



# HAAS

## Heythrop Association of Alumni and Staff

Edition Three

December 2007

**T**HE THIRD EDITION OF THE ALUMNI MAGAZINE IS NOW UNVEILED! For those of you who are sharp eyed, you'll notice that we've had a name change since the last edition. At our AGM in March a decision was taken to alter the name to include 'staff' (who are an integral part of our membership), and so our acronym has moved from A-HA! to HAAS.

Also at the AGM we altered our constitution to reflect the expanded membership of the Association, and to simplify the elections to the Committee. I'm delighted that Moira Siara has joined our number, and take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all my fellow Committee members for their hard work and dedication.

The next AGM will be held in November 2008, to bring us back into line with the College's financial year, and more of that elsewhere. In the meantime the Committee have a number of events lined up over the forthcoming months, and I personally look forward to meeting many more of our former students at these events.

Over the past months we have worked hard at updating our membership lists, and are now able to contact many former students by email. If you have email and wish to keep in touch, Mariann Jakab (m.jakab@heythrop.ac.uk) would love to hear from you. As you can see, we've also moved to having our magazine professionally printed, and introduced colour. I hope you'll agree this makes for a more enjoyable read, and I'm sure you'll find the articles in this edition fascinating; thanks to our contributors, and especially to Brendan Callaghan SJ who graciously spoke at our AGM too.

With very best wishes from Heythrop,

*Simon Gillespie; President, HAAS*

## Money, money, money

In the first edition of the Association's Magazine, the Principal's words about the future of the Association were 'The Association is an instrument run by graduates for graduates. Its mission is to bring together and to build up, to allow an exchange of ideas and a forum for friendship and discussion. The College will facilitate this and is glad to be able to continue to foster the family of the College not only while students are here but also long after they have left.' The College is indeed facilitating the activities of the Association and we are happy to acknowledge the support package that has been agreed. To be working in harmony with the College we have changed our financial year from the calendar year to fit with the academic financial year August 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> July. A

final account for the Heythrop Association has been prepared, and the name of the Association's bank account has been amended to 'Heythrop Association of Alumni and Staff'.

Thanks to the generous support of the College we no longer ask for annual subscriptions, we did contact all who used to pay by standing order advising that these should be cancelled. A very few members have not yet cancelled their standing orders and we continue to receive payments, usually in the month of October. While we are happy to accept these, those of you who have not cancelled SOs may wish to check your Bank Statements and save yourself a few pounds!

*Mary Black  
Vice-President, HAAS*

## Principal's Points

I am delighted that the new form of the Heythrop Association has done so well. The credit for this must lie with the new members and of course the committee which is proving to be creative and energetic. Like the College itself, I suggest. In spite of all my efforts, the College is flourishing like the palm tree.

Our new Undergraduate degree is a BA in Abrahamic Religions, the first of its kind in the country, and it seems, in Europe. Its aim is to bring together the three traditions of Judaism, Islam and Christianity in a way which respects the particularity of each and which refuses an easy synthesis among them. These are different characterisations and experiences of God which, in spite of their common grounding, differ from one another in important ways. The degree also intends to develop a fruitful, if sometimes difficult dialogue and engagement among faiths which have been conflictual in their aspirations and history. But this needs to happen.

The College is also looking into the possibility of developing a Foundation Degree in Community Leadership, with our strengths in interreligious relations and pastoral care being brought into a creative programme related to the workplace.

Two small signs I think of the energy and growth that characterises the College at the present time. May it continue to flourish with your help and prayers.

*Dr John McDade, SJ  
Principal*

# Heythrop College

## UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

### BA in Abrahamic Religions

Heythrop College, the specialist Philosophy and Theology College of the University of London, has launched the first degree in Europe focusing on the three great monotheistic religions – Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The BA in Abrahamic Religions is a degree of the University of London and, as would be expected, is academically rigorous and carefully balanced.

The course has been designed with the assistance of experts from the three traditions and teachers will be drawn from practicing members of each faith. Dr Mohammad Shomali of the University of Qom in Iran has advised on the Islamic part of the course throughout the last academic year. The course will cover texts, law, ethics, philosophy and other aspects of the three great monotheistic faiths.

The Coexist Foundation has generously agreed to provide funding of £2000 per student towards the cost of this three year degree. A limited number of places are still available for this degree which commences at the end of September 2008.

Further details are available on the College web site at [www.heythrop.ac.uk](http://www.heythrop.ac.uk) or contact can be made with the Assistant Registrar, Anthony Charles, on 020 7795 4202.

#### BURSARIES FOR FORMER HEYTHROP STUDENTS

Heythrop is offering a 50% bursary from the normal EU fee for all former Heythrop students who have completed an undergraduate degree in the last seven years and who wish to study for a taught Masters degree at the College from 2008/9. However due to new government financing regulations for Universities, the College will no longer receive any HEFCE funding for students who already have a Masters degree (irrespective of subject or where the Masters degree was taken). These bursaries are, therefore, available subject to the following conditions:

- Normal entry requirements for the course being applied for are met
- The applicant must have completed an undergraduate degree at Heythrop within the last seven years
- The applicant must not already hold a Masters or higher degree from any University.

Please contact Annabel Clarkson if further details are needed – [a.clarkson@heythrop.ac.uk](mailto:a.clarkson@heythrop.ac.uk)



## Heythrop College

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Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008 - 6.30pm - Faulkner Hall, Maria Assumpta Centre (Heythrop College)

### **“Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum - the Ordinary is now Extraordinary”**

A study evening given by Dr Andrew Cameron-Mowat SJ  
Open to all, no bookings needed - just turn up on the night

April 2007 - The Riverside Studios

### **“The Diving Bell and the Butterfly”**

A beautifully made film (based on a true story) of a 43 year old Frenchman who suffered a stroke, rendering him unable to communicate with the outside world save for the use of one eye-lid. The film shows how he adjusted to the world, living with his imagination and his memory

*Date and cost to be confirmed by January; email [simon.chrism@btinternet.com](mailto:simon.chrism@btinternet.com) if you're interested*

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2008 - Heythrop, Oxfordshire

### **Tour of Heythrop's Buildings and Grounds, and Lunch**

A tour of the site that was home to Heythrop College from 1926–1970

Transport will be available from Heythrop, London, or else simply make your own way to Oxfordshire

Cost and further details to be confirmed

*Please email [simon.chrism@btinternet.com](mailto:simon.chrism@btinternet.com) by 31st January if you are interested in this event*

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2008 - 7.00pm - Heythrop College Gardens

### **“Summer Success”**

A Cheese and Wine evening to celebrate the end of the academic year. Open to all HAAS members for a small charge and to those just finishing their studies (and so joining the Association) free of charge

*Please see the website: [www.heythrop.ac.uk/alumni/association-of-heythrop-alumni\\_.html](http://www.heythrop.ac.uk/alumni/association-of-heythrop-alumni_.html) for further details; or email [alumni@heythrop.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@heythrop.ac.uk) or [simon.chrism@btinternet.com](mailto:simon.chrism@btinternet.com)*

## Heythrop's new lift

Anyone who has struggled up the stairs, to say nothing of anyone in a wheelchair, will know that one of the problems with Heythrop is the lack of a lift. This will soon be a thing of the past. Work started at the beginning of July on a £300,000 project to build an external tower in the Wild Garden, with links to the Main Building, and install an eight person lift. The target is for all the work to be finished by Christmas. There will be entrances to the lift on four floors (basement to second floor), but for a variety of reasons it is not possible to provide lift access to the top floor.

Among challenges have been to build a lift on someone else's property, in a confined space and in a conservation area. Tribute has to be paid to MAC and to the contractors, Killby and Gayford, for the way they have managed to work together to ensure the work has been done with the minimum of disruption.

The Wild Garden is singularly inaccessible, but again the contractors have done a very good job of bringing all the materials across the garden, into JCR2 and through the building. The final challenge has been meeting the requirements

of the local Conservation Officer. Special bricks have had to be used, which then had to be “aged” to make them match those on the Main Building and cosmetic glass panels installed.

The majority of the funding has come from a grant from the Higher Education Funding Council for England, this being one of the first visible signs of the benefits of Heythrop being HEFCE funded.

*Christopher Pedley SJ*



Early July saw nearly 100 former students and staff gathering for an evening of ‘Summer Success’ to mark the end of the academic year, and the arrival of a new cohort of alumni into the Association's ranks. As well as showcasing some of the books recently written by the College faculty there was an opportunity for enjoyment over the cheese and wine provided. Next year's event is planned for 27<sup>th</sup> June, so put this date in your diaries now!



# Psychology at Heythrop

*A reminiscence on the teaching of psychology at Heythrop, and the history of the College,  
presented by Brendan Callaghan SJ at the AGM, 22nd March 2007*

One of the more scary things a speaker can do, in response to any sort of introduction, is to announce that he is not going to speak exactly to the brief. But because I don't wish to scare anybody, I'll moderate that by saying that I want to speak to more than the brief allotted to me, by speaking about psychology teaching at Heythrop rather than just my psychology teaching at Heythrop.

Three excellent reasons for making that slight adjustment are that the history of psychology teaching here as a whole is a much more interesting topic than simply my own contributions to that history, that the history is a much longer history than you might imagine, and that some of the features recognisable at the start of the history are strangely reminiscent of the present day.

Where to begin? Well-schooled in Anglo-Saxon philosophy, I can do no better than to start by noting that "it all depends what you mean by 'Heythrop'." In what follows, I'm going to cheat slightly, by referring to the College in its different phases of existence as "Heythrop" rather than "the-College-later-to-be-known-as-Heythrop."

You will know from your own association with the College that Heythrop is an ancient foundation, and one founded in exile. In its present incarnation, the foundation date is recalled in the entry-code for the front door - a stroke of genius on the part of Ted O'Connor, one of the able administrators who helped us move the College here to Kensington Square in 1993. Don't panic: I'm not going to plot the teaching of psychology all the way from Flanders in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century until the present day. But I would like us to recall that the College was already 180 years old when it came home to Britain in 1794, and had been operating in this country for 32 years before the University of London came into being.

At this point history seems to repeat itself, because from 1840 Heythrop became one of the early colleges scattered around the United Kingdom that prepared students to be exam-

ined for the degrees of the University of London. The current External System of the University is one continuation of this development, and it is pleasing to notice that Heythrop is the Lead College for Theology within this system. But the main legacy of this early development can be found in the present UK Universities, a surprising number of which started life as Colleges-at-a-distance of London.

And now we get at least close to the start of the teaching of psychology at Heythrop. Of course, philosophy of mind had been taught previously, and at some point acquired the title of 'rational psychology' (which makes one wonder about irrational psychology as an alternative or complementary discipline...), but psychology as an empirical science was yet to emerge. Perhaps the closing decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century can be as good a time as any to locate this development, with William James being appointed the first Professor of Psychology at Harvard in 1875 ten years before Freud, as a neuro-physiologist, went to Paris and made the observations regarding hypnosis that give rise to his psychology of the unconscious.

Rational psychology was a part of philosophy, so it was at Stonyhurst, with the philosophy section of the College, that this approach to reflecting on human functioning was being taught. That is probably why it was also at Stonyhurst that the new discipline of empirical

psychology first finds a place within Heythrop's teaching.

The first edition of the earliest text-book I have to hand dates from round about 1890, my own copy being of the sixth edition, published in 1905. Written by Fr. Michael Maher SJ, it is in fact a careful compendium of both empirical and rational psychology, with the two disciplines clearly delineated in terms of their methods. What I find intriguing is that Maher carefully sets out the variety of methods which might be involved in empirical psychology, noting introspection as one approach alongside the study of language and languages, developmental and cross-cultural studies, animal psychology, (Maher comments: "sometimes rather questionably dignified with the title of *Comparative Psychology*"), physiology, pathology and psychiatry, and more strictly experimental psychology including both psychometrics and psychophysics. Maher certainly seems to agree with William James that what we pull together under the umbrella title of 'psychology' is in fact "a series of questions requiring answers along several different lines of enquiry".

Maher's text-book also includes a response to a Mr W H Mallock, who seems to be the Richard Dawkins of his day, asserting that "Psychology, Biology, and Physics exclude and negate ... belief in a personal God, free-will, a spiritual soul and a future life." I use the term



*Heythrop at Heythrop, Oxfordshire (1926–1970)*



“asserting” because Michael Maher seems to suggest that Mr Mallock is stronger on rhetoric than on logic: on the existence of any current parallels, “I could not possibly comment.”

Moving back to the wider dimensions of Heythrop’s history for a moment, we can note that theology and philosophy, having operated on the side of the Vale of Clwyd and on the slopes of Longridge Fell above the Ribble Valley respectively, came together in 1926 on the flat lands of North Oxfordshire at Heythrop. It was a long way from Gerard Manley Hopkins’ “pastoral forehead of Wales”, and even further from “the finest half-house in England”, but Heythrop Hall became the home of the College for the following 44 years, and gave the College its enduring name.

Heythrop-at-Heythrop continued the tradition of teaching both rational and empirical psychology. Well-founded legend has it that it was the empirical psychology teachers at Heythrop who were called on to maintain psychology teaching in another seat of learning, 15 miles down the road. The empirical psychologists of Oxford University were drafted into the war effort, contributing to the work of selecting future army officers and the like. Certainly the tradition of empirical teaching and research was maintained, albeit without the scourge of the RAE driving publication-rates. This was a gentler time, with commuting being a matter of strolling from one side of the house to the other, a private golf-course to hand, (albeit only 9 holes, and replete with moving hazards such as sheep), and two miles of drive before the main road was reached.

But psychology teaching was maintained, and the research included a long-term investigation, conducted by George Croft who had his PhD from Fordham University in New York City, into the factors associated with perseverance in the religious life. I have to confess that the only two factors I can recall were first that birth-order was significant (but I have forgotten, or more likely repressed, HOW it was significant), and that those who persevered showed up with different scores on the lie-trap scales built into most personality tests, where they turned out to have higher scores - that is, to be less honest than those who moved on.

It was George Croft who brought



*Heythrop at Cavendish Square, London (1970–1993)*

the Heythrop psychology teaching to London when the College was reconstituted as a School of the Federal University. The only University degree for which the College taught in that initial period was the BD - the Federal undergraduate theology degree taught in the then four schools of Theology in the University. Empirical psychology was taught as part of the Philosophy programme, at that point a “College Course” made available for ordinands (who were and are required to study philosophy for two years), and there were eventually several modules in psychology in the Pastoral Diploma that was George Croft’s great legacy to the College, giving rise as it did the Pastoral Studies department and the development of a still-growing range of degrees, as reflected in the renaming of the department as “Pastoral & Social Studies.”

With the advent of the Joint Honours BA in Philosophy & Theology, the College Course came to an end, and with it, for a while, the teaching of empirical psychology as such in the College. But the pastoral teaching continued to have modules in psychology, and in 1980 I found myself assigned to begin teaching in the Pastoral Diploma.

A brief word on the preparations for that may be in order. I first asked if I could study psychology having followed the empirical psychology course at Heythrop-in-Oxfordshire, and the Director of Studies made the unusual, but rather apposite, request of me that he should be allowed to talk to my spiritual director - “just to check it out, dear, because so many psychologists end up leaving the Order...” Three years of Experimental Psychology in Oxford followed, in a Department where Experi-

mental meant Experimental. I spent one summer afternoon tapping a snail on the head and measuring how far it took in its horns on each successive tap. One of my confreres at Campion Hall, later the Professor of Poetry in Oxford, claimed to have spent months dining out on that story.

Quite what the snail made if it is not recorded, but the only laboratory rat with whom I had contact was manifestly wise to the nature of learning experiments. Having made a cursory inspection of its Skinner box (an ingenious contraption where it could be rewarded for pressing a bar by being given a pellet of food or a drink of sugared water, while its behaviour could be monitored and recorded on some reasonably sophisticated apparatus), it curled up in a corner and slept out the remainder of the practical class time. Two years of clinical training in Glasgow were probably a better preparation for what was to come...

The Pastoral Diploma, awarded by the College rather than the University, and entirely composed of what we would now call half-modules, provided an excellent starting-place to explore psychology teaching, and one of the modules I greatly enjoyed devising and then working with was an introduction to the basic ideas of Jungian psychology. As its absolutely mandatory reading it made use of the Earthsea Trilogy by the American fantasy writer Ursula le Guin. This trilogy now numbers seven books, and I doubt I could begin to encompass it in a half-module, but “The Earthsea Seminar” was an enjoyable and effective way into Jung, and there was certainly no problem with getting people to do the necessary reading.

Sterner stuff was to come with the development of a psychology of religion paper in the MTh in Pastoral Theology. This was possibly the first point at which a conscious option was made for the teaching of psychology of religion rather than religious psychology - that is, for taking a theoretical stance in which the tools of investigation and the canons of argument were those of psychology rather than those of religion. Somewhat prior to this, the undergraduate option in psychology of religion had made its way onto the timetable, where it has remained happily enough (from its teacher's point of view) even since.

One or two small developments in the management of Heythrop ensured that I was not in a position to do much beyond maintaining the teaching for these two papers until 1998, when the MA in the Psychology of Religion was launched. Until a year or so ago, this was certainly the only Masters-level programme in the psychology of Religion in the English-speaking world. There is now (possibly) another programme in Sweden, where they speak better English than the English, so we may have lost that unique position, (but this is not clear).



*Heythrop at Kensington Square, London (1993–present)*

The programme at Heythrop attracts an assortment of students: a small but growing number of recent graduates in psychology, philosophy, theology or religious studies; a larger number of psychology professionals, both practitioners and academics; and a roughly equal number of religious professionals, again divided between practitioners and teachers. The discussions in this

seminar-based programme can be enriched by this variety, even if there are moments when the expertise drawn from one area seems a bit daunting to those whose experience and knowledge is from elsewhere.

After a starting period in which the teaching was done by myself and a wide team of contributors, some offering simply one class within, for example, the developmental module, Dr Kathleen O'Connor joined the Faculty from the University of Sydney. Somewhat to my surprise, a matter of weeks after Kath's arrival I was appointed Formation Assistant to the British Jesuit Provincial, so greatly to Kath's surprise she found herself the Course Convenor for this unique MA in the Psychology of Religion. Never one to pass up a challenge, she tidied-up the structure of the course, drawing-on her considerable expertise and involvement in the discipline to develop a greater element of professionalism than the course had thus far managed to acquire.

The course developed smoothly enough, the only waves being stirred up by elements of the church press discovering the appointment of a follower of Wicca to teach modules in Jung and the encounter between East and West. For the record, the appointment had in fact been made four or five years prior to the stories appearing, and the contributions to the course made by this visiting Lecturer have been objective, ultra-professional and an invaluable contribution to the degree.

Kath O'Connor has now retired and is back in Sydney. Vivianne Crowley's consultancy work in organisational psychology has grown and developed. David Williams has decided that the several hour trek from and back to Yorkshire to teach a two-seminar on religion and mental health doesn't fit with someone who has passed retiring age. But Dr Joanna Collicutt has joined the faculty to teach on the MA, another Jesuit psychologist is hoving into sight, and this year has seen the inauguration of two new degrees at undergraduate level - the "Psychology PLUS" BAs - Psychology-plus-Theology and Psychology-plus-Philosophy. A small but keen first tranche of undergraduates will be joined next year by what we hope will be a larger but no less keen second entry to the course, [*our hopes have been fulfilled on*

*both counts*], and Dr Jonathan Loose, appointed this year to initiate the empirical psychology teaching for these degrees, will be joined by further appointments as the numbers of undergraduates builds up.

To round off the picture of psychology teaching here, we need to include the small but distinguished group of research students, who have in the past explored such knotty questions as the role of religious upbringing in relation to child-rearing practices, the effect of religious belief on the length of psychiatric hospitalisation, and the validity of James Fowler's schema of faith-stages outside a European setting. Three current research students in the psychology of religion are engaged in another three quite different tasks: one looking at faith development in adults, one at the different ways in which individuals describe themselves to different church and non-church professionals, a third exploring the role of metaphor in religious thinking and language.

You may have detected a certain measure of continuity here - or at least a measure of some matters recurring as the decades have passed. It seems to me to be very healthy that the more focussed psychology of religion teaching is now matched, once again, by psychology teaching that looks at other aspects of human functioning. It seems to me that the growing numbers of research students are an invaluable gain to psychology at Heythrop, while the effective establishment of a psychology section within the newly renamed Department of Pastoral and Social Studies is a welcome sign for the future.

The view that the department needed renaming came from a variety of considerations, not all of them of equal weight. But perhaps one final link with Heythrop's rural past incarnations can be found in the application we received a few years ago, when the theology-centred MA in the Department was known as the MA in Pastoral Studies rather than Pastoral Theology. A candidate from Southern Africa had applied for this degree in Pastoral Studies, and in the space on the form for "relevant previous experience" had written confidently: "management of a large dairy herd."

*Brendan Callaghan SJ*

# A Saint for our Times

*A history of the recently canonised Marie Eugenie Milleret de Brou,  
Foundress of the Sisters of the Assumption; by Sr Mary Simon Catlin ra*

On Trinity Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, this year, Marie Eugenie Milleret de Brou was canonised by Pope Benedict in the Piazza of St Peter's in Rome, a long way from Lorraine in France, where she was born in 1817.

These days people often ask, "What's a canonisation for?" Pope Paul VI explained this back in 1975, when Sr Marie Eugenie was beatified. He explained that the value of such events lies in the fact that people of good will are reminded of the true meaning of life and the goal of our searching for absolute good, who is in fact God himself. In the saints, the glory of God shines out and they show us a goodness that is humanly possible, not in a far off age but in our times.

We can see how true this is from the life of Eugenie, beginning with her happy childhood on the family estate where she played with her brother and tamed a wild fawn to eat from her hand. This idyll was shattered when her father's fortunes crashed, her parents separated, and soon afterwards her mother died. Eugenie, a lonely fifteen year old, wondered what point there was in life. Had it any meaning at all? "My thoughts," she wrote in her journal, "are like a troubled sea...I'm driven by some restless need for knowledge and truth that nothing satisfies." She had no home but was boarded out by her father with one set of friends or relatives after another. Yet somewhere, deep down and almost forgotten, was the memory of her First Communion when she had become aware of the attraction of God himself. She had felt then, she said years later, "a silent separation from anything I had any attachment to, so as to enter into the immensity of the One whom I possessed for the first time."

In the early 1830s it was the custom for good Catholics, such as the cousins with whom Eugenie was staying, to attend a course of sermons during Lent. It was then, in the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris that Eugenie heard the great Dominican, Henri Lacordaire. It was in listening to his lucidly theological

but impassioned preaching that Eugenie rediscovered God, Jesus Christ and the Church. Lacordaire proved a good adviser. He gave her a list of books that she devoured, and although she was hoping to put her enthusiasm into action, he counselled a time of prayer and waiting for the will of God to become clear.

Eugenie had received an excellent education from her mother. They travelled and she spoke German fluently and read English. The family entertained the liberal politicians and writers of the day, and Eugenie was inspired by the ideas of Catholic social reform put forward by Lamennais and his circle. Her parents were not devout but her mother had taken great care to form her character. For Mme Milleret a common sense upbringing demanded honesty, kindness, self control and a sense of duty especially towards the poor, which led to a certain nobility of character. Eugenie retained this outlook: for her, you had first to be a good human being and then religious virtues could do wonders.

It is not surprising then that when another disciple of Lamennais, Fr Combalot, met the twenty year old Eugenie and talked to her, he saw the foundress of his dreams. The fiery and somewhat eccentric preacher had the ambition of founding a congregation of women dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption, who would combine a life of contemplative prayer with a work of education suited to the times. Combalot won Eugenie over. She discerned God's call and began to

think of a plan for the education of future wives and mothers that would be far more solid than the fripperies of most girls' schools at the time. The drawback was, she told Combalot, that she knew absolutely nothing about nuns' lives. She suggested a time of preparation in a convent and this was arranged in a monastery of the Visitation order, under a proper novice mistress. This was a happy choice. Eugenie loved the generous but gentle spirit of these daughters of St Francis de Sales and borrowed many of their customs when setting up her own community.

In April 1839 a small group of young women gathered under Eugenie's leadership in a Paris apartment to begin the new venture. Life was hard: they were poor and Fr Combalot was an exacting teacher. Worse, his eccentricities increased. Sudden changes in lifestyle, mood swings and eventually a bizarre idea of taking the sisters off to Brittany led to a break between the fledgling community and its founder. Eugenie, with the blessing of the Archbishop of Paris and the loyalty of the sisters, now took full charge.

These early years were happy but not easy. Yet Eugenie and the first community had found the elements of a religious life that were lasting: a radical spiritual life with the Blessed Sacrament and the Divine Office at the centre and a strong sense of their mission in education. Once more Divine Providence watched over Eugenie in the friendship



*Marie Eugenie Milleret de Brou*



and spiritual direction of another of Lammennais' circle, Fr Emmanuel d'Alzon. Their letters to one another over forty years of a close and inspiring relationship are perhaps the best record of Eugenie's growth in holiness and maturity. It is there that we learn of her anguish over the deaths of young sisters, the failures of some of the missions, her own doubts and hopes. On his side too there are both joys and sorrows, requests for advice and plans for the founding of the Augustinians of the Assumption. Eugenie's intelligence, her gift for sympathy, and her sound judgment made her a valuable friend to him and many other men and women of her time.

Eugenie's spiritual journals give another dimension to the story of her life. Besides the growth of the congregation, the many successful foundations



*Marie Eugenie Milleret de Brou*

across Europe and to Nicaragua and the Philippines with all the travelling and negotiation these involved, we find the evidence of sheer toil, poor health and trouble of all kinds. Characteristically, she said, "There are times when the only thing one can do is to set one's mind on God by an effort of love, since he knows better than we what is best for us. Simply accepting things may be the only way to pay him homage...Thy will be done...It is in suffering that God's work is established. I was the first stone set here by his hand. I have often wondered why God put me at the head of the congregation. I, who have none of the qualities of a founder and who never meant to found anything. I have sometimes thought it was because I have a certain business ability and that this is needed at the start but I hope that one day I shall be allowed to rest..."

It was not her business ability that made her a saint. It was her total dedication to the God she loved and her trust in him never wavered. During a particularly hard time when it looked as though a group in the congregation might break away, the sister in the room next door heard her pacing up and down in the night murmuring "Thy will be done..." The schism did not materialise and Eugenie continued to live out her own advice to the sisters: "Be gentle, strong and joyful. He who has conquered the world loves you and guides you." Her sense of humour lights up her letters to her sisters. Writing to one for her birthday she says, "I was delighted to learn that I have a daughter who is a year more venerable than I thought." To her assistant, a lively Irishwoman, she points out that Sr F really understands young

people because she leaves them free to chatter at recreation, while Sr A, who is less understanding, wants to air her own theories about the Church which are quite beyond them.

Eugenie loved the children and took a great interest in them. It is not surprising that the gift of an amazing miracle coming through her intercession was that of a child. Baby Risa, from the Philippines, was found to have a serious malformation of the brain. The two hemispheres were not connected and the doctors said she would never, walk, talk or see. In between trips to specialists, the family visited Paris, where they laid her on top of Eugenie's tomb. Family and sisters prayed for a miracle and by the time she was four Risa was developing normally. No one could explain this. She is now twelve with skills corresponding to her age and had the joy of attending the canonisation with her family and the crowds of Assumption sisters, students and friends. It was Risa who was chosen to give Pope Benedict the customary "present" - a school for needy children in Africa.

So Marie Eugenie's presence is still felt. Her legacy remains: "In education, a philosophy, a character, a passion. But what passion? That of faith, of love, of the fulfilment of the Gospel." In this, she has described herself. Passionate in her love of Jesus Christ, carried to adoration by the mystery of the Being of God, she dedicated her intellect and her rich personality to spreading the Good News in ways adapted to an ever changing world without compromising the essentials.

*Sr Mary Simon Catlin ra*

## Interreligious Dialogue

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February saw Jonathan Gorsky MA and Dr Mohammad Shomali considering Interreligious Dialogue from their own perspectives. Both are teaching at Heythrop, and this is a unique venture for the College, bringing together adherents of these great monotheistic faiths to dialogue and exchange ideas.

Jonathan talked of the Heythrop New BA in Abrahamic Religions, the first of its kind in the UK. The systematic approach to the curriculum for the Jewish, Christian and Muslim studies is by exchanging ideas and different points of view, and comparing what emerges with the world we live in. There is a dark side as well to international interreligious ideas, stemming from the different philosophies of each faith, as seen by the recent history of religious inspired conflict.

Mohammad spoke of Reason as an important gift of God, together with revelation. There is never a conflict between Reason and the true understanding of Revelation. We all come from the same mother and father: Adam and Eve. Therefore, there should be good fellowship and racism is not acceptable.

Thanks were expressed to each speaker, and time was given after the talks to debate and further discussion.