

Dowry

Autumn 2020, Issue N°47

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

Picture: Second Year FSSP UK seminarians Henry and Conan were delighted to receive the visit of Sr Mari Caritas at their seminary in Nebraska. The three were part of one of our local youth groups in England, and consecrated their lives to God last autumn. Let us pray for them and for many more!



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Editorial: Gloom versus Glow



Looking at nature around us in this bleak November month, we see life hiding away. Daylight is getting shorter and shorter. In the sky, a heavy slab of grey clouds weighs upon us. The leaves are falling off the trees. The bright colours of autumn are fading away, while the chill of winter is looming ahead.

Even more disheartening than the gloom in nature is the demise of society. For us Catholics in this November 2020, could it get much bleaker? We feel unsupported, if not abandoned, by our leaders both civil and religious. Subjected to yet another lockdown, with no clearer evidence that the alleged threat justifies the confiscation of our fundamental liberties, we can't see when this oppression will end, if it ever will. The economy is imperilled; workers lose their jobs or soon will; we are forbidden from travelling or merely from going out and from sustaining our social life through innocent entertainments; our children and students are denied suitable conditions to prepare their future; our sick and elderly are sequestered in care homes and hospital wards. Much worse than all this even, Holy Mass is made inaccessible.

Friends, let us ask the saints and holy angels for help in our present troubles, for they are powerful if we trust in their intercession. But also, let us consider that our loving Father, God almighty, allows us to be chastised for our expiation and amendment. Let us confess that we have failed to respond to God's plan of sanctity for us. Let us admit that

we have taken it easy, being satisfied with an average righteousness, whereas God meant us to rise and to glow and to shine and to radiate His splendour with inimitable graciousness, fecundity and glory!

It is not too late to allow God, the most creative and prolific of artists, to shape our mediocrity and turn it into the varied and splendid generation of saints in this Covid-19 era. It is not prideful to look at the

*The varied
and splendid
generation of saints
in this Covid-19 era.*

empty niches on the walls of our churches and at our abstract stain glasses and to realise: God wants us depicted there one day. God plans for men and women alive in two hundred years to look at these walls and to draw inspiration from the virtues He will have put in us ordinary Catholics: in me, in you. For God wants our lives to become as holy as those of the saints of old.

So, let us beware of the devil, the master in discouragement. The devil shrinks our horizon to the short-sighted scope of what the media depressingly repeat day and night. The devil wants us to forget that God is Lord of history and that the gates

of hell shall never prevail over Holy Mother Church. But beware again, for those of us whose memory has not been amputated by secular education; for those of us who read the lives of our forefathers in recusant times or in other glorious pages in the life of the Church, the devil can cunningly lock us up into nostalgia. He makes us wish we had been born at the time of St Bernard or St Dominic, or of St Catherine of Sienna. By doing so, the devil sterilises grace in us. He distracts us from the time and place where God in His wisdom and mercy chose to plant us and make us grow and bear fruit.

On the contrary, friends, our time is now. Our place is here. We are the saints God has appointed from all eternity to solve the many problems of our modern era. Let us desire to be made saints. If sin abounds, divine grace will over-abound. It is irrelevant whether God will make our sanctity known to people in our time. Sanctity is mostly hidden, like the mustard seed in the soil; and like leaven in flour. But it does grow and does convert the world, through patient intercession, through sacrificial reparation, through undeterred hope and joy in the Lord after His Immaculate Mother our model.

We assure you of our prayer at the altar for a blessed Nativity of the Saviour, the yearly anticipation and token of His final victory.

Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP,
Superior of the English FSSP
Apostolate, 15th November 2020. □

Malleray

I Go To The King!

A visitor to a church run by our Fraternity in Europe sent us the following reminiscences about her conversion. The issue of dress and devotion in church is a delicate one, to which this article provides only a personal illustration.

A year or two after my conversion to Catholicism, I happened to go to a Latin Mass, and from which I came away profoundly changed. I had seen no visions, I had heard no trumpets, it was a low Mass and on a very cold and dark and early morning; there was no incense, no Gregorian chant and no organ. There was instead a most chastening decorum and sobriety that shook me to the core: God was in that place and my appalling misery was all right there before me. I would have given anything to have had, not a veil, but a blanket to cover myself. Before returning the next day I made sure to have something to put on my head, at least, and a longer coat for wrapping around the trousers.

I attended that Mass every day for a month, and then it was time to go home and to my regular parish church—and where I felt no

compunction about my misery or my trousers. Our Lord was as present there as He was at that Latin Mass. What sense did it make to cover my head at the Latin Mass but not at the Mass in my church? As if God were not there? Well, the reasoning was certainly sound enough, but courage enough I did not have for wearing a veil quite then. However, I did start wearing skirts and dresses, and after a while I just stopped wearing trousers altogether. And in hindsight, I can say that it was the most important step I took in the whole of my spiritual life. Nothing could have removed me more effectively from the clutches of the world than putting away the trousers for good. It may seem a very great exaggeration to say so, but it is the simple truth.

Every time we go to the Holy Mass it is *our* royal marriage, and most especially if we are to receive Holy

Communion. The very beauty of the church reflects the solemn reality of this, and everything inside concurs to honour as sumptuously as possible the ineffable dignity of that which transpires there, and within us : exquisite linens and lace clothe the Altar and choicest flowers adorn it like jewels, the Priest is solemnly vested in his sacred garments and the very air is ennobled by plumes of the most heavenly incense; if it were given us to see the divine reality of what is unfolding unseen all around us and upon the Holy Altar, the glory of it would cause us to faint before ever reaching the altar-rail. There we come before the King of kings, our great Prince Who, upon the Altar has accomplished the great sacrifice of His cruel death which He died to crush the horrible enemy of our souls. In receiving Holy Communion we are united to our beautiful Prince-Saviour in the holiest of unions; our flesh becomes one flesh with His Flesh, and our bodies become the Holy Body of our Royal Spouse. How reverently, how *carefully* we ought to clothe it then! How reverently and carefully we ought to *keep* it!

And so it was that I began wearing dresses. And to my great surprise, it began to change me. It is difficult to remember now the myriad transformations brought on by the dresses and skirts, but a few in particular stand out. For instance, just for starters, I began to think of myself as an adult woman and not anymore as some generic piece of

Picture Joseph Shaw: Guild of St Clare Sewing Retreat 2009, England



ageless humanity. I was nearing 40 at the time. When I started wearing dresses I realized that I had never really matured much beyond the age of 10 or 11. Oh, I was as mature as anybody else in the way the world judges maturity, but I was quite dismayed to discover instead how appallingly immature and even ignorant I actually was. This immaturity resembled something like the petulance of spoiled children. Wearing dresses gave me the authority of an adult, finally, and over time the spoiled child got sorted out.

I ought to say here that it was not as if I had never worn dresses at all. On the contrary, I had a lovely collection of dresses. But the going back and forth between dresses and trousers annuls any positive virtue of the dress-wearing and serves only to stoke one's vanity more. I remember thinking how wonderful it was to be a woman because a woman can wear whatever she wants: dresses in the

morning trousers in the evening! Men on the other hand are always stuck with trousers. But that's the very sort of thing, it seems to me, that sets us up for believing that we actually *can* do, and *have*, and *be* anything we want (the delusion of spoiled children).

Wearing dresses began to soften me, they softened my thinking and they softened my heart. I had never had much of a maternal instinct, but I got softened even into that. Not that I was particularly wanting to become a mother, but I found myself quite surprisingly delighted by little children and I no longer feared taking small babies into my arms!

Then, I could not help but notice a new kind of intelligence; it came like an unexpected Spring after years and years of winter sludge (which I had mistaken for great acumen); it progressed one little flower at a time. My thoughts were being formed by a now gentler heart informing a more docile mind; I

began to learn how to be gracious with others. I had always been mannered and polite—but a far finer grace was truly lacking. And without even trying, I became more delicate and feminine in my bearing.

And my relationship with my husband changed completely. This alone could fill a book. Wearing a dress was a constant reminder to me of my position with regard to him. And to God. Beforehand, to my graceless mind, we were not much more than just two *people* living together; 'man' and 'woman' being secondary distinctions and even interchangeable: we are all equal after all! When I stopped wearing trousers I also stopped thinking that we were equal and started seeing him as head of the family, for instance, and responsible for me. And for the first time ever I felt gratitude towards him, and I was no more so inclined to criticize him and tell him how he ought to do everything from tying his shoes to

running his affairs. I was becoming more quiet and respectful—with a certain holy fear of God conducting me. For years I had been bitterly dismayed with my husband, I am so very sad to say. But in the last years of his life I had learned, by the grace of God, to be a better wife. The evening before his most unexpected death, I happened to look at him from across the room and my heart filled with such love and

Picture Joseph Shaw: St Catherine Trust Summer School 2019, Ramsgate.





Picture Fr Lawrence Lew OP: Shrine of St Therese of Lisieux.

gratitude, and I blessed the Lord for so splendid a husband.

Now, all of these things that I have written cannot be entirely ascribed to the mere fact of changing trousers for dresses. Because, in fact, the change to dresses was itself an effect of a greater cause. I would not have been at that Latin Mass, which was the catalysing moment of the trouser-to-dress change, if there had not been first of all, a great desire for God urging me on.

In that period, while living abroad, I had been reading *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*, *The Life of St. Catherine* by Blessed Raymond of Capua, *Story of a Soul* by St. Therese of Lisieux, and *Dark Night of the Soul* by St. John of the Cross. These great saints imparted to me a most sumptuous knowledge of the Lord and a supremely beautiful notion of Catholicism. And reading them made me very homesick for God and for His Holy Church; they

made me aware of exquisite things for which it was impossible not to be consumed with the most desperate kind of longing. And that first Latin Mass was the drop that made the cup runneth over: in the dark of that cold morning all the longings and desires became reality and I was immersed in the beatitude of eternal mysteries. And indeed my vileness was keenly felt in that great moment, but it seemed too, that I was being raised up and clothed in the glorious robes of my eternal birthright. And what remained afterwards in the wake of it all was something like a hint, an injunction, maybe whispered by my guardian angel: *Be clothed in your glory*.

Before returning to my regular parish, I had purchased a Roman Missal to have with me in that far away place and to remember those remarkable days of grace at the Latin Mass. I would often read from it at random just for the deep refreshment it gave my very hungry soul. There was something so high,

so majestic, and so compelling in those ancient pages! They seemed capable of transforming a garden-shed into a cathedral like Chartres. What could they not do for a soul? They were most assuredly doing some such thing to me. Certain bits of text, I recall, so astounded me (*this* is the Holy Mass?); they shot into my heart like arrows and lodged there, and will be there for all eternity I do believe. These began to work deep and complex transformations in my thinking. And while for the most part they were mere phrases, yet, they were changing the way I thought about myself and most especially, they had me reflecting for the first time ever on the way *God* thinks of me, and there was just no place for trousers; there was no place for *any* of the former things:

The princess is decked in her chamber with gold-woven robes; in many-coloured robes she is led to the king... □

The Philosophy of Christendom

Presentation of the book Integralism: a manual of political philosophy, by Fr Thomas Crean OP

According to the ancient definition, human beings are rational animals. This means that we cannot reach unchanging truths with our minds except through the help of our senses; Isaac Newton, so the story goes, was spurred on to his researches into the law of gravitation thanks to a bump on the head from an apple. One consequence of this dependence of mind on sense is that people often have trouble disentangling some principle from the images with which it was clothed when they first encountered it.

Take ‘Christendom’, for example. This word names a timeless ideal of

society, where both citizens and those in public office recognise that the final purpose of life on earth is to attain the supernatural happiness of heaven, union with the Blessed Trinity through the grace of Jesus Christ; where the Catholic Church is publicly recognised as the accredited representative of God on earth, who provides by her teaching and sacraments the means to reach this final end; and where the laws and institutions of the country are shaped by, and protect, these beliefs. This ideal for society has no necessary connection to any century or land or technology or fashion.

Yet, for many people, ‘Christendom’ evokes as well as

these principles, or instead of them, a confused jumble of images: the emperor Constantine marching to Rome, Charlemagne being crowned in St Peter’s on Christmas day, mounted knights in armour, kings in gorgeous robes, monks copying bibles by hand, archery, lutes, sailing ships, peasants working in the fields, heretics being burnt at the stake, scholars disputing in Latin throughout the universities of Europe... And since today we have other fashions in clothing and music, in warfare and technology and legal sanctions, and since our powerful men today rarely wear golden crowns but are content to remain modestly behind the scenes, and since we no longer require even our

Pictures Fr Lawrence Lew OP: Below: *Father's Serra's Landing Place or Celebration of the First Mass* (oil on canvas), unsigned, attributed to Léon Troussset. Right: *Padrão dos Descobrimentos*, Lisbon.





the common good and authority; the family; servitude; the scope and origin of temporal power; forms of government and law; economics and international relations; the unity and distinction of temporal and spiritual power. This means that, as we hope, the book may serve not only as a kind of manifesto for Catholic action,

distinguished professors to know their Latin verbs – for such reasons, I think, ‘Christendom’ may seem like something noble perhaps, but hopelessly outdated.

Ever since Socrates, it has been the job of philosophy to distinguish the essential from the accidental. Hence, in our recent book *Integralism: a manual of political philosophy*, Alan Fimister and I have attempted to identify the timeless principles upon which any Christendom must rest, both the mediaeval one that was destroyed by the Reformation and by various secularising revolutions, especially that of France; and also a future Christendom, if God again grants such a thing to His people.

The word ‘integralism’ is apparently of 19th century, Spanish origin. St Paul once told the clergy of Ephesus that he had not shrunk from declaring to them ‘the whole counsel of God’. The Spanish ‘integralists’, likewise, were men who did not

shrink from infusing the whole of their political action with their Catholic faith, not trafficking with the rights of God for the sake of a lesser end, such as restoring some favourite dynasty to the throne of Spain. The word has thus come to denote an uncompromising insistence on what the Second Vatican Council called “the duty of men and societies toward the true religion and toward the one Church of Christ”. As such, ‘integralism’ does not name one brand of Catholicism among others; rather, as my fellow author and I consider, it is a word like ‘Trinitarianism’ or ‘iconodulia’ - simply the technical term for the Catholic position in one area of doctrine.

We decided to write the book as a ‘manual’ of political philosophy, that is, as a work that proceeds as clearly as possible by definition and inference from the most fundamental notions to more complex ones. Thus, successive chapters cover the idea of a society;

but also as an aid for students of political philosophy at school or university. The perverse idea that nothing of importance happened in philosophy between Aristotle and the 16th century still lingers in many places. Partly as a result, too many Catholics, ignorant of their own traditions, suppose that the best they should hope for from politics is to be left alone by a ‘neutral State’. But with the passing of each year it becomes clearer that such an aspiration is vain, and that our Lord’s words, *The one who is not with me is against me* apply to societies as well as to individual men. We hope that *Integralism: a manual of political philosophy* will help to revive aspirations which are both more realistic and more worthy of Christ’s kingship over the nations. □

The book can be ordered on Amazon and from various distributors as listed on www.editiones-scholasticae.com/distribution/

Sharing our Roman Traditions

Fr Henry Whisenant describes his time with the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter in Warrington as priest-in-residence before taking up a newly created traditional ministry in his home diocese last summer.

“Er, excuse me, can you tell me where the wasp spray is?” I asked the supermarket attendant. I was keen to find a quick fix to the last-ditch October invasion of the critters in my presbytery, but wasn’t seeing the item anywhere in the store.

“Aisle 13, above the bin bags”, replied the attendant, without missing a beat.

“Wow,” I said, “That’s impressive that you knew that offhand! They should give you a raise.”

“17 years mate!” was his answer. In other words, he’d been working at the store so long that he knew the aisles back to front.

Somehow, this prosaic encounter immediately set me thinking about the priesthood. Does today’s presbyterate have the same intimate, offhand knowledge of the things of the spirit that this superstore attendant had of his wares? I know that I for one fall short here! H. J. Sire, in his riveting book *Phoenix from the Ashes: The Making, Umaking, and Restoration of Catholic Tradition*, makes the claim that never has the Catholic clergy been less educated than since the Second Vatican Council. Is he right? I think he is. As a whole, we as priests have stopped studying Aquinas in any systematic way. We are largely unfamiliar with the teaching of the saints and the manuals in dogmatic, moral and ascetical theology. We cannot read

(let alone converse in) Latin. We are part of an age that despises familiarity with the liturgical rubrics, in favour of an approximate and *sui generis* style of celebration. We are unaware of previous, sensible deliberations to difficult pastoral cases, and end up ad libbing or searching the web.

Some may take exception to this diagnosis. And to some, thankfully, it will not apply. But I think there are many, like me, with whom it will strike a chord. I had some wonderful lecturers at Oscott College during my six years of priestly formation, and I have been fortunate to have been put in the way of good books to keep up my study, and good advice as to how to live the priestly life. But I have discovered many holes too - areas where even as a priest I had little idea what the Church taught or counselled on a certain topic before the year 1965.

This is why I am so grateful for the year I was able to spend with the FSSP in St Mary’s Warrington from the summer of 2019 to the summer of 2020. The Fraternity makes clear that its primary purpose is the formation and sanctification of priests. Only through priests who are thoroughly imbued in the faith, the



liturgy, and the spiritual life, can the faithful themselves be effectively formed and sanctified. This is ethos I found in living with Fr de Malleray, Fr Verrier, Fr Stewart, Fr Loewenstein and Deacon (now Fr) Gilbride. Each of them had spent seven years at seminary being formed in the 2,000 year old tradition of the Church. After Ordination, they and their confreres around the world live in communities which encourage ongoing intellectual and spiritual formation, helped by times of ordered communal prayer, regular days of recollection, and the frequent discussion (deliberately in meetings, or *ad hoc* at meals) of relevant theological, liturgical and pastoral principles. I found them to be men who at all times are keenly conscious of their high priestly calling.

One thing that struck me about the Fraternity was the priests' charity and discretion. They were reluctant to speak ill of others; their conversation was modest and balanced, and finished in a timely manner when the day's next duty called. But at the same time the community life was very natural, and many a laugh did I have with these men at table or washing up in the kitchen! On Saturday evenings in the summer we developed the custom of having a barbeque in the garden. With Warrington being in the North West, the weather was often against us, and Fr de Malleray (a true Frenchman) would be sceptical, and I (a native Texan) used to sunny climes would counsel surrender, but Fr Verrier, ever the true Brit, led us manfully to persevere in the face of the elements... So we ate those buns in a tent in the pouring rain! On Sunday evenings we made a point of gathering together to watch a film together at the end of a busy day, and on occasion we would take excursions in the car, anywhere from the Peak District to the Welsh coast. These gatherings served to season the priestly life with the relaxation that community life so readily provides.

This is important, for the labour of the priests in the Fraternity can be intense! When they are not celebrating the sacraments, they are regularly preparing talks, sermons and articles, organising the music, instructing catechumens, children and engaged couples, and giving spiritual direction - not to mention coordinating in Warrington a massively successful fundraising project to buy more property around the church in order to expand their work. So although the Fraternity has, I believe, around a dozen ordinations a year for its roughly 50 apostolates (many times the ratio of

any diocese), nevertheless I saw firsthand in my year with them how they are always in need of more priests to meet the many demands - especially when there are so many calls to open new apostolates beyond those that they have.

The faithful in Warrington, for their part, were amazing. Sometimes once will hear the cynical adage about the Latin Mass: "the Mass you love for the people you hate". I found that nothing could be further from the truth. The parishioners were not crazy, or snooty, or constantly carping! They were generous, upbeat, and down to earth, and they loved having the Fraternity and the Latin Mass in their church, including those who had discovered it of the first time. Moreover, they made any newcomers, like myself, immediately and abundantly welcome. That is the effect that living the fullness of the faith and attending the traditional liturgy seems to have - it makes people want to bring others into it!

At the end of my year in Warrington, I accepted a proposal from my Bishop in the summer to come back to the diocese and establish a Latin Mass chaplaincy here. Since, during my year with the FSSP, there had been a very real question whether I would apply to pursue a postulancy with them, people sometimes ask: Did something go "wrong" with the Fraternity for me to return to the diocese?



Fr Whisenant in his new church in Withermarsh Green; and offering a *Rorate* Mass in Warrington last Advent.

My answer is an emphatic: No! When my bishop asked me about starting a diocesan chaplaincy, the proposal resonated very much with an idea that had been in my mind for a few years; I felt a natural connection to the place where I grew up and for which I was ordained, and I knew there was a desire on the part of many people for a regular traditional apostolate in this area.

It is in fact because everything went *right* with the Fraternity that I felt enabled to take the present step. The FSSP encouraged me to keep my sights on what the priestly ministry is all about, and showed me how the traditional priesthood is lived day to day. Granted, now I will not have the boon of community life that I had with them, and I still have much to learn and study along the way. But the year that Fr de Malleray generously allowed me to spend with them helped me to find my feet for this new endeavour, and I will be ever grateful for that kindness. My hope is that as the Fraternity grow themselves, they will continue to be instrumental in the formation of other diocesan or religious clergy discovering the riches of Catholic tradition, so that *equipped for the work of ministry* we may all *build up the Body of Christ* (Eph 4: 12). □

A Very Priestly Fraternity

By Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP, Vocations Promoter for the FSSP in England and Ireland.

The release of the annual [statistics](#) of the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter encourages priestly vocations. Founded thirty-two years ago by twelve clerics from four countries, the FSSP now numbers 504 members including 330 priests. The average age of members is 38 years. Only ten members are deceased. The FSSP is present in 146 dioceses on four continents and runs two international seminaries in Bavaria and Nebraska (the only English-speaking traditional seminary in hierarchical communion with the Church so far), plus a First Year seminary in Sydney, Australia.

The FSSP has been serving in the UK since 1999. The FSSP gained twelve new priests from the UK & Ireland over the past eighteen years (2002-2020). Eleven FSSP Priests from the UK were ordained: Fr Konrad Loewenstein in 2002; Fr Brendan Gerard in 2006; Frs Matthew Goddard and William Barker in 2009; Fr Simon Harkins in

2010; Fr Matthew McCarthy in 2011; Fr Ian Verrier in 2015; Fr James Mawdsley in 2016; Frs Alex Stewart and Krzysztof Sanetra in 2017; Fr Seth Phipps in 2018. In addition, Fr Patrick O'Donohue, an Irish diocesan priest, was incorporated in the FSSP in 2018.

Four of these priests trained in Wigratzbad, Europe; seven trained at OLGS, USA. Six seminarians from the UK (including one from Ulster and one from Wales) are currently on formation at our two seminaries. One of them should become a deacon in May 2021.

Like Abraham of old, it takes courage and faith to leave one's country with no guarantee of being assigned back home after ordination. Our seminarians would naturally be glad to study and minister in the UK and Ireland. But they prioritize the quality of seminary formation and the assurance of a fully traditional ministry once ordained. The challenges of the modern world, they notice, call for a time-proofed configuration to Christ the Sovereign High Priest. The FSSP offers this through a philosophical and theological curriculum based on St Thomas Aquinas according to Canon 252 # 3, "*Students are to learn to penetrate more intimately the mysteries of salvation, especially*



with St. Thomas as a teacher" and Canon 251, "*Philosophical instruction must be grounded in the perennially valid philosophical heritage.*" The doctrinal formation is implemented through a deep liturgical life and a consistent discipline and spirituality. However, because their calling is not that of contemplative and scholars but of apostolic priests, FSSP seminarians are sent on short pastoral placements every year to experience their future ministry to souls.

More young men apply than are admitted, and many more attend our vocation weekends or individual meetings than choose to apply. While we do all we can to foster vocations (including through our 7,000-strong international prayer network, the [Confraternity of Saint Peter](#)), we must ensure that our



seminarians have natural virtues and apostolic skills to serve fruitfully as priests later on. Many young men are pious, learned and generous, but a healthy balance of the skills needed for a would-be pastor in the third millennium requires careful assessment. At the core of the calling, there must be a deep desire to imitate Christ as Priest, serving souls essentially through the daily offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the sacrament of Penance and the clear and sound teaching of the saving truths of Christ's revelation. In centuries past, circumstances led young men from Great Britain and Ireland to seek priestly formation where it was best provided. The need to re-evangelise what was once the Dowry of Mary calls for many, many courageous young men to enter the lists and joyfully follow the Good Shepherd of souls.

We are grateful to the bishops in this country who support our vision, entrusting ministries to us, ordaining our priests and authorising our publications.

The Constitutions of the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter state that its primary mission is to train future priests and to support those already ordained, including diocesan and religious fellow priests: *"12. To aid the sanctification of the clergy, the Fraternity of Saint Peter will offer priests the possibility of retreats and days of recollections. The houses of the Fraternity may host priestly societies, and periodicals to be published for the sanctification of priests. The Fraternity will be pleased to come to the aid of aged or sick priests, or those with special needs."* This ministry is listed even

before parochial activities. Numerically, the Fraternity is involved mostly with the laity: whether families, young adults, or the sick and the elderly. Constitutionally though, precedence is for priests. In its seminaries in Europe, America and First Year in Australia, the Fraternity is allowed to train also seminarians sent by their own bishop or religious superior, with a view to returning to their home diocese or community rather than join the FSSP (such a case occurred in this country.) In addition to fostering the sanctification of its own 504 clerics, the Fraternity organises spiritual retreats as well as liturgical

workshops for diocesan and religious clergy. It also welcomes them to spend time informally in its houses and it produces books and articles on priestly spirituality. (On the fssp.co.uk website, clergy readers may subscribe to a circular e-newsletter.)

Annual Vocation Weekend of discernment 29-31 Jan. 2021, Warrington WA1 2NS - for 18+ single Catholic men. Contact: malleray@fssp.org.

Resources: books on the Sacred Priesthood: aroucapress.com/x-ray-of-the-priest; and on the Holy Eucharist: www.lumenfidei.ie/product/ego-eimi-it-is-i. □



All pictures FSSP Wigratzbad:
Seminarian at St Peter's Basilica;
ritual ice-cream tasting in Rome;
tour of the Eternal City
with pastor of the FSSP personal parish
Santissima Trinità dei Pellegrini.

Schools of Prayer

By Ferdi McDermott, Headmaster

At Chavagnes International College, our English Catholic boarding school for boys, situated in the west of France, near Nantes, Mass is celebrated daily in the main College Chapel, Monday to Friday according to the 1962 missal, for all boys and Masters. On Sundays, Mass and Vespers in the Extraordinary form attract parents of pupils and a growing local following of friends and supporters. In addition, there are confessions, adoration, Benediction and other devotions held regularly in our chapel. The strains of Gregorian chant can be heard every day. Why, might you ask, do we place the Church's liturgy at the heart of our life as a school?

At Chavagnes, we take as our



blueprint the checklist for Catholic schools from Vatican II's *Gravissimum Educationis*: a broad education not just confined to religious teaching, a deep education which creates a habit of intellectual discipline, a moral formation and, lastly, a formation in prayer, especially in the context of the Sacred Liturgy.

Let me tell you about the first ever Catholic boarding school for boys

... in the late 2nd century, in the shadow of the great library of Alexandria, where, three centuries before, the chief librarian Eratosthenes had first calculated the circumference of the globe, St Clement of Alexandria ran a school for boys where the mathematics of Pythagoras, the oratory of Cicero and the epic poetry of Homer were taught alongside not only Sacred Scripture and Christian doctrine but also Greek athletics and dance. And





every day, the pupils would recite the psalms and attend the liturgy.

6th century St Gregory the Great was a rich young man who had set up a community following St Benedict's Rule in his family villa. When he became Pope, he famously sent Augustine to Canterbury with a group of Anglo-Saxon boys discovered in the slave market of Rome. And out of this community grew the first English Catholic boarding school, with the worship of God at its heart. First there was Canterbury, then Rochester. Schools began to spring up everywhere in England, under the influence of Gregory the Great's *Regula Pastoralis*. Several of them still exist today, 1,400 years later.

By the time of the 9th century Alfred the Great, who himself

translated Pope Gregory's Encyclical into Anglo-Saxon, the call was already going out across the land: "education for all." In what we came to call the Dark Ages, with the Roman Empire in collapse and the threat of the Norsemen ever present, the English (with the Welsh, the Irish and the Scots) busied themselves with the creation of centres of prayer, culture and learning. In a climate of uncertainty, but in a spirit of faith, the whole of England had taken, as it were, "the Benedict Option".

And so when at the end of the 13th century, Innocent III asked every religious house to open a school, England already had a massive head start. By the time of the Reformation there were Catholic schools in every English town: monastic schools, chantry schools,

colleges, grammar schools, all founded with the gifts of the faithful and built on daily prayer and worship. Hundreds of them still exist, although they have sadly departed from the faith that prompted their creation.

We are the only ones left standing in this great English tradition, at least in the sense of an officially recognised English Catholic school for boys, with the liturgy at its heart, attempting to perpetuate those traditions of Clement, Benedict, Gregory, Augustine and Alfred in our own time. And we are in France! Although we are in that part of France which belonged for a long time to the English kings! Since our foundation in 2002, several of our Masters and boys have joined the FSSP; in fact we have counted one priestly vocation a year.



Please consider helping us to raise a new generation of thoughtful, resourceful, joyful and prayerful Catholic leaders.

If you would like to find out more about us, check our website www.chavagnes.org and follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/chavagnes

Scholarships are available for boys from the UK. □

The Privilege of Motherhood

By Rhoslyn Aguirre Ramirez

“The Most Important Person on earth is a mother. She cannot claim the honour of having built Notre Dame Cathedral. She need not. She has built something more magnificent than any cathedral - a dwelling for an immortal soul, the tiny perfection of her baby's body... The angels have not been blessed with such a grace. They cannot share in God's creative miracle to bring new saints to Heaven. Only a human mother can. Mothers are closer to God the Creator than any other creature; God joins forces with mothers in performing this act of creation... What on God's good earth is more glorious than this: to be a mother?”

The quote above was written by Venerable József Cardinal Mindszenty - Prince-Primate of Hungary and passionate defender of the Church against Communism and Fascism. He was arrested numerous times; in 1949, Venerable József Mindszenty was tortured and imprisoned by the Hungarian Communist government for, among other things, refusing to permit Hungary's Catholic schools to be secularised. He was released during the Hungarian revolution of 1956 but was later forced to seek asylum in the American embassy in Budapest for the next 15 years, following the invasion of Hungary by the Soviet Union. He died in Austria in 1975.

Venerable József Mindszenty's courage only adds more weight to his beautiful and true words on motherhood. Indeed, he makes a

very valuable point that God *chose* to bring new life into the world in this way and we know that God does nothing by accident. There is surely great meaning behind this choice.

Sadly, I found during pregnancy and since giving birth that our society does not honour motherhood as Venerable József Mindszenty does. They may pay lip service to mothers but I challenge you to find concrete evidence of this in the behaviour of the average person today.

Consider, for example, couples who seem almost paralysed with fear and indecision when it comes to the question of whether or not to allow themselves to have children. On the one hand, there is the natural urge to have children. This is very strong and I have seen many women wrestle with this as they desperately try to satisfy the world whilst silencing their God-given maternal instinct. On the other hand, there is the knowledge that they would have to give up their freedom, their sleep, their ability to come home every evening with no responsibilities. They would have to accept that their bodies would never be the same again. There is the financial burden too.

How many times have we heard people casually say that they do not like children, that they prefer to go on holiday and buy a new car rather than allow themselves to bring new human lives into the world?

How far we have fallen from God's instruction to Adam and Eve:

"And God blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth" (Genesis 1:28)?

Now many are too afraid and selfish to do so, scared of being chained to their child. Or, if they do have children, their numbers must be limited, spaced out and every detail planned.

Indeed, there is little else more repulsive to modern society than a mother who feels privileged to have children and happily devotes herself to her family and her home, uninterested in a career. Truly, many consider this to be an insulting and degrading concept.

So how should we view motherhood? Is it honest to look at it through rose-tinted glasses instead? I don't think so.

As Alice Von Hilderbrand, a champion of women and femininity, points out in her



book 'The Privilege of Being a Woman': "[w]hen the Old Testament wishes to illustrate severe trials, it usually refers to a woman in labour". And, as GK Chesterton famously said, "...a woman's function is laborious, but because it is gigantic, not because it is minute".

Motherhood is heroic because it is difficult, because it requires a woman to take up her cross daily (Luke 9:23). It requires a woman to attempt, every day, to die to her selfish desires and give herself totally, first to God, then to her husband and to her children.

I admit, on the face of it, this doesn't sound very appealing when compared to the carefree life so

revered in the modern world. It's no wonder that many look down on mothers, especially those blessed with many children, if they look at her life through the lens of the world. Happily, we do not.

We do not believe that when we die, our bodies will rot in the ground and that will be the end of our influence. We do not believe that all our actions will cease to be important once we take our last breath. We know that when a mother is blessed with the conception of her unborn child, a human being with an eternal soul is growing inside her. A mother's influence on the destiny of that eternal soul is incomparable.

This is why a mother is so

important. This is why she deserves to be honoured, not just one day a year with a card and a bunch of flowers, but with proper respect for the awesome task she has been given.

As we think and meditate on motherhood, it's appropriate to end with the thought of our own Blessed Mother - our guide and model!

"Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honour of our people" (Judith 15:10).

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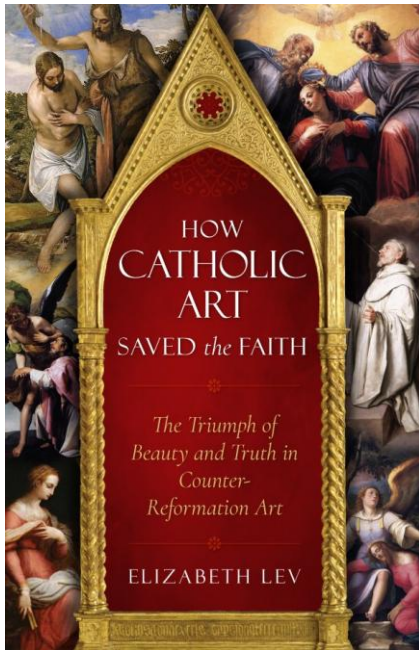
(Picture Fr Lawrence Lew OP, Ravenna)



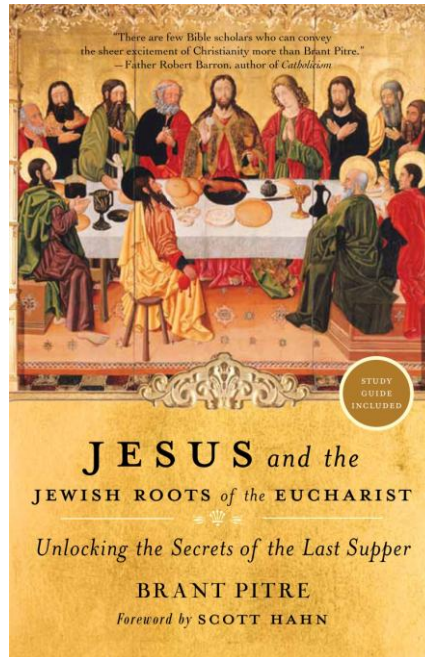
Good Books For All As Christmas Presents

As suggested by various priests

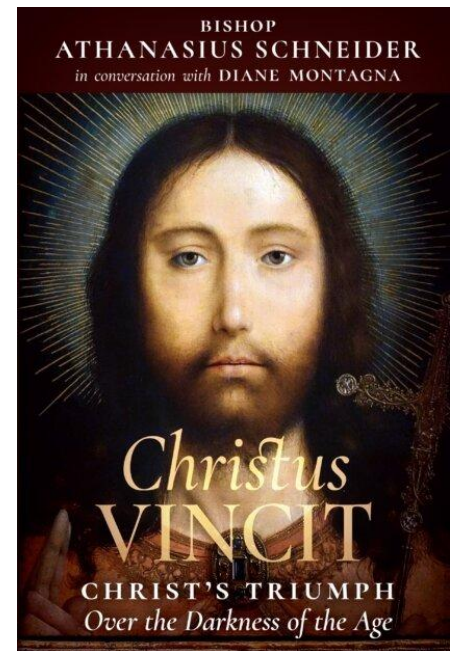
***How Catholic Art Saved the Faith
The Triumph of Beauty and Truth
in Counter-Reformation Art***
by Elizabeth Lev, Sofia Institute



***Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the
Eucharist Unlocking the Secrets of
the Last Supper***, by Brant James
Pitre, Doubleday Religion, 2011



***Christus Vincit: Christ's Triumph
Over the Darkness of the Age***, by
Bishop Athanasius Schneider with
Diane Montagna, Angelico Press



Not long after Martin Luther's defiance of the Church in 1517, dialogue between Protestants and Catholics broke down, brother turned against brother, and devastating religious wars erupted across Europe.

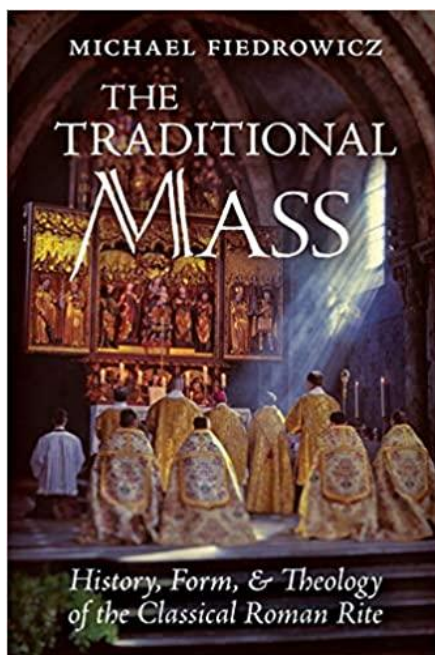
Desperate to restore the peace and recover the unity of Faith, Catholic theologians clarified and reaffirmed Catholic doctrines, but turned as well to another form of evangelization: the Arts. Convinced that to win over the unlettered, the best place to fight heresy was not in the streets but in stone and on canvas, they enlisted the century's best artists to create a glorious wave of beautiful works of sacred art — Catholic works of sacred art — to draw people together instead of driving them apart.

What was the Passover like at the time of Jesus? What were the Jewish hopes for the Messiah? What was Jesus' purpose in instituting the Eucharist during the feast of Passover? And, most important of all, what did Jesus mean when he said, This is my body... This is my blood? To answer these questions, Pitre explores ancient Jewish beliefs about the Passover of the Messiah, the miraculous Manna from heaven, and the mysterious Bread of the Presence. As he shows, these three keys; the Passover, the Manna, and the Bread of the Presence have the power to unlock the original meaning of the Eucharistic words of Jesus. Along the way, Pitre also explains how Jesus united the Last Supper to his death on Good Friday and his Resurrection on Easter Sunday.

Bishop Schneider addresses such topics as widespread doctrinal confusion, the limits of papal authority, the documents of Vatican II, the Society of St. Pius X, anti-Christian ideologies and political threats, the third secret of Fatima, the traditional Roman rite, and the Amazon Synod, among many others. Like his fourth-century patron, St. Athanasius the Great, Bishop Schneider says things that others won't, fearlessly following St. Paul's advice: "Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching" (2 Tim 4:2). His insights into the challenges facing Christ's flock today are essential reading for those who are, or wish to be, alert to the signs of the times.

Three Books On Priestly Spirituality

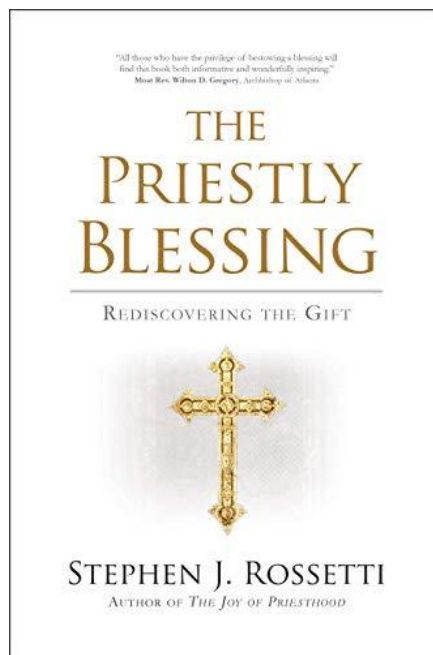
The Traditional Mass, by Michael Fiedrowicz, Angelico Press (2020).



Shows the organic process by which the Roman rite was built up from its foundations into a magnificent structure, marked by the accumulated riches of each age through which it passed, and characterized by order, beauty, and piety in its texts, gestures, rubrics, chants, and calendar—ranging from the major elements to the most minute details.

In view of ever deepening interest in the traditional form of the Roman rite of Mass—which, according to Benedict XVI's *Summorum Pontificum*, demands “due honour for its venerable and ancient usage”—a comprehensive but concise introduction to its history, form, and theology is more than ever desirable.

The Priestly Blessing, by Msgr Rossetti, Ave Maria Press. www.avemariapress.com/products/The-Priestly-Blessing

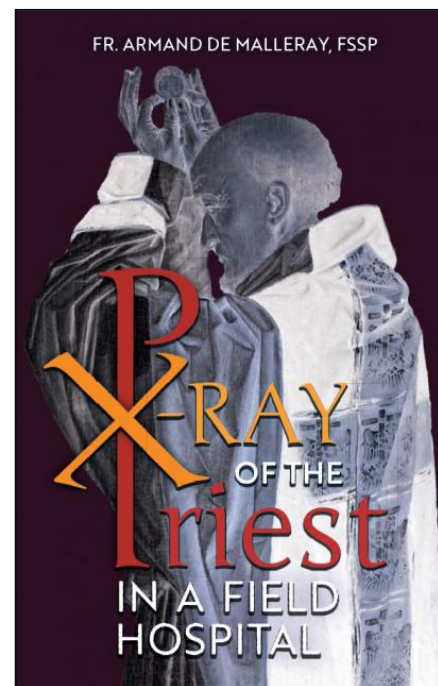


A renewed theology of priestly blessing, encouraging brother priests to embrace the habit of blessing people, objects, and events. This provocative and inspirational book shows how the blessing is integral to the identity of priests and crucial to the spiritual wellbeing of all the faithful.

Many priests shy away from blessing people and objects because of a lack of awareness of the rich tradition of Church blessings and a deficit in training for this important pastoral practice.

Rossetti traces the history of blessing in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. He also explores the various types of blessing, such as praise of God, the invocation of special benefit from God, and being consecrated to God.

X-Ray of the Priest in a Field Hospital, by Fr. Armand de Malleray, FSSP. Arouca Press, 2020; aroucapress.com/books/x-ray-of-the-priest.



This book identifies sinful hindrances and spiritual resources for a fruitful and rewarding priestly life in the twenty-first century.

“Written with both imagination and rigour, and merits a wide readership” - **Fr Aidan Nichols, O.P.**

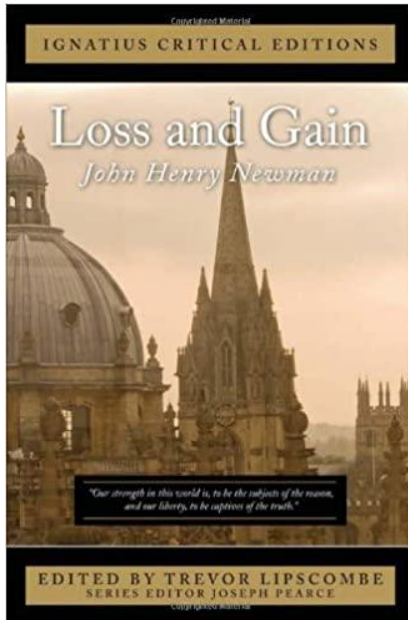
“Fr de Malleray’s reflections on the nature of the priesthood are fascinating and perceptive, and will edify both clerical and lay readers.” - **Dr Joseph Shaw, PhD, Oxf,** Chairman of The Latin Mass Society

“Full of instruction yet easy to read.” - **Fr Thomas Crean, O.P.**

“I am happy to recommend this robust set of meditations.” - **Dr Peter Kwasniewski**

Catholic Novels: When Fiction Illustrates Faith

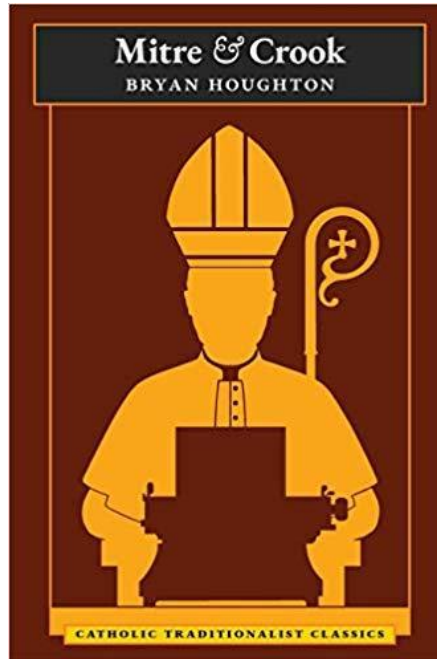
Loss and Gain: The Story of a Convert, a novel by St John-Henry Newman. Ignatius Press.



Mostly autobiographical: a pleasant opportunity to become familiar with the spiritual journey of the great 19th century convert.

This novel about a young man's intellectual and spiritual development was the first work John Henry Newman wrote after entering the Roman Catholic Church in 1845. The story describes the perplexing questions and doubts Charles Reding experiences while attending Oxford. Though intending to avoid the religious controversies that are being heatedly debated at the university, Reding ends up leaving the Church of England and becoming a Catholic. A former Anglican clergyman who was later named a Catholic cardinal, Newman wrote this autobiographical novel to illustrate his own reasons for embracing Catholicism.

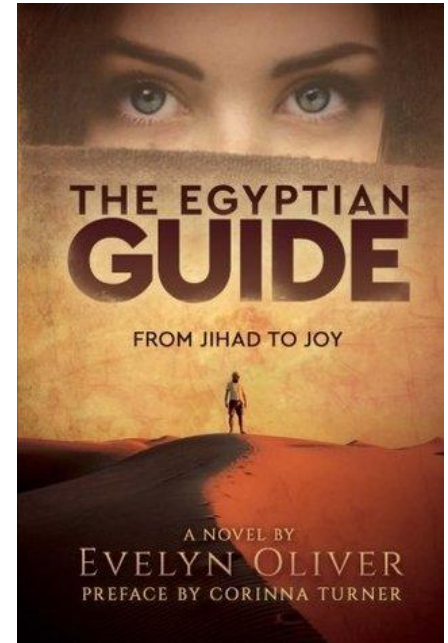
Mitre and Crook, by Fr Bryan Houghton (a reprint from the 1970s prophetic original). Order: lms.org.uk/product/mitre-and-crook



Bishop Edmund Forester, looking out over his little diocese of Stamford, was distressed at what he saw. In the early 1970s, a pragmatic bishop decides to allow the traditional Mass to go on.

A novel unique in the annals of Catholic literature. It takes the form of letters from the bishop himself: a tough infighter—and a saint; a man of humility and charity—with a nose for humbug and an eye for the absurd. What emerges from these remarkable letters is a bishop for the ages. But along with this extraordinary man we are treated to what may be the most incisive analyses of the crisis in the Catholic Church ever to see print. What duller writers take chapters and books to say, Bishop Forester declaims in a few pages. And unforgettably.

The Egyptian Guide – From Jihad to Joy, by Evelyn Oliver, Regina Press. Order: [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B000APR004), [LMS](https://lms.org.uk/product/the-egyptian-guide)



In this deeply Catholic novel, a sentimental encounter in Cairo leads to conversion and heroism. While Islamists and liberals connive to oppress Christians, Catholic beliefs and practices prove vital for protection and spiritual survival.

The Egyptian Guide is a beautiful story of a woman's faith journey. It contains a wide range of comparisons between life experiences and the realities of faith. The author uses rich descriptive language to explore the depths of conversion, love, forgiveness, and their interactions expressed through geopolitical events, terrorism, radical conversion, and consecrated life. The chapters are short. The plot is fast-paced, and it covers a full range of emotions. Reading this novel was at times exhilarating, at other times heartbreaking, but wonderfully satisfying.

History And Spirituality Books For All

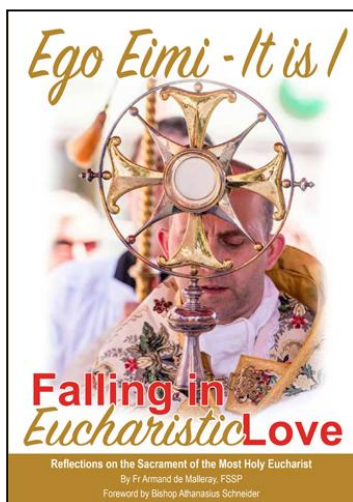
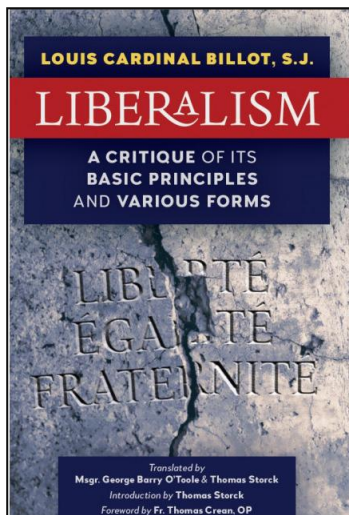
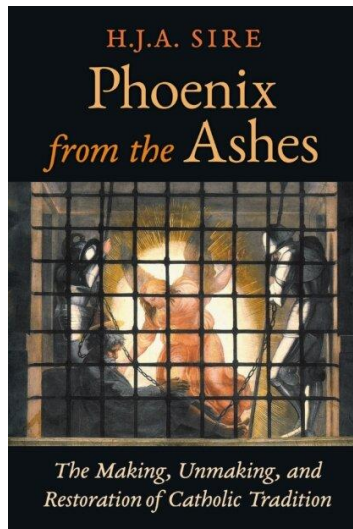
Phoenix from the Ashes: The Making, Unmaking and Restoration of Catholic Tradition, by Henry Sire, Angelico Press.

A concise summary of the history of Christendom as well as a prescient diagnosis of our modern situation. Serious and pious, yet simultaneously witty!

Liberalism: A Critique of Its Basic Principles and Its Various Forms, by Cardinal Louis Billot, S.J. Arouca Press. A very short book, essential to understand the root of the ideological disease affecting modern society.

Ego Eimi – It is I: Falling in Eucharistic Love, by Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP; Lumen Fidei. Order: lumenfidei.ie/product/ego-eimi-it-is-i/

“May the present book, a beautiful and impressive ‘paper shrine to the Most Holy Eucharist’, have a wide diffusion and be a practical spiritual aid in order to renew the Catholic Faith, the Catholic Love and the Catholic Worship of the Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist.”
+ Bishop Athanasius Schneider, *Foreword* to the book

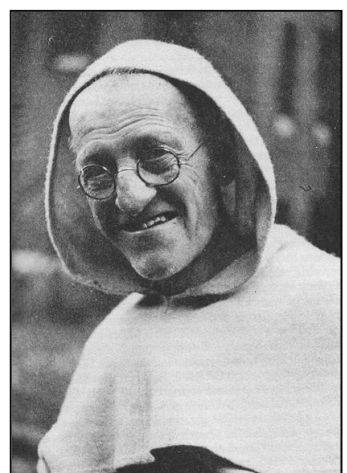
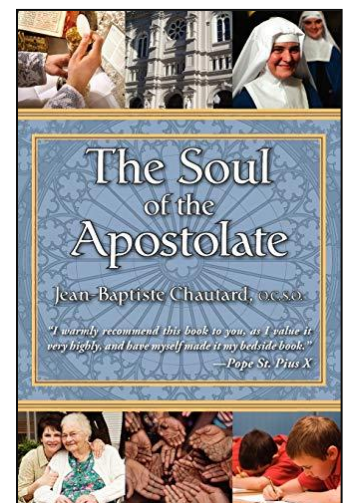
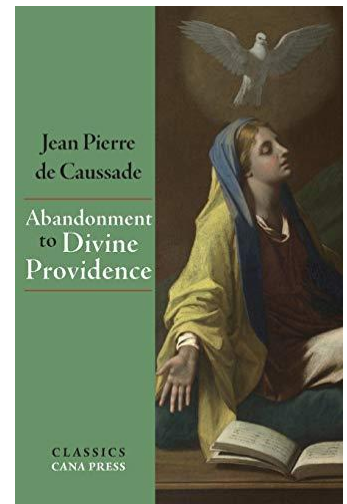


Abandonment to Divine Providence, by Fr Jean-Pierre de Caussade S.J. This spiritual classic seems to have been written just for our times of worry and uncertainty.

The Soul of The Apostolate, by Dom Jean-Baptiste Chautard.

A classic on the primacy of the interior life. Against the temptation of activism, or against helplessness when one is prevented from actively serving God, this book reminds clergy and laity that personal prayer is the key. The interior life seeks God in everything. It is a life of prayer, teaching us to live in the presence of God. It teaches us that God grants fruit to our initiatives in proportion with their root in mental prayer.

A Saint in Hyde Park, by E. S. Siderman. Anecdotal account of the life and words of Fr Vincent McNabb, the Dominican who preached to the crowds on Hyde Park Corner, never failing to make them stop and think about the deeper questions. Out of print, but second hand copies available on various sites.



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Glencomeragh House, Kilsheelan, Co. Tipperary
E91 H584, Ireland

Website: <https://fssp.ie/>

Contact for financial matters: Liam Kearney:
Lisieux, 20 Avoca Road, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Ireland
Tel: 00353(0)872515434.

Email: liamkearney8@gmail.com

Bank of Ireland; Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2.

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FSSP SCOTLAND:

Fr John Emerson, FSSP, 6 Belford Park,
Edinburgh EH4 3DP. Tel.: 0131 332 3750;
Email: fr.emerson@fssp.co.uk

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Vocation Weekend of discernment 29-31 Jan.
2021, Warrington WA1 2NS - for Catholic men 18+

Clergy Retreat, 7-11 June 2021,
Douai Abbey, Berks RG7 5TQ

Both events subject to Covid-19 regulations

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□



(Picture: Our First Year UK seminarian David as Julius Caesar in a humorous *disputatio* in Latin at our European seminary.)

Contact FSSP ENGLAND:

**Priestly Fraternity of St Peter,
St Mary's Priory, Smith Street,
Warrington WA1 2NS
Cheshire, England**

01925 635 664

warrington@fssp.org

fssp.co.uk