

Dowry

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Our Fraternity organised buses to the March for Life on Sat 5th September in London. Four FSSP clerics attended, with dozens of our faithful, among 10,000 pilgrims and fifteen UK bishops.

Thank God for such a beautiful and joyful witness to the value of every human life from conception! (Photo FSSP)

Deo gratias for 25 new priests ordained for the FSSP last spring. Please pray for our 9 priestly candidates from the UK & Ireland (including two deacons and seven seminarians) and for our 11 priests in these Isles: Frs de Malleray and McGonagle in Bedford, Fr Phipps (and Deacon Ó hAimheirgin) in Reading, Frs Goddard, Verrier, and Homolya in Warrington, Frs Gerard and Emerson in Edinburgh, Frs O'Donohue and Coelho in Waterford, and Fr Stewart (convalescing).

Editorial: Jubilee of St Francis of Assisi



Will anyone draw inspiration from our happy death eight centuries later, as is the case with St Francis of Assisi? That little man wearing sackcloth died peacefully on 3rd October 1226 in Italy. As laid out in the Franciscan jubilee proclamation ordered by Pope Leo XIV, the Church universal is preparing to commemorate his life and passing next Saturday 3rd October.

The spiritual legacy of St Francis has enlightened and strengthened the faith of millions over the past eight centuries. Since the 1960s, St Francis has been hailed as a friend of animals and a promoter of peace. Significant as such features are, they can be misunderstood if disconnected from St Francis' burning love for the Word Incarnate, the Lord Jesus, crucified Saviour of men. For St Francis as for any well catechised Catholic, the material creation is the manifold reflection of God's own splendour, a love-letter to men called to know, love and serve their Maker and Redeemer. Peace is the tranquillity of order, resulting from the knowledge and upholding of natural and divine laws by obedient and loyal human beings. No wonder therefore if the main topic in St Francis' letters is the Most Holy Eucharist. In that "sun of all the sacraments", St Francis exulted in possessing and adoring his Saviour truly, really, and substantially present:

"I also beseech in the Lord all my brothers who are and shall be and desire to be priests of the Most High

that, when they wish to celebrate Mass, being pure, they offer the true Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ purely, with reverence, with a holy and clean intention, not for any earthly thing or fear or for the love of any man, as it were pleasing men. But let every will, in so far as the grace of the Almighty helps, be directed to Him, desiring thence to please the High Lord Himself alone because He alone works there [in the Holy Sacrifice] as it may please Him, for He Himself says: "Do this for a commemoration of Me;" "if any one

*they offer the true Sacrifice
of the Body and Blood
of our Lord Jesus Christ*

doth otherwise he becomes the traitor Judas and is made guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

Call to mind, priests, my brothers, what is written in the law of Moses: how those transgressing even materially died by the decree of the Lord without any mercy. How much more and worse punishments he deserves to suffer "who hath trodden under foot the Son of God and hath esteemed the Blood of the testament unclean by which he was sanctified and hath offered an affront to the spirit of grace." For man despises, soils, and treads under foot the Lamb of God when, as the Apostle says, not discerning and distinguishing the holy bread of Christ from other nourishments or works, he either eats

unworthily or, if he be worthy, he eats in vain and unbecomingly since the Lord has said by the prophet: Cursed be the man that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully. And He condemns the priests who will not take this to heart saying: "I will curse your blessings."

Hear ye, my brothers: If the Blessed Virgin Mary is so honoured, as is meet, because she bore Him in [her] most holy womb; if the blessed Baptist trembled and did not dare to touch the holy forehead of God; if the sepulchre in which He lay for some time, is venerated, how holy, just, and worthy ought he to be who touches with his hands, who receives with his heart and his mouth, and proffers to be received by others Him who is now no more to die but to triumph in a glorified eternity: on whom the angels desire to look" (cf. *Letter to all the friars*).

Reciting daily from 25th September until 3rd October some traditional Franciscan prayer as a novena, let us beseech St Francis to lead us, our communities, and the Church universal, into a renewed understanding of and love for the Lord Jesus in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, his divine gift surpassing every natural creation and securing everlasting peace. ■

Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP
Superior of the FSSP England
Apostolate

Bedford, Nativity of the
Blessed Virgin Mary,
8th September 2026



(Picture by Malleray of Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata, by Frans Pourbus the Younger)

My Chartres Pilgrimage Experience 2026

Bridget Nisiima recalls her very first Christendom pilgrimage last Pentecost weekend among 20,000 young pilgrims

It's been a couple of days since the pilgrimage, but I can still hear the lovely songs and chants playing over and over in my head. The Chartres Pilgrimage was truly an out-of-this-world experience.

I picked up so many life lessons and will share a few below.

One of my favourite moments was arriving at the campsite after a day's walk and seeing the atmosphere of peace that surrounded everything. Children wandered around freely

without their parents worrying too much, and there was a beautiful simplicity to life there. We queued for Porta-loo toilets, ate the simplest meals of soup and bread, slept rough, and had almost no privacy in the communal tents. Yet somehow, with so little, everyone seemed so content and joyful.

Before deciding to go for the pilgrimage, one of my biggest worries was the thought of spending three days without a proper shower. By the end of the first day, I couldn't

have cared less. My concerns had completely changed. Instead of worrying about comfort, I was thinking about things like getting my bed ready to rest my back and sore feet, beating the toilet queues, and being thankful to God that I had made it through the day and without a single blister.

First lesson I picked up was how much we worry about the future and fear what we do not know. So often, the things we worry about never turn out to be the real challenges.



© Philomène Riou du Cosquer - Notre-Dame de Chrétienté

The walk itself was both sweet and sour. My feet often ached, and the heat could be intense, but somehow the grace of God gets you through it. You could never do it on your own. The mortification brought many graces.

Along the way, some people cheered us on. Others stood outside their homes with hose pipes and sprayed water over us as we passed, giving us brief moments of refreshment. Those moments made me think of the refreshment we hope to bring to the poor souls in Purgatory through our prayers and sacrifices. One kind lady even prepared cold lemonade for us and handed it over in disposable cups as we passed. Such simple acts of generosity meant so much and gave hope in humanity.

What struck me most was the overwhelming and selfless kindness of everyone around. At one point, I was lagging with my day bag, which had somehow become much heavier than when I started, and found myself walking alongside a French chapter. Some of the teenagers noticed I was struggling and offered to carry my bag. I do not speak French, and neither did they speak English, but language was no obstacle to charity. Their kindness spoke for itself.

The children were incredible. While some of the adults struggled to keep up, they seemed to sprint past us to catch up with the rest of the group. In our St Francis Chapter especially, they carried the banners throughout the pilgrimage and were amazingly supportive of one another, taking turns whenever needed. What a wonderful way to build values in children, that will stay with them for life.

I often wondered why the children seemed to find easy what felt so difficult for many adults. It didn't make sense at first. Then a thought came to me: perhaps it is because they are more innocent and less burdened by sin. The pain each person goes through on pilgrimage is very different, even though we all walk the same road. The lesson I learned was that Our Lord prepares a struggle that is exactly suited to each soul. Perhaps that is why the children were given a lighter one.

The prayers were beautiful, the chants uplifting, and the reflections from the seminarians, priests, and clergy deeply moving. Everywhere I looked, there were reminders of God and of people striving together towards Him.

It felt like a small escape from the world. Camp life was felt to me like a snapshot of what the Garden of Eden might have looked like—a place where people lived simply, cared for one another, and found joy in the things that truly matter.

There was also a wonderful sense of accomplishment at the end of each day, knowing another stage of the pilgrimage had been completed and imagining the graces attained along the way.

And lastly, the organisation—wow! It was incredible to witness. Everyone seemed to know exactly what they were meant to be doing, from putting up and taking down tents to ensuring everything ran smoothly.

I can only imagine what the organisers go through behind the scenes, but I was genuinely amazed. May God bless them abundantly for all their hard work and sacrifices.

From my perspective, nothing seemed to go wrong at all, which is remarkable considering the scale of the pilgrimage.

It was such an amazing experience that I don't think I could ever fully articulate it in words. But the good news is that you don't have to rely on my description—you can experience it for yourself too. I genuinely believe everyone should experience what I saw. Thousands upon thousands of people gathered with one purpose: to please Our Lord.

If I could give one piece of advice, it would be this—go on the Chartres Pilgrimage at least once in your lifetime.

I am definitely doing it again. Next year already feels too far away.

If you have never done it, sign up next year. Whatever worries have stopped you in the past, or whatever concerns you may have now, I can almost guarantee they will not be the things occupying your mind once you are there. You will have challenges, of course, but they will be different from the ones you imagine, and they will not be as bad as you fear.

I came home with a heart overflowing with joy and a jar overflowing with grace—enough, I hope, to carry me through until next year.

Go and collect your own next year. ■

The next Pilgrimage of Christendom will take place from 15th to 17th May 2027, on Pentecost weekend as usual. Visit chartresuk.blogspot.com and join hundreds of pilgrims from the UK.

On the Loss of Our Unborn Child

A young wife shares her experience of miscarrying and how as a couple she and her husband dealt with their child's remains with dignity, despite challenges inherent in the UK health system

On the 19th April 2026, after two years of trying to conceive, my husband and I found out we were expecting our first child. We were ecstatic at the news and eagerly began tracking what size fruit our baby measured the equivalent to and how each week he had developed new features: a face, tastebuds and tiny fingernails.

We excitedly attended each appointment, and at no point was our baby ever referred to as a “clump of cells” by any medical professional. However, at our 12-week scan on the 8th of June, we were reminded of the fragility of life. Our baby had no heartbeat and had not grown to the size expected for his stage of gestation. We were devastated. Notably, language surrounding our baby also began to change. Our baby was now ‘the pregnancy’, ‘products of conception’ or ‘pregnancy tissue’, even though in the same breath we were asked whether we wanted a picture of him (which I wholeheartedly recommend). It was important for us to be a witness to the fact that our baby was none of these, and instead he was going to receive the dignity and respect all human beings deserve from the moment of conception. It is this conviction that propelled me to write this article, not to judge anyone’s experience, but to provide support and knowledge to those

who ever find themselves in our position.

Following our diagnosis, an appointment was scheduled with the hospital’s Early Pregnancy Unit to discuss ‘miscarriage management’. We were given no information ahead of this appointment and had to rely on taking proactive measures to ensure that we were able to take our baby’s remains home. During one of several telephone conversations, we were given three options for miscarriage management: natural miscarriage (waiting until nature took its course), medical management (the taking of misoprostol to induce “natural” miscarriage) or surgical management (an operation to deliver our baby in hospital). It was during one

conversation that the nurse, whether intentionally or not, revealed the truth behind one of the many lies perpetuated by the abortion industry: that it is not just like a “heavy period”. I was informed that, if I chose to miscarry naturally or opt for medical management, the pain would be equivalent to labour, lasting several days and culminating in delivering the gestational sac containing our baby and blood clots up to the size of a lemon. For any women reading this article, you know this is significantly more than even the heaviest of periods.

We ultimately opted for surgical management under general anaesthetic. The idea of delivering our baby at home with no midwife was terrifying and taking misoprostol



(despite having no ethical or moral implications given that our baby had already passed away), did not sit well with us. During the pre-operative assessment, we stressed our wish (and legal right) to take our baby's remains home. We were shocked to hear that we were the first couple to request this, and even more horrified to learn that this right was only enacted in 2023. Prior to this, the only option parents had was "sensitive disposal", an option that is still offered. I have a hard time believing that anything referred to as a "disposal" can ever be sensitive, especially since we witnessed remains being flippantly discarded into a pathology bag while we waited in reception. For a baby who has passed before the age of 24 weeks, a document provided by the hospital (often called a "Sensitive Disposal/SD1" form) needs to be signed by the doctor ahead of the surgery to allow you to be in the possession of human remains. It is remarkable that "pregnancy tissue" magically becomes human as soon as paperwork is involved! Once it is signed, they must respect your wishes. I would recommend that you ask for this document to be uploaded to your patient notes, along with any other preferences/concerns you may have, so there is evidence that this conversation occurred. A preference we had was declining that our baby be sent to pathology or the mortuary so that we could take him home immediately.

On the day of the surgery, your doctor should already have read your notes. However, I would advise checking with the doctor that the information you have been provided is correct and that you reiterate your wishes to ensure there is no possible mistakes. For example, I was told that ahead of the procedure that

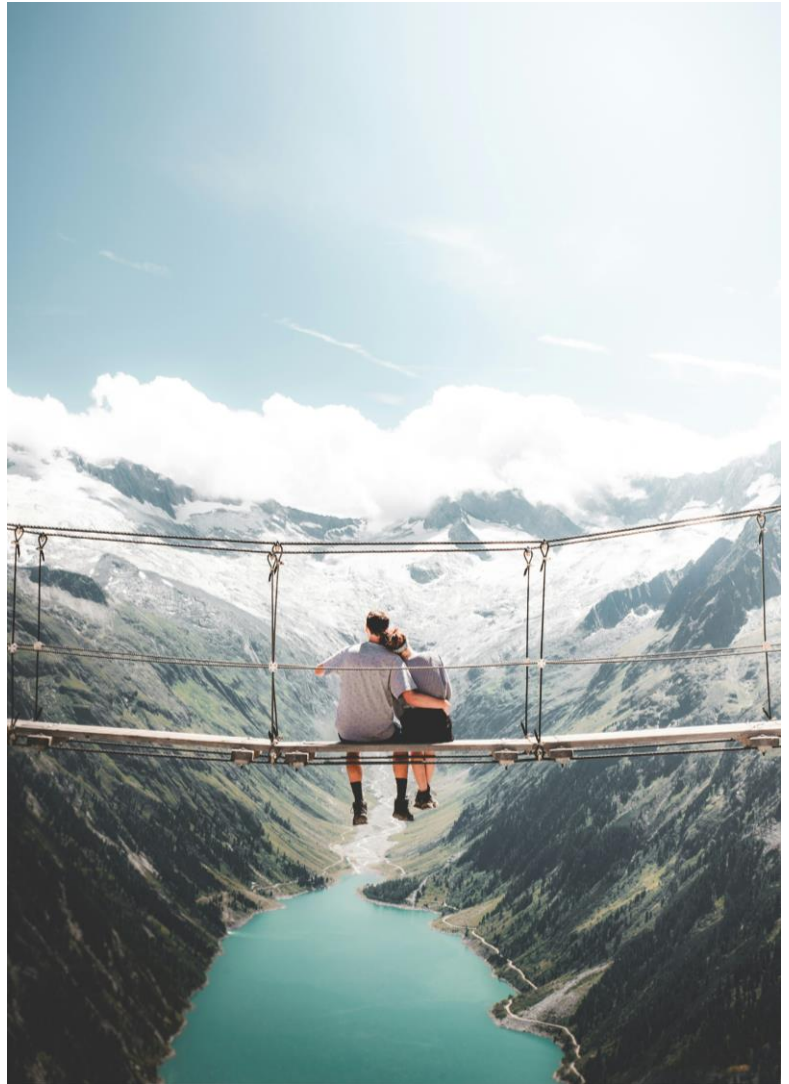
misoprostol would be administered in a delicate region. However, the surgeon confirmed that this is not necessary in the slightest. They also confirmed that they would bring our baby's remains to us themselves as soon as I awoke, a promise that they did fulfil.

We decided to name our baby Francis Anthony Lillian. To help us in our grief, holy Mass was offered for the loss of our child and Francis was buried in a dignified box in the church graveyard shortly afterwards. We also requested a baby loss certificate from the government (free to apply for online). The irony that the same government who legalised

abortion up to birth also issue certificates acknowledging the personhood and death of a baby (not a clump of cells) in utero is not lost on us. Each of the decisions we made was to ensure Francis received the dignity he deserved, and it has brought us great consolation to know that we, as his parents, have achieved this and that anyone who finds themselves in our position can do so too.

St Catherine of Sweden, patron of those who have suffered a miscarriage, pray for us. ■

Photos on Unsplash: left by Ömürden Cengiz, and top by Daniel J. Schwarz



The Latin Mass Revival Inspires Lady Novelists

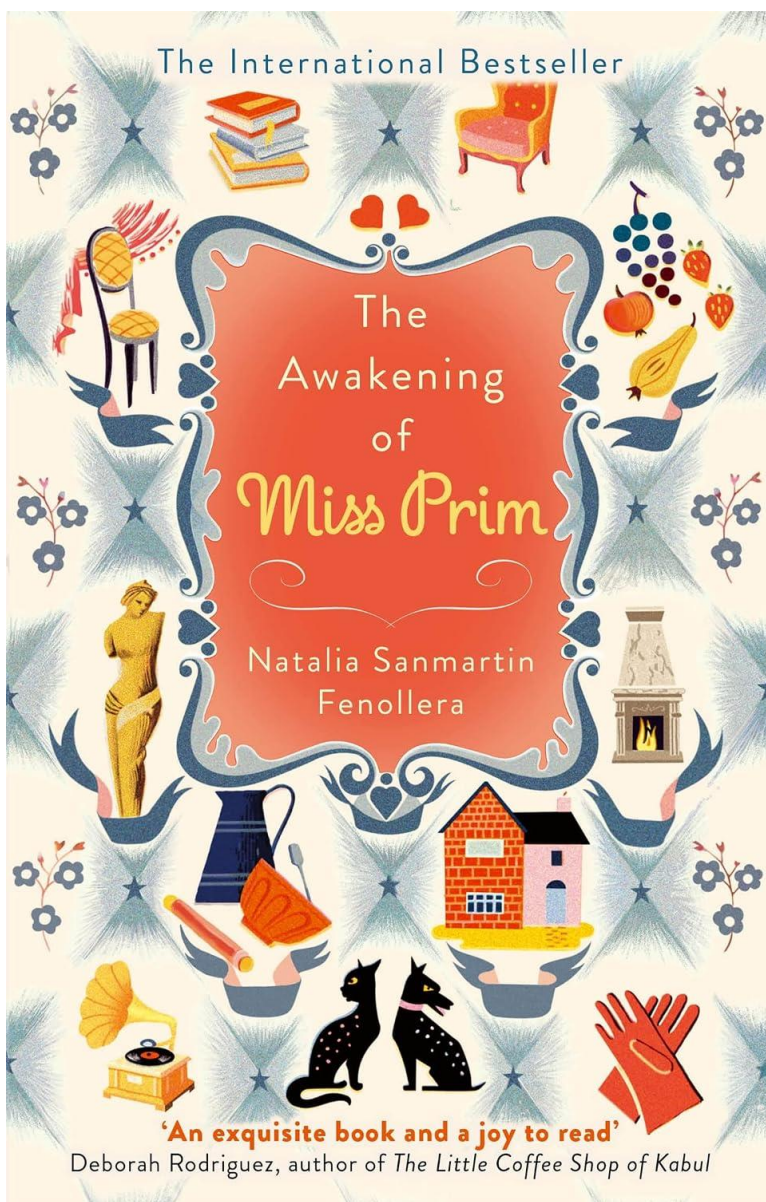
By Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP

That novelists from different continents should feel inspired to describe the same phenomenon, albeit from various angles, confirms the vitality and relevance of their shared topic of interest. Three lady novelists from Spain, America, and England have published novels about the trend identified as the *Traditional (Latin Mass) revival*. Surprisingly, none of their three novels overtly deals with the traditional liturgy, theology, or philosophy. Such omissions may be a blessing in disguise, allowing their plots to unfold with more literary genuineness than if using fiction as a thin veil for doctrinal affirmations. Perhaps more convincingly, therefore, the three stories entail, but don't insist upon, traditional Latin church communities. What takes place in the sanctuary, the reasons for the traditional Latin worship, the crises in Church and society caused by the eclipse of liturgical reverence and doctrinal clarity, all such considerations are woven into the narratives as material taken for granted rather than domineering the plot. Let us take a look at each novel.

A Spanish journalist with a law degree, Natalia Sanmartin Fenollera published her breakthrough novel *The Awakening of Miss Prim* in 2013 (Booket Editions). The heroine is Prudencia Prim, an academic young woman applying for a position as a librarian in a family home set in an idyllic French village. Through her interactions with the children of the house, their father

and grandmother, as well as with the villagers, Miss Prim journeys from her rather secularist and feminist assumptions to a surprising admission of the value and truth offered through principles and behaviours which she used to decry as oppressive or delusory. Her

perception changes slowly, without fanfare, nor with a sense of defeat. Rather, she comes to admit that religious faith, if its object is true, offers a decisive criterion for selecting a spouse, as well as the surest basis for neighbourly life in a rural community and also,

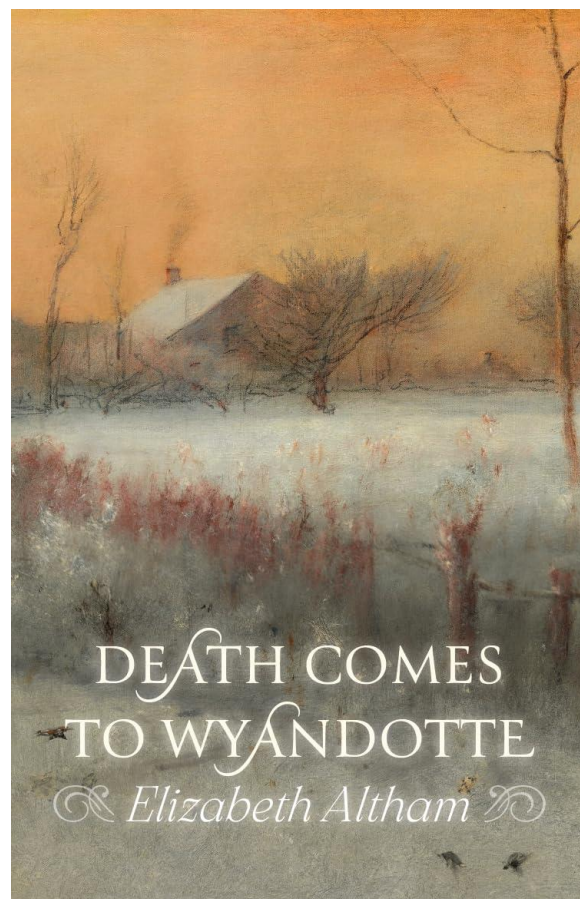


ultimately, for one's spiritual awakening. The tone is light and even humorous, but not at the expense of the heroine, a likeable figure victim of her secular upbringing. The novel gently suggests, rather than hammers, the solution or remedy. Without disclosing too much, we can say that Prudencia's conversation with a traditional Benedictine monk, short as it is, acts as a catalyst that will confirm the intuitions nurtured in her soul through the friendship of the entire village community. Translated into various languages, *The Awakening of Miss Prim* has met with unexpected success.

Elizabeth Altham is a retired teacher in America. Her novel *Death Comes to Wyandotte* (published in 2025 by Os Justi Press), depicts the transition, within a crumbling American Midwest parish, toward a thriving Traditional Latin Mass community. A significant feature is the absence of complacency evinced by the Traditional group. Indeed the change is initiated by the diocesan bishop himself in response to a request for the Traditional Latin Mass by a local association of lay people. However, the prelate does not grant their wish out of the goodness of this heart. With rather unfatherly irony, he allocates to them the most modern church building he can think of, literally a spaceship made of concrete, devoid of any orientation or sacred features. Thankfully, he also appoints Fathers Hopkins and Houghton, two likeable priests from among his own diocesan clergy (even though his motive is only to rid himself of conservative clerics). Their fraternal life and cheerful efforts to revive Catholic life against gloom and doom provide the main thread in the narrative. They receive grassroot support, suggesting that

interest and later, love, for the traditional ways, are shared by the population far beyond the initial committee that petitioned the bishop. Such is perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of the story, since it gently debunks the myth that Traditional Latin Mass-goers are a different species from mainstream Catholics. The "flying-saucer" shape of the church allocated by the bishop subliminally betrays his assumption that "trads" come from elsewhere than "Planet Church", and with questionable motivations, that is, as invaders, not as brethren. Far from such antagonism, Altham's novel can be seen as a blueprint for the revival of dying church communities, benefitting locals and inspiring many more across that diocese and further afield.

Bernice Zieba lives with her husband and children within a Traditional Latin Mass community in England. She published in 2026 *The Spire* (Jan Webmedia). Its main protagonist is Alice, a young Englishwoman living in 2075 in Preston, Lancashire. Zieba's depiction of our country in half a century is painfully credible, when digital technology is ubiquitously applied by the woke State to control every move and thought of the population. Scheduled for demolition, a church with a very



tall spire becomes the gate through which Alice travels back to the nineteenth century, and as far back as Penal times under Protestant persecution. Along her rabbit hole, modern Alice falls into no wonderland, but she discovers periods in history when faith, and Catholicism in particular, were worth standing up for, and even dying for. In *The Spire*, the heroine embodies modern young generations in our secular Western world. They are unchurched, lack basic knowledge of history, and consequently assume that religion and family are long shaken-off shackles from a bygone era. But human nature in them cannot be eradicated as long as they breathe, nor the craving for God and his created reflections as truth, beauty, and bounty. Thus, Alice warms to a fellow time-traveller,

Father O'Brien, first encountered as the zealous pastor of the nineteenth-century parish church, then as a heroic recusant priest under Tudor persecution. Mrs Zieba's attention to detail shows in her carefully researched depictions of the slums and cotton mills in Preston during the industrial revolution, with moving Dickensian hues. Why may mature readers, not only teenagers, enjoy reading *The Spire*? Because its juxtaposing of three epochs feels neither artificial nor childish, but aims at showing that our era, the 2020s, is blessed with small, budding Traditional Latin Mass communities which we should support and make widely known, thus helping curb secular oppression and investing in the lasting reconversion of England.

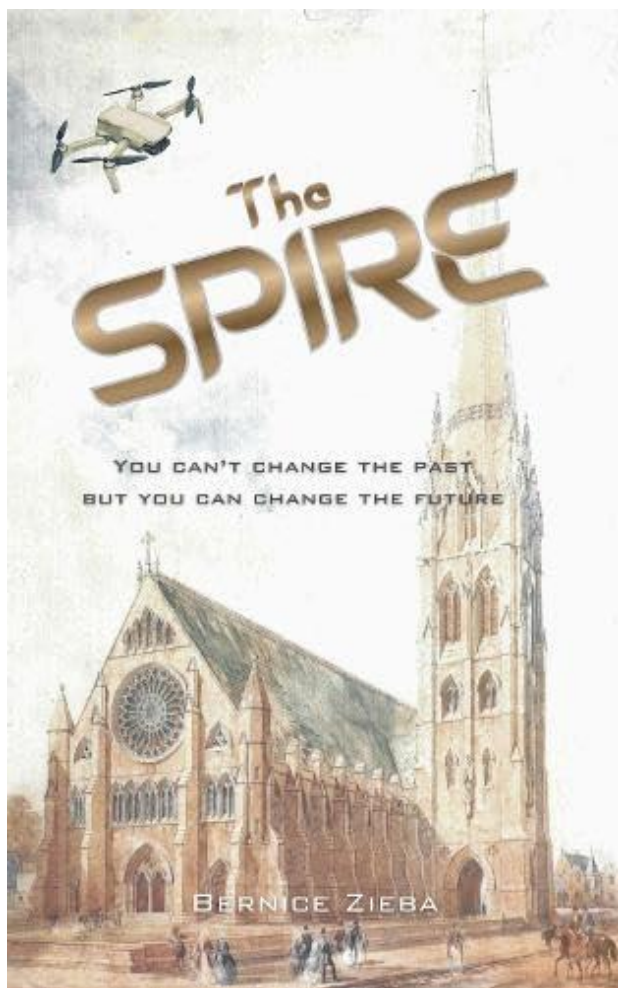
Any of our readers who may have come across more novels depicting the Traditional Mass Latin revival are welcome to let *Dowry* know about them. These three are not presented here on the basis of their literary merit, even though their plots are well constructed, their style flows unobtrusively, and their characters are consistent. Indeed, professional literary critics may wish for more depth and complexity to these narratives. Enjoyable as they are, they may not pass the test of time as works of art – since very, very few novels do so in any generation. They matter still as a sample manifesting the impact of the traditional Latin revival upon the imagination of the wider population. For decades we have heard a growing number of

people dare call the crisis by its name. Admittedly, fiction has been used already to depict the liturgical and doctrinal crisis affecting the Church, such as in Fr Bryan Houghton's *Mitre and Crook* (1979), and in Stephen Oliver's *Smoke in the Sanctuary* (2001, Epsilon Books). But those books focused on the struggle of bishops and priests trying to salvage the treasures of tradition as from within the clerical scope. Useful as such books are, and very much retaining their relevance to our day, they did not give pride of place to the ordeal of the *foot soldiers*, the people still in the pews or already lapsed. *The Awakening of Miss Prim*, *Death Comes to Wyandotte*, and *The Spire* focus on the perception of the Church crisis by the laity as an existential want. The voice of the flock speaks higher here, at times confused, desperate, then resolute and grateful. The malaise felt by communities deprived of the traditional founts of liturgical and doctrinal sustenance, and their attempts to seek, retrieve, and secure *pearls of great price* is worth depicting. The fact that three novelists – all of them laywomen – from various parts of the world, have been inspired to do so confirms the growing engagement of our generation in restoring the Roman traditions of the Church as a living treasure feeding the imagination of all, so as to enlighten minds, and warm up hearts with divine charity.

■

(This article first appeared on *Crisis Magazine* on 1st September 2026.)

Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP holds an MA in Modern Literature from the University of the Sorbonne in Paris, and is the author of books of fiction, theology, and artistic commentaries (cf. malleray.com).



A Monk Muses Over a Painting by Bellini

By an English Benedictine monk



Bellini's *Madonna and Child and Two Female Saints* was painted around the year 1490 in the style that is known as *Sacra Conversazione*, or *Sacred Conversation*. The saints, perhaps St. Catherine of Alexandria on our left and St. Mary Magdalene on our right, wear garments whose colours quietly contrast with the lapis lazuli of Our Lady's veil. We can note, too, the jewellery in the hair of St. Catherine and St. Mary Magdalene's luxuriant curls. Our Lady's head is however completely covered.

Unlike Bellini's other works in this style the background is almost black. The soft light is gently carried in from our left, while seeming also to emanate from the flesh of the four

figures, lending them a luminous quality that might remind us of the words of the Last Gospel, "In Him was life and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." Perhaps Bellini painted the haloes so lightly in order to emphasise this quality. The Christ Child, the Word very recently made flesh, is rapt, gazing up to Heaven.

What are we to make of Our Lady? Has she been distracted by something off to her right, perhaps by the source of the light? St. Catherine looks at the Holy Infant, her hands joined in prayer, but do those hands look a little too large? St. Mary Magdalene's arms are lightly crossed in a gesture of repentance, yet her face bears no

trace of sorrow, no trace of contrition. Could it strike the viewer as slightly incongruous that she seems oblivious to those who are so close to her, even if she is totally absorbed in contemplation?

An art historian would of course make very interesting remarks about the garments of the figures, the angles at which Bellini has placed them, and would

talk about his technical skill and his place in the development of Renaissance painting. Many years ago I heard a monk say that books about prayer are like an Ordnance Survey map. They will show you the way from A to B, but the landscape looks completely different when you are there. He could have added that two people can read the same book, yet see the landscape in completely different ways. Since I saw this painting in Venice, I have looked at it many times in reproduction. The figure of St. Mary Magdalene always leads me to ask myself, "What was in Bellini that allowed him to paint that gaze?" ■

(Picture: public domain Wikipedia)

The Girl and the Priest on the Train

A short story by Stuart McCullough

Jane got up early. Not wanting to miss her appointment, she was determined to be on time. It was a beautiful sunny day outside. She glanced at the booklet giving her some instructions and she put on some loose-fitting clothes. She put on the right type of makeup to make herself look self-assured and confident. Looking in the bathroom mirror, she was pleased with the effect. Happily her mascara was waterproof, for she did look a little glassy-eyed already. She decided to walk the fifteen minutes to the nearest underground station as this would give her time to think, after the weeks of turmoil that her mind had been going through. Today everything would be sorted. She was very glad that she had not taken the bus, as one passed by her, full of noisy school children. The pavements were relatively quiet: she only saw one or two mothers taking toddlers to nursery in their pushchairs. Arriving at the underground station, having missed the rush hour, she hopped on the tube and found a seat on her own. As the train ran through central London, taking Jane to her appointment, the carriage began to fill up, but it was still not overcrowded or uncomfortable. A young couple sitting a few seats away from her were sharing their headphones while listening to music. Very few people on the tube were speaking, as this was London, and most were on their mobile phones or reading

newspapers. One strange chap was standing up reading a book: this made Jane smile. And then it happened, a man in his thirties, wearing black, sat down opposite Jane and smiled. Jane started to smile back in response but then her heart stopped, she had never seen this man before, but his collar clearly set him out as a priest.

Father was only a curate. He had been given the duty of saying the early 7.30am Mass. He didn't really mind as the server knew what he was doing, there was a small congregation, and no need to preach. It was the feast of Saint Jane de Chantal, a French saint little known in this part of London. Having recited his thanksgiving prayers after Mass, Father would have the rest of the day to himself as it was his day off. He was planning to go to Essex visiting with a couple of priest friends. As he walked out of the presbytery front door, he took his jacket from a hook and put it on. It made a slight 'tinkle' sound as he stepped into the street. Father wondered for a moment what the sound was: something in his pocket? But it wasn't. Instead, it was a small badge that he had been given, had put on this jacket, and had forgotten about. He got the bus to the station and chatted to a couple of the lads from the local Catholic High School. They talked about football and school. Father even got to tell them a little about the saint of the day, St

Jane, a widow with grown-up children, who went on and became a religious Sister.

At Liverpool Street Underground Station, Father changed onto the Central Line heading out to Essex. He sat down opposite a young woman and smiled; she started to return a friendly look when the expression on her face changed to one of horror. Over the next couple of minutes a whole range of emotions seemed to pass across her face, but none of them was happy or friendly. Father, who had only been a priest for a few months, wasn't sure how to react and felt extremely uncomfortable. At the next station, which was not his destination, he quickly jumped up, tried to smile again, and promptly stepped off the train. As the train pulled away from the platform he could see the woman through the window. She was still staring at him with a look that could only be described as one of hatred. Deeply unnerved by all of this, Father walked into the nearby coffee shop and ordered a double espresso to try and calm himself. Whilst waiting for his drink, he said a prayer to the young woman's guardian angel for her protection. Father never saw Jane again, but he did pray for her often and, that afternoon, listened to lots of friendly advice from his priest friends, having told them the story of what had happened to him that morning.

The young couple sharing the headphones had noticed the small incident, but felt that it was not really any of their business. When the train arrived at Buckhurst Hill, they stepped off onto the platform, noticing that Jane was still looking a little distracted. Walking up the hill to the nearby abortion centre, they stopped on the other side of the road, opposite the entrance. The woman looked at her male companion almost nervously, crossed the street, and stopped at the gate. He put his hand into his pocket, took out his Rosary beads and started to pray. She took leaflets from her bag, leaflets that offered help and support to pregnant women and she waited to give them to any of the mothers coming for an abortion today. Neither of them ever saw Jane again.

Jane remained sitting on the train. She had missed her stop, Buckhurst Hill, and had no doubt by now missed her appointment. She couldn't help thinking about the badge the priest had been wearing. It was just a small black badge with two words on it, and a priest dog collar. But those two words had been *FORMER EMBRYO*, and that had set Jane thinking. This priest was a former embryo. She herself was a former embryo. In fact everybody was a former embryo. And thus it became clear to Jane that an embryo is fully human and will become a priest, a teacher, a fireman, a wife, a husband, or who knows what. So, she and her unborn baby having missed their abortion appointment, went home to explain to her family how, in a few months' time, they would all hear the patter of tiny little feet. ■

Stuart McCullough works for the Good Counsel Network, the excellent charity supporting pregnant women: visit www.goodcounselnetwork.com.

Our Fraternity organised several buses to the March for Life on Sat 5th September in London: www.marchforlife.co.uk. Four FSSP clerics attended, with dozens of our faithful from our four communities in the UK (Bedford & Chesham Bois, Reading, Warrington, and Edinburgh). What a blessing to hear an official message of support from Pope Leo XIV, and to see so many Catholic bishops at the March attended by over ten thousand young people, clergy, friars, and families!

(Picture: ChatGPT, for Dowry)



Modesty and Chastity for Modern Women

A talk given by Sarah Haire to young ladies at the Juventutem Summer Weekend attended by 60 in July 2026

Ladies, before we begin it is essential that you know who you are in Jesus Christ, our Saviour. You need to know in the depths of your heart, that you are a beloved daughter of God and He delights in you, He loves you. This topic can so often come as condemnation, but rather this is an invitation to veil the mystery of our bodies. In the mystery of the sixth day, God formed woman from the rib of Adam as the pinnacle of creation. We are made 'very good' and what God creates, must be cherished and protected.

When the word *modesty* is mentioned today, many conversations immediately move toward clothing. We think about hemlines, necklines, fashion, and questions of what is considered appropriate. As a result, modesty has

often been reduced to an external standard, either experienced as a burden or dismissed as outdated. Yet this understanding fails to capture the richness of the Catholic tradition. Modesty was never intended to be merely about fabric or appearance. It is fundamentally about the meaning of the human person and the truth communicated through the body.

The same misunderstanding often surrounds the virtue of chastity. In contemporary culture, chastity is frequently interpreted as repression, restriction, or simply. abstinence. Even among Catholics, it can sometimes be presented only in terms of what one must not do. However, the Christian vision of chastity is far more profound. Chastity is not a rejection of human desire but its purification. It is not a denial of love but the formation of a

person capable of authentic self-gift. At the heart of both modesty and chastity is the central question: What does the human body reveal about the human person?

Pope John Paul II's answer transforms the way we understand ourselves. He writes that "the body, and it alone, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine." The body is therefore not simply something we possess, nor is it merely a biological reality. The body reveals the person.

It expresses an invisible mystery: the dignity, identity, and vocation of the human being created in the image and likeness of God.

Love is invisible. You cannot see love itself. You see love through bodily actions. A hug. A smile. Holding someone's hand. Washing someone's feet. Kneeling in prayer. Feeding the hungry. Receiving the Eucharist. Even God's love becomes visible through Christ's body stretched out on the Cross. Without the body, human love would remain an interior intention. The body makes love visible. This understanding is deeply counter-cultural. Modern society often presents two contradictory views of the body. On one hand, the body is celebrated, perfected, displayed, and marketed. On the other hand, it is frequently reduced to something functional, something to be manipulated or consumed. The body



becomes separated from the person, treated as an object rather than recognised as a revelation of someone's unique dignity.

The Christian tradition proposes a radically different vision. The body is not a problem to overcome. It is not an obstacle to spirituality. The central mystery of Christianity itself—the Incarnation—reveals that the human body possesses extraordinary dignity. God did not save humanity by rejecting the physical world. He entered into it. He took on human flesh. The body is therefore capable of revealing divine love.

If the body reveals the person, then the way we treat the body becomes a theological question. The way we present ourselves, the way we look at others, and the way we love, all reveal something about what we believe a person truly is. Pope John Paul II begins his reflection on the body by returning to Genesis. Before the Fall, Adam and Eve are described as “naked and were not ashamed.” This does not mean that they lacked awareness of their bodies. Rather, they possessed a pure vision of one another. They saw each other first as persons. Their bodies revealed their dignity rather than becoming objects of possession.

The tragedy of sin is not that the human body would have become evil. The body remained good because everything created by God is good. Instead, sin wounded the human gaze. Adam and Eve began to experience one another differently. Where there had once been communion, there was now the possibility of using. Where there had once been wonder, there was now the temptation to possess.



This is why Christ's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is so profound: “Everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Christ is not condemning beauty, attraction, or human desire itself. Rather, He reveals that the problem lies in a distorted way of seeing. Lust is not simply strong desire. Lust is desire separated from love. It reduces a person to something that exists for the satisfaction of another rather than someone whose dignity calls forth reverence. It is a failure to see the whole person.

Alice von Hildebrand, one of the great Catholic thinkers on femininity and human dignity, challenged the modern assumption that exposure automatically leads to freedom. Contemporary culture often suggests that authenticity requires complete visibility—that the more we reveal, the more honest we become. Yet Christianity offers a different understanding of the human person. The person is not a product to be displayed. The person is a mystery to be encountered.

Mystery does not mean secrecy or shame. A mystery is something so rich and profound that it cannot be exhausted by immediate access. The deepest realities of human life—love, trust, friendship, faith—cannot be forced or consumed. They require patience, reverence, and a gradual gift of self. The Church has always expressed this truth through her liturgical traditions. What is most sacred is often veiled. The tabernacle, the chalice, and the sanctuary are treated with reverence, not because they are unworthy of being seen, but because they are worthy of honour. A veil does not diminish beauty; it protects beauty from being treated casually.

If modesty governs how the person is revealed, chastity governs how the person is given. This is why chastity cannot be understood merely as a list of restrictions. St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that virtue does not destroy human desire; it orders it. Virtue brings harmony to the person. It allows reason and desire to work together rather than placing the human person in conflict with

herself. Christianity does not teach that desire is bad. Desire is part of the goodness of creation. The problem arises when desire becomes detached from love.

Pope John Paul II expresses this beautifully when he defines chastity as “the successful integration of sexuality within the person.” Chastity is about integration. It brings together the body, emotions, intellect, and will so that the person can truly give herself in love. Karol Wojtyła, before becoming Pope, explored this idea in *Love and Responsibility*. He developed the personalistic norm: “The person is a good towards which the only proper and adequate attitude is love.” This principle is at the centre of Christian relationships. A person must never become merely a means to an end. Other human beings are not valuable because of what they provide for me emotionally, physically, or socially.



They are valuable because they are persons loved by God, created after His own image and likeness.

Pope Benedict XVI explains this in *Deus Caritas Est* when he writes that eros “needs to be disciplined and purified.” Christianity does not reject eros; it transforms it. Desire is not eliminated but elevated. It moves from wanting to possess another person toward wanting the true good of the other.

This is the heart of chastity. The question is not simply, “Do I desire this person?” The deeper questions are, “Do I desire what is truly good for this person? Do I respect their dignity? Do I desire their holiness? Do I love them enough not to use them?”

Edith Stein offers further insight into the dignity of womanhood. She writes about the feminine capacity to recognise and nurture the personal dimension of life. Yet every gift can become wounded. The desire to love can become the desire to be needed. The desire for a relationship can become fear of being alone. The desire to be chosen can become dependent on another person’s approval.

This is why the Christian woman must always return to the deepest truth of her identity: she is first a daughter of God and in order to live in that, one must live in communion with the Lord, with a consistent encounter with the Lord in one’s daily prayer. This is the most essential and is the only means of living the virtue of purity and chastity. Seek first the kingdom of God and all else shall be given to you.

Our Lady is the model of authentic femininity because she shows us what true freedom looks like. Mary

does not seek attention, yet she stands at the centre of salvation history. She does not define herself through the gaze of others, but through her relationship with God. Her greatness lies in her complete openness to divine love.

Mary shows us that receptivity is not weakness. To receive love and respond generously requires profound courage. Ultimately, modesty and chastity invite us to rediscover who we truly are. They reject the falsehood that our worth depends on being admired. They reject the falsehood that freedom means following every desire. They reveal the truth that the body is not a commodity but a gift.

The deepest question is therefore not simply, “How much can I show?” or “How far can I go?” The deeper question is: Does the way I live reveal the truth that I am a beloved daughter of God?

Modesty says: my dignity is too great to be reduced to appearance. Chastity says: my love is too great to be reduced to desire. Together, they proclaim the Christian vision of the human person: created not for consumption, but for communion. In a culture obsessed with being seen, modesty reminds us that we are already known. In a culture searching for instant fulfilment, chastity reminds us that true love

requires freedom.

And in a world that often forgets the sacredness of the body, Catholic theology affirms the extraordinary truth that our bodies are not obstacles to holiness but rather are where the Holy Spirit dwells. They are the very place where God’s love becomes visible.

“To a great extent the level of any civilization is the level of its womanhood. When a man loves a woman, he has to become worthy of her. The higher her virtue, the more noble her character, the more devoted she is to truth, justice, goodness, the more a man has to aspire to be worthy of her. The history of civilization could actually be written in terms of the level of its women” —*said Fulton Sheen.*

To conclude, ultimately the demand of us is to ask the intention of our heart. We have to be honest with ourselves. Do I really know that my body is a mystery given by the Lord? A mystery to be veiled and loved in the correct order? And so with that I want to bring this topic to the practicals—how do we actually live in this world with purity of heart, dressing modestly and living chastely? We have to protect our eyes—what do we let into our minds? Our Lord said in Matthew 6: 22-24 “The eye is the lamp of the body.” You draw light into your body through your eyes, and light shines out to the world through your eyes. So if your eye is well and shows you what is true, “then your whole body will be filled with light.” By the grace of God, let us protect our eyes so as to live in the fullness of what God has created, good. ■

(Photos: p. 14 by Christopher Campbell on Unsplash; pp. 16, 17 pilgrims to Chartres in 2026 under the hottest weather ever, by Philomene Riou du Cosquer and Camille Boutin for Notre-Dame de Chretiente; p. 15 Alice von Hildebrand: YouTube screenshot from Socrates in the City)



On the SSPX Episcopal Consecrations

So as to enlighten disorientated faithful and clergy further to the very sad event that took place last 1st July in Écône, we are pleased to provide the following translation by fssp.com of an article in Claves, the newsletter of the French district of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter. This article summarizes the arguments presented in a 40-page theological study authored by members of the Fraternity in June 15, 2026 under the direction of Fr. Josef Bisig, Rector of Our Lady of Guadalupe seminary and a founding member of the FSSP.

Are the ordinations planned by the FSSPX legitimate?

Written by a group of theologians (Theologus), this article received strong praise from Cardinal Sarah:

“A huge thank you for this enlightening text. It will enlighten souls eager to live their Faith in the Truth, that is, in Christ and in His Church. Since 2001, I have been among those who assist the Supreme Pontiff in selecting candidates for the episcopate, following a long and meticulous investigation of each candidate. I am painfully surprised and shocked that a simple decision by a Community Superior would determine the ordination of ‘truly Catholic bishops.’ Thank you for this wonderful, clear, and well-researched text. We must realize that it is not we who save souls. It is Christ alone who saves. We are merely instruments in His Hands. Let us continue to pray that the Body of Christ may not be torn apart again.” Cardinal Robert Sarah

What is the fundamental argument of the SSPX in defence of the consecrations planned for July 1, 2026?

It is officially summarized in an *Appendix* to Father Pagliarani’s response to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, dated February 18, 2026:

“An episcopal consecration not authorized by the Holy See, when it is not accompanied by a schismatic intention or by the conferral of jurisdiction, does not constitute a rupture of communion with the Church. The constitution *Lumen gentium* on the Church states in Chapter III, no. 21 [LG 21], that the power of jurisdiction is conferred by episcopal consecration. [...]

The argument that would conclude that future episcopal consecrations within the Society would be schismatic rests entirely on the postulate of the Second Vatican Council that episcopal consecration confers both the power of order and that of jurisdiction.”

In what way is this argument open to criticism?

It contains two major errors: one regarding what the Council affirms; the other regarding the argumentation of those who oppose the future consecrations.

What does the Council actually say?

It does not affirm that episcopal consecration confers the power of jurisdiction.

“The holy Council teaches that, through episcopal consecration, the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders is conferred [...]. Episcopal consecration, together with the office (or function: munus) of

sanctification, also confers the offices of teaching and governing, which, however, by their very nature, can be exercised only in hierarchical communion with the head of the college and its members (LG 21).”

To fully understand the text of LG 21, it should be noted that an explanatory note (*Nota explicativa prævia*) was added to *Lumen gentium* in response to requests for clarification from the Council Fathers, including those from the group to which Archbishop Lefebvre belonged, the *Cætus internationalis Patrum*.

What does the Note explaining LG 21 say?

“In the episcopal consecration, ontological participation in the sacred functions (*munera*) is conferred, as is clearly evident from Tradition and also from liturgical tradition. The term ‘functions’ (*munera*) is deliberately used rather than ‘power’ (*potestas*), because the latter could be understood as a power capable of being exercised in practice. But for such a power capable of being exercised to exist, a canonical or juridical *determination* on the part of the hierarchical authority must intervene. [...] Such a subsequent norm is required *by the nature of the matter*, because these are functions that must be exercised by *several subjects* who, by the will of Christ,

cooperate in a hierarchical manner. It is evident that this “communion” was applied in the life of the Church according to the circumstances of the times before being codified *in law*.

This is why it is expressly stated that *hierarchical* communion with the head and members of the Church is required. *Communion* is a concept held in high esteem in the early Church (as it still is today, particularly in the East). It is not understood as some vague *sentiment*, but as an *organic* reality, which requires a juridical form and is at the same time animated by charity. ” (*Nota prævica*, n. 2).

Is there here an erroneous innovation of Vatican II?

Contrary to what the FSSPX

maintains, according to Vatican II, what is conferred by episcopal consecration is not the *power* to govern (jurisdiction), but *offices* or *functions*. The FSSPX therefore asserts—without proving it—a supposedly erroneous “postulate of Vatican II.”

Moreover, a well-known “traditionalist” theologian, Father Raymond Dulac, explains, on the contrary, that in the text of LG 21, there is no break with previous Catholic doctrine: “Consecration produces an innate, indelible vocation, inscribed in the ‘episcopal character,’ to govern a portion of the Church, but this capacity must be actualized through a true ‘power’ of jurisdiction.” And he speaks of “radical authority inscribed in

consecration ” (*Episcopal Collegiality at the Second Vatican Council*, Le Cèdre, 1979, pp. 119–120).

Does the argument of those who oppose future consecrations rest entirely, as the SSPX claims, on this supposed “error” of Vatican II?

No, because even if the SSPX were correct in its criticism of *Lumen gentium*, those who oppose its reasoning do not base their position on this question of the transmission of the power of jurisdiction.

The argument of those who oppose the SSPX’s consecrations rests on the very nature of the Catholic episcopate, the essence of which includes hierarchical communion.

(Photo Vatican media: Pope Leo XIV is presented with a picture of the FSSPX seminarians from our motherhouse in Wigratzbad during the audience granted on 19 January 2026 to FSSPX Superior General Very Rev. Fr John Berg, and FSSPX co-founder as well as OLGS Seminary Rector Very Rev. Fr Josef Bisig)



How might we clarify the arguments of those who oppose future consecrations?

As we have just noted, what is at issue in future consecrations is not whether or not the power of jurisdiction is received. It is the fact that all the functions received in consecration—including that of the sanctification of the baptized through the conferral of Confirmation and Holy Orders—“can be exercised only in hierarchical communion with the head of the college and its members”; and that this stems from “the very nature” of these episcopal functions.

Does this also apply to a bishop without jurisdiction, such as a titular bishop or a bishop emeritus?

Yes, a bishop who has not been entrusted with a flock to govern (titular bishop) or who has retired (bishop emeritus) does not confirm or ordain the faithful of other bishops in the Church without the permission of their own Ordinaries.

A titular bishop is indeed consecrated without being granted



(Public domain Wikipedia for both photos: above, and p.22: Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter, by Guido Reni).

This mosaic from the late thirteenth century in former Byzantium depicts Archbishop St Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 297-373). There is no conclusive historical evidence that he consecrated bishops or ordained priests while unjustly exiled from his episcopal see of Alexandria by a faction of Arian bishops backed by civil authorities. Even if such evidence were found, it would have been consistent for him to do so, since his clergy, his flock and Pope Julius acknowledged him as the rightful Patriarch of Alexandria, even though he was prevented from residing in his diocese. Even after Pope Liberius, imprisoned by the emperor for two years and being threatened with death, had been coerced into excommunicating St Athanasius (with no canonical effect, since conceded under duress), the latter did not set up his own parallel hierarchy. And yet, no less strong motives would he have had to claim that there was a “state of necessity” amidst the Arian crisis, than SSPX clergy in our times of modernism. Manifestly, consecrating bishops against the will of the pope is totally alien to Catholic tradition. Doing so allegedly “to safeguard Roman traditions” is contradictory, to say the least. May St Athanasius and St Pius X obtain for us all peace and unity.

Further reading:

- ✓ Recent article by renowned theologian Fr Louis-Marie de Bagnieres, FSVF: <https://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2026/06/the-sspx-consecrations-separatism-is.html>
- ✓ Older study by Fr Seth Phipps, FSSP, whose conclusion still holds even though further historical data may now be added: <https://fssp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-05-06-Dowry-42-ONLINE.pdf>

actual jurisdiction, but he nevertheless continues to exercise, within the order of sanctification, the “grace of leadership” received at his consecration (cf. St.

Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, III, 17, 2) in hierarchical communion with the Pope and the other bishops.

Whenever a bishop without actual jurisdiction exercises his episcopal sacramental power, he does so with a mission received from those who have jurisdiction (diocesan bishops or religious superiors).

Is a special mission received for the future bishops of the SSPX?

No, that is not what is envisaged for the consecrations of the SSPX:

“The present situation, which is one of a widespread and permanent invasion of modernism into the minds of men of the Church, demands, for the sanctification and salvation of souls, a truly Catholic episcopate free from the errors of the Second Vatican Council, such as cannot in fact be found outside the work initiated by Archbishop Lefebvre ” (Abbé Gleize, “The Consecrations of July 1, 2026,” *La Porte Latine*, February 11, 2026).

In the introduction to a book published in Italian, the SSPX asserts that it is necessary to have “the consecration of fully Catholic bishops for the ordination of fully Catholic priests who will continue to transmit the Deposit of Faith without alteration” (Various Authors, *Al servizio della Chiesa. Le consacrazioni episcopali della Fraternità San Pio X*, Edizioni Piane, 2026).

It is therefore envisaged that the future bishops of the FSSPX will be consecrated not only without receiving any jurisdiction or mission but also outside the Catholic hierarchical communion, since only the FSSPX can, in its view, transmit

the Deposit of Faith without alteration.

Is ordination outside of (and a fortiori against) hierarchical communion an intrinsically evil act?

Yes, because a priest who is ordained without receiving actual jurisdiction nevertheless always receives a spiritual power intrinsically ordered toward the governance of the Church. He cannot receive, outside of any mandate from those who hold authority in the Church (and *a fortiori* against them), a “grace of leadership,” that is, a power essentially ordered toward an act reserved, by divine right, to those in the Church who are vested with authority.

A consecration outside of hierarchical communion therefore entails a grave defect which is, if not schismatic, at least in the very line of schism. Pius XII thus describes consecration received without apostolic institution as a “very grave attack on the very unity of the Church,” and he describes the exercise of the power of order by bishops thus consecrated as “gravely illicit and sacrilegious” (Encyclical *Ad apostolorum Principis*, June 29, 1958).

Is conferring or receiving the episcopate outside of hierarchical communion contrary to divine law?

Yes, because Christ did not establish the apostles, nor did the apostles institute the bishops, their successors, as autonomous entities, unconnected to one another. Speaking of the determination required for hierarchical communion, the *Nota Praevia* clearly states: “Such a subsequent norm is required by the nature of the matter, because these are functions that must be exercised

by several subjects who, by the will of Christ, cooperate in a hierarchical manner” (n. 2).

The conferral of the episcopate on priests of the FSSPX on July 1 would therefore take place autonomously and without any connection to the rest of the Catholic episcopate. It would contradict what Fr. Berto, theologian (*peritus*) to Archbishop Lefebvre during the Second Vatican Council, recalled: “By divine right, the bishops, even when scattered, are a *constituted body* within the Church” (*Pour la Sainte Église Romaine*, Éd. du Cèdre, 1976, p. 242).

And Pius XII emphasizes that the three offices of the bishops (including that of the order) belong to them in subordination to the Supreme Pontiff: “By divine institution, it belongs to you, the successors of the Apostles, under the authority of the Roman Pontiff, by virtue of a threefold office and prerogative (cf. can. 329): the magisterium, the priesthood, and governance (*magisterium, sacerdotium, regimen*) ” (May 31, 1954, Address to the Cardinals and Bishops who had come to Rome for the canonization of St. Pius X)

Are such consecrations, as their defenders claim, free from “schismatic intent”?

Subjectively, it is possible. The grave and prolonged crisis in the Church, particularly the fact that certain members of the hierarchy may at times actually promote error or be complicit with those who spread error, can lead some, in good faith, to lose sight of essential elements of Catholic doctrine, such as hierarchical communion. And subjective intention is a matter for God’s judgment.

But objectively, the Lefebvrist episcopate can only be constituted by



denying the other bishops the status of Catholics: the SSPX acknowledges this when it asserts that a “truly Catholic episcopate” must be established for “the salvation of souls.”

As Bishop Marian Eleganti noted, “it is not primarily a matter of intentions, but of objective facts and behaviors” (thecatholicerald.com, March 9, 2026). And Bishop Robert Mutsaerts wrote: “The SSPX has a parallel hierarchy (of bishops without a papal mandate), it performs ordinations without jurisdiction, and often ignores local bishops” (lifesitenews.com, March 12, 2026).

Is the concept of the episcopate, as presented by the FSSPX, orthodox?

Unfortunately, the FSSPX is increasingly and clearly developing a concept of the episcopate that is manifestly contrary to Catholic Tradition. It claims, in fact, to ordain bishops who have no connection to the actual governance of the Church and who are not “true princes in the

ecclesiastical hierarchy” (Leo XIII, encyclical *Sapientiae christianae*, January 10, 1890).

In contrast, the Catholic concept of the episcopate is clearly affirmed by St. Thomas: “The bishop has a rank in relation to the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church, over which he receives a principal and quasi-royal charge” (Treatise on the Perfection of the Spiritual Life, chap. 24, 4).

Tradition is also expressed, in particular, in the liturgical rites and practices of the Church, both Eastern and Western. It shows that, through the rites of episcopal consecration, bishops not only receive a specific power of order but also take the place of Christ as Teacher and Shepherd. Thus, the traditional Roman Pontifical states, for all bishops, even those who do not have charge of a particular flock: “Grant him, O Lord, an episcopal see to govern Your Church and the people entrusted to him.” And Benedict XIV invokes another text from the Pontifical: “Receive the Gospel, and go and proclaim it to the people entrusted to you” (Apostolic Letter to Cardinal delle Lanze, August 4, 1747).

The SSPX, on the contrary, promotes an episcopate reduced to the exercise of the power of order (ordaining priests and confirming the faithful). This contradicts the Council of Trent, which teaches on two occasions that “preaching is the principal duty (*præcipuum munus*) of bishops” (Session 5, *Decretum de reformatione*, c. 2, and Session 24, *Decretum de reformatione*, c. 4; Mansi, 33, 30, and 159).

Is there a danger of drifting toward heterodoxy?

Yes. For the SSPX, the bishop is appointed by the superiors of a

particular society of apostolic life: the SSPX. Such a bishop is therefore no longer instituted in union with the pope and the other bishops; he is no longer a member of a body.

Therein lies a *heresy*, at least in practice: “The most elementary Catholic doctrine,” teaches Pius IX, “teaches us that no one can be considered a legitimate bishop:

- unless he is bound by the communion of faith and charity to the rock upon which the Church of Christ was built,
- unless he adheres to the supreme shepherd to whom all the sheep of Christ have been entrusted to lead them to pasture,
- unless he is bound to the one who confirms his brothers who are in this world (Apostolic Letter *Etsi multa luctuosa*, November 21, 1873).

On the other hand, the concept of the episcopate as formulated by the SSPX is allegedly reduced to the function of bishops administering the sacraments at the behest of the SSPX’s superiors.

Such bishops claim to have no jurisdiction, yet they nevertheless assume jurisdiction over subjects who are not under their authority in order to confirm and ordain them. One sign of the insincerity of this claim of lack of jurisdiction is precisely the use in the FSSPX’s pontifical ceremonies of numerous symbols of the powers of teaching and governance: the miter, the crozier, the throne, etc. Whereas such liturgical symbols are absolutely not required for the validity of the exercise of episcopal power of order. The conception of an episcopate reduced to the power of order thus practically contradicts the revealed affirmation that bishops are “appointed by the Holy Spirit to govern (shepherd, *poimainein*) the Church of God” (Acts 20:28). ■

An Englishman in French-speaking Bavaria?

By Deacon David Kahn, FSSP

When I tell people that I'm an Englishman living in Germany but studying in French but praying in Latin, they tend to get confused. And with good reason! There is, however, a method to my madness. The *International Seminary of St Peter*, where I study for the priesthood, is the FSSP's European house of formation. Located in Wigratzbad, Bavaria (hence Germany), it has two language sections for classes (German and, in my case, French), but only one for the Liturgy: Latin!

Worshiping in the language of the Church has very practical advantages in a community of over 20 nationalities. As befits sons of the Catholic, i.e. universal, Church, each nationality lives in harmony with the others, yet keeps its own character. Indeed, Wigratzbad is the living proof that Catholicism can do what globalism cannot. Our (Greek) cook is a genius, but the Italians still long for *real* pasta; the French for *real* cheese. The weather is changeable, but three days without a cloud in the sky and I long for rain; three days of rain and the Portuguese all

get depressed. Seminary life is quite disciplined, but the Swiss still lament the lack of punctuality; the Spanish *are* the lack of punctuality. In short, everyone's happy!

I study in the French section—to atone for my sins, as I like to say! But while the 100 Years' War never really stopped amongst trades (you wouldn't believe how many times I heard the words "Joan of Arc" in my first year), I still feel right at home amid my confreres. They're simply a great bunch of friendly, pious, down-to-earth young men. Planting a Union Jack in the seminary courtyard for St George's Day wouldn't have been any fun without their delighted indignation, anyway... Whether we're battling it out on the football pitch, teasing the thurifer for having genuflected to the choir instead of the altar (I've seen it happen!) or chomping our way through 100kg of asparagus when

the cook accidentally adds an extra zero to the order (true story), life at seminary is rich and varied!

The international nature of the seminary prepares us well for life in the international Fraternity of St Peter, at the service of the universal Church. Our summer camps in the UK are staffed by seminarians from anywhere from England and Ireland to Croatia and Mexico; I've been on apostolate in France with Poles, in Poland with Czechs, and in Lithuania with Frenchmen; and I'll be spending my diaconate year at the FSSP's other seminary in Denton, Nebraska!

It is both a challenge and a joy to live out such a truly universal Catholicism. God calls all men to sanctity, but each in a different way. "There are many rooms in my Father's mansion," said Our Lord. Thank goodness for that! ■

(Picture FSSP: Wigratzbad seminarians by Lake Constance)



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Pictures: browse through hundreds of amazing pictures of our liturgies, summer camps and other pastoral activities on the FSSP England Flickr page.

DOWRY Magazine

Is our shared printed medium all across these Isles. We therefore invite readers from Scotland and Ireland to make this publication more widely known, as well as in England and Wales. *Dowry* is given to you for free, but contributions are welcome since each copy of *Dowry* costs £2 to produce, print and post. Please also visit our websites, where you will find regular news and updates, and the full series

This Sacred Victim

Clergy retreat led Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP on

The priest at the altar as sacrificer

Monday 5th - Friday 9th October 2026

Organised by The Christian Heritage Centre

at Stonyhurst. Bookings and info:

<https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/this-sacred-victim/>

of *Dowry* readable on-line: fssp.org.uk/category/dowry/. Email us your comments to be included in our forthcoming readers' feedback section.

Find articles of past issues of *Dowry* conveniently sorted by topic here: <https://dowry.org.uk/>

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Save the date: Annual weekend of vocational discernment on 5-7 March 2027, led by FSSP clergy at Buckden Towers, PE19 5TA. For unmarried men 18-35. Contact & inquiries: malleray@fssp.org.

Below: priestly ordination last 28th May in America of 13 FSSP deacons, including Irishman Fr Conan McGonagle, FSSP, subsequently assigned in Bedford, England. (Photo FSSP).



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