



## *The FRIENDS of the* HOLY FATHER

Charity Registration No. 280489

Founded 23 June 1980

### NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2019

#### THE ROCK OF PETER

Take the early Martyr-Popes, or the Gregories and the Leos; whether they were rich or poor, in power or in persecution, they were simply detached from every earthly thing save the Rock of Peter. This was their adamantine foundation, their starting-point in every enterprise, their refuge in every calamity, the point of leverage by which they moved the world. Secure in this, they have let other things come and go, as they would; or have deliberately made light of what they had, in order that they might gain what they had not. They have known, in the fullness of a heroic faith, that, while they were true to themselves and to their divinely-appointed position, they could not but 'inherit the earth,' and that if they lost ground here, it was only to make progress elsewhere.

Old men usually get fond of old habits; they cannot imagine, understand, relish anything to which they are not accustomed. The Popes have been old men; but, wonderful to say, they have never been slow to venture out upon a new line, when it was necessary, and have ever been looking about, sounding, exploring, taking observations, reconnoitring, attempting, even when there was no immediate reason why they should not let well alone, as the world would say, or even when they were hampered with difficulties at their door, so great that you would think that they had no time or thought to spare for anything in the distance.

It is but a few years ago that a man of eighty, of humble origin, (Pius IX, 1792 -1878) the most conservative of Popes, as he was considered, with disaffection and sedition upheaving his throne, was found to be planning missions to the interior of Africa, and, when a moment's opportunity was given him, made the most autocratic of Emperors, the very hope of conservatives, the very terror of Catholics, quail beneath his glance. And, thus independent of times and places, the Popes have never found any difficulty, when the proper moment came, of following out a new and daring line of policy (as their



astonished foes have called it), of leaving the old world to shift for itself and to disappear from the scene in its due season, and of fastening on and establishing themselves in the new.

*From Saint John Henry Newman's University Sketches, 1852*

#### HUMAN FRATERNITY FOR WORLD PEACE AND LIVING TOGETHER

Earlier this year Pope Francis was in Abu Dhabi and signed *The Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*.

The signing followed the Holy Father's speech to the Global Conference on Human Fraternity in Abu Dhabi, a key element in the Holy Father's Apostolic Visit to the United Arab Emirates (3-5 February 2019).





*'We cannot honour the Creator without cherishing the sacredness of every person and of every human life: each person is equally precious in the eyes of God, who does not look upon the human family with a preferential gaze that excludes, but with a benevolent gaze that includes all. Thus, to recognize the same rights for every human being is to glorify the name of God on earth. In the name of God the Creator, therefore, every form of violence must be condemned without hesitation, because we gravely profane God's name when we use it to justify hatred and violence against a brother or sister. No violence can be justified in the name of religion.'*

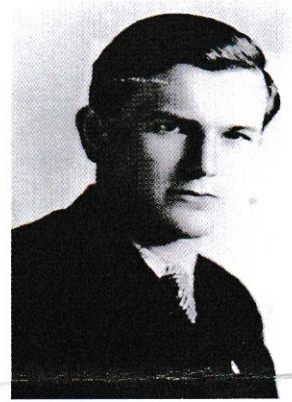
*From Pope Francis' speech to Global Conference on Human Fraternity in Abu Dhabi*

*Left: Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar*

## POETRY OF POPE ST JOHN PAUL II

When Cardinal Wojtyla became Pope in October 1978 it became known that he had published poetry under an assumed name. This surprised many people even in Poland, for the identity of 'Andrzej Jawien,' the pen-name he used for sixteen years had been kept a well-guarded secret among his close friends. Between 1950 and 1966 poems signed by Jawien appeared in two Polish Catholic periodicals.

In 1938, A year before the outbreak of WWII Karol Wojtyla enrolled in the University of Crakow to study Polish literature, not theology. The priest's vocation came later during the hard years of the German occupation when he had to support himself as a worker in the quarries and in a chemical factory. But his passionate interest in poetry remained. In Cracow he joined a clandestine 'Rhapsodic Theatre.' 'Jawien' did not come to light until after 16th October 1978 when the author of the poems became Pope John Paul II. Below are two examples of Jawein's poems.



### CHILDREN

Growing unawares through love, of a sudden  
they've grown up, and hand in hand  
wander in crowds (their hearts caught like birds,  
profiles pale in the dusk).  
The pulse of mankind beats in their hearts.

On a bank by the river, holding hands –  
a tree stump in moonlight, the earth a half-whisper –  
the children's hearts rise over the water.  
Will they be changed when they get up and go?

Or look at it this way: a goblet of light tilted  
over a plant reveals unknown inwardness.  
Will you spoil what has begun in you?  
Will you always separate the right from the wrong?

### A CONVERSATION WITH GOD BEGINS

The human body in history dies more often and earlier than the tree.  
Man endures beyond the doors of death in catacombs and crypts.  
Man who departs endures in those who follow.  
Man who follows endures in those departed.  
Man endures beyond all coming and going in himself and in you.

The history of men, such as I, always look for the body you will give them.  
Each man in history loses his body and goes towards you.  
In the moment of departure each is greater than history  
although but a part (a fragment of a century or two merged into one life).



## THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS

*The Dream of Gerontius* is a dramatic poem written by St John Henry Newman which portrays the death of an old man and what happens to his soul as he enters into eternity. The strongest beliefs held by Christians are the existence of God, the fact of an afterlife, God's providential care of each one of us, and trust in the atoning death of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The poem is about the death of an old practising Catholic, surrounded at his deathbed by Catholic friends: they utter Catholic prayers for the dying in the Roman ritual, they have called in the priest to administer the Last Sacraments and they believe in the intercession of Our Lady and all the angels and saints.

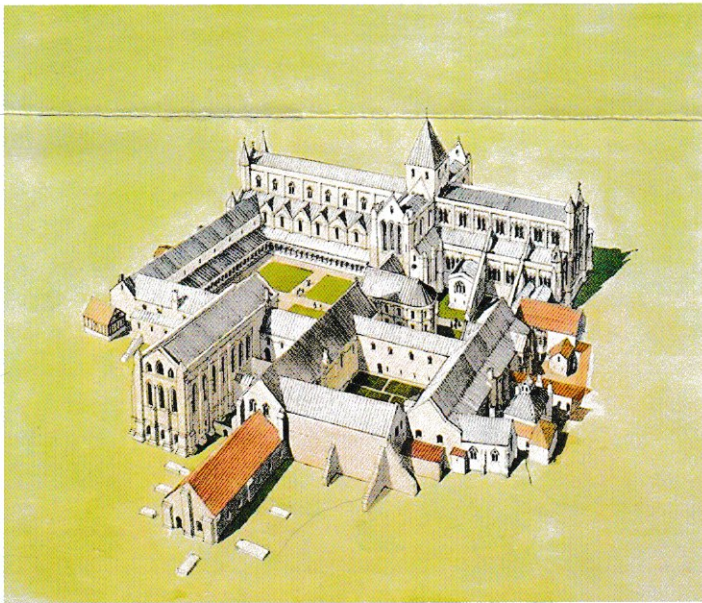
The Dream of Gerontius has become popular and well-known through being set to music by Sir Edward Elgar. One famous person who used it was General Gordon who died at the battle of Khartoum in 1884. He used the poem at his last moments, marking with a pencil all the passages that struck him as bearing on death and prayer. For instance: 'Pray for me, O my friends; till death, O loving friends... use well the interval... now that the hour is coming, my fear is fled.'

Newman's great adversary immediately before the writing of 'The Dream' was Charles Kingsley who wrote to a friend:



*'I read The Dream with awe and admiration. However utterly I may differ from the entourage in which Newman's present creed surrounds the central idea, I must feel that the central idea is as true as it is noble, and it, I suppose, is this: the longing of the soul to behold Deity, converted by the mere act of sight, into a self-abasement so utter, that the soul is ready, even glad, to be hurled back to any depth, to endure any pain, from the moment it becomes aware of God's actual perfection and its own utter impurity and mean-ness.'*

## THE REFORMATION LONG DELAYED THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION



Investigations have revealed that the Cistercian monks of Rievaulx Abbey in Yorkshire were known to have been skilled metallurgists, who also had a blast furnace (the only medieval example yet identified in Britain) for the smelting of iron ore into cast iron.

In an ordinary iron furnace, iron ore, limestone and charcoal are fed into the top of the furnace and set alight; in a blast furnace there is an additional air inlet below with bellows, driven by a water wheel, pumping air in that greatly increased the heat in the furnace. All Cistercian monasteries were built next to a stream, which supplied water for all their needs. The iron ore left in the slag at Laskill, a village nearby, has been identified by the archeometallurgist Gerry McDonnell, as more refined than anything else around at the time, suggesting a

much more efficient blast furnace technology than otherwise existed, perhaps as advanced as a modern blast furnace. The destruction of the Abbey at Rievaulx by King Henry VIII during the Reformation put an end to this blast furnace and its advanced technology after 1535. Had the monks been allowed to share their new blast furnace techniques, which they frequently did with other advancements, the world might have entered the Industrial Revolution a full two and a half centuries earlier.

Knowledge of certain technological advances was transmitted as a result of the General Chapter of the Cistercian monks, including the blast furnace, as the Cistercians were known to have been skilled metallurgists and their high level of industrial technology facilitated the diffusion of new techniques. Every monastery had a model factory, often as large as the church and only several feet away, and water power drove the machinery of the various industries located on its floor. Iron ore deposits were often donated to the monks along with forges, in order to extract the iron.







A happy and holy Christmas and a blessed New Year

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please check that your subscription is up to date. This is currently £20 p.a. If you would like to renew by Banker's Order in future please request a form.

#### LEGACIES

Please remember that leaving a **legacy** to the F.H.F. is a way of continuing your support for the Holy Father, well into the future. We are a national charity (no. 280489) so your bequest is exempt from inheritance tax. It can be included in a new will or added in a *codicil* to your existing will.

FRIENDS OF THE HOLY FATHER  
23A Vincent House, Vincent Square, London SW1P 2NB

Website: [www.friendsoftheholylather.org](http://www.friendsoftheholylather.org)