

September 5, 2010

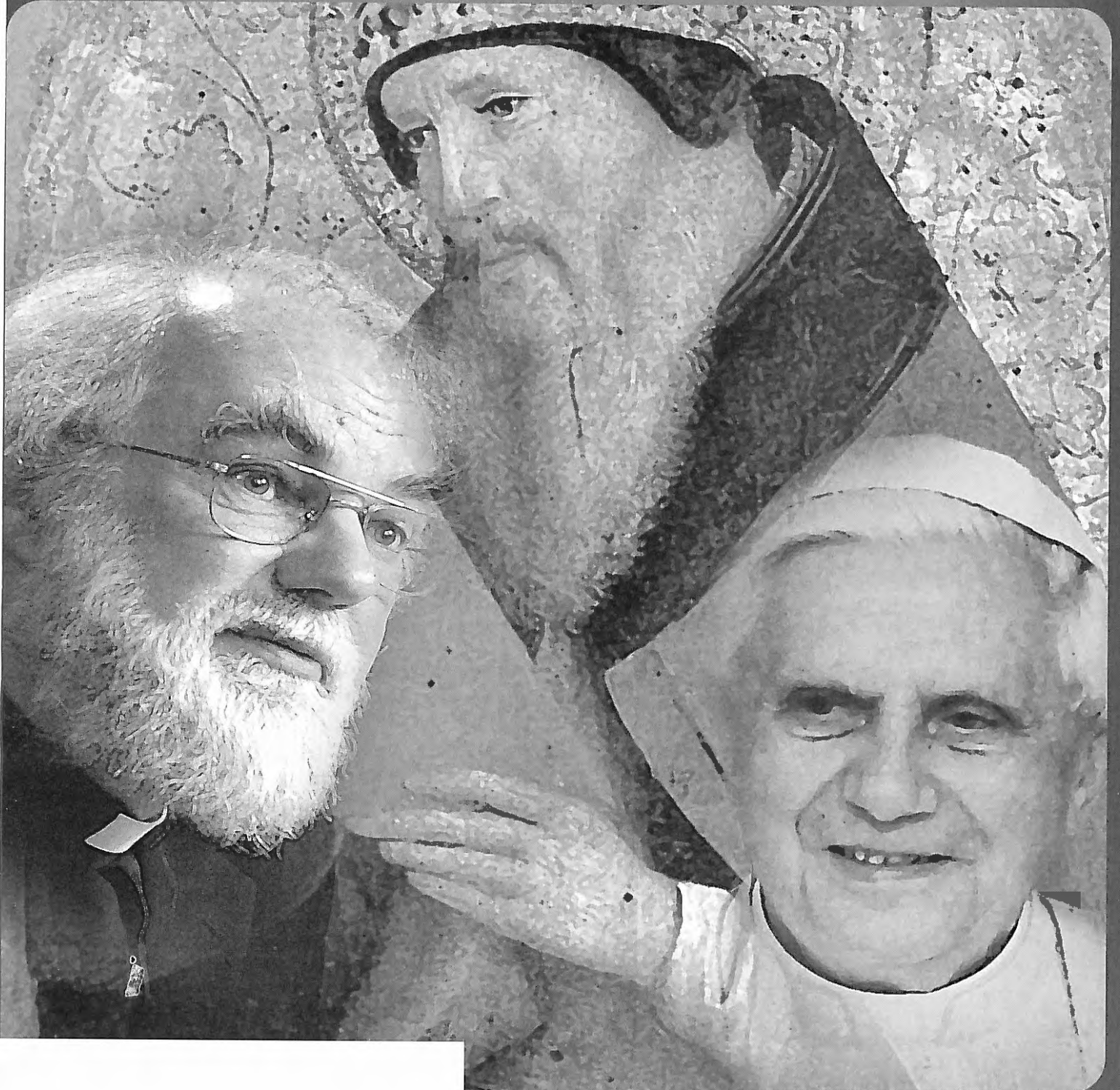
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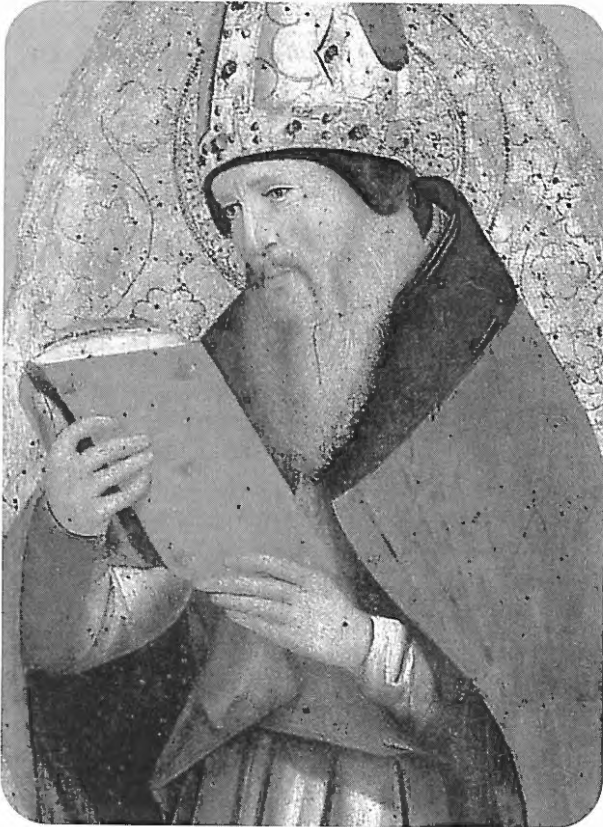
on the cover

St. Augustine, Archbishop Williams
and Pope Benedict

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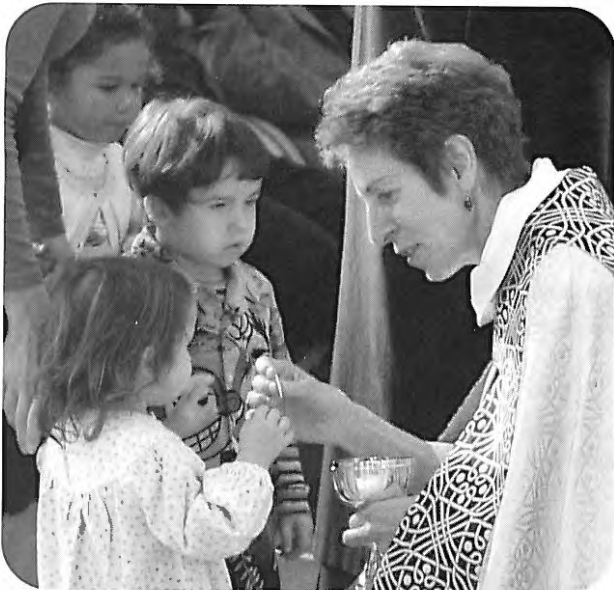
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Protests Greet Bishop Bennison

The Bishop of Pennsylvania returned to office on Aug. 16 amid open opposition within the diocese.

The Rt. Rev. Charles E. Bennison, Jr., returned after the Court of Review for the Trial of a Bishop reversed a trial court's ruling that Bennison should be sentenced for conduct unbecoming a member of the clergy.

The review court found that Bennison was guilty of such conduct, in failing to protect a teenage girl from the sexual abuse of his younger brother, John, in the 1970s. But the review court also ruled that the church's statute of limitations applied because the bishop was not charged with committing any sexual abuse himself.

The diocese's standing committee, which has been at odds with Bennison for several years, distributed an open letter on Aug. 16 that asked the bishop not to resume his leadership.

"We do not believe that Bishop Bennison has the trust of the clergy and lay leaders necessary for him to be an effective pastor and leader of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, nor that he can regain or rebuild the trust that he has lost or broken," said the letter issued by the 10-member standing committee. "We believe that it would be in the best interest of the diocese that Bishop Bennison not resume his exercise of authority here."

The Rev. Timothy Safford, rector of the diocese's mother parish, Christ Church, also asked Bennison not to return.

"Jesus willingly made the sacrifice of his life for the benefit of others," Safford wrote in an open letter on Aug. 8. "What Christ did for the world, we are called to do. To share in Christ's crucifixion is to die to self and selfish needs so that Christ will be raised in us. I ask you to prayer-

fully consider making the sacrifice of not returning as Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania for the benefit of many who want to believe that the Episcopal Church can be safe."

Two leaders of St. David's Church, Wayne, also wrote to Bishop Bennison on Aug. 12 to renew their request that he resign. The letter from the Rev. W. Frank Allen, rector, and his warden, Dr. Joseph Bonn, said that Allen had asked the bishop, three times before he was inhibited, to resign for the good of the diocese.

Bishop Bennison issued a statement saying that he has focused on listening since his return.

The bishop said he met with the executive team of the standing committee on Aug. 17.

"At the end of the meeting, they asked how they could help me, and I told them that we need to work together in a collaborative manner," Bennison said. "I also asked them to pray for me so that we can move forward together to bring healing and reconciliation to the diocese."

Four Nominees in Western N.Y.

The Diocese of Western New York has nominated one canonically resident priest and three priests from outside the diocese in the search for its 11th bishop.

The canonically resident priest is also the one woman among the nominees: the Very Rev. Canon Barbara J. Price, 60, rector of St. Peter's Church, Eggertsville, N.Y.

The other nominees are:

- The Rev. Michael N. Ambler, Jr., 46, rector of Grace Church, Bath, Maine.
- The Very Rev. Canon Michael A. Bamberger, 55, rector of Church of the Ascension, Sierra Madre, Calif.
- The Rev. Dr. R. William Franklin,

63, senior associate priest at St. Mark's Church, Philadelphia, Pa.

The election is scheduled for Nov. 20 at St. Paul's Cathedral, Buffalo.

In their profile materials, both Franklin and Price described ministry among divided congregations.

"In 2005 my wife was named Director of the American Academy in Rome, and I was asked to come as Associate Director," Franklin wrote. "In Europe my priestly identity has matured at a rapid pace because of numerous opportunities for service. I have been able to assume roles of leadership that would not have been possible as a layman: stabilizing vicar of a conflicted mission, mediator between bishop and clergy in turbulent encounters, representative of the Anglican Communion to the Vatican and of the Episcopal Church to the Archbishop of Canterbury in troubled times."

In his resume, Franklin identified the congregation as Church of the Resurrection, Orvieto, Italy, and added that he "guided the congregation to reconciliation and stability" after its previous vicar attempted to remove it from the Episcopal Church.

Price, formerly canon to the ordinary for the current bishop, the Rt. Rev. Michael J. Garrison, wrote of her current parish: "This church had historically suffered the loss of a Rector and half the congregation amidst deep turmoil. We've nearly doubled in attendance and budget, and Church School membership has increased five-fold in the past eight years."

Price also wrote about her longstanding interest in praying for people's healing: "A close family member was hospitalized, critically ill, and I had never seen my mother so

frantic. When she got home from the hospital, she said to me with a clear and directive voice: 'pray.' I got down on my knees beside the bed and folded my hands and looked up at the ceiling and prayed fervently for my loved one's full recovery in the pleading words of a seven-year-old child.

"By the grace of God, my loved one was significantly improved within twenty-four hours and the connection was forever sealed in my heart: God hears our prayers. Of course I learned as an adult that not all prayers for healing result in a 'cure,' but that later learning came when the solid foundation of a life of faith and prayer had already been established."

Bamberger, a firefighter and a priest in the Diocese of Los Angeles, wrote of giving media briefings amid a Sierra Madre blaze that destroyed nearly 600 acres in 2008.

"I gave the briefing and did the interviews with a dramatic looking backdrop and then dropped by the church where my associates — lay folks and priests — were capably welcoming our assisting bishop for our yearly visitation," he wrote. "Later, many people in the larger community told me how important it had been to them, and their families spread around the world, to see and hear Father Michael telling the news that Sierra Madre would be protected. Even though I was dressed in firefighting garb, the community saw their priest. Ultimately, priestly ministry, alone or with others, comes back to witnessing and proclaiming God's abiding love and care."

Ambler wrote of conducting an emergency baptism for a baby girl who was dying in a hospital:

"The parents were exhausted and numb. The one thing they could do for their child was to have her baptized, and that was why I was there. A barricade of cloth partitions created a place of privacy and quiet. The entire medical staff and the child's family gathered round.

"I have never felt the presence of angels before, or since. But when I stepped inside that ring of screens, I knew that I was in the presence of unseen beings. I could feel them, feel their heavy wings. They were protective, implacable. They surrounded that bassinet with love that nothing evil could penetrate.

"... I'm not a scriptural literalist, but I know that God is not a metaphor either. God is real, and when God chooses, can be very tangible. *That's* what makes life in the Church such a radical, humbling, exciting adventure: the simple reality that it's all true."

West Missouri Nominates Three

The Diocese of West Missouri has nominated three veteran priests in the search for its eighth bishop:

- The Rev. Peter F. Casparian, rector, Christ Church, Oyster Bay, N.Y.
- The Very Rev. Martin S. Field, rector, St. Paul's Church, Flint, Mich.
- The Rev. Canon E. Daniel Smith, canon to the ordinary, Diocese of Missouri.

The diocese will elect its new bishop Nov. 5.

In brief profiles, the nominees described feeling a possible call to the episcopate through the voices of other people.

Casparian was the only nominee to

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Theology of Hope

United by Postmodern Critical Augustinianism

By Brian Crowe

Communion-oriented Anglicans should be Choping that press officers in both the Vatican and Lambeth Palace stumbled across an interview given by Anglican theologian — and inspiration for the “Radical Orthodoxy” school — John Milbank to *Asia News*, concerning Pope Benedict and Archbishop Rowan Williams. “I think it is important that the two leaders take the opportunity to show that their agreements are far more profound than their differences,” Milbank said ahead of the forthcoming papal visit to the United Kingdom. “For they espouse a similar sort of theology: rooted in the legacy of Augustine and the recovery of authentic patristic and high medieval tradition.”

Augustinians in Postmodernity

Archbishop Williams’s Augustinianism is a matter of record: Rupert Shortt’s biography describes St. Augustine as “Rowan’s single greatest influence.” Referring to the archbishop’s first meeting with Benedict as pontiff, he notes that “both are steeped in Augustine.”

Roman Catholic theologian Tracy Rowland endorses this same analysis in *Ratzinger’s Faith: The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI*. Benedict’s Augustinianism is hardly a secret, as his encyclicals

testify. His first encyclical, *Deus Caritas est*, reflects on the Church as a “community of love” in light of Augustine’s insight that “if you see charity, you see the Trinity” [2:19]. In *Spe Salvi*, Augustine is the exemplar of hope-filled faith:

Amid the serious difficulties facing the Roman Empire — and also posing a serious threat to Roman Africa, which was actually destroyed at the end of Augustine’s life — this was what he set out to do: to transmit hope, the hope which came to him from faith and which, in complete contrast with his introverted temperament, enabled him to take part decisively and with all his strength in the task of building up the city [29].

Caritas in veritate similarly invokes Augustine in discussing the relationship between hope, love and truth:

As the absolutely gratuitous gift of God, hope bursts into our lives as something not due to us, something that transcends every law of justice. Gift by its nature goes beyond merit, its rule is that of superabundance. It takes first place in our souls as a sign of God’s presence in us, a sign of what he expects from us. Truth — which is itself gift, in the same way as char-

ity — is greater than we are, as Saint Augustine teaches. Likewise the truth of ourselves, of our personal conscience, is first of all given to us. In every cognitive process, truth is not something that we produce, it is always found, or better, received [3:34].

Benedict's Augustinianism is the central theme of Rowland's excellent book. At the very outset we are reminded of the then-Cardinal Ratzinger describing himself as "a decided Augustinian." It was the influence of Augustine which resulted in Ratzinger as theologian critiquing the dry, impersonal neo-Thomism of pre-Vatican II Rome. Engagement with Henri de Lubac and the *Ressourcement* school intensified his Augustinianism — what he later described as "the required dialogue with Augustine."

Rowland says of the *Ressourcement* school: "they found Thomism dry and unable to convey a sense of the glory of the Revelation. It was a much contracted presentation of the kerygma."

Ratzinger's involvement with this movement has, of course, given rise to the interpretation that he was a "liberal" who was mugged by reality and only then became a "conservative": the rebel who rejected the prevailing orthodoxy in the 1950s and 1960s became the Curia's hardline conservative of the 1980s.

Contra Rationalism

Rowland presents a much more sophisticated and interesting account in which Augustine remains central to Ratzinger's theological thinking across the decades. The critique of neo-Thomist Scholasticism was not an expression of liberalism. It was, in fact, a critique of Enlightenment rationalism. As Rowland states:

For Ratzinger "pure reason" à la Immanuel Kant simply does not exist. He has said this many times over several decades. Some Thomists, eager to defend the faith at the Bar of eighteenth-century philosophy, have taken on board elements of Kant's epistemology. Many Neo-Scholastics influenced by these projects may find this statement shocking but it is nonetheless true that Ratzinger and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), the father of post-modernism, are united in their opposition to the Kantian belief in "pure reason." The way

that Ratzinger often expresses the principle is by saying that "reason has a wax nose." Its shape is determined by theological convictions.

The particularity and beauty of the Incarnation, passion and resurrection of the Word were lost amid the passionless propositions of the Neo-Thomists. But, what was true of the dry Scholasticism of the pre-Vatican II era was also true of the theologies of Schillebeeckx and Küng in their attempts to reinterpret and get behind the theodrama of the Christian proclamation. As Rowland notes, much liberal theology was "paradoxically ... closer in effect to the propositional character of ... the whole post-Tridentine approach." Both pre-Vatican II "conservatives" and post-Vatican II "liberals" were children of the Enlightenment. Both were rationalists.

It is, then, the same Augustinian Ratzinger responding to both Scholasticism and Schillebeeckx. Against the propositions of both, Ratzinger proclaimed the Christian narrative. This is beautifully illustrated in Rowland's quotation from a friend of Ratzinger's: "He [i.e., Ratzinger] is not

Rowan's theology was grounded, passionate, caught up in the life of God, and he was clear that everything came together in the Church, rather than the academy.

interested in defining God by abstract concepts. An abstraction — he once told me — does not need a mother."

In many ways, Ratzinger's commitment to *Ressourcement's* proclamation of the Christian narrative was mirrored in Rowan Williams's engagement with Anglican liberalism in the 1970s. Shortt describes Williams during his time at the liberal Catholic Westcott House, Cambridge, as "invigorat[ing] a generation hungry for a richer theological diet" than that offered by *The Myth of God Incar-*

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nate. He then quotes a former Westcott student:

We ... needed to break out of what seemed like an old-fashioned Oxbridge consensus presenting Christ as essentially a moral mentor. Rowan liberated us from this. His theology was grounded, passionate, caught up in the life of God, and he was clear that everything came together in the Church, rather than the academy... We came to think that it was possible to out-think the Enlightenment, and defend the integrity of revelation.

Both Benedict and Rowan have been defined by a commitment to recover the truth and beauty of the Christian narrative from theological projects which sought to “translate” Christian faith into rationalist terms. The means they have sought to do this has been what John Milbank calls a “postmodern critical Augustinianism.”

The Liturgy of Beauty

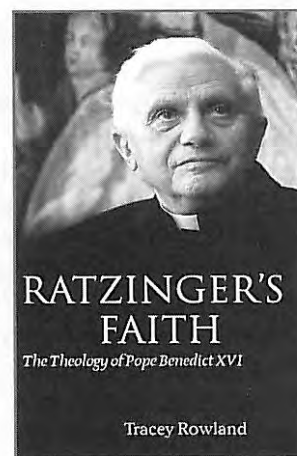
Both have also shared an understanding that this has implications for liturgy. In *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (2000) Cardinal Ratzinger wrote a devastating critique of a functionalist approach to liturgy. Rowland describes Benedict’s emphasis on the counter-cultural nature of the liturgy — not least its pointing to transcendental beauty — as “part of his Augustinian heritage.” She contrasts this with the fact that “anyone wanting to escape the culture of modernity with its lowest-common-denominator mass culture will find it difficult to do so at many contemporary [Roman] Catholic liturgies.” Against this background, Benedict’s *Summorum Pontificum* can be understood not as an exercise in reactionary ecclesiastical politics, but as a meaningful attempt to restore the Roman tradition’s liturgical richness and beauty.

In a perhaps less grand manner, but not less significant, the archbishop’s sympathies appear to be with those proposing an Anglican version of the “reform of the reform.” In 2006, preaching on the 450th anniversary of the martyrdom of Cranmer, Williams described contemporary critics of the prayer book tradition as “liturgical puritans” and

defended Cranmer’s Eucharistic rite:

The insistent reversion to penitence in the Communion Order is not neurotic uncertainty but the sober expression of the truth that we never “move on” from being saved sinners, and our amazement at God’s free forgiveness has to be spoken out again and again. The edge of our resource: that is where faith belongs, and that is where the language of worship has to lead us.

It is also noteworthy that Rowan prefaces his *Tokens of Trust* with the 1662 translations of the Apostles’ and Niceno-Constantinopolitan creeds, and in the section on the Eucharist first quotes the



Ratzinger’s Faith

The Theology of Pope
Benedict XVI

By **Tracey Rowland.**

Oxford University Press. Pp. 232. \$17.95.

ISBN 978-0-1995-7034-8

1662 practice: “In the old Church of England Prayer Book, the Lord’s Prayer is said after Holy Communion — as if to remind us that when we have eaten and drunk our identity as God’s adopted children is renewed.”

For Benedict and for Rowan, older liturgical traditions embody a beauty and a logic that enriches the life and witness of the churches.

Between Two Cities

Pontiff and archbishop, then, have both been shaped by the desire to offer an alternative to the theological rationalism and liturgical puritanism that afflicted both the Roman and Anglican communions in the second half of the 20th century. In part, this has been motivated by a recognition that such rationalism and puritanism undermines the Church's ability to speak meaningfully to the citizens of late modernity. For both Benedict and Rowan, the post-Christian nature of late modern Europe and Britain defines the Church's mission. Ratzinger's 2005 Subiaco Address, contained in the appendix to Rowland's book, contrasted the post-Christian nature of contemporary European society with the previous culture: "The great deep convictions created by Christianity to a large extent remained. But this is no longer the case." As a consequence, "the splendor of being an image of God no longer shines over" humanity.

The same analysis can be seen in Rowan's *Lost Icons: Reflections on Cultural Bereavement*. It concludes:

The "lost icons" of this book have been clusters of convention and imagination, images of possible lives or modes of life, possible positions to occupy in a world that is inexorably one of time and loss.... And this loss, I've suggested, is inextricably linked with the loss of what is encoded in the actual icons of Christian tradition and usage.

In the flattened, disenchanting wasteland of post-Christian, postmodern societies, there is — as Rowland notes — "a change in the social perceptions of the nature and dignity of the human person." For Benedict and Rowan, that dignity is restored through the proclamation and living out of the Christian narrative in the communion of the Church.

A Second Spring?

Tom Wright provocatively remarked of *Spe Savli's* treatment of purgatory that "if a Pope had said this loud and clear in Germany in, say, 1517, the entire course of European history would have been different." As might be expected, Rowland's work does not quite suggest this. She is at pains to

If we are to witness a series of second springs — for Anglican–Roman Catholic relationships, for an understanding of evangelical fidelity and catholic beauty, for a Christian vision of the common good — the two Augustinians in Rome and Canterbury have an opportunity to show strength in weakness.

deny a dichotomy between the Augustinian Benedict XVI and the Thomist John Paul II. The differences, however, are significant and are described by Rowland as a "harmonious contrast." In a phrase she quotes from Ratzinger, Augustine is "a counterweight to Thomas Aquinas."

The papal visit to the United Kingdom comes at a time when both pontiff and archbishop are wounded — the former by the clerical abuse scandals, the latter by Anglicanism's ongoing divisions. Anglican–Roman relationships have been soured by the distraction of the Ordinariate. All of this emphasizes the significance of Milbank's words about the two leaders' points of agreement. Rowland offers us an excellent portrayal of an authentically Augustinian pontiff that gives us grounds for hope. If we are to witness a series of second springs — for Anglican–Roman Catholic relationships, for an understanding of evangelical fidelity and catholic beauty, for the witness of the churches in post-Christian Europe, for a Christian vision of the common good — the two Augustinians in Rome and Canterbury perhaps have an opportunity to show strength in weakness, treasure in clay jars. Some may regard "postmodern critical Augustinianism" as clumsy jargon. But it potentially offers the hope of renewal for Rome and Canterbury.

The Rev. Dr. Brian Crowe (morethanaviamedia.blogspot.com) is a non-stipendary priest in the Diocese of Connor, Church of Ireland.

Sic et Non

Contradicting Paradox

By Bryden Black

During American Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori's informal visit to Australasia last June, she spoke on the topic "Science and Religion: Your Context or Mine?" at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand. Despite my interest in the topic, I admit to a deep suspicion of her conclusions, on several counts.

Start with the title: not "science and theology" but "*religion*," as if there were such a generic thing. An emerging consensus among Christian thinkers over the last 20 years — including Gavin D'Costa and the prominent editors of *Fields of Faith: Theology and Religious Studies for the Twenty-first Century* (Cambridge, 2005) — has concluded the opposite: that faith languages are and must be relentlessly particular, even as science has matured into a roundly global enterprise.

In this light, "telling our story," as the presiding bishop told hers at some length, becomes rather more complicated, relative to the *Christian* story. For does Christian faith as lived in various places merely subsist in constitutive and incompatible "experiences," necessarily derived from given "contexts"?

At least for Christian theology, it is true, as the presiding bishop claimed, that the claims of science are broadly "congruent" with the faith — based not on "prejudice" but on a certain way of framing and exploring questions, weighing evidence, evaluating hypotheses, and finally leaving the results up to God, "like good Franciscans." The scientific method is essentially *a posteriori*: it induces and discovers, laying bare the basic structures of reality, even as it approaches objects according to their natures. Yet science is also profoundly traditional and traditioning, as Hans-Georg Gadamer (following Aquinas and others) and

Michael Polanyi have shown in our time.

We come here face to face with a paradox, to be sure; but not, I think, the one that Bishop Jefferts Schori went on to stress — emphasizing our "limited views" of what is the case. "Religion" speaks of "myth" and "science" speaks of "theory," she said, and in each case multiplicity is presumed. For example, there are two theories regarding light and its behavior: particles or waves. But "any and every perspective is limited." Similarly, when we come to "God": "using [human] words, we've already missed what we're describing," the presiding bishop concluded.

This is, however, only half the story. Yes, in the venerable tradition of Negative Theology, God's name given to Moses in Exodus 3 is barely a name at all; "I am who I am" or "I will be who I will be" only begins to point us in the right direction. But the very indeterminate nature of the Name *will* be revealed in the future, as all of Scripture bears witness; for God is the One who *shall* show himself, *as* himself. When such and such happens, when thus and so befalls you, "*then* you shall know that I am the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me." Likewise, in the New Testament, "God," as Robert Jenson says, "is whoever raised Jesus," *the* Servant of the LORD, *the* Israelite, "from the dead"; Jesus, whom the fourth gospel identifies as nothing less than "the *Word* of God." Thus, in both the Incarnation and in the words of Scripture, God accommodates himself to our human condition and to our human languages. And while we cannot comprehend God, we can and do *apprehend* him truly in Christ Jesus. For "God knows us" in Christ (Gal. 4:9).

Something like the following, therefore, should be our question to Presiding Bishop Jefferts

Anglican Taonga photo
Presiding Bishop Katharine
Jefferts Schori with children
at Holy Trinity Cathedral in
Auckland, New Zealand,
on June 27.



Schori (as I myself suggested when it came time for Q&A in Christchurch):

In the history of science, we have on the one hand the change from a Ptolemaic view of the world to that of Copernicus. The two views are simply contradictory, being mutually exclusive; either one is the case or the other, but not both. On the other hand, when Einstein proposed his theories of relativity, this did not render Newton's "Laws" wrong exactly but inadequate, under certain circumstances. The Newtonian paradigm thus persists within a larger Einsteinian perspective that is more encompassing and, indeed, paradoxical.

In this light, it seems that the presiding bishop would have us see the paradoxical, but not the contradictory and mutually exclusive — a failure of fact that also leaves us unable to distinguish necessary kinds of difference. Which is where authentic Christian theology comes in.

Christian faith and its theology stands or falls upon an adequate account of divine revelation. We find in the tradition a distinction between "general" revelation, by nature, and "special" revelation, in Scripture, culminating in Christ Jesus, and only the latter is sufficient unto human salvation. This is not to handicap divine providence or "common grace" among all the peoples of the world. It is, however, to avoid the postmodern mistake of granting any and all stories equal validity — as if the LORD of Scripture never had a problem with Baal, or St. Paul never objected to Artemis of the Ephesians! Accordingly, faithful inter-religious encounter requires the Church *both* to recognize contradictory religious experience, which Christians must deny and forgo, *and* to find in other forms of religiosity often paradoxical elements of truth that may be compatible with the unique specificity of Jesus.

The presiding bishop's response pointed back to

the need to reconcile apparent contradiction that may be eventually brought together into a whole — another earlier key theme of her talk, in terms of "interconnectedness." A duly religious appreciation of things, returning to "more ancient ways of understanding," will enhance human flourishing and permit both our human existence and the survival of other species, she said. Modern science has demonstrated the sheer interconnectedness of life on this planet, and religious persons will add that all things are connected "in God." Here then is her task for faithful science and technology: to come to grips with our interconnectedness in concrete ways — for instance, in the face of climate change — in a way that may enhance and inspire "holistic thinking and vision."

This sort of an answer does not help us distinguish between true contradiction and mere paradox, however, and in fact may leave behind *science* altogether. Earlier in her talk, the presiding bishop extolled Einstein and Heisenberg as more "mystic and poet" than anything else. And many a mysticism of course seeks to bring together all things "inclusively" into "the divine" — what the Hindu tradition refers to as *neti neti*, "neither this nor that." One is thus left with a monism that precludes any real contradiction *a priori*.

By contrast, Christian theology affirms creation by the triune Creator, and the unique and specific Incarnation of Jesus of Nazareth, for all the world to know and be saved. Accordingly, a faithfully missionary engagement of culture and context will be resolutely incarnational and christological, at once judging the world and fulfilling its truest desires and hopes.

The Rev. Dr. Bryden Black is a non-stipendiary priest in the Diocese of Christchurch, New Zealand, and a commercial farmer.

West Missouri Nominees

(Continued from page 5)

address church divisions regarding sexuality: "My early years in Kansas City coincided with prayer book revision and women's ordination — both of which brought about speculation about the 'end of the church as we knew it!' My sense is that the latest challenges of human sexuality and similar panic in certain quarters will eventually be incorporated into our Church's resilient and progressive new history while still rooted in the great story of Christ's redeeming love."

Smith referred to another timely issue — abuse of clergy power — from his time as a rector in West Des Moines, Iowa.

"In my ministry in Iowa, I had the opportunity to help bring healing to a congregation following sexual and financial misconduct of a clergy person," he wrote. "This work taught me how great the impact is when boundaries, great and small, get crossed. I also learned again about God's grace and realized that the return to health and mission is a story of the resurrection."

Field wrote about leading through patience and building consensus.

"I am energetic, hard working, motivated, and mission-oriented, but I am also able to be patient, to meet and accept people where they are, to lead gently, but without losing the resolve to continue pressing forward," Field wrote. "Hand-in-hand with that is a gift for consensus building. By temperament and by choice, I seek consensus among stakeholders when moving toward a decision. Consensus is rapidly becoming an American cultural norm for our day, and I have the patience and the will to seek consensus when decisions, especially potentially divisive decisions, have to be made."

Still Independent, Episcopal

Thank you for noting EDS's work to sustain residential education (as one of the models we offer) while working to make it more affordable and accessible [TLC, Aug. 15]. I have only one quibble: the story notes that we sold some of our buildings to Lesley University and now "share some facilities as well as administrative functions" with them.

While true, I fear that sentence can be misread to perpetuate the misconception that EDS has merged with, or is largely run by, Lesley. Not true. We sold them some buildings; we jointly own the library (as we have, in the past, with the Jesuits at Weston); and each of us tries to cooperate when the other needs to borrow additional space.

As for joint administrative functions: we contract with Lesley for security, cleaning, and maintenance services for buildings on this campus, whether owned jointly, by Lesley, or by EDS. EDS has in no way surrendered administration of our school, our programs, or our community life. We take advantage, when we can, of economies of scale and we continue to look for ways (such as cross-registration) to enhance one another's programs. But EDS remains an independent, Episcopal seminary.

*(The Very Rev. Dr.) Katherine Hancock Ragsdale
President and Dean
Episcopal Divinity School
Cambridge, Mass.*



Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass.

Correcting an Obituary

I am writing to correct several significant errors in a death notice for the Rev. Canon Gordon McBride [TLC, Aug. 1].

At the time of his death Fr. Gordon was chair of the diocesan Commission on Ministry of the Diocese of Arizona, not Wyoming.

He was a deacon at St. Paul's in Salt Lake City, and after his ordination was invited to return to St. Mark's as a clergy affiliate.

He was rector of St. Paul's Church, Tucson, from 1985 to 1991, and then as the first rector of Grace St. Paul's Church, Tucson, from 1991 to 2008. (Grace St. Paul's is a parish formed through the merger in 1991 of St. Paul's and Grace

Church in Tucson.) He retired from Grace St. Paul's on June 1, 2008.

*David Wachter
Grace St. Paul's Church
Tucson, Ariz.*

Not in California

The article about Bishop Grafton [TLC, Aug. 22] has a minor error. The article states regarding the Sisters of the Holy Nativity, "its works continue today at houses in Wisconsin and California." The Sisters no longer do work in California. They've provided their property in Santa Barbara to the Order of the Holy Cross since that order's fire.

*Matthew P. Payne
Lay Canon for Administration
Diocese of Fond du Lac
Appleton, Wis.*

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People & Places

Appointments

The Rev. Canon **Carl M. Andrews** is canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of Colorado, 1300 Washington St., Denver, CO 80203-2003.

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Deacons

Northern California — **Christopher J. Arnold**, deacon-in-charge, St. Mary's, PO Box 744, Middlesboro, KY 40965; **Andrea A. Baker**; **Lawrence R. Holben**.

Spokane — **Ellen Loposer**, St. Stephens, 5720 S. Perry St., Spokane, WA 99223; **Charlotte Mills**, St. David's, 7315 N. Walla, Spokane, WA 99208.

Deaths

The Rev. **Richard Rhys Williams** of Otisfield, ME, died at Ledgeview Living Center. He was 87.

He was born in Bethlehem, PA, and graduated from Lehigh University. He received theology degrees from General Theological Seminary, including a doctor-

ate in 1960. He also received a master's degree in Semitic languages from Columbia University. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1947, and served as curate at Church of the Holy Spirit in Lake Forest, IL, until 1949, then was assistant at St. Mark's, New Canaan, CT. He also taught at General Seminary, 1950-53. He was rector of St. Mary's and St. Jude's churches in Northeast Harbor and Seal Harbor, ME, 1953-58. He taught at Nashotah House from 1958 to 1961, and was rector of Christ Church, Poughkeepsie, NY, 1963-70. From 1970 to 1983, he taught at Marist College, Poughkeepsie, while serving as rector of St. Peter's Church, Millbrook, NY. In retirement, he taught at the University College of Cape Breton (now named Cape Breton University) in Nova Scotia and assisted at various Anglican churches. In 2002 he moved to Otisfield, and assisted at Christ Church, Norway. He is survived by his wife, Mary (Pixie); four children, Michael Montgomery-Williams of Andover, MA, Margaret Williams of South Portland, ME; Trudy Sloan of Kennebunk, ME; and Jane Lattimore of Princeton, MA; and five grandchildren.



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Ultimate Decisions

“Therefore choose life” (Deut. 30:19).

BCP: Deut. 30:15-20; Psalm 1; Philemon 1-20; Luke 14:25-33

RCL: Jer. 18:1-11; Psalm 139:1-5, 13-17; or Deut. 30:15-20; Psalm 1; Philemon 1-21; Luke 14:25-33

“In his great love, God was unwilling to restrict our freedom, even though he had the power to do so. He has left us to come to him by the love of our heart alone.” These words of the Syrian Christian mystic Isaac of Ninevah sum up an important theme linking together these lessons.

All of them invite a decision. Moses sets two ways before the people: following the commandments of God and finding life, or serving other gods and inheriting death. Paul urges Philemon to receive back his former slave Onesimus “as a beloved brother.” But he will not command the master’s obedience, “in order that [his] goodness might not be by compulsion but of [his] own free will.” Jesus invites his disciples to consider the hard road of complete dedication to God. They must choose care-

fully, though, sitting down to “count the cost.”

The human capacity for free choice is a gift that comes as part of being created in the Divine Image. Our virtues and our destinies are formed by the decisions we make, and acting without unnecessary coercion is basic to human dignity.

But in these passages, a free decision is more important because of the gravity of the choices than these deeper claims about human nature. God is calling his people to choices that require the total redirection of their lives. Moses calls them to walk continually in God’s ways, to commit themselves to God alone instead of the idols that claim to rule Canaan’s people. Jesus warns his followers to weigh their options carefully, to understand that faithfulness may lead to broken rela-

tionships and poverty. This commitment will cost them everything, and they must be sure that they can bear the demands.

A spur-of-the-moment choice or one made under pressure or in the heat of emotional fervor simply will not do. Such ultimate decisions must be made calmly and carefully, because they must be made day after day, in the face of different kinds of challenges. Unfortunately, those who talk so often of “a personal decision for Christ” sometimes seem to forget the scriptural vision of continual conversion. The choice is for the way of discipleship, a lifetime path of following Jesus, giving God the first place in our hearts. God loves us enough to allow us to choose, but he expects a complete choice from us. True discipleship demands all we have.

Look It Up

Is the human freedom described by these texts the same as the freedom St. Paul describes in Galatians 5?

Think About It

St. Paul is sometimes criticized for not having condemned slavery outright in his letter to Philemon. Might his exhortation for Philemon to receive Onesimus “as a brother” be even more radical?

Next Sunday The Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost (Proper 19C), September 12, 2010

BCP: Exod. 32:1, 7-14; Psalm 51:1-18 or 51:1-11; 1 Tim. 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-10

RCL: Jer. 4:11-12, 22-28; Psalm 14 or Exod. 32:7-14; Psalm 51:1-11; 1 Tim. 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-10

THE LIVING CHURCH

Volume 241 Number 10

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MANUSCRIPTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS: THE LIVING CHURCH cannot assume responsibility for the return of photos or manuscripts. THE LIVING CHURCH is published every week, dated Sunday, by the Living Church Foundation, Inc., at 816 E. Juneau Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53202. Periodicals postage paid at Milwaukee, WI, and at additional mailing offices.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$45.00 for one year; \$85.00 for two years. Canadian postage an additional \$55.00 per year; Mexico and all other foreign, \$62.00 per year.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE LIVING CHURCH, P.O. Box 514036, Milwaukee, WI 53203-3436. Subscribers, when submitting address changes, please allow 3-4 weeks for change to take effect.

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