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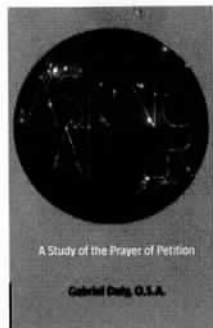
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Cover design by Bill Bolger – The cover image of a dog with a torch in its mouth refers to a dream experienced by the mother of St Dominic: her, as yet unborn, child, she understood, would set the world alight. A punning reference to the Friars Preachers as *Domini-canis* cannot be overlooked.



Asking the Father A Study of the Prayer of Petition

GABRIEL DALY OSA

Of the first edition of *Asking the Father*, biblical scholar the late Seán Freyne wrote that it 'not only answers the questions people have ... but gives us a more mature understanding of what faith in God means.'

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The New Papal Saints and their Relations with Orthodox Christianity

SALVADOR RYAN

ON SUNDAY 25 May last, while on pilgrimage in Jerusalem, Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople issued a Joint Declaration to mark the anniversary of the historic meeting of their predecessors, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras on 6 January 1964, which led, the following year, to the mutual lifting of excommunications that had been in place since 1054. While admitting that the goal of full communion has not yet been achieved, it nevertheless recognised the huge strides that have been made in creating bonds of 'depth and authenticity' over that fifty year period in what it calls a 'grace-filled journey'.¹

Less than a month earlier, Pope Francis presided at the canonisation ceremony of popes John XXIII and John Paul II whose personal commitment to improved relations between Orthodox and Catholic Christians contributed greatly to the progress achieved over that time. Separated by just two pontificates, the first of fifteen years, the second of just over a month, the climate of ecumenical relations between eastern and western Christianity had changed almost beyond recogni-

1. 'Common Declaration of Pope Francis and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I'. Apostolic Delegation (Jerusalem), Sunday 25 May 2014. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/may/documents/papa-francesco_20140525_terra-santdichiarazione-congiunta.html (accessed 20 June 2014).

Salvador Ryan is Professor of Ecclesiastical History at St Patrick's College, Maynooth. His publications include *Art and Devotion in late medieval Ireland* (co-editor with Rachel Moss and Colmán Ó Clabaigh); *Devotional Cultures of European Christianity, 1790-1960* (co-editor with Henning Laugerud); and *Treasures of Irish Christianity*, volumes 1 and 2 (co-editor with Brendan Leahy).

tion between the beginning of Pope John XXIII's reign in 1958 and that of Pope John Paul II twenty years later, not least on account of the shift in ecumenical language and outlook that can be seen in the decrees of the Second Vatican Council. But this built on the work of numerous individuals and groups in the area of ecumenical relations in the decades before the Council. This short paper looks in brief at the respective contributions of Angelo Roncalli (John XXIII) and Karol Wojtyła (John Paul II) to greater understanding between the Orthodox and Catholic churches and the mixture of joys and difficulties that this commitment inevitably brought.

APPOINTED TO BULGARIA

It might be said that the young Angelo Roncalli (1881-1963) only properly cut his teeth in ecumenical relations when he was appointed apostolic visitor to Bulgaria in February 1925. Secretary of State, Pietro Gasparri relayed his mission to him in the following manner:

I'm told the situation in Bulgaria is very confused. I can't tell you in detail what's going on. But everyone seems to be fighting with everyone else, the Moslems with the Orthodox, the Greek Catholics with the Latins, and the Latins with each other. Could you go there and find out what is really happening?²

Roncalli was to be made an archbishop first (Pope Pius XI thought this necessary - otherwise the bishops in Bulgaria wouldn't take him seriously. Pius had learned this lesson the hard way as a mere Monsignor Achille Ratti in post-war Poland).³ It is safe to say that Roncalli felt somewhat apprehensive at the thought of what lay ahead. In the days leading up to his consecration as archbishop on 19 March 1925, he wrote in his journal: 'I have not sought or desired this new ministry: the Lord has chosen me, making it so clear that it is his will that it would be a grave sin for me to refuse'.⁴

Roncalli was travelling to a country where there were not only

2. Peter Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII: Pope of the Council* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1984), p. 113.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

4. Pope John XXIII, *Journal of a Soul*. Trans. Dorothy White (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1964), p. 204.

tensions between Catholics and Orthodox Christians but also between both parties and eastern rite or 'Greek' Catholics (often pejoratively termed 'Uniates' at the time). These Christians had been re-absorbed into Catholicism (and recognition of the supremacy of the Pope) some centuries before, but had been allowed to retain their distinctive Byzantine liturgy and ecclesiastical discipline, such as the permission given for priests to marry. For many Orthodox Christians, however, these 'Uniates' were considered thorns in the side, retaining what was best of Byzantine worship and yet subsumed by Rome. They were also regarded as proof of Rome's proselytising tendencies in lands which were traditionally Orthodox Christian. For Latin rite Catholics, the distinctiveness of their 'Greek' counterparts also often aroused some suspicion that they might, in fact, be too close to the Orthodox in their ways and mentality, in much the same way as Jewish converts to Christianity (*conversos*) in fifteenth-century Spain were frequently suspected of continuing to harbour Judaising tendencies. Eastern Rite Catholics would continue to be a bone of contention in Orthodox-Catholic relations, especially in the aftermath of the fall of Communism in Russia, when churches once again came up for air.

READING *IRÉNIKON*

The new apostolic visitor to Bulgaria came to the country with a deep sympathy for the work of ecumenism. Roncalli was an admirer of the Dom Lambert Beauduin, O.S.B. (1873-1960), the Belgian professor of fundamental theology at San Anselmo. In 1925, Beauduin had founded a bi-ritual Benedictine abbey wholly devoted to church unity at Amay-sur-Meuse in Belgium. And in the following year the journal *Irénikon* was founded, which devoted itself to the study of the Eastern Church.⁵ It was a journal that Roncalli read closely and often quoted from. Beauduin himself had been greatly influenced by the Irish Benedictine Dom Columba Marmion (1858-1923) who was prior of the monastery of Mont César where Beauduin was based before being appointed to the post at San Anselmo, making Roncalli something of

5. For Beauduin and his work see Raymond Loonbeek and Jacques Mortiau (eds), *Un Pionnier, dom Lambert Beauduin (1873-1960): Liturgie et unité des Chrétiens*. 2 vols. (Louvain: Université Catholique de Louvain, 2001).

an ecumenical grandson of the Irishman! Roncalli would bring the ecumenical sensitivity that he admired in Beauduin to his mission in Bulgaria. In a letter to his friend, the Italian Christian feminist, Adelaide Coari, on 9 May 1927, Roncalli recalled a meeting with the Ecumenical Patriarch, Basil III the month before:

I had an interesting meeting with the Ecumenical Patriarch Basil III, the successor of Photius and Michael Cerularius. How times have changed! But Catholics are impelled by charity to hasten the day of the return of the brethren to the unity of the one fold, You follow me? By *charity* – this, rather than by theological discussions. By the charity praised by St Paul in 1 Corinthians 13.4.⁶

While one can see Roncalli's emphasis on relationships focused on mutual love rather than theological wrangling, nevertheless there is still the language of the 'return' of Orthodox brethren, which would be regarded as unacceptable in ecumenical dialogue today. Even with Roncalli, then, we should not run ahead of ourselves and view him out of the context of his time. And this was still the 1920s. The following year (1929), Pope Pius XI would release his encyclical *Mortalium animos*, which effectively put the brakes on many of the assumptions of the early ecumenical movement.⁷

Is it not right, it is often repeated, indeed, even consonant with duty, that all who invoke the name of Christ should abstain from mutual reproaches and at long last be united in mutual charity? Who would dare to say that he loved Christ, unless he worked with all his might to carry out the desires of Him, Who asked His Father that His disciples might be 'one' ... But in reality beneath these enticing words and blandishments lies hid a most grave error, by which the foundations of the Catholic faith are completely destroyed.⁸

The charity that *Mortalium Animos* had in mind was that of the 'one true church' eventually embracing the schismatic prodigals: 'Let them,

6. Hebblethwaite, p. 123.

7. *Mortalium Animos* (On Religious Unity) http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19280106_mortalium-animos_en.html (accessed 20 June 2014)

8. *Mortalium Animos* (4)

therefore, return to their common father who, forgetting the insults previously heaped upon the Apostolic See, will receive them in the most loving fashion'.⁹ This image would appear again some thirty years later in the now Pope John XXIII's first encyclical, *Ad Petri Cathedram* on 29 June 1959.¹⁰

And yet, at the same time, there is John XXIII's desire to reach out to other Christians as 'brethren' (note that for centuries the language used to describe Protestants and Orthodox Christians respectively was 'heretics' and 'schismatics'): 'May we, in fond anticipation, address you as sons and brethren?'¹¹ In reality, though, John XXIII's first encyclical, shaped to some extent by overseers such as Secretary of State, Domenico Tardini, represented a balancing act between what had gone before and what was to come with the newly-announced Second Vatican Council.

A CANDLE IN THE WINDOW

Roncalli's years in Bulgaria were difficult and presented many diplomatic challenges, not least with the marriage of Tsar Boris III, an Orthodox Christian, to King Victor Emmanuel's daughter, Princess Giovanna of Savoy, in Assisi on 25 October 1930. In order to obtain the dispensation to wed, Tsar Boris had agreed to a Catholic marriage and to raise their children as Catholics. When they returned to Sofia five days later, however, the Tsar and Princess Giovanna underwent a full Orthodox marriage ceremony, something which he deemed necessary to show the Holy Synod that he was not in danger of reneging on his Orthodoxy. Pope Pius XI was enraged by this action (and the subsequent baptism of their first child by the Orthodox Metropolitan in 1933), considering it a betrayal – and Roncalli got much of the blame.¹²

He would soon be on the move. Despite the difficult posting, he had grown to love the country and its people and, in a homily preached

9. Ibid (11)

10. *Ad Cathedram Petri* (On Truth, Unity and Peace in a Spirit of Charity) http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_29061959_ad-petri_en.html (accessed 20 June 2014)

11. *Ad Cathedram Petri* (80)

12. Hebblethwaite, pp 138-9.

at Christmas 1934 in Sofia, he concluded with a reference to the Irish custom of leaving a lighted candle in the window at Christmas to show Jesus and Mary that the family was waiting for them:

Wherever I may go, if a Bulgarian passes by my door, whether it's night time or whether he's poor, he will find that candle lighted at my window. Knock, knock. You won't be asked whether you're a Catholic or not; the title of Bulgarian brother is enough. Come in. Two fraternal arms will welcome you ...¹³

Roncalli did not know it at the time when referring to this Irish custom, but in 1943, while serving as apostolic visitor to Turkey and Greece, he would acquire a new secretary, the thirty-year-old Monsignor Thomas Ryan, a native of Kilcommon, County Tipperary.

MEETING THE PATRIARCH

His years in Turkey brought him further ecumenical opportunities. After the election of Pope Pius XII in 1939, Roncalli was invited to the palace of the Ecumenical Patriarch Benjamin I at the Phanar. The patriarch greeted him (and the news of Pius XII's election) in Latin with the Easter proclamation, 'This is the day the Lord has made' (*'Haec est dies quam fecit Dominus'*) and they exchanged the kiss of peace, a moment of great symbolic significance which foreshadowed the famous exchange between Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras in 1964. Gestures such as these, even if small, were highly valued by Roncalli. Realising that there were going to be no ecumenical 'quick fixes', Roncalli in later years admitted that rather than attempting to tear down entire walls of Christian division, 'I try to pull out a brick here and there'.¹⁴ But what Christ could do was a different matter. In a homily delivered at Pentecost in 1944 in Istanbul, Roncalli stated:

Here, we Latin Catholics of Istanbul and Catholics of Armenia, Greece, Chaldean, Syrian rite – we are a modest minority living on the surface of a vast world we are just superficially in touch with. We love to distinguish ourselves from those who do not profess our faith, from the Orthodox, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, believers or non-believers ...

13. Ibid., pp 141-2.

14. Ibid., p. 159.

[yet even if] diversity of race, language, education, painful contrasts of a sad past keep us in reciprocal distance, in the light of the Gospel ... Christ has come to tear the walls down; he died to proclaim our universal brotherhood; the central focus of his teaching is the love that links every man to him as the first of brothers, and that links him with us to the Father.¹⁵

VATICAN II

The importance of this goal for Roncalli can be seen in his preparations for the Second Vatican Council as Pope John XXIII, principally in establishing the Secretariat for Christian Unity on 5 June 1960 and, two years later, elevating it to the same level as the Preparatory Commissions which were preparing the documents to be considered at the Council to which Orthodox and Protestant observers would be invited. Cardinal Augustin Bea, President of the new Secretariat, in an interview of 22 January 1961, shared his thoughts on John XXIII's hopes for what it might achieve:

The Holy Father hopes that the forthcoming Council may be a kind of invitation to our separated brethren, by letting them see, in its day-to-day proceedings, the sincerity, love and concord which prevail in the Catholic Church. So we may say, rather, that the Council should make an indirect contribution to union, breaking the ground in a long-term policy of preparation for unity.¹⁶

The Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*,¹⁷ promulgated on 21 November 1964, after Pope John XXIII's death, marked just how far ecumenical relations had come since the days of *Mortalium Animos*. In noting that the heritage of the apostles was explained from earliest times variously in different places, and in different forms and manner:

For this reason the council urges all, but especially those who

15. Andrea Gagliarducci, 'Christian Unity: a common goal to John XXIII, John Paul II', <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/christian-unity-a-goal-common-to-john-xxiii-john-paul-ii/#.U0f1Y8IBito.twitter> (accessed 21 June 2014)

16. Hebblethwaite, p. 377.

17. *Unitatis Redintegratio* (21 November 1964) http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html (accessed 21 June 2014)

commit themselves to the work of restoring the full communion that is desired between the eastern Church and the Catholic Church, to give due consideration to this special feature of the origin and growth of the Churches of the East, and to the character of the relations which obtained between them and the Roman See before separation, and to form for themselves a correct evaluation of these facts. Where this is done carefully, it will greatly contribute to the dialogue in view.¹⁸

In reflecting on the document's legacy forty years later, Cardinal Walter Kasper spoke of not a new church but a 'renewed church' which the Council gave birth to, and added 'It was Pope John XXIII who initiated this renewal. He can rightly be called the spiritual father of the Decree on Ecumenism'.¹⁹

A POPE FROM THE EAST

The pontificate of Pope John Paul II (1978-2005) would be characterised by an even greater urgency for the restoration of communion with Orthodox Christians. Very soon after election he asked Cardinal Willebrands, President of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, to organise a papal visit to the Ecumenical Patriarch, Dimitrios I for November 1979. On the eve of this visit he declared:

By this visit I wish to show the importance the Catholic Church attaches to this dialogue. I want to express my respect, the deep brotherly love, towards all these churches and their patriarchs, but above all towards the ecumenical patriarch to whom the church of Rome is linked by so many age-old bonds, which in these last years have recovered new force and actuality.²⁰

While there, he would remark that 'full communion with the Orthodox church is a fundamental stage of the decisive progress of the

18. *Unitatis Redintegratio* (14). Text from Austin Flannery, O.P., (ed.), *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations* (Dublin, Dominican Publications, 1996), p. 514.

19. 'The Decree on Ecumenism read anew after forty years' http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20041111_kasper-ecumenism_en.html

20. Aidan Nichols, O.P., *Rome and the Eastern Churches* (2nd ed., San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), p. 358.

whole ecumenical movement'.²¹ On 30 November pope and patriarch announced the establishment of a Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. It has since held twelve plenary meetings and produced a number of joint documents.²²

Dimitrios I would pay a return visit to Pope John Paul in December 1987. Although not a concelebration, both leaders processed into Mass in St Peter's Basilica side by side, led by an Orthodox deacon and a Catholic deacon. The deacons proclaimed the gospel in Greek and Latin respectively, the Greek deacon receiving a blessing from the Pope beforehand and the Latin deacon receiving a blessing from the Patriarch. Both leaders then preached and afterwards jointly recited the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed in Greek. During his homily, Pope John Paul referred to the fact that the two men could not drink from the same chalice as a 'source of bitter suffering'.²³

John Paul was a man in a hurry to achieve reconciliation and the restoration of full communion between the churches, to have Europe breathing with both lungs again – one of his favourite images. He fervently hoped that this might be achieved before the end of the second millennium, praying that Christ might 'transform our suffering into an incentive to work tirelessly to restore full communion among us soon'.²⁴ In the end, however, he was to be disappointed.

THE END OF COMMUNISM

The collapse of Communism in the late 1980s and into the early 1990s, while bringing about greater religious freedom, nevertheless exacerbated further the delicate relations between Catholics, Orthodox and Eastern Rite Catholics - the so-called 'Uniate' churches, especially in the Ukraine, which Weigel reminds us, 'had been the reactor core of the meltdown in Catholic-Orthodox relations since the collapse of

21. George Weigel, *Witness to Hope: the biography of Pope John Paul II* (London: Harper Collins, 2001), p. 360.

22. For a list of these see the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/sub-index/index_orthodox.htm (accessed 21 June 2014)

23. Weigel, p. 556.

24. *Ibid.*

Communism'.²⁵

The fact that John Paul II himself was a Pole and a Slav actually made relations more complicated still. A pan-European synod of bishops, planned in the aftermath of the fall of Communism, was boycotted by the Orthodox churches, except for a representative of the newly-elected Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew I. The representative was Metropolitan Spyridon Papagheorghiu of Venice. At an ecumenical prayer service in St Peter's on 7 November 1991, the thorny issue of the Eastern Rite Catholics was raised again as Metropolitan Spyridon heavily criticised them for their reoccupation of churches in the Ukraine and Romania and also took Rome to task for its 'parallel missionary structures' in Russia.²⁶ Clearly there was much work yet to be done.

A LONG ROAD AHEAD

In 2001 Pope John Paul made further history when he visited Greece, the first pope to do so in almost 1300 years. On Friday 4 May 2001, in a visit to Orthodox Archbishop Christodoulos, John Paul, recognising the burden of 'past and present controversies' spoke of the need for 'a liberating process of *purification of memory*'²⁷ He went on:

For the occasions past and present, when sons and daughters of the Catholic Church have sinned by action or omission against their Orthodox brothers and sisters, may the Lord grant us the forgiveness we beg of him.²⁸

Special mention was given to the 'disastrous sack of the imperial city of Constantinople' by Latin Christians in 1204. At this stage Archbishop Christodoulos had already delivered his words of welcome. In doing so, he had noted that 'the anathemas have been lifted by the grace of God. The causes that brought them about, however, have not'.²⁹ In his

25. Weigel, p. 672.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 648.

27. 'Address of John Paul II to His Beatitude Christodoulos, Archbishop of Athens and Primate of Greece' http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20010504_archbishop-athens_en.html (accessed 21 June 2014)

28. *Ibid.*

29. For a full text of Archbishop Christodoulos' speech, see Den Katolske Kirke <http://www.katolsk.no/nyheter/2001/05/11-0003>

address, Pope John Paul stressed that: 'Division between Christians is a sin before God and a scandal before the world', going on to say that 'if certain models of reunion of the past no longer correspond to the impulse towards unity which the Holy Spirit has awakened in Christians everywhere in recent times, we must be all the more open and attentive to what the Spirit is now saying to the Churches (cf. Rev. 2:11)'.³⁰

For John Paul II, who seemed to have harboured the dream of full communion within his own lifetime, the experience in Greece may have taught him that there was likely to be a long road ahead. In the most recent Joint Declaration of Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew (25 May 2014), both leaders 'confirm our commitment to continue walking together towards the unity for which Christ our Lord prayed'.³¹ Roncalli's idea of taking down the wall by 'pull[ing] out a brick here and there' may, in fact, be more realistic in the long term. The ecumenical prize of full communion is not likely to be won in a sprint.

30. 'Address of John Paul II to His Beatitude Christodoulos, Archbishop of Athens and Primate of Greece' (4).

31. 'Common Declaration of Pope Francis and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I' (3).

Searching – Many responses and observations [on the questionnaire sent to bishops' conferences] call for theological study in dialogue with the human sciences to develop a multifaceted look at the phenomenon of homosexuality. Others recommend collaborating with specific entities, e.g., the Pontifical Academy of the Social Sciences and the Pontifical Academy for Life, in thoroughly examining the anthropological and theological aspects of human sexuality and the sexual difference between man and woman in order to address the issue of gender ideology.

The great challenge will be to develop a ministry which can maintain the proper balance between accepting persons in a spirit of compassion and gradually guiding them to authentic human and Christian maturity.

Synod on the Family, 2014, Instrumentum Laboris (nn. 117-118)

Merciful God, Merciful Church

An Interview with Cardinal Walter Kasper

MATTHEW BOUDWAY AND GRANT GALLICHO

During his first Angelus address, Pope Francis recommended a work of theology that 'has done me so much good' because it 'says that mercy changes everything; it changes the world by making it less cold and more fair.' That book is *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life*¹ by Cardinal Walter Kasper, which has just been published by Paulist Press. Before serving as president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (2001-2010), Kasper was bishop of Rottenburg-Stuttgart (1989-1999). He has taught theology at the University of Tübingen, the Westphalian University of Münster, and the Catholic University of America. L

Associate editors Matthew Boudway and Grant Gallicho of *Commonweal* magazine (New York) spoke with the cardinal in New York. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Commonweal: In your book *Mercy*, you argue that mercy is basic to God's nature. How is mercy key to understanding God?

Cardinal Walter Kasper: The doctrine on God was arrived at by ontological understanding – God is absolute being and so on, which is not wrong. But the biblical understanding is much deeper and more personal. God's relation to Moses in the Burning Bush is not 'I am,'

1. Paulist Press, Mahwah, New Jersey. Available in Ireland and Britain from The Columba Book Service.

Matthew Boudway and Grant Gallicho are associate editors of *Commonweal* magazine (New York), where this interview first appeared on June 4, 2014. Reproduced with permission: www.commonwealmagazine.org