

UNIVERSITAS

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This is the second *Universitas* for this year. Hopefully, we can continue to issue at least two a year from here on. The much anticipated visit of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for World Youth Day has come and gone, like a comet that flashed across the continent. It was truly an event, or rather a series of events over almost a week, that demonstrated the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst. For those who were in Sydney it was an unforgettable experience of Faith, Hope and the Love of Christ, abounding in the joyful participation of youth from all parts of the world. For a moment all involved felt what it must be like to live in the joy and peace of the Spirit.

On his return to Rome the Pope has retired to a retreat for a much needed rest after his hectic schedule and long journeys across the world. He is thought to be using this time to write. One hopes so; one expects so with great anticipation.

During the time around World Youth Day there were a number of conferences and talks given. We wish to refer here to two. One was connected with that event; the other not directly. The first was a talk given by Christoph Cardinal Schoenborn, Archbishop of Vienna, at the Great Hall of Sydney University to an overflowing audience on the subject of Evolution. Those familiar with the good Cardinal's work and writings will know that he has devoted a special catechesis to the subject of creation, in which naturally enough the question of evolution has to be addressed, and that a short piece of his which appeared in the *New York Times* a year or two back caused somewhat of a stir.

The other matter was a conference held at Campion College on G.K. Chesterton and the continuing relevance of his thought for our own culture today. Those who are familiar with the writings of Chesterton will know that his work on St. Thomas is highly regarded for its insight into the saint's mind. Etienne Gilson, one of the most famous of historians of philosophy of the last century, and himself a disciple of St. Thomas, is reputed to have said that with all his knowledge of St. Thomas he could not have written such a perceptive book. "I consider it as being without possible comparison the best book ever written on St. Thomas." Apart from the appreciation of the CTS of

Chesterton for his natural philosophical genius, which fully accords with that of St. Thomas, we are convinced that he remains for our times, what he was for his own day, the perfect antidote for the mental weariness inexorably induced by modern culture.

It is not our intention to report on these two events; those interested will no doubt be able to obtain such reports more directly. What we wish to do is to say something on the topics dealt with at both. For it is clear that the talk and conference highlighted some of the difficulties that the reception of a Catholic viewpoint, even one based also on reason, comes up against in the cultural and academic climate today in Australia and the western world generally. Accordingly, in this issue there are three articles by Dr. Don Boland who attended the talk and the conference; one is on Evolution and is entitled "The End of Evolution" and two are on Chesterton, and are entitled "Chesterton's Mind and Method" and "Chesterton and Capitalism".

The late Dr. H. G. Pearce, a close associate of Dr. Woodbury in his great work, whose "The Common Good" appeared in the previous *Universitas*, was an admirer of Chesterton and, being particularly interested in Social and Economic Science, studied closely all of Chesterton's books on this subject. He extracted from Chesterton's writings on the burning social questions of his (and our) times an amazing "Guide to the Politico-Economic Ideas of G. K. Chesterton", showing an extensive collection of notations. They refer to many of his books (fifteen in all), from "Heretics" in 1905 (the book that first brought GKC into prominence) to "As I was Saying" in 1936 (the last year of Chesterton's life).

We may think initially that what Chesterton says must be an exaggeration. But what we find on reflexion is that he is only putting in bold relief abnormal things to which we have, unfortunately, become accustomed and accept as "normal". A good instance of this in modern philosophy is his pointing out that Nietzsche did not have a strong mind, but a weak one; that he not a bold thinker but a timid one, who spoke in metaphors of bodily pre-eminence, such as the super or upper man, and what is beyond morality (suggesting something "higher"), instead of in clear and definite concepts of reason - a weakness of mind which is common enough today.

Dr. Pearce's notations were obviously made simply for his own benefit and were not meant to be taken as the exact quotations but to note, in great detail, the topics mainly relating to economics and politics discussed by

Chesterton throughout these books. It is a marvellous resource. We provide here only a sample of the actual quotes of Chesterton to which some of these notations refer us.

The short but most interesting piece on one of the most famous of Thomists, Dominic Banez, that also appears in this issue, has been taken from the notes for the lectures which Dr. G. Deegan MA PhD, the honorary President of the CTS, gave on “Renaissance Scholasticism”.

John Young, one of the former lecturers at the Centre, now living in Melbourne, has produced another fine book on Philosophy entitled “The Scope of Philosophy”. A review of this book is also included in this issue.

The Editor