



SSPX



# In Principio

Christian Art



*De cetero fratres quaecumque sunt vera quaecumque pudica quaecumque iusta quaecumque sancta quaecumque amabilia quaecumque bonae famae si qua virtus si qua laus haec cogitate*

*For the rest, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever just, whatsoever holy, whatsoever lovely, whatsoever of good fame, if there be any virtue, if any praise of discipline: think on these things. (Philippians 4:8)*

*St Luke displaying a Picture of the Virgin. Guercino (1591 - 1666 )  
( Giovanni Francesco Barbieri 1591 - 1666 )*



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# In Principio

## **Society of St. Pius X in Ireland**

Year Planner 2021

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# Letter from the Superior

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Rev. Fr Robert Brucciani, District Superior

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## Christian Art Faith through the senses

When we were born, we had no intellectual knowledge. Our minds were as blank slates. Fed by the senses, the intellect of each then produces its fruit: intellectual knowledge. All our intellectual knowledge, unless supernaturally infused (something reserved to privileged souls), has its origin in the senses.

Even the knowledge of things that our senses are unable to detect such as beings of the spiritual order (the soul, angels, demons, God) must be communicated to us through the senses: by observation of their effects, or by analogies expressed in words or by images. St Paul says that faith comes 'ex audi-



Virgin and Child  
Elisabetta Sirani (1638 - 1665)

tu' by hearing (Romans 10:17), which means that the truths of the faith need to be taught for the supernatural virtue of faith to have something



to work upon, something to believe. This teaching might be by ear, but it might also be by art: buildings, pictures, sculptures and their adornment.

## Devotion through the senses

Besides the intellect, our senses feed also the will which naturally desires those things that please the senses, such that, when those things that please the senses are ordered to God, it is easy to choose good.

When opening the curtains reveals the colours of a sunny autumn dawn, for example, it is easy to rise early to go out for a walk. When sunlight shafts pierce the ascending clouds of perfumed incense as bells ring the consecration at High Mass, it is easy to lift the heart and mind to God.

When we kneel before a beautiful statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary – a spiritually beautiful statue that is – then devotion to her seems entirely natural and without effort.

Christian art, therefore, has this purpose: to furnish the senses that man's intellect may be perfected by the highest truth and his will might more easily choose the greatest good

## Against the iconoclasts

At various times through the centuries, notably in the eighth and ninth

centuries (Byzantine Iconoclasm) and in the sixteenth century (Protestant Reformation), misguided Christians sought to destroy Christian art seemingly because of their failure to make the distinction between honouring the artwork and honouring the person represented by the artwork. Deep down, however, it was more likely because of their rebellion against the faith that the artwork taught, and the devotion that it inspired.

Truly Christian art leads souls to God as He revealed Himself to be, and leads souls to choose what His law demands. This of course is intolerable to heretics, apostates and to heathens.

## Against the Modernists

It is for this reason that we see so little truly Christian art in the Church today. Instead of the soaring towers of cruciform cathedrals which will always be powerful signs of the faith, hope and charity from whence they sprang, we are more likely to see grotesque structures designed by architects who are inspired more by science fiction than by any knowledge or love of the faith. Instead of the windows, pictures and statues presenting a doctrinal and devotional catechism in light, form and colour, we are



confronted by abstract, ugly, and sickly creations.

Perhaps this is by intention. Modern church art neither teaches the faith nor inspires devotion but seeks to make us turn in on ourselves that we might discover our faith within and decide for ourselves what our rule of conduct should be. Modern church buildings are often circular and have man at their centre; its artwork lacks coherence and focus. Neither lead the mind or heart anywhere but to self – like the cell and furniture of solitary confinement. Modern church art is modernist in style and Modernist in its inspiration.

### The future of Christian art

Just as the law of prayer follows the law of belief, so too does Christian art. It may be inspired by the past in as much as the art of the past was inspired by faith and devotion, and in as much as it leads to an increase of faith and devotion, but it is not constrained to follow only the past. The well of creativity in man is deep and new schools of Christian art are possible, but they need a culture in which to develop and by which they are informed. Romanesque, Gothic and Baroque art, for example, each developed within their own particular cultural

context. Romanesque reflects the solid foundations of the faith of a thousand years; Gothic: its spiritual grandeur as Church and state walked together; Baroque: exuberance in defiance to the shadows of Protestant predestination.

What will the next school of Christian art look like? It is difficult to predict, for we know not the future, and it may be some time before a truly Catholic culture is established anew in society.

### Serenity of faith with hope

As the Sundays after Pentecost flash by with increasing speed, let us not forget that this liturgical time is one of hope, in which the Holy Ghost works in our souls by our invitation, thus completing the work of redemption. There is indeed hope, for though the storm buffets the barque of Peter in our day as never before, knowing how the story ended for the apostles (Mark 4:35-41), we have nothing to fear. And, who knows? In the calm that will follow this present-day storm, perhaps it will be serenity of faith-with-hope that will inspire the next school of Christian art in its quest to raise mind and heart to God again. The Pacific School of Christian art?

God bless you all

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# Cultural Marxism and the Destruction of Art

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Kevin Quain

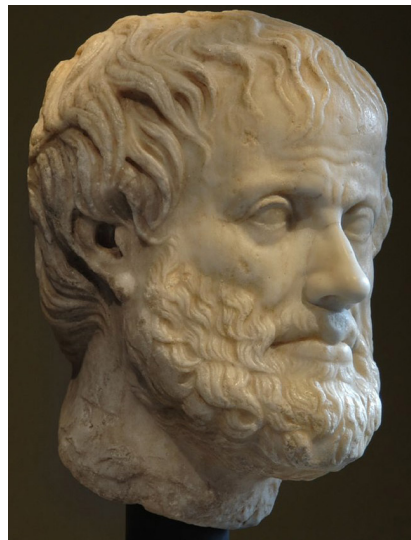
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St Thomas Aquinas defines art as a representation of the good, the true and the beautiful. Centuries before him, Aristotle, who influenced much of St Thomas' thinking, defined art as the imitation of nature.

The consistency between these two definitions is at once obvious if we consider that nature was created by God who is the perfect embodiment of all that is good, true and beautiful. But where Aristotle's definition is limited to nature and the natural, St Thomas' definition contains the supernatural and spiritual as well, in as much as these can be represented to the human eye.

Before it is possible to understand the effects of Marxism on art, it is crucial to understand art before Marxism. This discussion will be

limited to art and culture in the



Head of Aristotle. Vienna, Museum of Art History, Collection of Classical Antiquities. Marble. Roman copy of the mid-1st century from the Greek



West as the history of the West has largely determined the arc of human history in general.

Most importantly, art has always been concerned with ideals, and it has always reflected the shift in ideals and ways of thinking at each and every stage of history. The Greeks and Romans showed this through their sculptures which sought to portray the idealised human form whether the subjects were their gods and goddesses, or athletes and emperors. This concern with the ideal came to mean so much more than the human form with the advent of Christianity. It became an ideal of the spiritual and supernatural. The subjects of artistic representations became Our Lord, Our Lady and the saints. Practically speaking, this meant

a turning away from the natural realism of the Greeks and Romans. Early Christian art represented by icons and mosaics, used symbolism in order to portray spiritual reality. Thus, the backgrounds of all icons are gold meaning that the person depicted is in Heaven. Our Lord and certain Old Testament prophets are depicted with abnormally long noses which is a symbol of wisdom. Colours of clothing and other objects all had their own meanings and associations, and were not meant to indicate historical facts. Perspective, as it came to be used in the Renaissance as a reflection of how humans actually see, was unimportant. An example of this can still be seen on the main altar at St John's in Dun Laoghaire. Upon close inspection, one can see inside the chalice on the table at the Last Supper because the rim is tilted in an unrealistic manner to show the contents, the Blood of Christ.

Symbolism, more than natural historical reality, was paramount throughout the Middle Ages until the Renaissance, when naturalism started to again become the ideal. This trend continued and became more humanistic and less spiritual due to events such as the Protestant Reformation, the Age of Enlightenment and the French Revolution.



Book of Kells c.800AD



The Annunciation Don Lorenzo  
Monaco (c.1370 - c. 1425)

Shortly after the French Revolution came the Industrial Revolution, and in its wake, Marxism. The period of art associated with this time period, the nineteenth century, is called Realism. Realist painters, such as Gustave Courbet, depicted scenes from everyday life, often of the poor or working classes of society. Such paintings helped to highlight the difficult and unfortunate conditions of the working class. In 1848, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels wrote the Communist Manifesto describing the plight of the 'proletariat' and the need for the lower classes to rise and overthrow the upper classes.

The principles of Marxism are based on materialism and the falsehood of universal equality, completely devoid of any regard for the supernatural. Marx even went so far as to call religion 'the opium of the people', a drug used to subdue the lower classes. It should come as no surprise then that with the abandonment of God and animosity towards all things spiritual, Marxist principles, particularly as expressed in Communism, failed to remedy the economic and material situation they purported to fix: 'Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you'. With the abandonment of God comes even the abandonment of humanity. This is easily seen in countries that operated or operate





under a specifically Communist government. Unfortunately, over the course of the last few decades, Marxist principles have pervaded nearly every country and culture in the West.

How, then, has Marxism affected art? It has done so by not only eradicating religion from art, but even humanity and reality. The art of the twentieth century and through to today lacks resemblance to any form of art that has preceded it. José Ortega y Gasset wrote the following about modern art:

*Analysing the new style ... it tends towards the dehumanization of art; to an avoidance of living forms; to ensuring that a work of art should be nothing but a work of art; to considering art simply as play and nothing else ... and finally, towards an art which makes no spiritual or transcendental claims whatsoever.*<sup>2</sup>

It is art for art's sake, serving no purpose but its own, and by doing so, it conveys an emptiness and pointlessness. Writing on the same subject, John Senior stated, *Art for art's sake is a sterilization of the mind so as to prevent "conception" while enjoying discourse ... The aesthetic in the extreme is anesthetic: numb, having no sensation, unconscious.*<sup>3</sup>

Many viewers would likely agree with the above ideas when viewing pieces of art whose subjects are so vague or disfigured so as to be uninterpretable. Pablo Picasso's later works<sup>4</sup> depict barely recognisable human figures with misplaced body parts. The American artist Jackson Pollock simply flung different colours of paint across a canvas and became famous.<sup>5</sup>

José Ortega y Gasset described the modern painter and his goal as follows: 'The painter, far from stumbling towards reality, is seen to be proceeding in the contrary direction. He has set himself resolutely to distort reality, break its human image, dehumanize it.'<sup>6</sup> Interestingly enough, this distortion of reality is not wholly inaccurate. Like all art throughout history, it is indicative of the current times, culture and manner of thinking or lack thereof. The twentieth-century Christian author, philosopher and professor, Hans Rookmaaker, wrote: 'In our time it is different. Now too our artists want to show us our own world and our own times. But because of apostasy, joy has disappeared; it has been replaced by a lot of bitterness, hatred, and inner alienation from reality. Their paintings tell us about this'<sup>7</sup> From a certain point of view, though modern art can hardly be said to be a representation of the good or





the beautiful, it is true in that it is a reflection of the times. Such art is created in a world where there exists no proper sense of hierarchy and order, a world in which transgender ideologies and cancel culture run rampant. Gasset's observation that modern art is 'stripped of all spiritual content',<sup>8</sup> is sadly true. To quote Rookmaaker once more:

*Art gives a vision of reality. Surely, this vision can be a lie! But if this view of the world in which we live is shared by many, if nihilism in art is nothing but an expression of nihilism which, as the spirit of this age, reigns nearly supreme, then we may not ignore it – even if it were only in order to discover*



Modern Sculpture  
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

*how we too are perhaps much more affected by the evil all around us than we ever suspected ...*<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps there is indeed something to be learned from a visual medium that does not merit to be called art. If nothing else, it allows us to observe the fruits of false principles, which hopefully we are able to recognise immediately. The next step then, is to restore culture by re-cultivating the good, the true and beautiful, and surrounding ourselves with art as it should be.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 6:33.

<sup>2</sup> Ortega y Gasset, J. 1925. 'The dehumanization of art'. In *The Dehumanization of Art and Other Essays on Art, Culture, and Literature*, p. 70.

<sup>3</sup> Senior, J. 2008. *The Death of Christian Culture*. IHS Press: Norfolk, p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> For example, 'Head of a Woman' (1934).

<sup>5</sup> 'Red Composition' (1946).

<sup>6</sup> Ortega y Gasset, 'The dehumanization of art', p. 71.

<sup>7</sup> Rookmaakers, H. R. 1958. 'What is visual art?' In M. Hengelaar-Rookmaaker (ed.) 2003. *H.R. Rookmaaker: The complete works 4*. Piquant Carlisle, <https://www.artway.eu/content.php?id=854&lang=en&action=show>.

<sup>8</sup> Ortega y Gasset, 'The dehumanization of art', p. 81.

<sup>9</sup> Rookmaakers, 'What is visual art?'.



# Interpreting Angels in Art

## Grattan Keating

The mere mention of an angel typically evokes a particular image in a person's imagination; this usually takes the form of a white-robed, winged, human-like creature with a youthful face, complete with a halo and a harp, sometimes with a flower, other times with a sword and armour. Despite this widely accepted, almost universal aesthetic, the bibli-

cal descriptions of angels bear little resemblance to these depictions.

This does not, however, devalue the representations of angels; rather, it insists the viewer have a better understanding of how to translate the artworks they are bound to encounter whenever they enter a church or open a book on Christian art.





Unfortunately, we now live in an age where correct interpretation of Christian aesthetics is in sharp decline; added to that, modernism has had a corrupting influence on the arts, whereby religious subject matter has been reduced to a semi-abstracted mess. All one need do is look at what passes for Christian art in modern churches to gauge the decline in all its ugliness. The secular world has further reduced angels to a generic model that can comfortably sit on the shelf alongside crystals, unicorns and rainbows.



The topic of angels is, however, very complex, and the deconstruction of the visual representation of even one image could consume an entire article. Furthermore, the distinctiveness and uniqueness of different angels is often poorly exemplified in Christian art; that is to say, there is often a homogenous repetition of form rather than a true reflection of the actual diversity. Most angelic choirs are simply depicted in winged, human form, without any indication of attributes that would allow the viewer to distinguish it: let's say, a virtue from a power, or a dominion from a principality. Notwithstanding this, however, it is my intention to provide a brief overview of each choir and how they are depicted with a final emphasis on the highest choir.

## Aesthetic Origins and Context

In the western tradition, the quintessential angel aesthetic can be traced back to the Hellenistic period, and even further in some cases. After the Punic Wars, the Romans assimilated the Greek representation of the divine and adapted it to fit their own tastes. The statue Victory of Samothrace, c. 190 BC, or Nike in Greek, profoundly inspired the Roman depiction of their goddess, Victory. Upon view this is undoubt-



edly the template for what would become the Roman standard of the divine and the archetypal angel. The drapery of the robes is rendered as a wind-swept cloth, suggesting a well-built, idealised form, and capturing a sense of realism. The image of Victory was prevalent in Roman civilisation. Aside from appearing on coins and atop columns, Victory also graced the hall of the Senate House before it was finally removed by Theodosius the Great in 395 AD, after making Christianity the official state religion. Her image would, nevertheless, endure and become the standard trope for angelic representation in Christian art from Late Antiquity onward.

The endurance of this form would persist throughout the Late Middle Ages and into the Renaissance period, from Giotto (1267–1337) to Bronzino (1503–1572) whilst the meaning and placement of angelic attributes would evolve. This evolution is something that can elude the unsuspecting viewer and requires an explanation as to why angels are represented the way they are.

The most obvious attribute to consider is the depiction of wings. In holy scripture, we seldom encounter a physical description of an angel beyond human form; in Genesis (18:2), Abraham is visited by three

men, who are often referred to as angels; however, they are not described as having wings or any other attributes commonly associated with the traditional angelic aesthetic. Again, in Genesis (32:22-32), Jacob wrestles with an angel, however, there is no mention of wings, armour nor anything else that would otherwise suggest an angel; and finally, when Mary Magdalene and the other women visit the tomb of Jesus in Luke (24:1-7), they encounter two men in 'dazzling apparel' with no mention of wings or any other attributes commonly associated with angels. In other words, wings are not strictly an angelic signifier.

We do, however, encounter winged angels in Isaiah (6:1-7) in the description of the Seraphim: 'Above him stood the seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew'. In Ezekiel, we hear the vision of the four living creatures, in which Ezekiel describes seeing the three orders of the highest hierarchy of the angelic choir: the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones. The cherub is depicted as having two pairs of wings and four faces: that of a lion, an ox, a human and an eagle; their legs straight, the soles of their feet like the hooves of a bull, gleaming like polished brass.



Interestingly, in art, angelic wings signify a purpose other than the obvious mode of flight one would presume: wings represent speed and power. To further complicate things, angelic speed is not concerned with physical movement, as angels are pure spiritual beings with no material elements. Rather, speed denotes communication – specifically, how fast an angel can transmit an idea or concept to another creature, be it angelic or human. This idea or concept has its origin with God and moves through the angelic medium, down the choirs to the lower angels. Power is represented by the multiplicity of wings and the complexity of each particular angel: the higher the angel in the hierarchy, the greater its power or status due to its proximity to God – and the more wings it has.

It is also important to bear in

mind that each individual angel is a unique species unto itself; one angel is as different from another as cats are from dogs. Considering this, combined with the scarcity of winged depictions in the Bible, it is perhaps surprising that, throughout art history, we seldom get a wide diversity of angelic types. The generic model of humanoid with wings is certainly in the majority. One has but to consider the Renaissance and in particular, Leonardo de Vinci's painting *Annunciation* (1472–75), and we see the stereotype beautifully displayed. Here we see a classically formed angel Gabriel, his wings painstakingly rendered from observations made by Leonardo of real birds in order to try and mimic their structure and grace in movement. On closer observation of the painting, you can see its genesis in classical Greek and Roman form and the telltale influence of Victory.







It is amongst the more unusual orders of angels, and particularly the highest order of angels, where artists have struggled to depict the angelic – for reasons that are all too apparent.

### The Trouble with Conception:

Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones  
The highest order of angels – the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones – offer up a significant aesthetic challenge for artists. The primary reason for the troubled conceptualisation when looking at the highest order, is that they are exceptionally diffi-

cult to visualise in practical form. Ironically, despite modernist artists seeming to wish to abstract and disjoint everything sacred and traditional, they avoid the three sets of beings who are truly abstract, and for want of a better word, genuinely bizarre in appearance.

As human beings, we appear to have a need to anthropomorphise other creatures or beings into something more human that we can identify with. However, when reading the descriptions of the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones in holy scripture, we are left puzzled and lost; their descriptions are of creatures far beyond our human experience and thus artists inevitably produce work that seems rather clunky, awkward and improbable.

Take the Thrones: they administer creation, they are found in the medium of creation itself, but form the double purpose of a mode of transport for God, as seen by Ezekiel. In Matthäus Merian's illustration the 'Chariot Vision', Merian carefully depicts a Throne as the two interlocking wheels with many eyes running along the sides of each wheel. Robert Pranker's etching on the subject of Ezekiel's vision, 'Ezekiel has a phantasmagorical vision of angels and spheres with eyes coasting along the thunderstruck sea'





(1761), hones in on the Cherubim and the Thrones, with no sign of the Seraphim. Again, we are shown the bizarre nature of the highest angels, especially the Thrones and their improbable configuration as this etching tries to remain true to the source material. What we are left with, however, is something truly beyond human conception. Perhaps so much so that some artists have forgone any attempt to depict them accurately.

In a much older mosaic from about c. 1300, rendered in the Byzantine style, the artist depicts the Throne in an idealised classical form, the perfect body type, not unlike a representation of a Greco-Roman deity. Perhaps the artist felt some licence was prudent.

## Conclusion

It is clear that the subject of angels has a very rich and deep tradition in art history, from the Classical period to the nineteenth century and beyond. The subject of angels, in of itself, is fascinating, but their rendition makes for an intriguing investigation. It is beyond the scope of this article to go into further detail on the subject as analysis of each of the angelic ranks would require more extensive analysis. What can be surmised here, is that reality is often far stranger than art and in this case, the highest order of angels marks the point where artists struggle to grasp the beauty and complexity of God's creation, which is perhaps, arguably, only right and just.





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# Beauty and Truth

## The Arts in Catholic Education

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**Mary-Jacinta Murphy**

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What is the primary purpose of the arts?

The teacher of poetry is familiar with the following scenario: confronted for the first time with a somewhat obscure poem, the clouded brow of the student registers puzzlement. The eager teacher, nothing daunted, interprets the poem and pauses, breathless, for a reaction. The student's face clears with the disconcerting suddenness of April sun after April shower. A hand shoots up. 'Miss', enquires the student, 'why did he have to write a poem to say that? Couldn't he have said it in ordinary English?'

This reaction is not, alas, confined to young students. Even otherwise highly literate adults may suggest that poetry is a roundabout and



Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844 -1889)

(hopefully) redundant way of expressing oneself in a gratuitously incomprehensible manner. Underpin-





ning this argument is the idea that utility has priority over beauty. The great poet Gerald Manley Hopkins disagreed in advance. He maintained that poetry could be ‘speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning’.<sup>1</sup>

This notion – that art has an intrinsic value beyond its didactic power – surprises those who are accustomed to view the arts as vehicles for social change. The instrumentalisation of the arts for political and social purposes and the neglect of poetic form has been too long underway. It is, after all, over eighty years since WB Yeats exhorted Irish poets to,

*learn your trade  
sing whatever is well made,  
Scorn the sort now growing up  
All out of shape from toe to top.*<sup>2</sup>

If, admittedly, the arts have often historically served a secondary purpose (as exemplified, for instance, by classical satire) the primary purpose of the arts (outside of the liturgy) has always been spiritual recreation and refreshment through the contemplation of beauty.

## Neglect and cynicism

Instrumentalisation of the arts for other purposes has resulted in the

subsequent decline into tedium, then nihilism. Neglect of the primary purpose of the arts has produced such monstrosities as 4'33" by John Cage (1948), in which the composer instructed his performers not to play anything at all. The visual arts furnish some examples of the same reductive and ultimately destructive tendency: in 2018, the Royal Academy of Arts in London showcased an exhibition of eighty-four mounted cornflakes, somewhat pretentiously entitled ‘Taxonomy of the Cornflake’. Faced with such travesties, students of art can easily become tainted with the spirit of cynical subversion. Beauty and elegance are, sadly, the casualties.

## Raising the bar in education

The postmodern tendency to prioritise originality over mastery has (ironically) fostered this development towards cynicism in art. Our ancestors were disposed to consider artistic efforts as learned skills; the elements of drawing and music were taught just as the rudiments of geography and geology, as matter to be painstakingly mastered. Although entering an eighteenth-century lesson in painting would doubtless be a culture shock, it would be an unfair caricature of traditional education in the arts to say that it was all drill



and no originality. Would it not be fairer to say that our ancestors had a greater sense of apprenticeship in the arts and a more realistic sense of the amount of drill needed before a composer or designer could innovate with skill? Do we do justice to our older students by praising an inarticulate scrawl as 'great poetry' or an insignificant daub as 'original'?

It is time to raise the bar in arts education and to foster the same respect for literary and artistic boundaries as we demonstrate for scientific learning. Young students of nine or ten are perfectly capable of mastering metre and of innovating upon it. Indeed, young Derwent Coleridge was only seven when his proud poetic papa wrote for him the clever 'Metrical Feet', an ingenious composition wherein each line of verse simultaneously exemplified and described a metrical foot. We do students no favours by refusing them the rich dish of classical poetry and presenting them only with free verse. The same holds true for the visual arts: children respond to an educator who guides their explorations and who offers models and patterns from the great tradition of painting and sculpture. Dissonance in art, on the other hand, has a short-lived attraction for children since the intellect seeks pattern and order along with variety.

### The inbuilt desire for harmony, order and pattern

In the natural world, God caters for this craving by the changing seasons, always in the same sequence and yet perpetually recurring. Before the Age of Revolution tipped the balance in the favour of emotion and finally into anarchy, art sought to mirror reality; thus, pattern and balance in visual art were seen as essential.

This simultaneous desire for order and variety is seen in very young children who seek to interpret and recreate patterns in their world. The artistic sense is formed very early, preferably by exposure to as much real beauty as possible. For instance, it is preferable for a small child to explore a real rose than to draw or paint it. The impact of the rose on the senses of sight, touch and smell imprints the essence of the rose on the child's mind. Later





the child can summon a range of such sensory images and distil from them her concept of the exquisite. Hence the importance of the home and the early classroom as a sanctuary of order and beauty. Children instinctively imitate what they see and hear, and will recreate loveliness or its absence in their surroundings. Later, when the ugly side of life can and must be delicately introduced through drama, prose and visual art, the necessary knowledge of our sin-soiled world will find its shining foil, love of beauty, planted in advance in the youth's heart. Confronted with vulgarity and evil, the soul will remain incurious and sing with Keats 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty: that's all you know and all you need to know'.<sup>3</sup>

## The arts and the formation of sensibility

The foregoing remarks on skill building and imitation of worthy models should not be understood to discourage exploratory play with the arts. The nature of art as a spiritual refreshment requires some creativity and personal input on the part of the student. Such input can play a key role not only in the development of a sense of beauty and appropriateness, but also in the formation of a balanced sensitivity. The fine arts have this

twofold quality: they both stimulate and calm the emotions. How often has an angered child soothed her soul in the tranquillity of painting or copying! Meanwhile, a youth who suffers from painful shyness can find confidence in shedding his everyday self and playing a dramatic role. The elementary composition of music and poetry produce a deep satisfaction, offering to the mind a possibility of echoing the creative activity of God. Such activities are recreation far worthier of human beings than the constant, inert consumption of streamed content. Such



Hard Times, Louisa and her Father  
(Harry\_French)

noble play is worthy of Holy Wisdom Who declares, 'I ... was delighted



every day, playing before him at all times, playing in the world: and my delights were to be with the children of men'.<sup>4</sup>

‘There is a wisdom of the Head, and there is a wisdom of the Heart’<sup>5</sup>

Charles Dickens’ *Hard Times* depicts the heroine Louisa as deprived of fairy-tale, imagination, in short, of any education beyond the strictly factual. Filled with ‘nothing but Facts’, she lacks the imagination and inner resources to manage the challenges of life. Reduced to misery, she reproves her father:

*‘How could you give me life, and take from me all the inappreciable things that raise it from the state of conscious death? Where are the graces of my soul? Where are the sentiments of my heart? What have you done, oh, Father, What have you done with the garden that should have bloomed once, in this great wilderness here?’ said Louisa as she touched her heart.*

The arts are a means to plant a garden in the heart of our children, a garden that will endure against the wilderness of the world.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup>. Hopkins, G. M. 1937. ‘Poetry and Verse’. In *The Note-Books and Papers of Gerald Manley Hopkins*. Oxford University Press, London and New York.

<sup>2</sup>. Yeats, W.B. 1961. ‘Under Ben Bulbin’. In R. J. Finneran (ed.) *The Poems of W. B. Yeats: A new edition*. Macmillan Publishing.

<sup>3</sup>. Keats, J. 1820. ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’.

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# Saint Catherine of Bologna

## *Jesus, Jesus, Jesus*

Kelly Murphy Bannwart

St Catherine (or Caterina Vigri as she was known at birth)<sup>1</sup> was born into an influential and wealthy

BOLOGNESE SCHOOL, XV CENTURY



Saint Usula and her maidens  
Caterina Vigri

family in Bologna in 1413.<sup>2</sup> Her father, John de' Vigri, was a diplomat trained in law and employed by the Marquis of Ferrara, Nicholas III d'Este. While little is known about Catherine's early life, we know that her mother, Benvenuta Mammolini, was a woman of great faith who sought to instil the faith in her daughter.<sup>3</sup>

At a young age, Catherine soon found her life following the natural course of one descended from nobility. At the age of ten, her father sent her away to work in the court of the Marquis of Ferrara as a companion and 'lady in waiting' for the Princess Margarita – the illegitimate daughter of Nicholas III d'Este. Catherine was diligent in carrying out her duties as a lady in waiting and the princess grew fond of her compan-



ion over the course of Catherine's service to the court. Life in the court afforded Catherine the opportunity for an advanced education in the arts with training in music, painting, dancing and writing composition. She became skilled as a musician in playing the viola and exhibited a strong mastery of Latin. Catherine was most notably gifted as an artist and honed her skills to produce beautifully crafted works in copying and in miniature painting.<sup>4</sup>

Margarita to the Prince of Rimini, Roberto Malatesta, Catherine gracefully declined the opportunity to remain as a companion in service to the princess.<sup>5</sup> Catherine had been yearning to leave her life of privilege in order to pursue the monastic life to live according to the rule of the Third Order of St Augustine.<sup>6</sup> Catherine was thirteen years old when she parted ways with Princess Margarita and entered the Franciscan Corpus Domini convent in Ferrara.<sup>7</sup>

After the marriage of Princess

While Catherine was perfectly



Image from the Breviary of St Catherine of Bologna

content to remain at this convent, she was summoned directly by Our





Lord who reportedly appeared to her and instructed her to return to her homeland in Bologna.<sup>8</sup> The Lord impressed upon her that it was His holy will that she be appointed abbess in Bologna. Catherine humbly obeyed and prepared herself to serve as abbess by practicing fasting, scourging and many penances.<sup>9</sup>

Despite her earnest desire to assume a less prominent role, Catherine submitted to the Lord's will and accepted her appointment as abbess of the Poor Clares convent in Bologna in 1432.<sup>10</sup> There Catherine joyfully embraced all menial tasks and duties common to the monastic life. While she was highly trained and gifted in the arts, she cheerfully carried out her communal chores of laundering, baking and caring for animals in the Franciscan tradition.<sup>11</sup>

As a Poor Clare, Catherine continued to produce beautiful art for the glory of God. She was keen to paint religious images in order to inspire the pursuit of greater virtue and devotion to God.<sup>12</sup> One of her most famous paintings is of the virgin and martyr St Ursula, which remains on display at Galleria dell'Accademia in Venice.<sup>13</sup> Catherine also used her drawing skills to illuminate her manuscript, which was later used by Pope Pius IX and remains on display in Oxford to the present



Madonna of the Peach  
St Catherine of Bologna

St Catherine's artistic talents and spiritual mysticism converged in her spiritual writing. One of her most notable compositions consists of a treatise on the spiritual life, entitled *Treatise on the Seven Spiritual Weapons*, which she entrusted to her confessor shortly before her death.<sup>18</sup> The treatise preserves her instruction and counsel on spiritual growth. The work also contains an autobiographical reflection of her own struggles against temptations in striving to live a life of holiness.<sup>19</sup>



St Catherine passed away on 9 March 1463.<sup>20</sup> The last year of her life was filled with great suffering as her health rapidly deteriorated.<sup>21</sup> Catherine patiently bore all sufferings with dignity and humility using her remaining time to lovingly exhort her sisters to live a holy life for Christ. Of all that St Catherine accomplished throughout her life through the merits of Christ, there is nothing more valuable or precious than the manner in which she died. For it was on her deathbed that the saint, *entered her agony; her face grew beautiful and translucent; she still looked lovingly at those who surrounded her and died gently, repeating three times the name of Jesus.*<sup>22</sup>

St Catherine was buried in a simple grave without a coffin in the Poor Clare tradition.<sup>23</sup> Within fourteen days following her death the sisters began to notice a sweet odour coming from Catherine's tomb. They decided to exhume her body to discover that it was indeed the source of the sweet scent. The sisters further discovered that the saint's body had remained 'fully flexible' and showed no signs of corruption or decay. They elected to place Catherine's incorrupt body in the Corpus Domini church where she remains to the present day. The saint remains resting in a sitting position as she holds

a golden cross and the Holy Bible.<sup>24</sup>

Catherine was canonised in 1712 by Pope Clement XI and is venerated as the patron saint of Bologna, as well as the patron saint of artists, the liberal arts and against temptations.<sup>25</sup> St Catherine's life was an exemplary masterpiece of humility and love for Christ. In imitation of Our Lord, she chose to empty herself and to die to the world. She resisted the temptations and vanities of the world and instead committed all of her gifts and talents to a life of humility and service to Jesus Christ.

The life of St Catherine has attracted the admiration and veneration of various dignitaries since her time of death in the fifteenth century. The people of Bologna have come to affectionately refer to the incorruptible saint as 'La Santa'.<sup>26</sup> Queen Isabella of Naples paid homage to the saint in 1465 by leaving a crown at the site where her incorrupt body is displayed. The gesture was repeated again in 1474 by Ippolita, the daughter of the duke of Milan. In commemoration of the gifts of the two crowns, the saint is depicted wearing a crown in a panel painting commissioned by the Loiani family of Bologna.<sup>27</sup> The crown on the head of St Catherine in the painting evokes her image as she is today – crowned in Heaven interceding for





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**the Church Militant and worship-  
ing with all of the saints around  
the throne of Christ the King.**

**St Catherine of Bologna, pray for us.**

NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Sister Caterina Vigri (St. Catherine of Bologna) and “Drawing for Devotion”. Art Herstory, <https://artherstory.net/sister-caterina-vigri-st-catherine-of-bologna-and-drawing-for-devotion/>.

<sup>2</sup>‘St. Catherine of Bologna’. Catholic Encyclopedia, <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03446a.htm>.

<sup>3</sup>St. Catherine of Bologna’. The Holy See, Benedict XVI, 29 Dec. 2010, [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2010/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_aud\\_20101229.pdf](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20101229.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> ‘St. Catherine of Bologna’. Catholic Encyclopedia.

<sup>7</sup> ‘St. Catherine of Bologna: saints & angels’. Catholic Online, [https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint\\_id=111](https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=111).

<sup>8</sup> ‘St. Catherine of Bologna’. The Holy See.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> ‘St. Catherine of Bologna’. Catholic Encyclopedia.

<sup>11</sup> ‘St. Catherine of Bologna, patron saint of the arts’. 6 Aug. 2020. Loyola Press, <https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/prayer/arts-and-faith/visual-arts/st-catherine-of-bologna-patron-saint-of-the-arts/>.

[www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/prayer/arts-and-faith/visual-arts/st-catherine-of-bologna-patron-saint-of-the-arts/](https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/prayer/arts-and-faith/visual-arts/st-catherine-of-bologna-patron-saint-of-the-arts/).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> ‘A visit to the 500-year-old remains of St. Catherine of Bologna, expert on spiritual warfare’. 10 May 2019. Aleteia, <https://alleteia.org/2019/05/10/a-visit-to-the-500-year-old-remains-of-st-catherine-of-bologna-expert-on-spiritual-warfare/>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> ‘St. Catherine of Bologna, patron saint of the arts’.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> ‘St. Catherine of Bologna’. Catholic Encyclopedia.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> ‘St. Catherine of Bologna’. The Holy See.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> ‘A visit to the 500-year-old remains of St. Catherine of Bologna, expert on spiritual warfare’.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> ‘St. Catherine of Bologna: saints & angels’. Koster, M. 1998. ‘Reconsidering “St. Catherine of Bologna with Three Donors” by the Baroncelli Master of Bruges’. *Simiolus: Netherlands quarterly for the history of art* 26(1/2), <https://doi.org/10.2307/3780870>, at p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.



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# St Declan's Way 2021

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**Ron Rossiter**

*You are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)*

I'm sure in the years to come when



A Misty Start at Ardmore

we reminisce about our ramblings over the Knockmealdowns and the annual St Declan's Way, we will most likely say 'wasn't that the year it rained?'

Well ... yes it rained! We had so much of it that Tom, the guy with the umbrella, although initially happy with his means of protection, complained that the rain even managed to get in at the point of the umbrella and then made its way down to his elbow. At any rate, what I'm saying is, we all got wet.

It is only fitting that if one is going on a pilgrimage the best way to prepare spiritually, is to go to early morning Mass. Our pilgrimage started here in the open air, within the walls of St Declan's Cathedral, in Ardmore, Co. Waterford, on 20



Walking the Rosary

August 2021. After Mass, we all congregated on the site of St Declan's Oratory where Fr Kimball, with the help of Peadar, laid out the dos and don'ts of the walk.

Fr Kimball explained that St Declan would have had to walk to the Rock of Cashel to see St Patrick on business, adding that it was fitting for us to do the same. Father also urged us to pray for the changes happening within the Church at home and in Rome while we walked, offering up to the Lord our sacrifice for these intentions, and he also encouraged us to use the time wisely in our spiritual life.

As we started out, nobody really knew what was in store but for all it would be one foot in front of the other; for each wayfarer had his own track to make. Stopping for tea and buns around 11am and again around 2pm, these were welcome opportunities to rest and replenish.

On reaching the community centre at Mount Mellary and having completed a 40km trek, we were tired, wet and hungry. My heart went out to those who arrived much later, after taking a wrong turn. But the mood lifted as soon as they received a round of applause for their efforts on arrival ... a bit of light banter!

The Budds worked hard to deliver a much-needed hot dinner (as well as seconds for some!) and our tummies soon felt full. Jamie and co. reached for their instruments and soon gave us a musical treat that filled the community centre with melody and laughter.

It didn't take much to get everyone to settle down for the night, knowing in our minds that 6am is an early start for any man or woman. When that time did arrive, we woke to the sound of – yes you got it! – rain, pelting down upon the roof windows. 'Ireland, if only one could put a roof on it ...' Mass started at 7am. Straight after breakfast, and to everyone's joy and amazement, the rain stopped and the sun had a field day.

Trekking on Day Two felt a bit easier, mind you we had steeper slopes and wetter tracks from the wet weather that morning. As we reached higher peaks, the scenery



Plenty of puff left

was stunning, looking out over the plains of the Golden Vale. En-route we came across the monument of Liam Lynch, nicely tucked into the side of the mountain overlooking the Vale. Lynch was a key figure in the War of Independence and the Civil War that followed. His primary motivation was to plot an independent course for the people of Ireland. Some called him the real chief.

Taking a break at an old gun club along the way, the hosts prepared homemade soda bread, brown bread, scones and tea. Ardfinnan community centre in Co. Tipperary was our next stop, where the team had rolls and snacks ready. At this point, the pilgrims' feet were either beginning to hurt or had already developed full-blown blisters. Taking some unusual advice on board, we carefully placed lambs' wool in our shoes: the science escapes me but it worked!

By the time we left Ardfinnan, the sun was shining high in the sky. Crossing the River Suir, we headed for Cahir. It was flat ground for the most part, but our legs were now tiring as we made our way to the community centre in the town.

On entering the centre, an aroma brought me back to my childhood. The hall was filled with the sweet smell of Irish stew. There are few meals more comforting after a long walk than stew. A few drinks that night in the local hotel and then off to bed with us. Day Two was now over us, with 80km racked up. Leaving Cahir for Cashel, our legs seemed lighter. We stopped at the Lady Gregory, an old public house on a main road with a large car parking space opposite. This is where we rested and met more people joining the pilgrimage, mostly with young children. It was great to see them as they brought new energy to the group.

The town of Golden was our next stop and the local GAA stadium was the venue. For the life of me I couldn't understand how after walking almost 100km, the young people of the group took to the pitch and played football. Where did they get the energy?

For the older members of the group, it was precisely this that they en-



joyed most of all: being around the next generation, their energy and their faith. If you found yourself walking in tandem with younger members of the group, they were delighted to strike up a conversation. After witnessing the steady decline of faith in Ireland, to be around young, enthusiastic traditional Catholics was refreshing.

Having been fed and watered in Golden, our next stop would be just 3km outside Cashel. The purpose was to group everyone together as we walked towards the Rock. On approach, the Rock looked impressive but for St Declan he could have only imagined how great it was to become. The place is also known



Preparing for Mass

as St Patrick's Rock as it is said that the saint converted the King of Munster here in the fifth century, round about the same time as St Declan's visit to St Patrick.

Hore Abbey (St Mary's), just south of the Rock, was our final destination. This ruined Cistercian abbey was to be the site of our Mass. This was to mark the end of the pilgrimage, our journey's end to be poetic. A group photo captured the happy scene, a moment that will not be forgotten easily. All our endeavours culminated here: our sacrifices, our blisters and our sore limbs.

Charlie led the singing of our High Mass. The choir situated itself under the vaulted ceiling, as their voices rang out with clarity to God the Father. I had no idea that those I walked with had so much music within them.

Everyone got something from the pilgrimage: a different way of life for one, a deepening of already held beliefs for another. For me, the desire to learn more Latin has stayed with me, as it has others. It was everyone's pilgrimage, as we are all pilgrims in a world gone mad..

On behalf of all in attendance, I would like to say a big thank you to all the organisers on a job well done. It meant a lot to everyone.



✦ 

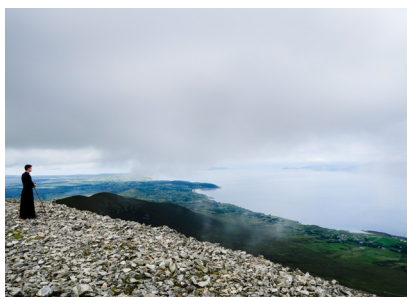
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 Confirmations at St. John's – 2021





## Croagh Patrick – 2021







## Youth Group Outing Cork – 2021







## Saint Declan's Way – 2021



# Priestly Society of Saint Pius X in Ireland

## **DUBLIN St. John the Evangelist Church**

1 Upper Mounttown Road Dún Laoghaire,  
Co. Dublin A96 P793  
T: (01) 284 2206

### **Mass Times**

- Sunday 9am & 11am  
- Monday - Friday 11am & 6:30pm most days  
- Saturday 11am

## **Saint Pius X House**

12 Tivoli Terrace S, Dún Laoghaire  
Co. Dublin A96 KV65  
T: (01) 284 2206

### **Resident:**

Rev. Fr Patrick Abbet (Prior)  
Rev. Fr Leo Boyle  
Rev. Fr Patrick Kimball  
Rev. Fr Jules Doutrebente

## **ATHLONE Corpus Christi Church**

Connaught Gardens, Athlone  
Co. Westmeath N37 E671  
T: 090 643 3703

### **Mass Times**

- Sunday 10am (check website, can be 4pm)  
- First Friday 6:30pm

## **Saint Joseph's House**

Court Devenish House, Athlone,  
Co. Westmeath N37 NF77  
T: 090 643 3703

### **Resident:**

Rev. Fr Patrick Kimball

## **BELFAST Saint Pius V Chapel**

78 Andersonstown Road  
Belfast, Co. Antrim  
BT11 9AN  
T: (028) 9445 3654

### **Mass Times**

- Sunday 12noon

## **CORK Our Lady of the Rosary Church**

Shanakiel Road Sunday's Well,  
Co. Cork T23 T389  
T: (090) 643 3703

### **Mass Times**

- Sunday 11am (check website, can be 4pm)  
- Saturday 11am

## **NEWRY Our Lady of Knock Chapel**

Unit 5 Richbrook Business Park,  
Mill Road, Bessbrook,  
Newry, Co. Down BT35 7DT  
T: (048) 30 825730

### **Mass Times**

- Sunday 8:30am

## Summer 2021 Events

Oct 31 Feast of Christ the King: Youth Commitment Renewal to CCR (Dublin)

Nov 1 Feast of All Saints (holyday of obligation)  
14 Feast of St. Laurence O'Toole – patron of Dublin  
20 Crusader Meetibg in Dublin  
20-21 Youth Outing in North

Dec 8 Feast of the Immacukate Conception (holyday of obligation)  
SSPX 3rd Order Engagements  
11 Youth national study session (Dublin)



FSSPX Northern Ireland



FSSPX Republic of Ireland

Society of Saint Pius X



S S P X

The Society of St. Pius X is an international priestly society of common life without vows, whose purpose is the priesthood and that which pertains to it.

Since its foundation by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre in 1970, the Society has formed priests according to the immemorial teachings of the Catholic Church. By offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the traditional Latin rite and administering the sacraments according to the traditional rites in vigour in 1962 (before the Second Vatican Council 1962-5), the Society's priests perpetuate what the Church has taught and done throughout its history. By the exercise of the teaching office of its priests, the Society fights against the errors that presently afflict the Church.