

Winter 2025 – Edition No. 18



RESORIUS MAGNUS



The voice of the Foederatio Internationalis Una Voce



The central figure is that of Juan Cardinal Sandoval Iñiguez, surrounded by twelve representative signatories of the 2024 petitions.

Clockwise from top left: Sir James MacMillan; Lord (Julian) Fellowes; Tom Holland; HRH Princess Michael of Kent; Jesús Emmanuel Acha Martinez; Mamela Fiallo Flor; Dame Felicity Lott; Larry Chapp; Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Bianca Jagger; Sir Paul Smith; Lord (Andrew) Lloyd-Webber.

Gregorius Magnus: biannual magazine of Una Voce International

The FIUV's magazine is dedicated to St Gregory the Great (Pope Gregory I), who died in 604 AD, a Pope forever associated with Gregorian chant and the Gregorian rite of Mass (the Traditional Mass).

Gregorius Magnus magazine aims to be a showcase for the worldwide Traditional Catholic movement: the movement for the restoration to the Church's altars of the Mass in its traditional forms. We draw features and news from our supporters all over the world, including the magazines published by some of our member associations.

Gregorius Magnus is published twice a year: in March and in October.

The Editor wants to hear from you! We want to spread the news, good or bad, about the movement for the restoration of the Church's liturgical traditions, from all over the world.

The production of the magazine is supported financially by the Latin Mass Society of England and Wales, and we wish to record our thanks to them.

'He who would climb to a lofty height must go by steps, not leaps'.

St Gregory the Great



Please send contributions to secretary@fiuv.org, for our two annual deadlines:

15th February,
for the March issue,

15th September,
for the October issue.

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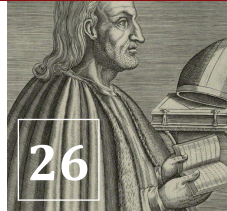


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Gregorius Magnus is published by the Foederatio Internationalis Una Voce. The FIUV is a lay movement within the Catholic Church, founded in Rome in 1965 and erected formally in Zürich in January 1967.

The principal aims of the FIUV are to ensure that the Missale Romanum promulgated by Pope St John XXIII in 1962 is maintained in the Church as one of the forms of liturgical celebration, to obtain freedom of use for all other Roman liturgical books enshrining 'previous liturgical and disciplinary forms of the Latin tradition', and to safeguard and promote the use of Latin, Gregorian chant, and sacred polyphony.

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President's Message

by Joseph Shaw

As well as regular contributors, extracts from magazines, and book reviews, this issue contains two special features: one on the petitions submitted to the Holy See in July to save the Traditional Mass from further restrictions, and another marking the twentieth anniversary of the death of Michael Traherne Davies (1936-2004), President of the FIUV from 1995 to 2004, and prolific writer and campaigner for the cause of the Traditional Mass.

The petitions were signed by public figures – academics, musicians, politicians, businessmen, TV personalities, and celebrities – and were inspired by the petition sent to Pope Paul VI in 1971. That petition was signed by an extraordinary roll call of the British 'great and good', including many writers, artists, and broadcasters, and the less well-known full version of the list was truly international in character.

There were three petitions this year, organized respectively in Britain, the USA, and Mexico. Texts and signatories are included in full in the pages that follow, with a discussion of their impact.

Today's petitioners will gain no worldly prestige for their support for our cause – some may even incur criticism. One, who had been active in seeking further supporters, told me that he had lost friends over the project. Lending their names and prestige to the ancient Mass was an act of disinterested charity on their part. The Latin Mass Society organised a Mass for their good estate; please join us in praying for them, and thanking God for their intervention.

Michael Davies was similarly motivated. His extraordinary zeal and dogged hard work emerges very clearly from his obituary by Leo Darroch printed in this edition. A piece of Davies's writing is also included, a 2004 review of *Looking Again at the Liturgy with Cardinal Ratzinger*, a record of the ground-breaking Fontgombault conference of 2001, which was attended by Cardinal Ratzinger. Please pray for Michael Davies. The Latin Mass Society organised a Mass for him on the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross (14th September).

The Fontgombault conference was an example of the positive developments that took place towards the end of Davies's life, and for which his remarkable labours paved the way. Cardinal Ratzinger's important book *The Spirit of the Liturgy*


had been published in 2000, and a new era of scholarship had begun to reassess the liturgical reform and to have an effect even on the policy of the Holy See, for example, with the project for a more accurate English translation of the reformed Mass. Davies did not live to see his friend Cardinal Ratzinger elected Pope in 2005, but his confidence in him was vindicated when in 2007 he freed the Traditional Mass from the restrictions of the earlier indults: indults, as Pope Benedict now explained, that had never been legally necessary, as the Traditional Mass had never been abrogated.

All this seems a long time ago, and readers may be forgiven for thinking that our movement's successes have been reversed. This is not at all the case. Michael Davie's enormous legacy of books, articles, and pamphlets cannot be unwritten, and the words of Joseph Ratzinger, both as a private theologian and as Supreme Pontiff, cannot be unsaid. The enormous expansion of the number of Traditional Masses being celebrated, the priests who have learnt it, and the people who have discovered it, cannot be wished away. The renewed attention drawn to our cause, first by Pope Benedict's gracious action in 2007, and then again by Pope Francis's restrictions from 2021, have created a public debate and public sympathy that would have been difficult to imagine in the 1980s or 1990s,

and this is reflected in the petitions of public figures that have been published this year.

For our movement, this is a moment of difficulty and suffering, but it is not a moment of weakness. Never in the history of the Federation has our cause enjoyed such scholarly support and cultural prestige, and never has it been so active. Traditional religious communities are being founded; schools are being established; walking pilgrimages are joined by unprecedented numbers of young people; not only are books being written but entire publishing houses have been established to bring them to market. If this is what is being done during a time of official disapproval, our opponents must be wondering what will happen when the official wind changes direction once again – for it is clear that the current persecution is unsustainable.

They are right to wonder. May that day be soon, and may we all be ready to make the most of it.

This edition introduces a new magazine from a member association: *The Little Flower*, from Una Voce Nigeria. In it readers can learn about the school that has been the special focus of the association and of the Nigerian apostolate of the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter, which has already been featured in *Gregorius Magnus. Floreat!* 

Become a Friend of the Una Voce Federation

Becoming a Friend is an easy way to support the work of the Federation for the 'former Missal' of the Roman Rite, and to keep yourself informed about its activities.

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'It is vitally important that these new priests and religious, these new young people with ardent hearts, should find—if only in a corner of the rambling mansion of the Church—the treasure of a truly sacred liturgy still glowing softly in the night. And it is our task—since we have been given the grace to appreciate the value of this heritage—to preserve it from spoliation, from becoming buried out of sight, despised and therefore lost forever. It is our duty to keep it alive: by our own loving attachment, by our support for the priests who make it shine in our churches, by our apostolate at all levels of persuasion...'

Dr Eric de Saventem, founding President of the Una Voce Federation, New York, 1970

His Eminence Cardinal Sandoval and Sir James MacMillan Presented with the De Saventhem Medal

by Joseph Shaw

The founder-president of Una Voce International (FIUV), Eric de Saventhem, is the inspiration for an honour that the Federation awards only on rare occasions, the De Saventhem Medal. Dr de Saventhem, a German convert to the Catholic Faith, was implicated in anti-Nazi activities during the Second World War, and managed to defect to the British from the German embassy in Istanbul in 1944. Later he applied his great energy and international connections to the defence of the Traditional Mass.

The award takes the form of a die-cast medal, with the FIUV logo on one side and an embossed image of Dr de Saventhem on the other, with the Latin phrase *Pro merito magno*: 'for great merit'. It is given to those who have made a really significant contribution to the cause of the Traditional Mass. It has previously been given to Cardinal Dario Castrillon Hoyos, and the last survivor of the 1971 petitioners, Vladimir Ashkenazy.

On Monday, 18th September 2024, it was my honour as president of Una Voce International to present one of these to Sir James MacMillan, for his organisation of a petition in favour of the Traditional Mass, which gained international attention. On Wednesday, 23rd October, Felipe Alanís Suárez, one of our vice presidents, resident in Mexico, presented another to His



Eminence Juan Cardinal Sandoval Íñiguez, whose open letter to Pope Francis on the same subject was the occasion for a 'letter of adherence' to his letter signed by many international figures, particularly from Latin America.

These initiatives, and related public statements, petitions, and behind-the-scenes interventions with Pope Francis by all kinds of people, have come together to make the point that the Traditional Mass is not the symbol of a narrow and friendless group of people. It is the heritage of all Catholics: of artists, composers, singers, and celebrities; from world-bestridding businessmen to the stoical French 'mothers of priests', from politicians to the simple faithful all over the world. In this moment of crisis, created by persistent rumours of a supposedly final set of restrictions on the Traditional Mass, apparently to have been published on 16th July 2024, these interventions appear to have made a decisive difference.

The efforts of Sir James MacMillan and Cardinal Sandoval were the most prominent initiatives, and our thanks to all those involved is symbolised by our honouring of these two quite different men. Sir James MacMillan is a Scottish Catholic composer of international reputation who has invested much talent and energy into



religious music; he is also a Patron of the Latin Mass Society. Cardinal Sandoval, sometime Archbishop of Guadalajara in Mexico, now aged ninety-one, is no stranger to controversy, and has even survived an assassination attempt. He is a signatory of the 2023 *dubia* submitted to Pope Francis, alongside his brother Cardinals Burke, Sarah, and Zen. He appears in the recent documentary *Guardians of Tradition*, the third in the *Mass of the Ages* series, which is available on YouTube.



Alongside them we recall all the signatories, and also such disparate figures as the maverick British left-wing politician George Galloway, who personally advised Pope Francis against restricting the Traditional Mass in a private audience, and the French actress Brigitte Bardot, who, in an interview with Aleteia on the occasion of her ninetieth birthday, reflected that with the liturgical reform the Mass had lost its 'mystery' and become a mere 'theatrical performance'.

On behalf of the international movement, the Latin Mass Society had a Mass celebrated in Corpus Christi Maiden Lane on Monday, 16th September, for the good estate of the petitioners. This was a votive Mass of the Holy Cross – the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross falls on the 14th. It was a High Mass, with deacon and subdeacon, accompanied by the Society's affiliated polyphonic group, the Southwell Consort, who sang Victoria's Mass 'Pro Victoria', with the assistance of period instruments: a sackbut and a cornet. All the UK-based petitioners were invited to this Mass and also to a dinner afterwards. It was here that the presentation to Sir James MacMillan was made, before a number of distinguished petitioners, Latin Mass Society Patrons, and LMS Committee members.

May all the petitioners, and all those who have used their influence for this cause, enjoy God's blessing and our eternal gratitude. ⑥



The 2024 Petitions

July 2024 saw an extraordinary outpouring of support for the Traditional Mass from public figures, in three major petitions addressed to the Holy Father. The first, published on 4th July in a British newspaper, *The Times*, was organised by the Scottish Catholic composer Sir James MacMillan, and was signed by forty-eight individuals: from business, music, the arts, and politics, mainly from Britain. Sir James's friend, the American poet Dana Gioia, organised a similar petition from the United States, with ten signatories. This was published on the very day that, according to rumour, planned new restrictions on the Traditional Mass would be published.

On the same day, another petition was published from Mexico: a 'letter of adherence' to a personal appeal to Pope Francis from Cardinal Sandoval, the ninety-one-year-old retired Archbishop of Guadalajara. This gained international support, with sixty-seven signatories: it was signed by members of the FIUV Council, by artists from Britain and America, but most of all by public figures from Latin America.

The range and importance of the signatories is truly extraordinary. The MacMillan petition was signed by a cabinet minister, a senior member of the British Royal Family, Bianca Jagger, and a great many musicians, and by Catholics, Anglicans, Jews, and non-believers. The Sandoval petition included a prominent pop musician, television personalities, academics, and film-makers: in this case, all Catholics.

They are further discussed in an appendix added to *The Latin Mass and the Intellectuals* edited by Joseph Shaw, of which an extract is printed in this edition of Gregorius Magnus.

The MacMillan petition: letter to *The Times*, 4th July 2024 'Latin Mass at risk'

Sir,

On July 6, 1971, *The Times* printed an appeal to Pope Paul VI in defence of the Latin Mass signed by Catholic and non-Catholic artists and writers, including Agatha Christie, Graham Greene and Yehudi Menuhin. This became known as the 'Agatha Christie letter', because it was reportedly her name that prompted the Pope to issue an indult, or permission, for celebration of the Latin Mass in England and Wales. The letter argued that 'the rite in question, in its magnificent Latin text, has also inspired priceless achievements



... by poets, philosophers, musicians, architects, painters and sculptors in all countries and epochs. Thus, it belongs to universal culture'.

Recently there have been worrying reports from Rome that the Latin Mass is to be banished from nearly every Catholic church. This is a painful and confusing prospect, especially for the growing number of young Catholics whose faith has been nurtured by it. The traditional liturgy is a 'cathedral' of text and gesture, developing as those venerable buildings did over many centuries. Not everyone appreciates its value and that is fine; but to destroy it seems an unnecessary and insensitive act in a world where history can all too easily slip away forgotten. The old rite's ability to encourage silence and contemplation is a treasure not easily replicated, and, when gone, impossible to reconstruct. This appeal, like its predecessor, is 'entirely ecumenical and non-political'. The signatories include Catholics and non-Catholics, believers and non-believers. We implore the Holy See to reconsider any further restriction of access to this magnificent spiritual and cultural heritage.

(For the benefit of readers, we have added some information about the petitioners after each name.)

Robert Agostinelli: Catholic, Italian-American financier

Lord Alton of Liverpool: Catholic, former MP for the LibDems, pro-life activist

Lord Bailey of Paddington: Shaun Baily, Christian, Conservative Party candidate for Mayor of London; Afro-Caribbean heritage

Lord Bamford: Anthony Bamford, Catholic, businessman and philanthropist

Lord Berkeley of Knighton: Catholic, composer, son of Sir Lennox Berkely, who signed the 1971 petition

Sophie Bevan: Catholic, soprano

Ian Bostridge: singer

Nina Campbell: clothes designer

Meghan Cassidy: viola player

Sir Nicholas Coleridge: former chairman of the Victoria and Albert Museum; chairman of Historic Royal Palaces; writer

Dame Imogen Cooper: pianist

Lord Fellowes of West Stafford: Julian Fellowes, Catholic writer, creator of *Downton Abbey*

Sir Rocco Forte: Catholic, hotelier

Lady Antonia Fraser: Catholic, historian

Martin Fuller: painter

Lady Getty: Victoria Holdsworth, former model, philanthropist, widow of Sir John Paul Getty Jr

John Gilhooly: Catholic, director of Wigmore Hall (major London classical music venue)

Dame Jane Glover: conductor

Michael Gove: Conservative Party cabinet minister

Susan Hampshire: actor

Lord (Alexander) Hesketh: Conservative Party minister, hereditary peer

Tom Holland: agnostic historian

Sir Stephen Hough: Catholic, pianist

Tristram Hunt: director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, former Labour Party cabinet minister

Steven Isserlis: cellist, Jewish heritage

Bianca Jagger: actress and human rights campaigner (ex-wife of Mick Jagger)

Igor Levit: Catholic, pianist

Lord Lloyd Webber: Andrew Lloyd Webber, composer, of Jewish heritage

Julian Lloyd Webber: cellist, of Jewish heritage

Dame Felicity Lott: soprano

Sir James MacMillan: Catholic, composer

Princess Michael of Kent: Catholic, wife of Prince Michael of Kent (grandson of King George V)

Baroness Monckton of Dallington Forest: Rosamond Mary Monckton, Catholic, campaigner for Down's Syndrome children

Lord Moore of Etchingham: Charles Moore, former editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, biographer, Catholic convert

Fraser Nelson: Catholic, editor of *The Spectator*

Alex Polizzi: Alessandra Maria Luigia Anna Polizzi di Sorrentino, Catholic, hotelier

Mishka Rushdie Momen: pianist, of Indian heritage

Sir Andrés Schiff: pianist and conductor, of Jewish heritage

Lord Skidelsky: Robert Skidelsky, economic historian

Lord Smith of Finsbury: Chris Smith, head of Environment Agency and Advertising Standards Authority, former Labour Party minister; member of the Church of Scotland

Sir Paul Smith: clothes designer

Rory Stewart: Conservative Party minister, professor of Human Rights at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Anglican

Lord Stirrup: Jock Stirrup, former Chief of Defence Staff, RAF

Dame Kiri Te Kanawa: Catholic, soprano

Dame Mitsuko Uchida: Japanese-English classical pianist and conductor

Ryan Wigglesworth: Catholic, composer and conductor, husband of Sophie Bevan

AN Wilson: writer

Adam Zamoyski: Catholic, historian, of Polish heritage

.....

Letter from Juan Cardinal Sandoval Íñiguez to Pope Francis, advocating for the Mass of Saint Pius V, and International Endorsement by Personalities (made public on 16th July 2024)

On 6th July, Juan Cardinal Sandoval Íñiguez, Archbishop Emeritus of Guadalajara, penned a letter to Pope Francis, which he dispatched on Monday, 8th July. He urged that,

amid persistent rumours of an impending global restriction on the celebration of the Traditional Latin Mass, the Tridentine Mass, which has been celebrated for four centuries according to the rite of Saint Pius V, not be suppressed or suspended. Diverse Catholic associations and news/Internet platforms, among them Una Voce México, have called on personalities from around the world to endorse this petition launched by Cardinal Sandoval.

Below is a free translation of the letter sent by Cardinal Sandoval.

To His Holiness Pope Francis, Bishop of Rome and Shepherd of the Universal Church.

Pope Francis, there are rumours that there is a definitive intention to prohibit the Latin Mass of Saint Pius V.

The Lord's Supper, which He commanded us to celebrate in His memory, has been celebrated throughout history in various rites and languages, always preserving the essentials: commemorating the death of Christ and partaking in the Table of the Bread of Eternal Life.

Even today, the Lord's Supper is celebrated in various rites and languages, both within and outside the Catholic Church.

It cannot be wrong what the Church has celebrated for four centuries, the Mass of Saint Pius V in Latin, with a rich and devout liturgy that naturally invites one to penetrate into the Mystery of God.

Several individuals and groups, both Catholic and non-Catholic, have expressed the desire for it not to be suppressed but preserved, because of the richness of its liturgy and in Latin, which alongside Greek, forms the foundation of not only Western culture but also other parts.

Pope Francis, do not allow this to happen. You are also the guardian of the historical, cultural, and liturgical richness of the Church of Christ.

Seeking your blessing, who esteems and always commends you.

**Guadalajara, Jalisco, July 6, 2024,
+JUAN CARD. SANDOVAL ÍÑIGUEZ
Archbishop Emeritus of Guadalajara**

Letter of Adherence to the request of His Eminence Don Juan Cardinal Sandoval Íñiguez to the Holy Father, regarding the celebration of the Holy Mass according to the missal known as that of Saint Pius V; dated July 6, 2024

We, the undersigned, inspired by the present letter of Cardinal Juan Sandoval Íñiguez, Archbishop Emeritus of Guadalajara, also wish to make our plea that the treasure known as the Mass

of Saint Pius V, due to its spiritual and historical richness, be preserved and not restricted in the Church.

We attest that among the signatories there are those of us who attend the Mass celebrated with the Missal of Saint Pius V and those who attend the Mass of Saint Paul VI; we are united by the recognition of the value of this liturgical and cultural heritage and the desire for concord and unity in the Church.

Modesto Aceves Ascencio. Architect, former National Director of Restoration Works, Mexico

Jesús Emmanuel Acha Martínez. Singer, composer, and entrepreneur, Mexico

Humberto Jorge Aguilera Hernández. General Director of Noche Lírica Música Vocal, Mexico

Felipe Alanís Suarez. Vice President of the International Federation Una Voce, Mexico

Jaime Alcalde Silva. Professor at the Catholic University of Chile, President of the Liturgical Association Magnificat, Chile

Andris Amolins. President of Una Voce Latvia

Miguel Angel Yañez. Director of Adelante La Fe, Spain

Esteban Arce. Communicator and national radio and TV news anchor, Mexico

Julio Ariza Irigoyen. President and founder of Grupo Intereconomía, La Gaceta, and Toro TV, Spain

Roberto Badillo Martínez. Major General, State Major Diploma, Mexico

Teresa Banderas Aceves. Choir of the State of Jalisco, Mexico

Patrick Banken. President of Una Voce France

Guadalupe Blanco Aceves. Seise of the Metropolitan Cathedral of Guadalajara, Mexico

Alberto Buela. Philosopher and professor at the Sorbonne University of Paris, France

Edgardo Juan Cruz Ramos. President of Una Voce Puerto Rico

Juan M. Dabdoub Giacoman. President and founder of the Mexican Family Council, Mexico

Lord (Daniel) Moylan. Catholic politician, UK

Simon DeLacre. Director and film producer, Argentina

Luis Fernando Escobar Duque. President of Cruzada Cultural Center, Colombia

Edgar Fernandez Cerda. President of Una Voce Mexico

Rodrigo Fernández Diez. Jurist and writer, Mexico

Mamela Fiallo Flor. Journalist and international keynote speaker, Ecuador

James Gillick. Catholic painter, UK

Horacio Giusto. Philosopher and international keynote speaker, Argentina
Michael Hichborn. President of the Lepanto Institute, USA
Jorge Issac Lozano. Principal organist at the Church of the Visitation in Guadalajara, Mexico
Sir James MacMillan. Composer, United Kingdom
Álvaro Leño Espinoza. Entrepreneur, Mexico
Martha Leño Espinoza. Businesswoman, Mexico
Elizabeth Lemme. Calligrapher and artist, USA
José María López Valencia. Director of the Choir of the State of Jalisco, Mexico
Anuar López Marmolejo. Founder of the Mexican Association of Catholic Jurists
Alfredo López García. Director of Bendita Eucaristía Radio, USA
Fabio Marino. President of Una Voce Italy
Nicolas Márquez. Writer and international lecturer, Argentina
Austreberto Martínez Villegas. Historian and writer, Mexico
Debra Matthew. Musical director of San Mark's Parish Episcopal Church of Guadalajara, Mexico
Luis Medina. Communicator and journalist, USA

María Eugenia Méndez Dávalos. Former local deputy of Michoacán, Mexico
César Moreno Aguirre. Chief industrial engineer, Mexico
Arturo Navarro Leño. Entrepreneur, Mexico
Javier Navascués Pérez. Editor of InfoCatólica, Spain
Manuel Ocampo. Director and founder of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Universidad Panamericana, Mexico
Uchenna Okezie. President of Ecclesia Dei Society, Nigeria
Jack Oostveen. President of Ecclesia Dei Delft, Netherlands
Omar Alejandro Padilla López. Musical director at St Philip Catholic Church, USA
Rubén Peretó Rivas. Philosopher and researcher, Argentina
Ricardo Ramírez Carreño. Dean of the Faculty of Arts at St Michael Archangel International University, USA; Director of the Royal Art Academy, Santiago, Chile
David Reid. President of Una Voce Canada
Monika Rheinschmitt. President of Pro Missa Tridentina, Germany
Cristián Rodrigo Iturralde. Author, researcher, and international keynote speaker, Argentina
Juan Manuel Rodríguez González-Cordero. President of Una Voce Spain Luis Román. Catholic communicator and founder of the channel Conoce Ama y Vive tu Fe, USA

Walter Romero. Director and founder of Metapedia, Brazil
Ernesto Rubio. Entrepreneur, Mexico
Rodrigo Ruiz Velasco Barba. Historian and researcher, SNI, Mexico
Miguel Salinas Chávez. Director and founder of the international analysis platform BIIE, Mexico
Mouris Salloum George. President of the Club of Journalists of Mexico
Jorge Luis Santa Cruz. Director of Periodismo sin Compromisos, Mexico
Matthew Schellhorn. Concert pianist, UK
Joseph Shaw. President of the International Federation Una Voce, President of the Latin Mass Society of England and Wales
Agustín Silva Lozina. President of Una Voce Argentina
Juan Manuel Soaje Pinto. Director and founder of the TLV1 Channel, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Jarosław Syrkiewicz. President of Una Voce Polonia
Gwyneth Thompson-Briggs. Artist, USA
Ricardo Valdés Ayón. Graduate in Gregorian Chant, Mexico
Luis Zapater Espi. Doctor of law and former judge, Spain



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P.S. The letter of His Eminence Cardinal Sandoval refers to 'various groups, Catholic and non-Catholic' who have sought the preservation of the ancient Mass. Among these is the petition of mainly British cultural figures published on 3rd July 2024. We are pleased to note that Sir James MacMillan, Britain's premier Catholic composer and the organizer of the 3rd July petition, associates himself with His Eminence's letter in the following Letter of Adherence, together with many figures of culture and academia, and leaders of the Una Voce movement from all over the world.

As of 15th July 2024

Edgar Fernandez Cerda – President of Una Voce Mexico

Felipe Alanís Suárez – Vice President of the International Federation Una Voce

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Petition organised by Dana Gioia (published on 16th July 2024)

To His Holiness, Pope Francis

We, the undersigned, are inspired by the recent petition to Pope Francis that was organized by the classical music composer Sir James MacMillan and signed by distinguished British artists, business leaders, composers, human rights activists, musicians, and writers. We join our voices with theirs in asking that no further restrictions be placed on the traditional Latin Mass.

We are Catholics and non-Catholics, believers and nonbelievers. We are scientists, novelists, comedians,

inventors, poets, painters, business leaders, composers, singers, musicians, playwrights, filmmakers, advocates for the poor, sculptors, conductors, philanthropists, human rights activists, and patrons of the arts. We share a love for the beauty, the reverence, and the mystery embodied in the ancient liturgy of the Latin Mass.

Those of us who are Catholics pledge our filial loyalty to you, Pope Francis. We come to you with the humility and obedience but also the confidence of children, telling a loving father of our spiritual needs. We pray that you will not lump us with some of the angry and disrespectful voices magnified by social media. Most of us attend the Novus Ordo regularly, and all of us acknowledge the most important thing about the dominant rite of the Latin church: each time the 'new' Mass is celebrated, Jesus Christ comes to us in the Eucharist, really and fully present and uniting us to his Body, Blood, and Divinity.

To deprive the next generation of artists of this source of mystery, beauty, and contemplation of the sacred seems shortsighted. All of us, believers and nonbelievers alike, recognize that this ancient liturgy, which inspired the work of Palestrina, Bach, and Beethoven and generations of great artists, is a magnificent achievement of civilization and part of the common cultural heritage of humanity. It is medicine for the soul, one antidote to the gross materialism of the postmodern age.

So we join our voices not only to this generation of great artists but to previous generations as well, who have asked the Pope to permit access to the Latin Mass.

The 1971 petition to Pope Paul VI was signed by poets Robert Lowell, Robert Graves, David Jones, and England's poet-laureate Cecil Day-Lewis; major novelists such as Graham Greene, Nancy Mitford, Djuna Barnes, and Julian Green; as well as the most celebrated Argentinian short-story writer Jorge Luis Borges, whose literary work gave birth to the 'magic realism' movement of the late 20th century among Spanish writers in the Americas. The 1966 petition organized by Christine Campo, translator of Marcel Proust's *Death Comes for the Cathedrals*, was signed by W.H. Auden, Evelyn Waugh, Jacques Maritain, French Nobel Prize-winning novelist François Mauriac, composer Benjamin Britten, and Gertrud von Le Fort, author of the Catholic classic *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, which later formed the basis of an opera by Francis Poulenc.

Petitioners of this calibre are proof the traditional Latin Mass cannot be understood as a mere refuge from modernity, for some of the most creative minds on our planet are inspired by the Latin Mass – its beauty, its reverence, its mystery – to make new works of art and also to serve the least among us.

We, the undersigned, ask that no further restrictions be placed on the traditional Latin Mass so that it may be preserved for the good of the Catholic Church and of the world.

- Dana Gioia**, former Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, former California Poet Laureate
- Eduardo Verastegui**, actor, singer, producer
- Morten Lauridsen**, composer
- Andrew Sullivan**, author and editor
- Nina Shea**, international religious freedom advocate
- Angela Alioto**, International Director of the Knights of Saint Francis, Civil Rights Trial Attorney, former president San Francisco Board of Supervisors
- Frank La Rocca**, composer, *Mass of the Americas*
- Blanton Alspaugh**, Grammy Award-winning classical music record producer
- David Conte**, Chair and Professor of Composition, San Francisco Conservatory of Music
- Larry Chapp**, theologian, founder of Dorothy Day Workers Farm
- Dr Scott French**, former assistant professor, Stanford University Medical School

Petitions to Save the Traditional Mass: 2024 Edition

by Joseph Shaw

In 2023, at the Pax Liturgica Conference in Rome, I launched *The Latin Mass and the Intellectuals: Petitions to Save the Ancient Mass from 1966 to 2007*. Unexpectedly, 2024 saw three new petitions to the Holy See by public figures in favour of the Traditional Mass. These were stimulated by the rumours of the imminent publication of a new document that was to have imposed further restrictions on this liturgy, described by anonymous sources as a ‘final solution’ to the supposed problem represented by the Mass. Thanks at least in part to these petitions, this threat has not materialised.

Elsewhere in this edition of *Gregorius Magnus* are reproduced the most important petition texts and signatories.

The publisher of *The Latin Mass and the Intellectuals*, Arouca Press, agreed to my composing an appendix covering these developments. Below is an extract from this appendix, which is now included in new copies of the book.

The Cultural Elite and Museumification

The Catholic news agency Zenit headlined their widely picked up story on the MacMillan petition: ‘40 British celebrities, nobles, politicians and artists ask the Pope, in *The Times*, not to limit traditional Mass any more’. The liberal Catholic lay theologian Rich Raho commented on X (Twitter): ‘A signed letter by a bunch of aristocrats in favor of TLM Mass is far from a “widely diverse” group, but it does reveal that the Old Rite appeals to and is funded by a certain clientele ... with money’ (ellipsis in the original).¹

Raho’s comment was widely mocked, because while technically one could say that many of the signatories were ‘noble’, as members of the House of Lords, eleven of them had been ‘ennobled’ as life peers, a reward that awaits a great many senior politicians when they retire from office, alongside



successful businessmen, professionals, and even humanitarian campaigners such as Lady Monckton, a champion for Down’s Syndrome children, regardless of their class background. This process can hardly be said to make them ‘aristocrats’.

The roll call of Lords, Ladies, knights, and dames might sound medieval, but it simply reflects the British honours system as it currently operates. In fact, on this list, only Lady Antonia Fraser (the daughter of an Earl, which is why the title goes before her Christian name) and the impoverished Lord Hesketh inherited their titles. Her Royal Highness Princess Michael of Kent took her title upon marriage to Prince Michael of Kent (she was born Baroness Marie-Christine von Reibnitz). Lady Getty enjoys her title as the wife of a knight, her late husband Sir John Paul Getty, who became a British citizen. The title ‘Dame’ is the female equivalent of ‘Sir’, indicating a knighthood.

The list is indeed diverse, in terms of politics, religion, and avocation. It is designedly a list of public figures, of people publicly recognized for their achievements

and contribution to politics, business, and culture. It would be impressive, in one way, if Traditional congregations were composed solely of such individuals, but obviously they are not.

A related reaction was that of papal biographer and liberal Catholic journalist Austen Ivereigh, who posted on X (Twitter): ‘Smartly organised plea against restrictions of TLM in @thetimes uses frame of “cultural conservation”. Artists and celebrities, most not Catholic, liken it to an old cathedral facing destruction. Church qua museum for cultural elites who argue for preservation of “heritage”’.²

Since about half the MacMillan signatories were Catholic, Ivereigh’s point about that is weak. It is further weakened by the subsequent petitions: the Sandoval petitioners were entirely Catholic. His main contention, however, is that the fact that they came from the ‘cultural elite’ somehow counts against them. We might ask, if the

1. 3rd July 2024, <https://x.com/RichRaho/status/1808582289024299135>.
2. 3rd July 2024, <https://x.com/austeni/status/1808416387246805120>.

cultural elite are not allowed to speak up for a cultural treasure such as the Traditional Mass, who is allowed to do so? The petitions of ordinary Catholics, like the French mothers of priests, have not been taken more seriously by the Holy See, or indeed by Ivereigh.

Ivereigh is correct, however, that the interest of a cultural elite in a cultural artefact might relegate it to a museum. A professionally sceptical elite, particularly characteristic of the Enlightenment and the colonial period, might deal with their own deep discomfort about objects of religious veneration by putting them into a museum, and there is today a scholarly literature on 'museumification'.³ This reality has been noted from the earliest days of museums in their modern form, in Napoleon's Paris under Quatremère de Quincy. As one scholar describes the process: 'take the crucifix out of the cathedral, and you take the cathedral out of the crucifix'.⁴

It is not difficult to apply this analysis to the Traditional Mass. Many liturgical progressives have as their objective not the wide availability of more modern forms of worship but the total obliteration of the ancient Mass from human memory, which they describe not merely as obscurantist but as encouraging superstition. They would prefer it never to be celebrated anywhere, and even children's books about the saints are illustrated as if the reformed Mass would have been said by the Curé d'Ars or attended by St Francis of Assisi. Liturgical items associated with the Mass should be destroyed, in this view, unless their artistic value cannot be gainsaid, in which case they should be relegated to museums for the interest of students and scholars. In a similar way, sacred music can be limited to performance outside a liturgical context.⁵

There is a double irony in Ivereigh's comment. The first is that museums are today increasingly aware of their responsibility for objects regarded as sacred, and acts of worship in museums, including in Catholic places of worship which have been incorporated into museum complexes, has become an established phenomenon.⁶

The other is that it is not the petitioners who wish to see the ancient liturgy stripped of its spiritual significance. This, rather, is the project of people like Ivereigh himself.

Following in the footsteps of Marcel Proust, the petitioners, including the unbelievers among them, want it to continue to flourish in its natural habitat, surrounded by those who recognize its sacred nature, with an unimpaired capacity to surprise us, to challenge us, and to transform us.

Impact of the Petitions

So close in time to the petitions their longer-term consequences remain unknown. The immediate media reaction to the MacMillan petition has been noted, however, and the Letter of Adherence to Cardinal Sandoval's intervention was also widely reported and commented upon in the Spanish-speaking world.



These petitions achieved a number of things. They made clear that, first, the fate of the Traditional Mass is not a matter of indifference to the cultural and political classes; and second, that this observation is not just true in Britain but has a strong echo in the most unexpected, and extremely important, region of the Catholic Church: Latin America. Again, while the American contribution to these petitions has been noted, it is clear that the stereotype of the Traditional movement as consisting almost entirely of Americans is completely false. The importance of Latin America is particularly great from the perspective of Pope Francis, the Church's first Latin American pope.

Third, the MacMillan petition in particular undermines other negative stereotypes of supporters of the Traditional Mass. Rich Raho and Austen Ivereigh did their best to turn the elite nature of the petitions against them with charges of 'elitism', but the more dangerous stereotype of Traditional Catholics is that they are culturally and politically powerless and irrelevant. It turns out that this is not entirely true.

The feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 16th July, the anniversary of *Traditionis Custodes*, rumoured as the date for a new document restricting the Traditional Mass, came and went without any such new document. The well-informed Argentinian blog *Caminante Wanderer*, in a post picked up and translated by *Rorate Caeli*, commented on the conflict taking place in the Holy See:

On the other hand, requests from many bishops, priests, faithful, and personalities of the world reached the Pope's desk begging him not to take such a step. And it seems to have had an effect. But this is not just a synodal act of 'listening to the People of God'; that is for the unwary who believe in synodality. It was also the advice of a group of cardinals and prelates who, without having any sympathy for the traditional liturgy, consider the hatred of [Archbishop] Viola [Secretary at the Dicastery for Divine Worship], [Andrea] Grillo, and their ilk to be an exaggeration that would end up damaging not only the Church as the mystical body of Christ, which probably does not bother them, but the papacy as well.⁷

The opponents of the Traditional Mass have not disappeared, but it does appear that, thanks to Sir James MacMillan, Cardinal Sandoval, and their supporters, they have lost this round of the fight. ⑥

3. See Crispin Paine, *Religious Objects in Museums: Private Lives and Public Duties* (Routledge, 2013), 3.

4. Philip Fisher, *Making and Effacing Art: Modern American Art in a Culture of Museums* (Harvard University Press, 1997), 9, quoted in Paine, *Religious Objects in Museums*, 14.

5. See the Congregation for Divine Worship, Instruction, *Concerts in Churches* (1986), 6.

6. See Paine, *Religious Objects in Museums*, 38-44.

7. <https://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2024/07/argentine-blog-prohibition-document.html#more>; original Spanish: <https://caminante-wanderer.blogspot.com/2024/07/rumores-sobre-el-documento-que-no-fue.html>.

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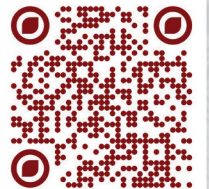


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The
Latin Mass Society
FOR THE TRADITIONAL ROMAN RITE



Introducing *The Little Flower*, magazine of Una Voce Nigeria

This is also the magazine of St Therese of the Child Jesus School, established by Fr Angelo Vanderputten, FSSP, with assistance from UV Nigeria. This is the first year of the school, and of the magazine, and it is planned that the magazine will continue as an annual publication.

The Priestly Fraternity of St Peter apostolate in Nigeria maintains a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/fsspigeria>



‘The children are being empowered to think, to have conversations, and to love learning’

An interview with Fr Angelo Vanderputten, FSSP

Little Flower (LF): Good morning, Father.

Fr Angelo: Good morning.

LF: We’d like to interview you for the *Little Flower Magazine*. It’s been an interesting year, so what’s the progress so far with the school?

Fr Angelo: Well, I think we’ve made great progress. It seems just like yesterday, when the little six-year-old boy, as we’re going through the market on the scooter, said to me, ‘Father, buy me an A-P-P-L-E!’ And I thought about it for a second, didn’t know what he was saying, and then was like, ‘Apple’. Wow! And then, there were two little boys on the scooter with me. And then the little boy was like, ‘Tell him to buy us B-A-N-A-N-A!’ Like, whoa! So the little children are excited about school and learning. When I told this story to one of the young men in the parish, he didn’t understand. So he said, ‘What do you mean?’ And I said, ‘Apple.’ And he was like, ‘Oh, right’. Then the little six-year-old kid was there, and he said ... ‘He wasn’t very smart; he didn’t get what I meant’. (LF & Fr Angelo giggle)

Clearly, the children have made a tremendous advance in their education. They’re excited about it, which is wonderful to behold because it shows that the teachers, especially the sisters, are doing a wonderful job. To inspire a child, to love knowledge, to love learning is truly a grace. It’s a wonderful gift that the sisters have given to the children. And I think this is almost indispensable for true education, this love for learning, this love of God, this love of knowledge, not just information. The children are being, shall we say, empowered to think,



to have conversations. They’re asking intelligent questions. They’re having conversations even at the age of six. So that’s, I think it’s deeply impressive. So clearly, the school, especially with the littlest children, is having a tremendous impact on their lives. And, of course, that’s seen by the parents.

So the parents noticed that most of the children were, you know, public school educated, even if it was Catholic school, they just simply didn’t get it. And within one year, one short year, because we had trouble, no, birthing pains, at the beginning. So we had to shut the school down for several weeks. But within one short year, the parents have seen a dramatic change in their children, for the better. I think all the parents are deeply impressed with the school. And I’m certainly very pleased with what the teachers, the staff, and the sisters have accomplished within this year. And I think if we continue this same spirit, this same drive, this same zeal, I think we can expect some great things out of the school.



LF: Thank you, Father.

LF: St. Therese of the Child Jesus School truly is famous in Umuaka. People are talking about it in the market and on the streets as a good school. The children are exemplary. And you can find this from our response to our first question. But how have we achieved this in the school? What is that ingredient that you think is responsible for the transformation you're sending to the children?

Fr Angelo: LOVE ... Love in one word, is certainly the recipe, the ingredient necessary, and I think, essential and perhaps the only way to have a true education.

When the children are loved and when they sense that love, and you see it in the children. The sisters obviously love the children, but I think the whole staff too are committed to giving of themselves in a very concrete way. They spend time with the children; they're always teaching them, they spend extracurricular time with them; they enjoy their presence, and I think that's mutual. And when the children see that, I mean, I think it's something that even their parents don't always give them. I don't think that there's much love in Africa, even in families. So clearly, I think it's quite visible. There's clearly a love of the staff, of the teachers, of the sisters, for the children and the good of the children. And I think that's really the critical element.

Of course, within that, there's discipline, which is elemental, but it's not had in any other school, unless you go to a military school, perhaps. But there's a great discipline, and yet the discipline is very loving. It's stern

– they are disciplined, but it's just. And that's beautiful, it really is. It gives the children this clarity. It gives the children this certainty and boundaries. There's a safe environment in the true sense of the word, and it's beautiful.

So I think love is the ingredient, the recipe, and then all these other things which come in. The discipline, the unity among the teaching staff, I mean, there's a tremendous unity there. We're all there for the same reason, for the same purpose, all giving of ourselves – and that's obviously seen by the children and experienced in their education and through our presence. So yeah, it's the love that the teachers and the staff have for the students first, and then the unity that they have among each other, to give that love to the children.

LF: Thank you, Father. So what do you think can be done better in school?

Fr Angelo: Oh, that's a difficult question. Because, I mean, obviously, it's like the Catholic life, the life of virtue. If you're not constantly aware of your weakness and constantly striving to be better, then you have a problem. And I think that's the same thing with the school. I mean, it's not a mathematical equation. It's not a measurable thing, in a sense. It's like the Catholic life. So if we're not, as a staff, continually seeking for our own spiritual improvement, and the improvement of the children, then we've lost the plot. We're going to lose the school.

So the improvement that we want to see is a constant effort at becoming holy and becoming better persons, at giving more of ourselves, of sacrificing more – and that's the Catholic life ... that's the Catholic virtue. And so the children imbibe that, and then through the discipline they receive that as well. In this way, we can really grow Catholic persons, Catholic people, saints. I think we see that already – within one short year – in the transformation in the children. And I think if we continue this, with this effort, with this zeal, with this love, I think we can be guaranteed, as much as that's possible on this earth, that the children graduating from our school after 10-12 years, are going to be real Catholic individuals, and they will be a tremendous joy to the Catholic community and to God.

LF: Thank you. The readers of our magazine include the parents of the children, the parents and parish benefactors, and other people who might want to support the school in one way or another. What kind of support will you be asking for?





Fr Angelo: Well, for the school, obviously, I mean, financial aid is always a necessary element. We have running water in the school, we have toilet tissue, which I'm told is very rare in this country, the running water and the toilet tissue, and those are expensive. And then food – we feed the children. Every day, they get a good meal – which is not always guaranteed when they're at home. So I think the monetary element is obviously essential.

But then for the parents, of course, they have to participate in that love and discipline that we give to the children at school, in their homes. And I think that's the most difficult thing for parents. But that's absolutely essential and elemental. So if they want to see their children improve, then they have to improve their spiritual life, by discipline, by the Catholic life, by the Catholic virtues. That is the biggest assistance that they can give to the school, outside of the small fees that they pay. Because most of the children are under scholarship,

so they're not actually being paid for by the parents – which is bad in one way because then the parents don't feel obliged to participate in the education of the children. But on the other hand, most of the parents are quite poor and simply couldn't afford the fees. So I think for the parents, the most important thing is to pay the little fees that they have to, and then spiritually to be continually seeking to grow in their spirituality.

For the friends and benefactors, of course, financial assistance is absolutely essential. And then to pray as well, because I think we realize, in our endeavours here, that if it's not done for God, then it's useless. We're trying to build good citizens, as St John Bosco said, but of course, without the supernatural, then you're not good citizens. They're just maybe good animals or something. But as Catholics, of course, we emphasize on a daily basis the importance and necessity of the supernatural. And that is lubricated by the prayers of the friends and benefactors. So for them,

that's the most important thing to pray for the success of the school, for the perseverance of the staff, and the improvement on the supernatural level of the parents.

LF: Thank you very much, Father. May God reward you for your sacrifice.

LF: Any final words?

Fr Angelo: Thank you. I think we pray that God rewards all of us for the sacrifice, because clearly, we see that the sisters especially, but I think all of the teachers have given their time and efforts to make this school a success. And so, yeah, I think it's a deeply moving sight – and it's clearly shown great fruits in this first year. We pray that they persevere and the school continues to flourish. ⑥

Readers can support the school financially through the website <https://missiontradition.us/donate/>

Please specify St Therese of the Child Jesus School, Umuaka, Nigeria, as the beneficiary.

Mass of Ages is the magazine of the Latin Mass Society of England and Wales

In this edition of *Gregorius Magnus* we reprint two articles from *Mass of Ages*. The first is by Kathryn Hennessy on why increasing numbers of Catholic parents are choosing to home school. The second is by Fr Thomas Crean on the preaching of the Assumption.

A Positive Choice

by Kathryn Hennessy

Until quite recently, home education was not considered a serious proposition by Catholics in this country. Perhaps due to the strong association of English home education with the 'unschooling' movement of the 1970s, older Catholics often reacted with alarm at the prospect of their grandchildren being educated at home, subconsciously conjuring images of the 'unschooled' child who spends his days barefoot in the mud, doesn't know what the times tables are and wears a hand-painted T-shirt defiantly proclaiming 'Down with Skool.'

Back in the 1990s when we took the plunge into home education, respectable Catholics tended to give us a wide berth: the presumption was that in order to do something so drastic, we must be at least a little unhinged. Now, those same people are much more likely to say, 'Yes, absolutely, I get it: if I were raising children now, I'd do the same thing'.

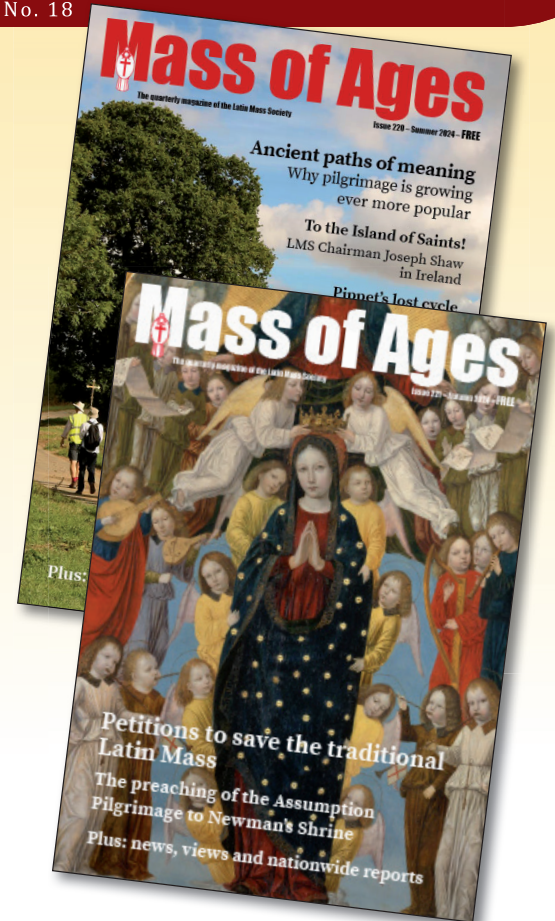
What has happened to cause such a shift in attitudes towards home education, and what is prompting increasing numbers of parents to view it as a viable, reasonable (and even respectable) option for the education of their children?

Probably the most obvious factor in home education's improved status is a loss of faith in the ability of our schools to provide an authentic Catholic education. So few Catholic schools seem to teach the tenets of our Faith in any explicit way. Many (with some notable exceptions) seem to have been swept along on a tide of cultural change which has carried them into some very strange waters. It is not my intention here to delineate, denounce or debate everything that is wrong with our schools. I sense that even those readers who are committed to education through schooling, even those who admirably devote their lives to the service of our schools, will admit that all is not well. While one obvious response to this is to work from within the system to improve it (by, for example, setting up new, smaller schools), increasing numbers of parents are looking for solutions elsewhere. Whatever our response, the idea that a Catholic education can be provided most effectively through the existing school system appears to be no longer axiomatic.

However, the decision to home educate goes beyond a negative reaction against inadequate schools. Although it is true that many parents

only consider this option when school fails their child, increasing numbers of young people are making a positive choice for home education from the start. My own parish is full of young parents (including several newly trained teachers) who have already decided that their children will not be registered at school; they want something better, something more unashamedly Catholic, for their own children and they are convinced that home is the place to provide it.

One reason for this change in attitude is that home education is now very much a known quantity. Catholic home education has entered its second generation, with parents who were themselves home educated choosing this option for their own children – and, significantly, sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm with other young parents. This new generation of parents does not face the same worries our generation faced, as the Catholic world wagged a disapproving finger and told us we were ruining our children's lives. The children we raised, now confidently educating our grandchildren, are the proof that such pessimism was misplaced. The new generation of home educators has the



advantage of our experience on which to draw: we have already made mistakes from which they can learn.

Home education is also becoming a more attractive option because the way in which it operates has changed dramatically. In the early days, the choice for Catholic parents who wanted to teach their children at home seemed to be either ‘do it all yourself’ or ‘sign up to an American Distance Learning Programme leading to a High School Diploma’. There was little support for parents who wanted to give their children a Catholic education using home grown resources which would lead to English (or Welsh, Scottish or Irish) qualifications. Now, thanks to the internet, there are so many resources available that we have arguably gone too far the other way: parents new to home education can actually find themselves overwhelmed with the plethora of resources on offer; from local co-ops running classes, to self-paced distance learning courses, to full-time online schools. There has been a steady increase in books outlining the different possible approaches to home education, some being published in the UK for the first time. Now (again, thanks to the internet), finding another Catholic home educating family nearby is no longer like finding the veritable needle in the haystack.

Yet I would go further and suggest a deeper reason for home education's increasing popularity. The young parents I speak to have a sense that home education may have the potential to offer a better form of education than that currently available in our schools. If this seems a bold claim, let me explain. Many parents feel that schools are not only neglecting to teach the Faith in a clear and intellectually rigorous way but have also lost sight of what education is really for. They sense that we are so busy cramming our pupils with specialised information over an increasingly wide range of subjects – and constantly testing them to track how well they have retained the information – that we are missing something very important. Such a sense is not new: the well-known Victorian educator Charlotte Mason identified the same problem in the schools of her own day; in America, earlier attempts to solve this problem found expression in the ‘classical education’ movement of the 1990s.




All Saints Day at the Oxford home education group with students Melangell, Christopher and Barnaby

The problem is that we have forgotten some fundamental truths about how human beings learn. One of these is that children need time to process information – to make connections between the different aspects of what is being taught – if that information is to be transformed into knowledge. Another is that children need even more time to reflect on what the implications of that knowledge are for how they ought to live. We are so busy racing through the curriculum to the next test that we have lost sight of the need to make space in a child's day for thinking; specifically, for the kind of deep, quiet, slow thinking which is the path (so our educational forebears believed) to wisdom, and a life well lived.

What some of us have discovered over three decades as parent-teachers

is that home education, freed from the constraints of the school timetable, allows us to step back from the cramming, drilling and testing and give our children this time to think. It allows us to simplify the curriculum, not in order to dumb down but in order to scale up: with fewer boxes to tick, we are free to explore subjects not usually timetabled, or to explore traditional subjects in greater depth. Does this mean that ‘essential school skills’ can be neglected? Not at all; it means, rather, putting these skills in context, recognising that they are important not merely for passing exams and gaining employment, but because they enable our children to engage critically with the knowledge which is being presented to them. Putting these skills in the context of a rich historical narrative helps our children to create the kind of cultural hinterland they will need if they are to make sense of the world around them – and keep their faith in the midst of it.

In writing this, I am not suggesting that home education is a silver bullet or a panacea for all our educational ills. I am not claiming that it will always be done well, or that there is not still a great deal of work to be done to make it more accessible and effective. I will also be the first to acknowledge that this route is not for everyone: there are many compelling reasons why families cannot or choose not to home educate. But I do believe that, in the present culture, bringing education home may be one of the most powerful means we have of building strong, unified families in which our children (and our Faith) can flourish.

Surely that is a cause in which we are all invested, one which we should all support and fight to defend. 



Vinisha card Family illuminated manuscript project

Spirituality

The preaching of the Assumption

by Fr Thomas Crean

It is sometimes made an objection to our faith in the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary that unambiguous statements of the doctrine are found only relatively late in the Church's life – from the 500s onward, at least according to the documents that chance to have survived from antiquity (we should always remember, of course, that the overwhelming majority of ancient writings have perished). Shortly after his ordination as a Catholic priest, St John Henry Newman mused poetically on this scarcity of evidence:

'It became Him, who died for the world, to die in the world's sight; it became the Great Sacrifice to be lifted up on high, as a light that could not be hid. But she, the lily of Eden, who had always dwelt out of the sight of man, fittingly did she die in the garden's shade, and amid the sweet flowers in which she had lived. Her departure made no noise in the world. The Church went about her common duties, preaching, converting, suffering; there were persecutions, there was fleeing from place to place, there were martyrs, there were triumphs; at length, the rumour spread abroad that the Mother of God was no longer upon earth. Pilgrims went to and fro; they sought for her relics, but they found them not; did she die at Ephesus? or did she die at Jerusalem? reports varied; but her tomb could not be pointed out, or if it was found, it was open; and instead of her pure and fragrant body, there was a growth of lilies from the earth which she had touched. So inquirers went home marvelling, and waiting for further light' ('On the Fitness of the Glories of Mary', in *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*).

She who, during her life, had sought always to conceal herself the better to manifest the glory of her Son, was not to be cheated of her goal even in death, if we may use that word of her dormition. And, in God's providence, too, there is a time for everything: first the resurrection and ascension of our Saviour was to be preached to all nations, starting from Jerusalem. Then, when the gospel had put

down deep roots among the nations, the exaltation of the mother of God could be spoken about more openly.

It would be surprising, no doubt, if the Holy Ghost had left the Scriptures entirely devoid of allusions to the assumption of His mystical bride. But He did not will them to be ones lying on the surface, for any chance reader to notice, and, perhaps, disdain. It belongs to the dignity of the Church, remarks St Robert Bellarmine, that she should have a tradition accessible only to those within as well as books accessible to those without. Hence, we find St Thomas Aquinas say in one place that although Christians believe that the Blessed Virgin was assumed bodily into heaven, the Scriptures do not mention it (*Summa Theologiae* 3a 27.1). Yet he means that they don't declare it in plain words, since like other mediaeval authors he held that the assumption was prophesied in the words of the Psalm: Arise, O Lord, into thy resting-place, thou and the ark which thou hast sanctified (Ps. 131:8). That the old ark of the covenant foreshadowed our Lady is a very ancient belief, and seems implied by the vision of St John in the Apocalypse, when the sight of the ark in heaven is followed immediately by that of the woman crowned with twelve stars (Apoc. 11:19-12:1).

Or, to stay with the psalter, we could also mention Psalm 112, one of the psalms of the Vespers of our Lady: *Excelsus super omnes gentes Dominus, et super caelos gloria eius* (High above all peoples is our Lord, and above the heavens his glory). Doesn't St Paul tell us that the woman is the glory of the man (1 Cor. 11:7)? If so, why should we not see here a reference to both the ascension of Christ and the assumption of Mary? Of course, such an exegesis is unlikely to satisfy sceptics, but then the Scriptures were written for believers, not for sceptics... Again, we should note that immediately after the Fall, God announced the joint victory of the Man and the Woman over the enemy of our race, who had been the bringer not only of sin but also of death (Gen. 3:14ff).

Yet although they did not write of the mystery openly, we cannot doubt that our Lady's Assumption was made known to the apostles, at least to those of them who were still alive when it happened (St James, the brother of St John, may well have already died). So we should not be surprised to find veiled allusions to it from an early date among their successors, the bishops of the Church. St Hippolytus of Rome, for example, who died as a martyr around the year 235, preached a sermon of which only a fragment survives, in which he reflects on the similarity already mentioned between the ark of the covenant and the virginal body of Mary. According to the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament that he would have read, this ark was to be made of 'incorruptible wood'. So, St Hippolytus writes: 'The Lord was without sin, being in his nature made from incorruptible wood, that is from the Virgin' (quoted by Theodoret, a 5th century bishop, in his *Dialogues*).

St Gregory, the 4th century bishop of Nyssa in Asia Minor, and the brother of St Basil the Great, has in one of his works a passage that is certainly obscure but which also seems to speak of the incorruption of our Lady's body. He writes: 'To speak of Mary the mother of God, death which reigned from Adam until her (yes, until her, since death existed for her too); ... death, having struck against the fruit of her virginity as against a rock, was crushed; it broke itself against Mary' (*On Virginity*, 13). His East Syrian contemporary, St Ephraim, called the 'harp of the Holy Ghost', wrote in the fifth of his *Hymns on the Blessed Virgin*: 'The Virgin gave birth, and she kept her virginity intact. Rising she gave milk to her child and she remained a virgin. She died, and the seal of her virginity was not broken.' This last phrase implies the preservation of her immaculate body.

Earlier in the same century, St Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis on the island of Cyprus, professed a reverent agnosticism about where God had

placed His mother after her earthly life, perhaps because he had to steer a middle course between two sub-Christian groups, one of whom was belittling her privileges, the other of whom had fallen into the error of offering sacrifices to her. He nevertheless declares that the end of Mary's life was 'a wonder that surpasses human understanding' (Panarion 78.11). It is hardly possible that he could have spoken so if he had thought that the end of her life was no different from that of the average saint, so to speak. But how could it have been different, unless because Mary's body had at least been preserved from decay?

Even in the first centuries, then, we find good evidence of the widespread belief in the incorruption of the body of the Virgin. Many bishops, at least, would have been enlightened to understand the apostolic tradition, that Mary had been brought body and soul into heaven itself. And any believer who thought seriously about the matter can hardly have failed to realise that her body must have been taken by God in a way as least as miraculous as had been done for Enoch and Elijah.

Yet it is only with the fading away of the last remnants of paganism that we find the dogma being openly declared. Probably there had been an instinctive fear that the pagans, or converts from paganism, would assimilate Mary to one of their goddesses, if her glories had been preached too freely. The symbolic date often assigned to the ending of paganism in Christendom is AD 529, when the Roman emperor closed down 'Plato's academy' in Athens. It may just be a coincidence, but it is a striking one, that the earliest known sermon on Mary's Assumption has been dated to just a couple of decades later. It was preached by a certain Theoteknos, bishop of Livias in Palestine. He said to the faithful:

'It was fitting ... that her all-holy body, her God-bearing body, godlike, undefiled, shining with the divine light and full of glory should be carried by the apostles in company of the angels, and, after being placed for a short while in the earth, should be raised up to heaven in glory with her soul so loved by God'.

It's worth noting, incidentally, that this bishop speaks of Mary's Assumption as something already well known to the faithful, not as something they are hearing about for the first time.



Assumption by Michel Corneille the Younger, late 17th century

© Metropolitan Museum of Art

After this time, sermons in honour of the feast multiply. Some of the most beautiful were preached by St John Damascene (born around 675) in Jerusalem, in a church reputed to have been built over the very site of her dormition.

As for Catholics today, although we have our own difficulties, some of which would doubtless have appalled the bishops of the early centuries, we can be

glad at least that we live at a time when the miracle of our Lady's Assumption is not only written about and preached, but has been defined by the pope in Rome, with his teaching repeated by an ecumenical council. The preaching of the dogma has thus imitated Mary's own life, going from obscurity to glory. For the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day (Prov. 4:18). ⑥

Una Voce is the magazine of Una Voce France

Here we republish reflections on three popular prayers to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Prayers of the Virgin Mary

1. Sub Tuum Praesidium

*Sub tuum praesidium confugimus,
sancta Dei Genitrix,
nostras deprecationes ne despicias
in necessitatibus,
sed a periculis cunctis libera nos
semper,
Virgo gloriosa et benedicta.*

We fly to thy patronage,
O holy Mother of God;
despise not our petitions in our
necessities,
but deliver us always from all
dangers,
O glorious and blessed Virgin.
Amen.

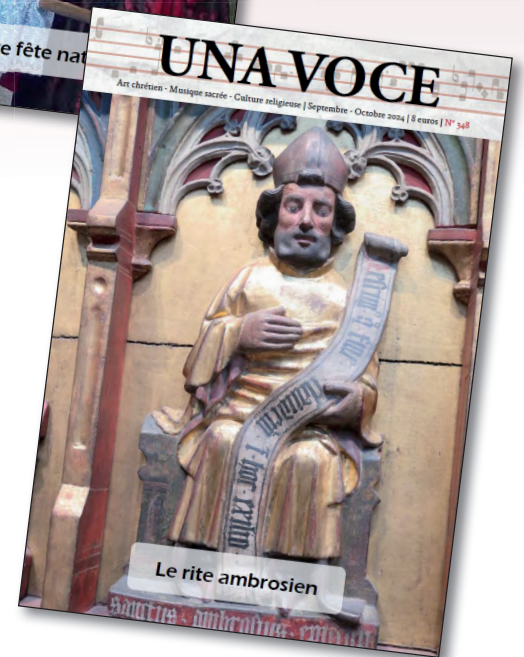
This prayer was from the third to the twentieth centuries the most important Marian prayer (in its complete form, the *Ave Maria* we recite today dates only from the sixteenth century). A notable modern use of it is recorded in the war diary of Fr Jean Dervilly (serving at this date as a sergeant in the 47th Infantry Regiment of Saint-Malo). He wrote, on the terrible day of 22nd August 1914: 'During my service I had already heard the more or less high-pitched whistling of bullets. But everyone is rendered emotional by the special whistling sound of the shells when they come close to the point of arrival. Whenever I hear it, I quickly make the sign of the

cross and I say the words *Sub tuum praesidium*, falling flat on my stomach or clinging to the foot of a tree'.

Fr Dervilly could not have known at the time of writing that this invocation had been used by the Christians of the fourth century in Rome, and, before then, was a prayer of the Eastern Churches from the third century, as revealed by a papyrus discovered in Egypt in the very same year, 1917 (this document is now in Manchester, England). This is the Greek text in Latin script:

*Hupo tèn sên eusplagchnian
katapheugomen Theotoke.
Tas hêmôn hikesias
mê paridêis en peristasei
all'ek kindunôn lutrôsai hêmas,
monê Agnê, monê Eulogêmenê.*

The *Sub Tuum* is therefore a translation, which explains a few awkward points of the text. *Praesidium*, 'guard, protection', is weaker than the Greek *eusplagchnia*, which evokes both bowels and mercy. *Virgo gloriosa* is more vague than *Monê agnê*, 'alone pure'. Is the comma between *semper* and *Virgo* well placed? The text already expresses the Catholic faith in Mary, Mother of God, including the Immaculate Conception. (Benoît Le Roux)



2. Salve, Sancta Parens

*Salve, sancta parens, enixa puerpera
Regem, qui cælum terramque regit
in sæcula sæculorum. (Ps 44: 2)
Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum:
dico ego opera mea Regi.*

Hail, Holy Mother, who in childbirth brought forth the King Who rules Heaven and earth, forever and ever. (Ps 44: 2) My heart hath uttered a good word; I speak my works to the King.

This is the Introit of Marian Masses in the Ancient Rite, such as the Nativity of the Virgin (8th September); in the Novus Ordo it is the Introit of the Feast of the Mother of God (1st January). The words are also the Word, the Word of God Himself. The verse of the psalm is carried by the Virgin Mary. This chant is set to several Corsican polyphonic settings. (Jean-Louis Benoit)

3. Ave Regina Cælorum

*Ave, Regina cælorum,
Ave, Domina Angelorum
Salve Radix, salve Porta,
Ex qua mundo Lux est orta.*

*Gaude, Virgo gloriosa
Super omnes speciosa.
Vale, o valde decora,
Et pro nobis Christum exora.*

Hail, O Queen of Heav'n enthron'd,
Hail, by angels Mistress own'd
Root of Jesse, Gate of morn,
Whence the world's true light was
born.

Glorious Virgin, joy to thee,
Loveliest whom in Heaven they see,
Fairest thou where all are fair!
Plead with Christ our sins to spare.

A little iambic poem in two stanzas, which are quatrains, either eight octosyllabic verses, with very rich rhymes. This taste for rhymes suggests that it was composed in the time of St Bernard, to whom this text has been attributed, though without direct proof. A monastic origin does seem plausible, from the twelfth or thirteenth century, leaving many possibilities open! It is sung as an

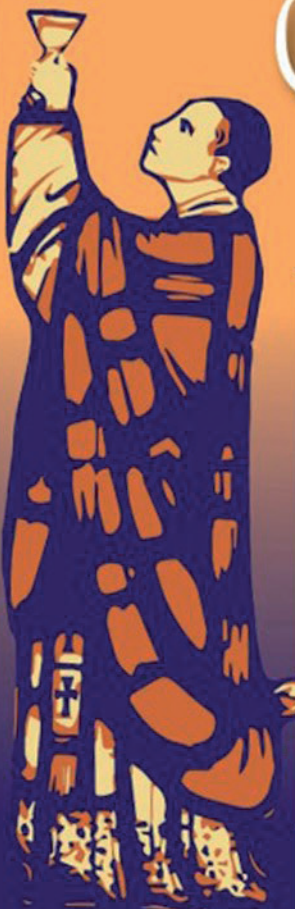
antiphon at the end of Compline, thus at the end of the daily Office, from 2nd February to Holy Wednesday (then the *Regina Cæli* is sung until Trinity Sunday, then the *Alma Redemptoris Mater*). It was Pope Clement VI who is said to have introduced it into the breviary. As with the other Marian antiphons that occupy this position according to the liturgical season, there is then a verse and a collect, and the Office is completed. Someone said of this poem that it was a madrigal, which seems fitting. (Dom François Larroque, Abbey of Notre-Dame de Fontgombault) ⑥



Children with the processional statue of Our Lady of Walsingham, from the Latin Mass Society's Walsingham Pilgrimage

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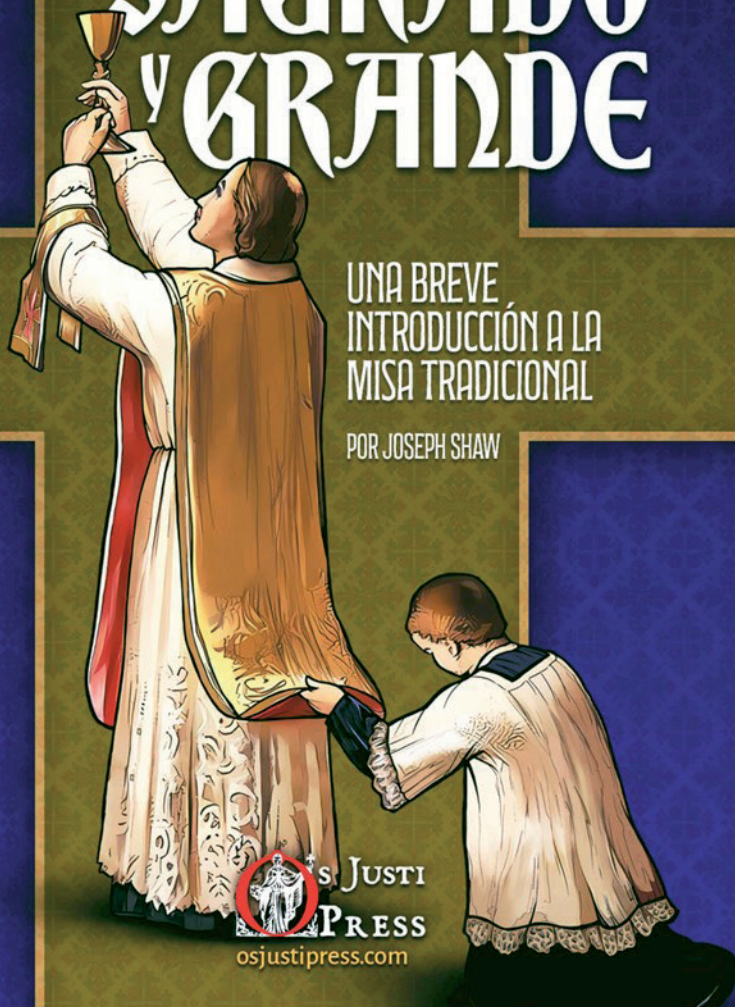
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SAGRADO *y* GRANDE

UNA BREVE
INTRODUCCIÓN A LA
MISA TRADICIONAL

POR JOSEPH SHAW



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Here we publish a translation of an article that appeared in *Dominus Vobiscum*, the magazine of Pro Missa Tridentina (Germany).

The Doctor of the Church Needed in Our Time: Notes on the Life and Work of Thomas Aquinas

by Dr Sebastian Ostritsch



Catholic doctrine is under attack from all sides. It is not surprising that the world rejects, opposes, and tries to ridicule faith. However, the fact that there are also voices within the Church that seek to relativize the traditional teachings or denounce orthodoxy as rigorism causes confusion among many believers.

The current crisis in the Church is undoubtedly also a crisis of theology. For when the correct way of thinking about God and towards God is no longer considered, faith is at risk of becoming confused. This can be observed in the prevailing theological paradigm in many places, which seeks to measure God's revelation against a pre-theological anthropology and thus a purely human standard.

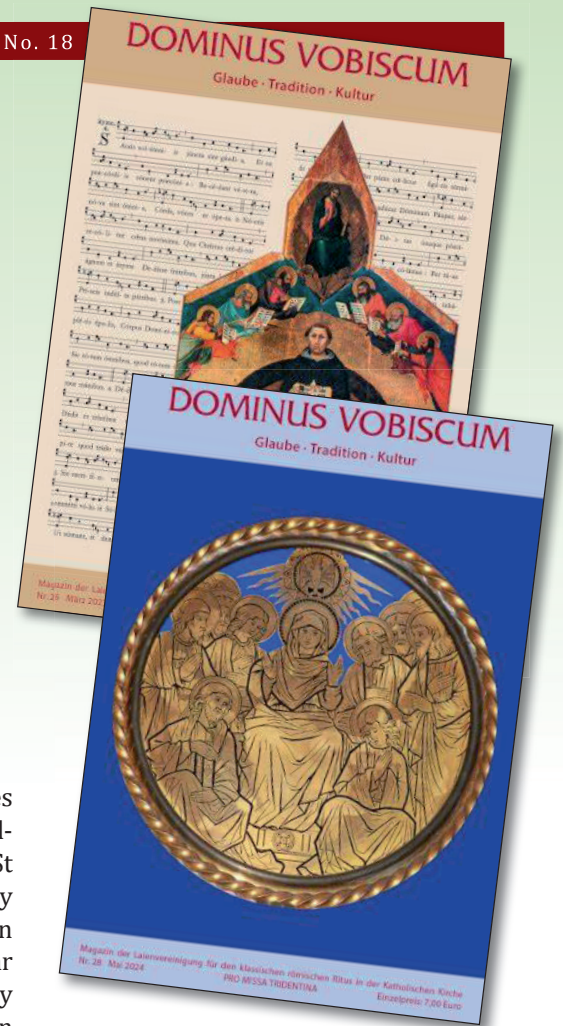
However, 'where danger is, there also grows the saving', as Friedrich Hölderlin famously said. And so, in these dark days,

we commemorate three anniversaries of one of the greatest theological-philosophical minds of all time – St Thomas Aquinas. The 700th anniversary of his canonization by Pope John XXII in Avignon fell on 18th July 2023. This year (2024), we mark the 750th anniversary of the saint's death: he passed away on 7th March 1274 on his way to the Council of Lyon in the Italian town of Fossanova, south of Rome. In 2025, we will celebrate the 800th birthday of this Doctor of the Church. Although the exact date has not been definitively confirmed by research, much suggests that Thomas was born at the beginning of the year 1225 at the family castle in Roccasecca, in the Latium region.

For all those who thirst for intellectual depth and clarity, this triple anniversary is a true gift from heaven. Divine Providence seems to remind us, in these difficult times, through the celebrations of St Thomas Aquinas, of a thinker who can decisively contribute to restoring order to the confused contemplation of God.

That God is: the natural can recognize reason

Countless people today, surprisingly even many theologians, are questioning whether God exists at all. And even among those who believe in Him, many feel they must believe without reason. Many mistakenly believe that faith and reason are completely separate, so there can be no rational grounds for believing in God. Those who hold such a view



almost inevitably end up with a form of fideism, meaning they assume that believing in God depends solely on a pure act of will, whether one chooses to believe or not. With such an attitude, any rational discussion about the existence of God is stifled from the outset.

St Thomas, on the other hand, determined the proper relationship between faith and reason quite differently. First, regarding the role of reason: for Thomas, it is anything but useless when it comes to the knowledge of God, or, more precisely, the fact that He exists. The existence of God indeed falls within the realm of 'natural theology', which is a science of God that relies solely on natural reason rather than divine revelation. According to Thomas, both pagans and Muslims, and Jews and Christians alike, can recognize that God exists.

Thomas presented several convincing arguments for the existence of God. The best known are the *quinque viae*, the 'five ways' from the *Summa Theologiae*, on which he worked during the last seven years of his life, until his death in 1274.

Critique of Anselm: without experience, it is not possible

Before delving into the five ways, however, it is enlightening to clarify which proofs of God Thomas rejected. Anselm of Canterbury, in his work *Proslogion*, written in 1077-78, attempted to prove the existence of God *a priori* – that is, purely logically and conceptually, without reference to experience. Anselm's proof idea essentially involved an analysis of the concept of a 'supreme being'.

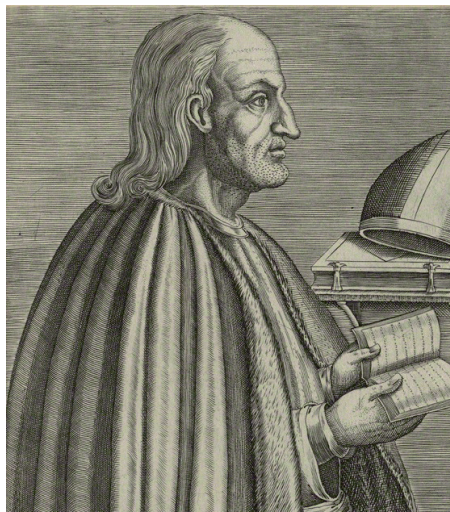
Apparently, we can think of something like a supreme being, or, more precisely, a being 'that cannot be conceived of as greater'. Now the question arises as to whether this supreme being exists or not. As Anselm quotes Psalm 14, the fool denies the existence of God, but Anselm claims that in doing so he contradicts himself, by claiming that the being that cannot be conceived of as greater does not exist. This is because this being would be even more perfect, and therefore greater, if it did exist. The fool who denies God's existence has therefore not truly conceived of the supreme being. The supreme being must therefore be thought of as existing. In other words, it is inherent in the concept of God that He exists.

Thomas rejects this argument. He recognizes in this a logical fallacy that – to put it somewhat simply – is based on the fact that ideas of real existence are not possible to distinguish. When we imagine God as the supreme being, we imagine Him as a being Who also exists. But whether there is something in reality that corresponds to this idea is a question that cannot be answered purely logically or conceptually. The *Summa Contra Gentiles* (I, c. 11) says:

Now, from the fact that that which is indicated by the name God is conceived by the mind, it does not follow that God exists save only in the intellect. Hence, that than which a greater cannot be thought will likewise not have to exist save only in the intellect. From this it does not follow that there exists in reality something than which a greater cannot be thought. No difficulty, consequently, befalls anyone who posits that God does not exist. For that something greater can be thought than anything given in reality or in the intellect is a difficulty only to him who admits that there is something than which a greater cannot be thought in reality.

First, this shows Thomas's intellectual honesty. Thomas agrees with Anselm that God exists and this can also be proven philosophically. But despite this agreement, Thomas is completely committed to truthfulness. If he does not think an argument is conclusive, he rejects it, even though he considers the objective of proof to be important.

Second, Thomas reveals himself as a thinker who always starts from experience. The attraction that Anselm's attempt at proof exerts on philosophers consists precisely in the fact that he wants to be independent of any empiricism. Thomas is unreceptive to this. As we will see in an example, his five paths to God are based on effects that can be experienced by everyone in the world, in order to draw conclusions about their ultimate cause – namely, God.



Third, Thomas's criticism of Anselm anticipates an objection of the Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant a good five hundred years later. For Kant, too, Anselm's 'ontological proof of God' is invalid, because the actual existence of a thing cannot be derived from its concept, but only from experience. Kant considers Anselm's proof to be fundamental. He is of the opinion that the possibility of recognizing God's existence by means of reason stands or falls with him. Thomas, however, shows that this is not the case: one can reject the attempt to prove God's existence independently of experience and still use reason to put forward experience-based arguments for the existence of God. At the same time, Thomas proves to be immune to the Kantian attack on 'natural theology'. This is also so important because Kant has become the pillar saint of not a few contemporary theologians.

God: the unmoved mover

So how does Thomas himself argue for the existence of God? In his five paths, Thomas always begins with an everyday phenomenon that is obvious to everyone and then gets to the bottom of the matter in the literal sense of the word: he asks for the ultimate cause for the fact of experience to be explained. Since outlining all five paths would go beyond the scope of this text, we want to concentrate here on the first path, which starts from the phenomenon of 'movement'.

It is a truth obvious to all, which reveals itself to our senses, that there is movement (*motus*) in the world. While today we usually only understand 'movement' to mean a change of location, Thomas means all kinds of change, including qualitative or quantitative changes, such as when warm tea becomes cold or a few snowflakes become a large pile of snow.

Now, there is no truth of common sense that would not be safe from the excessive scepticism of certain philosophers. Thus, even the existence of change can be called into question; the great Parmenides did this at the beginning of Western metaphysics. However, reality remains entirely unaffected by such speculations. For example, if one has to walk in pouring rain without an umbrella, they may wish for Parmenides to be right for the sake of dry clothes, but they will also feel on their own soaked body that he was wrong.

Changes, as the next step of the argument, cannot be brought about by the changed thing itself. The wet shirt does not dry on its own, but must be dried by a heat source, such as warmer ambient air or a hair dryer. Similarly, a birthday cake does not divide itself into pieces; it must be cut by something, such as a knife.

But how is it with living beings? Do they not move and change by themselves? In fact, the characteristic of the living is that it carries the principle of its movement within itself: living beings move on their own. In everyday language, we also say that someone moves from one place to another, instead of saying, 'he is moved'. And yet, even with living beings, every change ultimately occurs due to something other than the changed thing, because even if the whole person takes a step forward, only a part of him is responsible for it, namely, his feet.

A foot moves only because of a certain muscle and tendon contraction, which in turn occurs because of a specific neural impulse in the brain. This makes it evident that the changes brought about by living beings also follow the same principle: the altered thing is not changed by itself but by something else.

Now we know: There is change in the world, and every change requires something that brings about the change and is different from what has been changed. Now the question arises: Can the chain of the changed and the changing, of the moved and the mover, be infinite, so that there is no first unchanging changer, no unmoved mover?

Thomas argues that this is not possible. We can understand his reasoning through a concrete example. Let us imagine an ordinary train. Typically, it consists of a locomotive and a finite number of carriages that are either pulled or pushed. For each of these carriages, it is true that they move only because they are moved by their predecessor or successor. Ultimately, however, there must be a locomotive that propels or pulls the entire train. An infinite number of carriages, it seems, would not budge if they lacked this crucial first link. Of course, the locomotive of a train is also not an unmoved mover: it is driven by the part, as we have already demonstrated for living beings. However, the train example makes it clear that a decrease to infinity is unthinkable in changes of this kind, where the changed and the changing are in a simultaneous relationship to each other.

Thomas himself does not explicitly speak of trains. He gives the example of a staff being guided by a hand, which causes it to move. One can embellish the case further and imagine, for instance, the staff drawing a geometric shape in the sand. The crucial point is that the staff would fall to the ground if it were not guided by the hand. However, as we already know, even the hand cannot be the ultimate cause of movement. Therefore, there must be a final, unmoved mover, an unchanging reason for every change – and the fitting name for this is indeed 'God'. God, metaphorically speaking, is the perfectly stable hand that has everything under control and without which no change could take place.

Thomas did not conceive this proof alone. Rather, he derived it from the writings of Aristotle, who argued for the existence of God as an unmoved mover in both his *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. Aristotle



plays an immense role in Thomas's intellectual life. His works had been lost for a long time but were reintroduced to Europe through the mediation of Arabic and Jewish scholars when Thomas began his studies. His time studying in Naples proved fortunate, as there the study of Aristotelian works was expressly permitted. In contrast, at the famous University of Paris, where Thomas would later find himself multiple times, there were initially significant reservations regarding the Greek pagan thinker.

One of the most important questions of the time was whether a train of argument that had not yet been illuminated by the light of revelation and therefore was based solely on natural reason could be compatible with Christian doctrine. It is counted among the great achievements of Thomas, both through his own systematic reflections and through numerous commentaries on works, to demonstrate the compatibility of 'the philosopher', as Aristotle was called, with the Christian faith.


That there is no contradiction between the truths that natural reason can recognize and the revealed truths of faith does not mean, according to Thomas, that there are no differences. Rather, Thomas insists on a specific division of roles. While natural reason, as we have outlined in the first way, can infer that God exists, it cannot, through this path, comprehend anything about the essence of God as He has revealed it to us. For example, the central belief that the unmoved mover is a triune and three-in-one God cannot be deduced through natural means.

Thomas expressly warns against claiming, in discussions with unbelievers, that the truths of faith [going beyond the existence of God] can be proven solely through reason. In doing so, there is a danger of making oneself and, worse yet, faith, appear ridiculous. Rather, the role of natural reason in matters of faith is purely negative: it must demonstrate that the truths revealed in the Holy Scriptures do not contradict reason. It can also present certain 'probable reasons' for the truths of faith. However, the ultimate goal is to clear the path for believing solely based on the revealed word of God.

If we want to discuss what God is philosophically, if we want to make statements about His nature based on reason, then we can only do so using analogies or in a negative manner. The philosopher must therefore tread the winding path of *Via negativa* if he wishes to approach the essence of God. Strictly speaking, we can only say what God is not, or as it is stated at the beginning of the third Quaestio in the *Summa Theologiae*: 'But because we cannot know what God is, but only what He is not, we cannot consider in what manner He is, but rather how He is not'. Further reflection on God reveals that He must be timeless (or eternal), immaterial, indivisible (or absolutely simple), infinite, unlimited in His knowledge (or omniscient), and perfect in every way.

.....

After his death in 1274, which was likely caused by decades of overwork and resulting exhaustion, the greatness of his work was recognized by many, but not without some sharp disagreement. In 1277, numerous theses, including Thomistic ones, were condemned in Paris. Nevertheless, in 1323, Thomas was canonized by Pope John XXII in Avignon. Two years later, Bishop Etienne Bourret of Paris lifted the condemnation of 1277, at least as it pertains to Thomas. It took over two hundred years before Thomas was finally declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius V in 1567.

The philosophical-theological crisis can be observed especially with the Enlightenment. This necessitates a return to the teachings of Thomas. In 1879, Pope Leo XIII published the encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, emphatically calling for a re-engagement with the thought of St Thomas Aquinas, the 'Prince and Master' of the Scholastics. This call remains relevant and urgent. If Thomas were taught intensively again in universities and seminaries today, it would be a crucial first step in overcoming the philosophical-theological errors of our time, which fail to make proper use of reason and faith. 

The ‘Vast River of Tradition’

by Michael Haynes

‘It is an impressive sight to see and be part of a crowd that learns and wants to unite its sacrifice to the incomparable sacrifice of Christ on the Cross that is perpetuated in the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar.’¹ These were the thoughts of Monsignor Marco Agostini, papal *ceremoniario* and official in the Secretariat of State, following the fourth annual walking pilgrimage of Our Lady of Christendom in Spain.

The pilgrimage draws hundreds of devotees of the Traditional Mass to walk nearly one hundred kilometres in three days, and is one of many such walking pilgrimages about which insightful and moving passages have previously been written in *Gregorius Magnus* and elsewhere.

But Mgr Agostini’s reflection is not just a commentary on the pilgrimage itself. Rather, he points at something so fundamental to the current growth of attendance at the Traditional Mass: he highlights the desire of faithful Catholics to join Christ in His sacrifice and to render to God the most perfect act of adoration of which they are able. Remarking on the sight of many tired yet happy pilgrims, Mgr Agostini opined that it was a spectacle ‘that would not leave even the most sophisticated detractors indifferent if they had been there’.

‘I saw tears flow through the fresh, though tired, faces of these young people as they received the Holy Eucharist on their knees and with their hands together’, he lauded. Tears of joy at having completed an arduous pilgrimage, but also tears of joy at being able to worship God in the manner afforded by the traditional liturgy.

‘The “true bread” of the pilgrims was the “Bread of the Angels” received at the solemn and ancient Masses that marked the days of pilgrimage of this new generation of children of the Church’, he noted. ‘These sons replenished their strength by drinking, just as the three hundred of Gideon (Judges 7: 1-8), in the vast river of Tradition’.

There are many scholarly treatises expounding the immense qualities of the ancient rite. Some attendees of the Old Mass are indeed won over by these arguments alone, or after having studied the great theological and spiritual riches offered through the Traditional Mass and concluding that it is an especially lofty

manner of giving worship to God. Such ‘converts’ to the Traditional Mass (for lack of a better term) could be described as having taken the academic route of discovery.

But often the most compelling and beautiful argument in favour of those same qualities of the Old Mass is the first-hand experience of the Mass itself, as testified to by the statements of those who discover it and come to love it simply through their encounters with God in the ancient rite. These same souls are those who find in the rites and prayers of the Traditional Mass the safe home where they can – in the words of Mgr Agostini – unite their sacrifice to the ‘incomparable sacrifice of Christ on the Cross’.

One such example is found in Fr Gerard Quirke, who was ordained as a diocesan priest in Ireland yet discovered the Traditional Mass only after his ordination – a discovery that led to his eventually entering the FSSP. Recounting his introduction to the Traditional Mass, he recalled not fully knowing what was happening at first, but simply ‘focusing on the priest at the moment of consecration, and just wanting to hold on to his chasuble. Because I knew that he was going to Heaven and that he was bringing us all with him’.

‘I remember just being struck by the truth of it, by the pathos that was there’, he told this correspondent. Fr Quirke described his encounter with the Traditional Mass as revealing to him ‘the truth of my priesthood’ and of providing him with fruitful ground for his priestly ministry.

Indeed, the beauties and mysteries of the Traditional Mass provide this fertile soil. With the Mass being the unbloody sacrifice of Calvary, it is naturally the focal point of the spiritual life for all Catholics, but especially so for priests, who – as the *alter Christus* – offer the sacrifice, making Christ manifest upon the altar and being the physical medium whereby Catholics receive the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ in the form of the Sacred Host.


It is this natural yet compelling draw of the Traditional Mass, and the desire to unite oneself with the sacrifice of Calvary, that sees the continued flourishing of Traditional orders, with Old Rite seminaries having to implement waiting lists and

receiving up to five times as many applicants as there are places. The priestly life, a life of uniting oneself to Christ and bringing His Truth to souls, takes on a special meaning when nourished by the fruitful ground and the ‘vast river of Tradition’ found in the Old Mass.

Souls are drawn to the life-giving river of Tradition ‘because of the silence they encounter, because of the beauty, some talk about the reverent gestures toward the blessed Sacrament’, Fr Lawrence Lew, OP, told me. ‘Those who first stumble across it then they realize there is something very beautiful, something which helps them to contemplate God better’.

Contemplation is aided by silence, and it is often the silence of the Old Rite that is the most immediately striking and compelling factor calling souls to drink at the river of Tradition. ‘Silence speaks very eloquently of the coming of God, of the Word made flesh in our world, and at that point we become worthless, we can say nothing, because we give way to God’s Incarnate Word who is speaking to us on the altar’, he remarked.

As Raymond Cardinal Burke noted in 2021, ‘I know so many lay faithful and also priests who have told me that being able to assist at the Holy Mass according to the *usus antiquior* has so helped them to deepen their understanding and their appreciation and their participation in the Holy Mass’.²

The cardinal’s comment denotes the international nature of the phenomena that Mgr Agostini highlighted at the local level: namely, that in a manner concordant with Scripture, the ‘new generation of children of the Church’ are indeed nourished by ‘the vast river of Tradition’ that is the Traditional Mass. 

1. <https://nscristiandad.es/en/peregrinacion-a-covadonga-2024/>.
2. EWTN, *The World Over*, 20th January 2022.

Tolkien's Holy Knights: Bilbo, Frodo, and Sam

by Robert Lazu Kmita

The attentive reader of John Ronald Reuel Tolkien's stories will notice a highly significant detail: the transformation that the most important heroes of Middle-earth undergo in the course of their adventures. In particular, the hobbits, who set out to fight against the evil stemming from dark Mordor, experience a true 'alchemical' change in their own personalities. The author himself sometimes highlights the evolution of characters such as Bilbo and Frodo Baggins or Sam Gamgee. For example, the most important figure in all of Tolkien's stories, Gandalf the Wise, emphasizes at the end of *The Hobbit* the great transformation of his little friend:

'My dear Bilbo!' he said. 'Something is the matter with you! You are not the hobbit that you were.'

The metamorphosis that Bilbo undergoes between the initial and final stages of the story can also be perceived in the other characters, especially those embodying timeless chivalrous values. Following complex and arduous paths imbued with a clear element of initiation, the major figures of Tolkien's stories perfectly illustrate a kind of 'alchemic' principle, so to speak – one that lies at the very heart of these narratives: by going through extreme situations or experiences, the knight attains a new status, a 'holy' one, fundamentally different from the 'profane' state specific to ordinary human beings. In other words, the 'initiate' acquires a transformed human condition. This new condition enables him to overcome hostile forces, whatever they may be. The most important aspect to note is the hero's inability to achieve this final victory without first acquiring a transformed human nature. Therefore, the desire to defeat evil is not enough; the agent must become capable of such an action. This is the fundamental

principle, which undoubtedly mirrors two Christian sacraments: Baptism, which transforms the human being into a person purified of sin, and Confirmation, which makes the Christian a knight perfectly equipped for spiritual warfare under the banner of Christ the King.

The epic hero: Sam Gamgee

In a letter addressed to Milton Waldman, probably written in 1951, Tolkien stated – as the brilliant Stratford Caldecott pointed out in his monograph *Secret Fire: The Spiritual Vision of J.R.R. Tolkien* (2004) – that neither Aragorn nor Frodo Baggins is the main hero of the epic narrative in *The Lord of the Rings*. Who, then, is the 'chief hero'? Although at first glance this may seem surprising, he is none other than Sam Gamgee, the little gardener from the Shire. Indeed, without the heroic support of Sam Gamgee, who carried Frodo on his back to the final step of their quest and adventure, the ring would not have been destroyed, and the great enemy of free people would not have been defeated.

In front of the orcs living in the cursed tower of Cirith Ungol, Sam reveals his spiritual grandeur, invisible in everyday life, and the result is that these creatures are terrified: he is truly, as the orcs imagine, a great warrior, possibly an elf, wielding a mortal sword. Faced with such a fearsome figure, the orcs are absolutely convinced that they are being attacked by 'one of those bloody-handed Elves'.

From the moment of his encounter with the monstrous Shelob, Sam Gamgee reveals his true nature as a perfect knight, hidden under the appearance of a gentle and humble servant of Frodo. Even the commanders of those wicked and evil armies are shocked and impressed by his terrifying presence:

'By all the signs, Captain Shagrat, I'd say there's a large warrior loose, Elf most likely, with an elf-sword anyway, and an axe as well may be'; ... Sam smiled grimly at this description of himself.

But how can the way the orcs see Sam be explained? The answer is the same as for all of Tolkien's heroes. When facing terrifying monsters that he must defeat courageously, driven by his deep love for life, liberty, and friendship, Sam undergoes a profound transformation that makes him comparable to Bilbo, Frodo, Aragorn, or Gandalf the Grey.

None of his battles played a greater role in his transformation than the life-and-death struggle with the immense descendant of Ungoliant, Shelob. Tolkien describes this battle with such narrative force that it allows us to feel both the despair and the determination of this little hobbit. This scene is, in my opinion, one of the best and most impressive in the entire trilogy:

Sam did not wait to wonder what was to be done, or whether he was brave, or loyal, or filled with rage. He sprang forward with a yell, and seized his master's sword in his left hand. Then he charged. No onslaught more fierce was ever seen in the savage world of beasts, where some desperate small creature armed with little teeth, alone, will spring upon a tower of horn and hide that stands above its fallen mate.

What follows goes beyond imagination. Despite the obvious disparity in size, Sam succeeds in cutting off one of the monster's claws and stabbing one of its eyes. Then, at the climax of their fight, when he is nearly

crushed, he finally penetrates Shelob's hideous belly with the legendary sword Sting, thereby avoiding being killed by the monster's immense weight. Like the great warriors of the ancient world, protected by the mystical incantation of the Elven queen's name – 'Gilthoniel A Elbereth!' – Sam Gamgee accomplishes one of his greatest acts of courage, one that significantly contributes to the success of Frodo's mission. Prepared for the decisive confrontation in the tower of Cirith Ungol and for the passage through the infernal plains of Mordor toward the Mountain of Doom, he becomes the knight who contributes most to the destruction of the forces of evil in the Third Age.

The immortal Frodo

In one of the most moving moments in the entire *Lord of the Rings*, on the great plain of Cormallen, Frodo Baggins and Sam Gamgee are greeted with exceptional esteem and honours. Everything that happens after these two characters awaken seems like a dream almost too beautiful to be true. The knights honour them and bow before them in a gesture of reverence. The king himself, Aragorn Elessar, kneels before them and places the two heroes on either side of his throne. Then, after the minstrel completes his masterful song about the legend of Frodo Nine Fingers, Gandalf crowns them both with silver circlets to symbolize their rank and their merits. Above the heads of everyone present at this celebration, the echo of a triple cry is heard: 'Praise them with great praise, Frodo and Samwise!'

Reflecting on all the adventures experienced by Frodo, the son of Drogo and nephew of Bilbo Baggins, one can clearly understand how a mere hobbit could achieve such dignity. Despite all appearances, which are deceiving as always, he becomes a great hero, ready to risk his life for those he loves. Sam, his ever-faithful servant, has the chance to witness and admire his master's hidden grandeur: 'For a moment, it appeared to Sam that his master had grown: a tall, stern shadow, a mighty lord who hid his brightness in gray cloud'. Yet, this grandeur was known to the wise. Able to see the unseen and

perceive the essence hidden beneath every hobbit's humble appearance, Gandalf clearly understood – from the very moment Frodo was recovering in Rivendell after his terrible fight at Amon Sûl with the head of the Nazgûl – the metamorphosis he was about to undergo.

Gandalf moved his chair to the beside, and took a good look at Frodo. The colour had come back to his face, and his eyes were clear, and fully awake and aware. He was smiling, and there seemed to be little wrong with him. But to the wizard's eye there was a faint change, just a hint as it were of transparency, about him, and especially about the left hand that lay outside upon the coverlet. 'Still that must be expected', said Gandalf to himself. 'He is not half through yet, and to what he will come in the end not even Elrond can foretell. Not to evil, I think. He may become like a glass filled with a clear light for eyes to see that can'.

By the end of his adventures, Frodo truly became 'like a glass filled with a clear light'. Elrond was right to place him among the legendary heroes of Arda, alongside great figures such as Hador, Húrin, Túrin, and Beren. This grandeur reflects the light and even the holiness of his actions, which produced an incredible transformation within himself, similar to those experienced by his beloved uncle, Bilbo. But what are these heroic acts and adventures?

First of all, one cannot forget Frodo's courage and dedication on Weathertop, where he faced the leader of the Nazgûl, the Witch-King of Angmar. Here, for the first time, he discovers the secret power in the sacred name of the queen of the stars, the wonderful Varda:

At that moment Frodo threw himself forward on the ground, and he heard himself crying aloud: 'O Elbereth! Gilthoniel!' At the same time, he struck at the feet of his enemy.

Incessantly pursued by Sauron's servants as well as by Saruman's scouts, Frodo is tested repeatedly, facing not only fear but also the changes brought


by the flame of courage within his own heart. Therefore, when in the Chamber of Mazarbul, located in the dwarves' underground fortress of Moria, he suddenly feels the fury of great warriors:

Suddenly, and to his own surprise, Frodo felt a hot wrath blaze up in his heart. 'The Shire!' he cried, and springing beside Boromir, he stooped, and stabbed with Sting at the hideous foot ...

'One for the Shire!' cried Aragorn.

Later on, when nearly trapped in the maze of tunnels located in the Mountains of Shadow on the western border of Mordor – tunnels ruled by the cruel Shelob – the same flame of heroism burns even brighter, empowering him on his final journey toward Mount Doom:

Then Frodo's heart flamed within him, and without thinking what he did, whether it was folly or despair or courage, he took the Phial in his left hand, and with his right hand drew his sword. Sting flashed out, and the sharp elven-blade sparkled in the silver light, but at its edges a blue fire flicked. Then holding the star aloft and the bright sword advanced, Frodo, hobbit of the Shire, walked steadily down to meet the eyes.

In such crucial moments of the story, we see again and again how Tolkien's small warriors act with unexpected courage. With each such heroic act, they transform, borrowing the strength of a diamond. However, all of this, much like the Christians who constantly fight the vices and passions stirred up by the demonic armies of darkness, only serves to strengthen them, to mature them, to transform them into true heroes. They are the holy knights of Middle-earth. His heroic deeds, combined with the humility inherent in all hobbits, give Frodo the true strength of a pure diamond, fully justifying the metaphor used by the elves, led by Gildor, to describe him: 'A jewel among hobbits'. 

A Benedictine Monastic Adventure in the Antipodes

by Anthony Bailey

It is often said that God's grace moves in mysterious ways – that He has plans for us that we are not even vaguely aware of until the time or situation is right wherein He makes His will known. An example of God's grace moving mysteriously in the first instance and then gradually unfolding can be found on the island of Tasmania in the southern part of Australia. Who would have thought that when a young Australian couple, Stuart and Martine Watkinson, read an article about how Benedictine monasticism civilised the Western world it would eventually lead to the founding of a Benedictine priory, dedicated to Our Lady of Cana, in Colebrook in the Archdiocese of Hobart?

The genesis of Notre Dame Priory can be found in a connection between the Watkinsons and Dom Pius Mary Noonan (originally from Kentucky and now an Australian citizen), a professed monk of the Abbey of Saint Joseph in Flavigny, in the Burgundy region of France. For several years, Dom Pius had visited Australia with a fellow monk from the Flavigny abbey to give retreats; Flavigny has become known around the world for its conduct of retreats based on the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius. The Watkinsons, having read the article in the Australian Catholic periodical *Oriens*, were convinced they had a call to help heal some of the wounds afflicting the world and the Church. At the same time, Dom Pius was developing a strong sense of the potential of a traditional Benedictine monastery in Australia and the potential to establish one.

The Watkinsons' invitation to Dom Pius to consider a Benedictine foundation in Australia, the request by the Most Reverend Julian Porteous, Archbishop of Hobart, that Dom Pius come to Tasmania, and the blessing of the Abbot of Flavigny for Dom Pius to leave Flavigny in response to God's call – all combined to bring forth the first



Dom Bede Mary Cannavo, OSB (at far right), following his ordination, with (left to right) Dom Pius Noonan, OSB; Bishop Geoffrey Jarrett, Bishop Emeritus of Lismore; and Archbishop Julian Porteous of Hobart

Benedictine foundation in Australia in the twenty-first century.

The Priory of Notre Dame was officially inaugurated on 22nd February 2017 with a Solemn High Mass celebrated in St Patrick's church, Colebrook. Archbishop Porteous and numerous clergy and faithful from around Australia were present. The choice of St Patrick's, Colebrook, as the first spiritual home, so to speak, of the Notre Dame community is an example of the connections between this twenty-first-century religious project and the Catholic history of Tasmania. Benedictines such as Bishop Bede Polding were among the first Catholic clergy to officiate in what was then called the colony of Van Diemen's Land in the early nineteenth century. The first Bishop of Hobart, Bishop Robert Willson, was a friend of the great Gothic Revivalist A.W.N. Pugin, who designed three churches for him in Tasmania, in addition to a range of ecclesiastical furniture and fittings, stained glass windows, and vestments. One of those churches is St Patrick's, Colebrook, sometimes known as the Cathedral of the Coal

Valley and a unique example of Pugin's colonial ecclesiastical architecture, with its Sarum-inspired sanctuary. Interestingly enough, Colebrook was once known as Jerusalem.

The Notre Dame community had a somewhat peripatetic start following its canonical establishment as a Private Association of the Faithful. Throughout 2017, while the community was living in an unused presbytery in the suburbs of Hobart, a number of young men expressed an interest in the traditional Benedictine way of life and sought to join the nascent community under Dom Pius's spiritual care and direction. The presbytery soon became unsuitable for the small but growing community, which needed the space to establish a genuine Benedictine environment. So, for the next two years or so, Rhynaston, a short distance from Colebrook, was the home of the community. This early phase of the community's life was not without its own difficulties. The monks lived in somewhat spartan conditions, but at the same time they had the peace of the countryside and space to develop community life and to start thinking about the future of the

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Immaculate Conception Church (left) and monks' cells at Notre Dame Priory

monastery. While living at Rhyndaston, they celebrated the Latin Mass daily at the church at Colebrook, further consolidating their connection with the local community and establishing a Benedictine presence within the archdiocese.

By the grace of God and thanks to generous benefactors and a loan from the Catholic Development Fund of Tasmania, the community was able to purchase a large property in Colebrook in August 2018 – the Jerusalem Estate. The property could not be better suited to the establishment of a traditional Benedictine monastery. It consists of more than 600 hectares of excellent farming land in addition to heritage buildings, including the Georgian Hardwick House on Jerusalem Creek. The monks launched a 'Help for Hectares' campaign to raise funds to repay the loan, while making changes to various buildings in the property, erecting cells for the monks, and working with an architect to develop

a master plan for the monastery to be constructed near Mount Olivet, one of the highest hills on the property. Thanks to the intercession of Our Lady of Cana and Saint Joseph, they raised sufficient funds and fully repaid the loan in 2023.

Since 2017 the community has seen its first group of novices clothed with the habit of St Benedict (the habit is white in honour of the Perpetual Virginity of Mary), its first group of novices make their triennial profession of vows on the feast of the Immaculate Conception in the presence of Archbishop Porteous (2018), its first solemn profession (2021), and, in a sure sign of God's beneficence towards the community, its first diaconal ordination (2023) and priestly ordination (2024). This is a very impressive list of achievements for such a young community, particularly at a time when the celebration of the traditional Tridentine liturgy is facing a number of challenges within the Church. It is also a demonstration, in

the words of Dom Pius, of how 'Saint Benedict, his Rule, his community life, his divine liturgy, are invaluable for helping man rediscover who he really is.'

If you would like to learn more about the Notre Dame community, attend one of their spiritual retreats, purchase books from their publishing house, Cana Press, or help them realise their vision of building the monastery near Mount Olivet, visit their website at www.notredamemonastery.org.



Monks establishing the vineyard on the Jerusalem Estate

.....



The community of Notre Dame Priory with Archbishop Julian Porteous of Hobart

Correction to the article *Liturgical Music and the Old Mass in Australia*, published in the previous edition of *Gregorius Magnus*: There are four active choirs in the Parish of St John Henry Newman, North Caulfield, Melbourne: the Newman Parish Choir sings at the weekly Sunday Solemn Mass and at other times during the year; the Schola of Saint Dunstan, a male choir, regularly sings Vespers and Benediction and on special feast days; the St Hildegard Ladies Choir sings for the Mass of Our Lady on First Saturdays and for the feast of St Cecilia; and the Newman Consort, a professional choir of four to six voices, sings at evening Masses on feast days and at Nuptial and Requiem Masses. A fifth choir, the Newman Schola, is currently in recess following the suppression of the weekly Wednesday afternoon Latin Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne. We pray for the speedy return of the Latin Mass on Wednesdays at the Cathedral. ⑥

Michael Treharne Davies

13 March 1936 – 25 September 2004: Obituary

by Leo Darroch

From an address given in Rome, 3 November 2012, at the invitation of Il Centro Culturale Lepanto. Reprinted in Leo Darroch, Una Voce: The History of the Foederatio Internationalis Una Voce 1964-2003.

Michael Treharne Davies was born on 13 March 1936, in Dorset, England. His father, a Welshman, was a Baptist and his mother, who was English, was a member of the Church of England. On leaving school in 1954 at the age of eighteen he joined the British Army as a regular soldier and served in Malaya, Egypt, and Cyprus. There is one comment in his army service records that is of particular interest. In August 1957 his commanding officer stated that,

He is a quiet, kind man with a very Christian outlook on life. He is too kind-hearted and I have never heard him run down anyone. For this reason he does not possess the disciplinary powers to make a non-commissioned officer. He puts service, loyalty, and the welfare of others before self. I recommend him unreservedly for any position requiring trust and dedication to his fellow men.

It was during this army service that he was drawn to the Catholic faith and he was received into the Church on 17 April 1957. After leaving the army in 1957 he met a young Croatian girl, Marija Milosh, at the French Church in Soho, London, and they married in July 1961. Michael attended St Mary's Catholic Training College in London, and qualified as a teacher in 1964. During his time at this college he wrote a number of short stories and poems for the college magazine. When he left college his Senior Lecturer provided a reference in which he said:

Mr Michael Davies is the most hard-working student I have ever known in my seven years as a Lecturer. He is open, reliable, co-operative, firm in his religious faith and tenacious in pursuing his ideals without fuss or outward show.



This was the formative background that laid the foundations for his great work that followed. From being a soldier in the service of his country and a teacher of young minds, he became a soldier and teacher in the service of his Church.

Michael's first appearance in print was in May 1967. A magazine had printed an article on the Vietnam War by a priest who had made various claims about Americans bombing Catholic churches in North Vietnam and killing people on their way to Mass. Michael did not believe the story and checked the information. He proved that the entire article was groundless and based on Communist propaganda. This theme of checking information in the search for truth became the cornerstone, the constant thread, of everything he produced subsequently. It became a continual source of irritation, and more, to those 'experts' who wished to steamroller liturgical change upon a disbelieving laity, that their spurious claims were put under the microscope and found, in the most part, to be without foundation. As a schoolteacher and also a parent, Michael knew the importance of guiding young minds along the path of

truth; and especially so in matters of the faith. It is well known that initially he had a degree of enthusiasm for Vatican II but he quickly realised that things were not as he and many others expected. He joined The Latin Mass Society of England and Wales in February 1967 and very quickly became actively involved, giving talks on 'Mass and the under elevens,' and 'Children and the Mass'. He had been a Catholic for only ten years, and a teacher for only four years, but he could see immediately the damaging effect the changes would have on the faith of young people. He was to be their champion and he threw himself entirely into the battle.

His life's work was spent meticulously researching these supposed new insights, this new scholarship, and exposing it to public scrutiny as the shallow and destructive movement it was. He had discovered in his late teens and early twenties that the Truth existed in the Catholic Church and he was not prepared to allow anyone to take it away from him or his children. For Michael, the truth was everything and he was appalled at the way the modernist pseudo-intellectuals and their fellow travellers had infiltrated the Catholic media, the seminaries, and the publishing houses, and were introducing a new religion to our churches and schools to the detriment of the faith. He was also equally appalled not only that many of the hierarchies of the world had allowed these 'experts' to peddle their destructive theories unchallenged, but even worse, that many actively supported them, while condemning as divisive those Catholics who were not prepared to abandon the faith of their parents and grandparents.

For those people who, when the liturgical changes were introduced, were ploughing a very lonely 'traditional' path in their parishes, his books and encouragement were like manna from heaven. In his research and exposition

of the real facts on the liturgy and architecture he shed a great deal of light on matters that many liturgical 'experts' would have preferred to keep secret. It was this information, exposing the shallowness and historical ignorance of the 'progressive modernists', that has allowed so many ordinary people in the pew to present their priests and bishops with reasoned argument against unwarranted change; something that they did not enjoy. The fact that the cause of tradition is now making a very effective return world-wide to our altars is due in great part to Michael and his scholarship and leadership. This may well be his lasting legacy to the Church; the provision of books and papers that rallied the faithful and educated them in a period of time that will truly be called one of the dark ages of the Church.

By the early 1970s Michael had already established a reputation for being a formidable defender of the faith and was forming friendships with other wonderful defenders of Catholic tradition in the English-speaking world – men such as Father Paul Crane, S.J. in London with *Christian Order*; Hamish Fraser in Scotland with *Approaches*, and Walter Matt in the USA with *The Remnant*. These three publishers formed a mighty triumvirate in defence of Catholic doctrine and tradition, and in Michael they immediately recognised a writer to cherish. For nearly thirty-five years he wrote incessantly and prodigiously for these magazines, and his articles were always the first to be read before all others. In his writing Michael Davies encapsulated the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. He was possessed of a wonderful faith that even in the darkest moments never wavered; he never lost hope that tradition would be restored to our altars, and, though he criticised endlessly the disastrous reforms inflicted upon the Church, he never resorted to personal abuse of those who were responsible for them.

By the mid-1970s the crisis within the Church was deepening. In his general research on the various novelties that were being introduced he had amassed a huge amount of data on the Council and how the great majority of the Fathers had been deceived by a well-orchestrated plan of a clique of European bishops and their liturgical advisors. Thus was born his great trilogy *Liturgical Revolution*. His first volume, *Cranmer's Godly Order* (1976), examined the Protestant Reformation,

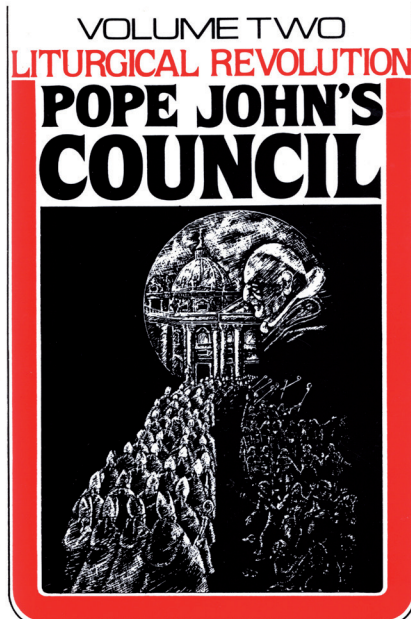
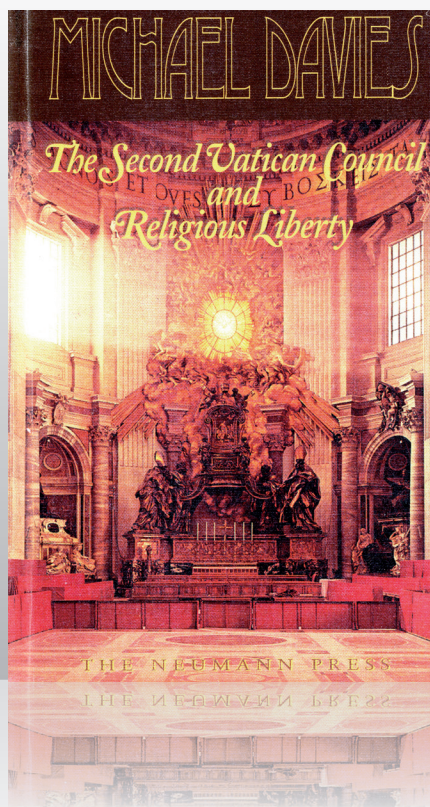
what happened and why. His second work, *Pope John's Council* (1977), was written to provide an objective and documented explanation of the fact that the Church in the West is disintegrating and that the responsibility for this disintegration must be laid at the door of those who manipulated the Second Vatican Council for their own ends. His third volume, *Pope Paul's New Mass* (1980), provided a detailed examination of the development of the Roman rite, the liturgical legislation pouring out from Rome during and after the Council, the prayers and rubrics of the new form of Mass, and the devastating impact of the changes on the Church throughout the world. Michael had submitted his first book, *Cranmer's Godly Order*, to the Censor of his diocese for an imprimatur but it was refused, despite the Censor finding no doctrinal fault with it. An appeal to his archbishop proved fruitless. Such was the prevailing hostile attitude of the authorities to anyone who dared question Vatican II or its 'fruits'. Following this unjust rebuff he decided there was no point in submitting any more of his work for an imprimatur but everything he produced was examined by theologians for inspection and amendment where necessary. Michael's books were published originally by the Augustine Publishing Company but he told me in 1984 that it had dropped all his books 'because of complaints that they were extreme'. Michael's kindness was unlimited and he sent me free copies of all his books as soon as they were published. He made an interesting comment in 1986 when he said that he never even glances at his 'efforts' once they are in print, and had not even read *Pope Paul's New Mass*. Once a book was finished he moved immediately on to the next. At one point he was writing three books at the same time.

In the midst of working on this trilogy, *Liturgical Revolution*, a taxing enough project in itself, Michael became engaged in a spirited defence of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. In 1976 the Catholic Truth Society of England and Wales published a pamphlet that seriously misrepresented the Archbishop. Michael wrote to the author and suggested he either substantiate or withdraw his allegations, but he refused. This led to a pamphlet entitled *Archbishop Lefebvre – The Truth* and this was so successful it ran to several reprints. However, he decided that the only way to fully present the truth about the Archbishop would be to write an Apologia,

and this was published by the Angelus Press in June 1979 as *Apologia pro Marcel Lefebvre*. In the event, this became Volume One and was later followed by Volume Two (August 1983) and Volume Three (April 1988). His output then became prolific with works on such great figures as John Cardinal Newman (1978), St Pius X (1983), and St John Fisher (1998).

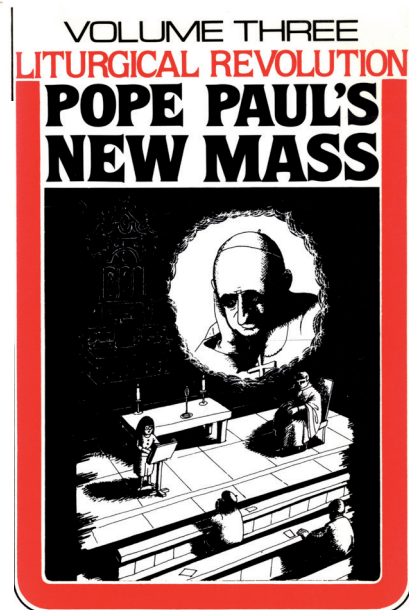
Such a prodigious feat of writing would have been immense for a fulltime author but Michael was first and foremost at this time a schoolteacher with a young family. He was teaching by day and writing by night and at weekends. In all of this it must not be forgotten that his wife Maria played a vital role in supporting all his activities, a fact that he readily acknowledged. At home he would be so immersed in his writing that Maria did everything else. His meals had to wait until he finished some important paper, and his daily routine seemed to revolve around the times of postal collections. 'I must catch the post' was a daily cry as he dashed out of the house. His home in Bromley, South East London, became the centre of the lay traditional movement and he and Maria entertained visitors from all over the world, including many priests and seminarians.

It was surprising, given the problems encountered by many other Catholic teachers who were deeply unhappy about the 'new' faith being imposed on the Church and in our schools, that he suffered no problems personally in his own schools. Maria Davies said that Michael was an excellent teacher and he had a compulsion to teach about the knowledge he had acquired. That is why his books are so readable. He took great pride in the fact that he was a primary school teacher and had an endless stream of stories about his pupils. He deeply resented that he was teaching his pupils the Catholic faith he had learned as a convert, and which had been reinforced at his teacher training college, and then they were going on to senior schools and beyond and being exposed to a version of the Catholic faith that he did not recognise. A faith that had been adapted to the secular spirit of the age and was watered down to be acceptable to everyone, but in fact was rejected by most. Although he loved teaching, when his writing became the focus of his life, he wanted to retire. He wrote to me in July 1994 to say he had 'overcome the problem of the day job interfering in what really interested him'



Michael Davies

Michael Davies



Michael Davies

Michael Davies

and had taken early retirement. He said he was now poor but happier.

As Michael's reputation grew so did the demands on his time. Everyone wanted a quote, an article, a lecture, a foreign visit, or simply a reply to a letter or an email – of which he received thousands each year. In 1980 he appeared on television in America where he debated the state of the Church with Father Joseph Champlin from the Chancery of Syracuse, New York, who served on the bishops' commission on the liturgy. From then onwards Michael became probably the foremost lay speaker in the USA; the Americans took him to their hearts and he was invited back time and time again. With his reputation growing worldwide his tours took in many European countries, and further afield in India, Australia, New Zealand, and even Nigeria where he helped with the foundation of a traditional parish.

St Matthew recounts how Jesus said that we must not lay up our treasures on this earth but lay them up in heaven: 'Where your treasure house is, there your heart is too'. It was abundantly clear where Michael's heart was. In 1998 a friend complained to Michael about a magazine using some photos without permission.

He wrote in reply,

You will not be surprised to learn that I do not in the least share your indignation. I believe that we are in a war about the most important issues in the world, that our enemies are the [he named a bishop] of this world and that if anything that we have written or photographed can be useful to our allies we should be delighted. I have not only had extensive passages from my books quoted without permission, I have had entire books and pamphlets reprinted or translated into other languages on numerous occasions without being informed. I discovered quite by accident that in one country five of my full length books and about ten of my pamphlets had been published. In every case I have been pleased that my writing has been found useful in fighting the good fight.

Michael truly appreciated that we as individuals were not important, it was the restoration of the traditional liturgy that was paramount and that anything that we could do should be focused totally on this cause. I think it is worth mentioning that

Michael made very little money from his writing. Unfortunately, he was too trusting and some publishers simply did not pay him anything, even though they were selling thousands of his books. In February 1997 he said that one particular publisher declared itself bankrupt but carried on trading. Over seventy thousand copies of *Liturgical Shipwreck* were sold and he never received a cent. An honourable exception to this is the Angelus Press, which has always been scrupulous and regular in paying the agreed royalties.

Michael Davies' books were read by many priests and prelates. One bishop commented to me that he had found Michael to be a man of the highest integrity, vision, and commitment. He said he had ploughed a lonely furrow for many years and, specifically, in his writings on the Mass, he had kept an awareness of Pope St Pius V to the fore in all our minds. He ended by saying that his writings will, in time, reveal his real greatness. Another prelate said to me that he had hoped and prayed that he would meet him but was disappointed that it never happened. It was Michael, he said, who had led him to a true appreciation of the sacred liturgy.

In 1995 Michael Davies was elected President of the International Federation *Una Voce*, a position that gave him greater international status and a much higher 'official' profile which allowed him access to the major Vatican departments. It also increased greatly an already taxing workload as for most of his term of office he acted as president, secretary and treasurer. He became a respected visitor to the Congregations for the Doctrine of the Faith, of Divine Worship, and the *Ecclesia Dei* Commission. In addition to his great work with the *Una Voce* movement he received, and accepted, many invitations to functions in small parishes and these were seen as equally important as his international engagements. He was kindness and patience personified to everyone who wished to speak to him but was deeply uncomfortable when compliments were being paid to him. He would become embarrassed and change the subject to something entirely different, such as Welsh rugby (his second religion). But every compliment was thoroughly deserved – he was the master who came forth from the liturgical chaos and restored clarity of Catholic teaching on liturgy, on doctrine, and on the re-ordering of churches. This is why the liturgical establishment disliked (hated?) him so much. He embarrassed their experts, and he angered those bishops who were in thrall of the weird and (not so) wonderful theories of their experts and who had implemented wholesale liturgical and architectural changes on their recommendations.

I think it is true to say that Michael Davies, while being a man hugely admired and respected within the world of traditional Catholicism, and known – and feared? – in the corridors of power in Rome, was perhaps relatively unknown to the great majority of Catholic faithful who still attend Sunday Mass in their own parishes. The immensity of the man will only be fully appreciated in the years and decades to come when his writings will be recognised as the foundation and springboard of the resurrection and resurgence of the traditional liturgy and faith of the Church. The greatest tribute we could pay him for his service to us and the Church is to make his work more widely known. For those members who do not have any of his books I would recommend his trilogy *Liturgical Revolution*. Those who have one or more of his books could perhaps try and persuade their local

clergy to read something of his work.

He was diagnosed with terminal prostate cancer in late 2002 but he saw this as more an irritation than something to be feared. He cheerfully commented to me that should the pain become too much he would simply drink more whisky: a drink he often enjoyed to excess. Although his illness seriously affected his energy, it did not diminish his determination but it took such a toll on his health that he could only concentrate for about two hours each day. Not to be defeated, he had a small bed placed in his office where he could rest. He wanted desperately to update his great trilogy on the liturgy and was working on *Pope John's Council* until the day he died. In the event, he died, suddenly, of a heart attack on 25 September 2004.

Michael's legacy, and what an immense legacy he has left us – seventeen full length books and several dozen booklets and pamphlets – provides a body of work of truly Catholic genius which will enlighten, educate and sustain Catholics in future generations. A timely antidote to the self-interested, self-serving, shallow delusions of men whose ideas were condemned by Pope St Pius X in *Pascendi Gregis* over 100 years ago. The immensity of the man will only be fully appreciated in the years and decades to come when his writings, particularly on the Mass, will be recognised as a major contribution to the resurgence and restoration of the traditional liturgy and faith of the Church. Since the promulgation of *Summorum Pontificum* the debate concerning the liturgy has been re-ignited and more and more senior figures in the Church are raising their voices in support of a new analysis of the failed policies of the 1960s and 1970s. The recent re-publication by the Angelus Press of Michael's great trilogy *Liturgical Revolution (Cranmer's Godly Order, Pope John's Council, and Pope Paul's New Mass)* is a timely and valuable contribution to this debate and will surely bring his work to a new audience; an audience that has no first-hand knowledge of the years surrounding the Second Vatican Council, and who will appreciate his clinical assessment of the changes that were imposed, and his exposé of the flawed and false scholarship that drove the changes. He said to his family that if he were to be remembered for anything he hoped it would be for this trilogy. These three books deserve pride of place in the libraries of all Catholic seminaries. Perhaps the greatest tribute we could pay

him for his service to the Church, and to the faithful, is for each of us who has one or more of his books, to make his name known to those who have no knowledge of him or his work. If we are indeed serious in our desire to restore the ancient liturgy to our altars we must make it our apostolate to persuade our parish priests to read his trilogy on the liturgical revolution – it could produce remarkable fruit.

Perhaps the publication in July 2007 by Pope Benedict XVI of the *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum* was the greatest vindication of Michael's unceasing public support for Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in the face of much opposition. It was a relationship based on mutual trust and on the occasion of Michael's death in September 2004 His Eminence sent this tribute to the Latin Mass Society (translated from the original German):

I have been profoundly touched by the news of the death of Michael Davies. I had the good fortune to meet him several times and I found him as a man of deep faith and ready to embrace suffering.

Ever since the Council he put all his energy into the service of the Faith and left us important publications especially about the Sacred Liturgy. Even though he suffered from the Church in many ways in his time, he always truly remained a man of the Church. He knew that the Lord founded His Church on the rock of St Peter and that the Faith can find its fullness and maturity only in union with the successor of St Peter. Therefore we can be confident that the Lord opened wide for him the gates of heaven. We commend his soul to the Lord's mercy.

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger,
9 November 2004

Mass was celebrated for the repose of the soul of Michael Davies, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of his death, on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, on Saturday, 14th September, in the historic church of St Augustine's Snave, in Kent, England. The Mass was organised by the Latin Mass Society. ⑥

Reinstating Trent

by Michael Davies

This book review was first published in the Latin Mass Society's Newsletter (later renamed Mass of Ages) in February 2004.

.....

Looking Again at the Question of the Liturgy with Cardinal Ratzinger: Proceedings of the July 2001 Fontgombault Liturgical Conference, various authors, pb, St Michael's Abbey Press, £11.95.

I am almost certain that I have read every book of significance concerning the post-Vatican II liturgical reform published since the imposition of the new Mass in 1969, not to mention translations of books on this topic from other languages, and I have no hesitation in stating that this is one of the most important yet to appear. We are all deeply indebted to Dom Alcuin Reid, OSB, for arranging for its publication.

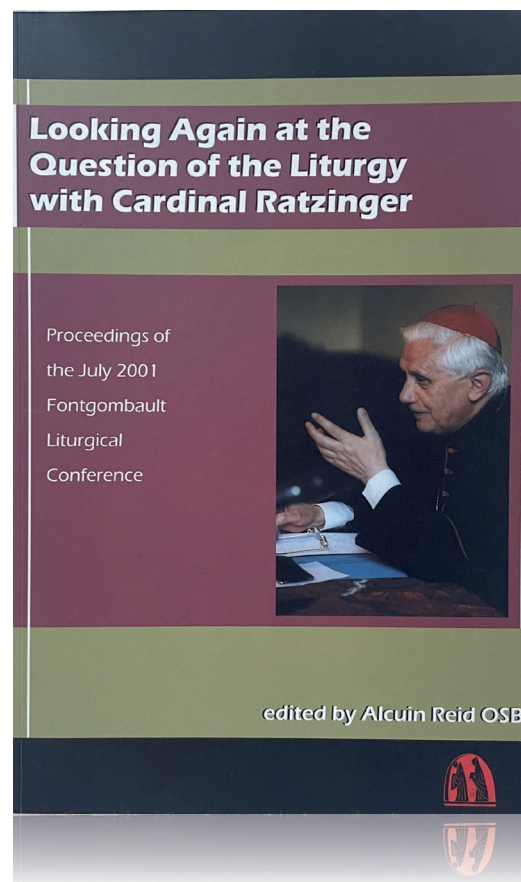
In July 2001 a conference took place at the Abbey of Fontgombault, under the auspices of Cardinal Ratzinger, to assess the current state of the liturgy of the Roman rite. The shared assumption of all the speakers, including the Cardinal, was that the post-Vatican II liturgical reform had gone badly wrong, and the speakers proposed two possible solutions – a reform of the reform or greater use of the pre-Vatican II missal. Cardinal Ratzinger stated unequivocally that the “reform of the reform” refers of course to the reformed missal, not to the missal in previous use, which means that traditionalists need not fear that plans are afoot to make changes to the 1962 missal. I will not waste space commenting on suggestions for reforming the manner in which Mass is celebrated according to the 1970 missal, a manner in which what were once considered abuses have now become the norm. The liturgical bureaucracy, bishops, and most of the parish clergy are perfectly satisfied with the liturgical travesties perpetrated in most parish churches each Sunday and would resist any attempt to replace them.

The space made available to me will allow me to comment on and quote only three of the speakers: Cardinal Ratzinger, Professor Roberto de Mattei of *Una Voce Italy*, and Professor Robert Spaemann of *Pro Missa Tridentina*. Professor de Mattei argues that the aspect of the reform that should concern us most is that of dogma, and that the reform has undermined fundamental Catholic dogmas concerning the Eucharist. He writes:

The *lex credendi-lex orandi* relationship, which is implicit in the liturgical reform, should be viewed in the light of the new theology which prepared the way for the Second Vatican Council, and which above all tried to give direction to what developed from it. In this sense, the *lex credendi* expressed by the *Novus Ordo* appears as a revision of the Catholic faith by refraction through the anthropological and secularist ‘turn’ of the new theology – a theology, it must be emphasised, which not merely re-

presents the themes of Modernism, but appropriates these themes in a Marxist sense, that is to say, by way of a system of thought which offers itself as a radical ‘philosophy of practice’.

This is a very serious and very radical criticism. Can it in any way be justified? Note in particular the reference to the fact that this new theology prepared the way for Vatican II. Cardinal Ratzinger certainly accepts that this is the case. He analyses the thinking of a representative selection of contemporary theologians and liturgists and concludes that: ‘A sizeable party of Catholic liturgists seems to have practically arrived at the conclusion that Luther, rather than Trent, was substantially right in the sixteenth century debate’, and adds: ‘one can detect much the same position in the post-conciliar discussions on the priesthood’. He refers also to theologians who share Luther’s opinion that it is ‘the most appalling horror and a damnable impiety to speak of the sacrifice of the Mass’. The



Cardinal then articulates a conclusion which many of us considered to be the case, but have not put forward for fear of provoking accusations of exaggeration:

It is only against this background of the effective denial of the authority of Trent, that the bitterness of the struggle against allowing the celebration of Mass according to the 1962 Missal, after the liturgical reform, can be understood. The possibility of so celebrating constitutes the strongest, and thus (for them) the most intolerable contradiction of the opinion of those who believe that the faith in the Eucharist formulated by Trent has lost its value.

The fact that such theories are being propagated by Catholic theologians and liturgists would be bad enough if they were confined to their particular circles, but, insists the Cardinal:

The serious nature of these theories comes from the fact that frequently they pass immediately into practice. The thesis according to which it is the community itself which is the subject of the Liturgy, serves as an authorisation to manipulate the Liturgy according to each individual's understanding of it. So-called new discoveries and the forms which follow from them, are diffused with an astonishing rapidity and with a degree of conformity which has long ceased to exist where the norms of ecclesiastical authority are concerned. Theories, in the area of the Liturgy, are transformed rapidly today into practice, and practice, in turn, creates or destroys ways of behaving and thinking.

The Cardinal insists that this is an intolerable situation. We can, he insists, have confidence in the Council of Trent. 'Trent did not make a mistake, it leant for support on the solid foundation of the Tradition of the Church. It remains a trustworthy standard'. In his recent books Cardinal Ratzinger has made frequent references to the fact that, since the concept of offering the divine Victim has now been lost, the community is now celebrating itself, its own consciousness of what it is, which means that, in effect, it is celebrating nothing. He continues:

One thing should be clear: the Liturgy must not be a terrain for experimenting

with theological hypotheses. Too rapidly, in these last decades, the ideas of experts have entered into liturgical practice, often also by-passing ecclesiastical authority, through the channel of commissions which have been able to diffuse at an international level their 'consensus of the moment', and practically turn it into laws for liturgical activity. The Liturgy derives its greatness from what it is, not from what we make of it. Our participation is, of course, necessary, but as a means of inserting ourselves humbly into the spirit of the Liturgy, and of serving Him Who is the true subject of the Liturgy: Jesus Christ. The Liturgy is not an expression of the consciousness of a community which, in any case, is diffuse and changing. It is revelation received in faith and prayer, and its measure is consequently the faith of the Church, in which revelation is received.

The Cardinal considers the missal of 1962 to be a bulwark of orthodoxy which must continue to be celebrated:

It seems to me indispensable to continue to offer the opportunity to celebrate according to the old Missal, as a sign of the enduring identity of the Church. This is for me the basic reason: what was up until 1969 the Liturgy of the Church, for all of us the most holy thing there was, cannot become after 1969 – with incredibly positivistic decision – the most unacceptable thing. If we want to be credible, even with being modern as a slogan, we absolutely have to recognise that what was fundamental before 1969 remains fundamental afterwards: the realm of the sacral is the same, the Liturgy is the same ... this Missal of the Church should offer a point of reference, and should become a refuge for those faithful who, in their own parish, no longer find a Liturgy genuinely celebrated in accordance with the texts authorised by the Church. There is no doubt, on the one hand, that a venerable rite such as the Roman rite in use up to 1969 is a rite of the Church, it belongs to the Church, is one of the treasures of the Church, and ought therefore to be preserved in the Church.

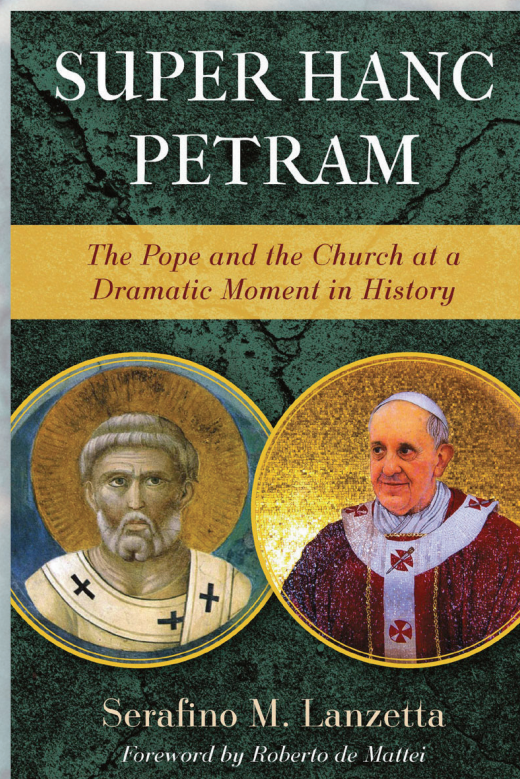
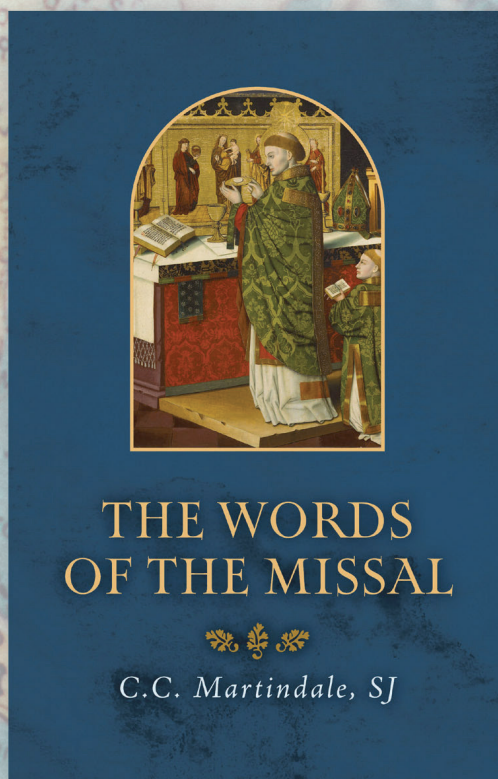
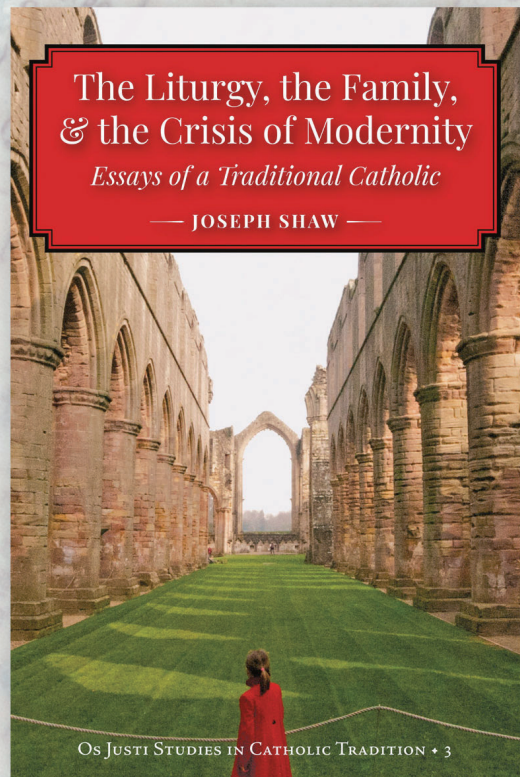
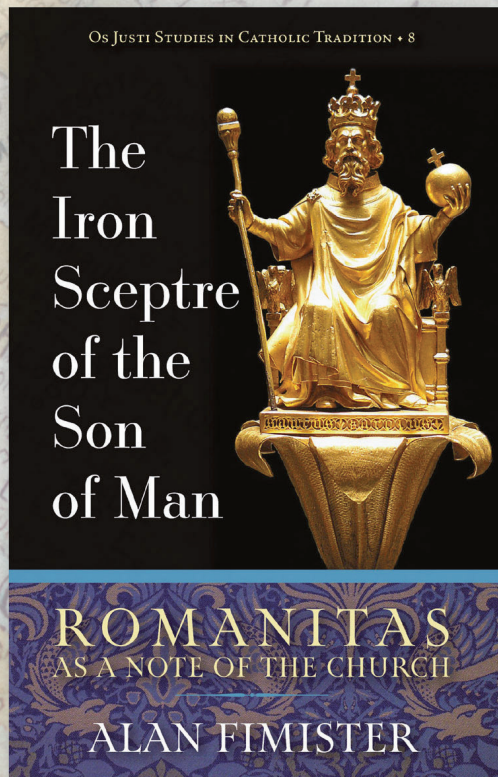
An argument used invariably by those seeking the suppression of the 1962 Missal is that we belong to the Roman rite, and that within this rite

there can be only one missal. This thesis is totally demolished in a very learned article by Dom Cassian Folsom, OSB, but is subjected to an even more radical refutation by Professor Robert Spaemann, who claims, correctly in my opinion, that the rite of Mass found in the 1970 missal has been subjected to so radical a revision that it no longer retains its Roman ethos:

In my view there can be no doubt that a Liturgy of the Mass which has no offertory, with a multiplicity of Eucharistic Prayers and the almost complete abolition of use of the Roman canon, with a different calendar – with, for example, the abolition of the pre-Lenten period (from Septuagesima onward) – with a different set of readings from Sacred Scripture – that such a Liturgy, as I say, is a different rite; especially if we consider not only the origin but the appearance of the two liturgies: the orientation of the priest, the liturgical language, etc. An Orthodox friend told me that he finds more similarity between the old Roman Mass and his own Liturgy, than between that and the Masses usually celebrated today. Given the fact of these two rites, then the abolition of the old Roman rite would, as a matter of course, be illegitimate even if not illegal. As Cardinal Ratzinger has shown us, in its whole history the Church has never abolished a legitimate rite which was hallowed by Tradition ... Every Catholic Christian has the right to fight for a form of prayer hallowed by his ancestors, by many saints, and by the entire Church for centuries ... The hostility of some of the advocates of the new rite towards the old is the strongest argument in favour of maintaining it.

I would urge every reader, priest readers in particular, to buy and to study this book which makes it clear that where the debate on the liturgical reform is concerned, the case for the traditional Mass alone has credibility, and the case against put forward by advocates of the new rite can be supported by no credible theological or liturgical arguments. ⑥

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Children, Culture, and Demography

by Joseph Shaw

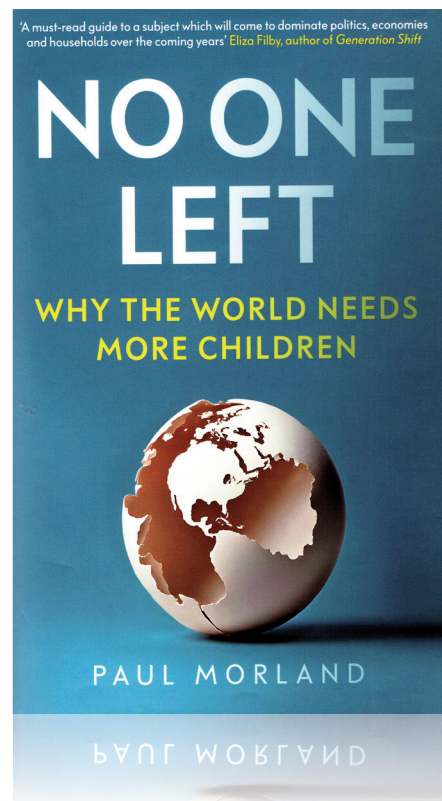
This is a reflection on two books published this year:

- Catherine Pakaluk, *Hannah's Children: The Women Quietly Defying the Birth Dearth* (Regnery, 2024)
- Paul Morland, *No One Left: Why the World Needs More Children* (Forum, 2024)

Over the last decade or two, we have become used to the fact that we are facing a demographic winter. For some time, this fact had to struggle to be heard, because of the entrenched idea that the problem was the opposite, a population explosion that would overwhelm the world's capacity to produce food. Although this theory was dominant in the 1970s and 1980s, and lingers to this day in some circles, it was always very dubious and for a long time now has been clearly false. The rate of the growth of the world population peaked in the early 1960s. The growth rate has continued to decline since then, and, as night follows day, it will fall below zero in the decades to come, and the world population will begin to shrink.

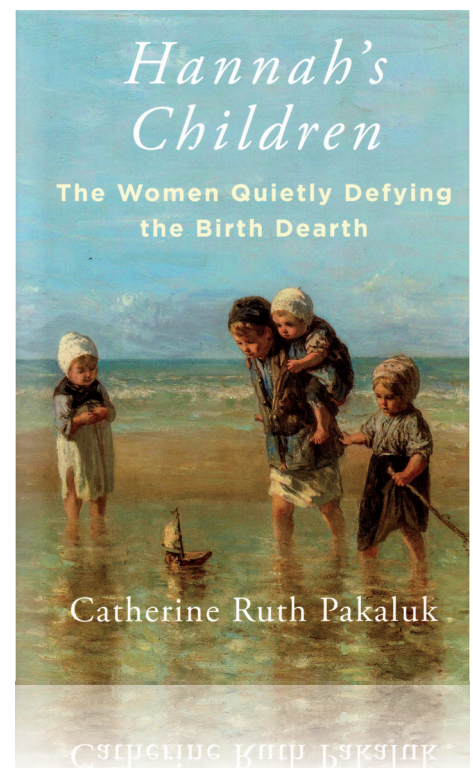
These two books give important insights into the relationship between economics, demography, and values. Paul Morland is a demographer without a particular religious axe to grind: he frequently reminds his readers of his support for contraception. Catherine Pakaluk, married to the Catholic philosopher Michael Pakaluk, is a Catholic mother of eight, and also a social scientist with a background in economics, who led a research project to interview fifty-five women in America who had college degrees and at least five children.

Paul Morland sets out the facts of the demographic implosion the world is facing: how severe it is, how difficult to reverse it will be, and the frightening consequences that can be expected from it. These consequences are already unfolding in Japan, a rich country where old people are increasingly dying alone and untended in their homes. Japan is unusual in having resisted mass immigration as a solution to falling numbers of young people joining the workforce, but, as Morland points out, the world as a whole cannot solve its demographic problem through immigration. When poorer countries arrive



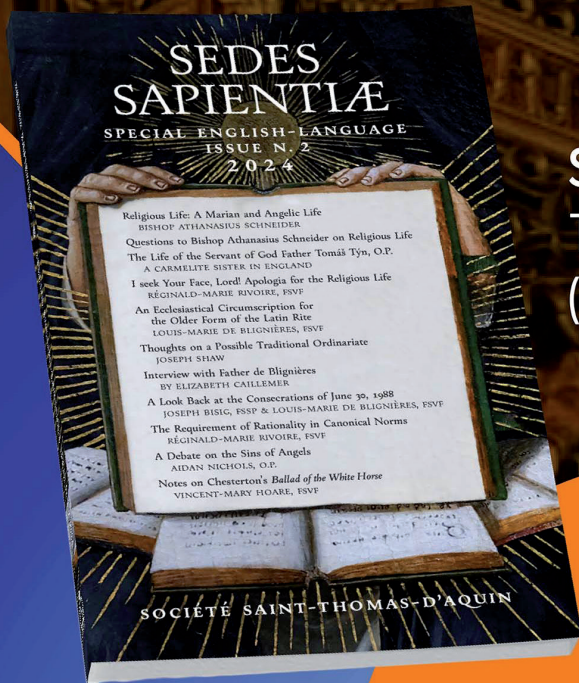
at the demographic stage that Japan is in today, the consequences for the care of the elderly will be ugly. Already, relatively poor nations such as Thailand and Jamaica have fertility rates well below replacement levels, and many other countries are heading in the same direction. The demographic winter will reach some countries before others, but it is not a problem only for the rich world.

Morland also questions the hopeful idea that new technology will come to the rescue. He points out that rapid technological development is a feature of countries with plenty of young people: young inventors eager to think in new ways, backed by young investors with a long time horizon and an appetite for risk. The number of Nobel prizes for science



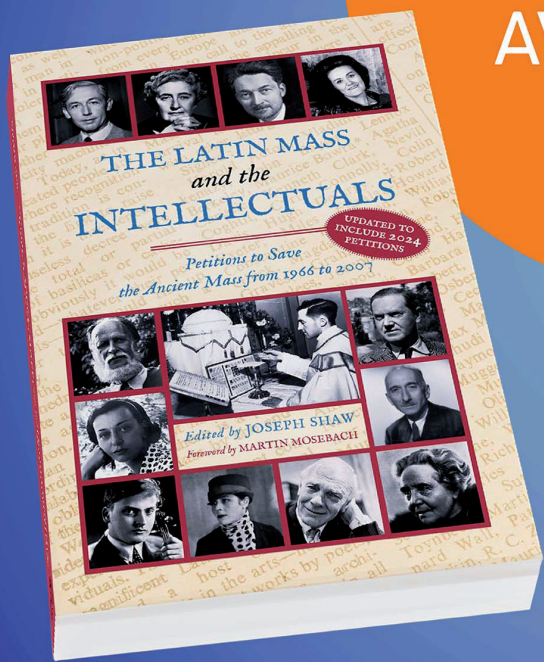
won by Japanese scientists has plummeted as its population has aged.

Morland also effectively dismisses concerns about the environment and finite resources. All the world's problems, from poverty to pollution, are best addressed by a young and vigorous population, not an aging population preoccupied with retirement planning, and quite unconcerned about what happens more than twenty years down the road. Many arguments about the problems caused by population growth ignore the key fact, as Morland puts it, that people are a resource. With more people, more things can be done, at lower cost, with greater innovation, more division of labour, and denser and therefore more efficient networks.

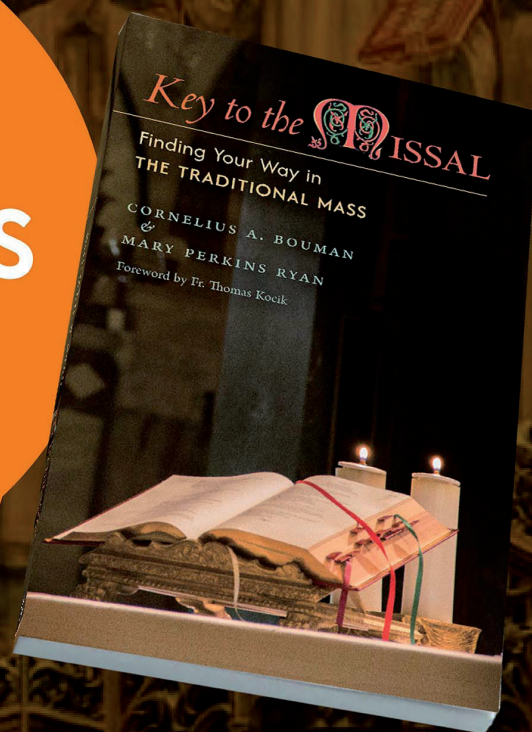


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The reason for the decline in fertility rates

Why have fertility rates fallen so far in the developed world, and why is the rest of the world following the same pattern? The consensus view of demographers is a simple and plausible one, which they express in terms of ‘intergenerational flows of wealth’.

Society has been transformed by three linked developments that took place in the West gradually, from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, and have been happening much more rapidly in the rest of the world since then.

First, the home and its immediate environs ceased to be the location of much paid work: handlooms gave way to factories, the proportion of people working on the land fell, and so on. This reduced the value of children’s work in and around the house, particularly work for the marketplace.

The second accompanied this: the rolling out of modern, state-sponsored, and often compulsory education, which demands so much of children’s time that they have much less chance to make themselves useful at home.

The third development was the advent of modern, state-sponsored, and often universal pensions that make financial provision for old people. Not only do the contributions of children become less necessary to the planning of a tolerable old age, but over time pensions transformed expectations about the relationships between

children and their aged parents.

With these developments, many of the costs of raising children remain the responsibility of parents: even if medical care and education are provided free at the point of delivery, which is by no means always the case across the world, children still need to be clothed, housed, and fed. Children consume their parents’ resources, but neither as young workers nor as mature providers for their parents’ old age do children promise anything like the direct return on parental investment that they once did. In sum, the age-old transfer of wealth from children to parents has been reversed.

As I have just said, in the context of the modern state, children no longer provide for their parents’ old age directly. They continue to do so indirectly, however, through their taxes. In order to pay for tomorrow’s pensioners, the state is not storing up contributions from today’s workers; it is relying on tax contributions from tomorrow’s workers.

This creates a monumental free-rider problem. Those who do not pay the costs associated with raising children get the same pension as those who do, but if children are not raised in sufficient numbers to join the workforce, the system will collapse. What is worse is that in general these vital contributions to the system are not even encouraged by a sense of civic duty, as usually happens in the context of a free-rider problem. People who leave a pile of unwashed dishes in a

shared kitchen are at least expected to feel guilty about it. Where having children is concerned, the message of many influential voices, particularly in the Anglosphere, is that it is those who are helping to sustain the system who should feel guilty, as people who have made a self-indulgent lifestyle choice, while those who are not doing so can bask in a sense of moral superiority for keeping their carbon footprint small.

Expressing it in this way makes it clearer why policy measures intended to encourage childrearing have been relatively ineffective. Under modern conditions, the financial penalty for having a large family is gigantic. Non-financial motives stimulate a few brave souls to have large families despite this, but trying to turn the financial incentives around would be a massive undertaking.

Values

As Morland points out, financial considerations are fortunately only part of the story. People are prepared to spend money on what they think is worthwhile, what is personally fulfilling, and what signals status and achievement. If having four or more children were seen as having value equivalent to flying first class or taking an annual skiing holiday in an exclusive Swiss resort, then couples would be willing to make a financial sacrifice to achieve it.

This is where **Catherine Pakaluk’s** research comes in. She wanted to discover what motivated her interviewees to have so many more children than most women graduates, since graduates on average have fewer children than non-graduates. The answer is that they valued having children.

These mothers come from a number of different religious traditions, and some are non-religious, but they articulate very eloquently the idea that children are worthy of choice. As she summarises, ‘the relevant obstacle to having a child, they said, was the cost of missing out on the other things you could have done with your time, your money, or your life’. Again: ‘the women we met told us that they valued childbearing – and children – more than the other things they could do with their time. More than their careers, their passions, and getting a good night’s sleep’. By contrast, a Chinese Weibo user

1. *The Economist*, 17th January 2023



quoted by *The Economist* declared: 'Getting married and having little chives can only harm my personal development and lower my quality of life.'¹ (Apparently, 'chives' is Chinese Internet slang for dupes.)

Demographers have long pointed to South Korea, Japan, and Italy as countries where traditional family structures seem to have exacerbated the birth dearth, on the basis that in these countries social expectations make it harder for women to combine motherhood with a career. They contrast the Scandinavian countries, whose subsidised child-care and other policies have resulted in a more robust birthrate, at least until recently. The Scandinavian model lowered the cost of having children, not so much in terms of money but in terms of what else you can do with your life.

The problem with this approach is that not only does it not do anything to heighten the perception of the value of having a child, it may actually depress it. What attitude to the value of the mother-child relationship, for example, will be fostered by a generation of mothers discouraged from spending time with their growing

children? In any case, the fertility party is over for the Nordic nations. Having enjoyed for some decades fertility rates not far below replacement levels, in the last fifteen years or so they have fallen by as much as half a child. What needs to be shifted above all is the value parents expect to realise from having children, not the convenience of having them.

We may illustrate the problem with cognitive behavioural therapy, the British state's favoured approach to rehabilitating criminals, on the rare occasions that funds can be found to attempt any kind of rehabilitation. The point of the therapy is to get the client to think rationally about how he could realistically achieve his goals. Well, my friend, drug dealing and petty crime haven't worked out very well for you, have they? Think about what you'd like to be doing in five years. No, not trying out another prison, but maybe having a decent place to live, a car, and a relationship. How could you get there? Have you considered getting a job? And so on.

Cognitive behavioural therapy is perfect for the secular modern state because it

is values-free, or rather, it works with the values the client has already got (though no doubt there are limits to this in practice). I don't doubt that it can get good results in some cases. But for many harder cases it is going to fall flat, because they are not motivated by the good things of life. Their time horizon has shrunk to the weekend, and their planning has devolved to the path of least resistance. What they need is not better means-to-ends reasoning; what they need is the ends. What they need is what is supplied to many people by religion: values.

This lack of motivation is associated with depression. Perhaps that Weibo user had all sorts of plans, to learn Elvish and find a cure for cancer, and wanted to remain child-free to devote all his energy to these things. Most people who say that they don't want children, however, do not have noble and demanding ambitions. They may just want to spend more time playing video games and taking recreational drugs. It is as if we have a whole culture that is suffering from depression.



Curing cultural depression

Successive British governments have displayed an extreme reluctance to doing anything to address this problem. Members of our political elite express this in terms of not wanting to tell people how many children they should have, because of a general principle of not wanting to tell people what to do.

On other matters, of course, the government is very willing to tell us what to do: not just to eat less salt and do more exercise, but to change our attitudes, about race or gender or sexual orientation. They have even adopted the language of cultural change as a policy goal. If young women think that a career in science is not for them, this is wrong and must be changed, by relentless propaganda backed up by all sort of resources, and enforced if necessary by quotas in university admissions and even jobs. If young women think that having three children is not for them, on the other hand, it would apparently infringe their freedom for schools even to present this as a positive option among others.

In vain does Paul Morland point out that outside the Anglosphere, pro-natalism is not exclusively the property of the political right: that President Mitterrand of France promoted childbirth, that Stalin banned abortion, that Latvia has adopted pro-family policies, and so on. The very idea of the family has become a sort of cultural kryptonite for English-speaking feminists.

Unfortunately, this brand of feminism has unique influence over worldwide cultural attitudes, and even in places where demographic realities have established a consensus among the political elite, whether in liberal Latvia or communist Cuba, they face an uphill struggle in presenting childrearing as a worthwhile use of large portions of one's life.

Conclusion

I want to end with a final illustration of the difference between a financial incentive and a cultural value, by reference to the Catholic Church's attitude toward virginity and celibacy. Everyone knows that the Church is against abortion and contraception, and if one wanted to explain in what sense the Church is pro-natalist, it would be natural to point to those things. However, outsiders might just as well imagine that the value attached to virginity and celibacy would pull in the opposite direction. After all, the Church traditionally holds celibacy as a higher calling than the married state.

Here is the odd thing, though. Somehow, in Catholic societies the married life and the life of a religious, though alternatives for young Catholics, don't exactly seem to be in competition. We do not see in different epochs or places one rising at the expense of the other: on the contrary, a healthy number of vocations to the priesthood and the religious life seems to go hand in hand with good numbers for

marriage and family formation. In 2011, during a brief moment of Pope Benedict-inspired optimism about ordination numbers, I did a research project on the statistics published over the decades in the Catholic Directory for England and Wales. On marriages, I found:


The number of marriages collapsed by a third between 1968 and 1978 ... and has continued a rapid decline since then, now standing at less than 10,000 a year, a quarter of the 1968 level in absolute terms.

The story is strikingly similar for ordinations to the priesthood: they fell by more than half between 1965 and 1977, and continued to decline thereafter, and at the time of writing were only a third of their peak.

Again, just as priests and religious abandoned their vocations in the 1970s and 1980s, so marriages have been ended by divorce. I'm not suggesting that one is the cause of the other, but that both are being driven by a common factor.

Catholics are invited to make the sacrifice of their independence and the opportunities it represents, for the much deeper satisfactions of the consecrated life or of family life: satisfactions that are possible only in the context of life-long commitment and sacrifice. When this spirit of commitment and sacrifice, accompanied by a trust in Providence, declines, it undermines everything for which a long-term commitment is necessary.

Long-term commitment is exactly the kind of thing that the depressive is incapable of making; it is the thing that cognitive behavioural therapy cannot teach. It is the response to value at the bottom of the religious impulse: a recognition of something outside of ourselves that inspires us to act, to realise or to preserve something of great value.

In the words of one of Catherine Pakaluk's interviewees: 'Nothing I ever do will be more purposeful, meaningful, and have more impact on a human than giving them a body and then nurturing them as a human. For me, it's the most worthwhile thing that I will do in this life.'² 

2. Catherine Pakaluk, *Hannah's Children: The Women Quietly Defying the Birth Dearth* (Regnery, 2024), 50

FIUV Position Paper: Evangelization and Western Culture

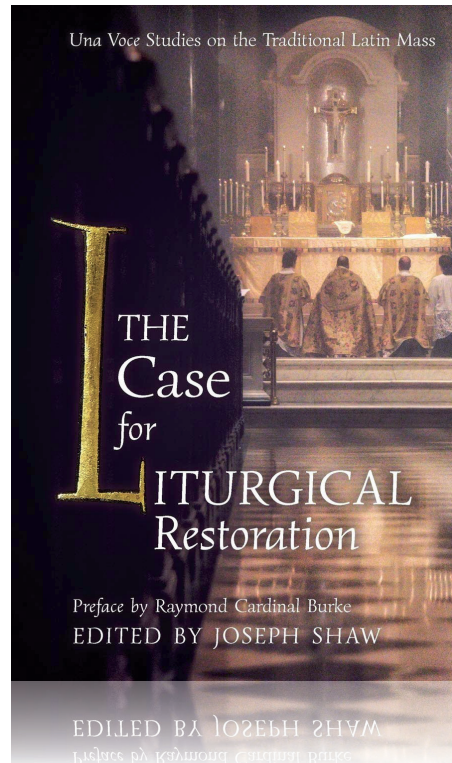
First published September 2012. Included in The Case for Liturgical Restoration: Una Voce Studies on the Traditional Latin Mass, ed. Joseph Shaw (Angelico Press, 2019).

The ancient Latin liturgical tradition is rooted, first, in the Western Mediterranean culture of antiquity, and then in the Western and Central European culture of the Middle Ages. It was influenced by, and in turn influenced, these cultures over many centuries, and was carried with the rest of European culture to the Americas, Oceania, and elsewhere. A key question in the liturgical debate of the 20th century, and since, has been whether what we may broadly call ‘Western’ culture (the culture of Latin Europe, and of populations of predominantly European culture in other continents) has changed in recent centuries in such a way that this liturgical tradition, in its familiar form, is no longer an effective tool for the sanctification of the individual and the propagation of the faith, particularly in the context of the need for a re-evangelization of this culture. As Pope Benedict XVI commented: ‘In our own time, [the Church’s mission] has become particularly challenged by an abandonment of the faith – a phenomenon progressively more manifest in societies and cultures which for centuries seemed to be permeated by the Gospel.’¹ Indeed, as Pope John Paul II remarked: ‘We are witnessing the emergence of a new culture, largely influenced by the mass media, whose content and character are often in conflict with the Gospel and the dignity of the human person.’²

The continuing evangelizing potential of the classical Roman rite in the West is the subject of this paper. The place of the Latin liturgical tradition in a number of other cultural contexts is addressed in other papers.

Problematic features of Western culture

Western culture has certainly changed, or decayed, in ways unfriendly to the ancient liturgy. The theologian Aidan Nichols, OP, cites sociological evidence suggesting that, for example, children raised without a clear understanding of hierarchy and ritual, and in a context of an atomized society, find it harder to comprehend the messages conveyed by social rituals such as the liturgy:



The slackening of group and grid whereby change in social patterns, especially in the family, brings about contempt for rite, the lack of strong social articulation in an increasingly amorphous, excessively personalized, individualized, and dehierarchized world: these processes, left to themselves, will tend to produce a ‘religion of effervescence’, incompatible with a sacramental faith.³

The Church has always respected pagan cultures, and in purifying them of elements incompatible with the natural law has enabled them to flourish. As the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has noted: ‘Although the Gospel is independent from any culture, it is capable of infusing all cultures, while never allowing itself to be subservient to them.’⁴ It might seem possible, therefore, for the Church to approach the task of re-evangelizing the West in a similarly open-minded fashion, on the basis of the culture now prevalent there.

The difficulty is that the cultural attitudes most at odds with the ancient liturgy are those that have derived, historically, from a rejection of Catholic teaching. The tension here is noted by Pope Paul VI:

Evangelization loses much of its force and effectiveness if it does not take into consideration the actual people to whom it is addressed, if it does not use their language, their signs and symbols, if it does not answer the questions they ask, and if it does not have an impact on their concrete life. But on the other hand, evangelization risks losing its power and disappearing altogether if one empties or adulterates its content under the pretext of translating it.⁵

To illustrate the problem, the Romantic tradition stresses the emotions and spontaneity, as indicative of sincerity and authenticity, as Pope Paul VI also observed: ‘It is often said nowadays that the present century thirsts for authenticity. Especially in regard to young people it is said that they have a horror of the artificial or false and that they are searching above all for truth and honesty.’⁶ This cultural attitude is often related to a rejection of ritual and formalism in the liturgy, and in religion generally. The emphasis on emotion and spontaneity, however, is historically related to the focus on personal religious experience and the rejection of reason in theology that are found in some strands of Protestantism. This itself is contrary to the teaching of the Church, which tells us that religious emotion is neither a necessary nor a sufficient indication of a state of grace, and that one may prove the existence of God and have

1. Benedict XVI, Apostolic Letter *Ubicumque et Semper* (2010), Preamble
2. John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* (2003), 9
3. Aidan Nichols, *Looking at the Liturgy* (Ignatius Press, 1996), 74
4. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization* (2007), 6
5. Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), 63
6. *Ibid.*, n. 76

sufficient grounds for accepting the claims of the Church, rationally. For this reason a person influenced by this aspect of modern Western culture may have to reject or substantially modify associated attitudes and habits of mind, if he is to embrace the faith.

Romanticism is, within modern Western culture, in permanent tension with the exaggerated rationalism of the Enlightenment. Rationalism raises problems for the ancient liturgy that are partly overlapping and partly contrasting with those just noted, since it rejects symbolism, ritual, and the sense of mystery as obscurantism. This, again, cannot be separated from an attitude of mind hostile to the faith itself, since it is hard to see how someone with this rationalist attitude could accept the ineffable mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation.

Joseph Ratzinger expresses the point with great clarity, when discussing the cultural significance of kneeling.

It may well be that kneeling is alien to modern culture – insofar as it is a culture, for this culture has turned away from the faith and no longer knows the One before whom kneeling is the right, indeed the intrinsically necessary gesture. The man who learns to believe learns also to kneel ...⁷

As Pope John Paul II remarked: 'the liturgy, though it must always be properly inculturated, must also be countercultural'.⁸

In light of this, the question we face is: how, in general, and specifically in the liturgy, can we best overcome prejudices unfriendly to the faith that are deeply rooted in modern Western culture, and promote and sustain the countercultural nature of the community of believers?

Advantages of the Traditional Liturgy

There are many aspects to a complete answer to this question, and indeed it has been addressed in the papal magisterium with increasing urgency in recent years, in the context of the 'new evangelization'. How might we see the ancient liturgy as a positive force in this effort, and not at all a handicap?

First, the *usus antiquior* can itself be the cure for the instinctive hostility to the faith. The texts, ceremonies, vestments, and musical accompaniment of the liturgy, the layout of the sanctuary and the movement of ministers and servers, the complexity of some, and

not other, ceremonies, the contrast between spoken, sung, and silent prayer, and the engagement of the faithful: all communicate the faith in subtle ways, even to those who, in Pope Paul VI's phrase describing 'modern man', are 'sated with talk'.⁹

In this way it can serve as a gentle re-education of the imagination and emotions: for, in Pope Benedict XVI's phrase, liturgy is a 'school of prayer'.¹⁰ Nichols also argues that the liturgy can be a force to restore the sense of the sacred, of hierarchy, and so on, that is generally lacking in modern society: 'by worship our Christian selves are forged'.¹¹

The sense of 'sacrality', noted as a characteristic of the *usus antiquior* by Pope Benedict XVI,¹² corresponds to the call, made by Pope John Paul II in the context of the new evangelization, for a renewed sense of mystery in the liturgy.¹³ Pope John Paul II applied this explicitly to the traditional Latin Mass:

The People of God need to see priests and deacons behave in a way that is full of reverence and dignity, in order to help them to penetrate invisible things without unnecessary words or explanations. In the Roman missal of Saint Pius V, as in several Eastern liturgies, there are very beautiful prayers through which the priest expresses the most profound sense of humility and reverence before the sacred mysteries: they reveal the very substance of the liturgy.¹⁴

Secondly, the ancient liturgy is characterized by an unflinching presentation of the truths of Faith: it avoids the danger of (in the words of Pope Benedict XVI) 'the repetition of phrases that might seem more accessible and more pleasant for the people', 'making the mystery a banality'.¹⁵ For example, the reality of human sin and our need for grace, which are perhaps the truths most energetically evaded but most urgently needed by modern Western culture, are presented insistently by the classical Roman rite, not only in its texts (such as the Collects of Lent), but also in its ceremonies, such as the priest's Confiteor before the servers'. It is a natural bulwark against the danger noted by Pope Benedict: 'A weakened sense of the meaning and importance of Christian worship can only lead to a weakened sense of the specific and essential vocation of the laity to imbue the temporal order with the spirit of the Gospel'.¹⁶

Thirdly, even while some aspects

of the traditional liturgy may provoke a negative reaction among those formed by Western culture, the beauty, particularly of the Church's musical patrimony, but also of the ceremonies, vestments, altar furnishings, and architecture, all used in their intended liturgical context, can often penetrate and soften the heart hardened against the faith. The role of art as an 'invitation to seek out the face of God' was emphasized by Pope John Paul II:

Nor should we overlook the positive contribution made by the wise use of the cultural treasures of the Church. These can be a special element in the rekindling of a humanism of Christian inspiration. When properly preserved and intelligently used, these living testimonies of the faith as professed down the ages can prove a useful resource for the new evangelization and for catechesis, and lead to a rediscovery of the sense of mystery ... Artistic beauty, as a sort of echo of the Spirit of God, is a symbol pointing to the mystery, an invitation to seek out the face of God made visible in Jesus of Nazareth.¹⁷

This beauty can gain a hearing for the content of the faith.

Fourthly, the *usus antiquior* is today the focal point of a milieu informed by traditional spiritual writers and supported by the religious orders committed to it, which constitutes a form of Catholic culture consciously countercultural vis-à-vis the dominant secular culture: in the phrase of Pope Paul VI, 'they make up a community which is evangelizing': 'Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses'.¹⁸

7. Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy* (Ignatius Press, 2000), 19

8. John Paul II, Ad Limina Address to Bishops of the Northwestern United States, 1998

9. Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 42

10. Ratzinger, 'Address to Catechists and Religion Teachers' (2002)

11. Nichols, *Looking at the Liturgy*, 84

12. Benedict XVI, *Letter to Bishops*

13. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa* (2003), 7

14. John Paul II, Address to the Plenary Session of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (2001)

15. Ratzinger, 'Address to Catechists and Religion Teachers'

16. Benedict XVI, Ad Limina Address to the Bishops of New York State (2011)

17. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, 60

18. Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 13 and 42

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The Mystical Meaning of the Ceremonies of the Mass

BY JEAN-JACQUES OLIER

Edited with an Introduction Abbé Claude Barthe • Translated by David J. Critchley

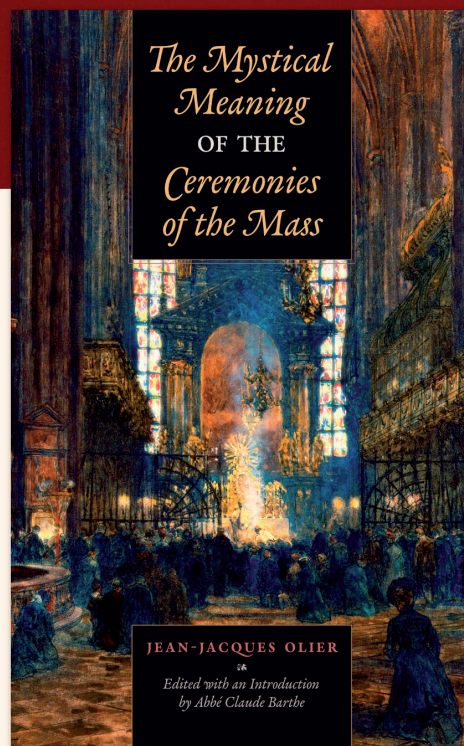
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The call to be witnesses to the faith even in the most hostile environment, made by Pope Benedict XVI and his immediate predecessors, is one that has been enthusiastically answered by traditional Catholics, who find themselves in possession of resources from the Catholic Tradition that have been neglected by many others in the Church.

Finally, the *usus antiquior* has value in embodying classical cultural forms. It is impossible to study the history of art or music without seeing the contribution of the Church and the faith, and this contribution is a living part of the ancient liturgy. Again, in the liturgy proper, the *usus antiquior* represents an ideal against which many Protestant and secular forms have reacted. A secular Westerner experiencing it may have the same kind of experience one has when seeing, for the first time, a nun wearing a traditional habit, which one had previously seen only in comic films or mocking cartoons. He will see at last what the fuss was about, and may well have to reassess judgments made on the basis of the parody.

This experience, of seeing clearly at last what lies at the root of Western culture, despite all the attempts to abuse and belittle it, is of profound importance.

As Pope John Paul II observed:

There can be no doubt that the Christian faith belongs, in a radical and decisive way, to the foundations of European culture. Christianity in fact has shaped Europe, impressing upon it certain basic values. Modern Europe itself, which has given the democratic ideal and human rights to the world, draws its values from its Christian heritage. More than a geographical area, Europe can be described as ‘a primarily cultural and historical concept, which denotes a reality born as a continent thanks also to the unifying force of Christianity, which has been capable of integrating peoples and cultures among themselves, and which is intimately linked to the whole of European culture.’¹⁹

The philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre, talking about ‘traditions of rational enquiry’, describes the experience of many who have discovered the classical Roman rite, whether as Catholics or not: ‘Upon encountering a coherent presentation of one particular tradition... such a person will often experience a shock of recognition: this

is not only, so such a person may say, what I now take to be true but in some measure what I have always taken to be true.’²⁰

Something like this shock is expressed by St Augustine in his *Confessions*:

Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you. In my unloveliness I plunged into the lovely things which you created. You were with me, but I was not with you. Created things kept me from you; yet if they had not been in you they would have not been at all. You called, you shouted, and you broke through my deafness. You flashed, you shone, and you dispelled my blindness. You breathed your fragrance on me; I drew in breath and now I pant for you. I have tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more. You touched me, and I burned for your peace.²¹ ⑥

19. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, n. 108

20. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*

Which Rationality? (Duckworth, 1988), 394

21. St Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk. 10, ch. 27, 38

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