

Dowry

(N°32, Winter 2016)

“O Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and our most gentle Queen and Mother, look down in mercy upon England thy Dowry.”
Cardinal Wiseman

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*(Picture: “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.” (Col 3:2)
FSSP Seminarian Emmanuel is pulling on the chapel bell rope as part
of his minor ordination as Porter, last November at our North American Seminary.
One of our eight seminarians from the UK and Ireland,
Emmanuel studied History and International Relations in Exeter.
Our Fraternity numbers 425, including 155 seminarians and 272 priests
serving in 226 Mass centres across 124 dioceses on 4 continents.
Please pray for us. We assure you of our prayers at Midnight Mass this Christmas.)*



Editorial: There is Another Country

Last month, we commemorated the centenary of the Battle of the Somme when, during the Great War, over one million men were wounded or killed. Praying for the repose of their souls is very fitting, because they gave up their lives so that we might be free. In Christian charity, we would not have excluded from our prayers the souls of those on the German side, most of whom were merely following orders from their governments. Troops fought for their respective countries. They died for their homeland, or motherland.

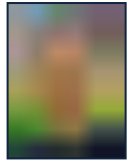
A hundred years later though, the world has become so globalised that we may find it difficult to understand what the word “country” means. In turn, this weakens our zeal to serve our country as piety demands, or even to die for it if a war started tomorrow. What is a country? A country is an area of land that is controlled by its own government. It is the geographical and political entity in which one grows up. It combines the culture, language, history, religion, laws, climate and even gastronomy proper to that part of the world. We all grow up in a family, located in a village or town, which is part of a country. The more a country fosters freedom among its citizens, the better it is, and the more one could die for it.

Political freedom though is different from true liberty. In Israel, two thousand years ago, the Lord Jesus did not preach and act for the Roman occupier to be defeated and sent away. When He announced: “Now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (Jn 12:31), He did not mean Emperor Tiberius, not even King Herod, but Satan, the Father of lies (Jn 8:44). Our Blessed Lord focused on liberty at a deeper level than political. Such freedom is a fruit of truth. Jesus did not say: ‘I will get rid of the Romans for you, and you will be free’. Rather, Jesus said: “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn 8:32). Truth then, is what liberates us.

But, ‘What is truth?’ – Pilate asks Jesus (Jn 18:38). Sound philosophers answer: ‘Truth is the conformity of the intellect to the things.’ First then, things exist. Second, our mind tries to express what things are. Things are diverse. So, truth applies at various levels. The truth about God comes first: there is a God, and He created everything. Then comes the truth about our human nature: God created man as male and female, to be fruitful and multiply and subdue the earth. God calls every human being to holiness and grants us His grace to reach that goal. Scientific truth matters as well, in dependence of philosophical, moral and religious truth.

Today, many people still live under political violence. Armed conflicts deprive many of the basics of human existence. We in Britain live in peace, politically, and we

owe it to a great extent to our forefathers who gave up their lives in the two great wars. But as we saw, genuine liberty is something other than political freedom. It is about the truth. In that respect, is Britain really free? Are we free? Do our British fellow citizens hear the truth about God as creator, redeemer and judge? Do we receive the Good News of Jesus Christ and His Church? Do we accept the truth about our human nature and our human destiny?



Last month the entire nation celebrated the glorious fallen ones from the two great wars. Let us pray that our country will seek more than the thrill of patriotic hymns and well organized military parades. Let us pray that whoever wore a poppy on their lapel might be inspired to ask the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, to grant genuine freedom to all, through the knowledge of the truth. Outside of the truth about God, man, the family, human love and human calling, there is no genuine freedom. There is but tyranny.

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We are all exiles inasmuch as we are all journeying towards Truth. This applies to the holy souls in Purgatory, awaiting admission into the heavenly motherland. It also applies to us, earthly pilgrims. The popular hymn *I Vow to Thee, My Country* reminds us that we belong to two countries. We belong to our earthly motherland, and also to our celestial one. Our earthly country is worth fighting for to the extent in which it prepares us to enter our celestial country. Our earthly country is only worth dying for, as an anticipation of our celestial country. This is so, because the earthly one will end,

and the celestial one will not. The two countries cannot be opposed. One must lead to the other. Our true motherland is heaven, so that, the better our earthly nations prepare us for heaven, the more they deserve to be called countries. And in case of doubt, in case of conflict, eternity is the criterion.

Dear Friends, the war against truth is raging in our earthly country. Enslaved, souls starve and die for want of truth. During this Advent and soon at Christmas, let us welcome Jesus our King, Who said: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (Jn 14:6). Let us renew our pledge, the oath of our baptism, and promise to be loyal, faithful and courageous fellow countrymen and women in Our Lady’s Dowry. Then we will be sure to enter our celestial motherland one day, the land of eternal liberty, with the Blessed Trinity, the Immaculate Mother of God, the angels and all the saints.

Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP
Superior of the English FSSP Apostolate,
Advent 2016 □

Malleray

Divine Providence in J.R.R. Tolkien's works

By Seminararian Thomas, FSSP. This article draws heavily on Joseph Pearce's books: *Bilbo's Journey and Frodo's Journey* (both published by St Benedict Press) which explore the Catholic themes in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. As a follow-up to this article, we recommend Lord Alton's talk on Tolkien's Catholicism, cf davidalton.net.

'You don't really suppose, do you, that all your adventures and escapes were managed by mere luck, just for your sole benefit?' 'There was something else at work, beyond any design of the Ring-Maker ... Bilbo was *meant* to find the Ring, and *not* by its maker. In which case you were *meant* to have it.'

With these words Gandalf informs Bilbo and Frodo that there is a higher power at work in Middle-earth, guiding the events in which they find themselves. This truth, he tells Frodo, 'may be an encouraging thought.' Why? Because now the Hobbit has hope that the evil of the Ring can be overcome because there is at work a power greater than Sauron who orders all things to a higher purpose.

This higher power is obviously God, Who directs all things to attain their final purpose, which is ultimately His glory. The plan according to which God directs creatures is called providence, which St. Thomas defines as the 'type of the order of things towards their end',¹ and the actual carrying out of this plan is called governance. This does not mean that God forces us to act in certain ways. He has created all men (and angels) with free will, though of course to choose any supernatural good we need the aid of God's grace. The precise way in which God's providence and our free will interact is a very complicated question which goes beyond the scope of this article, but we must hold these two truths: that God does infallibly govern all things according to His providence, and that man remains free.

The existence of evil has caused many people to question this teaching. They argue that an all-powerful God could prevent evil and an all-good God would do so. The answer that theologians such as St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas provided to this problem is illustrated very well by Tolkien.

Going back in the history of Middle-earth to its creation Tolkien tells how God (whom he calls Ilúvatar) created the Ainur, spirits that represent the angels. Ilúvatar taught these spirits to sing and then he brought into reality the themes they had sung. The most powerful of these spirits, named Melkor, rebelled. He did not want to sing according to the themes proposed by Ilúvatar, but rather

made up his own. In response Ilúvatar tells Melkor 'that no theme may be played that hath not its uttermost source in me, nor can any alter the music in my despite. For he that attempteth this shall prove but mine instrument in the devising of things more wonderful, which he himself hath not imagined.'

Melkor here clearly represents the devil, who had been the highest of the angels, but who rebelled against God, seeking to find his own way to perfect happiness rather than humbly following the path God had set out for him. The devil brought evil into the world. He tempted Adam and Eve to try to prevent them attaining the purpose God



had ordained for them, and he continues to try to ruin souls and prevent the fulfilment of God's providence. He cannot, however, succeed. Ilúvatar's words to Melkor express perfectly the Catholic explanation for evil. As Saint Augustine says, 'Almighty God would in no wise permit evil to exist in His works, unless He were so almighty and so good as to produce good even from evil'.² St. Thomas Aquinas even teaches that God's omnipotence is most manifest in the act of mercy, when from the evil of sin and its consequences He brings the good of virtue and holiness.³ The greatest example of this is the *felix culpa* of Adam. God permitted the sin of our first parent, because He could bring from it the good of the Incarnation and Redemption. The works of J.R.R. Tolkien are thus not merely great works of literature, but also illustrate the truths of the Catholic Faith. □

¹ *Summa Theologica* I, q. 22, a. 1

² *Enchiridion* c. 11, quoted in *S.T.* I, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2um.

³ *S. T.* I, q. 25, a. 3, ad 3um; II-II, q. 30, a. 4; cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Virtutibus Theologicis*, p. 499.

Eleison! – The Latin Mass in one Greek word

The Year of Mercy declared by Pope Francis ended on 20th November 2016. But the petition for divine mercy will go on within the Church until the Last Judgment. As an enduring witness, it is enshrined in the traditional Roman Missal, the very same which St Faustina and so many saints would have used daily, and which confirmed the aspirations of their souls. Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP explains how the traditional Roman Missal, nowadays used by a growing number of devout Christians worldwide, is all about divine mercy.

“Lord, have mercy!” We are so used to this petition repeated at every Holy Mass, that we may not realise how essential it is. “Lord, have mercy – Kyrie, eleison!” Retaining the original Greek words even in Masses offered in other languages, shows how old this prayer is, rooted in the worship of the very first Christian communities. Holy Mass is all about mercy. No wonder then that the word “mercy” occurs up to twenty two times in the Extraordinary Form Missal, from the *Vidi Aquam* to the *Leonine Prayers*. St Thomas Aquinas defines mercy as “the compassion in our hearts for another person’s misery, a compassion which drives us to do what we can to help him” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II.30.1). Mercy can be shown by God, albeit without altering His perfect happiness, but rather leading Him to remove the cause of our unhappiness: sin.

At Holy Mass then, we sinners, penitents, fallen children of Adam and Eve, are encouraged to ask God for mercy. We ask for mercy because we recognise that we have sinned and we know that God wishes to forgive us. The more we understand that God is good, the more we wish to be reconciled with Him. This implies that our sins be taken away from us as an effect of God’s mercy. “God acts mercifully, not indeed by going against



His justice, but by doing something more than justice” (*S.T.* I.21.3). This is why the Word Eternal became flesh in Jesus Christ and suffered His Passion: to take away the sins of the world, that we may have life eternal. This was achieved through Our Lord’s Passion and Death on the Cross. Since Holy Mass is the unbloody re-enactment of Christ’s unique Sacrifice, nearly every prayer in the Missal involves mercy, as we shall now see. For the sake of brevity we will skip synonyms and consider only the instances where the word *mercy* itself appears.

“Asperges me Domine – Thou shalt sprinkle me O Lord”. On Sunday, in preparation for the Sung Mass, the Celebrant sprinkles holy water over the congregation (picture above). It is a rite of spiritual purification. Those droplets of water should be considered as having journeyed across space from Golgotha, and across time since the year 33, as St John witnessed: “one of the soldiers with a spear opened His side, and immediately there came out blood and water” (Jn. 19:34). From the start, we worshippers find ourselves in spirit at the foot of the Cross; not to mourn but to expose ourselves willingly and hopefully to the saving power of the Lord’s Sacrifice. Holy water comes first, reaching our skins – the Precious Blood will follow, entering our mouths. From the start we ask

for mercy: “Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam – Have *mercy* on me, O God, according to thy great *mercy*.”

One may think that this supplication would end with Lent, once the penitential season is over and the Church focuses joyfully on Her Saviour’s triumph. How telling then that from Easter onwards, in Paschaltide, the same rite of sprinkling (then called *Vidi Aquam*) still points to mercy, not sought anymore but received, and thus a cause for thanksgiving: “Give praise to the Lord, for He is good: for His *mercy* endureth forever.” Before and after Easter, the congregation asks further: “Show us, Lord, Thy *mercy*.”

When the Celebrant reaches the foot of the altar, he confesses his sins and asks the congregation to intercede for his forgiveness, to which they reply – or the server on their behalf: “May almighty God be *merciful* to thee, and forgiving thy sins, bring thee to everlasting life”. In return, after the faithful have confessed their sins, the Celebrant intercedes for them: “May almighty God be *merciful* to you, and forgiving your sins, bring you to everlasting life.” He adds on behalf of all: “May the almighty and *merciful* Lord grant us pardon, absolution, and remission of our sins.” Then follows a dialogue whereby God is requested to be favourable. The Celebrant asks anew: “Show us, O Lord, Thy *mercy*.”

Once he has ascended the altar, the Celebrant alternates the *Kyrie* with the server. It is the emblematic petition for divine mercy, a real summary of Holy Mass. A triple invocation is addressed to each of the three divine Persons, since none within the Blessed Trinity ever acts separately. Nine times then, the walls of the church reverberate the humble, passionate and hopeful “Eleison – Have *mercy*!” To God the Father: “Lord, have *mercy*. Lord, have *mercy*. Lord, have *mercy*.” To God the Son: “Christ, have *mercy*. Christ, have *mercy*. Christ, have *mercy*.” To God the Holy Ghost: “Lord, have *mercy*. Lord, have *mercy*. Lord,

have *mercy*.” From a literary perspective, one could say that this prayer is rather poor. By contrast, other prayers of the Missal are masterpieces of creative balance and theological concision. Not so with the *Kyrie*. There is no time. There is no need. By then, those present know too well what their most urgent necessity is: the removal of

their sins. They are also well assured of God’s willingness to grant it through His mercy. Both convictions meet in the plain repetitions addressed to the divine Persons. Their lack of style betrays the humility that inspires them, the urgency of our need and the assurance of an answer.

With the *Gloria*, it would seem that the penitential mode is over. God’s mercy is now secured. We progress with confidence towards its sacramental outpouring in the Consecration and Communion. The mood is one of jubilant praise, as the very words of the angels on Christmas night are now quoted by human tongue: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will”. And yet how striking when, in the midst of such exultation, again mercy is asked for: “Who takest away the sins of the world, have *mercy* on us.” Truly, the sinners’ petition for mercy is not sombre or gloomy after all. If it can occur in such a happy context, it shows that the consciousness of one’s shortcomings does not weigh down those who trust in God’s bounty.

On the contrary, it fosters rejoicing, as the Church dares to proclaim during the Paschal Vigil at the *Exsultet*, describing the original sin: “O happy fault that earned for us so great, so glorious a Redeemer.” The same *Gloria* insists then: “Who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have *mercy* on us.” At this stage, we realise that divine mercy is one side of the same truth whose other side is human sinfulness. The more we acknowledge the latter, the more we benefit from the former. Neither can be handled separately. Focusing on God’s mercy without understanding it as a response to the calamity of sin will sterilise its healing power. Reciprocally, clinging to our sins in shame like Judas, instead of throwing them into the furnace of



God's mercy like Peter, will drag us down into hell. God showed mercy by creating us, and again when redeeming us.

In preparation for the Gospel, the Celebrant prays the *Munda Cor*, begging God thus: "vouchsafe, through Thy gracious *mercy*, so to purify me, that I may worthily announce Thy holy Gospel." His sinfulness makes him unworthy, he knows, of acting as God's herald. But he confesses that the Good News he is mandated to proclaim announced his own salvation and that of the human race. Even as an ordained minister, he knows that his service is acceptable to God not by virtue of any personal talent, but as a consequence of God's mercy that cleansed him.

The Offertory expresses the sacrificial destination of the bread and wine, rather than their human origin. At Consecration, they will become the Sacred Body and the Precious Blood of God made Man, Jesus Christ. The need of an exchange between men and God is not ignored though. This appears at the incensation of the bread and wine: "May this incense blessed by Thee, arise before Thee, O Lord, and may Thy *mercy* come down upon us." While speaking these words, as the *Rubrics* instruct, the Celebrant "incenses the gifts, thrice swinging the thurible over the Chalice and Host together in the sign of the cross, and thrice around the Chalice and Host, that is, twice from right to left, and once from left to right".

The scented smoke of incense ascends over the bread and wine as an expression of mankind's humble and trusting prayer. In response, God's mercy is expected to descend upon the altar. Such is the exchange. But how telling that our petition be uttered while the sign of our redemption is made three times with the thurible over the matter which will become the Saviour. Similarly, during the Canon of the Mass, God's mercy will not descend anywhere on the altar, or directly to sinners, but straight upon the bread and wine when they are changed into the Redeemer. Again we see that the avowal of our sinfulness is the key to open the treasures of God's infinite mercies, poured upon us through His Son confessed as Saviour, adored as God and welcomed as our Life in Holy Communion.

Even the graces of spiritual Communion stem from the Eucharistic Presence.

Washing his fingers, the Celebrant recites the second half of Psalm 25. Verse 11 states: "I have walked in my innocence: redeem me, and have *mercy* on me." He stresses that his justice is not his own, as if it expressed merits of his. The only reason why he is innocent, unlike the "men of blood", is because God's mercy has either cleansed him from any grave sins or prevented him from committing them. This confirms the fact that mercy is not slavishly wanted, but filially hoped for. Acknowledging one's frailty and even one's sins is not meant to lead to despair or merely to a bleak outlook on life, but rather to excite humility and prudence for our weakness, and confidence in a bounteous and fatherly God.



The word *mercy* occurs only once in the Canon of the Mass. Such scarcity however does not indicate a diminution of mercy. On the contrary, mercy is brought to its climax through the words of Consecration, whereby the Saviour Jesus Christ offers Himself in sacrifice to the Father on behalf of all sinners. Only after this, however, is mercy expressly mentioned. This occurs after the intercession for the deceased. Having requested that God may allow them into His presence in Paradise, the Celebrant now includes the living in this petition: "To us also Thy sinful servants, who put our trust in the multitude of Thy *mercies*, vouchsafe to grant some part and fellowship with Thy Holy Apostles and Martyrs".

After the *Our Father*, the Celebrant develops its last petition, that is, to be delivered from all evil. He asks this through the intercession of the saints, adding: "grant us peace in our days, that through the bounteous help of Thy *mercy*, we may be always free from sin and safe from all disquiet". Speaking on behalf of the congregation and of the whole Church, the Celebrant stresses anew the radical incapability of men to fulfil God's holy will unless succoured by divine grace. Far from any pessimism, this further statement is healthy realism prompted by love, based on the Lord's statement: "But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less" (Luke 7:47).

Holy Mass can be compared with Mount Golgotha. We pray the *Kyrie* on our way up; reaching the summit, we witness the Consecration-Crucifixion; and at the same distance on our way down we find the *Agnus Dei*. Like the *Kyrie*, the *Agnus Dei* is a triple invocation to God. But since we are after the Consecration, Jesus the Word Eternal is now physically present on the altar under the externals of bread and wine. Consequently, the triple petition is addressed directly to God the Son made Man, the only Victim perfectly acceptable to God: “Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world...” Since Our Lord’s Passion, no bloody sacrifices are valid or licit anymore. We don’t see animals slaughtered on the altars of the true religion. For that reason, the word *lamb* may have lost its sacrificial meaning for us. Instead, it may

Lamb of God states the deliverance from all suffering through peace bestowed.

Towards the end of Holy Mass, before the Celebrant imparts the Last Blessing, he prays for his offering of Christ’s Sacrifice to bear fruit: “Through Thy *mercy* may it bring forgiveness to me and to all for whom I have offered it.” Again we see that God’s mercy is the condition for forgiveness to be granted to men. Having reached nearly the end of the sacred action, the Celebrant knows that through his offering in the very Person of the Saviour of men, mercy is being poured upon souls, including his own.

Customarily, a few prayers are said after Low Mass. Added for historical reasons, they can also be used in general for thanksgiving. The *Hail, Holy Queen* teaches us to salute Our Lady as “Mother of *mercy*”. As Mary is the Mother of Jesus, Jesus *is* mercy then. What a beautiful way of referring to the Saviour, naming Him with the very word *mercy* as His first name. Divine mercy stems from the Most Holy Trinity, it is embodied and merited by Christ and most efficaciously petitioned by His Immaculate Mother. We thus beg Our Lady: “Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of *mercy* towards us”. Adding two more occurrences of the word *mercy*, the *Prayer* following the *Salve* expresses this: “O God, our refuge and our strength, *mercifully* look down on Thy people who cry to Thee, and through the intercession of the glorious and immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God, of Saint Joseph her Spouse, of Thy blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and of all the saints, in *mercy* and goodness hear our prayers”.

After invoking St Michael, these *Leonine Prayers* end most fittingly with a triple invocation to Christ. Not Christ as Judge or King, but Christ as Victim of Love for our salvation. How telling that the very last petition addressed to God in Holy Mass should be to the Sacred Heart pierced for our sins! The Sacred Heart is our best assurance of securing divine mercy, which we so radically need. With filial assurance then, we beg for mercy, a gift altogether unmerited and costly: “Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have *mercy* on us! Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have *mercy* on us! Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have *mercy* on us!” By then, if we have received the Sacred Host at Holy Communion, Christ truly present in us is pouring upon our souls the mercies of the Father. What we ask for is to welcome His Real Presence in us with deep faith, and humbly to allow Him to bear abundant fruit in us, so that in our turn we may become “merciful like the Father”. □



spontaneously evoke cute woolly creatures frolicking in flowery fields; perhaps with ribbons tied around their necks as at Trianon, Queen Marie-Antoinette’s made up farm in Versailles. If the Lamb of God takes away the sins of the world though, it is because He suffered His Passion as the perfect Victim, covered with His own Precious Blood. Our confidence stems from the infinite power of His human and divine Blood shed for our sins. By the virtue of His Blood then, we dare to beg of Him twice: “Have *mercy* on us!” The third petition to the

(Painting Left: *Holy Trinity* Altarpiece or *Mercy Seat* by Durante Alberti, 1581, English College, Rome.

Above: *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb*,

by Jan & Hubert van Eyck, 1432, St Bavo Cathedral, Ghent.)

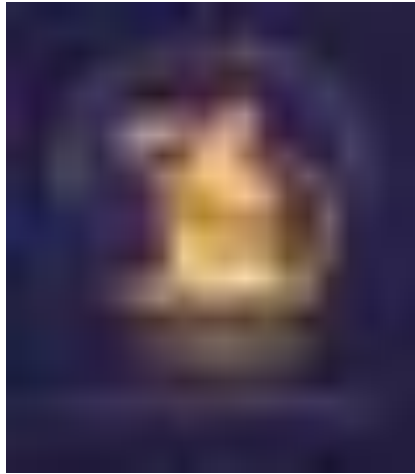
Prisoner-turned-Priest Going Back to Burma

By Fr James Mawdsley, FSSP — imprisoned for 17 months in Burma for political protests between 1997 and 2000, and ordained a priest July 2016.

The Church in Burma (Myanmar), present for 500 years, is growing steadily, now approaching a million souls including twenty bishops and a cardinal. Much of this growth has been recent. Having suffered so meekly for so long, the people of Myanmar are well disposed to find value in sacrifice, to find God on the Cross. In 2014 the martyr Bl Isidore Ngei Ko Lat (□1950) was pronounced blessed—Myanmar’s first beatification.

To thank God for all the good He has done in Myanmar, and to ask further blessings, I will return there soon after Christmas to offer Holy Mass at a dozen churches, including—*Deo volente*—the cathedrals in Mandalay and Kengtung, and at the national shrine to Our Lady at Nyaunglebin.

Planning for this visit, it was a deep joy in 2014 to find churches in Myanmar with scores and sometimes



(Picture left: Official logo for the 500th anniversary of the evangelisation of Burma.

Below: Pyo Pan Wai School, where (Fr) Mawdsley taught English until it was caught up in conflict in 1997.

Right top: Sticker showing Min Ko Naing, who would spend 20 years in solitary confinement. (Fr) Mawdsley was arrested in Moulmein in 1998 while distributing this sticker.

Right bottom: (Fr) Mawdsley meets Min Ko Naing in 2014 in Yangon.)

hundreds of school children present for daily Mass. In Upper Burma it was the norm to receive Holy Communion kneeling on the tongue; many of the girls wore mantillas; certain priests remembered Gregorian chant with affection and would be glad to see it return. I also found a refreshing frankness about ecumenism—Protestants were to be loved as God’s



children but their errors and heresies abhorred as dangerous to salvation.

Political improvements in recent years have been dramatic, so Myanmar is poised on a threshold of tremendous opportunity. Of course there are dangers. Misguided Westerners, including Christians, are pressuring Myanmar to facilitate the spread of Islam. This is gravely irresponsible. While Burmese Buddhists have long held Catholics in affection for the evident good that they do, for example in education and nursing, there is a well-founded wariness of Islam, for it does not bring peace. More dangerous is the importing from the West of the culture of death. Marie Stopes has some 25 centres in Myanmar, boasting of “37,300 unsafe abortions prevented in 2015”—doublespeak for killing 37,300 Burmese babies in one year. In Yangon two years ago I met an intelligent young Englishman teaching politically active Burmese about western notions of human rights. He counted abortion and homosexual ‘marriage’ among these rights. The instinct of the Burmese I asked is that these perversions are against nature. But the West wraps them in a package with much money and corrupt concepts of freedom, thus poisoning Myanmar even while claiming we are helping.

God forbid these evils should prevail, for God loves each person in Myanmar enough to die on the Cross for each one singly. His desire is to bestow endless riches on this land, spiritual riches which bring true peace. Development begins with grace; otherwise any advance, in any field whatsoever—health, education, infrastructure, communications, military, juridical, political—becomes an occasion for the strong to take



advantage of and exploit the weak. Such is the way of the world.

Instead, the Gospel is the herald of all authentic development. For the sake of God’s glory, within us it works the desire to build a civilisation of love. In 2014 it was a joy to be re-united with Fr Norman Wu for the first time since he had twice visited me in Kengtung prison in 2000 to offer Holy Mass. We spent a few days travelling the diocese together. As charity has an eye also for material needs (Jas 2:16; 1 Jn 3:17), it was an opportunity to give money to schools, orphanages, a leper colony, churches and even one of my old prisons. The Church in Myanmar is salt and light for millions, body and soul.

Returning after Christmas until 10th January, I am deeply grateful that the Christmas appeal of St Mary’s Shrine in Warrington is for Myanmar, so there will be more funds to distribute to similar projects. FSSP seminarian Julius (from Bavaria), who will be travelling with me, has opened a similar appeal in Germany, so we may combine funds. For all support you can give, my thanksgiving in Burma will be inexpressibly sweet. God turned my prison cell from hell to heaven. My prayer ever since is that He may do the same for the whole country, especially those suffering most grievously, and all who are yet to discover Him. □

For more information, or to make a donation, please visit our blog (with Paypal) www.stmaryswarrington.co.uk or contact james.mawdsley@fssp.org



Mary, Mother of God: the proof by Manchester!

By Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP

In the year of the Lord 431, heated discussions took place in the Church of the Mother of God, Ephesus, where hundreds of bishops were gathered together. Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, believed that there were two separate persons in Christ. He held that Mary was the mother of the human person but not of the divine person. On the contrary, the Catholic teaching is that while in Christ there are two natures – divine and human – there is in Him only one person: a divine person, the second person of the Blessed Trinity. Christ is God the Son made man. Since Mary is the Mother of Christ according to His human nature, and since this human nature belongs directly to God the Son, then Mary is the Mother of God.

This does not mean of course that she existed before God. Mary was created by God like every non divine being. Ordinary motherhood links two persons in an exclusive way: the mother with her son or with her daughter. Similarly, Mary's divine motherhood links her with the very Person of the Eternal Word, endowed with a human body and soul since Mary's Fiat at the Annunciation. As always with Marian dogmas, it is not about Mary, or at least not essentially. The added glory given to Mary by the title *Theotokos* or *Mother of God* is only a consequence of another truth. That other truth concerns Christ Himself and is the very heart of the matter and the reason for so much debate at Ephesus.

It is about who Jesus is. Jesus is not a man adopted by God. There was never a time when the man Jesus would have existed without being also God. On the other hand, Jesus is not God as hiding under the mere appearances of humanity, like an actor under a cloak and mask. No, Jesus possesses a full and complete human nature with a real body of flesh and blood and a true human soul endowed with created intellect, memory and will. Unlike Archangel Raphael taking the mere appearance of a young man to guide Tobias, Jesus is not God in human disguise. Jesus is not a man



divinised either, as if divine powers had been granted Him later in life, at His baptism in the River Jordan for instance. No, Jesus is from the start and essentially God and man fully and truly.

Lastly, Jesus is not divided. Jesus is not made of two different persons in one body, as tragically occurs in conjoined twins. In Jesus, the divine and human natures are under one and a single self or person, that is, the Word Eternal. What more convincing proof of God's esteem and love for mankind (though fallen) than this appropriation of a genuine human body and soul by God the Son? In Jesus, our human nature is united to God as intimately as ever can be. What an honour for us! He is

not disgusted by us then, despite our sinfulness. In Jesus, a human body like ours is animated by a human soul like ours, kept together under one single self like ours. But better than us, that self of Jesus is



(Pictures: Ruins of the ancient Church of St Mary in Ephesus – site of the proceedings of the Council of Ephesus in 431.

Our Lady as *Theotokos* in the Hagia Sophia Basilica, Istanbul.

The John Rylands Library, Manchester: The Sub Tuum Fragment; and the inside of the building.)

not human but divine. Potentially, the whole of mankind is ennobled by this union. In Jesus, we are made partakers of the divine nature.

The dogma of the divine Motherhood confirms this truth and makes it shine lovingly. Mary conceived Jesus according to His human nature, not according to His divine nature. As the true mother of Christ according to His true humanity, Mary is the Mother of the One who assumed this true body and this true soul. Who is that One? God. God the Son. Mary is thus the Mother of God. Again, what a glory for our human race, that a mere daughter of men, Mary of Nazareth, be raised to such heights as to become the Mother of the Almighty! And what confidence it must give us all poor sinners, to know that our human sister can intercede for us with our Judge not only as His creature, which she remains, but also as His Mother, which she became!

The Marian title was vindicated by St Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, against Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, at the Council of Ephesus in 431. But the title of *Mother of God* was not invented there and then. Rather, it was used widely in the Church long before, as attested by the ancient Marian prayer *Sub Tuum Praesidium*: "Under your mercy we take refuge, Mother of God! Our prayers, do not despise in necessities, but from the danger deliver us, only pure, only blessed". In that prayer, Our Lady is invoked as Mother of God.

That the *Sub Tuum* predated the 431 A.D. dogmatic definition of Ephesus by long was confirmed through an essential discovery 99 ago. In 1917, the John Rylands Library in Manchester managed to acquire a large panel of Egyptian papyrus including an 18 cm by 9.4 cm fragment containing the text of this prayer in Greek. In 1938, E. Lobel collaborated in editing the Oxyrhynchus papyri, 'basing his arguments on pure palaeographic analysis, and argued that the text could not possibly be older than the third century, and most probably was written between 250 and 280', that is, about 1.5 century before the Ephesus definition.

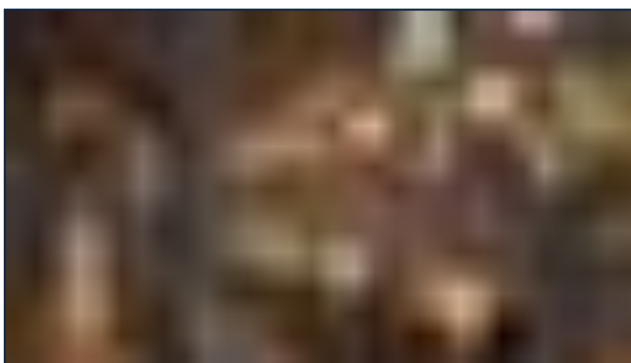


On his way back from Ephesus, St Cyril sent the following letter to his clergy and flock in Alexandria. To try and share his mood, we might dare to imagine a modern setting, picturing him in the taxi on his way to Ephesus airport, texting from his smartphone. How moving to see the passionate exultation of the courageous bishop, and the joy demonstrated by the city's population!

"Cyril sends greetings to the priests, deacons, and the people of Alexandria, most beloved and most cherished in the Lord. Even though I ought to make known to your reverence more fully the recent happenings, yet because the bearer of this letter is in a hurry, I write with brevity. Accordingly, I am letting you know that the holy council met in Ephesus on the twenty-eighth day of the month Pauni [June] in the city's great church, dedicated to Mary, the Mother of God. Having spent the entire day, finally we subjected the blasphemous Nestorius, who did not dare to appear in the holy council, to a sentence of deposition and removed him from the episcopacy. We who came

together in the meeting were more than two hundred bishops.

The entire populace of the city remained from dawn until evening awaiting the judgment of the holy council. As they heard that the wretched man was deposed, everyone with one voice began to praise the holy council and to glorify God because the enemy of the faith had fallen. But as we came out of the church, they preceded us with torches as far as the inn, for the evening was near; and there was much joy and lighting of lights in the city, so that even women carrying censers led the way for us. Our Saviour showed to those blaspheming His glory that He can do all things."



May all of us, sharers in the joy of our forefathers in Ephesus, and their heirs, carry in our souls the torches of our faith in God the Son truly made man in the virginal womb of Mary. O immaculate Mother of God, pray for us sinners and lead us to your Divine Son our Lord. □

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Forthcoming Events

Our apostolates in the South and the North with Reading and Warrington as their respective bases hold regular weekly and monthly events. Please visit fssp.co.uk for details. We encourage you to subscribe free of charge to our weekly circular emails so as to be informed and updated. Please forward our offers to your acquaintances: a simple and useful way of evangelising!

Sunday 22nd January, 11am at St Mary's Warrington: **Solemn High Mass** offered by Very Rev. **Fr John Berg**, Superior General of the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter.

Wednesday 25th January: Clergy day of recollection at St Mary's Shrine in Warrington on the feast of the Conversion of St Paul, with talk by Very Rev. **Fr John Berg**, Superior General of the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter. Any priests, deacons, friars and seminarians are welcome. **Schedule:** 12noon: Holy Mass by Fr Berg (time of meditation with Confessions heard). 1:00pm Lunch at nearby venue (3 minute walk from church: booking **essential** for lunch: email malleray@fssp.org by Thursday 19th January). 2:30pm Talk by Fr Berg followed by Qs & As, ending with Refreshments.

Monthly Clergy Recollections: at St Mary's Warrington every third Wednesday in the month: 21 Dec., 25 Jan. (by exception), 15 Feb., 15 March: Holy Hour with Confessions; doctrinal/spiritual talk, Qs & As; convivial meal.

Bookings: malleray@fssp.org

Info: email us now to subscribe to our free Clergy emailing list.

Clergy Silent Retreat in Bath: 27-31 March 2017

In the splendid setting of Prior Park, Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP will preach on: "I have come to bring fire to the earth - Ignem veni mittere in terram" (Luke 12:49).

Our priestly journey might unfold on a gentle pace, led by Christ's "kindly light", to quote Blessed John-Henry Newman. So did probably Fr Jacques Hamel think as, at the age of 85, he vested before Mass at Saint-Étienne-du-Rouvray on 26th July



Picture: FSSP Seminarian Gwilym from Wales was among 25 receiving Clerical Tonsure and donning the cassock last October.

last. Like him however, we want to be faithful until the end, whatever the circumstances, if our end is to be a blissful beginning... **Cost: £333** per person, single room, full board. All bookings to be processed by the *Latin Mass Society* on their updated website: www.lms.org.uk.

ROME: 22nd February 2017: 10th anniversary of the foundation of the Confraternity of St Peter (i.e. CSP), our 5,000-strong vocation prayer network. Mass of thanksgiving by General Chaplain Fr de Malleray, 11am: Piazza della Trinità dei Pellegrini, 00186 Roma. A meal will follow and an afternoon pilgrimage to places linked with the Apostle St Peter. CSP members may contact Fr de Malleray. Travel and accommodation to be organised privately.

17.6.17: Priestly ordinations of FSSP Deacons Alex Stewart and Krzysztof Sanetra, 11am, St Mary's Warrington, by Liverpool Archbishop Malcolm McMahon, OP.

Summer Camps for Boys, and for Girls, first half of August 2017, Ashurst, New Forest. Details to be advertised soon.

Fatima Centenary Traditional Pilgrimage: 28th September to 3rd October 2017. Price: £579. Includes direct flight to Lisbon from London Heathrow and from Manchester. Chaplain: Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP. Daily EF Mass. Experienced

local guide. Bookings: call 01423 531 222 Jackie at Number One Travel. Enquiries: call group leader Liam on 07415520494. Email: info@nationalpilgrimagecentre.com.



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Thank you for your help as part of our **Jewel in the Dowry Appeal!** Please continue to help us run St Mary's Shrine and fund our ministry in England.

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**Priestly Fraternity of St Peter,
St Mary's Priory, Smith Street,
Warrington WA1 2NS Cheshire, England
Tel: 01925 635 664 . warrington@fssp.org**