

Dowry

(N°25, Spring 2015)

“O Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and our most gracious Queen and Mother, look down in mercy upon England thy Dowry.” (Cardinal Wiseman)

*Dowry N°XXV “Silver” issue
Special EDUCATION*



(As a cover for this “Silver” issue of our quarterly magazine (N°25) focusing on education, we chose this drawing of the Annunciation of Archangel Gabriel to the Most Holy Virgin Mary. It is the work of a 6-year-old artist named Edith. She explained that Our Lady puts her hand against her chest as she – Edith – was taught to do when expecting a blessing during Holy Mass. Our Lady is standing against the end of her bed, upon which her book with the Holy Scriptures lies open. At her feet are a jar of water and a basket with a loaf of bread. The square frame in between her and Archangel Gabriel is actually a window showing the town of Nazareth, with one house on the left and four on the right, on either side of the main access to the town centre.

This is a very fitting reminder of the fact that the most intimate event of the Annunciation is not meant to remain private, but rather starts the process of the Redemption of the whole world, on behalf of which Mary gives herself to God. Our Lady looks deeply recollected, her features and general posture expressing humility and abandonment to the holy will of God. Archangel Gabriel kneels before the Woman who is about to become the Mother of his God, and thus his own Queen. He presents her with a beautiful lily, symbol of the virginal conception of Our Lord through the power of the Holy Ghost, depicted as a dove radiating light above Our Lady. May all children in our country be granted to learn, love and share their precious Catholic faith as little Edith did for us all through this drawing. Ave Maria!)

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Editorial: Education, from darkness to light

What is education about? Who can educate, and to what end? In this 25th issue of *Dowry*, we offer a series of articles on this most important question. It is obvious to all that education is in crisis. With the immense majority of pupils in Catholic schools stopping to practice their religion on reaching adolescence, no one can deny that Catholic education today is a failure. Secular education in State schools is no more successful, as it forms citizens who prove totally incapable of understanding natural law and of promoting it.

Let us look first at the etymology. To “e-ducate” literally means to “bring out”, or “lead forth”, from “ex-” “out” and “ducere” “to lead”. Thus, education is about someone assisting someone else in a transit from one place to another. Put simply: Johnny lies in his cradle and Mummy carries him to the kitchen. More deeply, the transit is from one condition to another; or from one stage of lesser development to a stage of greater development. Thus, children are educated to become adults. One assumes that the transit is for the better. Education must improve the person, not degrade or pervert him. Education should assist the person in his development, as called for by his human nature and by his divine vocation.

The process is sometimes painful, as Plato explains in his famous *Allegory of the Cavern*, where men are likened to prisoners facing the back of a cave, until a philosopher leads them towards the real world outside: “See what will naturally follow if the prisoners are released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his head round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which, in his former state, he had seen the shadows” (cf *The Republic*, Book VII).

We don’t need to know whether St Paul had read Plato, when writing to the Colossians that God: “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins” (1:13-14). Rather, we can admire that divine Providence allowed the natural wisdom of Plato, a pagan, to forebode four centuries in advance the rising of Christ, the true Sun of Justice. Our Blessed Lord Jesus is the true Educator of mankind. He is the divine Teacher Who leads the human race out of sinfulness towards fulfilment, that is, to the contemplation of the Most Holy Trinity. In its deepest meaning, education is imitation of Christ the Truth Incarnate, pedagogically unbinding souls from the snares of the devil, the “Father of lies” (John 8:44), and introducing them to the Kingdom of the “Father of lights” (James 1:17).

After Christ their Model, educators must know that their mission may expose them to persecution from the evil one, who hates to see his prey snatched from his claws. In Plato’s allegory, the wise man is put to death by those who prefer darkness – a reference to the sentencing of Plato’s master, Socrates, accused by the State authorities of corrupting youth through his impiety and his undemocratic views. It can be noted that, similarly, at Pilate’s tribunal, the Jews charged Christ with perverting the people and with threatening the political *status quo*: “And they began to accuse him, saying: We have found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he is Christ the king”

(Luke 23:2). More than once in human history, the State has prosecuted genuine educators for undermining the official creed and threatening civil order – when in reality that “creed” was itself a perversion of the natural law, and that civil “order” a tyrannical oppression of consciences.

Such violence can be inflicted in the name of religion, when even basic education is feared as an obstacle to despotic control over the population. This was tragically manifested 11 months ago when the Muslim terrorist group Boko Haram abducted hundreds of schoolgirls in Nigeria. Their leader said that “the girls should not have been in school and instead should have been married, since girls as young as nine are suitable for marriage”. Similarly in Pakistan, in 2012, the Taliban shot in the head the teenage girl, Malala Yousafzai, in retaliation for her activism for children’s rights to education.

Referring to God to justify such crimes is unacceptable. But worse violence has been inflicted against educators and children in the name of the State. In 1937, within 5 days, Pope Pius XI issued two encyclicals condemning the twin totalitarian regimes of National Socialism and of Communism. On 14 March, *Mit Brennender Sorge* warned German parents thus: “an education, hostile to Christ, is to profane the temple of the child’s soul consecrated by baptism, and extinguish the

eternal light of the faith in Christ for the sake of counterfeit light alien to the Cross. [...] Yet do not forget this: none can free you from the responsibility God has placed on you over your children. None of your oppressors, who pretend to relieve you of your duties can answer for you to the eternal Judge, when he will ask: “Where are those I confided to you?” May every one of you be

able to answer: “Of them whom thou hast given me, I have not lost any one” (John 18:9)”. On 19 March, *Divini Redemptoris* denounced the fact that in USSR: “the right of education is denied to parents, for it is conceived as the exclusive prerogative of the community, in whose name and by whose mandate alone parents may exercise this right”.

In 2015, many Western governments profess “values” which are as disconnected from natural and religious laws as the two regimes denounced by Pope Pius XI. In fact, they implement “a dictatorship of relativism that does not recognize anything as definitive and whose ultimate standard consists solely of one’s own ego and desires. We, however, have a different goal: the Son of God, the true man. He is the measure of true humanism” (Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *Homily before the 2005 Conclave*).

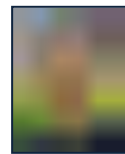
Dear Friends, this provides a rather bleak prospect for all of us involved as parents, teachers or clergy in the beautiful mission of education in contemporary Britain! But since God has endowed mankind with the dignity of procreation, there is no doubt that He wants all of us adults to cooperate in raising His children as saints through genuine Catholic education. Arduousness must not deter us, if we trust in His grace, in the long experience of His Church and in the intercession of His witnesses: “The expense is reckoned, the enterprise is begun; it is of God; it cannot be withstood.”

I wish you a grace-filled Lent and Easter.

Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP

Superior of the English FSSP Apostolate,

St John Fisher House, Reading, 12 March 2015 □



*God hath translated us
into the kingdom of
the Son of His love.*

Malleray



Virgin and Child, Claus de Werve, French (Burgundy), ca. 1415-1417, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Plainly assessing Catholic education in England

A couple of young Catholic parents offer their reflexions on education: choices, compromises and some green shoots

“Give me the child, and I will mould the man”, said St. Francis Xavier. If that is the case, then parents of young children have some urgent questions to ask themselves. To whom are we giving our children? What sort of men will be returned to us? What can we do about it? And should we even be using such a misogynistic, gender-specific quotation?

That last question wasn't entirely serious, but the great Jesuit's words have a clarity and sense of purpose that is completely at odds with the Orwellian jargon that pervades today's educational establishment. Even allowing for the somewhat pessimistic view of the modern world to which Catholics – particularly those of a traditional bent – are prone, the decline in educational institutions has been catastrophic, and there is no prospect of an improvement in the foreseeable future. As a result, Catholic parents of young children are presented with a narrow set of choices when deciding how, and where, to educate their children. All of these choices involve significant compromises. Below is a basic overview of these choices (based mainly on personal experience, and only taking into account the UK) and a plan to retake some of the lost ground.

In the state sector, Catholic schools are subject to the increasingly intolerant rules and regulations that the government and their various agencies impose. Most recently, the 'Trojan Horse' scandal (whereby extremist Islamist views were allowed to flourish in certain Muslim schools) has given government inspectors license to impose their version of 'British values' in all faith schools. A

quick glance at the news shows us that the government's version of 'British values' is not something that we can feel comfortable tolerating. Even worse, Catholic schools are often more than happy to dilute the Faith in search of more funding or a better OFSTED rating. In practice, this means that pupils at Catholic state schools are increasingly exposed to exactly the ideas from which parents are trying to shield their children – and under the guise of a "Catholic education". Indeed, some parents prefer to send their children to non-Catholic schools, so that they can draw the line between secular education at school, and religious education at home.

Independent Catholic schools are more autonomous and so can avoid the worst of the state's zeal, but they must make a different set of compromises. There is demand from around the world for a British education, and so schools perceive a need to offer every possible bell and whistle to their 'product'. Consequently, independent Catholic schools have raised fees to eye watering levels – well beyond the reach of a typical family, let alone a typical Catholic family! And the need to find parents to pay these fees has driven Catholic schools to make other compromises – only one Catholic boys' boarding school is still single sex, and many actively encourage applications from non-Catholics. So, the makeup of today's independent Catholic school is significantly different from twenty or thirty years ago; a much wealthier set of friends for the child, and a diluted Catholic identity. As for St. Michaels', the SSPX

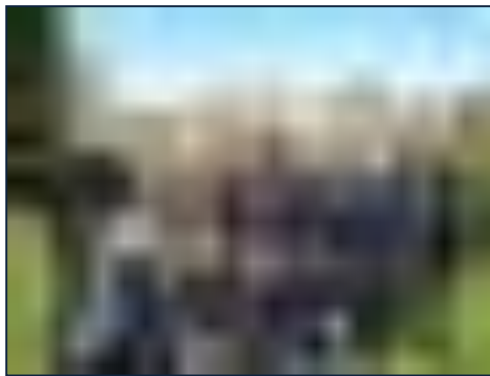
school: despite all its undoubted merits, parents must consider the compromise regarding the SSPX's canonical status.

The Free School initiative initially gave rise to a great deal of hope for Catholic education. The ability for a group of parents to set up a school, funded by the state but bypassing the local authority, seems ideal. However, all that glitters is not gold. Only 50% of pupils can be required to be of a certain religion and, since these schools are funded by the state, they need to promote the infamous "British Values". Indeed, the education authorities seem particularly keen to target Free Schools – Grindon Hall and the Durham Free School (two Christian free schools) have in the last month effectively been shut down due to a lack of 'understanding' and 'diversity'.

With the choices above, it's no surprise that so many families choose to home school. But, heroic as those parents are, home schooling cannot be the only way; there is too rich a history of Catholic education in this country to simply abandon schools to their fate.

The solution must therefore be to start a new school. That is easy to write, less easy to do! But the situation outlined above

gives some starting points: a) It must be fee paying; that doesn't guarantee complete insulation from the state's interference, but it gives the school the greatest chance of the autonomy it needs. b) The fees, however, must be reasonable, so the school can be as accessible as possible. Initially, at least, this precludes a boarding school, where the costs are going to be significantly higher. c) It should start with a primary school. Parents are more likely to take 'a risk' at primary level, and classes can be very small; they will fill up as the school grows and perhaps eventually feed through to a secondary school.



(Pupils from FSSP boarding school visit the Reading Oratory School.)

Some brave groups of parents have shown us a way forward in the past few years, adopting exactly this strategy and starting independent day schools with a strong Catholic identity, in and around London. So we know this is possible; but parents need an option outside London! For this, the following three are needed: a) A small group of people who are willing to help spearhead this project. They don't need to be teachers, although the head teacher is crucial to the school's success. Those who don't teach can be part of an educational trust for fundraising and governance, where a wide range of expertise will be needed - from property, to law, to accounting and finance. b) A building. As well as a venue for classes, this will provide a geographic focal point for the initiative, and bring the project out of the realms of the theoretical. Bedfordshire, as an affordable county with good road and rail links to London, is a prime candidate for consideration. There may also be a particular location already available there. c) A religious organisation, to give spiritual direction to the project, administer the sacraments, and provide institutional strength to the initiative.

We have put this project under the patronage of St Joseph. If anyone reading this is interested in such a school, or knows someone who might, then please email:

stjosepheducation@gmail.com. □

St Anne teaching the Virgin Mary to read



Author: Nottingham workshop

England, 15th century

Polychrome alabaster

91 x 35 x 14 cm

Lisbon Museum of Ancient Art

Mediaeval English alabaster.

Mass produced by the workshops of the Midlands, a region that had Nottingham at its centre, these images were imported in significant quantities, in a cultural context that saw Portugal drawing closer to England, a tendency that was rendered official by the marriage between Dom João I and Philippa of Lancaster in 1387.

One of the most familiar images of St. Anne is as Mary's teacher. In spite of writings such as the Golden Legend and the tradition based on them, i.e., that Mary spent the years between age 3 and puberty in the temple, there is an equally strong tradition that she spent those years at home, under the instruction of her mother.

From at least the 14th century, artists have shown St. Anne as the teacher of her daughter. That it should be thought necessary that Mary should be literate is interesting in itself. The Gospel of Luke tells us that Jesus read from the Book of Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-17). Therefore, it is apparently assumed that Mary can read also. Indeed, she is frequently pictured as teaching the Infant Jesus to read in many works of medieval arts, such as a lovely early 15th-century statue in the Metropolitan Museum collection. If Mary can read, then it is a logical assumption that she was taught to read by her mother, St. Anne.

So far, the earliest images of St. Anne as teacher appear to come from 14th-century England. Due to the destruction of most English religious art during the Reformation and the later Republican period, the surviving images are few and frequently in bad shape. However, a number of wall paintings have emerged from the layers of whitewash and plaster that covered them and there are occasional survivals elsewhere. For example, the Cluny Museum in Paris owns a painted wooden altar frontal from the parish church from Thetford in Suffolk that is dated to about 1335.

Through the medium of illuminated manuscripts, the image of St. Anne as teacher spread to the Continent. It is found in manuscripts from France and Spain and from the Low Countries, as well as in sculpture.

[<http://imaginemdei.blogspot.co.uk/>]

Freedom and education in Europe

Anne Coffinier has been living in the UK for several years with her husband, the French Consul in Edinburgh, and their children. A committed Catholic and a high ranking civil servant and diplomat in her own right, Anne Coffinier chose to put her career on hold and invest her energy in helping foster reliable education for all. She started and still runs Fondation pour l'Ecole, a private institutional umbrella promoting independent schools. In 2013, 50 000 French pupils attended schools linked with Fondation pour l'Ecole. This represents 601 schools, offering education to pupils of 5 to 18 years of age. Anne Coffinier regularly speaks at international conferences and meets with government representatives. Website: <http://www.fondationpourlecole.org/>.

Below is a series of excerpts from the conference she gave on 20th September 2014 in Madrid, as part of an international seminar on "Christian Faith and the Future of Europe". Space prevented us from quoting the full text, which we encourage you to read here: http://www.catholicdays.eu/images/speeches/Anne_Coffinier.pdf. Emphasis ours.

What are the limits of educational freedom?

Should Scientologists have the right to open private schools? Should Muslims have the right to establish schools where Sharia law is taught? Should secular schools have the right to inflict a Godless ideology on children? Is it not an act of violation to neglect a child's spiritual needs, and a form of bullying to challenge a child's beliefs at such a tender age?

[...]

It is through little responsibilities at a school level that future citizens learn to be reliable and responsible for the common good at a national level.

From a practical point of view it is worth recalling the words of Condorcet, a philosopher of the French Revolution: State schools objectively need independent schools because these, by their very existence, promote competition and therefore quality.

[...]

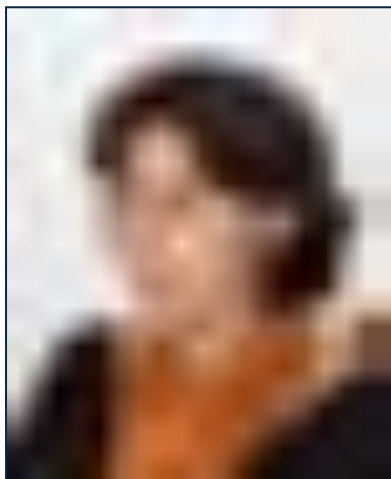
The Catholic Church has a mandatory educational mission. She cannot choose not to educate. Jesus Christ himself stressed that his disciples had an educational mission with regard to all nations.

[...]

Governments are using their regulatory power and the State curricula to promote new 'rights' like abortion, non-scientifically proven theories and political correctness.

[...]

In no circumstances should the Church act as a proxy or tool for the State educational system. She is not a public service provider. She invented the University, and gave birth to modern science. She inspired the greatest artists who have ever lived. The first State high schools were modelled on the schools of the Jesuits, and the first State primary schools in France were inspired by the schools of the Christian Brothers.



The Church has to maintain her own educational path. And this will benefit even the State's nondenominational schools. Canon Law on this is clear:

Can 794-1 The Church has in a special way the duty and the right of educating, for it has a divine mission of helping all to arrive at the fullness of Christian life.

-2 Pastors of souls have the duty of making all possible arrangements so that all the faithful may avail themselves of a Catholic education.

[...]

While the Church has a long and illustrious tradition of educating Muslims, Muslims themselves have almost no teaching tradition, so the

Church should not fear competition from Muslim schools. Unfortunately, because of an overriding atmosphere of political correctness, this is not discussed openly, and so the issue of public funding of schools of choice is just swept under the carpet.

[...]

Nevertheless, after the Second World War, Europeans showed the same concern as the Church for the need to protect children and families from anti-religious persecution by the State. The first European Declarations bear the mark of the dreadful experience of the National Socialist or Communist persecutions of religious families and schools. We knew that expelling God from schools was in no way neutral or harmless. For the State to deprive children of God in their fundamental intellectual and human formation is a violation against children. The State was cutting them off from their families, and from their historical and cultural roots, thereby deliberately creating **spiritual orphans**. The first post-war European and international declarations tried to prevent this injustice ever happening again and families saw their right to a plurality of educational options acknowledged.

[...]

This is a contradiction because, according to the Convention, in a democracy the variety of education on offer has to be pluralistic (from a religious and pedagogical point of view). **This does not mean that the education itself has to be pluralistic.** In requiring that the environment and the content had to be pluralistic, the second section of the Court concluded that the crucifix had to be removed [from Italian schools]. Paradoxically, this conception of plurality leads to the monopoly of secularism. The reasoning seems to be the following: democracy means educational pluralism, which means religious



neutrality and therefore no religious signs in State schools. In the minds of the judges, true pluralism can only flourish in a relativist environment and a secular and public framework.

[...]

From this new perspective, the resolution of the Council of Europe dares to give a new definition of the guardianship of parents. Parents are free to give their children an education consistent with their religious and philosophical beliefs – “**in as much as** they are compatible with the fundamental values of the Council of Europe”. This resolution gives the power to the judges to deem whether the parents’ values are agreeable with those of the Council of Europe. This will undoubtedly lead to new case law. Will tomorrow’s parents continue to be able to give their children an education compatible with Catholic faith and morals? Or will it be assessed as a too ‘intolerant’ and discriminatory education to be barred by the State?

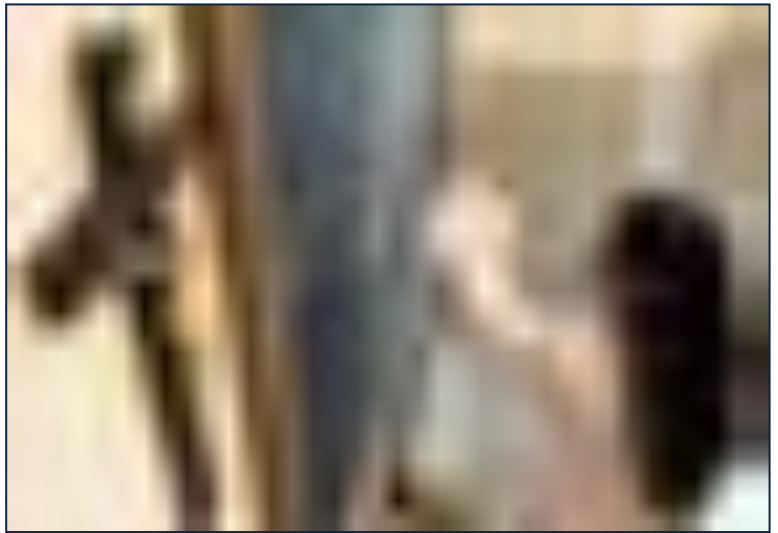
That is the question.

[...]

More generally, one feels in the resolution of the Council of Europe, a suspicion towards private schools; much more is required from them than from public schools. Why do the recommendations of quality control in the resolution target the private schools and not the public ones? Regarding the poor quality of State schools (in France for instance) wouldn’t such recommendations be superfluous? Why does the resolution not incite member States to put in place an independent quality control body to prevent the evaluation unit being both player and referee? Why should the suspicion on curricula and methods target only private schools? The same question arises about the physical and psychological integrity of children as well as the communitarian segregation. Have children never been abused in State schools? This suspicion against the values of civil society in relation to education prevails in a number of countries: there have been, for example, recent **judicial decisions against home educators** in Germany and Ireland.

[...]

The crucifix case [a European ruling against crucifixes in Italian schools] revealed to the world the danger of the prevailing ideological tendencies held by these judges. It aroused strong opposition and raised a strong awareness of the problem. Ten countries asked to step in as “*amici curiae*” along with Italy. Eleven countries declared publically that this decision was not acceptable. Several countries stated that the Christian faith was the root of European identity and values,



and that there was no consensus on the religious neutrality of education. This issue was an opportunity to reiterate that secularism is not a general principle agreed upon in the European Convention. **The neutrality of a State with regard to education should not be assimilated to secularism, which is a political position that is anything but neutral.**

[...]

One idea which is widespread is that a school should ensure equal opportunities for all. This idea began to spread only around ten years ago but it is now everywhere. It has superseded other concepts such as meritocracy and the concept inherited from the parable of the Talents in the Bible that one should develop one’s full potential. The idea of the performance of a school system is totally absent from universal or European instruments. Member States do not recognise any obligation to allow students to excel, that is to say to develop all their capacities. This creates a huge waste of competencies at school and in society.

[...]

Another new characteristic which prevails in Europe is the devaluation of the traditional mission of the school, which is to transmit knowledge. This mission is often overlooked in favour of the importance of transmitting values or shaping behaviours. This is the case in the resolution of the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe which stresses “the transmission of values that favour the protection and promotion of the fundamental rights, the democratic citizenship and social cohesion.” What is stressed are political and economic objectives. The importance of transmitting fundamental knowledge, the formation of reasoning, on culture besides its political dimension, is neglected.

[...]

Our school system is becoming intellectually weaker and weaker and more moralising and intrusive in the conscience of students than it has ever been. The stress on a moralising approach (which requires that students conform to the values of the Council of Europe), united with a weaker formation of the mind, leads to an approach more akin to the conditioning of minds than to anything else. □



(Pictures anticlockwise, 2-pages:

Mrs Anne Coffinier. Judges at the European Court of Human Rights. The Prime Minister’s wife Samantha Cameron reads to children as part of a *Save The Children* event. Crucifix in a classroom.)

Value of Classics in education today

By Seminarian Seth, FSSP. Before entering our international seminary in Nebraska five years ago, Seth completed a doctorate in Classics in Oxford. He discusses for Dowry the wisdom of the Ancients, as experienced in his formation.

Before entering seminary, I did a degree in Latin and Greek language and literature. Throughout my studies, people would constantly ask me, ‘What are you going to do with that?’ The incredulous look on their faces indicated they had already decided the answer to the question: learning dead languages was a complete waste of time and money.

I would always bristle somewhat at the suggestion that the point of a university education is exclusively practical, as if the only reason for learning anything was to put it to use in the workplace. All the same, when I finally embarked on formation for the priesthood at a traditional seminary, I took a certain mischievous pride in pointing out that I would be using my Latin and Greek every day throughout my ‘career’!

Readers will hardly be surprised to hear that Latin has a prominent place at the FSSP seminaries. First-year seminarians, who otherwise have relatively few academic demands since the emphasis is more on building good habits of prayer and community life, are nonetheless put through their paces with intense Latin classes. Relentless drills in grammar and vocabulary in the earlier stages prepare them for later reading original Latin texts, whether from the Vulgate Bible or St Thomas Aquinas. Once students have reached a high level of competence, they may attend the ‘Latin seminar’ in which we read more challenging works and practise translating from English to Latin. For the braver souls, there are even opportunities for Latin conversation over Saturday lunch or recreational walks.

This may seem like a lot, and no doubt for the less linguistically-minded seminarians, it can be a cross to bear. But the importance of Latin in our formation is hardly to be underestimated. At the very minimum, a cleric must have a basic grasp of the Missal and Divine Office which he prays daily. On the other hand, a cleric versed in Latin will find he has access to the Church’s immensely rich heritage of writings that can only be understood to their fullest sense in the original language.

In fact, so important is Latin for seminarians that in the Apostolic Constitution, *Veterum Sapientia* (‘the wisdom of the ancients’, February 22, 1962) Pope St John XXIII mandated that ‘no one is to be admitted to the study of philosophy or theology except he be thoroughly grounded in this language and capable of using it’ (¶3). Indeed, theology is supposed to be taught in Latin and using Latin textbooks. Greek, too, is required at seminaries (at Denton, seminarians must take at least one year of Greek, with more available).

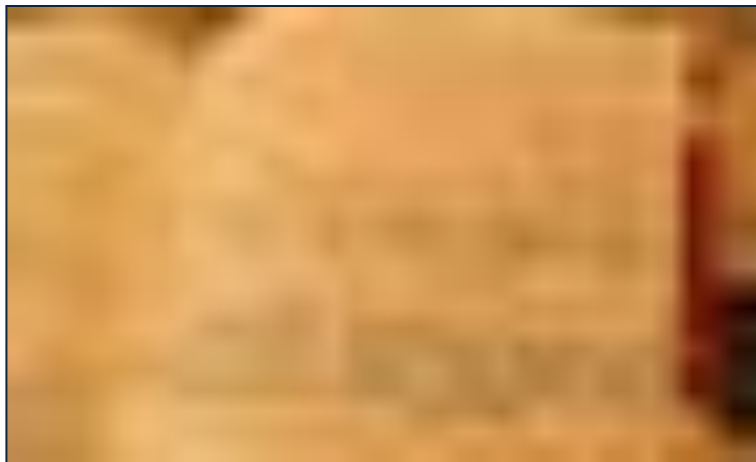
This document points to the broader ‘formative and educational value’ of the classics in education besides the practical. St John XXIII noted:

It is a most effective training for the pliant minds of youth. It exercises, matures and perfects the principal faculties of mind and spirit. It sharpens the wits and gives keenness of judgment. It helps the young mind to grasp things accurately and develop a true sense of values. It is also a means for teaching highly intelligent thought and speech (*Veterum Sapientia* ¶2).

In the document’s accompanying instruction, the pope included an extensive syllabus of ancient texts with which the seminarian should be familiar in the original language, and extended this recommendation to other institutions of Catholic education. For an example of the sort of thing that was envisioned, one might look at the traditional Jesuit formation programme, which included two years of classics before any philosophy or theology (see, for instance, the entertaining account of Fr McGloin, SJ, *I’ll Die Laughing*, Bruce Publishing, Milwaukee, 1955).

Perhaps today such a syllabus will seem to many more like a

pious aspiration than a genuine possibility. Yet what it does is emphasise the intrinsic value not only of studying the languages but also of reading even non Christian literature in the original Latin and Greek. Such studies are deemed to be formative in themselves, and not only for those training for the sacred priesthood, but indeed in a secular education as well. In what follows, I will briefly sketch out what I see as



the main educational benefits of classics.

Firstly, everyone admits that learning ancient languages helps us to understand and improve the use of our native language. Grammar is very seldom, if at all, taught in schools today, with the result that anyone entering higher education or even the workplace must often undergo a certain remedial training if they are to write at the required standard. But it is much easier, and certainly far more enjoyable, to understand our own grammar through studying that of a different language; and if this is true of studying any language, it is all the more true of languages like Latin or Greek which place a high demand on the comprehension of morphology and syntax. In addition, there is great benefit (and fascination) in tracing the roots of modern languages. One’s native vocabulary increases manifold through studying classical languages: I can remember as a sixteen-year-old taking great delight in using all kinds of long and (to me) impressive words such as ‘sesquipedalian’ or ‘polyptoton’ that I would never have discovered had I not been exposed to Latin and Greek.

Secondly, as the passage from *Veterum Sapientia* quoted above indicates, the study of these languages ‘sharpens the mind’. Reading a Latin or Greek sentence can be a little like puzzle-solving, requiring and developing mental organisation. It is for this reason that many employers are in fact very keen to have

classicists in their company, despite the perceived 'irrelevance' of the subject. For example, in recent years GCHQ has had an entry-scheme specifically for classics graduates.

Thirdly, an ability to read texts in Latin and Greek opens up an unparalleled cultural heritage which can only be truly appreciated in the languages in which they were written. I have already mentioned the ecclesiastical writings that belong to the Church's incomparable tradition. But Homer, Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Vergil, Horace (to but a few)... these writers are the bedrock of our civilisation, whose great works were seminal for centuries of literary achievements since.

Incidentally, since the Church Fathers were themselves immersed in these pagan writers, there is an indirect sense in which we can claim them as part of our Christian background too. When St Jerome and St Augustine trade blows in their letters, for example, they do so via subtle allusions to writers like Vergil that the modern reader can easily miss. The Fathers, it is true, often wrestled with how much the Christian ought to use pagan literature and philosophy, but a popular image was that of the Israelites taking the precious jewellery from the Egyptians: sourcing the best to be at the service of the holy. They often saw these writings and the mythologies they enshrined as a sort of preparation for the gentiles before the coming of Christ; in the same way, the pagan classics can serve as a stepping stone for the Christian on his way to the true wisdom of the Gospel.

As St John the XXIII writes at the beginning of *Veterum Sapientia*:

The wisdom of the ancient world, enshrined in Greek and Roman literature, and the truly memorable teaching of ancient peoples, served, surely, to herald the dawn of the Gospel which God's Son, "the judge and teacher of grace and truth, the light and guide of the human race," proclaimed on earth. Such was the view of the Church Fathers and Doctors. In these outstanding literary monuments of antiquity, they recognized man's spiritual preparation for the supernatural riches which Jesus Christ communicated to mankind "to give history its fulfilment." Thus the inauguration of Christianity did not mean the obliteration of man's past achievements. Nothing was lost that was in any way true, just, noble and beautiful (§1).

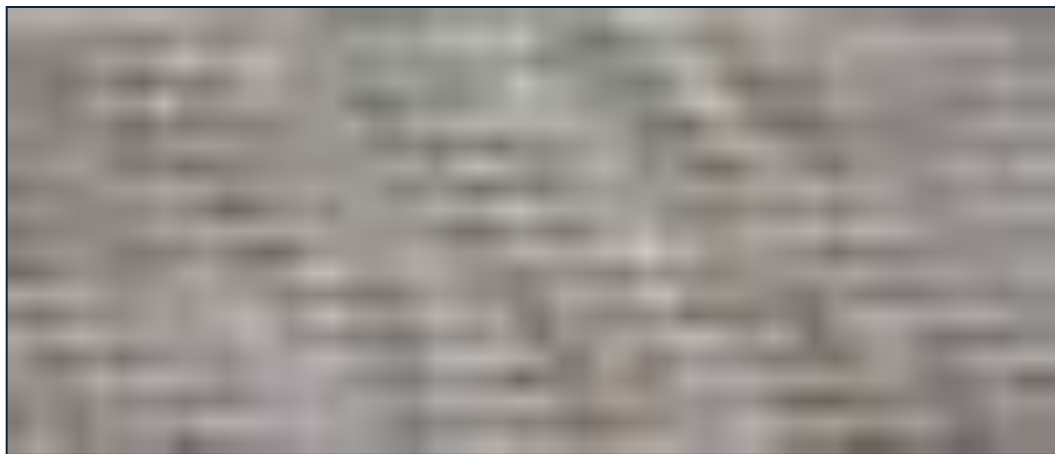
It is true that one can read many of the greatest works in translation, and I strongly recommend it. But anyone who embarks upon learning the ancient languages does not take long to discover how utterly remote those translations often are from the force of the original. Even the beginner in Greek, for example, must grapple with those little words called 'particles' that are utterly untranslatable but express such rich strands of thought. Or who can adequately express the distinction in Aristotle's metaphysics between the various nouns derived from the verb 'to be' that simply do not exist in our language? In Latin poetry, how do we find a way to bring out the puns of Ovid, or the subtle nuances of Horace?

Engaging with ancient languages and texts moreover brings enjoyment and rewards in its own right. The mind is transported across boundaries of time and place in a way no textbook can ever capture. Nothing quite expresses the

dimensions of the Greek mind at Athens' pinnacle as her drama, whether it be the intense horror and raw power of tragedy or the blend of sophistication and bawdiness in comedy; we will never altogether grasp Roman thought until we place ourselves in the courtroom at one of Cicero's orations. The 'dead' languages become a vehicle for bringing alive the monuments of the past.

In this interaction with the past, we inevitably find both a sameness and a difference. For example, the *Iliad* of Homer (probably composed c.750 BC) brings into stark relief the ongoing preoccupation of man with his own mortality by putting before our eyes Achilles, a hero faced with the unique choice of either inglorious immortality or a glorious but short life. We see him rage beyond reason at a slight by Agamemnon; we see him grieve terribly at the death of his friend Patroclus; we see in the midst of his thirst for revenge on Patroclus' killer, Hector, have compassion in a tender encounter with Hector's father, Priam. The tussle of human emotion and reason, sin and redemption, social obligations: it is all there.

But we cannot escape the difference – and this indeed is part of the very magic. For all that the authors capture the perennial concerns of the human race, ancient Greek and Roman society is still decidedly remote from our own, even more so than the England of Chaucer and Shakespeare. It is this difference as



well as sameness that allows us to gain a new and, I think, deeper appreciation of our own world, just as travelling to a foreign continent gives new perspectives on where we grew up. Indeed, this must have been somewhat as the ancient Athenians themselves felt on watching tragedies: the moral dilemmas of the tragic hero or heroine would have spoken to the spectator concerning his own choices and behaviour, but they could do so precisely because they were conveyed through the 'safe' medium of myth set in the distant past (Oedipus's responsibilities are all the greater for him being a king; but there were no kings in the audience at the first performance of Sophocles' plays).

One must work at any literary text to get the most out of it; but when you have poured out sweat over the confusing verb-forms, have teased out the difficult grammatical constructions, have considered the effects of Latin or Greek's much freer word-order, then you find very great rewards indeed that go far beyond mere practical application. □

(Picture left: Words of Consecration in the Roman Missal. Above: Magna Carta. Salisbury Cathedral's copy is one of four which survive from this original issue. It was written in Latin by hand, by an expert scribe, on vellum, in this case, sheepskin. Next June will be the 800th anniversary – but who can still read the text?)

Liberal education and the conversion of England

By Justin Shaw, a trustee and former chairman of Civitas, the Institute for the Study of Civil Society. His novels, *The Illumination of Merton Browne* and *Ten Weeks in Africa* (Sceptre), examine the human impact of educational deprivation, corruption, and moral relativism.

Taken together, *Liberal Education and the National Curriculum* by Professor David Conway, and Robert Peal's book *Progressively Worse*, tell the story of the expansion of liberal education in Britain from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, and its subsequent rapid retreat. It is a story that has profound significance for Catholics, not simply because the Church is still responsible for running many of the UK's schools, but because Catholic apologists, most notably Blessed John Henry Newman, contributed enormously to the defence of classical humanist education in Victorian times, thereby helping to build a political and administrative consensus in its favour which was to last for almost a century. By contrast, it is unsurprising that the abandonment of traditional educational standards since the nineteen-sixties has gone hand-in-hand with the collapse of the Church's moral and intellectual influence in British public life. Professor Conway's study analyses the confluence of ideas and personalities which exposed the poor state of English and Welsh parochial schools in 1850s and 1860s, and agitated for intelligent reform. Whereas Newman wrote in defence of liberal education at the university, Matthew Arnold – son of Thomas Arnold, the famous headmaster of Rugby – was the leading figure of the movement to improve elementary schooling. Arnold urged his contemporaries to address what he regarded as the morbid condition of English intellectual, artistic and moral culture, fearing that the narrow provincialism of so many teachers, and the 'prison of Puritanism,' which in his view had blighted even elite cultural life in England since the seventeenth century, would prevent the emergence of a culturally literate working-class, essential to the success of Britain's gradually evolving democracy.

While Arnold's objectives were different from Newman's, and certainly had nothing to do with Catholic evangelisation, the two men were in agreement about the importance of the classical liberal curriculum. For a cultural conservative like Arnold, such an education was an indispensable source of coherent, integrated knowledge about the world, its literature, thought and history. A literary and humanist education was also an unmatched means of cultivating the imagination, an essential guarantee of humanity in an age of utilitarianism, positivism and materialism. For Newman the emphasis on developing a well-informed imagination carried additional

significance, since he regarded this as vital to a fruitful engagement with the truths of the Catholic faith. 'The heart is commonly reached,' Newman wrote, 'not through reason, but through the imagination, by means of direct impressions... by history, by description.' Thus, what Arnold and other anti-utilitarian intellectuals valued as a natural virtue of the mind, enabling 'all men to live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light', Newman regarded as also necessary to the reception of supernatural grace.

Arnold's practical recommendations for the curriculum were largely based on what he and his associates witnessed in schools in Prussia and France during their official visits as Parliamentary commissioners: a classical curriculum supplemented with more recent history and literature, modern languages, religious studies, mathematics and the sciences. As well as advocating what today would be called a 'knowledge-based' or 'knowledge-rich' curriculum, Arnold also believed that the State must take charge of primary education in England, which otherwise would be left in the hands of the dreaded puritans. Arnold's view prevailed, and the Forster Act of 1870 introduced the principle of universal, state-subsidised education for all children aged 5 to 13 – a practice which became compulsory (with some exemptions) from 1880.

In *Liberal Education and the National Curriculum*, Professor Conway follows the development of the Arnoldian curriculum and its associated public exams, as they underwent various extensions and reforms under Edwardian, inter-war, and post-war governments.

Conway's view is that the much-maligned National Curriculum introduced by the Conservative Education Secretary Kenneth Baker in 1988 was to all intents and purposes just another updated version of Arnold's approach, the substance of which would have been regarded at any time between 1870 and 1960 as entirely unexceptionable, not only by the education establishment but by almost all teachers and parents.

Indeed, looking back on that period from our own perspective, what is most striking is the solid consensus about the basic question of what children should be taught at school. It was not simply that Catholics and non-Catholics worked towards many of the same objectives. Just as importantly, egalitarians and socialists regarded the classical heritage as a means of



liberating the working-class and enabling all men and women to achieve their potential.

If a classical education had equipped the traditional ruling class to rule, so the argument went, then those seeking to replace or join them must begin by internalising the artistic excellence, psychological acuity, and penetrating philosophy which classical art and literature embodied. This view was shared by socialist revolutionaries, including Lenin himself, who upheld the primacy of ‘landlordist and capitalist’ literature, believing it to be manifestly superior to the ‘Proletcult’ material promoted by some Bolsheviks. In a similar vein, Gramsci, the father of the New Left, spoke of the need of the proletariat for a disinterested, classical humanism.

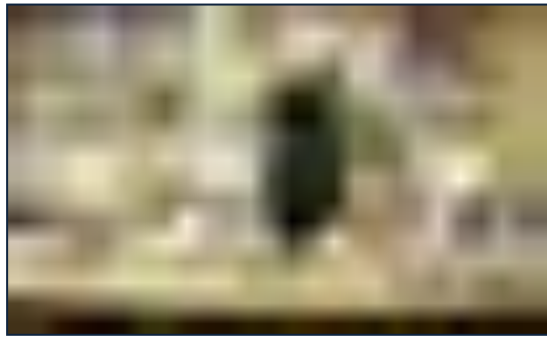
By contrast, the principal theorist of Italian Fascism, Giovanni Gentile, who was also Mussolini’s first Minister of Public Instruction, introduced reforms to the school curriculum in 1923 which encouraged spontaneity, disdained intellectualism, and promoted ideas and beliefs over facts, figures, names and dates – an approach summed up in Gentile’s slogan, “Teaching is formative, not informative.”

Unfortunately for the children of the English-speaking democracies – and by a curious twist in the history of radical thought – it was Gentile’s attitude to education, not Gramsci’s, which was to dominate the post-war Left’s approach to the curriculum, teaching methods and school discipline, and to bring an abrupt end to the consensus which had sustained the expansion of humanist education since the middle of the previous century.

This cultural coup d’état – the abandonment of education as it had been universally understood in previous eras, and its replacement with a child-centred process essentially unconnected with the mastery of traditional academic subjects – is the subject of Robert Peal’s study, *Progressively Worse*. Peal summarises the educational ideology which has triumphed over the last half century in the UK as child-centred rather than teacher-led; opposed to the transmission of coherent bodies of complex knowledge, which are regarded as unimportant to children’s formation, if not actually oppressive; opposed to discipline and moral formation; and pessimistically committed to the view (historically associated with ‘reactionaries’) that the outcome of education is predetermined by the socio-economic background of the child.

In the field of education, as in that of family policy, the victory of radical anti-humanism has been extraordinarily rapid and complete. Peal’s vivid account shows how the defenders of liberal education were consistently hoodwinked and outflanked by the advocates of the anti-knowledge agenda, who drove their revolution forward with a remarkable combination of strategic consistency and tactical adroitness. Radicals gained ascendancy, during the middle decades of the twentieth century, over teacher training colleges and university education departments, the Department of Education, the teaching unions and the broad mass of teachers, until by the 1980s the majority of parents, too, could be relied upon to acquiesce in the on-going reinvention of education.

Those who defended the right of children to a liberal education were driven to the margins of public debate by a succession of official reports promoting the new orthodoxy which were supported enthusiastically by the press, by all ‘right-thinking’ intellectuals, and the education establishment. The increasingly impressive body of empirical evidence which grew up throughout this



period, demonstrating that child-centred methods and the absence of knowledge were harming children’s development, was simply ignored.

By the time Kenneth Baker tried to use the law to impose on

schools the sort of curriculum that teachers in previous decades had regarded as obvious common-sense, the civil service was determined to make sure that his ideas would never see the light of day in a workable form. First his national curriculum was gutted of its academic content in a series of committees controlled by establishment figures; then its day-to-day implementation was sabotaged by an avalanche of paperwork. Thus, after a delay of about a century, the central plank of Arnold’s reforms – namely, the expectation that the civil service and the academy could be relied on to support his fight against the ‘enemies of promise’ – was successfully subverted, and the philistine anti-intellectualism which Arnold and his contemporaries feared so much, had become entrenched within the apparatus of central power.

By contrast with Arnold, Newman, if he were alive today, would hardly be surprised that the educational establishment, increasingly hostile towards religious or philosophical truth, had lost the will to ensure the transmission of complex and demanding forms of learning, or that the humanities had declined in lock-step with religious belief. Correspondingly, if he could advise today’s Catholics how to respond to this situation, Newman would no doubt urge us to fix our sights once more on the long-term renaissance of classical humanism, as providing the cultural and imaginative framework most conducive to the restoration of Catholic catechesis and devotion. □

Professor David Conway: *Liberal Education and the National Curriculum* (Civitas, 2010)

Robert Peal: *Progressively Worse: The Burden of Bad Ideas in British Schools* (Civitas, 2014)

(Pictures: Portrait of Cardinal Newman at the National Portrait Gallery in London, commented upon by Fr de Malleray during an art tour. Children learning Arabic and prayer at Crown Hills Community College in Leicester. Pope Benedict XVI meeting school children at Twickenham during his visit to Britain in September 2010.)



“I will give you shepherds”

In this article, Fr Matthew Goddard, FSSP explores the concept of education as applied to future priests at seminary.

“I will give you shepherds after my own heart” (Jer. 3:15).

In these words from the prophet Jeremiah, God promises his people that he will never leave them without shepherds to gather them together and guide them: “I will set shepherds over them [my sheep] who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed” (Jer. 23.4). These are the opening lines of Pope St John Paul’s apostolic exhortation, *Pastores dabo vobis* (henceforth ‘*Pastores*’), on the formation of priests in the contemporary world. Written in the wake of the 1990 Synod of Bishops, it represents something of a ‘road map’ for clerical formation in general and seminary formation in particular. Within it John Paul dedicates several chapters to the four essential pillars of formation of ‘candidates for the priesthood’: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral. In this article, I shall relate my own experience of the application of *Pastores* in the life of Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary.

Pastores speaks of human formation as being the necessary foundation for the formation of Seminarians, because the priestly role is located in the context of human relationships and interactions. To put it simply: Priests need to be able to relate to others! Therefore our seminary programmes are designed to form strong and balanced men who are capable of bearing the weight of pastoral responsibilities, but also loyal, respectful and genuinely compassionate: men of integrity, who are able to relate to others in a clear and respectful way. Seminarians come from a wide spectrum of backgrounds and with varying degrees of life experience. But all, to some degree or other, will have to work on particular elements of their character, overcome fears or concerns and acquire particular relational skills, in order to foster healthy priestly identities.

Human formation is achieved more broadly through the daily life and programme of the seminary in conjunction with growth in sanctity. As *Pastores* states, seminary can be seen as both a place and a period in life. It is an “educational community in progress”, which like the apostolic college gathered around Jesus is not only a place to live and study, but a community built on friendship and charity, through which a refined programme of human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation is pursued. All four of those pillars are not only necessary, but are interlinked. They work together to support and sustain each other.

The experience of living seven days a week in a community with others rather inevitably provides many daily opportunities

for practicing virtue and working on the weaker elements of one’s own personality. Meanwhile, the seminary faculty allocate roles and responsibilities to Seminarians, not only to assist in the smooth running of the institution, but also to help identify areas that require further personal development, as part of a process of constant monitoring and evaluation. The rather intense seminary environment fosters close friendships through common pray, study, and recreation, and through sharing and supporting one’s confreres through joys, difficulties and consolations.

An important element for Seminarians striving to pursue their full human potential is spiritual formation. Through it they learn to live in close union with God and to take on the likeness of Christ the Priest. This is particularly achieved through meditating on Holy Scripture and the lives and writings of the saints, through participating in the Holy Mass – the source and summit of the Church’s life – and the Divine Office, much of which is sung in common in the chapels of the Fraternity’s seminaries. Spiritual formation is aimed at promoting generous self-giving, so that the future priest is truly the ‘man of charity’ that he’s called to be – a true shepherd of souls, after the example of Our Lord, the Teacher, Priest and Shepherd.

According to the FSSP’s *Constitutions* (governing document), the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass sits “... at the very heart of the spirituality and apostolate of the Fraternity of St Peter.” Consequently, it also sits at the heart of our seminary life. Together with the reception of the normative clerical dress of the Latin Church – the Roman cassock – the path of spiritual formation is marked out by the reception of clerical tonsure, the Minor Orders and Subdiaconate. Through these, Fraternity Seminarians receive

graces which are ordered ever more closely and intimately towards priestly service ‘ad altare Dei.’

One particularly important aspect of human and spiritual formation is spiritual direction. Though an open and trusting relationship with his Spiritual Director, the Seminarian is guided and supported in his own quest for holiness and journey towards the altar. In seminary life there can be periods of desolation, crisis or just good old-fashioned spiritual warfare (the Devil will inevitably do what he can to cause upset and disturb peace). Through all these periods the Spiritual Director is something of an anchor, providing advice, perspective and encouragement.

Intellectual formation is essential to both human and spiritual formation. In order for a future Priest to become a true physician of souls, not only is a spiritual life marked by a close personal relationship with God required, but has to be





integrated with a profound theological knowledge. In these days of confusion, both within the Church and in the world at large, care has to be taken so that philosophical and theological formation is solid and sound.

As *Pastores* suggests, a crucial stage of intellectual formation is the study of philosophy, not only because of the links between great philosophical questions and the mysteries of salvation which are studied in theology, but also because of today's cultural situation which emphasises subjectivism as the criterion and measure of truth. Consequently, as the Fraternity's *Constitutions* maintain, the philosophical and theological studies in our seminaries are "...founded on the principles and the method of St Thomas Aquinas, and therefore conformed to the desires and prescriptions so often renewed by Popes, Councils and the Code of Canon Law. Thus the Seminarians will carefully avoid modern errors as much in philosophy as in theology." History of Philosophy courses are taught, firstly in order to contextualise Aristotelian philosophy (which underpins the thomistic method) and secondly, to understand and locate the errors inherent within (and the tragic consequences of) enlightenment and post-enlightenment philosophy.

Because the training of Seminarians has as its object the formation of true spiritual shepherds, the study of pastoral theology is the fourth essential pillar. While this involves classes of one kind and another, just as importantly it involves apostolic pastoral service, which *Pastores* cautions should assume a clear ministerial nature. This combination of spiritual formation, study and service together leads to a deeper knowledge of and communion with the pastoral charity of Christ, which should be the ultimate principle behind all priestly ministry. I found that pastoral experiences further reinforced my vocational discernment and led to a greater vigour in my quest for priesthood.

In diocesan priestly formation the heart of pastoral formation lies in parish placements. While the Fraternity does offer such

opportunities in its parishes and church communities, pastoral placements present more of a challenge, because our apostolates tend to be spread out over large geographical areas. I was privileged to have a wide variety of opportunities, including several weeks helping out in a church school, two months shadowing a hospital Chaplain in a large London hospital, visiting parishioners including the lapsed, a day with a Prison Chaplain, as well as many opportunities to mix with the faithful. In keeping with *Pastores*, pastoral assignments always involve a liturgical dimension, with Seminarians at the very least exercising service at the altar according to their Order. Such experiences enable Seminarians to experience clerical life in the world and explore elements of the priestly role which might feel more challenging. For instance, I knew that priesthood would involve teaching, but the idea of standing before a class of children was well outside of my comfort zone. However, that 'demon' was suitably exorcised by a week teaching at the St Catherine's Trust Summer School in Sussex! *Pastores* concludes with the Pope appealing for a heartfelt generosity to respond to God's promise that: "I will give you shepherds after my own heart" (Jer. 3:15). He appeals to families to be generous in giving their sons to the Lord; and he asks young men to be docile and not to be afraid to open their hearts and minds to Christ if He calls them. The Fraternity's *Constitutions* remind us that "... the formation to the priesthood... will be obtained above all else by sacramental grace which sanctifies the priest continually, if he cooperates with this grace..."

Please pray for our seminarians – one hundred and sixty of them as of October 2014 – that they are faithful in cooperating with the graces God gives them and truly become Shepherds after His heart. "The harvest is rich but the labourers are few..." □

(Picture left: *Rorate* Mass at our seminary in America.
Above: Forty Hours devotions at our seminary in Bavaria.)

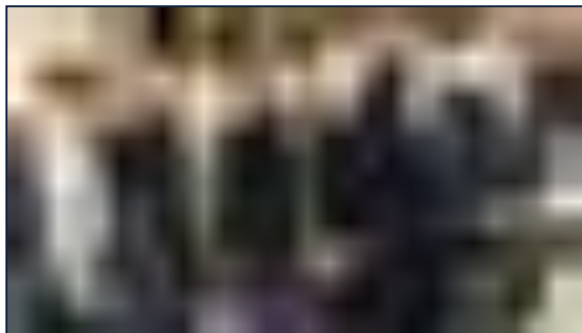
Catholic boarding school across the water

By Fr Sébastien Dufour, FSSP, Headmaster of Institut Croix-des-Vents

Established by means of a superb effort of faith and hope, the Seminary at Sées in Normandy opened its doors in 1939 and closed them again thirty years later: the diocese was obliged to abandon it. The mortal remains of the founding bishop were transferred to the cathedral, the magnificent stalls were sold at auction, the altar was dismantled and all the sacred furnishings of the chapel were disposed of. The red tabernacle lamp was extinguished. The Sacred Presence had left this place which had witnessed the formation of those who had accepted the mission of establishing Him all around in church tabernacles. The stripped, bare sanctuary offered a sad vision of Good Friday: *Quomodo sedet sola civitas*.

Twenty years after these sad events, those who enter these premises are no longer presented with a scene of desolation, because 160 young men have taken it over! Our secondary school or sixth form level pupils are to be found kneeling and chanting the same antiphons as those which re-echoed here in former times. They repeat the same words uttered daily in the past just as today: *Introibo ad altare Dei, ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam: And I will go to the altar of God, to God, the joy of my youth*. These young men remain under the watchful eye of more than twelve lay teachers and six priests of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter, who devote themselves to education in accordance with their *Constitutions* approved by the Holy See: “*Schools free from any secular interference will, as far as possible, be encouraged and if necessary established by members of the society. These schools will give rise to vocations and Christian families.*” And so, at the Institut Croix-des-Vents St Joseph, the priests exercise their sacerdotal function by celebrating

Mass, administering the sacraments, giving spiritual direction and preaching the Gospel. They also, however, teach profane subjects such as English, maths, economics, Latin, philosophy... and even rugby! All of these subjects, which are not in themselves sacerdotal, must be taught by the priest-teachers in a priestly way, conforming to Christ who is High Priest, Doctor and Lawgiver to mankind, and consequently the model for all teachers. Since earliest Christian antiquity, priests have always been teachers, and established schools, from Saint Clement of Alexandria right up to Saint John Bosco. La Croix-des-Vents is not a pre-seminary but it is a solid Catholic establishment, as its motto indicates: *Una cura Salus: One aim, Salvation*. This single preoccupation is the one which moulded the saints, and we must be careful to strive for the salvation of our soul no less than for academic success. Pope Benedict XVI has shown that « *what gave Europe's culture its foundation – the search for God and the readiness to listen to Him –*



remains today the basis of any genuine culture » (Address at the Collège of the Bernardins, Paris, September 12, 2008). Similarly, the search for the salvation of his soul is a pupil's best guarantee of success, because he enters thereby into the order and harmony desired for him by God.

A theologian wrote: « *The purpose of education is to bring the child to the point where he will always*

freely prefer the true to the false, good to evil, the just to the unjust, beauty to ugliness and God to everything » (Abbé Victor-Alain Berto, d. 1968, Founder of the Dominicans Nuns of the Holy Ghost, a traditional teaching order in France). It is therefore up to the educators not only to instil a sense of and love for truth, goodness, beauty, justice and above all, God (by means of the Holy Liturgy, especially), but also to develop a sense of freedom. Such a task is demanding. It requires the acquisition of appropriate behaviour indispensable to life in society: « *With the arrival of each new generation, society is threatened with an invasion of little savages who must be civilised as quickly as possible, through education: that is, through an apprenticeship in the human virtues which give true freedom. We are not born free, despite what we are told by a certain Declaration. We become free, by means of an*

education which is not permissive or indifferent but demanding » (cf Guillaume Frédéric Le Play, French engineer, sociologist and economist, d. 1882). The acquisition of social and intellectual accomplishments thus assumes the existence of certain constraints, but those constraints are themselves liberating. Boarding, for example, has the advantage of providing a young man with temporary shelter from the world so that, like a tender young plant, he has time to develop the deep roots and solid



stem with which to hold firm against the tempests which will later batter him. A smart school uniform, a manly environment, traditional lessons and a serious approach combine to provide this young man with several years of the sort of healthy and agreeable environment which many families are looking for but unfortunately do not find. Thus, our school is seeking to remove the pupil from a certain kind of ‘determinism’, but certainly not from the ‘family determinism’ (as wrongly suggested by a French Education Minister), substituting ourselves for the parents. Quite the reverse: in harmony with the wishes of the family, we want to remove a child from the atheistic determinism of a society constructed entirely without God and assist families in shaping souls for this life and the next.

Visit us on www.croixdesvents.com.

Institut Croix-des-Vents, 55, rue d'Argentré, F-61500 Sées, France □

Loving life

SPUC

By Rhoslyn Thomas

Last year, I was travelling back from SPUC's National Conference with a couple of colleagues. They were talking to me about the glory days, when busloads of people would drive down from Scotland and all over the country to descend upon London for marches, demonstrations and conferences. Although I grew up in the pro-life movement and am still in my twenties, I don't remember these vast numbers of people. Most of my pro-life friends are of a similar age and I have had the pleasure of fighting a few pro-life 'battles' alongside them, but I have also been present at many local pro-life meetings and demonstrations where I was the only one under 65.

For example, at a recent pro-life demonstration, I stood with perhaps 10 other people (all of whom were elderly) and spoke with one lady who was in her eighties and whose 60th wedding anniversary it was that very day. She and her husband chose to celebrate their anniversary by coming to silently and peacefully witness for life on the side of a busy road in Swansea.

The wind was incredibly strong and I was genuinely afraid that some of these faithful old-timers would be blown into the road. This particular lady had two shattered arms (with which she held the sign with a pro-life slogan) and she said to me, "Isn't God good to me? I can still walk".

I ask myself, what happened to the hordes of people, especially young people, who used to attend these events?

Don't get me wrong, I know that there are many young pro-lifers in this country and all over the world. Students For Life



America are right when they say that the tide is turning – abortion is on its way out and young people are absolutely vital to this fight.

But that doesn't mean that we can rest on our laurels.

Now, more than ever, new techniques are being devised which brutally and unnaturally end human life and these practices are often accepted by many people without a second thought. Consider, for example, plans by the government to discuss and pass legislation (this year) which would allow mitochondrial donation. Mitochondrial donation involves the attempt to avoid a mother passing on mitochondrial disease by combining and destroying two embryos to produce a third embryo, or alternatively by combining unfertilised eggs from two women to create a third egg which is then fertilised to create an IVF embryo.

This is painted by many in the media as being a miracle solution to illnesses such as muscular dystrophy, and those who oppose it must be hard-hearted and backward. The reality is that this technique involves the destruction of two human persons at the earliest stages of development – stages which we all had to pass through in order to be born and grow into the people we are today.

What we must do is look across the water to the inspirational marches organised by *Manif Pour Tous*, which made headlines all over the world. Here were hundreds of thousands, sometimes over a million people, all marching together with one common cause: the protection of the family unit as one husband and one wife, brought together for the procreation and upbringing of children.



The marches saw a mix of people, but many of them were young and enthusiastic, though the topic was unpopular and the government vehemently, even violently, opposed to their message.

We must be ready to take part in unpopular and even unpleasant pro-life events in the cold, wind and rain and we must be ready to take over from those people who have fought the good fight for many years. The structures which make up the pro-life movement in this country are strong, but they cannot be manned by the same people forever. It's good for the spirit to attend uplifting conferences, talks and retreats. Yes, please keep doing those things! We must socialise and mingle, but that is where we recharge our batteries, ready go to out and demonstrate, to stand outside abortion centres and pray for an end to the slaughter of children, to petition our local representatives, to attend local meetings. In short, we must be ready to do the little things so that there is still a pro-life movement which can achieve the huge goal of which we all dream!

When I helped to run a 40 Days For Life campaign for the first time, the chapter that went around and around in my head was this:

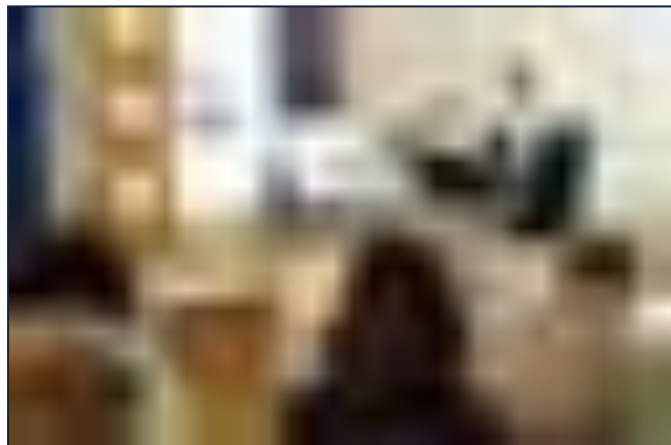
“And one of you say to them: Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; yet give them not those things that are necessary for the body, what shall it profit? So faith also, if it have not works, is dead in itself. But some man will say: Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without works; and I will shew thee, by works, my faith. Thou believest that there is one God. Thou dost well: the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” – James 2:16-21

It is not enough to say that we are pro-life. We must act, and every moment that we do not act, babies are killed and the vulnerable are forced into an early grave.

St. John Paul II gave us this warning, which seems foolish to ignore:

“At this stage of history, the liberating message of the Gospel of Life has been put into your hands. And the mission of proclaiming it to the ends of the earth is now passing to your generation. Like the great Apostle Paul, you too must feel the full urgency of the task: “Woe to me if I do not evangelize” (1Cor 9:16). Woe to you if you do not succeed in defending life.”

Web: www.facebook.com/SPUCProLife



(Picture: Huda Alfardus, Nottingham student, now giving SPUC schools presentation. Slavery, precursor of abortion: unborn deemed non-persons. Below: The monthly Oxford Pro-Life Group.)

Christmas Goodies for Courageous Mothers

By Good Counsel Network *staff*

Dear friends at St William of York Church in Reading, I am writing to thank you and all the parishioners who supported our Christmas Party for Mothers by sending gift bags for the mums and new babies.

We had about 40 Mothers attending the Christmas Meeting, all of these are women who have experienced severe difficulties in their pregnancies, either relationship breakdown, domestic violence, financial problems, medical problems or various other pressures from people or circumstances. Most were considering, or on the way to, aborting their baby when we met them. All have chosen life for their children instead.

I am sending some photos where you can see the great bishop, St Nicholas, distributing the Christmas presents and the bags of food and gifts that you kindly supplied.

All the gift bags were lovely and filled with overwhelmingly nice goodies! The handmade bags were particularly beautiful and well-received by the mums. Several women were in tears when they saw how lovingly their bags had been filled with good things to make their family Christmas that bit more comfortable and luxurious! It was a delight to see them receiving them. One mum said “Thank you SO much, you



really show your care for us by the generous way you give to us. You treated us like family by giving us such lovely gifts”.

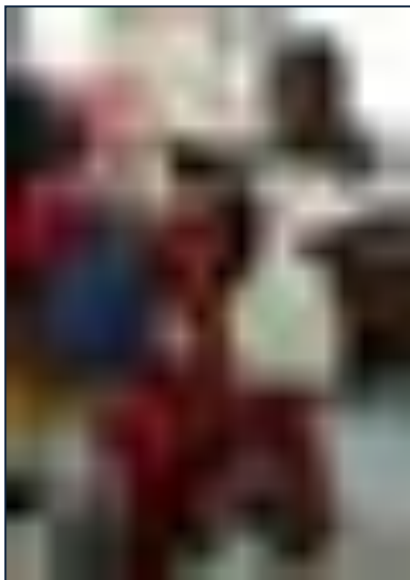
Many of our mums have no rights to benefits or other support, like housing, so they particularly relished some of the special foods and chocolates and gifts.

The baby goods and other items were also put to good use and were all distributed at the party (cf picture right).

We can't thank you enough for your generous response to this appeal for gifts. Thank you for welcoming these little ones into the world and supporting their mums' bravery in continuing their pregnancies, it was really, really appreciated.

God bless you all.

Contact: www.goodcounselnet.co.uk.



A Path to Rome

By Anne Grimer

Who am I? What contributed to me being the person I am today? In the 21 years of being a Catholic, what since my baptism, led me to be pro-life and to want to attempt a 1,200 mile pilgrimage from Canterbury, across France, over the Great St. Bernard Pass between Switzerland and Italy and then on to Rome?

I am young. Surely most young people should be studying, getting on with their lives, and focusing on their future careers? There is nothing wrong with that but...

Here is my question for you. What is the purpose of life?

I come from a family of ten children – something which is very rare in the modern world. When I tell people about my family they are usually speechless, in disbelief or will blurt out a variety of very rude questions. Most of the time, I just ignore them. How could they know what it is like to come from such a big family? How could they realise that it is when you sacrifice some of your everyday comforts for the love and support of the people around you that your life becomes so much richer? The sad truth is that they have not had the opportunity to experience these things, and perhaps do not want to.

My life today is the product of my sacrifices, my good and bad life experiences and the sacrifices of the people around me. It has not always been easy but, sometimes, we need to fall down to realise how lucky we are.

At the age of 14, I began a long battle with depression, self-harming and wanting to take my own life. At the time I felt useless, un-supported

(which was far from the truth) and empty. I did not want to listen to God, preferring to keep my faith, my understanding of the way a Catholic should live and my belief that abortion was wrong, hidden away at the back of my mind.

One day a friend of mine told me that she thought she was pregnant. I went with her to the supermarket to buy a pregnancy test. To her and her boyfriend's relief the test result showed



negative. A few months later she told me she'd had a contraceptive device implanted which meant that she did not have to "worry" any more about becoming pregnant. I started thinking. How could a girl of 15 feel the need to have a contraceptive device fitted which would prevent her from becoming pregnant and damage her body? She should not even be in those kinds of situations, juggling her teenage life against the possible lives of her unborn children. Those beliefs that I had pushed to the back of my mind were slowly, day by day, inching themselves forward, back to the place where they should have been all along.

A few weeks later, my friend called me on the phone. She had a knife in her hand and asked me to convince her not to take her

life. I did not know what to do. I cried and cried whilst trying to formulate a good enough argument for her not to kill herself. Then I told her that she was unique in every way, very special and if she did not take her life I was certain that she would make a difference in the world. I was still too upset to think of (and fully believe) in an argument like that, but I was sure, at the time, that God was helping me to prevent my friend from committing suicide. After that my belief in God and my life experiences began showing me what life really meant.

In 2014, I walked the Camino de Santiago – the pilgrimage route, from St-Jean-Pied-de-Port in France, to Santiago de Compostela in Spain (cf picture below: pilgrims blessed by Fr Goddard as they depart). On that pilgrimage I realised that our lives are like those electrocardiograms one sees in hospitals. There are high points, low points, and times when things are relatively normal.

In June, I will be walking La Via Francigena, the ancient pilgrimage route running from Canterbury to Rome, because I believe that it is time for me to put my faith and pro-life beliefs into action. I am in no way perfect but I am prepared to do what few young people of my age would do, take three months out of "my life" to walk to Rome in support of the lives of the unborn.

My aim is to raise funds for the Good Counsel Network, which reaches out to pregnant woman in desperate need of support. Through your help and my journey, I hope to be able to achieve what I could not seven years ago; to show these young mothers that they are loved, supported, and that each and every mother and child are God's gifts to the world.

You can watch my presentation video here <http://youtu.be/1An6Yymn-Pk> and you can sponsor my pilgrimage for the unborn here:

<https://www.justgiving.com/A-Walk-For-Life/>

Please contact me now if you can walk all or part of it, as it would be much better to be several pilgrims (no matter your age, if you are ready to walk long distances): anne.batman@yahoo.co.uk or 07851532735. □

The Entombment

On Michelangelo's painting at the National Gallery in London – by Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP

There are bonds that kill and bonds that save. Do those that interlace the bodies of the deceased Lord and of the pensive witnesses lead to disaster or to Salvation? Here we witness Jesus borne to his burial place, escorted by his friends. Rather than appearing sad, they tread lightly, as if dancing around Christ. It is as if the tomb (perhaps that cavity in the upper right hand corner?) towards which they accompany Jesus, had the attraction of a nuptial chamber where some intimate ceremony will take place in the silence and the shadows – the Resurrection that was cried out for by their souls and promised by His mouth.

For the present, however, the body of Christ resembles a corpse which, judging from the arms of his friends, is hardly light. He is supported by long strips of cloth, the same ones most likely that Joseph of Arimathea (the bearded figure behind Christ), Saint John the Evangelist (in red, to the left) and Nicodemus (in green, to the right) used to thread around the sacred limbs when they brought Christ down from the Cross. Filled with saintly respect, the disciples carry the body of He Who raised others from the dead in this improvised stretcher. Note that their hands do not actually touch their gentle burden – they simply support Him on the cloth. Moreover, the body, though lifeless, seems to move under its own volition and to walk alone, as is suggested by the undulation which inclines Christ's face to the right and His legs to the Left.

Jesus does not have here the stiffness of a cadaver, less still the appearance of a victim of torture. There is indeed no trace on Christ's sides – revealed for our devotion by the artist – of the countless scars of the Flagellation or of the

blows of His executioners. And on this smooth, rounded forehead, where are the cuts inflicted by the crown of thorns? Or the traces on the hands and feet of such recent suffering? If Michelangelo omitted to paint the Stigmata, it is not that he was unaware of their eternal existence as glorious signs of Christ's Passion but that, most likely, he did not take the time to add such crucial "details" to this unfinished work.

In fact, the only visible scar is the navel (located at equal distance from the eyes of John and Nicodemus), which marks a seal of love on the immaculate Flesh. With this gentle wound, the new Adam bears witness to His origins: it is from a Woman drawn from among us by the Holy Spirit that God the Son



(This art commentary was translated from the French by Sebastian Goetz. First published as part of the *Italian Renaissance Art for Souls* cd-rom, by *Ardeam & Rejoyce*, Versailles, 2004; narrated by Margaret Howard; with a foreword by Paul Cardinal Poupard, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture.)

received the human form needed for our redemption. The cord, now gone, left on Christ's stomach a mark that neither the flails of the whips nor the nails of the gibbet could overshadow. The link of love of which the dead Christ's umbilical mark reminds us, points always towards the Mother who bore in her virginal womb the Author of all life.

The same incompleteness of the picture allows us to suppose that the artist was reserving for Mary, under the bust of the saintly woman to the right, the lower unpainted right hand corner of the panel. Unfortunately, only a vague contour suggests the kneeling silhouette of the Virgin. The posture of Saint Mary Magdalene on the left opposite (possibly the earring denotes her) informs us of that which was intended for the Mother of the Saviour.

Lastly the disciples occupy a symmetrical position on both sides of Christ. These Christ's porters are true "christo-phers" literally "carriers of Christ". The colours of their clothing are carefully coordinated. St. John is wrapped in a red tunic with green highlights, while Nicodemus wears a green tunic on top of a red shirt.

The ties with which they support Christ complete the unity of the central trio. This is not only because of the intrinsic cohesion conferred on the group by the intertwining of the binds around the three figures; above all it is because of the reference made by this very particular composition to a no less prestigious, but much earlier work of art, the discovery of which so struck Michelangelo that it stayed in his memory throughout his life. This other masterpiece, however, is not a painting, but a statue: *The Laocoon*.

Unearthed in Rome in 1506, this group composition came from Rhodes where it had been sculpted seventeen centuries earlier by three artists. It shows the high priest Laocoon with his two sons suffocated by two serpents. *The Entombment* replicates the structure of this group, replacing Laocoon with Christ, the two boys with St. John and Nicodemus, and finally the reptiles with bands of white cloth. These coil from John's stomach, right shoulder and hips, under Christ's arms and over his torso, to writhe themselves around Nicodemus' waist and behind his back to his right shoulder before passing down his left hand, back to John, under the legs of Jesus, and over those of John before finally dropping down at the latter's right foot, forming as they go the most serpentine of shapes.

Before highlighting the surprising avenues that the reference to the *Laocoon* opens up for a spiritual analysis of *The Entombment*, we should note the objective similarities between the two works.

Christ, naked like Laocoon, is at the centre of the group; both figures twist to their left. His left forearm is hidden by that of Nicodemus, like Laocoon's is by the serpent. His right arm is invisible, just as Laocoon's was missing before the statue was restored. The thighs of both main figures are offset to their left against their upright bodies; their right legs are more bent than their left; and their heads lean against their left shoulder. However, Christ's feet, which are held together, resemble those of the son on the left.

The height difference marking the first step which separates St. John's feet is the same as that of the pedestal base on which the high priest is seated in *The Laocoon*. St John's legs, the anatomy of which is revealed even under his tunic, look like a painted copy of Laocoon's. Above their right thigh, the transverse formed by the band across St. John's imitates the serpent across Laocoon's. Similarly, St John's right hand grips the cloth, in the same fashion as Laocoon seizes the serpent with his left fist.



Of the son on the right (as seen by us), as with Nicodemus (idem, to the right of the Lord), only one foot is visible on the ground; both figures are seen from the left profile. Finally, the full beard and the knitted brow of Laocoon, while absent on Christ's face, are faithfully reproduced just above in the features of Joseph of Arimathea, the third disciple in the centre whose face is closest to that of Jesus.

From the spiritual angle that concerns us, let us first only take stock of the formal similarities between the two works, which make the *Laocoon* appear as the pagan negative or reverse of *The Entombment*. Thus these bonds of love (the white cloth) which unite the three central figures become

pregnant with unsuspected meaning as soon as they are seen as the poetic transposition of the serpents of hate, which in the group from antiquity, suffocate both father and sons. Once the link between these bonds of death and these binds of life has been identified, the various fictions of the legend of Laocoon unfold before our eyes as judicious counterpoints that throw into sharp relief the historical truth of Christ's passion.

Thus Laocoon, son of the Trojan monarch Priam, is the sacrificer of a pagan divinity; Jesus, "Son of King David", is that of the Eternal Priesthood announced by Melchizedek. Both warn their fellow men against a mortal danger. In both cases, the populace accuse them of betraying the very god they claim to serve: Laocoon is denounced for sacrilege, Christ for being an impostor. In both cases, the object of their doom is a wooden assemblage improvised by the enemy and drawn up in front of the city – in one case the Greek horse on the fringes of

Troy, in the other the cross of the Romans at the edge of Jerusalem (to the left of St. John's head). Laocoon throws his spear against the wooden horse; Jesus is speared by a lance on the Calvary Cross, surrounded by the two crucified thieves. Both groups of men are forced by their enemies to languish on the arms of the cross and inside the horse until the hour of darkness.

Both objects, which the population hoped would win them political security, end up as agents of siege. The Trojans believed the lie of the renegade Sinon, who promised them the protection of Athena if they admitted into their walls the wooden horse that had been offered to her. Trusting in the traitor Judas, the high priest Caiaphas abducted Christ from the Mount of Olives and imprisoned Him in the city where he had Him condemned to crucifixion, calculating "that it was expedient that one man should die for the people" (John 18:14). Yet the contempt that the two peoples had for their respective priests (whether Laocoon or Jesus) led, on the western fringes of the same Asian continent, to the respective ruins of Ilion and of

Zion. Troy was in fact razed by the Greeks, Jerusalem by the Romans; in both cases the Mediterranean victors came from the west, Lacedaemon (Sparta) and Latium (Italy).

This sculpture from Greek antiquity and this painting from the Italian Renaissance thus set each other off, to the advantage of the latter and to the benefit of the viewer. Considered in itself, the fable of Laocoon is certainly evocative; but what an explosion in meaning is lent to it by the Christian Revelation: instead of a despairing meditation on the human condition, the

Laocoon becomes instead the pagan herald of the unique Sacrifice! The impotence of the mythical high priest highlights and reveals the total efficiency of the Crucifixion, the ultimate act of the historical High-Priest and divine Christ!

We can develop this parallel further. The Son of God has just died on the cross to save all mankind. Because his Passion (which is completed in the arms of the disciples) is the Redeeming Sacrifice, the bonds of charity which join John and Nicodemus to the dead body of Christ, are the bonds of life which lead them, beyond the grave, to Salvation. By contrast, the bonds which attach the still-living Laocoon to his children lead them to death. For as the monstrous serpents of the *Laocoon* form a poisonous web and force themselves on their unwilling victims, so the linens in *The Entombment* are instruments of a delicate compassion for Christ, and are thus willingly carried by the disciples.

Snakes and stripes thus symbolise a common idea: that of parentage. The reptiles suggest a material parentage, subject to

space and time; the linen bands describe a spiritual parentage, which grace frees from earthly constraints. These alternatives force us to make a choice: where do we see ourselves? Whose sons do we recognize in ourselves? Of which values, which history, which vision of the world, of which Spirit do we claim to be the heirs?

The first type of parentage is oppressive. It evokes the conflictive relationship we have with the laws of our human nature, and with the divine vocation which these laws remind us of. We are tied by deceit, by vice, by complicity and by crime to this impure object – whether it be visible or invisible – that is defined by our actions as the centre of our existence. This is symbolised, in the *Laocoon*, by the central figure of the father, from whom the sons are unable to separate themselves. Like meteorites approaching a black hole, they only gravitate towards him for their imminent demise. Ensnared by the coils of our sins, we die like these children, of a constriction that is all the more efficient in that we think ourselves free.



Only the second parentage is truly liberating. John and Nicodemus remain perfectly free to drop on the spot the coils of cloth that encircle their bodies. These bonds link them to the only living Object, the inanimate Flesh of God, whose might preserves from corruption the Body soon to be glorified at Easter. No, nothing holds these bound men back, since as children of Salvation everything enraptures them! Due to Michelangelo's inspiration, the traditional sorrow of *The Entombment* is in this instance infused with a peace which illuminates the faces, softens the poses and fortifies the souls.

Above all, from the smooth surface of the Holy Body in the centre, a glowing candour seems to flow from Christ's breast, through the pale stripes held by the disciples, down to the holy women. Whereas the serpents spewed venom into the sides of their victims, these streams of whiteness seem to well up from Christ, irrigating His bearers! Surrounded by milky softness, He comes to wash away tears and to anoint those who love Him. □

English Martyrs Pilgrimage

By seminarian James, FSSP (first published in the FSSP North American Newsletter, September 2014)

English Catholics may sometimes forget how rich our religious history is, and how visible it remains in the architecture and shrines across the country. As an accompanying seminarian, I was glad to share some of this spiritual wealth with the forty souls, most of them Americans, led by Fr Michael Stinson, FSSP, on pilgrimage to holy sites of England to learn about and pray to our English Martyrs. The martyrs' story stretches from before St Alban († 250) to after St Oliver Plunkett († 1688). And although this history includes such luminous saints as St King Edmund, St Thomas Becket and St John Fisher, there was an unavoidable sense that the truth about England's history is still difficult to discover, for it is still deliberately obscured today.

Our week-long coach journey, organised by Syversen Touring, filled the last week of August. Our first destination was Walsingham for Holy Mass. Walsingham used to be Christendom's most important Marian shrine until it was obliterated by order of Henry VIII. Yet devotion to our Lady of Walsingham did not die out, rather the shrine resurrected, and now attracts over 100,000 pilgrims every year. After Walsingham we proceeded to York, where Constantine

the Great was proclaimed Roman Emperor and where 1,300 years later St Margaret Clitherow and 71 others were martyred for the very Faith which Emperor Constantine had embraced. Our itinerary took us to Birmingham, where Blessed John Henry Newman founded the Oratory. Also we had Benediction in the room (now a chapel in Littlemore) where Bl. Dominic Barberi received Bl. Newman into the Church. We saw Shakespeare's home and grave in Stratford-upon-Avon; then visited Oxford, city of many martyrs; we also climbed up to a secret chapel at the first post-Reformation Marian shrine, Our Lady of Consolation at West Grinstead (where Hilaire Belloc is buried). After this we prayed at the site of St Thomas Becket's gruesome martyrdom of 1170 in Canterbury Cathedral and venerated the relics of St Simon Stock in the place he received the scapular from the Virgin Mary (Aylesford).

In London we visited the second oldest church building in England which is currently in use as a Catholic church (the C.13th St Etheldredas, cf picture), then assisted at Holy Mass at

St James, Spanish Place, beside the site of the first church to be built in England after the Reformation (thanks to the Spanish embassy). Near Tyburn Convent, we prayed at the memorial where so many Catholics were martyred that a triple-gallows had to be erected.

The closing day of the pilgrimage saw Solemn High Mass at the FSSP apostolate in Reading, followed by a river cruise up the Thames to Mapledurham, possibly the only Catholic estate in England to have survived the Reformation fines and to remain to this day a working-estate in Catholic hands. The current owner, John Eyston, a direct descendant of St Thomas More, welcomed our group and gave us an absorbing historical



talk in the estate gardens. We had been blessed with well-informed clerics and tour guides at many of the various locations who related the accounts of martyrs and of the struggle for life of the Church in England against a state which wished to strangle her. Only in 1829 was the Catholic Emancipation Act passed by parliament, thanks to the Duke of Wellington, at that time Prime Minister. He had seen the horrors of the French Revolution, and he feared that if the British State did not revitalise itself by returning legal freedoms to Catholics, then it was in danger of falling victim to revolutionaries. Ultimately only the Church can deliver man from barbarity. Not a few of our pilgrims drew some lessons for the USA today, prayerfully taking strength from the witness of the English martyrs for whatever might lie ahead. Blessed Virgin Mary, pray for us!

Due to the success of last summer's edition, another 'English Martyrs' pilgrimage is planned next summer (20-29 August 2015). Anyone from England may join.

Please visit www.syversentouring.com for information. □

The Confraternity of Saint Peter – in Lausanne

By Fr Benjamin Durham, FSSP – formerly based in London, then serving Reading and Bedford

Many faithful readers of *Dowry* are undoubtedly familiar with the splendid and rather Baroque church of the London Oratory. The priests of the Fraternity, who were based in London at that time, used to offer Holy Mass there on weekdays, whilst travelling to Reading and places further afar at weekends. Those of you who know the church well, or have visited there, could not have helped but notice the magnificent *Lady Altar*, which was, in fact, brought to London from Italy. Perhaps *rescued* would be a more fitting term for this polychrome marble altar with its monumental *Dominican* sculpture, as this altar was originally erected in the Italian city of Brescia by the Confraternity of the Rosary in 1693, and rescued from the doomed church in 1881. Throughout the ages, confraternities have built altars and churches, schools and hospices; their members have been active in many facets of charitable work among those most in need. Many charitable institutions throughout the world also bear names that clearly demonstrate the faith and spiritual values upon which they were founded, such as the *Charité* Hospital in Berlin, founded as a hospital for the poor struck by the plague; or *La Pietà* in Venice, where Antonio Vivaldi helped orphaned girls and young women to develop their musical talents.

The Confraternity of Saint Peter already existed in many countries, including England, before I came to Switzerland four and-a-half years ago. I was always pleased to promote this important work, and one can see how much the Confraternity has since grown throughout the world. The main task of the Confraternity of Saint Peter is a spiritual one. Throughout the world, and in many of the Fraternity's apostolates, the members pray for the sanctification of priests and for vocations; as well as praying for each other. The Confraternity's members are certainly familiar with its daily obligations to pray the *Prayer* of the Confraternity and a decade of the Rosary for the intentions set forth above.

Nevertheless, these obligations could perhaps be better defined as 'minimum requirements': no member should do less, and yet members can also freely choose to do much more, as *charity truly hath no bounds*.

When I arrived here in Lausanne, there were already a few members of the Confraternity. Not many, but perhaps it is important to highlight *quality* over *quantity*. Not only is there room for each of us to grow in our



spiritual lives, but we also have many gifts and talents, given to us by God, which we can share with others. As Saint Francis de Sales aptly stated: *Each soul is, in fact, a large diocese*. The labours of conversion must begin with, and within each one of us.

As the first Fraternity priest to be based here at the *Chapelle Saint-Augustin* in Lausanne, I soon realised that the main obstacle to the growth of the Confraternity was simply a lack of communication. Not only had there not been much talk of the Confraternity in the past, as the Chapel had not been an apostolate of the Fraternity; but there was also not much communication between members, for they did not necessarily know that the person next to them in the pew was, in fact, one of their 'confreres'. Since then, the Confraternity in Lausanne has grown slowly but steadily and

its members have also expressed the desire to be more active in a variety of ways.

Many positive experiences from my brief ministry in England inspired me to further inspire the Confraternity members here in Switzerland. Countless examples of hard work, dedication and a true sense of community could be mentioned as inspiration for the labours of the Confraternity here in Lausanne. To consider briefly but one example, the St Bruno's group in Reading, with its prayer and contemplation, served as a strong base for many fascinating spiritual discussions, as well as strengthening the social bonds among those who took part in the group each month. It also led me to form a particular bond with an Italian stainless steel coffee maker named *Ingrid*. Why an Italian coffee maker should have a strikingly Nordic name, or why *it* was a 'she', is beyond me. Nevertheless, it seemed quite plausible that a similar orientation could work well for the Confraternity here in Switzerland. Such activities, which exist elsewhere, gave our members food for thought and helped them to choose some activities that they could do as a small group under the auspices of the Confraternity.

I mention the St Bruno's group in particular, not only because I very much enjoyed participating in the monthly meetings, but until recently, all of the Confraternity members here in Lausanne were men. It was purely coincidental, and yet it seemed strikingly similar, at least in my mind, to the famed group in Reading. The most active members of the Confraternity, and those who were keen, not only to share in spiritual and charitable pursuits but to help strengthen the bonds within our small

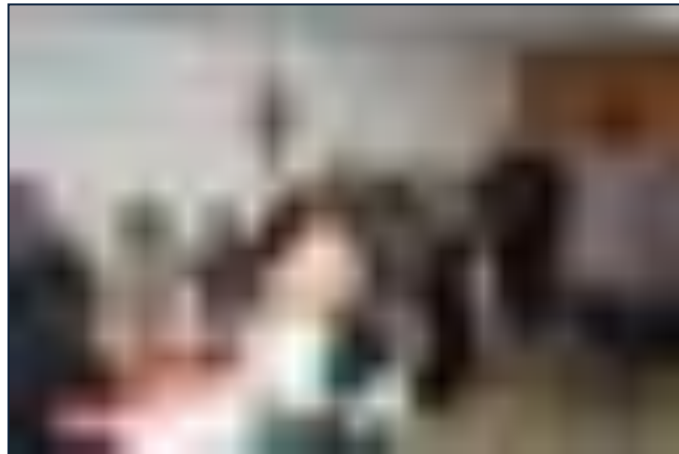


community, were a group of men, with their various professional and family situations. Many people, *both men and women*, often work long hours in a variety of jobs, not to mention the many tasks at home that are required by family life. It is impressive and even more inspiring to see the dedication of such individuals, who have undoubtedly been through quite a daily routine, or perhaps 'daily ordeal', and yet find the strength and will to do even more! It was the renowned aviatrix Amelia Earhart who once stated that "*the more one does, the more one is able to do*".

You shall know them by their fruits. Without a doubt, the faithful who come to the chapel here are brought together by a love of the Traditional Roman rite, but they may also share other things in common apart from that, which can help them to grow spiritually, as individuals, as families, and as a community. We find a rich diversity in our communities, and in our shared experiences; and I am able to draw inspiration from the many positive aspects of my ministry in England, and having had the opportunity to know many of you; not only personally, but by your fruits of hard work and dedication in building up your communities. The men and now, women of the Confraternity here in Lausanne have also shown themselves to be keen to organise activities which have since helped us to develop a better and more enriching sense of community.

Every first Sunday of the month, the Confraternity members host a Pasta Luncheon, which has enjoyed much success since its inception last October. The Pasta Luncheon is open and free to all, as all of the food and drink are generously provided by the Confraternity. Some of our members are Italian and are able to draw from their roots through their choice of delicious recipes for the many adults and children who come each month. Not only does such a meal bring our community closer together, but it is also a help to our growing number of families, who need not think about rushing home to prepare a noon meal after Sunday Mass. The next item on the agenda of the Confraternity in Lausanne is to hopefully fix up the small room ('parish hall' would be somewhat of an overstatement) so as to have a better setup, not only for our Pasta Luncheon, but also for our weekly Catechism classes and other activities.

Before Christmas, the Confraternity also helped organise the visit of Saint Nicholas to the children of our community as well as the December Pasta Luncheon, which were followed by Vespers sung in our Chapel. There was much more planning involved in having three rather distinct activities follow the Sunday Mass here in Lausanne; nevertheless, it was also very rewarding to be able to do something for the community, as



well as having many people attend throughout the day. Roughly, half of our faithful participated in the St. Nicholas/Pasta Luncheon day, which is certainly an excellent turnout for any community. We were also able to receive some donations that were earmarked for a Swiss association, somewhat akin to the Good Counsel Network, which provides material assistance to expectant mothers and their new-born infants.

My two years spent serving various communities in England were quite enriching and I am pleased that I am able to continue to profit from many positive experiences. It is also my hope that this brief article will serve to repay a debt of gratitude to many of you for your generous dedication and support; by perhaps giving you some new ideas of what can be done to help you grow spiritually, as individuals and within your communities. There is no doubt that we must continue moving forward, with a strong sense of commitment, until we reach our place in Heaven, a place that God has magnificently prepared for us from all eternity. And if, in the course of your journey on this Earth, you should ever happen to stop in Lausanne; please know that we would very much enjoy your visit and would be delighted to see many of you again...

Contact: Chapelle Saint-Augustin, 78 avenue de Béthusy, CH-1012 Lausanne, Switzerland (Sunday Sung Mass 10am). □

The Confraternity of St Peter

is our **prayer network** for priestly vocations and ministry. Nearly 5,000 have joined in the last eight years, including over 200 in the UK & Ireland (among whom 12 diocesan priests).

The three commitments are revocable and light and can all be fulfilled **without travelling** or attending any particular events: daily 1) to offer one decade of the rosary for the intentions of the Confraternity and 2) recite the *Prayer* of the Confraternity; 3) yearly to have the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass offered for the intentions of the Confraternity.

The fruits are great: 9 seminarians from England in formation; probably 3 more next September, and one of them ordained a priest each year, please God, over the next 5 years!

In our times of increasing shortage of priests, prayer for vocations is an emergency and a service for the whole Church and every soul! Receive many graces, indulgences and make your prayer for vocations even more efficacious with the Confraternity of St Peter.

Visit: www.fssp.org/en/confraternite.htm

+ **O Lord, grant us many holy priests!** +



Ongoing ministry

Unreported below are our day-to-day ministry and our monthly groups. Some readers have complimented us on the number and diversity of our activities. That impression is due to the relatively small size of our congregations (150 in two Sunday Masses) and to the fact that St John Fisher House being so far our only house in England, it is responsible for the development of our Fraternity across the country. This leads us to answer invitations and take initiatives outside the Reading area, for the sake of evangelisation and to serve the needs of souls often scattered at some distance from our House. However, we should like to point out that diocesan priests assigned to local parishes work certainly as much as we do. Only, their legitimate focus on local faithful allows less pastoral diversity. This certainly does not mean less dedication. Ad maiorem Dei gloriam.

3-5 December: Canonical Visitation of St John Fisher House, led by General Assistant Fr Andrzej Komorowski, FSSP. Every three years, our houses are visited by our own superiors to see that we live in conformity with our *Constitutions* and *Directories*; to assess the difficulties and achievements; and to give each member of the community an opportunity to express his views.

6 December: Frs de Malleray and Goddard attend the priestly ordination of Br Stephen Morrison, O. Praem., at Chelmsford. They are introduced to Bishop Alan Williams, new Bishop of Brentwood and meet again with many clergy and with lay friends.

9-11 December: Advent Retreat preached to circa 20 adults by Fr Matthew Goddard on “Living the Beatitudes”, at Douai Abbey; assisted by Fr de Malleray.

13 December: The change of schedule for our monthly Women’s Group proves successful (now starting at 10AM, ending at 12.15PM), with a record attendance of 16 women, some of them travelling from London. Fr de Malleray gave a presentation on the Greater “O” Antiphons. Please visit www.facebook.com/fssp.england to find out about this monthly event, and any others.

13 December: Fr de Malleray attends the Christmas Dinner at

Chesham Bois with many parishioners and local Parish Priest Fr Andy Ollard. This is our other Mass centre in the Northampton Diocese, where Bishop Peter Doyle has established us a Gregorian Chaplaincy: every Sunday and main feasts at 8AM, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Church, 30 Amersham Road, Chesham Bois, Bucks HP6 5PE.

15-17 December: Four religious stay at St John Fisher House on private recollection.

20 December: Successful monthly Youth Group, habitually led by Fr Goddard, FSSP, attended by a dozen teenagers. We watch the film *Bella*, an inspiring story of a young woman making the choice of life. Large pizzas are shared afterwards and a young guest living in China describes his life as an English Catholic over there.

The same day, our monthly Altar Servers Practice takes place at St William of York from 2PM to 4PM. Any men and boys are welcome to attend.

24 December: The presence of Fr Gabriel Diaz, a liturgical scholar from Argentina visiting Oxford, allows us to have a Solemn High Midnight Mass.

5 January 2015: Fr Goddard performs the one-hour-long blessing of Epiphany Water, to be used in the following weeks for Epiphany blessings of houses in Reading and further away



in Bedfordshire, Sussex, Hampshire and Surrey.

12-16 January: Fr Pierre-Henri Gouy, FSSP comes to stay. Up to last summer, Fr Gouy was the pastor of our apostolate in Québec City, where we own the beautiful church used by Alfred Hitchcock for his 1953 drama *I Confess*, on the seal of confession.

12-15 January: New Sanctuary at St John Fisher House! Thanks to the skills of “Tim the Gilder” (whom we shamelessly kidnapped from Dorchester-upon-Thames where he had worked wonders at St Birinus), our community at St John Fisher House can now pray the Divine Office, offer the Holy Sacrifice and spend time of contemplation in a beautifully improved setting! We thank the benefactor who helped us cover most of the costs. You and all those dear to you will be remembered while we pray in our new sanctuary. Come and join us here on our monthly Men’s Group and Women’s Group, open to all. Oremus.

14 January: Fr de Malleray and Fr Gouy attend a Clergy Day of Recollection at Wickenden Manor, East Sussex.

14 January: End of holiday for Seminarian Seth who stays the night at our House before flying back from Heathrow to our American seminary in Denton.

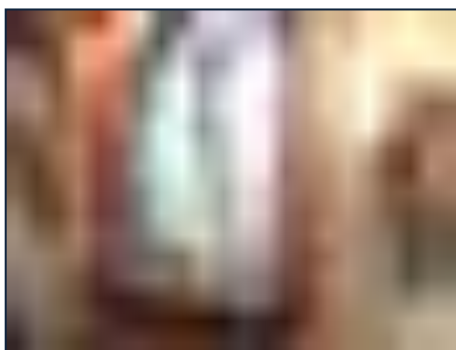
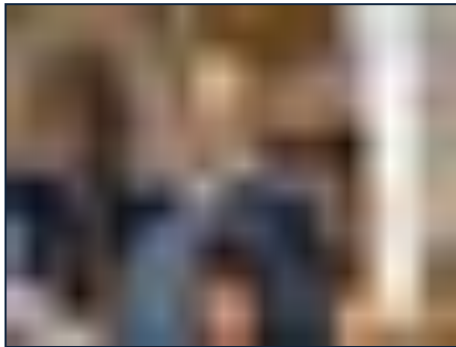
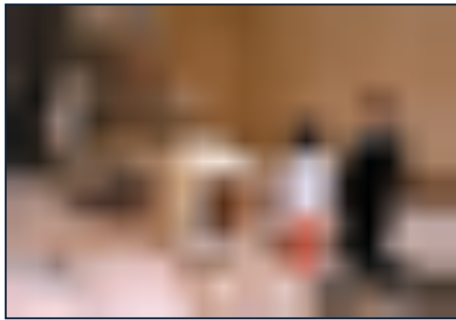
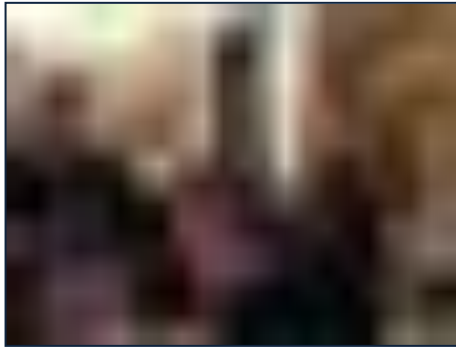
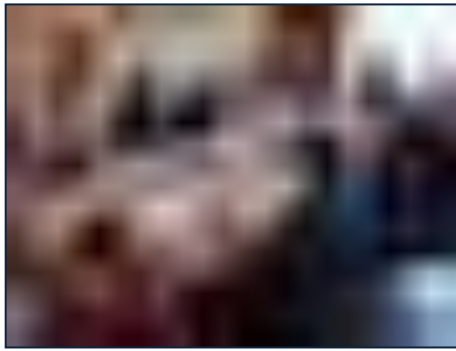
30 January: Fr de Malleray gives a conference in London to 20 Francophones on “How to become saints in the world”. Next events on <http://sacradocctrinauk.blogspot.co.uk/>.

31 January: 50 adults and children attend Fr de Malleray’s ‘Art for Souls’ tour on the theme “Children”, commenting on the place of children in society: in relation to innocence, to vulnerability, to learning and to the life of grace. As usual, access to the Gallery and tour are free for all. Persons of any age and faith (or none) are welcome. See the date of our next tour on www.facebook.com/fssp.england.

2 February: Candlemass in Reading and Chesham Bois with blessing of candles and procession.

9-14 February: Fr de Malleray in Wigratzbad to give the semestrial retreat on “The Four Last Things” to French-speaking seminarians and priests: 45 in total attended.

10 February: Fr Goddard attends a day of recollection for Clergy organised by the Confraternity of Catholic Clergy at St Patrick’s Soho Square, with a conference on spiritual direction by Fr Gerard Sheehan. Our priests in Reading readily give time to provide spiritual direction to all those wishing to have recourse to this very useful means of sanctification.



14 February: Fr de Malleray assists as Deacon at the ordination of Seminarian James to the subdiaconate in Bavaria, by His Excellency Czeslaw Kozon, Bishop of Copenhagen in Denmark.

20 February: On the first Friday in Lent, our congregation at St William of York begins its communal Lenten effort, namely, the 40mn prayer of the Stations of the Cross every Friday evening (at 7:00PM) followed by Holy Mass. Our specific intention this year is for the persecuted Christians. Printed booklets are made available for all to follow; and a plenary indulgence can be gained on this occasion at the usual conditions.

24-26 February: At Douai Abbey in Berkshire, 34 attend the retreat preached by Fr de Malleray on “The Four Last Things”, assisted by Fr Goddard. Our group prayed traditional Vespers daily in the Abbey church with the Benedictine Community. We also had Stations of the Cross, Holy Rosary, Exposition and Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration with confessions, table readings and of course, 9 conferences on the rarely preached upon theme of Death, Judgment, Hell and Heaven. As usual, we are grateful to the monks of Douai for their kind hospitality – including their *cuisine* of excellent quality! Retreatants had travelled from Nottingham, Bristol, the Isle of Wight, East Anglia and Greater London. If you have never been on a retreat, we very much encourage you to come to our next one in Advent, or during Lent next year.

3 March: Frs de Malleray and Goddard are back at Douai Abbey, this time for a diocesan Clergy Day of Prayer, led by Abbot Geoffrey Scott, OSB. Nearly 30 priests and deacons from the Portsmouth diocese attend.

3-6 March: Fellow diocesan priests come to stay at St John Fisher House for a spiritual break, brotherly talks and liturgical practice. A highlight of their stay was our pilgrimage to Lyford Grange, south of Oxford, where St Edmund Campion, S.J. was arrested on 17th July 1581. Driving further north to Woodstock, we visited Blenheim Palace, regretting that the conversion of the 9th Duke of Marlborough to Catholicism had not been followed by that of his children. In Reading, the fathers also visited the place where Passionist priest Blessed Dominic Barberi passed away, four years having

received into the Church John Henry Newman.

10 March: Fr de Malleray attends a day organised in London by the Confraternity of Catholic Clergy at St Patrick’s, Soho Square, where His Eminence Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke gives a conference on Priestly Identity and the Sacred Heart. □

Forthcoming events

*All booked in
your diary yet?*

Solemn Sacred Triduum 2015

in the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite
at St William of York Church,
Upper Redlands Rd, Reading RG1 5JJ (free car park)

Maundy Thursday	2 nd April	9am-10am	Confessions
		10am-12noon	Tenebræ
		7.00pm-9.00pm	Solemn High Mass
		9.00pm-midnight	followed by adoration
Good Friday	3 rd April	9am-10am	Confessions
		10am-12noon	Tenebræ (stay with packed lunch after)
		2.00pm-2:45pm	Solemn Stations of the Cross
		3pm-5pm	Polyphonic Solemn Liturgy
Holy Saturday	4 th April	9am-10am	Confessions
		10am-12noon	Tenebræ
		2pm-4pm	Confessions
		10pm-midnight midnight-1.30am	Solemn Easter Vigil + Solemn High Mass
Easter Sunday	5 th April	11am	Solemn High Mass

Day of recollection on St John the Baptist: 25 April

Organised by the Order of Malta with the FSSP at St William of York Church, Upper Redlands Rd, Reading RG1 5JJ (free car park). Starts 10am – ends 4pm. EF Holy Mass and two conferences by Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP and devotions. Come and meditate on the witness of Our Lord's Precursor, who gave up his life for the sanctity of marriage. A most needed intercessor! Please bring a packed lunch. All welcome. (Picture: White glazed terra-cotta 1510-20, by F. Rustici.) →

Clergy Retreat in ENGLISH in Bavaria: 4-8 May

Led by Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP on the theme: 'The Four Last Things'. **Cost: £290** (all inclusive for 4 full days full board in modern single rooms with en-suite bathroom + conference room + organisation fees + transportation from the airport and back).

Most of us will travel as a group. To join us, conveniently book your ticket now on www.easyjet.com for the following return flight (current Easyjet price £85 return):

Easyjet flight: Mon 04 May 2015: London Luton to Zurich

Dep 13:20 - Arr 16:00 - Flight EYZ204516

Easyjet flight: Fri 08 May 2015: Zurich to London Luton

Dep 16:30 - Arr 17:15 - Flight EYZ204616

Transfer from Zurich airport to Wigratzbad and return by hired coach will be organised for our group. In case you prefer to travel separately, the nearest railway station is HERGATZ (1 mile from Wigratzbad), on the Munich-Lindau-Zurich line. Zurich airport and Munich airport are both 2h drive from Wigratzbad (in opposite directions); while Memmingen airport and Friedrichshafen airport are 40mn drive.

On option: stay on with us for one day of tourism: Lindau peninsula on Lake Constance, dinner in local 'Gasthaus' (restaurant) and Abbey of St Gall – with take off from Zurich on Saturday afternoon.

Contact us now for any enquiry and booking (send your £100 cheque made payable to 'FSSP ENGLAND' as deposit). Already 16 priests and deacons have booked. More places available. Please book now.

← 14 places left:
please book now!

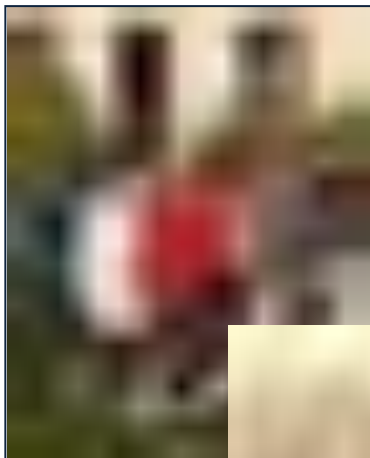


Art tour on 'Sacred Vessels': Saturday 16 May

Led by Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP

Did you know that before first use, chalices and patens are traditionally consecrated by bishops with holy oil, whereas ciboria and monstrances only require blessing, even by mere priests? Come and learn more about the beautiful containers of our Redemption.

We meet inside the main Entrance Hall of the Victoria & Albert Museum at 1.45pm, for start at 2pm. Duration: 1h. Entrance and tour free. All welcome (Catholics and non Catholics alike: bring your friends along and join us for tea at the cafeteria afterwards). Cromwell Road, London SW7 2RL. Website: www.vam.ac.uk.

**International Pilgrimage to Chartres:**

23-25 May

Welcome to the 33rd Chartres Pilgrimage! With Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP and other valiant English priests from various dioceses, on the weekend of Pentecost, walk with 12,000 fellow Catholics, in the footsteps of millions!

We walk from Notre-Dame Cathedral, Paris, to Notre-Dame Cathedral, Chartres, involving circa 70 miles in three days. This involves long hours of walking, early morning starts, arriving at the campsite late in the evenings and requires a reasonable level of fitness. The British Pilgrimage starts on Friday 22 May 2015 and this year travel is by Eurostar. We leave St. Pancras International at 1:30 pm, but we are asked to be there an hour in advance.

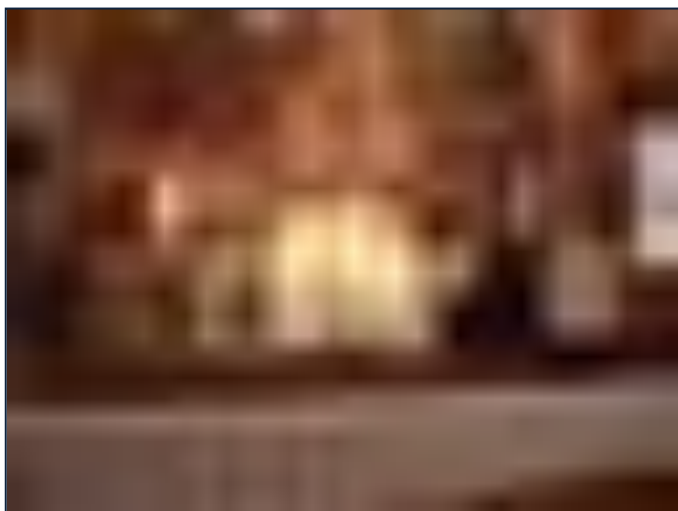
Info/booking on <http://chartresuk.blogspot.co.uk/>.

First Solemn High Mass: Saturday 20 June at 11AM

of then-Fr Ian Verrier, FSSP

As is now customary for our newly ordained priests from the UK, then-Fr Verrier will offer his first Solemn High Mass in England at St James' Church, Spanish Place, 22 George Street, W1U 3QY London. Please book this important date in your diaries now. Please come and give thanks to God for yet another young priest ordained.

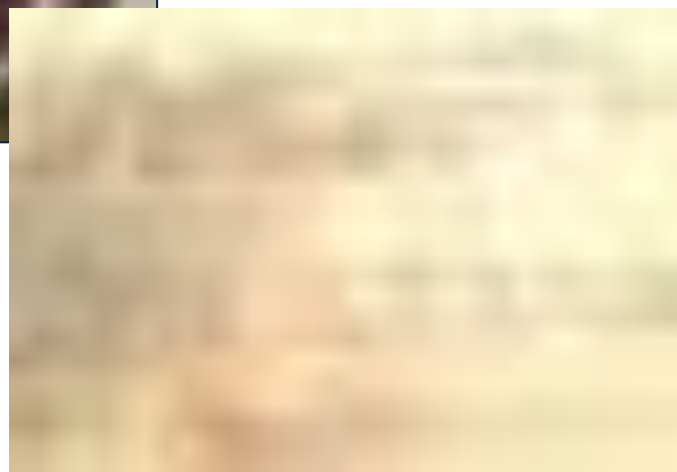
Despite the French flavour of his surname, Fr Verrier is a born and bred Englishman from Birmingham, who read Music in Manchester before entering our American seminary, where he spent the last 6 ½ years. He will be assigned at St John Fisher House in Reading from July onwards. All are welcome to the First Mass and to the refreshments and First Blessings in the Parish Hall after Mass.

**Altar Servers' Weekend: 3-5 July**

For single Catholic men between 18 and 32 years of age (under 18 please contact us). Starts Friday 6pm; ends Sunday 3pm. Fully residential. Low Mass workshops for beginners. Possible upgrade for more advanced. Seize this opportunity to ask any question you like about the EF liturgy and spirituality. Get to meet with other young men sharing your interest. For most of you, it will be the first time you can discuss those important topics at length and learn about them.

Socials, walks, Holy Mass each of the three days (Extraordinary Form of the Roman rite).

Cost for the whole weekend 2 nights full board: no set price for students or unemployed – any donation welcome; others: £50 suggested. **Booking** and Contact: Tel: 0118 966 5284; Email: malleray@fssp.org

**Summer Camp St Peter for Boys: 2-7 August**

Organised and run by FSSP priests and seminarians. Distinct activities for boys 10-13 and boys 14-17. It will take place in the New Forest at St Joseph Centre, 8 Lyndhurst Road, Ashurst, Hants SO40 7DU, from Sunday 2 August 2015, 3pm until Friday 7 August 3pm. Six of our English seminarians and priests will be present full time, including then-newly ordained Fr Ian Verrier, FSSP as Camp Chaplain. As a support to families, the Camp is heavily subsidized by FSSP England. Requested contribution: £90.00 per boy. Total number of boys: 24. Please contact us to be sent a Booking Form. Please contact us for all enquiries, including discounts. There are still many places available. So **now** is the time to book! □

Fundraiser for the Good Counsel Network:

Can you walk... to Rome... to save unborn babies? 21-year-old Anne, a member of our congregation in Reading, is looking for female companions to walk to Rome with her from June to August/September 2015. Even if you are well above 21 or think you could walk only part of it, please contact Anne urgently! This pilgrimage (called the *Via Francigena*), requires stamina and will power! – but will be equally rewarding in a sense of self-achievement and spiritual benefit.

Watch Anne's video here: <http://youtu.be/1An6Yymn-Pk>. Once the number of pilgrims is known and the dates booked, we wish to support the initiative through a sponsoring scheme and by posting news of their progress. Potential co-pilgrims, please contact urgently: anne.batman@yahoo.co.uk, or 07851532735.

Support our seminarians & our apostolate

With up to ten seminarians from England and Wales in formation, and a third priest serving in England as of July, the needs of 'FSSP England' for your financial assistance are increasing. Please consider committing to our ongoing *Labourers for the Vineyard* Campaign. Thank you so much! Please continue to give, that we may train tomorrow's priests, for you. In particular, monthly standing orders, even of a couple of pounds, are enormously helpful for us to plan ahead.

FSSP ENGLAND is a registered charity: number **1129964**.

Please ask us for a Gift-Aid form if you are a UK tax payer.

Account at: Lloyds TSB, Palmerston Branch Road Southsea, under 'FSSP ENGLAND'

Account number: 02027225

Sort Code: 30-93-04

BIC: LOYDGB21361

IBAN: GB09 LOYD 3093 0402 0272 25

Cheques payable to 'FSSP England', to be sent to our address below. Administration and Gift Aid enquiry:

Please write to Mrs Rebecca Eastwood at St John Fisher House (our address below) or email her: rebecca.eastwood@fssp.org.

Thank you for your great support.

With our prayers and those of our seminarians from England and Wales for a grace-filled Lent and Easter for you and your family,

Fr Armand de Malleray, FSSP and
Fr Matthew Goddard, FSSP.

**Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter,
St John Fisher House, 17 Eastern
Avenue,
Reading, RG1 5RU, Berks., England**



Email Fr de Malleray : malleray@fssp.org

Email Fr Goddard: goddard@fssp.org

The best way to keep updated on all our events and news, with pictures, videos and links is through our Facebook page. You don't need a Facebook account: **it works just like any website!** Just type the address on your browser and our page will open automatically:

www.facebook.com/fssp.england

Tel.: 0118 966 5284

(Picture left: Midnight Solemn Mass in Reading. Above: Last month's ordination of our seminarian James as Subdeacon, here with his twin brother Lt-Col Jez, Royal Artillery, who has just been awarded an MBE. The citation from HMG recognised his decisive contribution in the Congo, especially in defence of Goma (population 1.5 million). It is an eloquent witness to see those (still comparatively young) two brothers committed to the service to good and justice in their distinct but complementary ways. Congratulations to both!)

