers.

Looking at the reasons for this, we could point to the emphasis on analogy, sacrament and symbol in the tradition of the Church. Artistic tendencies are no doubt also fed by participation at the sacred drama of the Mass, which ultimately is the font of grace which lifts our fallen human nature to a new level of capability. The seldom heard Christian teaching on judgement - adds to the Catholic meta-narrative of human life as a drama for all.

Pearce's book is a fine, if wordy, introduction to the latest scholarship on Shakespeare's religious adherence. While other authors such as Clare Asquith and Peter Milward SJ concentrate more on literary allusions to his faith - both tendencies - historical and literary - complement and build up the other. If interested in Shakespeare, start with Pearce, but make sure to move onto Asquith and especially Milward for the real beef and desert.

The Quest for Shakespeare by Joseph Pearce, is published by Ignatius Press and is available from their website www.ignatius.com.

In the next issue of *Fraternitas*...



Spring 2009

Special Rome
Pilgrimage Issue

2008

All the reports and
photographs from
the Fraternity's first
pilgrimage to Rome

SAINTS OF THE ARTS AND MEDIA

Saint Cecilia

PATRON OF MUSIC



Little is known of the life of St Cecilia; what we do know comes from the Acts of her martyrdom which some scholars do not accept as authentic. According to the Acts she was a young Roman Christian who having vowed her virginity to God, found that a marriage had been arranged for her. However she was fortunate enough to

have an understanding husband, Valerian, who not only respected her vow, but actually converted to Christianity himself. When persecution broke out Cecilia's husband and his brother, Tiburtius, also a Christian, were condemned to death.

Cecilia was not to escape either. She was arrested and condemned to death by suffocation in her own home, but they failed to kill her. Eventually they resorted to beheading, but a botched job in which three blows to her neck were struck by an inexperienced executer who then fled, left Cecilia still alive but in tremendous agony: she would linger for three days before she finally died. During these last days she bore her sufferings with great nobility and patience, forgiving those who had brought her to her death. She was buried in the Catacombs of St Callistus not far from the tombs of the martyr popes; such was the honour in which this young Roman woman was held. Her house in the Trastevere quarter in Rome was preserved as a house church, and later, when Christianity became the religion of the Roman empire, a magnificent church was built over it. Her body was transferred there from the catacombs in 822. While the exact date of her martyrdom is still a matter of debate, most scholars accept that she died in the third century although some believe that it was during the reign of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, which would make it some time between 161 and 180 AD.

In 1599 her tomb was opened and her body was found to be completely incorrupt. The sculptor, Carlo Maderna was allowed sketch the remains to sculpt the famous statue of the saint which now lies over her tomb. Cecilia's patronage of music emerges from the song she sang in her heart at her wedding: according to the tradition, as the guests were celebrating her nuptials, her heart was focused on God and praising him, hence she is a patron for all musicians who are called to praise God through their remarkable gifts. Her feast day is the 22nd November. Her husband and brother-in-law are also honoured as saints.

Celebrate our Second Anniversary..... with prayer

**Join the Father Director for a Vigil of Prayer
on the eve of the anniversary,
Sunday 18th January 2009,
in St Mary's Church, Drogheda,
beginning at 9pm.**

**Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
Rosary, Prayers to St Genesisius,
Benediction,
Veneration of the Relics of St Genesisius**



Second Anniversary Mass

Solemn Sung Mass of the Holy Spirit

Monday 19th January 2009

in St Mary's Church, Drogheda

at 7.30pm.

Music: St Peter's Male Voice Choir

Conductor and Organist: Edward Holly