



The power of storytelling

“Now settle down children...”

My thesis

- Narrative theology has a central role in how Catholics understand their faith.
- Learning by telling stories is an effective pedagogy that develops imagination and interpretive thinking skills.
- The workshop will explore how to tell stories more effectively and develop the pedagogical justification for storytelling as key teaching strategy for teaching RE.

It's natural, its common sense, it works

"I want facts, don't tell me another story"



- Epistemological issues
- How we understand knowledge
- The problem of Logical positivists – Scientism

(Story)

Narrative Theology

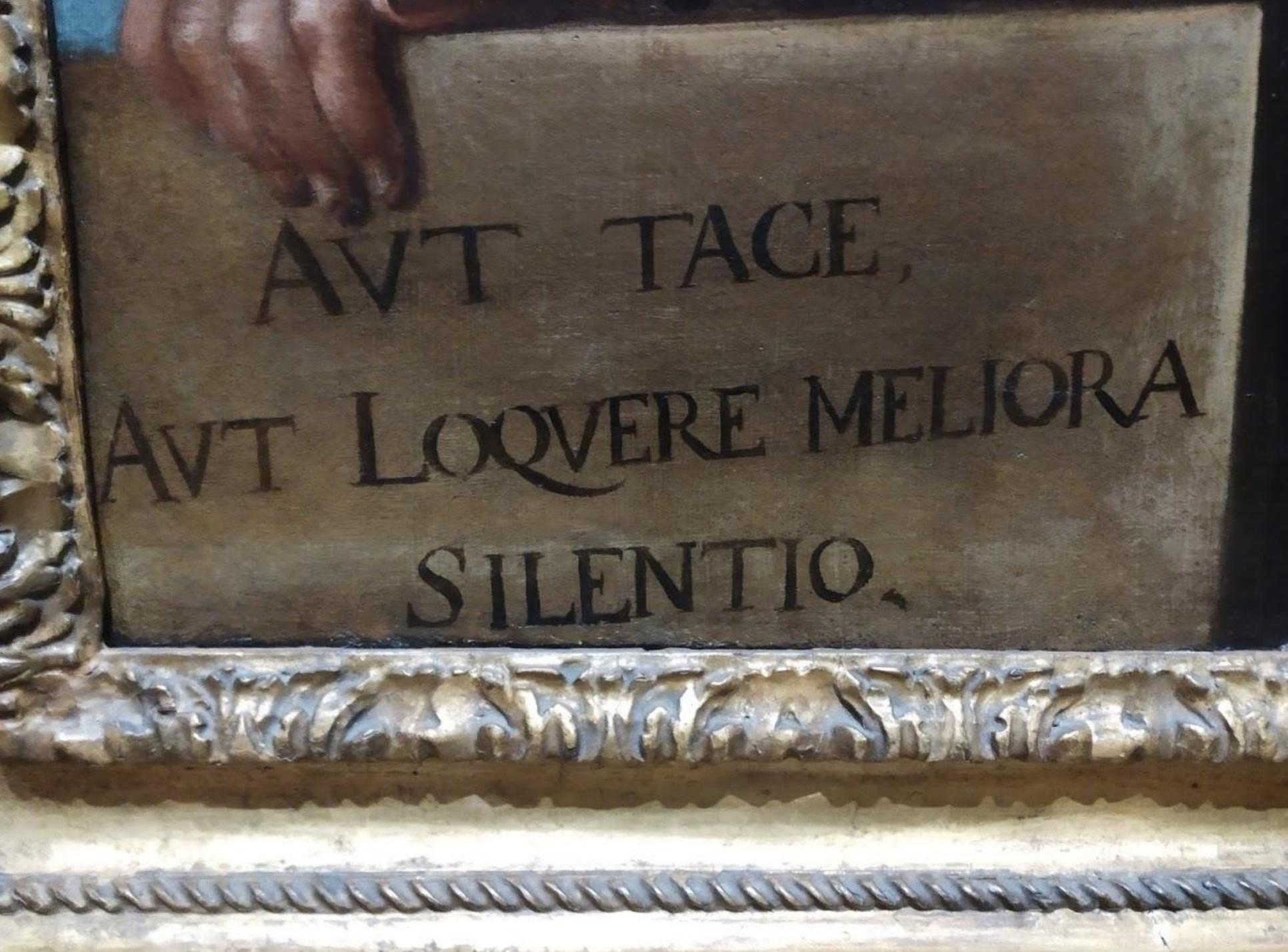
Non-propositional Theology
Revealed Theology, Scripture

V

(Statement)

Propositional Theology

Dogma, Catechism
Natural Theology, Reason, Philosophy

A close-up photograph of a stone tablet with Latin inscriptions. A hand is visible in the upper left corner, pointing towards the text. The tablet is set within a decorative frame with a rope-like border at the bottom. The text is carved in a serif font.

AVT TACE,

AVT LOQVERE MELIORA
SILENTIO.

Be silent, unless what you have to say is better than silence

Philosophy by Salvator Rosa, c.1645

National Gallery, London



"God of Abraham,
God of Isaac, God
of Jacob,
not of the
philosophers and
scholars."

Blaise Pascal

23 November 1654

A. Patrick Purnell SJ

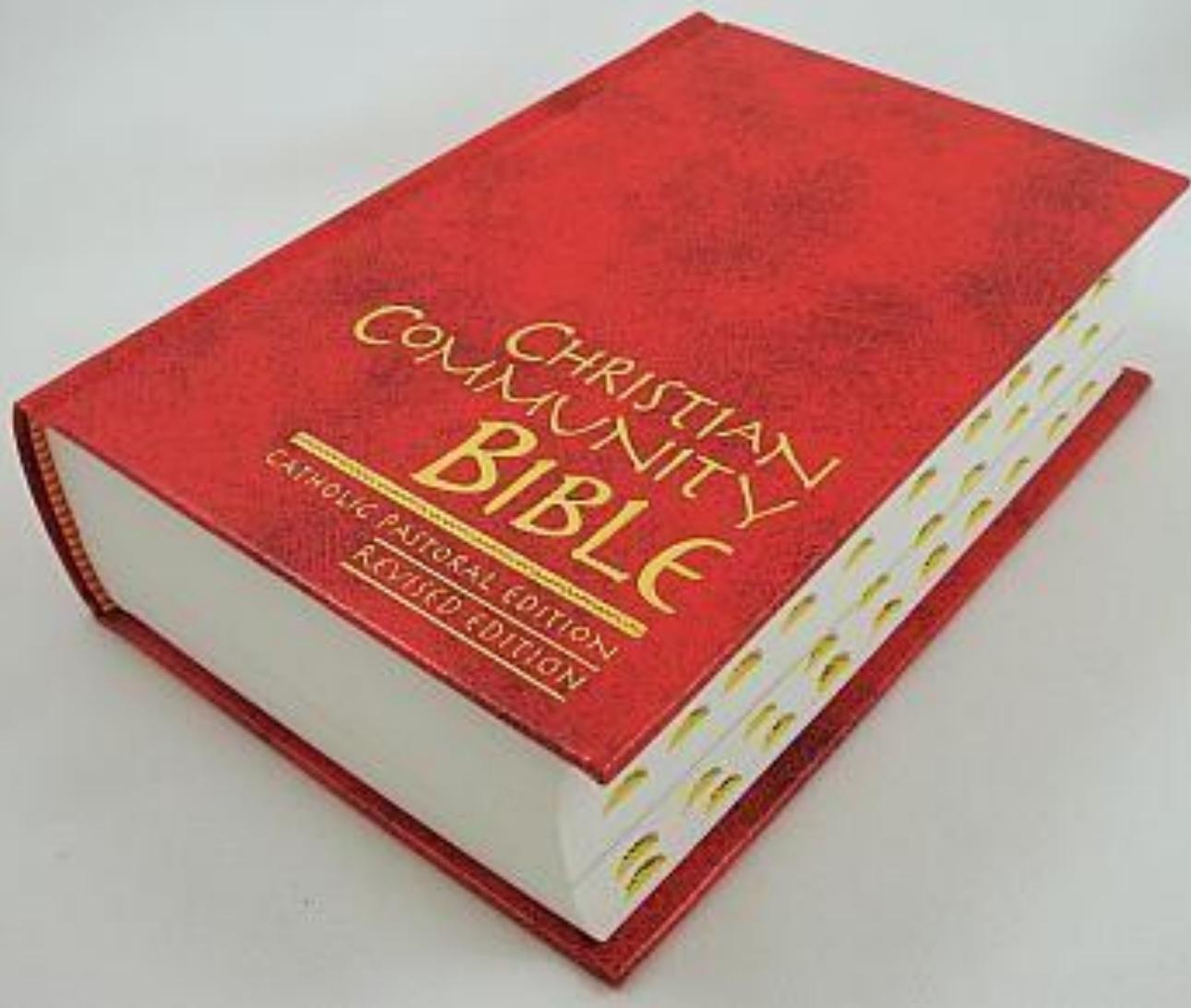
OUR FAITH STORY

Its telling



and its sharing

AN EDUCATION IN FAITH



Our story

The Story



Caricature of pedagogical differences

Primary

- Play
- **Story time**
- Fun

Secondary

- Real learning
- **Real knowledge**
- Serious

~~Too much teacher talk~~

○ **Passive learning**

○ **Active Learning**



Pedagogical justification

The Matthew Effect in Reading

"For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them." (*Matthew, 25: 29*).

Stanovich (1986) who used it to describe how, in reading, those who start well tend to continue to do so, while those who do not are unlikely to catch up. Not only do they not catch up, according to Stanovich, but there will also be a widening gap between the slow starters and fast starters as their school career continues. Reading stories is key for children.



Why read stories?

- Narrative structure supports language and cognitive development
- Storytelling develops thinking and memory
- Story telling develops visualisation and imagination

How can we improve the way we tell stories?

- Practice – rehearse
- Commit it to memory
- Varied use of voice
- Artefacts – props
- Facial expressions – gestures
- Timing – build tension – pause

Why do we tell stories in the classroom?

Stimulates thinking

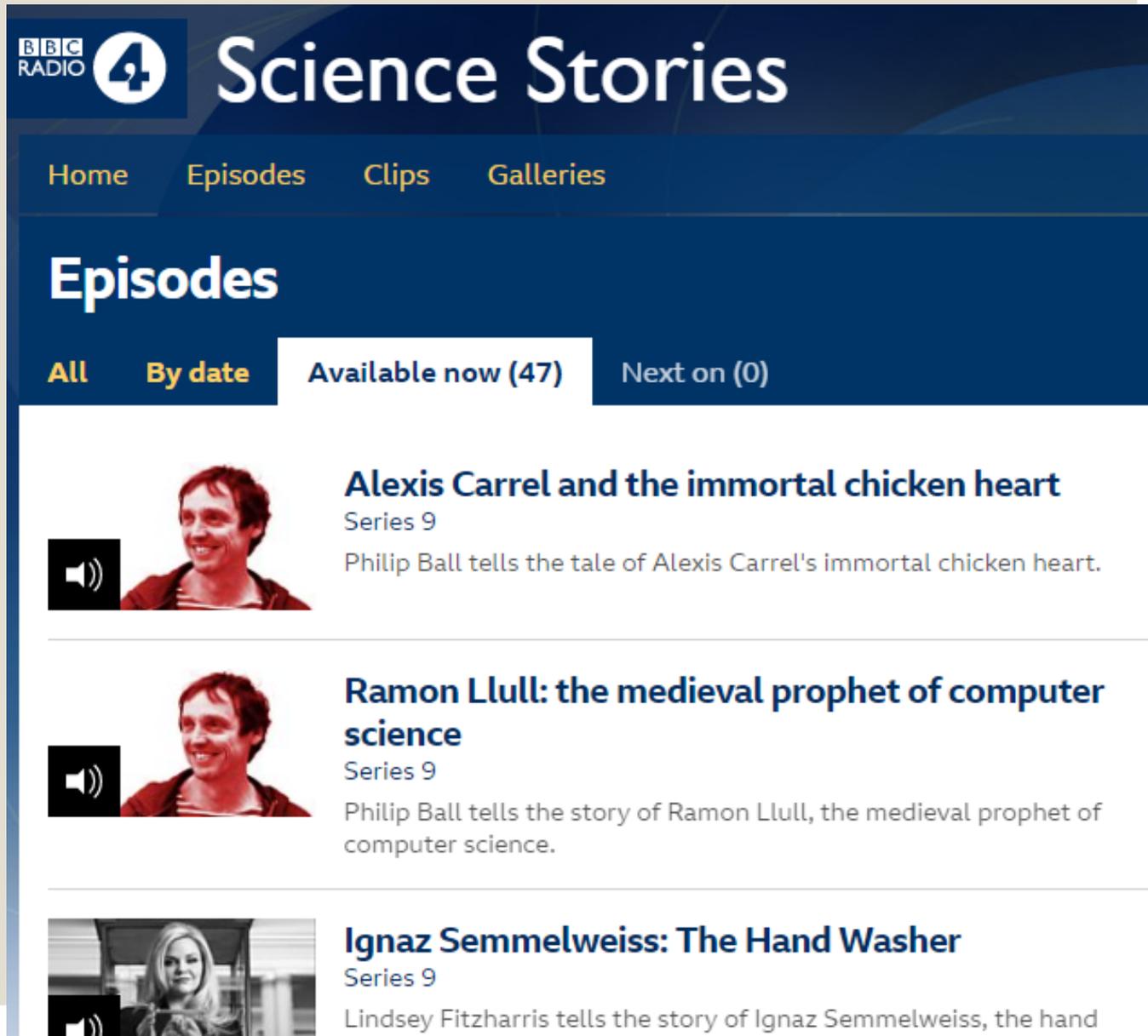
Tool for memory

Feeds the imagination

Emotional connection

Ignaz Semmelweis: The Hand Washer

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0007wf5>



The screenshot shows the BBC Radio 4 Science Stories website. The header includes the BBC Radio 4 logo and the text "Science Stories". Below the header is a navigation menu with "Home", "Episodes", "Clips", and "Galleries". The main content area is titled "Episodes" and has three tabs: "All", "By date", and "Available now (47)". The "Available now (47)" tab is selected. Below the tabs, there are three episode cards. Each card features a small audio player icon, a portrait of the host, the episode title, the series number, and a brief description.

BBC RADIO 4 Science Stories

Home Episodes Clips Galleries

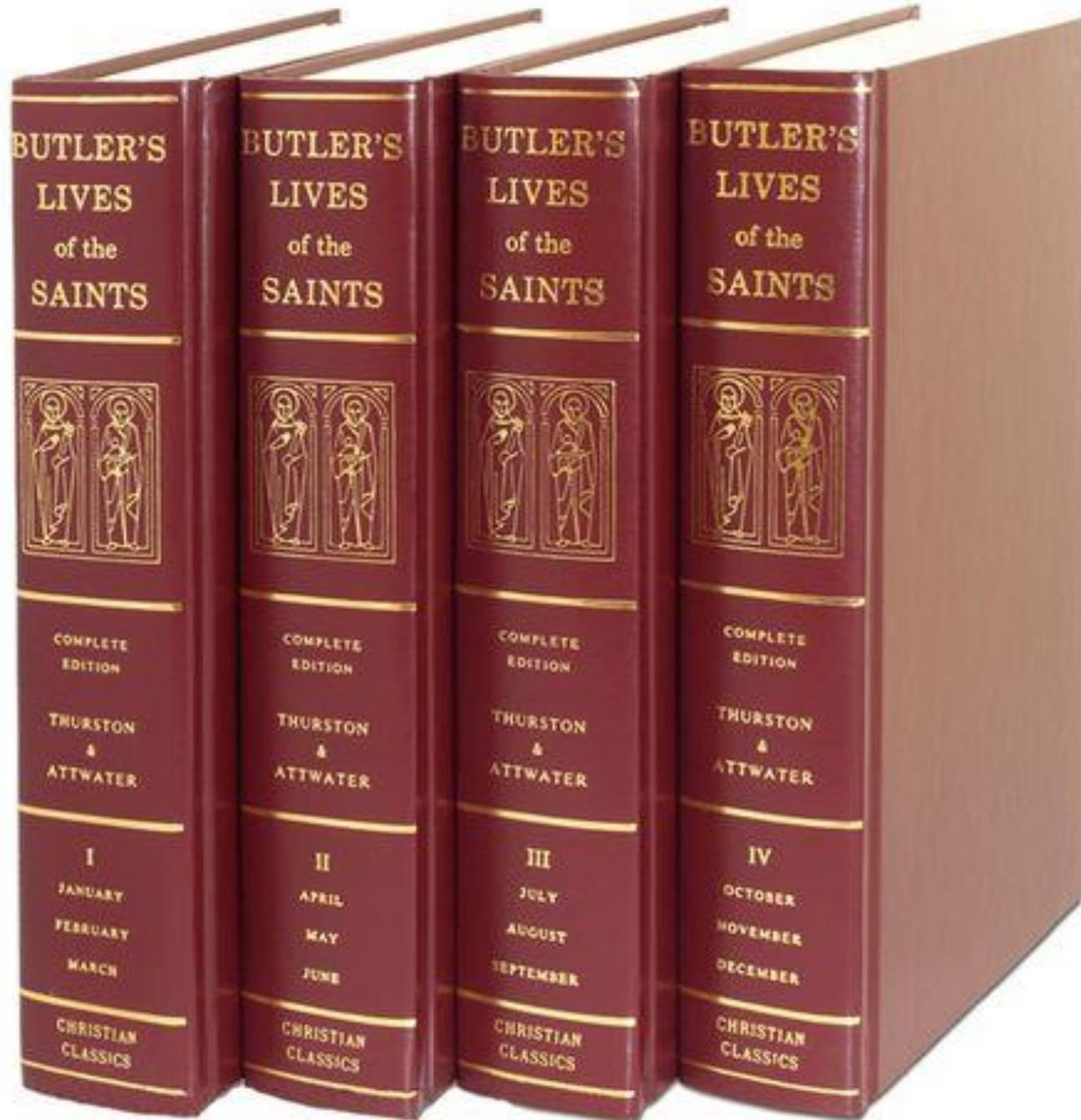
Episodes

All By date Available now (47) Next on (0)

  **Alexis Carrel and the immortal chicken heart**
Series 9
Philip Ball tells the tale of Alexis Carrel's immortal chicken heart.

  **Ramon Llull: the medieval prophet of computer science**
Series 9
Philip Ball tells the story of Ramon Llull, the medieval prophet of computer science.

  **Ignaz Semmelweis: The Hand Washer**
Series 9
Lindsey Fitzharris tells the story of Ignaz Semmelweis, the hand



Tap into
the
tradition,

the
ongoing
story of the
people of
God

Our story – tell them your story

- Everington (2012) - RE teachers – using their story - professionalism
- Kelchtermans (2009) - teachers – reflecting - Who I am in how I teach is the message:

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 54th WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY

***“That you may tell your children and grandchildren”
(Ex 10:2) Life becomes history***

I would like to devote this year's Message to the theme of storytelling, because I believe that, so as not to lose our bearings, we need to make our own the truth contained in good stories.

- http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/papa-francesco_20200124_messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html

References

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Everington, J. (2012) 'We're all in this together, the kids and me': beginning teachers' use of their personal life knowledge in the Religious Education classroom, *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 33:3, 343-355.

Kelchtermans, G. (2009) *Who I am in how I teach is the message: self-understanding, vulnerability and reflection*, *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice*, 15:2, 257-272,

Loughlin, G. (1996) *Telling God's story – Bible, Church and narrative theology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Purnell, A. P. (1985) *Our Faith Story – Its telling and Its sharing*, London: Collins.