

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

# Dowry

Winter 2023-24  
Issue N°60



***In this issue:***

**Editorial: Preparing for the Lord's Coming**

**The Catholic Doctrine of the Angels**

**Dr Jordan Peterson, Commonsensically Ours**

**Ivan Merz, A Youth Passionate For the Liturgy**

**On the Liturgy as the Highest Form of Art**

**Support our Apostolate**

**FSSP UK & Ireland Wall Calendar 2024**

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*The Holy Family, Westminster Cathedral, London*  
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**For your diaries:**

Annual residential weekend of vocation  
discernment for Catholic **men 18-30**, on  
16-18 February 2024 near Bedford.  
Info/bookings: [malleray@fssp.org](mailto:malleray@fssp.org)

Annual *Juventutem* summer weekend for  
young adults 18-35 at Ampleforth Abbey,  
2-4 August 2024. Info/bookings:  
[juventutemldn@gmail.com](mailto:juventutemldn@gmail.com)

# Editorial: Preparing for the Lord's Coming



As Advent begins, with Holy Church we *orient* our souls toward the coming of the Lord at Christmas. The Nativity is the rising of God made Man, Jesus Sun of justice, dispelling the shadows of sin. Tragically in Bethlehem this year, more than ever peace will be a grace to beg God for, rather than a blessing secured. The worldwide situation is not much happier. In Western countries, we Catholics do not shed our blood (yet or again) for fidelity to Christ and Church, but we see laws, institutions and the media tightening their grip around our liberties human and religious.

Amidst feelings of doom and against temptations of despair, we must give thanks for every opportunity offered us to practice our faith, for every holy Mass devoutly attended, for every absolution received, for every medal or scapular blessed; for any sound doctrine learnt from good books, LiveMass homilies, articles and conferences; and for every act of virtue performed in the service of God and neighbour. With one soul at a time we must share the joy of belonging to Christ in his Holy Church. One smile at a time, we must spread the assurance of our faith in God who created us, and communicate the strength of our hope in the Saviour who redeemed us.

Looking back, we surely can discern signs of growth, expressing God's response to our prayers. Since my assignment in England after priestly ordination in 2001, I have witnessed

a slow but steady improvement. In just over two decades, our Fraternity has been able to establish five houses across the UK and Ireland, serving seven Mass centres at least every Sunday. A number of priests from these Isles were ordained with us or joined us later on (our annual vocation discernment weekend will take place near Bedford on 16-18 February 2024). Many young people were strengthened in their faith or converted through the *Juventutem* activities, through our summer camps, pilgrimages and ongoing

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## *the seamless regularity of daily Masses and Confessions*

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ministry. On various occasions, entire families discovered Christ and embraced the faith. Fellow clergy from the dioceses or in religious orders took part in our retreats, welcomed our publications and honoured us with their friendship. In keeping with the determination of our founders, we have drawn inspiration from the Roman traditions of the Church under the successor of Peter and our bishops. Pope Francis' decree signed last year on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes happily confirmed the liturgical charism of our Fraternity.

We are grateful for the fruit granted by God wherever our priests have been given permission to minister. One such a place is St Mary's Shrine

in Warrington. On leaving St Mary's last October to establish our new house in the Northampton Diocese, I reflected that the seamless regularity of daily Masses and Confessions is perhaps the aspect of St Mary's life most to be given thanks for. Over the past eight years, there simply has not been a day without Holy Mass and Confessions. Eucharistic adoration and the choral recitation of the Divine Office also take place, as well as catechism, sick visits, monthly groups for gentlemen, ladies, and young adults; servers' training; choir practice; and the ongoing administration with the valued expertise and dedication of our lay staff. In a lesser extent, this takes pace as well in our other four houses across the UK and Ireland.

People entrust priests with their most secret concerns and joys. Therefore, priests are given a unique window into human suffering, and into the workings of divine grace. Like my fellow-priests surely, I am spurred and enthused when witnessing the courage, humility, faith and generosity of so many souls. We thank God for those unseen gifts, all the more valuable. With the shepherds and the wise men, we shall lay them at the feet of the newborn Saviour of the world this Christmas, along with all your intentions. O come, O come Emmanuel!

Bedford,  
3 December 2023.

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

# The Catholic Doctrine of the Angels

*Fr Armand de Malleray introduces a new book by Oxford theologian Fr John Saward*

A short enough book, *World Invisible, The Catholic Doctrine of the Angels* by Fr John Saward provides a timely synthesis of the perennial faith of Holy Church regarding God's incorporeal creatures.

The reader is led along a triple thread combining the theology of St

Thomas Aquinas, Dante's poetry, and paintings by Sandro Botticelli. Twentieth century Thomistic theologians are often referred to, such as Fr Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange OP, and Abbot Anscar Vonier OSB. The book uses precise words and concepts that will benefit averagely educated readers without discouraging beginners, however.

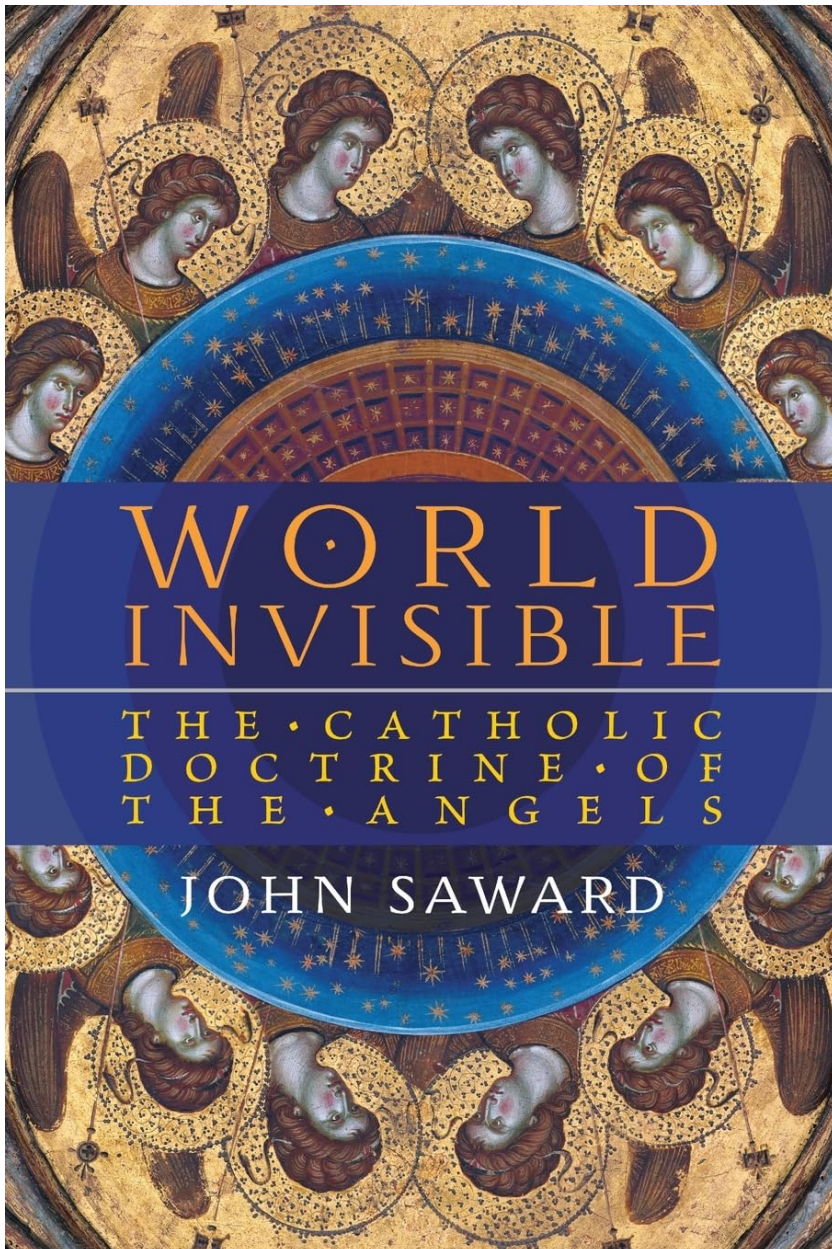
Abundant footnotes provide useful information for more advanced readers.

We learn about the creation of the angels and their subsequent acceptance or refusal of God's love. From their response followed the holy angels' elevation in God's grace forever secured, and the casting of the fallen angels into hell and upon the material world. The angelic nature is described with clarity, including its intuitive mode of intellection that excludes mistakes and repentance. The holy angels find fulfilment in the praise and service of God, as illustrated by the traditional liturgy of Holy Church aptly quoted by the author.

On the contrary, the fallen angels stubbornly deny God's sovereignty, which they attempt to undermine indirectly through tempting human beings. Thankfully, the reader is assured that demons cannot harm us humans beyond what God's providence may allow, whereas holy angels actively foster our salvation. Finally, their Queen is also our heavenly Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, true Mother of God.

This enlightening book will help many become more familiar with the angels, for safer protection against demons and for more fruitful collaboration with our God-appointed heavenly guardians. □

*Available on [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)  
and  
[angelicpress.com](https://www.angelicpress.com).*



# Dr Jordan Peterson, Commonsensically Ours

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By young adult Sophia Rumpus

A couple of weeks ago I attended Jordan Peterson's ARC Conference at the O2 Academy in London. For those who do not know Peterson, he is a clinical psychologist, author, and educator who rose to influential fame with his book *Twelve Rules for Life* which, as well as his other literature, has sold millions of copies worldwide. He has since appeared on mainstream media broadcasts and podcasts including the *Joe Rogan Show*, yet his own lectures and podcasts are streamed and attract large audiences, mainly for their honest approach to taking ownership and responsibility of one's life.

For the first five minutes of the conference, I was simply overwhelmed with the number of people that showed up that evening to hear him speak. He had attracted a crowd that was near to the capacity of the O2 Arena of 20,000. This was commented on by surprise guest of the evening, Ben Shapiro, who said that there is always such a camaraderie around Jordan's events. Throughout the conference, the audience applauded his more poignant points about marriage and children, about restoring familial



and community bonds in the age of globalism.

In the first part of the conference, Jordan spoke in general about living a good life and forming community, first by creating a family, and then lending your resources to your wider community. It was amazing to see how Catholic these values were, and even more amazing to see audience conviviality around these points.

He spoke about how in specifically Christian marriage, it's about

choosing someone who inspires you to be better, and who you inspire to be better themselves. It is the recognition that together, you are emitting a higher amount of good into the world than you do alone. By joining together in marriage and living for the good of the other, you are both striving for something far better than yourselves alone. He continued saying that in Christian marriage it is also the recognition of becoming responsible for something more important than you, in having children, as only in Christian marriage does every sexual act entail openness to life.

By being open to life and having children, you are building a familial community, established

by husband and wife together in the first place, that centres around inspiring virtue and morals. He went on to say that, once you have the resources, i.e. when your children are old enough to start taking care of themselves, you can then pour out those virtues from your family into the good of your community.

This led him on to the latter part of the conference with the introduction of his panellists, author and journalist Douglas Murray; founder of the think tank, *Copenhagen*

*Consensus* Bjorn Lomborg; Eastern Orthodox icon carver Jonathan Pageau; and finally the ARC organisation. The latter is defined on its website as follows:

*The Alliance for Responsible Citizenship (ARC) is an international community with a vision for a better world where every citizen can prosper, contribute and flourish.*<sup>i</sup>

The panel largely expressed the same set of beliefs about a post-Christian secular West where people struggle to find meaning: to reject resentment, victimhood and selfishness and be willing to suffer courageously in selfless truthful living, in pursuit of the common good, thereby finding meaning and flourishing.<sup>ii</sup>

The panel discussed globalism and its erosion of the layers of familial relationships. To erode the family is to erode the first love and care an individual receives that establishes true relationships, and ultimately, true identity. Without these important, loving and familial bonds at the centre of society, this sense of belonging and community is replaced with other communities, such as social networks and football teams – all comforts of globalism but none that are founded on virtue and unconditional love. Without this, and without God these communities can become false idols that do not offer the identity, belonging and fruits of the former. One nation under God is capable of striving for the ultimate good, otherwise you are left with a nation with an identity crisis and false gods. Not only did this resonate as leaning in to Christian and Catholic values, but their discussion on the globalist response to climate change in respect to the notion that humans



Picture left: [wikimedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivan_Merz), Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported, Gage Skidmore, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivan\\_Merz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivan_Merz), cropped.

Picture right: symbolically, a most traditional virtue goes unreported by the camera (of political correctness) - as long as it only applies to a beer brand?

© Malleray

are a ‘plague on the planet’ was counteracted by a poignant statement from Douglas Murray, affirming that ‘*humans are the point of the planet*’ which received much applause from the audience.

Although the majority of the panelists and perhaps the 20,000 members of the audience are presumably not practicing Catholics, we all share a universal yearning for truth and we, as Catholics, know that truth is found within God and anything that extends from God. Therefore it is not and should not be surprising to us how strong and unifying this counter-culture to a globalist agenda is. It is like we have been pushed so far away from God societally that the truth - when we hear it, is a refreshing oasis in a barren desert.

Dr Peterson’s wife has recently converted to Catholicism. Based on his own words and his familial influence – can we hold out hope for Dr Peterson himself? Whilst for now, God seems to be using his influence and his ‘unbiased’ reasoned approach as an avenue for many reluctant souls to take baby steps towards following God and adopting the Catholic lifestyle, with the many thousands of Catholics rooting for and praying for him, as well as the familial influence in his life, never say never. □

<sup>i</sup> 2023, *Arc Forum* [Arcforum.com](https://arcforum.com)

<sup>ii</sup> Simpson, George. (2023) Jordan Peterson ARC O2 review: *A call to truth and selflessness in the meaning crisis*

# Ivan Merz, A Youth Passionate For the Liturgy

*Seminarian Stjepan Androić, FSSP describes the life and work of his fellow-Croatian Blessed Ivan Merz (1896–1928)*

Philologist, teacher, literary critic, youth activist, lover of liturgy – Ivan Merz was all of these things and much more. Although born into a nominal Catholic family in Banja Luka (present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina), this young man would eventually become one of the most renowned saintly figures in his country's history.

Ivan Merz was a man of strong faith and wide culture. Apart from his deep piety, Merz was known throughout his life as a prolific writer and tireless Catholic activist. His writings on the topics ranging from the Catholic faith, the modern society, all the way to the psychology of the Christian soul remain highly relevant. His literary talent Merz developed early on in life, through passionate reading of classic literature and frequent journal writing. In fact, Merz's journal, which he began keeping at age 17, remains for us the main source of insight into his personal life and innermost ponderings. It can be broadly described as a testimony of one young Catholic man's struggle for sanctity and truth in a world that too often denies both.

Ivan Merz lived at a time when the *Zeitgeist* of *fin de siècle* had already begun to take its toll upon the modern world. Personally witnessing the horrors of World War I, Merz was led to a firm conviction that the true cause of man's misery lay with his abandonment of God and religion. His post-war years

were spent in Vienna and, later, Paris, where he studied literature. There he came into direct contact with the beauty of European culture but also the pessimism of many of his contemporaries. Unlike them, however, Merz saw light at the end of the tunnel: that light was the Catholic Church. Her teaching, Her sacraments, and – last but not least – Her liturgy became to him the source of hope for a man trapped by the modern spirit of despair.

Moved by the beauties of the Mass, Merz eventually chose to write his doctoral thesis on the influence of Catholic liturgy upon French writers. This thesis, originally published in French, shows us a man of remarkable critical talent and a palpable sense for the otherworldly. Merz argued that the beauty of Catholic liturgy was an instrumental element in shaping French writers' aesthetic sensibilities and hence fundamentally influenced the literary works they produced. Merz thus succeeded at proving once more the old truth that religion and culture are not two separate but intimately intertwined realities. Where religion flourishes, so does the culture and vice-versa. This conclusion remains highly pertinent even today. Far from being a mere 'add-on' to Christian life, our liturgy still is, ultimately, the primary way we offer worship to God, and therefore we ought to labour to have its own



beauty reflect the transcendent beauty of God.

Bl. Ivan Merz knew and lived this reality like few others. All the way up to his death, he frequented daily Masses at the Jesuit basilica of the Sacred Heart in Zagreb. He often spoke of the central place that the Sacrifice of the Mass has in the life of a Catholic: “The best way we can experience the strength of Christianity is to allow the life of Christ to touch us through the Gospel and liturgy.” Perhaps this thought more than any other offers advice for our current time: the start of our transformation in Christ begins there where heaven and earth touch in the very words of His Sacrifice: “This is my body”, “This is my blood”. □

# On the Liturgy as the Highest Form of Art

The following lines were written by Bl. Ivan Merz in 1920 after the Easter celebration in St Gabriel near Mödling (Austria). The liturgy of Holy Week witnessed there served as an impetus for the journal entry found below. Merz discusses the idea of liturgy as the highest form of art and postulates some principles on how art as a whole ought to be appraised, namely through a supernatural lens.

Just as theology is the highest among sciences, so is liturgy the highest among arts. It is perfectly objective and corresponds to Wagner's ideal of that one form of art under which all others should fall. Liturgy is the expression of the soul of the Church, and it does not seem that difficult to build a theory of art based on it. In it we see, as in a mirror, the life of Christ, not as one may look at it in historical terms, but as an objective viewer would: free from all bounds of time and space, looking at life from above, seeing the supernatural connexion between all events – say, as an angel does. Thus it becomes an objective mirror of life, catching all those things which a common man fails to notice. Liturgy has reached its apex: it is the most marvellous creation of art in the entire world and simultaneously the central work of art because it artistically presents the life of Christ, which stands at the centre of history. All other works of art must observe the same method that the Holy Ghost does in the



liturgy: the artist must, e.g., describe the motifs such as war, love, lust, murder, and other topics of pertinence in their supernatural context, and the better he does so,

the greater the work of art will be. Of course, this requires that the artist be saintly. Let us take the example of Christ's saying: "every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mt 5:28). For Christ is this word enough, for his is not to develop this idea in extensive detail but to plant the seed of all ideas which exist and will exist among mankind. This idea was further developed by Tolstoy in his *Kreutzer Sonata*, and very successfully in fact: he looks at human society objectively and it is reflected in a particular manner within his soul. The image that comes to life in this mirror is one of modern society, entangled as it is by the nets of its lust and sin. Tolstoy uses, therefore, the liturgical method. The saying from the Gospel is as a link in a chain to the story. This method may be applied to all works of art and, insofar as they are theocentric, they possess an artistic value. □

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[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC\\_NVY7jpDIhANiwjng1gN0w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_NVY7jpDIhANiwjng1gN0w)

Also, conferences & homilies on <https://vimeo.com/livemass>.

More of them on the Juventutem London Video page:

<https://www.facebook.com/londonjuventutem/videos>

Audio podcasts of clergy conferences by Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP:

<https://radioimmaculata.org/various-podcast/fssp-conferences>

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(Children at the FSSP Bedford chaplaincy delight in the visit of St Nicholas during Advent

– picture Malleray)

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