

‘MY NAME IS LAZARUS, AND I LIVE.’

DOES THE CONVERT BRING A PATRIMONY FROM THE TOMB?

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At the time of my reception into full communion with the Catholic Church, thirty years ago this October, I was not conscious of bringing a ‘patrimony’ with me from Anglicanism. What overwhelmed me was a feeling of gratitude to God for the gift of divine and Catholic faith, and of relief at final inclusion within the One True Fold of Christ. The long dark night was ended: no more struggling to preach and instruct in the dim light of my own knowledge and private judgement, no more clouding of the mind by the doctrinal relativism of a man-made denomination. As Newman says of himself in the *Apologia*, I was liberated by no longer having to make ‘for myself a Church by an effort of thought’; when I looked at the Catholic Church, I could say, as he said, ‘*This is a religion*’, and in comparison ‘the poor Anglican Church’ seemed, to me as to him, ‘the veriest of nonentities’.¹ On 10th October 1979, at Campion Hall, Oxford, when I made the profession of faith, received the Sacrament of Confirmation, and made my First Holy Communion, I felt like a pauper made rich, a prisoner set free, a dead man resurrected. What Chesterton wrote on the day of his conversion I, too, could have said, and would still say: *My name is Lazarus, and I live*. The sense of deliverance has never left me. *My name is Lazarus, and I live*.

¹ *Apologia Pro Vita Sua: Being a History of His Religious Opinions* (1865), new impression (London, New Yor, Bombay, & Calcutta: Longmans Green, & Co., 1908), p. 340.

But *this* Lazarus is a Catholic priest, ordained by Papal dispensation, and for that reason, he must say more about this resurrection of his soul. After all, as a married man, he would not be a priest at all, had not the Church recognized some good in the tradition in which he was raised, and in the ministry he once exercised, and for those reasons made an exception for him to the general law of celibacy. To be a Catholic is to be a realist, a disciple of the *full* truth, and the reality, the full truth, of my conversion is that I *did* bring something with me when I became a Catholic all those years ago. I don't just mean my deficiencies of mind and character; they required healing as before, though now they had the divine medicine of the Church's Sacraments on which to draw. I'm thinking of *positive* blessings, even of the supernatural order.

To begin with, my soul bore the indelible character of my Baptism, and with my wife I was united by the indissoluble bond of Christian marriage. Then there were the thousand good influences that were at last coming to Catholic fulfilment in me in that lovely chapel of the Jesuits in Brewer Street, Oxford. I am thinking of clergymen who helped me to know and love our Lord Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother. I mean all the properly Catholic treasures that enriched my life during the previous thirty-two years: Sacred Scripture, the Creeds, the wisdom of the Fathers and Doctors, sacred beauty in the worship of God, Christ's mysteries in the liturgical year, adoration of Christ in the Eucharist, auricular Confession, the veneration and invocation of the saints, the Rosary, Stations of the Cross, retreats and pilgrimages. All these blessings, these Catholic goods, disposing me for reception into the Catholic Church, came to me in my Anglican years, and through the instrumentality of Anglicans. And while I

have never for one Catholic moment believed that my Anglican orders were anything other than ‘absolutely null and utterly void’, I am convinced that our blessed Lord gave me as a clergyman the grace of an interior foretaste of Catholic priesthood, a grace that many of you here today have shared, and that the Holy Father and the bishops have recognized by making generous arrangements for our reception and ordination. And, of course, there have been many other words and actions of the Popes, and not only the post-conciliar ones, which seem to indicate that Holy Mother Church discerns within the Anglican tradition something worthy of honour and preservation. It may be, then, that after all Lazarus does bring a patrimony with him when he steps into the light.

In what follows, I shall defend the existence, and expound the nature, of what Pope Paul VI called ‘the worthy patrimony of piety and usage’ of the Anglican tradition. As is fitting in a city that boasts a great school of Thomistic studies, and indeed as is second nature for one who tries to be a disciple of St Thomas, I shall follow the method of the *Summa*. First, I shall place objections to my thesis; secondly, expound set forth the thesis positively with the help of principles from magisterial documents, and by inductive arguments from Church history; and finally reply to the objections.

Objection 1

Anglicanism is the product of schism and heresy, the wicked work of Henry VIII, Thomas Cranmer, and Elizabeth I. Now schism and heresy are sins, that is, grave moral evils. Therefore, Anglicanism is the product of moral evil. But the infinitely good God cannot will moral evil either directly or indirectly. Therefore, the existence of Anglicanism is not willed by God.

But what is not willed by God cannot constitute a patrimony in the one true Church of God, for a patrimony in the Church is always a divinely bestowed good handed on, by the working of the Holy Spirit, from our forefathers in the faith. Therefore, there is not, and cannot be, an ‘Anglican patrimony’ in the Catholic Church, any more than there can be, say, a Nestorian patrimony in the Catholic Church.

Objection 2

From the Elizabeth Settlement onwards, Anglicanism has been an alliance of mutually self-contradictory theologies. Bereft of the living Magisterium of Christ’s Church, Anglicans interpret Scripture, the Creeds, and the early Councils according to private judgement and party allegiance, and therefore in a thousand clashing ways. As Newman makes his character, Mr Vincent, say in the novel *Loss and Gain*, the ‘true children’ of Anglicanism ‘agree to differ’.² They call it ‘comprehensiveness’ or, these days, ‘inclusiveness’. But the Catholic Church, the divinely appointed guardian of the truth, cannot accommodate within her office of teaching, sanctifying, and pastoral care any contradiction of the truth. Therefore, there is no place for an Anglican patrimony in the official life and activity of the Catholic Church.

Objection 3

² *Loss and Gain: The Story of a Convert*, new edition (London, New York, & Bombay: Longmans, Green & Co., 1906), p. 84. *Reunion All Round*, Ronald Knox’s spoof pamphlet written in the style of Swift, with its ingenious plans for the reunion within the Established Church of the followers of all religions and none, is a satire not only on the indifferentism of the early ecumenical movement but also on the relativism that lies at the core of Anglicanism.

Even Anglo-Catholicism does not constitute a coherent tradition, and therefore cannot transmit a patrimony of positive good. Apart from the differences between so-called ‘Prayer Book Catholics’, moderately Romanizing ‘Anglican Catholics’, and full-blown ‘Anglo-Papalism’, Anglo-Catholicism from the late nineteenth century onwards included within its ranks some who were outwardly Catholic in rites and ceremonies, but Modernist in their beliefs about faith and morals. Moreover, all Anglo-Catholics, even the Anglo-Papalists, end up holding some form of the ‘branch theory’. The very prefix ‘Anglo’ or ‘Anglican’ used to qualify the name ‘Catholic’ implies the existence of several distinct species of Catholic: Roman, Anglican, Orthodox, with the so-called Roman Catholic Church as merely one of several branches of the one tree of the Church. It was for this reason that at the First Vatican Council Bishop Ullathorne, first Catholic Bishop of Birmingham, did everything in his power to ensure that the Church described herself in the dogmatic constitution *Dei Filius* as the ‘Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Roman Church’. According to Ullathorne, the phrasing first proposed for the text, ‘Roman Catholic Church’, would have played into the hands of the Puseyites who prided themselves on being ‘Anglican Catholics’.³ The doctrinal principle at stake in this terminology is of the gravest kind, as Father Bertrand Wilberforce, the Dominican son of Newman’s friend and fellow convert, Henry Wilberforce, and grandson of the great Evangelical abolitionist, showed in a chance encounter with an Anglican minister. Father Bertrand was once looking round an Anglican church when he was accosted by one of the local curates. Asked what kind of clergyman he was, Wilberforce replied that he was a Catholic priest. The

³ Cuthbert Butler OSB, *The Vatican Council, 1869 – 1870*. Based on Bishop Ullathorne’s Letters, edited by Christopher Butler OSB (London: Collins, 1962), p. 243 – 4.

curate commented: ‘You mean *Roman Catholic*’. ‘There is not the least necessity for using the word’, said Father Bertrand, ‘since there are no Catholics who are *not Roman*.’ ‘That is a matter of opinion’, responded the curate. ‘On the contrary’, said the Dominican, ‘it is a matter of Divine Revelation’.⁴ If this be true, and it is, then the Catholic Church, in fidelity to Divine Revelation, cannot accommodate even an ‘Anglo-Catholic’ patrimony.

But, on the other hand, as Pope Paul VI said in his homily at the canonization of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales, ‘there will be no seeking to lessen the legitimate prestige and the worthy patrimony of piety and usage proper to the Anglican Church when the Roman Catholic Church – this humble ‘Servant of the Servants of God’ – is able to embrace her ever beloved sister in the one authentic communion of the family of Christ’.⁵ Now, since those words were spoken, most parts of official Anglicanism have spurned the embrace of the Catholic Church through the ordination of women, and so the corporate reunion that Pope Paul may have been envisioning is now impossible to achieve. However, as Archbishop Myers has said, through the Pastoral Provision for individual clergymen, and, one might add, through the approval of the Anglican Use for whole

⁴ H. M. Capes OSD, *The Life and Letters of Father Bertrand Wilberforce of the Order of Preachers* (London: Sands, 1912), p. 180 – 1.

⁵ http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/homilies/1970/documents/hf_pvi_hom_19701025_it.html. Pope Paul’s incidental homiletic reference to the Anglican Church as a ‘sister’ has no dogmatic force, for, as the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith explained in a ‘note’, approved by Pope John Paul II, in 2000: ‘[T]he expression *sister Churches* in the proper sense, as attested by the common Tradition of East and West, may only be used for those ecclesial communities that have preserved a valid Episcopate and Eucharist’ (http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000630_chiese-sorelle_en.html). Now, by both doctrine and discipline, the Catholic Church does not recognize the validity of the Anglican episcopate and Eucharist. Therefore, the Anglican Church cannot be regarded as a ‘sister Church’ of either the Church universal or any particular Church.

communities, the Holy See has shown that it ‘recognizes that there is a legitimate historical patrimony of the Anglican Communion’.⁶

The Existence of an Anglican Patrimony: Deductive Arguments

Let us begin with a statement of two fundamental principles of Catholic ecclesiology:

The first concerns the *identity* of the Catholic Church, who and what she is, both in herself and in relation to the Churches and Christian communities separated from her. As successive documents of the Holy See show beyond all doubt, the form of words used by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council – the one Church of Christ ‘subsists in’ the Church governed by Peter’s successor and the bishops in communion with him⁷ – does not compromise, but rather confirms, the traditional claims of the Catholic Church; at the same time it takes account of the existence of elements of the Church’s own life outside her visible limits. As the clarification presented by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 2007 puts it:

[T]he Church of Christ *is present and operative* in the Churches and ecclesial communities not yet fully in communion with the Catholic Church, on account of the elements of sanctification and truth that are present in them. Nevertheless, the word *subsists* can be attributed to the Catholic Church alone, precisely because it refers to the mark of unity that we profess in the symbols of the faith (‘I believe... in the

⁶ <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/new.php?n=13283>

⁷ The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, n. 8

“one” Church’); and this ‘one’ Church subsists in the Catholic Church ... The use of th[e] expression [*subsists in*], which indicates the full identity of the Church of Christ with the Catholic Church, does not change the doctrine on the Church. Rather, it comes from and brings out more clearly the fact that there are ‘numerous elements of sanctification and of truth’ which are found outside her structure, but which ‘as gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ, impel towards Catholic Unity’.⁸

What is the Catholic Church in herself? She is ‘fully identical’ with, says the Congregation, is the same thing as, the Church of Christ. The One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, to which we refer in the Creed, is not an abstraction, an ideal to be realized in the future, but a concrete reality already existing in the present, the visible and hierarchical Catholic Church. In her alone does the Church of Christ have subsistence, exist as an hypostasis, the Bride He loves and the Mother of His faithful. What is the Catholic Church in relation to separated Churches and other Christian communities? She is not only the source of those truths and holy things they have preserved, for they are *gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ*, but also, as it were, the magnetic centre to which they are drawn, for those gifts have a force *impelling one towards Catholic unity*. The truths taught and the graces communicated within the separated Churches and communities already belong to the Catholic Church, and so, when a non-Catholic Christian *fully* assents to the truths and corresponds with the graces, they should lead him towards Catholic unity, that is, into full communion with the Catholic Church.

⁸http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20070629_responsa-quaestiones_en.html

The second principle is what the great Thomist, Charles Cardinal Journet, a close friend of Pope Paul VI, called ‘the principle of dissidence’ within non-Catholic Christian communities. On the one hand, there is a positive, constructive, supernatural principle at work in these bodies: the communication of sanctifying grace in those Sacraments they possess; the actual graces of the Holy Spirit impelling them towards Catholic unity. On the other hand, there is a negative, destructive principle at work, emanating from the evil one, which obscures the clear perception of Catholic truth, inclining souls to bigotry or ideology, and impeding their correspondence with divine grace.⁹ Sadly, the history of Anglicanism in the twentieth century, especially in England and North America, is empirical proof of the validity of Journet’s analysis. The denomination that once prided itself in adhering only to what has been taught by all Christians at all times and in all places now teaches, or tolerates, on faith and morals, what has never been held by any true Christian at any time or in any place.

Now, applying these principles to the question in front of us, we can see that there are good grounds for thinking there is a ‘worthy patrimony’ that Anglican converts carry into full communion. Since supernatural elements of her own life exist outside the visible limits of the Catholic Church, the Anglican patrimony will be made up of those elements, that is, of truths and goods preserved or reclaimed by Anglicans in the course of the last four and half centuries. However, since those truths and goods already

⁹ ‘In our opinion, what in the various forms of dissidence, depends on the grace of Christ forms the Catholic Church in initial act and enriches her exteriorization and her Catholicity; but what depends on the principle of dissidence mutilates the grace of Christ, prevents the formation of the Church in completed act, and tends of its very nature to impoverish her exteriorization and her Catholicity’ (*L’Église du Verbe incarné: Essai de théologie speculative*, vol. 3, Sa structure interne et son unité catholique, new edition (Fribourg: Editions Saint-Augustin, 2000), p. 1974n).

belong to the Catholic Church, and since to her alone has Christ our Lord entrusted the authentic proclamation and exposition of His Gospel, and on her alone has He bestowed the fullness of the means of sanctification, it follows that an Anglican patrimony will not, as it were, make up some deficiency in the very substance of the Church's faith, worship, and piety, but will instead be accidental perfections, fitting modes of expression of that faith, worship, and piety. Moreover, this patrimony, in its vulnerability to the principle of dissidence, will need to be healed, purified, and transformed by full communion with the Catholic Church.

The Existence of an Anglican Patrimony: Inductive Arguments

If it means nothing else, the worthy patrimony of Anglicanism within the Catholic Church is *people*. From none of the other reformed traditions have there been so many conversions as there have been from the Anglican Church in England and America during the last two centuries. I have just finished editing for Oxford University Press a large anthology of English Catholic writing from the end of the fifteenth century to the end of the twentieth. A great number of the authors are converts, many of them clergymen. Just to mention the names of the best known of them, and to recall their contribution to the life of the Catholic Church, is to prove the existence of the patrimony: St Edmund Campion, and the other converts among the English martyrs; the Venerable John Henry Cardinal Newman, founder of the English Oratory, soon to be declared Blessed and perhaps, one day, made England's second Doctor of the Church; Henry Edward Cardinal Manning, second Archbishop of Westminster, champion of Papal infallibility and father of the poor; Frederick William Faber, Oratorian priest, hymn-writer, and spiritual writer; Gerard Manley Hopkins, Jesuit

priest and poet; Robert Hugh Benson, priest, novelist, preacher, and apologist for the faith; Gilbert Keith Chesterton, Knight of the Holy Ghost, journalist, poet, novelist, apologist for the faith; Ronald Knox, preacher, Bible-translator, satirist, and apologist for the faith. A patrimony enriches you; well, these men have enriched the Catholic Church in the English-speaking world with the example of their lives, the wisdom of their theology, the beauty of their poetry, and the apostolic influence of their foundations. If this roll call of honour does not constitute a worthy patrimony of piety, I don't know what would.

An inductive argument for the existence of an Anglican patrimony can also be made from the generosity of the Popes towards Anglican convert clergymen. Think of the rapidity with which so many of them were allowed to proceed to ordination: Newman after twenty months, Faber after fifteen months, Manning after ten *weeks*. The Popes and English bishops such as Cardinal Wiseman recognized in these men minds that were already Catholic and hearts that burned with apostolic zeal. When the Anglican Benedictine monks of the Caldey community were reconciled in 1913, they were admitted as canonical oblates of the abbey of Maredsous in Belgium just *six hours* after their conditional baptism and reception, and their abbot, Aelred Carlyle, was ordained priest eight months later and canonically blessed as abbot of what was now a Catholic monastery. According to Carlyle, Pope St Pius X promised him personally 'the most ample faculties' to make smooth the path of these former Anglican Benedictines.¹⁰ The Caldey community eventually moved to Prinknash in Gloucestershire, and

¹⁰ Cf Peter Anson, *Abbot Extraordinary: A Memoir of Aelred Carlyle, Monk and Missionary, 1874 – 1955* (London: Faith Press, 1958), p. 182.

from there a second foundation was made at Pluscarden in Scotland. This new line of Benedictine monasticism in the Catholic Church is the work of converts from Anglicanism, further, inductive proof of the ‘worthy patrimony’ of which Pope Paul spoke.

The Nature of the Anglican Patrimony

In trying to define the nature of the Anglican patrimony of ‘piety and usage’, I do not intend to follow the path taken by my old friend, Fr Aidan Nichols OP, in his book *The Panther and the Hind*, in which he selects those parts of the Anglican theological tradition that he thinks might constitute an intellectual patrimony in what he calls, boldly, a ‘Anglican Uniate Church’. Instead of speculating about what might be retrieved from Anglicanism in the future, I shall instead try, with less ambition, to concentrate on the actually existing qualities that grace the lives and writings of the great converts from Anglicanism. In them we see all that is best in the tradition from which they came reaching its Catholic fulfilment: the principle of grace in flower, the principle of dissidence uprooted.

The first and most striking characteristic of Anglican converts, past and present, is fidelity to the Magisterium and devotion to the Successor of St Peter, the Vicar of Christ.¹¹ Now this part of the patrimony is born of suffering; it is the fruit of struggling to be faithful to Christ without the rock He has given His members to support them. Of its very nature, the living teaching office of the Church is not a good we converts inherited within Anglicanism; we discovered, and came to treasure it, through the painful

¹¹ I should say ‘*most* Anglican converts’, because sadly there have been a few exceptions to the general rule: one obvious example would be George Tyrrell, the Jesuit Modernist, raised as a Low Church Anglican in Ireland.

consequences of its absence, or through the contradictions we encountered when we tried to follow those geometrical substitutes for it, the *via media*, say, or the ‘Lambeth Quadrilateral’. Resting as we do now on the Rock, we sing Newman’s words with full Catholic assent and immense relief: ‘And I hold in veneration,/ For the love of Him alone,/ Holy Church as His creation/
And her teachings as His own.’

The second part of their Anglican patrimony that lives on in the Catholic life of many converts, an inheritance from the Caroline divines as well as the Tractarians, is a particular devotion to the Church Fathers. Newman said: ‘The Fathers made me Catholic’;¹² and indeed, after his conversion, he kissed the volumes of St Athanasius and St Basil in his library at Littlemore, saying, ‘You are mine now, you are mine now’.¹³ For Newman, full communion with the See of Peter meant full fellowship with the Fathers. Now, to be truly Catholic, reverence for the Fathers and early Councils cannot be exclusive, as if Doctors and Councils of later centuries had less authority. And so, after their conversion, the great Anglican converts – Manning and Faber, certainly, but Newman also (as one sees clearly in his early Catholic *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*) – plunged into Scholastic theology. Newman studied in Rome during an intellectual winter in the Eternal City, when authentic Thomism was still awaiting its new Springtime after *Aeterni Patris*. He was astonished when a Jesuit professor told him that Aristotle and St Thomas were ‘out of favour’ in Rome and throughout Italy. The future Cardinal’s reaction is revealing: he told the Jesuit that he ‘thought there was a latent power in Rome which

¹² *The Letter to Pusey*, in *Certain Difficulties felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*, vol. 2, new edition (London, New York, & Bombay, 1900), p. 24.

¹³ Cf Wilfrid Meynell, *Cardinal Newman* (London: Burns & Oates, 1907), p. 112.

would stop the evil, and that the Pope had introduced Aristotle and St. Thomas into the Church, and the Pope was bound to maintain them'. Newman is thinking with the Church, and wants to embrace the whole Tradition, not merely what is personally pleasing to him because of his Anglican formation.¹⁴

The third quality found in Anglican converts in general is zeal for sacred beauty, both in the manner in which the liturgy is celebrated and in the arts adorning the liturgy (including hymnody and liturgical translation). The Anglican Use parishes, in particular, supply a practical demonstration of the good effects of applying to the Church's liturgy that 'hermeneutic of continuity' which, as our Holy Father Pope Benedict has reminded us, is of the essence of the Church's Tradition. Many treasures of the Church's universal liturgical patrimony, which during these last forty-five years have been neglected, indeed rejected in so many parts of the Latin Church, continue to flourish in these parishes, and to feed the souls of the parishioners: music of that holy and heavenward kind which every Pope from St Pius X to Benedict XVI has prescribed; celebration of Holy Mass *ad orientem, ad Deum*; accuracy and euphony in liturgical translation; faithfulness to the traditional canons of beauty in architecture, the furnishing of the sanctuary, iconography, and vestments; good order and cleanliness in the sacristy; the habitual wearing of the cassock by priests; the preserving of

¹⁴ The Jesuit's shrug of the shoulders at Newman's response did not impress him: as he said in a letter to Dalgairns, in one of his typical colloquialisms, 'Here's a look out' (cf Wilfred Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, vol. 1 (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1912), p. 167. These comments, as well as evidences in Newman's writings of Scholastic influence, are sufficient answer to Cardinal Manning's fear of Newman was transporting into the Church 'the old Anglican, Patristic, literary, Oxford tone' into the Church, that is, the Fathers without Rome and the rest of the theological Tradition (Manning's letter to Monsignor Talbot, 22nd February 1866), cited in E. S. Purcell, *The Life of Cardinal Manning* (London: Macmillan, 1896), p. 323).

recollected silence in church before and after the celebration of Mass; solemnity and reverence in ceremonial; Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament as a regular part of the life of the parish; an all-pervasive atmosphere of devotion to our blessed Lady. By such a witness, the Anglican Use parishes, small in number though they may be, are assisting our Holy Father Pope Benedict in achieving one of the chief goals of his pontificate, namely, the restoration of the true ‘spirit of the liturgy’.

So, then, let us now reply to the objections:

Ad 1

[*Anglicanism’s origins in schism and heresy*] First, we must distinguish between formal and material schism and heresy. The present members of the Reformation denominations, brought up in good faith in their various communities, are in a different intellectual and moral situation from the founders of those denominations, who were men, once Catholic, who formally, that is, with full knowledge and by their own free will, repudiated the faith of their Baptism. This fact, insisted upon by the Second Vatican Council’s Decree on Ecumenism¹⁵ and commonly admitted by moral theologians long before the Council,¹⁶ suggests an important distinction between *Anglicanism* and *Anglicans*: *Anglicanism*, the original break and mistake, has no patrimony for appropriation by the Church; however, the individual Anglicans both past and present who, by God’s grace, have taken up and developed those elements of truth and holiness preserved amidst the

¹⁵ Cf *Unitatis redintegratio*, n. 3;

¹⁶ For example, Fr Dominic Prümmer OP says that ‘those who without obstinacy err in matters of faith are material heretics (for example, not a few Protestants), who have been brought up in heresy since infancy’ (*Vademecum theologiae moralis*, 4th edition (Freiburg: Herder, 1934), n. 202, p. 104).

errors of Anglicanism can and, so it seems to me, manifestly do bring with them a patrimony when they are reconciled with the Catholic Church.

Secondly, we must distinguish between, on the one hand, what almighty God wills directly or indirectly, and, on the other hand, what He permits; moreover, we must recall that God can and does bring good out of the moral evil that men contrive and He permits. As the Catechism teaches us, quoting St Augustine, ‘Almighty God . . ., because He is supremely good, would never allow any evil whatsoever to exist in all His works if He were not so all-powerful and good as to cause good to emerge from evil itself’.¹⁷ Therefore, we should not be surprised to discover something good, a ‘worthy patrimony’, emerging, by the mercy of God, out of those traditions whose historical origins lie in acts of formal schism and heresy. Indeed, even the Nestorians, having renounced the formal errors of their founder and the material defects in their formulations of faith, have conveyed into full communion a patrimony of liturgy and piety that is now the glory of the Chaldean Catholic Church. Therefore, there is no difficulty in supposing that, by a merciful dispensation, a similar patrimony has developed among those Anglicans who sought to reclaim their Catholic inheritance. As Chesterton says in his book, *The Thing: Why I Am a Catholic*:

Whether it be called a Catholic tendency or no, all the movements of all the sects of late have been in the direction of trying to put together again those separate pieces that were pulled apart in the sixteenth century. The main feature of our time has been the fact that one person after another has recovered one piece after another, and added it to the new scheme by borrowing it from the old. There is one sufficient proof that there has indeed been a shipwreck. And that is

¹⁷ *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 311.

that Robinson Crusoe has ever since been continually going back to get things from the wreck.¹⁸

The Anglican patrimony is like us formerly Anglican persons: it is a broken thing that by God's providence and grace can be a beautiful thing, and bear fruits for God's glory and the salvation of souls.

Ad 2

[*Anglican comprehensiveness*] As I suggested earlier, it was the pain of being without a divinely authorized teaching office that moved us converts, while still Anglicans, to search for such an office, and to find it at last in the Catholic Church. Our rebellion within Anglicanism against what Pope Benedict has called the 'dictatorship of relativism' makes us, and please God will always make us, the devoted disciples of objective truth, for Christ is the Truth. In a word, then, I answer: I concede that there is no positive patrimony to be found in Anglican comprehensiveness, but I argue that there is a patrimony of immense spiritual richness among those Anglicans who, having grasped the 'dogmatic principle' (to use Newman's phrase), sought the proximate rule of faith, that is, a living *Mater et Magistra*, who would teach her children with the serenity of a Bride wedded to the Word. First, they followed her footprints in the Patristic age, making normative this or that sequence of her Councils (up to Chalcedon, or even up to Nicaea II). Then the kindly light of the Spirit of Truth led them higher, and helped them find the *Mater et Magistra* still subsisting in the Church governed by Peter's Successor and the bishops in communion with him: *securus iudicat orbis terrarum*.

¹⁸ *The Thing: Why I Am A Catholic*, new edition; *G. K. Chesterton: Collected Works*, vol. 3, with introduction and notes by James J. Thompson Jr (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), p. 318.

Ad 3

[*Anglo-Catholicism*] I concede that the history of Anglo-Catholicism has been marred by the principle of dissidence. However, its positive achievements have been astonishing, and I suspect that, when most of us think of what a ‘worthy [Anglican] patrimony of piety and usage’ might be, we are thinking in the first place of what formed our own minds within the ‘Anglo-Catholic’ or ‘Anglican Catholic’ movement: the name may be problematic, but the reality denoted is an undoubted heritage of good. Henry Edward Manning, speaking fifteen years after his conversion, felt forced to conclude that the Oxford Movement was the work of the Holy Spirit, ‘drawing men, step by step, out of the illusions and falsehoods of the Anglican separation into the unity of the only Church’.¹⁹

One of the most important aspects of the Tractarian and Anglo-Catholic tradition, what distinguishes it from any other school of thought in the denominations descending from the drama of the sixteenth century, is the vigour with which its greatest theologians have defended the dogmas of the Trinity and the Incarnation. Such a claim may seem eccentric and improbable, for we tend to assume that the battle of the Reformation was fought exclusively over Scripture and Tradition, Justification, Ecclesiology, the Sacraments, and Eschatology, and that there was broad agreement among Catholics and Protestants on the Trinity and the Incarnation. After all, did not Anglicanism and Lutheranism from the beginning include the ancient Creeds in their worship? However, if you look at the writings of the

¹⁹ H. E. Manning, ‘Inaugural Address to the Academia’ (Session 1866 – 7), *Miscellanies* (London, 1877), vol. 1, p. 178, cited by James Pereiro, ‘Ethos’ and the Oxford Movement: *At the Heart of Tractarianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 228.

apologists for the faith in the later part of the sixteenth century (the *Ten Reasons* of St Edmund Campion, or the controversial works of St Robert Bellarmine), you will see that they give prominent attention to the Christological errors of the Reformers.²⁰ Even that most ecumenical and irenic of Catholic theologians, Father Yves Congar OP, regarded Luther's Christology – indeed Reformation Christology as a whole - as an improbable combination of Nestorianism and Monophysitism,²¹ and a century earlier Newman said that he thought most Protestants of his day had abandoned belief in the divinity of Christ.²²

Now it is to the honour of the Anglo-Catholic movement that its theologians have been tenacious in their defence and exposition of the Christological doctrine of the Councils and Creeds, and in their connecting of the Church and the Sacraments with the mystery of the Incarnation.

²⁰ Campion mentions, among many other examples, Calvin's argument that our Lord's words, 'The Father and I are one' (Jn 10: 30), does not show Christ to be God, consubstantial with the Father; Luther's 'hatred' of the word *homoousion*; the Reformers' denial that Christ was perfect in His grace from His conception; their blasphemous interpretation of the cry of dereliction as an expression of despair, and of the Descent into Hell as an experience of Christ's soul of the state of damnation (cf Edmund Campion, *Ten reasons Proposed to His Adversaries for Disputation in the Name of the Faith and Presented to the Illustrious Members of Our Universities*, new edition (London: Manresa Press, 1914), p. 123 – 4).

²¹ '[D]espite his fidelity to the formula of the Council [of Chalcedon], the reformer's Christology has something both Nestorian and Monophysite. It tends to be Nestorian, as Protestant theology tends to be, because of the distance it marks between the two natures, by the cleavage it places between the *opus Dei*, the *divinitas in opera*, on the one hand, and the human nature, on the other. But by the same token, by devaluing the role of the human nature of the incarnate Word, it attributes everything to the divinity; by the Incarnation it makes God operate divinely under the humiliating veil of humanity. At the level of the economy of salvation, which is alone of interest to it, it leads to a sort of Monophysitism, or rather Monoenergism, that is, it can only see God at work under the mantle of human flesh' (*Le Christ, Marie et l'Église* (Paris: Desclée de Brower, 1955), p. 37 – 8).

²² 'For if Mary's glory is so very great, how cannot His be greater still who is the Lord and God of Mary? He is infinitely above His Mother; and all that grace which filled her is but the overflowings and superfluities of His incomprehensible Sanctity. And history teaches us the same lesson. Look at the Protestant countries which threw off all devotion to her three centuries ago, under the notion that to put her from their thoughts would be exalting the praises of her Son. Has that consequence really followed from their profane conduct towards her? Just the reverse—the countries, Germany, Switzerland, England, which so acted, have in great measure ceased to worship Him, and have given up their belief in His Divinity while the Catholic Church, wherever she is to be found, adores Christ as true God and true Man, as firmly as ever she did; and strange indeed would it be, if it ever happened otherwise' (*Meditations and Devotions* (London, new York, Bombay, & Calcutta, 1907), p. 68 – 9).

Some of them, such as Gore and Weston, lost themselves in the thickets of Kenotic Christology. However, the greatest of them – the Anglican Newman, of course, but also Henry Parry Liddon, and in the twentieth century, the doyen of Anglo-Catholic Thomism, Eric Mascall – re-stated Catholic faith in the Holy and Undivided Trinity, and in the Incarnation of the eternal Son, in His Virgin Birth and Bodily Resurrection, with something of the courage and clarity of the Fathers themselves, and, in Mascall’s case, with that most attractive of Anglo-Catholic charisms, a disarming *humour*.²³

In his final months as an Anglican, while he was working on the *Essay on Development*, John Henry Newman came to see that Protestantism’s erroneous thinking about the Sacraments, and its resistance to devotion to the Mother of God, had their roots in a defective Christology. It is the Incarnation, says Newman, that ‘establishes in the very idea of Christianity the sacramental principle as its characteristic’,²⁴ and only one who has forgotten that Christ is ‘very God of very God’ could imagine that our Lady’s motherly mediation placed her in rivalry with her Son: ‘The votaries of Mary [Newman concludes] do not exceed the true faith, unless the blasphemers of her Son came up to it. The Church of Rome is not idolatrous, unless Arianism is orthodoxy.’²⁵

Conclusion

²³ Only Mascall, having finished the first of two Gifford Lectures at Edinburgh on the prolixities and pretensions of the Transcendental Thomists, could begin the second with a quotation from Al Jolson, ‘You ain’t heard nothin’ yet, folks!’ (*The Openness of Being: Natural Theology Today* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971), p. 75).

²⁴ *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, new edition (London: Sheed & Ward, 1960), p. 234.

²⁵ *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, new edition (London: Sheed & Ward, 1960), p. 105.

My reception into the Church took place in our Lady's month of October, on the eve of the old feast of her Maternity. There was no doubt in my mind that she, God's Mother and mine, had carried me to where I now stood. Whatever patrimony I may or may not have brought with me, I did not come as a motherless child. I knew only too well that Henry VIII had consigned the image of Our Lady of Walsingham to the fires of Smithfield, and that in England, our Lady's Dowry, as the recusant poet said, 'Sin is where our Lady sat,/ And Heaven turned is to Hell.' But I also knew that many of the greatest Anglican divines had honoured the Mother of God with true devotion. I thought of George Herbert, who called her 'the holy mine, whence came the gold,/ The great restorative for all decay/In young and old'. When visiting Wells cathedral, I recalled the devotion of the non-juring Bishop of Bath and Wells, Thomas Ken, who had sung of Mary's Son placing her 'next to His throne'. In Oxford I remembered how Archbishop William Laud, executed under Cromwell, restored the statue of the Madonna to its place above the entrance to the university church, and when I passed the college named for him, I could not forget the exultant words of John Keble, '*Ave Maria!* blessed Maid! Lily of Eden's fragrant shade'. It was Anglican pastors, in this same tradition, who first taught me to love our blessed Lady, to pray the Hail Mary and the Angelus, to 'sing the wonders that were done/ When the love of God the Father/ O'er our sin the victory won,/ When He made the Virgin Mary/ Mother of his only Son'. It was an Anglican aunt who gave me my first Rosary, and it was at the Anglican shrine in Walsingham that I first sang the Lourdes refrain.

And yet, as the years went by, as I preached and lectured on the Marian dogmas, I became convinced that I could not properly honour our

Lady without seeking full communion with the Church that Christ her Son built on Peter. As the great eighth chapter of *Lumen gentium* teaches us to do, I saw the Church in Mary and Mary in the Church. I can therefore echo these words of Chesterton with full assent:

I never doubted that this figure was the figure of the Faith; that she embodied, as a complete human being still only human, all that this Thing had to say to humanity. The instant I remembered the Catholic Church, I remembered her; when I tried to forget the Catholic Church, I tried to forget her; when I finally saw what was nobler than my fate, the freest and the hardest of all my acts of freedom, it was in front of a gilded and very gaudy little image of her in the port of Brindisi, that I promised the thing that I would do, if I returned to my own land.²⁶

Well, it wasn't in Brindisi, Italy, but in Shrewsbury, England, in a Catholic church dedicated to our Lady, Pugin's magnificent cathedral of Our Lady, Help of Christians, that I made the same promise that Chesterton once made. Whatever the cost, despite the loss of all I had hitherto held dear, not least what I had believed to be my priesthood, I would use my freedom to take our Lady's outstretched hand, and allow myself to be led by her into the one true Church of her Son. *My name is Lazarus, and I live.* Yes, and, like every grace, that grace of spiritual resurrection came from the Heart of Christ through the loving intercession of His Blessed Mother. May she keep me faithful to her Son, and to all the spiritual patrimony that has enriched my life, both now and at the hour of my death.

They rattle reason out through many a sieve
That stores the sand and lets the gold go free:
And all these things are less than dust to me

²⁶ *The Well and the Shallows*; George J. Marlin et al., (edd.) *The Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton*, vol. 3 (San Francisco, 1990), p. 463.

Because my name is Lazarus, and I live.²⁷

²⁷ 'The Convert', *The Collected Poems of G. K. Chesterton*, new edition (London: Methuen, 1948), p. 387.