# LETTERS

**The Editor of The Tablet** 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0GY
**Fax** 020 8748 1550 **Email** thetablet@thetablet.co.uk
All correspondence, including email, must give a full postal address and contact telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to shorten letters.

## Fears for the Missal

As one involved in preparing the international resource for the reception of the new Missal "Become One Body, One Spirit, In Christ", I have recently been comparing two texts. One is the text of the English translation of the Roman Missal approved by the Holy See in April, the other, the text of the order of Mass which our bishops, and other English-speaking bishops' conferences, thought they had received as "approved" from the Vatican back in 2008. It is clear to me that the newly approved text differs markedly from that originally approved by the bishops and the Roman authorities. The differences are so extensive as to argue that the 2010 text is not that which was approved in the first place. In effect, it appears that the Vatican approved one text in 2008 and has now approved a different text.

It also now appears that the whole of the 2008 translation (as submitted and approved by bishops' conferences) has undergone a complete revision with few texts left unchanged. This is worrying enough. But this latest revision drives a coach and horses through the guidelines contained in *Liturgiam Authenticam*, the 2000 document of the Holy See on how to translate liturgical prayers into the vernacular. Secondly, many of the changes are simply not correct English. Whoever did this work seems to lack a sufficient understanding of our grammar. Also, there seems to have been no communication between the reviser(s) and those in the International Commission on English in the Liturgy who have so carefully set the new texts to chant.

It seems reasonable to ask what is going on here, and to request a detailed comparison of the two sets of texts, to determine how great the difference is and gain a better perspective of the overall character of the changes. The introduction of the new texts will require hard work for many of us. It will not help if we have to champion a text which is very different from what we were expecting, of such questionable quality and which seems to have sidelined the bishops' conference. My fear is that the whole process will be made to look ridiculous. Is this really how we want to undo the mischief of the 1973 Missal and replace it with something better?

**(Fr) Alan Griffiths**
*Alresford, Hampshire*

## Victims of welfare cuts

As a long-standing member of the St Vincent de Paul Society, I find it shocking to hear once again the words "deserving poor" used freely by politicians and pundits. Public opinion has been thoroughly softened up in the last few months, with stories of large families living in the lap of luxury on benefits, second- and third-generation unemployed and teenage girls making a "career choice" to become single mothers.

**Anglicans head down the Tiber to Rome**

The SVP and other Catholic organisations are preparing for the hard times ahead, recruiting members, appealing for funds, acquiring knowledge about debt and the new rules on benefits (Leader, "The stakes could not be higher", 23 October). We are also bracing ourselves to hear the sad stories of misery, to see the parents' shame and the children's bewilderment as the house goes up for sale, the car is taken away, as Christmas is dreaded, not welcomed. But while we roll up our sleeves, we are waiting to hear from the bishops and Catholics in public life speaking up on behalf of those in need without labelling them "undeserving", "scroungers" or "cheats". We will be judged not on whether we have reduced the national debt but whether we have clothed the naked, fed the hungry and cared for the sick.

**Joanna Waller**
*Whitstable, Kent*

## Priests in the ordinariate

Abigail Frymann's article, "The journey begins" (23 October), reveals a couple of misapprehensions as to what *Anglicanorum Coetibus* does and does not say. The apostolic constitution provides for the reception of groups into full Communion, but nowhere does it set a precondition that an Anglican priest must bring with him a group of faithful as a kind of dowry! Article 6 §1 sets no such condition. Anyone who has ministered as an Anglican deacon, priest or bishop may be accepted, provided there are no impediments or irregularities.

There is nothing to stop someone otherwise eligible, who has already been received into full Communion and ordained for a Catholic diocese, subsequently transferring incardination to the ordinariate (Article 6 §3). Bishop Malcolm McMahon of Nottingham is quoted as saying that the ordinariate is not likely to ease the shortage of Catholic priests. Priests in the ordinariate will be relatively few in number and will have their own priorities. However, the number of faithful for whom they will have direct care is likely to be small, and if they do not have some other form of full-time employment for financial reasons, they may well be able to assist in local parishes. Indeed the apostolic constitution expects them to cultivate close relationships with the diocese where they are situated (Article 6 §4). The Complementary Norms state that they are eligible for membership of the Council of Priests and Diocesan Pastoral Council (Article 8), and that they should be available to assist the diocese where they are domiciled where this is deemed suitable for the pastoral care of the faithful (Article 9 §1).

**(Mgr) Gordon Read**
*Kelvedon, Essex*

## Status of Eastern patriarchs

May I correct two errors in your report on the creation of 24 new cardinals (The Church in the World, 23 October)? Patriarch Antonios Naguib does not head the "Melkite" but the Coptic Church of Egypt. Secondly, he is not the first Eastern patriarch to be named by Pope Benedict to the College of Cardinals. My own Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon, Emmanuel III Delly, was made a cardinal in November 2007. May I also correct a common misconception among Western Catholics that a patriarch is "elevated" when made a cardinal? While cardinals started as parish priests advising the Pope in Rome, most Eastern patriarchs can trace their origins back to the Apostles. The only person above a patriarch is the Pope.

**(Dr) Joseph Seferta**
*Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands*

## Catholic schools and marriage

I write in response to the many criticisms of my article ("Whose school is it anyway?", 9 October). My argument about proximity criteria has not been answered. Oversubscribed schools are being pressurised to adopt these as crucial in the admissions process, and yet they favour families with economic power who can move house. This has happened for primary schools and others for many years, but if Catholic schools which presently draw pupils from all over London are prevented from doing this, they will simply become the preserve of those who can buy houses nearby. What is the evidence for the claim that looking at the level of practice penalises the poor and favours the better off? In my experience many parents with demanding jobs manage to get involved in parish life in many ways, but a proper reference letter from a priest, drawing on his pastoral knowledge of his people, can explain people's circumstances. The suggestion that the schools in the firing line are enclaves for the privileged is an unfair caricature: those who know these schools can attest that children from a wide variety of backgrounds, some challenging, are nurtured by them.

Oona Stannard's view (Letters, 16 October) of the priest's role in the admissions process

presents a sorry and minimal view of his pastoral ministry. She writes that baptism is what defines a Catholic – but this is about joining the visible Christian community, and entails responsibilities. Her comment about baptism suggests that in due course the priest's rather minimal contribution – limited to affirming that applicants worship – will be eliminated altogether; in a few years' time proof of baptism will be all that is needed. The careful process described by Fr John Deehan (Parish Practice, 23 October) is in reality no more favoured than what I do.

Parents in second marriages, or lone parents, should not be penalised, but surely priests are entitled to know whether people are married. If proximity criteria are in place, and you have a parish school in an expensive area of housing, can it be right for a couple who are co-habiting near the school to displace a family where the parents are living according to Catholic teaching at the other end of the parish, where family housing is more affordable? Like it or not, our Church teaches that co-habiting couples are in a state of grave sin and their duty to bring up their children in the faith is seriously impaired by this. The Church is not punishing these children – parents are the first educators of their children, and they are responsible for the choices they make and the effect these will have on their children. What message about the importance of marriage are we sending to families and children if we suggest that whether parents are married or not is a matter of indifference?

My article was written to spark off a debate about these issues. There needs to be a proper and respectful discussion of these issues, grounded in good pastoral theology, and involving bishops, schools, parishes and those involved in teacher training; but it is not easy to have dialogue if you are "almost speechless".

**(Fr) Ashley Beck**
*Beckenham, Kent*

## Children carry jail burden

There are presently over 86,000 people held in our prisons in England and Wales. Around 15,000 of these imprisoned people, at any one time, are Catholic. The majority are parents. To employ extra criteria, in addition to the Admissions Code and the policy upheld by the bishops of England and Wales, would mean that the children of those held in prison would have little chance of attending a Catholic school.

In my experience, by far the largest number of people in prison come from socially marginalised backgrounds. This fact doesn't excuse committing a crime, but it often serves in helping our understanding of why people commit crime in the first place. We strive, as chaplains, to ensure that people in prison have the same level of sacramental and pastoral support as people in parishes. Indeed, our fundamental option for the poor, which is at the heart of our faith, leads us to reach out to all those who are struggling in the confusion and complexity of life. Are we to further punish and further socially exclude our brothers and sisters held in prisons by making it almost impossible for their children to have a Catholic education? "Whatever you do to the least of these, you do to me," says the Lord.

**(Mgr) Malachy Keegan**
*Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain, HM Prison Service*

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## Communion for coeliac patients

All this fuss about the host in the hand or on the tongue (Letters, 16 October) adds insult to injury as far as I, as a Catholic coeliac, am concerned. I have not been able to take the host with my fellow parishioners for 17 years since I was diagnosed a coeliac; I have to avoid ingesting even a tiny amount of wheat gluten. If all hosts were gluten free (suitable for everyone) there would be no problem. This affects some 18,000 coeliac Catholics.

**Francis J. Hind**
*Barnstaple, Devon*

## A future for Ushaw

Paul Waddington (Letters, 16 October) suggests that Ushaw College would "provide near perfect facilities for a traditional seminary" and asks, "what better use could be found for these marvellous buildings?" Lay formation?

**Rebekah O'Keeffe**
*London SE25*

## Oxbridge and the papacy

In his article on Catholic colleges, Richard Reynolds ("Higher standards apply", 16 October) errs in referring to the foundation of Oxford and Cambridge by papal bull.

Like the University of Paris, Oxford and Cambridge were not "founded" by any act of sovereign power. They originated towards the end of the twelfth century as spontaneous associations of *magistri* – teachers of advanced learning who formed themselves into corporations to organise their teaching and protect themselves from exploitation by civic authorities and landlords. In the course of time both universities sought and obtained papal protection and privileges, but their origins and independent status came to be recognised by the canonists with the descriptive terms *studia generalia ex consuetudine* (schools of universal status conferred by custom).

**C.H. Lawrence**
*Professor of Medieval History, emeritus, University of London*

## The living Spirit

The saints were not born as isolated phenomena, but as kneaded and pressed into a common mould and feature: into the communion of saints. And the saint, as a member of the Church, may be defined as one in whom the double operation of the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ has shown most gloriously. It is the saint who knows Christ most accurately: precisely because that knowledge, a gift of grace, has passed over instantaneously to love: knowledge and love have been pressed by the anguish of life into a single living ferment.

**Fr Daniel Berrigan SJ**
*Good Friday People*
Sheila Cassidy
(Darton, Longman & Todd, 1991)

A number of common ways of picturing the saints are misconceived. For example, people picture the saints with haloes round their heads, enshrined above an altar or during the glory of their canonisation. The reality is that the saints are among us ... Again, we frequently tend to look on the saints as super-beings, exempt from the burdens of the common lot of mortals by the power of miracles and their extraordinary spiritual force and vitality.

If we look at them closely, however, we can see that their faults of character were not always fully overcome or banished, that their passions remained, though harnessed in the service of their holiness. In fact, holiness itself is, in one sense, a converted passion! Brought under the direction of our divine vocation this passion brings about a real change of life and outlook – the fruits of grace and freedom.

**Glenstal Bible Missal**
Feast of All Saints

Siphon off the grit
So the water runs pure,
Gurgling in its proper channels,
Then you will see shimmering behind
Its true Life
And your soul, too, made of the same
Indestructible light,
Your consciousness is the water
Through which you gaze
And if it be pure
You shall see God as promised

**Joyce W. Povolny**
*Conversations With God*
(Sessions of York, 2009)