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

Dowry

Winter 2025-2026
Issue N°68

Pope Leo XIV received the Superior General of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter Father John Berg in private audience at the Vatican on Monday, January 19, 2026. (Picture © Vatican Media.)
The cordial half-hour meeting was an opportunity to present to the Holy Father in greater detail the foundation and history of the Fraternity, as well as the various forms of apostolate that it has been offering to the faithful for almost 38 years. The proper law and charism that guide the sanctification of its members were recalled.
This audience also provided an opportunity to evoke any misunderstandings and obstacles that the Fraternity encounters in certain places and to answer questions from the Supreme Pontiff. At the end of this meeting, Pope Leo XIV gave his blessing, which he extended to all members of the Fraternity.

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Save the date: ***Juventutem* Summer Weekend** at Ampleforth, **31st July- 2nd August** 2026, for single Catholics 18-35 on the theme *From Crush to Covenant:* ***A Fresh Look at Holy Matrimony***

Editorial: Stubbornly Loving Every Unborn

One unborn Briton out of three was aborted in 2023, according to the latest officially released statistics. With nearly 300,000 abortions that year across all four nations (277,970 in England and Wales alone), this figure is the highest ever recorded in our country. Moreover, it indicates a sustained upward trend. By contrast, UK births plummeted to a historic low, falling below 600,000 in 2023 (precisely 591,072 births in England and Wales, out of approximately 637,000 across the entire country).

A quick online search about infant mortality in Europe in the Middle Ages suggests a rate of around 30%, a figure described as "extremely high." With approximately 33% of our unborn children never seeing the light of day, we have surpassed "medieval" Europe. Of course, there is a crucial difference in interpretation between those figures. In medieval—that is, Christian—Europe, nearly all unborn fatalities would have occurred accidentally. Not so with ours today. All 300,000 died as a result of planned killing. In medieval Europe, dying children would be baptised in emergencies, would be buried with Christian respect, and mourned with parental love. But our young victims are slain in state-funded abortuaries, their surgical dispatch having been re-defined as "healthcare."

What, then, of the Hippocratic Oath? Does it not prohibit abortion (and euthanasia)? No longer. After being held for twenty-four centuries as the most solemn formulation of the medical code of honour, it was "modernised" in the age of abortion (in 1964) to fit the views of "liberated" humanity. Within a year, as if in response, Holy Church reiterated at Vatican II her unmitigated condemnation of abortion: "abortion and infanticide are unspeakable crimes" (in Latin: "abortus necnon infanticidium nefanda sunt crimina") (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, §51, 1965).

> *we have surpassed "medieval" Europe*

Still, that old stubborn thing called moral conscience, based on natural law—a taboo from the so-called Dark Ages—made some Westerners uneasy. Thus, the definition of the human person was changed (and soon that of healthcare). No longer human and personal from conception by two human parents, we now receive humanity and personhood as a gift bestowed on us by those in power, like an endowment, a social credit. Whenever we fail to meet their changing criteria, we lose our human and personal status, so that killing us ceases to be homicide. That arbitrary claim of law to redefine human identity had been successfully made in 1930s Germany, inspiring further eugenicists such as Planned Parenthood foundress Margaret Sanger.

Thanks be to God, great improvements have taken place in America, such as the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, and the presidential support of Donald Trump and JD Vance, (even though the abortion pill is still permitted, and IVF promoted). In the UK, while pro-life determination and commitment are slowly building up, much remains to be done. How, then, can we help?

We need *all* our young adults to get involved in the defining battle of our age. We need *every* able Catholic to stand in prayer at least once during Lent near an abortuary (with no fear of arrest outside buffer zones). We need every cleric to *speak up* for love of life from the pulpit and in parish newsletters at least once a year. But all those efforts will bear fruit only insofar as they stem from the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Where better than in the unbloody re-enactment of the Son of Man's sacrifice can the ritual slaughter of our unborn fellow men be averted? Let us then come in person to Holy Mass, not only every Sunday as necessary, but also on weekdays, to obtain graces of conversion and true enlightenment for all those misled into the dead end of abortion.

We assure you of our prayer in this penitential season of Lent, walking together towards Golgotha where the New Adam ransomed us out of love. □

Malleray+

Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP
Superior of the FSSP England Apostolate
Bedford, 2nd February 2026

(Picture: Adele Morris *on* Unsplash*.com)*

Moral Issues About *In Vitro* Fertilisation

After reading Biomedical Sciences at University College London, Marta Berbel Gallego obtained a PGCE in Biology from King's College London, and completed an MA in Theology at St Mary's University, Twickenham. In this article she summarises the reasons why IVF falls short of the bar set by Catholic anthropology.

"Miss… but… my parents are Catholic and I *am* an IVF baby." As a biology teacher, I had always known that this moment would come. The National Curriculum in England prescribes the teaching of hormones in human reproduction at Key Stage 4. Almost every examination board understands this to include the use of hormones in the treatment of female infertility and *In Vitro* Fertilisation (IVF). Undoubtedly, my next interaction with the student in question, of which the whole class was to be a witness, was a profoundly delicate moment. How could I communicate to this fifteen-year-old that he is loved and cherished while also explaining that the way in which his parents decided he was to be conceived fell short of the bar set by Catholic anthropology?

In the Beginning…

Thus, I started, like all sound theology ought to, from the beginning. Firstly, human beings are distinct and special from the rest of the created order (*CCC§355*). A human being has been made *Imago Dei* and is thus conferred the status of person; a 'someone' with both body and a rational soul (*CCC§357, 362*). Furthermore, God made us male and female (Gen 1:27) to be a communion of persons (*CCC§372*). In the Creator's eyes, the goodness of the love of the spouses made manifest in the sacrament of marriage embodies a glimpse of God's perfect love for mankind (*CCC§1604*).

Through the sacrament, the spouses become one and, for those who enter the covenant of marriage, God issues a clear directive in Genesis 1:28 to pro-create with him (*CCC§366*). This is one way in which human relationships mirror the 'generosity and fecundity' of the Father (*CCC§2335*). The Church acknowledges and approves of the possibility of needing legitimate medical interventions to aid this (*CCC§2379)* and, likewise, encourages any research focused on reducing human sterility developed in keeping with God's will and design (*CCC§2375)*. IVF is not one such method.

The Crux of the Matter: Why IVF misses the mark

IVF rests on and profits from selling the reductionistic idea that the conception of a human embryo equals the mere fusion of sperm and egg. Then, some of the embryos produced are transferred to the mother's womb in the hopes of implantation. However, engendering human life is not akin to the assembly of a piece of furniture or the manufacturing of a car. As the Catechism puts it 'A child does not come from outside as something added on to the mutual love of the spouses, but springs from the very

heart of that mutual giving, as its fruit and fulfilment' (*CCC§2366*). An adequate understanding of this includes the maxim that a child is to be regarded as a 'supreme gift' that the spouses may receive, not a right they have been granted (*CCC§2378*).

As part of the IVF process, eggs are extracted from the ovary while semen is obtained usually through masturbation. This is a sin against chastity and also represents a violation of the sacrament of marriage (*CCC§2352*). IVF also separates the procreative aspect of marriage (*CCC§2377*) from the marital act. The immorality of IVF is aggravated if it involves the use of donated sperm or egg (*CCC§2376*). Furthermore, the engendering of a human life is now controlled by the use of technological tools and the intervention of doctors, denigrating the human dignity of the embryo and undermining the meaning of the unity of marriage (*CCC§2377*).

In addition, the fate of embryos that have not been implanted into the uterus ranges from discarded when categorised as 'defective', frozen for later rounds or used in research. Human beings are categorically not meant to be disposed of, kept in freezers, or experimented on. Little thought is also given to the risks to both mother and children in the case of a multiple pregnancy, a regular occurrence in successful IVF treatments. All of this constitutes an outright violation of human dignity.

Resorting to IVF: When those Called are met with Unfulfilled Desires and Struggle

My student's candid statement was unintentionally insightful: the reality is that many Catholics resort to IVF. Some are fully aware of the teaching of the Church, but others are not. Let us remember that IVF is sought not just in cases of infertility but also to facilitate the screening out of certain genetic diseases before implantation. Diverse as are the concerns that each couple faces, unless we make a conscious effort to garner a greater understanding of the motivations and yearnings compelling those around us to use these reproductive technologies, our words will fall on deaf ears. The Church recognises the need to meet humankind in its suffering and walks close to those who find that the call placed on their hearts to become parents is met with pain and anguish. It is also 'at the very beginning', with Sarah and Abraham, where we find the first of many such instances that bear witness to this heartbreaking reality (CCC§2374).

Unequivocal truths

Perhaps my argumentation was wholly unsatisfactory to my young classroom audience but, at least, one can only hope that the following points transpired. On the one hand, Catholics have a duty to be versed in and defend theological truths. One should be confident in the revelation laid out from the beginning and the principles that the Church, with the help of theologians and Catholics of great wisdom, has distilled and interpreted from it.

Equally, when we take time to hear people's stories and, once we 'see the other' when 'heart speaks to heart' (*cor ad cor loquitur*), we can then proceed to carefully share the treasured truth by which hearts and minds may be changed. Being an IVF baby is not an identity marker. My student is first and foremost God's child (his immortal soul having been created directly by God), and to the whole world, he is an unrepeatable gift; this also *is* an unequivocal truth. □

(Picture left: Eric Ward *on* Unsplash*.com ; Above: Wikipedia, Public Domain)*

United in Blood and Love

The holy bishop St Francis de Sales has a lot to offer spouses and those contemplating holy Matrimony, says Canon Amaury Montjean, ICKSP, who authored a book on that topic.

Crossing the distances of history and of our cultures, St. Francis de Sales, bishop of Geneva from 1602 to 1622, addresses Christian spouses with astonishing acuity. Although he never wrote a systematic treatise on marriage, his writings and letters are frequently dealing with various aspects of marriage, such as conjugal friendship, contract, education, union with Christ the Bridegroom, procreation, sacrament, etc… He constantly emphasises the high dignity of the marital union as a symbol of the mysterious union and eternal friendship of Christ and his Mystical Body. The pages of *Salesian Anthology on Marriage* aim to unfold the strength and modernity of the Salesian teaching, as well as the delicacy of Francis de Sales' approach and expression on very intimate topics such as chastity, family crosses, and conjugal prayer. He wants couples and spouses to learn how every moment of their union is a door to the supernatural world, and not primarily how to "make their marriage work" on earth, following a mere psychological approach: "I think I have said everything I wanted to say, and let people understand without saying what I did not want to[1]".

The sanctity of marriage derives from the high purpose that God has assigned to this institution, i.e. the community of life with Him for all eternity. Marriage is therefore much more than assistance to human weakness, or the compulsory condition to reach the procreative and educational ends of marriage: this sacramental union is entirely angled by the eternal life of the spouses in Heaven. Therefore, procreation "multiply the number of the elect[2]", and community life prefigures the perfect union of the great family of the Blessed.

Marriage is thus instituted as a school of high perfection which entrusts to the spouses the natural and supernatural tools to forge their individual sanctity as well as that of the family. St. Francis de Sales understand that the day-to-day duties of marriage can distract the spouses from perfection: he subtly put these conjugal and familial obligations to their correct and just place in the scope of mutual sanctification. The core of the marital friendship is essentially a spiritual good: beyond the physical and cordial kindness, this supernatural gift is at the heart of every matrimonial contract. Without this constant supernatural presence, marriage would gradually decline and finally "die" in passions that would discredit the greatness of human love. Finally, following the teaching of the Church, St. Francis de Sales reminds his readers that the sacrament of marriage can only (and will) be dissolved by death: if the conjugal union as such will no longer exist, the friendship between spouses – and their children – will remain in Eternal life and will be a source of a secondary but greater happiness in Heaven.[3] □

(Picture of St Francis de Sales, Brompton Oratory, by A. Montjean)

[1] *OEA* III, 278, *IVD*, *On the honesty of the marriage bed*.
[2] *OEA* III, 263, *IVD*, *Advice to married people*.
[3] A shorter, electronic, translation of the book in English can be requested from the author at domeofhome@icksp.org.uk.

Newman and Péguy as Poets and Philosophers

Fr Gerald Duroisin, FSSP who did his doctorate in Rome on the philosophy of John Henry Newman discusses the new English Doctor of the Church in relation with French convert Charles Péguy

John Henry Newman (1801-90) is best known as a churchman, a theologian, a preacher and a spiritual master, a controversialist, an essayist, a historian, a classicist. He is the author of the beautiful religious hymn "Lead, Kindly Light" and many other poetical works; he seems then to belong to Romanticism which attaches so much value to nature, imagination and subjectivity. However, he also provides his contemporaries with relevant rational analyses. In this article, I aim to compare his philosophy with that of Charles Péguy (1873-1914) and to show the elements they have in common on a philosophical level.

The pilgrims of Chartres know well the man who wrote to a friend:

"Chartres is my cathedral. I walked 144 kilometres in three days. [...] The spire of Chartres from 17 kilometres away, across the plain. From time to time, it disappeared behind a swell in the landscape or a line of trees. As soon as I saw it, I was in ecstasy."

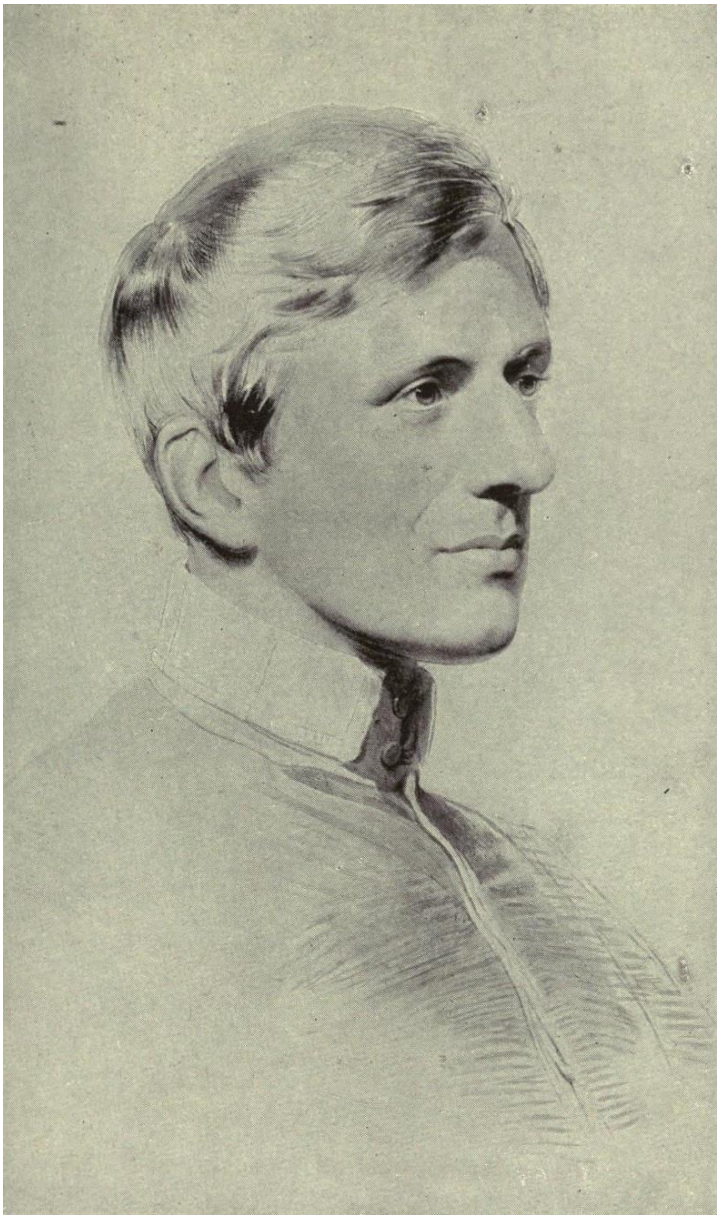
Both Péguy and Newman are poets and converts; both have written so well about the virtue of Hope! They lived in a different environment and apparently, they did not have much in common: Newman was an academic, was

ordained in the Church of England; he died at almost 90 years old; Péguy, a Frenchman born in Orléans, known for his socialist commitment, failed at the "agrégation,"[4] got married and pursued an independent intellectual path; as a lieutenant he was killed at the Battle of the Marne.

Péguy composed many verses in honour of Our Lady, "Star of the sea" above "the ocean of wheat," and whose cathedral he saw "from 17 kilometres away." For him "nothing is as beautiful as a lovely flat road in Beauce." The poet had probably a premonition of his end when he recited on the way to Our Lady of Chartres: "Blessed is the wheat that is ripe and the wheat that is gathered in sheaves."

At first glance, it may seem surprising that we are dealing with poetry in our investigation about philosophy. However, did "the Philosopher" (i.e. Aristotle) not also write the *Poetics*, a treatise on aesthetics? And in fact, is it not Saint Thomas himself, whose style seems so dry and off-putting to beginners in the study of scholasticism, to whom we owe marvellous hymns in honour of the Most Holy Sacrament?

Two poets, who strove for beauty, each with their own personalities, Newman and Péguy were also in search of the truth, which St. Thomas defines as "adequatio rei et intellectus (the correspondence of object and intellect)," following the empirical method. Contrary to the scepticism of their time, they did not question the objectivity of reality, of "things as they are." In his *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*,[5] Newman distances himself from "collective truth" and writes that "a truth or a fact may be certain, though it is not generally received."[6] He also goes against the nominalist logicians of the time for whom "dog or horse is not a thing when he sees but a mere name suggesting ideas."[7]



When dealing with intuition,[8] Newman speaks of a "vision," "analogous to eye-sight, which my intellectual nature has." More precisely:

It is arising from the original, elementary sympathy or harmony between myself and what is external to myself, I and it being portions of one whole, and, in a certain sense, existing for each other.[9]

This shows a deep poetical sensibility. Newman then quotes Wordsworth's "noble philosophy" in which the poet speaks of the "soul's immensity" of the child who is the "best philosopher," "Mighty Prophet, Seer blest." However, the old man's wisdom is not despised, and Aristotle is quoted:

"One should attend to the sayings and opinions of the experienced, the old, the wise, THOUGH THEY ARE INCAPABLE OF PROOF, not less than to proofs; for they see the principles, in that they have AN EYE in consequence of their experience."[10]

Newman's quest is very intuitive,[11] as is Péguy's; it contrasts with the rationalism of the modern era, and it creates a space for mystery and

Christian revelation. Both authors are against the laicism (secularism) of the time.[12] Péguy writes about "this most grotesque metaphysical system ever seen" that it is "one of the most tyrannical and formidable, oppressing consciences."[13]

Newman's realism in philosophy can be observed when he denounces "the counterfeit intuitions which are consequent upon the substitution of some personal subjective law for the nature of things."[14]

On the other hand, Newman is also aware of the fragility of human nature:

"Man is born a weak, blind, not to say wretched animal, in some respect inferior to the beasts of the field, helpless against external nature, and possessed within by a brood of irrational passions, which threaten to be worse foes to his life and well-being, even than the manifold enemies which threaten him from without."[15]

This conception is very different from the "hybris" or arrogance of modern man! Furthermore, real freedom is opposed to determinism which prevailed in 19th-century science; "habit," for instance, Newman writes, "weaves around our intellect an artificial system, which is practically mistaken for the nature of things."[16] Here, many saw afterwards Newman as a supporter of the rights of conscience or of the human person. Based on what has just been said,[17] it would be completely wrong to consider him as an ideologue pursuing a system and a utopia that are devastating and deadly to genuine knowledge or tradition.

As far as the supernatural virtue of faith is concerned, we find this clear statement:

"Though the real source and cause of religious faith is beyond nature and natural reason, still reason is its antecedent, and cause *sine qua non*."[18]

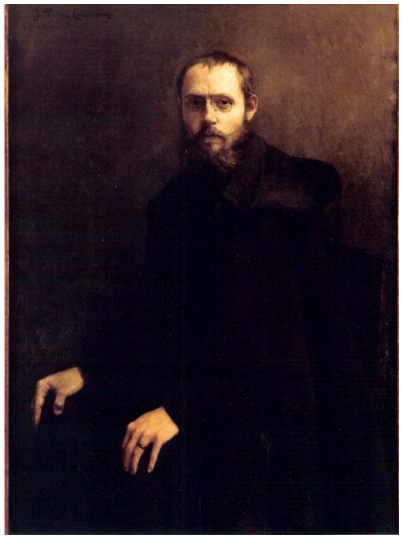
Newman emphasizes the role played by reason, which is one of the key words of Aristotelian thought, and he goes even further:

"I would maintain that faith must rest on reason, nay even in the case of children and of the most ignorant and dull peasant wherever faith is living and loving."[19]

Man is a "rational being," but Aristotle did not develop much the "divine" knowledge that a faithful child or a pious peasant can have!

Newman is not a rationalist, nor is Péguy, for whom the cult of "the goddess Reason" is madness. Philosophy is "ancilla theologiae (the servant of theology)." There should be order: "Let not the faithful servant rise up against her mistress."[20] At the same time, the latter shouldn't "stoop down against her servant."

A "great philosophy" for Péguy, "introduces a sense of unease (introduit une inquiétude), creates a sense of upheaval (ouvre un ébranlement)."[21] Péguy is a "reactionary," as we observe



(Pictures: Chartres Cathedral and pilgrims, by FSSP; Portrait of Newman, by George Richmond; Photo of Charles Péguy by Eugène Pirou; Portrait of Charles Péguy by Jean-Pierre Laurens – all three on Wikipedia Commons)

in these phrases:

"Great philosophy isn't about being first in composition; it isn't about being first in dissertation. It's in philosophy classes that one triumphs through reasoning. But philosophy doesn't go into philosophy classes."[22]

His Christian philosophy or "Chrétienté" (Christendom) is "fruit of the earth":

"Fructus ventris.
The most beautiful, surely, and the most excellent.
But of the earth."[23]

Like Newman, Péguy is an empiricist, but in his own way. The Christian humility that characterized the English convert, is also reflected in this description of Ulysses who becomes a Christ-figure, the incarnate Wisdom:

"He is no longer the man who boasts and the man who fights.
He is already the man who is silent and the man who wins.
He will rule the world."[24]

Finally, in another realm, here is another extract, reminiscent of the pilgrimage, at the end of Péguy's last writing:

"A Catholic is someone who knows perfectly well that he is on the right spiritual path; he experiences a profound joy in consulting the signposts. Protestants are people who make their own signposts, and not only do they make them, but they justify them all the time."[25]

The signpost is indeed for everyone; the Catholic pilgrim performs a ritualistic act, and the incommunicable joy he experiences is not unrelated to happiness, the fruit of the possession of truth.

To sum up, the numerous poetical writings of Newman and Péguy remind man that he is a spiritual being; in philosophy, both were realists; they were resilient in the face of conflict and resisted modernity which dissolves religion and its mysteries.[26] Maybe the best way of concluding is this quotation from the seeker of Truth, at Oxford, in our modern era:

"We are labouring for what is eternal."[27] □

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4 The most competitive and prestigious examination for civil service in the French public education system.
5 First published1870; I shall quote the 1909 edition (London).
6 *Grammar of Assent*, p. 242.
7 *Grammar of Assent*, p. 267.
8 *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman*, Published by Oxford University Press in 1976.
9 *Theological Papers*, p. 72.
10 *Theological Papers*, p. 74; Newman himself underlined some words from Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* (chapter 6).
11 Newman's thinking has different components. We are aware of our limitations in these few pages devoted to him; let us just mention that, for Newman, besides the knowledge by intuition that was just mentioned, there is also an insight gained by a "cultivated nature" or "educated nature," and – this final remark is interesting! – there may be illusions in untaught nature as well as educated." (*Theological Papers*, p. 75) Newman's thinking is best understood, in my opinion, if we acknowledge that it includes, within itself, a poetic tendency (with an "a-logical" knowledge, i.e., with images, metaphors etc. instead of abstractions and concepts). In Péguy, the numerous repetitions and neologisms we find in his writings are evidence of the same tendency.
12 On July 14, 1833, in St. Mary's, Oxford, Keble preached an assize sermon on "National Apostasy", and we know that Newman afterwards regarded this as the inauguration of the Oxford Movement which was so important for the restoration of Catholic traditions and the monumental event of Newman's conversion to Roman Catholicism a decade later.
13 Ch. PEGUY, *Œuvres en prose* 1909-14, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1961 (Paris), p. 1260.
14 *Theological Papers*, p. 77.
15 *Theological Papers*, p. 73.
16 *Theological Papers*, p. 78-9.
17 There are many pages in his *Grammar of Assent* where Newman speaks of "Natural religion." We even find this sentence: "No religion is from God which contradicts our sense of right and wrong." (p. 419) (It is evident that the "sense of right and wrong" is based on the "natural law".)
18 *Theological Papers*, p. 86.
19 *Theological Papers*, p. 86.
20 *Op. cit.,* p. 1536.
21 *Op. cit.,* p. 1338. Here again, we observe the poetical tendency of the author.
22 *Op. cit.,* p. 1339.
23 "Le plus beau c'est entendu et le plus éminent. Mais de la terre." (*op. cit.,* p. 1421)
24 *Op. cit.*, p. 1424.
25 *Op. cit.*, p. 1553.
26 Speaking of the "modernes," Péguy says that they "wanted to eliminate all traces of Christianity (toute substance de chrétienté)." (*op. cit.*, p. 223)
27 *Letters and Diaries* IV (Oxford, 1980), p. 166.

A Young Artist Shares Her Faith Online

Young Englishwoman Raya Cotton, who trained in fine arts in Plymouth University and learnt Gregorian chant and polyphony in England and America, presents her creative work in sacred painting and singing.

What if you could press pause on the noise of the world, and be caught up in a stream of ancient song – one that has been offered up to God for centuries?

As modern technology accelerates and dissonance becomes incessant in daily life, many people are seeking solace and stillness in Gregorian chant – even those who wouldn't consider themselves particularly religious. It seems to me that the Lord is working through this medium to speak to the hearts of listeners around the world, and I can't help but marvel at the universal power of sacred music.

I have found it my mission to offer to souls a place where one can experience the beauty of sacred music and discover the world of the sacred arts in a way that is accessible and open to anyone.

I began the project *Like the Hart* at the tail end of 2024, singing different chants and polyphonic motets, and recording my own harmonies over the top. It initially served as a personal outlet for me to express my own seeking of God through music, *like the hart yearning for the streams of water* (Psalm 43) but gradually became something more.

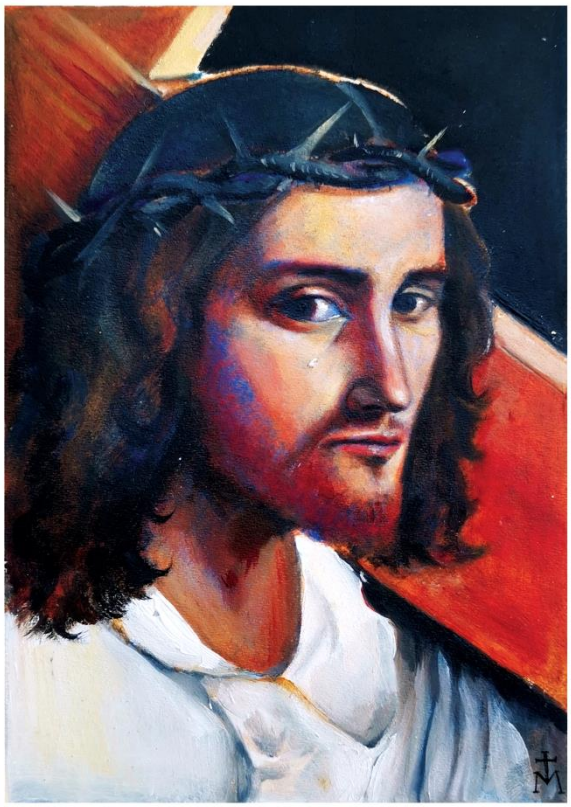
In an age of instant AI-generated content, I have found it important for my own spiritual life to return to the roots of *human* craft, preserving the value of creative work wrought by human hands and the human voice, and honouring that slow and meaningful process.

Like the Hart is my attempt to express the creativity of the human heart through traditional craftmanship, drawing from the sacred tradition of the Catholic Church. I wish to explore traditional methods of visual art as well as sharing the musical and mystical heritage of Gregorian chant in a way that feels open and approachable.

I do not wish to remain hidden behind a perfectly polished body of work. What matters more to me is inviting others into the creative process itself – sharing the work as it unfolds, from first sketches to final piece. I hope that in doing this, it might awaken something in others: a renewed desire to create, and an attentiveness to the gentle "drawing" of the all-loving Creator within their own hearts.

Most of this work lives on YouTube, where I regularly share Gregorian Chant recordings, as well as the meaning and translation behind them, and from time to time, offer glimpses into my artistic life. My latest published artwork is an oil painting called *The Tear of Christ,* which depicts the face of Jesus as He carries the cross, and serves as a meditation on the humanity of His interior sufferings borne in love for us. You can read more about my work and listen to my music on my website: www.likethehart.com. I would love to welcome you there. □

(Picture below: Artist's own painting. Next page: FSSP priest offers holy Mass at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, by FSSP)



Dead Rising in Saint Matthew's Passion

Having earned his Licentiate in Sacred Scripture from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, Fr Brendan Gerard, FSSP teaches Scripture at Saint Peter's International Seminary in Bavaria (Wigratzbad) while residing in Edinburgh as the superior of our Scottish apostolate.

"And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many." (Matthew 27:51-53 RSV)

In these words, St Matthew the Evangelist depicts God's answer to the death of his Son. Throughout Jesus' Passion, God has been silent; now he intervenes. The events portrayed here are signs of God's judgement. The torn curtain insinuates the end of Temple worship. Similarly, the appearance of many risen holy ones (that is, righteous Israelites) before numerous people in "the holy city" implies judgement on Jerusalem.

For those among the Gospel's audience or readers who are well versed in the Scriptures, the vocabulary of this Matthean passage is apt to recall two texts from the prophets, namely Ezekiel 37:12 and Zechariah 14:4-5, although neither of these corresponds completely to the situation in Matthew. In Ezekiel 37:12, after the vision in which the dry bones live again, God promises that he will open the graves of his people. That refers to the national "resurrection" after the Babylonian exile, with a promise that the people will be brought home to the land of Israel. Zechariah 14:4-5 speaks of a splitting of the Mount of Olives, an earthquake and the coming of the Lord with his holy ones (probably angels). Since that intervention of God is directed against the nations that are hostile to Jerusalem, this scenario is also different from the raising of the dead in Matthew.

Nevertheless, Matthew's use of concepts from Ezekiel and Zechariah makes it clear that here, too, divine intervention is at work. God's power to raise the dead is exercised as an answer to the death of Jesus, also implying a connection between resurrection and judgement.

Both for professional exegetes and for ordinary readers, the words "after his resurrection" (Matt 27:53) pose an especially thorny problem. On the one hand, that the holy ones appear only *after* Jesus' resurrection is quite appropriate. On the other hand, the order of events is problematic in that the holy ones are raised *before* Jesus himself. However, chronology is hardly the point on which Matthew places most weight here. By means of the phrase "after his resurrection," the raising of the holy ones is subordinated to Jesus' own resurrection. What remains in the foreground is the irruption of God's life-giving power as a consequence of the death of Jesus, and as a sign of judgement.

This article first appeared in German in the newsletter of the Fraternity's German-speaking district, November 2020. □

Love Within the Enclosed Garden

Drs. Leslie Anne Hamel, who studied history of art at the Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden, explains a fifteenth-century painting about the Blessed Virgin Mary

The late fifteenth century in Northern Europe witnessed a final flowering of medieval thought and practice in its devotional imagery. Panel painting, in the north, developed from the tradition and models of manuscript illumination, resulting in intimate works for personal use, to be seen up close and in meditation. The finest works of 15th century Flanders still speak to us today for this reason. They draw us near, and remain rich in symbolic meaning and devotional expression.

The Virgin of the Rose Garden, by a Flemish artist only known today as the Master of the Saint Lucy Legend is a fine example of one such meditational focus. The picture, painted between 1475 and 1480, would have served as a devotional aid within a household or potentially a convent, while highlighting the faith of early Christian women martyrs. We find Our Lady and the Christ Child, in an enclosed garden, surrounded by Saints Ursula, Catherine, Barbara, and Cecilia. The women are identified both by labels and by symbolic attributes. Though having lived in different places and times, they are depicted harmoniously together, sharing a quiet and tender moment in fifteenth century Flanders. They wear luxurious fashions of the time, while engaged in pious activity. Angels above bear a crown, proclaiming Mary as Queen of Heaven.

(Picture: Master of the St. Lucy Legend, Flemish - Virgin of the Rose Garden, between 1475 and 1480, 26.387.webp – Wikimedia Commons)

The use of an enclosed garden, the Hortus Conclusus, as a protected setting for holy persons was a favoured model in the late medieval north, and came to be associated with Mary altogether. Suggestive of her purity, the inspirational source of which is drawn from the nuptial love poetry of the Song of Songs, 4:12: *A*

garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed. Just as Rabbinic scholars had viewed the Song of Songs as an allegory of God's love for Israel, Christian commentaries were abundant in the Middle Ages, comparing the lover of the Song of Song's to Christ in his love for the Church. Mary became representative of Ecclesia, the Church, as a protected place of fertile abundance and goodness.

One is stuck by the attention to detail provided in this idealised garden. Fruits, flowers, and greenery are reproduced in sharp focus, and blooming or in fruit simultaneously, regardless of season. They are shown with the miniaturist's love of the minuscule. Of course these good things of the Earth suggest deeper meanings, with the arching arbour of grapes and the bank of red roses behind, serving as a reminder of Our Lord's coming Passion. The white lily represents Mary's purity, and the violets underfoot her humility.

The Christ child places a ring upon St Catherine's finger, in a reference to her mystical marriage. All of these martyrs protested against entering earthly marriages, though nuptial and fertility references can be found within the picture. Among them are the ring, the cincture, the carnation, and the pomegranate (in the brocade of Ursula's dress). Again, we note the connection to the Song of Songs, as interpreted in medieval thought as a nuptial union of the soul with God, as preached by Bernard of Clairvaux centuries earlier.

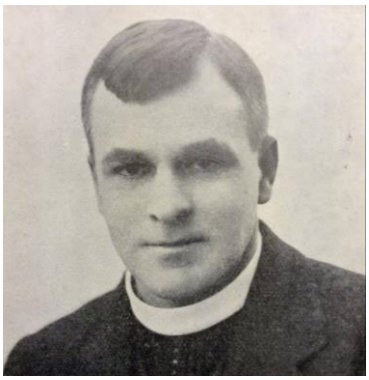
This format and its symbolism would have been readily apparent to its original audience. Compare the sheltered intimacy of "The Virgin of the Rose Garden," with the more monumental composition of an Italian picture of the same time. The "Sacra Conversazione," or sacred conversation, painted by Alvise Vivarini similarly depicts holy persons of different places and times, surrounding the Virgin and Christ child. Here, Mary looks outward to us, in a very engaging acknowledgement of our presence. The arrangement here is much more formal, however, with the columnar figures balanced around the Virgin's raised throne of marble. Both pictures offer a blessed experience to the viewer, but the Flemish work is decidedly more familiar and connected to daily life of the viewer. Behind our lady martyrs, we find the city of Bruges, with mountains beyond suggesting the wider world. The architectural detail of the town is so carefully shown, that the painting can be dated according to the appearance of a bell tower. So why might the Master show us these holy persons, wearing essentially contemporary clothing, with a busy and prosperous city behind them? Could we imagine such a scene with the same women in fashions of our own time, with a view of the London skyline behind them? The fifteenth century worshipper would have viewed these martyrs as elevated, but still relatable, people.

Our lovely and young saints appear to be rather reserved and composed, with a certain doll like uniformity, but we are not meant to misread their sweetness as being rare and fragile. They are in reach of the world, and implements and references to their martyrdom are not hidden from view. A sword stands between Catherine and the holy infant, while an arrow can be found just under Ursula's skirt. Barbara's dress is ornamented with small tower motifs. They do rest in holy tenderness with their Saviour, protected and apart, until the proper time. Perhaps we, too, might rest here for a while, among these honourable companions, until we are called as witnesses beyond the garden wall. □

Fr Owen Dudley's Novel *The Masterful Monk*

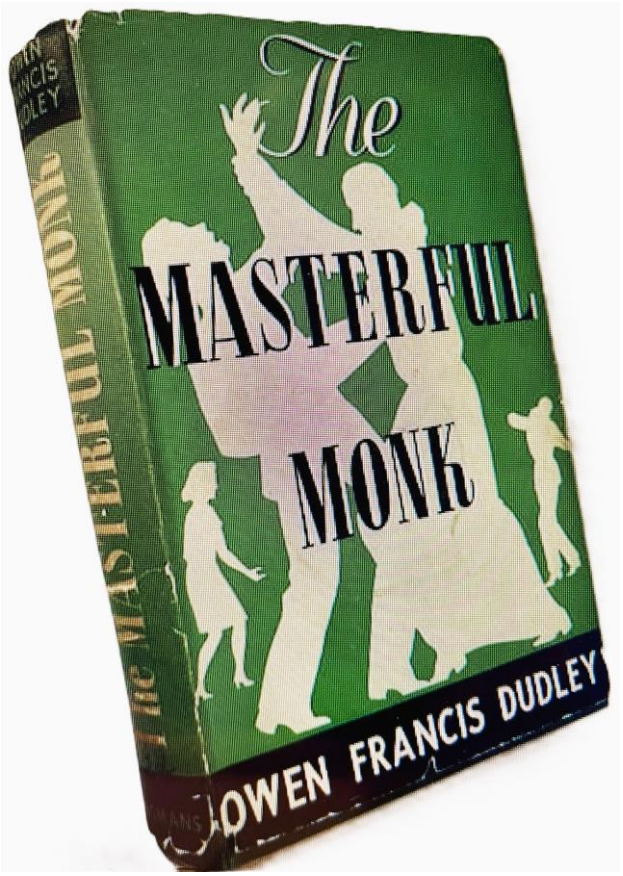
Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP presents an engaging novel by once well-known convert author Fr Owen Francis Dudley

In his lifetime, Englishman Fr Owen Francis Dudley (1882–1952) was famous worldwide as a Catholic lecturer and a novelist. After serving as an Anglican minister, he came home to Rome and was ordained a priest in 1917. He was wounded during the First World War.



His fiction works are *The Masterful Monk* (1929), *Pageant of Life* (1932), *The Coming of the Monster* (1936), *The Tremaynes and the Masterful Monk* (1940), *Michael* (1948), and *Last crescendo* (1954). His style has genuine literary qualities: possibly superior to Benson's, it reads as a blend of P. G. Wodehouse and Chesterton's *Father Brown*.

Just as Benson's *Lord the World* proved prophetic about assisted suicide in England, Dudley's *The Masterful Monk* put its finger on atheistic eugenic theories as early as 1929, at a time when one Mr Hitler was yet little known. *The Masterful Monk* introduces the striking character of Brother Anselm Thornton, OSB. A strong and tall Englishman, a former physician, and a heroic WWI army officer, he became a monk and a priest in Italy. However, his abbey sends him back to London to counter popular atheistic speaker Julian Verrers, a lapsed Catholic intent on destroying Church influence and natural morality.



Brother Anselm is an endearing clerical hero whose personality entails religious discretion, courteous affability, manly courage, and fatherly affection. As if brought over from a tale of chivalry, Brother Anselm stands as the gallant clerical "knight" who flies to the rescue of damsel in distress "Beauty" Dethier, a clever (and beautiful) young woman allured by the occult magnetism of evil Julian Verrers. The sentimental attraction between Beauty and the aristocratic heir Basil Esterton is exemplarily tested by faith matters and provides an eloquent parable of worthy courtship for young people even in the 2020s.

Brother Anselm reappears in further novels by the same priest author. Once famous in England and America as a novelist, sadly Father Dudley has been almost completely forgotten. Entertaining as is Chesterton's *Father Brown*, Dudley's fiction is much more effective in tackling ideologies, while its light and humorous tone makes it highly palatable. He urgently deserves being rediscovered! □

(Pictures: Fr Dudley ; Original copy of the novel: Six of Fr Dudley's books are republished by St. Bonaventure Publications in America.)

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***Contact* malleray@fssp.org**

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Below: FSSP seminarians in Bavaria made pancakes on Candlemas for their one hundred confreres. (Photo *FSSP*)

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