

delighting in the delight of a young lady at her own hard-earned success.

I hope you will not take it as moralising when I say that this is what folks who know what they're talking about mean when they speak of fellow-feeling and things like "the common good" and *idem sentire* and moral consensus as the ends and bases of society, and *condiciones sine quae non* of ordered liberty.

"My dear friend," Plato makes his Socrates call the litigious Euthyphro (on the steps of the king-archon's court, where Euthyphro had gone to denounce his own father for murder, while Socrates was there to answer a charge of "corrupting the city's youth").

A little later in the dialogue, Plato makes his Socrates ask Euthyphro, "What are the subjects of difference that cause hatred and anger?" Socrates offers a series of binaries: the just and the unjust, the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the bad. "Are not these the subjects of difference about which, when we are unable to come to a satisfactory decision, you and I and other men become hostile whenever we do?" Only, in the whole lasting of the dialogue the interlocutors do not reach agreement.

Enmity is averted only by departure, perhaps, but that was not my takeaway as I read the dialogue most recently. This last time, it occurred to me that they were talking all the way through.

Social crisis occurs when people who should be fellows are confronted with their own ignorance of what makes their society legitimate, and suspend or refuse each other conversation until they can establish the grounds of their fellowship.

The establishment of such grounds, however, is precisely the purpose of public discourse. In other words, to be a nation and a people is to be in conversation – to be in society is to find ourselves and each other engaged in it – hence our refusal to disengage with the conversation that constitutes us a nation and a people is our society's only available legitimacy.

"Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection," said Lincoln in his first inaugural – and though only a very few believed it would come to it, we know how costly was our failure then, in treasure and in blood.

While we talk, we are friends.

CHRISTOPHER ALTIERI

Literature

The Chesterton revival

The retiring editor of the Chesterton Review on the author's enduring legacy

Fr Ian Boyd, CSB, founded the *Chesterton Review* in 1974 and led the magazine for nearly a half century, during which the journal established a reputation for academic and literary excellence that make it a model for critical endeavour.

Heading into retirement, Fr. Boyd spoke with the *Catholic Herald* about how the landscape has changed over the past 46 years.

"One is able to keep in contact with fellow Chestertonians far more easily than it was 50 years ago," he said. "Editing an international journal has become a far easier task."

Fr. Boyd had a hands-on approach to the job, too. "As editor, Fr. Boyd was a bit like [Chesterton's iconic clerical sleuth] Father Brown: he seemed to turn up everywhere," Fr. Boyd's long-time colleague and friend, Prof Dermot Quinn said.

Prof Quinn will be succeeding Fr. Boyd as editor of the *Chesterton Review*. "I can't hope to be equally ubiquitous," Prof Quinn said, "but I'll try my best to keep the flag flying in all the old familiar places and some new ones too."

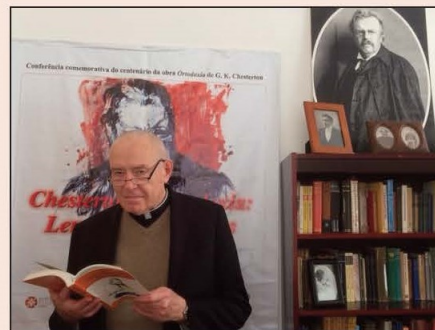
The international character of the *Review*, and of the Chesterton Institute at Seton Hall University in New Jersey where the journal has its home, is an expression of the prevailing ethos Fr. Boyd has instilled in both.

"The Chesterton revival of the last 40 years has been an international project," Quinn explained, with many local groups around the world.

One of the secrets to the *Chesterton Review*'s success, in fact, was its natural conception and organic growth.

"I simply got in touch with some Chestertonians I knew from my research," Fr. Boyd said.

His own academic interest in Chesterton has focused on the great 20th century writer's novels.



'An international project'

"Chesterton taught people to see religion in things that do not seem religious," he said – a great achievement in a world peopled by the disenchanted.

"Chesterton came to see that the products of the imagination were the most effective media of truth," he said. "People are Chestertonian without realising it." Now he wants people to see Chesterton as "a teacher of hope".

Whatever else GK Chesterton may have been, we know he was a Fleet Street scribbler of the Old School.

When asked what view he thought Chesterton would take of the current journalistic climate, Fr. Boyd said: "Chesterton described crises long before they happened."

Fr. Boyd recalled an early essay in which Chesterton predicted wars in the 20th century such as the world had never seen, and his warning against consumerist capitalist culture – a far greater danger to traditional morality, he said than socialism (which he also abhorred).

Chesterton also believed that the next great heresy would be an attack on morality – specifically on sexual morality. "The madness of tomorrow," Fr. Boyd quotes Chesterton as saying, "is far more in Manhattan than in Moscow."

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