



SSPX



In Principio

Motherhood



Surrexerunt filii eius et beatissimam praedicaverunt vir eius et laudavit eam

Her children rose up, and called her blessed: her husband, and he praised her. (Proverbs 31:28)

Madonna and Child in the Vision of St Francesca Romana- Orazio Gentileschi (1563 - 1639)



In Principio
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Gina Connolly

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The Motherhood of Mary

Rev. Fr Robert Brucciani, District Superior

My dear brethren,

The beginning

The recent Feast of the Annunciation commemorates the humble entrance of God into His creation to bring a fallen mankind back to Himself. It marks the beginning of the work of Redemption – a work that would reach its crescendo with the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord and then finally close with His Ascension into heaven.

The Feast of the Annunciation also commemorates the day when Mary became a mother. By her ‘fiat’, Mary not only triggered the actual redemption of mankind, she also began her vocation as a mother – not just physically, but spiritually; not

just naturally, but supernaturally; not just in relation to her Son, but in relation to many.

By considering of whom she is a mother, we can best explain how she is a mother.

Mother of God

First and foremost, Mary is the Mother of God, that is, the mother of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, Who took to Himself human nature in her womb. The Divine Person was conceived in her womb, took flesh of her flesh, and was born, nourished, clothed and educated by Mary. Mary is more than just God’s gateway into the world, more than just the Bearer of God ‘Deipara’; she is truly the virginal begetter of God ‘Virgo Dei



Genitrix' and the Mother of God, 'Mater Dei'.

Mother of the Church

Second, because Mary is the mother of the whole Christ (an expression used by St Augustine), her motherhood extends to His Mystical Body, so that Mary is mother of all the members of the His Mystical Body collectively.

Mother of souls

And third, Mary is a mother to individual souls. This motherhood began at the Annunciation and was perfected through her cooperation in the work of Redemption, for which she merited the title of Co-Redemptrix.

The principle of this motherhood is sanctifying grace. A soul in a state of grace has Mary actually as mother because it is animated by the divine life of her Son or, more correctly, the soul is transformed into her Son by degrees. When a soul first attains a state of grace, we say that Mary gives birth to that soul in grace.

Mary is even mother of all souls who are not presently in a state of sanctifying grace, but have the possibility of attaining grace. Christ

died so that all men might become born into grace. Mary, therefore, has a vocation of spiritual, supernatural motherhood to all these souls.

To all souls capable of redemption, just and sinners alike, Mary yearns to exercise all the acts of a mother. She wants to protect, nourish, educate and love souls for heaven. Her will for souls is identical to that of her Son's, to Whom she unites herself in His intercession with the Father, and so merits the title of Mediatrix of all graces.

Run to Mother

In his great work, *The True Spouse*



St Alphonsus Liguori



Annunciation, Fra Angelico (c. 1395 - 1455)

of Christ, St Alphonsus Liguori explains why we should have recourse to Mary:

According to Richard of St. Lawrence, this Mother of Mercy has her merciful eyes as well upon the just as upon sinners. This author says that she treats us as a mother treats her child: a mother always keeps her eyes on her child to prevent him from falling, and to raise him up should he fall. The prayers of Mary being the

prayers of a mother, partake in a certain manner of the nature of a command[!], and therefore they cannot be rejected. Hence, Blessed Albertus Magnus used to repeat the words of the Church, ‘montra te esse matrem’, ‘show thyself to be a mother’.

Behold the words which the holy Church applies to Mary on her festivals: ‘He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord’ (Prov. 8:35). He that shall find me, says Mary,



shall find the life of grace here and eternal glory hereafter.

Sinners that we are, let us run to Mother Mary.

Please accept my wishes for a holy

Triduum and a happy Easter. If we stay close to Mary our Mother of Grace, our Co-Redemptrix and our Mediatrix, the mysteries of this sacred time will bear fruit within our souls.

Object of Mary's Motherhood		Reason	Titles
Our Lord Jesus Christ		Mary is the mother of the Person Who is God, not according to His divine nature, but according to His human nature, the substance of His flesh and in time.	Mother of God Mother of Christ Mother of our Creator Mother of our Saviour
The Church		Mary is the mother of the whole Christ which includes His Mystical Body, the Church	Mother of the Church
Souls in a state of grace, in Heaven, in Purgatory, and on earth	Beginning of Motherhood	By her consent to be the mother of the Redeemer Mary became the adoptive mother of all souls that are born in grace (even before the Incarnation)	Mother of Divine Grace
	Perfection of Motherhood	By her participation in their work of Redemption as Co-Redemptrix, this motherhood of souls in grace is brought to perfection	Co-Redemptrix
Souls capable of redemption		By her maternal solicitude for all souls capable of redemption and by her mediation with her Son to the Father as mediatrix, Mary exercises the functions of a tender mother.	Mother of Mercy Mediatrix of All Grace



St Anne

And Ireland's devotion to the mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Richard Greene

There is a beautiful shrine and holy well in the Wexford countryside in the village of Tomhaggard. In Irish, the placename Tomhaggard is rendered Teach Moshagard in reference to the patron of the early church site there: a sixth-century

Irish saint called Moshagra, whose ecclesiastical foundations were affiliated with the substantial monastic centre at Glendalough, Co. Wicklow. Having conquered Wexford in the twelfth century, the Normans brought with them their great devotion to St Anne. Consequently, Moshagra's shrine at Tomhaggard became a place of devotion to St Anne. This beautiful veneration continues to this day.



Shrine of St Anne, Tomhaggard, Wexford

How Christian devotion to St Anne began is an extraordinary story, demonstrating that God wanted the world to know the saint's crucial role in His salvation plan for mankind by choosing her to be the mother of the Virgin Mary, conceived without sin.

The story of the devotion to St



Anne begins in the Western World in 47 AD when a boat carrying St Lazarus, St Mary Magdalen, St Martha and others – all refugees from a series of Christian persecutions in the Holy Land following Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection – landed in southern France. On board also were the precious remains of St Anne, grandmother of Christ the King, our Redeemer.

In those days of constant persecution and invasion, hiding the remains of martyrs and saints was essential. The body of St Anne was buried in an underground church or crypt in Apt (also called Apta Julia) in the Provence region of France. The martyrology of Apta, one of the most ancient in existence, mentions these facts. The first bishop of Apta Julia, St Auspicius, who died before 118 AD, took every precaution to safeguard the holy remains of St Anne, burying them deeper in the subterranean chapel and carefully concealing all approaches to it. Due to the repeated invasions by Hordes of barbarians and others, the precise spot where St Auspicius had carefully hidden the sacred relics became lost in obscurity. With Charlemagne's great victory over the Saracens in the eighth century, peace and tranquillity returned to Gaul (as France was then known). Only then did they begin to restore

many of the holy places that had been destroyed or desecrated. And it was then that priests and bishops of Apta Julia started to search for the hidden sacred remains of St Anne.

Charlemagne (c.742–814), the first Holy Roman Emperor and the first Emperor in Western Europe since the collapse of the Western Roman Empire three centuries earlier, then enters the story of the discovery of the lost remains of St Anne. Charlemagne's first care on his arrival at Apta Julia was to have the cathedral restored and reconsecrated. This took place for the Easter solemnities in the presence of a vast crowd made up of clergy and lay people. But there was one great sadness – the remains of St Anne had not been found.

An extraordinary miracle, however, was to lead to the discovery of her final resting place and this is told in a letter of Charlemagne to Pope Adrian I. Among the young nobles who accompanied their parents to the Easter solemnities was fourteen-year-old John, the son of Baron Casanova. John was deaf, dumb and blind from birth. During the services, this boy, who seemed to be carried away by some overpowering emotion as expressed on his rapt and upturned face, appeared



Garden and pond at St Anne's Shrine, Tomhaggard, Co. Wexford

as if listening to some voices from above. Eventually, he walked towards the high altar, struck with his staff the steps leading up to it and made signs that they should dig there. His persistence caused considerable disturbance amid the solemn rites but neither the clergy nor the royal guards could calm or restrain him.

Charlemagne was deeply impressed. After the Mass, he commanded that the site indicated by the boy should be excavated. The altar steps were moved, revealing a doorway blocked with massive stones. This was the door to the ancient crypt where St Auspicious had been known to celebrate Holy Mysteries and distribute Holy Communion to his flock. Its size and decorations were similar to Roman catacombs. When this door was opened, the blind boy led the way into the underground church.

Charlemagne gave orders to keep the huge crowd back and followed the instructions of the blind boy. When a wall was broken, this led to another underground crypt where a mystical lamp was shining. When the emperor entered the crypt, the mystical bright lamp went out. But more amazing still was that at that very moment, the blind boy could see, speak and hear and stated the following: 'the body of Saint Anne, Mother of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, is in yonder recess'. These were his first words.

The awe-stricken emperor and his followers, at first dumb with amazement, gave release to the overflowing emotion in words of praise and thanksgiving. The walled recess was opened, a sweet fragrance like that of an oriental balm filled the air and a casket of cypress wood was discovered containing the body of St Anne, wrapped around in folds of precious cloth. On the casket was the following inscription: 'Here lies the body of Blessed Anne, Mother of the Virgin Mary'. With all those present, Charlemagne venerated the sacred remains, bringing them to light after centuries of being lost. After all these extraordinary events, Charlemagne had a narrative of the discovery of the relics drawn up by one of the notaries and a copy of it sent to the pope with a royal letter.

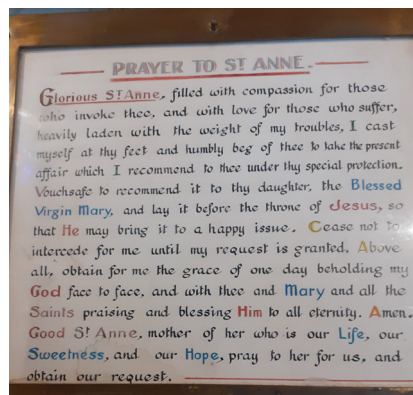


This letter and the description of the discovery of St Anne's relics, as well as Pope Adrion's response of gratitude, can still be read in the Vatican's archives.

So devotion to St Anne (Hannah in Hebrew) married to St Joachim spread all over France, especially in Brittany. The Normans, originally deriving from northern France, brought this devotion with them to England, where the feast of St Anne was first celebrated in 1378 on 26 July and was soon adopted by all the Western Church. From England, this devotion was brought to Ireland. One of the most famous pilgrimages dedicated to St Anne is at Sainte-Anne-d'Auray in Brittany, the largest pilgrimage site after Lourdes and Lisieux. I was privileged to visit Sainte-Anne-d'Auray on her feastday with many thousands of Bretons who journeyed there that day. The devotion to St Anne was brought to the United States and Canada by the first missionaries of North America, who came from France at a time when St Anne was becoming famous through her shrine in Brittany. St Anne has hundreds of churches and shrines dedicated to her in Northern America, where she still is one of the most popular and beloved saints. In Canada, devotion to St Anne was spread from the shrine of Sainte-Anne-

de-Beaupré in Quebec. Fr Thomas Briscoe, an Irish priest who became the second pastor of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, encouraged the devotion of his parishioners to St Anne by conducting an annual novena in preparation for the feast-day of St Anne.

As has already been discussed, the Normans had a great attraction to St Anne and brought that devotion to Ireland. It was particularly strong in Dublin in the medieval period but also elsewhere in Ireland, especially in Wexford, where some early holy wells were rededicated to St Anne. A stunning example is St Anne's Well at Tomhaggard, mentioned previously, situated adjacent to the ruined medieval church, as well as the modern Catholic Church of St Anne



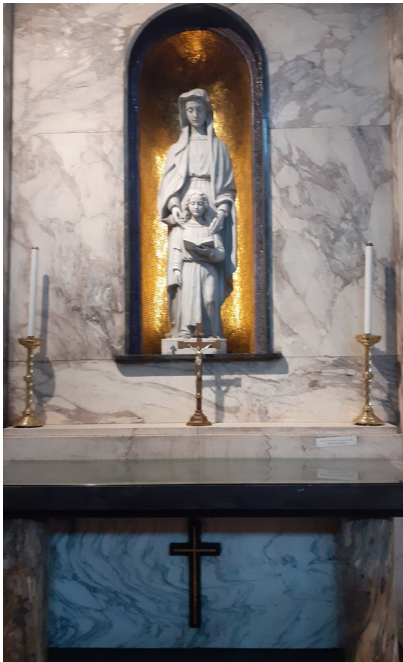
Prayer to St Anne



and St James. The tradition of the pilgrimage, like in Brittany at Sainte-Anne-d'Auray, has been revived at Tomhaggard.

It is known that there was great devotion to St Anne in Dublin from the 1300s onwards. Today, Whitefriar Street Church has a novena to St Anne leading up to her feastday on 26 July, with the novena traditionally starting on 17 July (but, of course, you can pray the novena anytime it suits). Also in Dublin, St Audoen's Church, on High Street, now run by the Polish

chaplaincy, houses the national shrine of St Anne. Like Whitefriar Street Church, St Audoen's Church celebrates St Anne's feastday with a lead-up novena. The beautiful statue of St Anne in the church was made by Deghinis of Fishamble Street and was donated by a Mrs Kelly in 1919. The site on which this church was built in 1841–46 formerly housed a college to cater for the chaplains to the Guild of St Anne, originally known as the Blakeney Inns and later St Anne's Inns. The Guild of St Anne played a vital role in the life and times of medieval Dublin and so we owe this to Richard de Clare and his Norman knights. Richard de Clare, better known as 'Strongbow', is buried, according to some accounts at least, in nearby Christ Church Cathedral.



Altar of St Anne, Whitefriar Street Church, Dublin



Flowers in the Desert

‘You can really see the grace grow in them.’

Fr Robert Brucciani

Introduction

In the year 2000, a young lady gave up the world to found an orphanage and old people’s home in her native Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh, in south-east India. A few years later, she discovered both the Tridentine Mass and her religious vocation thanks to her cousin, who was one of the faithful of the Society of St. Pius X. But, unable to attend Mass and frequent the sacraments, she made the bold decision to move her entire orphanage 700km south to Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu, to be near the only priory of the Society of St. Pius X in India. Fr Daniel Couture, District Superior in Asia and Fr Patrick Summers, the prior, welcomed Swarna and her children with open arms in January 2006. In her, and in her work, they saw the potential of a marvellous blossoming of

the apostolate in the pagan wasteland of India.

Consoling Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Almost a year before Swarna made the brave decision to move her orphanage to Palayamkottai, she



Sister Maria Immaculata holds a newborn – the child of one of her married orphans



visited two religious congregations in Europe with two intentions in mind. The first intention was to find a congregation that would accept her as a postulant; the second was to have the same congregation adopt her orphanage as part of their apostolate. This was a great thing to ask of any community, but the readiness of the Consoling Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to embrace both Swarna and her orphanage was a sign of Providence and an answer to her prayers.

The Consoling Sisters are a religious society with public vows dedicated to promoting devotion to the Sacred Heart and also to the Christian formation of girls and women. The motherhouse is in Vigne, about one hour north of Rome, and now comprises a modest eleven professed sisters and three postulants. The sisters have placed themselves under the spiritual and temporal guidance of Fr Emmanuel du Chalard of the Society of St. Pius X, and they help the Society in many ways.

In June 2007, one and a half years after the Servi Domini Orphanage arrived in Palayamkottai, Swarna boarded an airplane for Italy to begin her postulancy with the Consoling Sisters. She left the orphanage in the capable hands of another postulant

to the Consoling Sisters, Miss Marie-Blanche Herault of France, together with three Indian postulants who were the first fruits of the new foundation at Palayamkottai.

The year passed quickly enough: Swarna was accepted as a novice, taking the name of Sr Maria Immaculata, and was professed on 3 July 2008. With almost indecent haste, she boarded another airplane to return to her tearfully jubilant orphans. For months before, the children had been counting down the days with growing excitement. If any of the classes at school seemed a bit dull, one simply had to ask, 'How many days until Auntie comes?' and the sleepy children would be instantly transformed into a bright-eyed, chattering m el e. If only it were possible to describe the overflowing joy of the boys and girls on that day.



Sr. Maria Immaculata on the day of her taking the habit at the motherhouse near Vigne, Italy, 2007



Sr. Maria Celina cheerfully pushes one of the “grandmas” of the orphanage.

Sister, however, being of a phlegmatic temperament, betrayed little more than a placid smile.

Fr Couture came especially for the event, for it marked the close of another chapter in the continuing story of what can only be described as a beautiful work of Divine Providence. Since then, two more Indian ladies have been professed, two more are in the novitiate and there is one postulant in India. In addition, two French volunteers have entered the novitiate in Vigne because of their experience in India.

The new orphanage

Vocations were not the only flowers that bloomed in this unlikely garden; the generosity of many benefactors has permitted the construction of a

new orphanage on new land outside the noisy town of Palayamkottai. Fr du Chalard blessed the first stone of the first building on 29 November 2008 and returned on the feast of the Immaculate Conception in 2009 to bless the elegant edifice, which is now the convent for the sisters.

Fairer by far than concrete flowers, however, are the blossoms of virtue which charm all who visit the orphanage. The children, young ladies and elderly ladies – from infancy to eighty-six years old – form a community defined by the bonds of supernatural charity. When one sees a young girl patiently feeding an elderly lady or another supporting her as she totters in the cloister, or when one hears the beautiful singing of the choir or surprises a soul deep in prayer in the chapel, one senses the action of sanctifying grace at work. ‘You can really see the grace growing in them’, said Archbishop Lefebvre when speaking of his experience of the mission in Gabon; he would say the same thing here too.

On 23 September 2010, Fr Couture blessed the first stone of the second phase of the construction project. There were twenty-eight orphans and elderly occupying the convent building with the sisters, but now that the second phase is complete,



Sr. Maria Immaculata & Sr. Maria Pia as novices at the motherhouse in Italy, 2007.

the sisters have the convent to themselves and the numbers have increased to fifty girls and eleven elderly. The new building has a capacity for sixty children and thirty elderly, but more vocations are required to look after such a number. The next project will be the construction of a large church for which the sisters await the signal of Divine Providence.

Veritas Academy

When the Servi Domini Orphanage arrived in 2006 with sixteen girls, eight boys and seven elderly ladies

and invalids, Fr Summers, Prior of the Most Holy Trinity Priory, Palayamkottai, was obliged to turn his priory into a boys' orphanage and school.

Veritas Academy had been an unrealised dream of the priests at Palayamkottai for many years, but it was only with the arrival of so many children that the critical mass was achieved to found what is now the condition *sine qua non* of any long-term apostolate – a school to teach the faith to the next generation. The school has moved three times since then and started the 2014–15 academic year with sixty-eight pupils in a rented property equidistant from the priory and girls' orphanage. A sizeable property has been purchased for its final home, but the signs of Providence are awaited before the building contractors are called again.

Volunteers

The influence of Veritas Academy has not just confined itself to the vast expanse of the Indian subcontinent either. In a generous response to appeals for teachers and supervisors, some 110 volunteers have given time to teach at the school or to labour for the mission over the last eight years. They have come from every inhabited continent and have almost all returned home with happy memories that will never be effaced. Daily



Mass, working and playing with the children, bearing with a challenging climate, and experiencing a culture and landscape so far removed from any other, leaves most of the volunteers enriched with grace and virtue – as well as a desire to return. Four ex-volunteers are pursuing religious vocations on account of their experiences in India.

If there is one memory they cherish fondly, it is the innocence of the children. The children at the orphanage have no television, mobile phones, computer games, internet, tasteless music and ugly fashion – and their joy throws the sadness of modern Western anti-culture into sharp relief. May this memory serve them well.

The future

The *causa finalis* (ultimate purpose) of the mission in India is to establish a Catholic community with a Catholic culture in which Catholic families and vocations are formed and nourished. Substantially, there is nothing left of the 2000-year-old Catholic culture established by St Thomas the Apostle or the Catholic culture with its roots in the Portuguese colonies of 500 years ago. The ravages of the Second Vatican Council have broken the golden chain that spanned many

centuries; the physical structures remain, but they have lost their substance. Enculturation, religious ignorance and materialism have been the hammer blows that have broken this chain and we are fighting hard against an ambient pagan mentality of contraception and materialism to re-forge the links with the past.

The first group of boy orphans who live at the priory have graduated from Veritas Academy. Some are continuing their education; others are learning trades. Our plan is to give them support until they can support themselves – ideally by running their own businesses or to encourage them to try their vocations if they have the aptitude and disposition.

Already, thirty-five souls have received the sacrament of baptism as a result of the Consoling Sisters' apostolate and seven old ladies have died fortified by the rites of the Church. Sr Maria Immaculata is encouraging her girls to continue their academic education and helps them to acquire the qualities and skills of motherhood. Four young ladies have been married and Sister is a 'grandmother' eight times over. We still hope for religious vocations from the rest. Both the priory and the orphanage have attracted potential vocations from among the faithful. In June 2011, local boy Fr Therasian Xavier

Vocation



was ordained at St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary in Winona and now serves at the priory, which is around the corner from his home. At the priory, we currently have a pre-seminarian and there are two Indian seminarians at Holy Cross Seminary in Goulburn, Australia. At the orphanage, there are two novices and one postulant. The entire community of the Consoling Sisters were originally members of the faithful of the mission.

Over the last eight years, the mission has clearly been blessed. We thank all those who have helped the mission with their prayers and sacrifices, and we live in hope for the future. Charity has watered the desert and the flowers that now grow there are as miraculous as they are beautiful. May God be praised, may His mother continue to shower graces upon us and may you all be blessed.

Rev. Robert Brucciani
21 January 2015

Postscript

Since my departure from India in 2015, the Consoling Sisters have been blessed with a deluge of vocations at their motherhouse in Italy. At the last count, there were forty-nine professed sisters and eleven

novices from all over the world. The new novitiate in Italy is already too small, but there are advanced plans to open a house in the USA. In India, the orphans I knew have mostly flown the coop and are making their way in the world. A number are already married with children. The girls have been replaced by new orphans – just like the old ones: full of smiles and laughter and a delightful mischievous innocence. New ‘grandmas’ arrive to replace the old ones who die in the arms of supernatural charity.

Regrettably, Veritas Academy was forced to close because it was unable to renew its license, which means that the new orphans must now attend local schools. Also regrettable is the absence of boys at the priory because the original orphans have grown up and left. This was to be expected as the priory could never have hoped to be approved as an institution caring for orphans. In consequence, it is a tidier and more prayerful place, but alas, at the priory. Only happy memories remain where there was once chaotic joy.

Fiat, fiat.



St Frances of Rome

Nadine O'Donoghue

St Frances of Rome was born into a noble family in 1384. During her lifetime, she experienced civil war, plagues, famine, a great schism and the three popes. She witnessed churches being burned and destroyed and bloody conflicts on the streets of Rome. Her own home was ransacked because her husband remained faithful to the papal army and he was banished from the city. But Frances bore her husband's exile, the loss of two children, and the trouble that befell her city with heroic virtue. God used all her trials to raise her to great sanctity and perfected her in the science of the saints. He consoled her with many spiritual gifts. As a Catholic wife and mother, Frances also reached out to the wider world. While married, she dedicated herself to corporal and spiritual works of charity, established two

oratories, set up a hospital in her home, composed a rule of life and founded a religious order.

Frances is as wonderful a role model for us today as she was for her peers in her time. She embraced both the secular and the religious life. She fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick, consoled



Saint Frances of Rome Giving Alms,
Baciccio (1639 - 1709)



the sorrowful, converted the sinner, and gave spiritual and temporal succour to countless souls.

Even in her earliest years, Frances led a most virtuous life. Unlike other children, she shunned worldly amusements, finding joy in solitude and prayer. She inherited a strong will from her father and a deep devotion from her mother. Her earliest biographers describe her as highly intelligent but profoundly childlike, highly favoured by God yet deeply humble.¹ At the tender age of 11, she wanted to abandon the world to love God with an undivided heart in the solitude of the cloister. But God had another plan for her life.

Resigned to God's Will and her father's wishes, she married a wealthy young aristocrat, Lorenzo Ponziano. Early in their marriage, it was clear to Lorenzo that his wife had special gifts and so he trusted her with the care of his whole estate. She proved assiduous in the superintendence of household affairs and in her attention to the good of her children, her family and her servants – taking great care of their souls as well as their temporal needs. In the mornings and evenings, she attended local churches for devotions and Holy Communion. Determinedly, she spent every spare hour in prayer at her oratory, read spiritual books

and conversed on religious topics. Frances loved to practise almsgiving, especially helping the most unfortunate. She put her hand to the plough in earnest. She never wasted time and treasured every moment of this passing life.

When famine and plague had reached their worst, she gave away all her provisions and set up a hospital in her home. When her heroic works of charity emptied the family granary and cellar, they were miraculously replenished with an abundance of corn and wine. By her example, she inspired the noble class of Rome 'to increase their liberality, and encouraged them to serve more abundantly the suffering members of Christ'.²

Lorenzo was filled with a holy awe at the sight of all the wonders in his house. The strong and simple faith of Frances ensured God's providence at every turn. Lorenzo's great respect for his wife turned to deep veneration; he encouraged her to follow every divine inspiration and left her entirely free to order her time and life accordingly. She immediately gave away all her jewels and ornaments and embraced a more modest attire. Her fasting and mortifications increased, and she divided whatever money was hers into two: one half for the poor and the other for the sick.



Her selfless example inspired her peers, servants, husband, children and the poor alike to seek perfection and embrace a life of Christian happiness. Lorenzo's last words to her on his deathbed were: 'I feel as if my whole life has been one beautiful dream of the purest happiness.'³

Frances sought to persuade other noble ladies to shun the world of pomp and softness. Many renounced a life of idleness, followed in her footsteps, and imitated her virtues, pious exercises and daily works of charity. For these Roman matrons, Frances founded a house of oblates under the rule of St Benedict. They had a special apostolate to the sick and the poor; they aspired to be the hands and feet of Christ to the suffering people of Rome.

After the death of her husband, Frances fled to the oblates she founded, 'with a rope around her neck, prostrate on the ground with tears in her eyes, she begged admission to the cloistered life.'⁴ Her wish was granted and, although she was spiritual mother and superior to the whole community, she gloried in calling herself everyone's servant. Frances died in 1440 and she was canonised by Pope Paul V in 1608.

In every age, God raises up extraordinary saints. Their lives are full

of wonderful Christian instruction and encouragement for us all. St Frances of Rome is one of those treasures whose life and example fill us with awe and wonder:

*From her little oratory where she held secret communion with heaven, she went out into the world with the most ardent desire to serve the poor, to console the afflicted, to do good to all.*⁵

As a Catholic mother and wife, Frances was the pillar of her family home but she was also the beacon of parish life. She was a saintly role model for her family, the rich, the poor and all in her city. To all those she encountered, she was an incredible example of good works and strong faith. The many stories of her miracles are edifying to read, her mortifications are astonishing and the apostolate she lived is remarkable. It is not surprising that in her lifetime, the people of Rome venerated her as a living saint.

Notes

1 Fullerton, G. 2011. *The Life of St. Frances of Rome & Others*. Benedictine Classics, Oxford, p. 34.

2 *Ibid.*, 61.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 128.

4 Guéranger, D.P. 2018. *Liturgical Year: Septuagesima*, March 9, St Frances of Rome. Forgotten Books Publishers.

5 Fullerton, *Life of St. Frances*, p. 37.



Madame Lefebvre: Portrait of a Catholic Mother

Mary-Jacinta Murphy

God gave me the grace of offering Him the pure flower of my chastity on the day I was married, when I placed it on His altar and received, in exchange, other flowers, namely the new lives which He wanted to give me. (Maria Rosa dos Santos, mother of Sr Lucia of Fatima)¹

An unlikely calling

The twentieth century was dawning and twenty-year-old Gabrielle Watine – daughter of northern France, energetic, agreeable and vivacious – was nearing the end of her education. Nothing was more natural in the minds of the good Bernardine Sisters charged with completing the excellent education begun in her family than that young Gabrielle should have a vocation

to religious life. It was only to be expected that a young lady whose ‘only ... desire’ was ‘to accomplish ... duty, happily’ was ripe for a religious vocation.² Gabrielle too reflected seriously on the matter.

Surprisingly, her spiritual director ruled against religious life. There



Mme Gabrielle Lefebvre



was no lack of suitability in Gabrielle. One can only assume that the Holy Ghost moved Msgr Fichaux to make what must have been a courageous decision; he declared firmly that only in marriage would Gabrielle fulfil the Will of God.³

An indirect route to sanctity

Was obedience difficult for the girl? We do not know. Gabrielle was too discreet and well-balanced to tell the world the feelings of her soul. We only know two facts: firstly, the young girl began to pray for a devout Catholic husband and secondly, it is said that the young bride cried on her wedding day.⁴

Years later, a letter to her daughter reveals her mature thoughts on vocation. Gabrielle comments that the soul called to the 'very high' vocation of religious life 'has its direct way mapped out'.⁵ Cannot we hear in these words an echo of the energetic young girl who wished to give herself directly to God?

In this letter, Gabrielle subsequently reveals a hint of the Divine Wisdom that selected the way of marriage for her soul. A soul called to marriage, maintains Gabrielle, 'must find in the greatness of her duty, and in a great

desire to please God, food for her piety'.⁶ In other words, because she lacks the external rule of a religious order, the holy wife and mother must draw on her own resources and the events of daily life to nourish her soul. Even the oppositions, the 'trials, joys and pain – all will nourish it'.⁷ Not for Gabrielle the swift and secluded route to sanctity, in which the soul opens to and is filled by God via its holy rule, but instead the energetic and discerning cooperation with Providence, Who comes Himself to meet her on untrodden paths and in a land without clear boundaries. The holy bride who offers herself completely to God as a vessel for new life can expect His unmatched Providence and tender care.

'This very important matter of education'⁸

Providence prepared a sensitive and pious husband for Gabrielle in René Lefebvre. The first children came quickly: René, Jeanne, Marcel, Bernadette and Christiane. All five had priestly and religious vocations, while Marcel went on to found the SSPX. The seed of Gabrielle's vocational longing clearly came to fruition in the vocations of her children.



Gabrielle (now Madame Lefebvre) lived at a time and place most conducive to the education of a Catholic family. Catholic schools were well-staffed and abundant and supported the young family in the difficult task of educating young souls. How many parents were tempted to let the school, the parish and the religious undertake and supply for parental duty? Not so Madame Lefebvre. She understood that faith must be caught as well as taught. Reasoning that maternal education is ‘much more of an outpouring of the soul than a syllabus for a teacher’,⁹ she wisely preferred to prioritise spiritual reading and personal prayer over readings on the education of children. Elected as president of the Franciscan Third Order at the unusually young age of thirty-two, Madame Lefebvre had already journeyed far on the spiritual path. Her priorities were in order: to sanctify her children, she had first to sanctify herself.



Mme Gabrielle Lefebvre

The Lefebvre household was a busy, happy place. Had the internet been invented at that time, it wouldn't have featured much in the lives of the joyful family. Its members had already filled their lives to satiation. Each day began with daily Mass for those children old enough to walk. This quest for sanctity did not in the least disturb that blessed equilibrium for which Madame Lefebvre had been noted, even in school. The life of the Lefebvre children was not all prayer and grind. Gleefully, Madame Lefebvre reports of a summer holiday spent with her children, ‘I can see the sea and watch the games’.¹⁰ So much did she enjoy spending time with her children that she confessed to being ‘very sad’ when, on doctor's orders, she was forced to take a holiday away from them.¹¹

Mother and mistress

It should be remarked, though, that Madame Lefebvre was assisted in her duties as mistress of the home and so had ample time for the demanding superintendence and creativity required by the upbringing of children. Mothers of the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries find their homes blighted by the withering breath of Marxism in more ways than one. Not only



are mothers often forced by economic necessity to work outside the home even when their presence is urgently needed there, but they are equally deprived of the home help that common sense accorded to mothers of an earlier generation. At the same time, they are mostly deprived of the precious aid that schools and Catholic religious once provided to help form children. If we find a model of motherhood in Madame Lefebvre, we equally find in the France of 1910 a social milieu equipped to support her.

A sobering thought: had young Marcel Lefebvre's education lacked the abiding presence of his mother in the home, would he have become the Archbishop of Dakar and later the restorer of the priesthood? One may doubt it, God's all-powerful grace notwithstanding. In the prevailing circumstances, then, it is a bounden duty on all good Catholics, insofar as in them lies, to assist families materially and to struggle politically for their economic welfare so that the mother can continue to reign as the queen and the beauty of the Catholic home.

The mother is also for society

But Madame Lefebvre did not confine her affections to the family

circle. Nor were the children taught to expect her constant presence and unremitting attention; their little hearts were not trained to consider themselves as the entire centre and goal of their parents' lives. We are familiar with the Dickensian caricature of devotion in Mrs Jellyby, who sacrificed her whole household to the needs of the African missions.¹² If Dickens were to live in the twenty-first century, he might well reverse his caricature and paint a mother whose presence and Christian influence in society were entirely sacrificed on the altar of household demands.

Madame Lefebvre did not live to hear Pope Pius XII's addresses to women, but with her whole heart, she would have agreed with his words:

It is ... useless to preach [woman's] return to the home so long as conditions continue which in many cases force her to remain absent from it. Therefore every woman without exception is under an obligation – a strict obligation of conscience, mind you! – not to remain aloof; every woman must go into action, each in her own way, and join in stemming the tides which threaten to engulf the home, in fighting the doctrines which undermine its foundations,



*in preparing, organizing, and completing its restoration.*¹³

The Lefebvre family's attention was turned ever outward to the needs of those around them – beginning with incapacitated and needy relatives and going beyond the circle of relatives to the sick, the needy and the lonely who abounded in the years during and after World War I. Madame Lefebvre herself became a Red Cross nurse; this was providential, as she and her husband would care for the wounded during the war.

The shadow of the Cross

Thus far, the Lefebvre household had been sunny and virtuous, remaining untouched by major trials. Now fell the shadow of the Cross upon the young couple. First came the separation of husband and wife caused by Monsieur Lefebvre's war efforts. In common with all of France, the family suffered from food restrictions and a lack of privacy. German soldiers were lodged perforce in the family home; Madame Lefebvre resisted by offering empty rooms. Consequently, she was imprisoned but refused to apologise, though she fell dangerously ill.¹⁴

Nor were the conflicting duties to home and country easily reconciled in her conscience. Once, a fellow

Franciscan tertiary, torn between the urgency of needs outside the home and her duties within the home, asked if it were not her duty to remain at home. 'I also have asked myself this question',¹⁵ Madame Lefebvre replied. Finally, it was the Holy Ghost Who resolved this apparent contradiction by the gift of counsel; for in individual cases, there is no clear blueprint to follow and the Guest of the soul must illuminate the way. The subsequent career of the family proved Madame Lefebvre's concrete decisions correct. How much of Madame Lefebvre's iron resistance and Monsieur Lefebvre's zeal for his homeland were transferred by osmosis to Marcel Lefebvre?

The war years were just the beginning of the trials for the Lefebvres. After the birth of little Michel in 1920, Madame Lefebvre was diagnosed with a severe disease of the spine, which required her to be encased in plaster for thirteen months. In pain, sleep-deprived and incapacitated, she had to be carried around by her devoted husband, to whom she also showed thoughtful affection. Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre later traced his own religious vocation and that of his siblings to this trial, which was so crucifying for the whole family.¹⁶ Holy as they were, the family urgently needed



the Cross to detach them from the earth. More trials came: the threat of post-war poverty meant increased work for the still-young mother, who took on the additional burden of bookkeeping to save the family's money.

Giving each child to God

With each cross came consolation as, one by one, the children found their vocations. Madame Lefebvre was also detached in this matter, advising her children to be 'well-disposed to give ... as Providence demands'.¹⁷ Her maternal affection was far from lessening as each child reached independence and she explained, 'There is nothing which tears you apart like the separations, however temporary, from the children you love'.¹⁸ And when her eldest son became a priest, how like Our Lady was Madame Lefebvre as she strove to be with her son 'in spirit ... ador[ing] Our Lord in' the priest.¹⁹ If anyone finds this exaggerated, he should consider the example of St Leonides, the father of Origen, who was accustomed to kissing his infant son's breast because, as he explained, the Holy Ghost dwelt there.²⁰ Should not also a mother adore the mysterious Presence of Our Lord in the alter Christus, the additional humanity which she, as a mother, has presented to Christ as His own?

'A happiness without clouds'

Her mission was fulfilled. Madame Lefebvre had given her children to God. Now they must make their way in the world alone, with their parents' example as a light for their feet and a fire in their hearts. In July 1938, after a short illness which caused her great pain, Madame Lefebvre received the last Sacraments. In those days, the sacrifice of a missionary life was complete: neither René (her elder son) nor Marcel (a younger son) was there to give her the last Rites or even to say a final goodbye. Her three elder daughters, all religious in missionary or enclosed orders, were equally absent. Looking to heaven, The dying mother traced a big sign of the Cross for each absent child, saying: 'I bless René ... Jeanne ... Marcel ... Bernadette ... Christiane', before embracing and blessing her three youngest children.²¹ 'Again in a short time we will find each other in a happiness without clouds',²² she consoled her husband. On her peaceful death, in one of those delicate touches of Divine Providence, her wish was granted all unconsciously by her nurse: the Magnificat was intoned.²³

Esurientes implevit bonis.

Catholic Lives

Notes

1 Fellowes, M. 2007. *Sister Lucia: apostle of Mary's Immaculate Heart*. Immaculate Heart Publications, p. 22.

2 From a poem by Gabrielle Watine, written while at boarding school. See Le Crom, Fr, 1994 (trans.). *The Life of Gabrielle Lefebvre*. Angelus Press; Le Crom, Fr. 1948. *Une Mere de Famille*. Paris.

3 Le Crom, *Life of Gabrielle Lefebvre*, p. 5.

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

8 Gabrielle's own words to her aunt. See Le Crom, *Life of Gabrielle Lefebvre*, p. 10.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

12 Dickens, C. 1852-53. *Bleak House*.

13 Pope Pius XII, *Questa Grande Vostra Adunata*.

14 Le Crom, *Life of Gabrielle Lefebvre*, p. 18.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

16 'We understood what suffering is. We five older children were really marked by it. Our vocation to the religious life originated then'. Words by Marcel Lefebvre as reported in De Mallerais, B. T. 2014. 'A model of motherhood: Gabrielle Lefebvre-Watine, mother of Archbishop Lefebvre'. *The Angelus Online* [http://www.angelusonline.org/index.php?section=articles&subsection=-show_article&article_id=3541].

17 Le Crom, *Life of Gabrielle Lefebvre*, p. 23.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

20 'Saint Leonides: martyr'. *Lives of the Saints: our models and protectors*. [https://sanctoral.com/en/saints/saint_leonides.html].

21 Le Crom, *Life of Gabrielle Lefebvre*, p. 31.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 32.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 32.



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Motherhood and Family: A Review

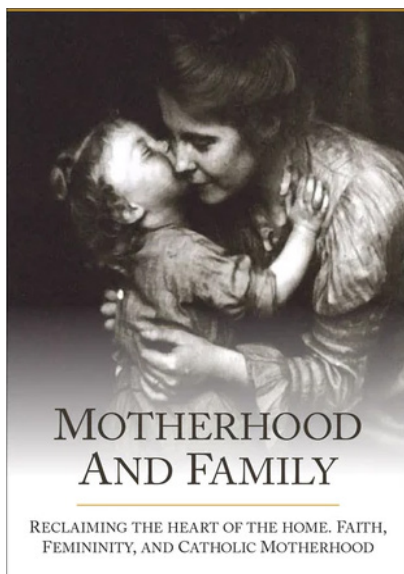
Fr Francis Gallagher

In the foreword, Fr Markus Heggenberger states that this book defends the Catholic concept of social life against a Protestant notion that Christian women should be concerned only with ‘church, children and kitchen’. Now feminism would ‘free’ women from all three. Hence the Irish government’s desire to abolish the constitution’s support for mothers working in the home.

Each essay offers advice to mothers. Caryll Houselander writes that art is not just for the gifted child. All children using their hands to make things can learn to love God. Mothers should encourage this. The human brain controls human hands. By making things with their hands, which were already in their minds, and loving what they make, children imitate God. Thus, they

learn to know and love Him.

In the first of her six essays, Mary Reed Newland recalls that children are often told that Mary weeps





when a girl whistles and that She would never chew gum! Newland opposes such ‘training’. It is the real Mary of the gospels that we must give our children to imitate. Mary was an enchanting child. As a mother, She was a great storyteller and teacher. She even taught God about God!

Teaching children to pray, writes Newland, is an important duty. Childhood is a delicate period. It affects one’s whole life. Parents who no longer pray themselves try teaching their children to pray. But how can they succeed if they don’t pray themselves? Children must be taught to pray early on, while their minds are more open to things spiritual. Their mothers should pray with them.

The summer months are especially the time for recreation. Whatever about mothers, for children it must be fun. The first years of a child’s life are almost all recreation. He is learning, eating, discovering and inventing. These things are fun and exciting – a form of recreation.

Women’s ‘emancipation’ freed them from home and family by dragging them into offices and factories. So breastfeeding seemed outmoded. But God knows that mothers can feed their children best with their

own bodies. Newland practised breastfeeding. Some mothers foolishly fear embarrassment. But Our Lady nursed Her baby. So why be embarrassed? Feeding increases intimacy between mother and child. Since she is normally seated or lying, the mother gets the rest she needs after childbirth. It is all part of God’s loving plan for mothers and babies.

Especially for those whose vocation it is, marriage cannot be considered a mere lesser evil. It is a spiritual union. It functions because God wills it to. He gives it a special grace. He tells the couple what they must do. Marrying and achieving physical union is good. It leads to the first end of marriage, which is the bearing of children. It paves the way for spiritual union. It is a holy vocation. It is not easy but grace will help, as will a nightly Rosary.

Mothers-in-law sometimes resent their children belonging to another. Their interference frequently harms marriages. The husband must try to prevent this. But the wife too must try to understand her ‘difficult’ mother-in-law. She must try to love her as one for whom Christ also died. She should imitate St Monica, whose patience, love and prayer won the love of a previously hostile



mother-in-law. Even mothers-in-law can sanctify and be sanctified!

Ed Willock maintains that voluntary poverty goes with marriage. But married couples must buy goods for their household. Poverty in marriage must be limited. Yet both parents can give their minds and hearts to God while performing their duties. The family can serve other families. So it used to be in Ireland. So it will be again one day, God willing.

Marital infidelity, Willock remarks, is the most significant symptom of social disintegration. The removal of Mary from modern life is its principal cause. Without Her, feminine modesty is ignored. Men divide women into good and bad and treat them accordingly. The remedy will be the restoration of Mary to public life, thereby restoring the dignity of woman.

Sr Muriel refers to St Maria Goretti, who was canonised in 1950 for heroically resisting an attempted rape. Her mother could hardly believe that her Maria was now a saint. But Maria received good training at home. Sadly, many mothers dread their children becoming saints. They fear what God will demand, forgetting the grace that He gives. Signora Goretti took her example from

Mary at the foot of the Cross. Was she really so surprised to see her daughter canonised?

The anonymous author of 'Having babies at home' claims that hospitals are not the best places for mothers to have babies. When the child is born at home, the entire household is involved. The atmosphere is better and calmer. In hospital, the mother often feels alone and worries about things at home. When she is at home, she can still receive visits from doctors, nurses and midwives. The author had all her children at home.

'He married an angel' by Susan Candle is especially concerned with wives who, believing themselves to be growing spiritually, hope to reform their less spiritual husbands. Women are concerned with expressions of love, emotion and atmosphere. But many women expect only this also from their husbands. They forget that it is in the nature of the man to be primarily the protector and provider. Only when they acknowledge this and work to correct their own faults is any progress possible.

Charity, writes Elizabeth M. Sheehan, enhances the spirituality of married life. Many women want careers but only vocations possess



hearts. God gave man the ability to put the mind in first place. But women have always held Christian homes together. Most women find an antidote to loneliness in the vocation of marriage in company with their husbands and children. The family can and must pray together. But they can pray frequently without disrupting their life lived in common.

Women, writes Carol Jackson, are generally more sensitive to the things of the spirit. Whatever they feel may even show on their faces. Whereas men might love things, women must love persons. The modern world, often successfully, would have them love only lesser beings. There is only one person whom they can safely and satisfactorily love, and that is Christ. Wherever He is introduced, all human relations begin immediately to straighten themselves out.

Elaine Malley discusses the 'empty nest' period in a mother's life. Her children have left home. She must now let them learn from their mistakes. Children are the strongest

unifying factor in marriage but often, once they appear, he who should be first in his wife's affections becomes the last. Now is the time for husband and wife to give each other what they have been giving to their children for years. They should rejoice in each other more. The wife will always be concerned about those whom God has given her to love but she should avoid useless worry. She should thank God for His goodness to herself and her family and leave the rest in His loving hands.

These essays were written in the forties and fifties but they are perhaps still more relevant today. Although some of the content seems outdated, and is perhaps sometimes unduly idealistic, this book contains much useful reading for mothers and, indeed, also for fathers. Mothers could also profit from reading 'Fathers and family'. After all, it is good to better know your better half. You may not understand him as well as you think you do.



The Painted Paschal Candle

Grattan Keating

The proposal

Back in January 2022, Fr Jules Doutrebente asked me if he could have a few moments of my time to discuss a painting proposal he had in mind; not an unusual request, as I had previously produced two paintings for the church. Fr Doutrebente asked me if it was possible for me to paint a paschal candle. At that moment, I must admit, I was rather puzzled by the request, as I initially thought Father wanted a painting of a paschal candle. This would have been an unusual request.

Fr Doutrebente went on to explain that he wanted me to paint onto the candle itself. At first, I was surprised, as I had never given any thought to the décor of a candle,

paschal or otherwise and, as an artist, in that moment, I was trying to work out the logistics of painting onto a cylindrical piece of wax. Fr Doutrebente proceeded to show me pictures of some truly splendid examples of painted paschal candles. This was something entirely new to me and a truly exciting proposal for a project. I agreed to do it but was now left with the dilemma of how to produce, with skill, a large painted candle in a technique I had never used before.

Step one: the theme

As in all art projects, whether it be in school, college or studio, there is always the conundrum of the starting point. Even before the



first brushstroke touched the candle, many problems needed to be solved.

The first hurdle was the theme. The theme, I felt, needed to relate to the season. In this case, Eastertide. Therefore, the focal point of the candle must be Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. I concluded that He must be the first element I produce on the candle.

Next, I needed to think about all the other elements that could be in the decoration – no shortage of inspiration there, as the inclusion of angels, saints and sacramentals are always an option. In this case, I researched paschal candles for some inspiration and guidance on how to proceed. What I discovered

was that there are many different schools in the production of paschal candles and each school was unique and almost competitive with their 'rival' schools.¹ Plenty of food for thought there, both from the perspective of subject matter and stylisation.

In planning the painting of a paschal candle, I discovered that it is broken into distinct sections, with a primary figure at the bottom/middle and a secondary figure on top, set between bands of wording, prayers or decorative symbols. These figures either overlap or give way entirely to the crucifix in the centre of the candle, where you find the symbols A (Alpha) and Ω (Omega), along with the year.

The arrangement of the initial composition came to me as I contemplated the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus after my Rosary. The idea of a throne upon a dais (a platform-like structure) seemed the most respectful way to represent Our Lord.

Now, I had made my decision on where to start my composition. All I had to do was to decide how the overall candle would look aesthetically. This question answered itself as soon as I contemplated it: it had to be in the Beuron aesthetic.



After researching other paschal candles – and there were many examples of artwork on display – I felt some lacked the seriousness needed in a piece as important as a paschal candle or were often just too artificial and basic looking, lacking beauty or originality. Too often, the candles I researched seemed to overindulge in multiple genres in one tight setting. Or the stylistic choices settled upon did not lend themselves favourably to the candle.

The Beuron seemed the most versatile choice because, by its nature, the Beuron aesthetic is based on precise animated geometry. The Beuronese style, as an artistic apparatus, is not burdensome nor laborious on the eye, nor is it overly simplified. It occupies a space whereby form is allowed to breathe, revealing itself gradually to the viewer, while at once still pious and unwaveringly tied to traditional Catholic aesthetics and values. The Beuron allows the subject to come first as it dispenses with the superfluous.

There was another reason for wishing to paint using the Beuron aesthetic on the candle: simply put, there were already two Beuron icons hanging inside the church, on either side of the high altar, which I had painted in 2020. It seemed fit-

ting to tie all these pieces together but also to stick to the established aesthetic in the church.

By making this decision, it allowed me to contemplate the rest of the candle's compositional makeup. This gave me the identity of the secondary figure on the candle. I had initially decided to put Our Lady of Sorrows on the top but, on reflection, I felt that St Finbarr, the patron saint of Cork, would be an interesting addition. It was also an opportunity to link the candle with the Beuron icon of St Finbarr, already in the church above the altar.

Step two: the process

I knew from the outset that I was in the realm of experimentation. This can be both a blessing and an artistic curse when working on a commission, especially when dates and time factors are attached to a project like this.

Two obvious questions loomed large in my mind. Firstly, what medium of paint was I to use? And secondly, with regard to the application of the image, what sort of ground (surface) was I encountering with the wax? But, before any of those considerations, I had to figure out how to actually paint the



candle and not drop or dent it in any way. My somewhat novel solution to hold the candle in place was my youngest child's baby change-mat, as it was cushioned on all sides. The next task was to determine how to draw onto the candle and build up my composition.

Looking at the bee's wax candle, it is soft and easily bumped/dented if care is not taken. However, I found it lent itself quite well to the mapping of my illustrations. I resolved to draw the entire composition of the candle to scale on tracing paper. I then cut out each section individually in order to arrange them like a jigsaw puzzle along the length of the candle.

Fixing the now-cut drawing onto the candle took patience and a little bit of adjusting to make sure everything was in alignment. Once in place, I simply drew back over my original drawing, which impressed itself into the candle, therefore outlining the image perfectly. But there was no margin for error at this point because it would ruin the composition and, most importantly, the candle itself.

Now the moment I had worried about was upon me: what type of paint would I use? I thought about three potentials and weighed their

merits carefully. In the initial running was model enamel paint, which is oil based but a very tough and enduring paint. The only problem was that it's challenging to mix colour freehand on a palette and it would require turpentine to allow it to flow into a solution, but turpentine would melt the wax on contact. There was also the added risk that it would make the candle highly flammable – I would like to highlight here that I had no intention of going down in SSPX history as the first artist to burn down a church! I then considered traditional oil paints: easier to mix but, unfortunately, the oils didn't dry very well





on some tester pieces and tended to sag and slowly fall off the waxy surface.

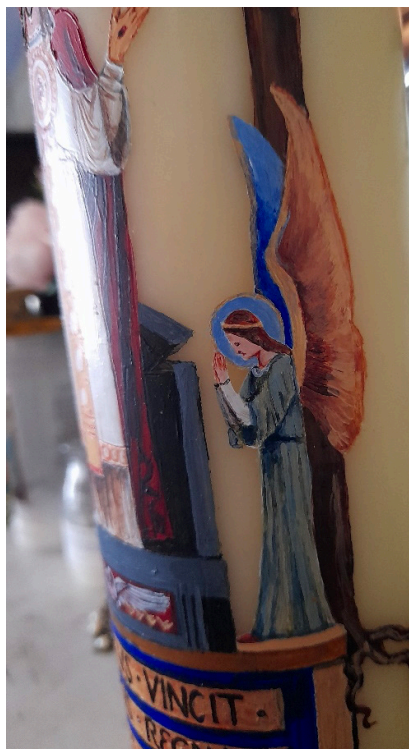
This left me with only one option: acrylic paint. Acrylic paint is water-based and dries exceptionally fast. However, I soon discovered that the acrylic needed a base coat primer before I applied solid colour, as the colours looked transparent when applied directly to the wax, creating a streaky washed-out effect, making it look unfinished and rushed.

As it turns out, it was, as we say in the studio, a happy accident that the primer was the way forward as it helped to speed up the application process immensely. This made what I liked to call 'ghosts' of my various assembled pieces as they appeared as white figures against the waxy background. The subtle curves and lines from the transferring process contained the primer very well. This was a process I perfected as the project developed further, and I was able to find faster and more efficient methods of developing my images as I painted.

The use of acrylic-on-wax did, however, give rise to two unforeseen problems. Firstly, the acrylic would peel off if pressed too hard against a plastic surface, in my case, the

changing-mat. Secondly, the candle had to be carefully handled lest the image would rub off on my hands. I solved both problems by employing the use of my wife's baking paper, which protected the acrylic until it was completely set and ready to be moved.

With the painting, I opted for a limited palette, following the Beuron rules. However, I considered the overall structure of the candle and decided to use blues, very much reminiscent of Giotto's painting





style, to give the background element a bit of dynamism. I also added trees to frame the main subjects on the candle. These trees were based on the mosaic image on the floor before the altar in Our Lady of the Rosary Church in Cork City. This helped to add another unique link between the candle and the church itself. I decided that the top of the candle should act as a partial landscape in the Beuronese style. This landscape would be supported by a blue, star-filled sky, alongside a full moon as a subtle reference to Our Lady.

The figures

There are four figures in the paschal candle overall: Our Lord Jesus Christ, St Finbarr and two Beuronese-styled angels flanking Our Lord on either side of his throne. As mentioned above, the first figure to be designed, mapped and painted was Our Lord. As with any project where you are using a new medium or ground, the quality of rendition increased as I perfected my method of painting acrylic paint onto wax. Therefore, I returned to the figure of Christ several times throughout the course of the project, changing and adapting his clothing, throne and facial features. The clothing Our Lord is wearing depicts the Sa-

cred Heart; again, I felt a reference was needed to relate it back to my original ideas generated by reciting the Litany of the Sacred Heart.

The second figure designed and painted was St Finbarr. I decided early on in the project to render him differently from the icon already hanging in Our Lady's. It would have been an easy decision to stick with a tried and tested image, but I felt that he needed to





be unique. Therefore, I opted to change the colour palette from that used in the icon, along with his vestments and posture. I also depicted the saint without his glove. It is said that Christ appeared to St Finbarr in a dream, whereupon the saint fell on his face but was helped to his feet again when Jesus took him by his right hand. As a result, his hand was illuminated and remained illuminated when he awoke from his dream, necessitating the use of a glove to conceal its radiance. I made this decision on aesthetic grounds as I didn't want to distract from the primary icon on the candle.

I did, however, opt to include Lú (Lua), the demon St Finbarr famously cast out of the lake in Gougane Barra. But I altered the way the demon is usually depicted. Instead, I opted for a gargoye-like physique, long neck, bird-like features on the head, with sharpened hook-beak, reptile-like scales and fins on the back. Lú needed to embody the demon described by St Finbarr but with reference to the Book of Genesis and the serpent. Lú's eyes are also much more intense, glowing yellow and red with rage for being cast out.

The two angels featured on the candle are also based on the Beuron

aesthetic. They are not a direct pastiche; therefore, they are original to the candle. They were, however, rendered following the rules of the Beuron aesthetic as established by Fr Desiderius (Peter) Lenz (1832–1928). Set in profile, they flank Our Lord on either side of his throne. The wings were inspired by the work of the artist Jan van Eyck (1390–1441), as I wanted my angels to have a little more colour in their wings. The colouration of the icons in the Beuron can be a little more muted compared to more typical renditions of angels in ecclesiastical art.

Colouration and symbolism

What is important to note about the paschal candle, like other forms of Catholic art, is that there is an in-built colour symbolism at play. An index is needed to interpret the colour coding and this will be instantly recognisable to anyone familiar with the liturgical colours used for the Mass.

The colour coding can be read as follows:

I. Red is typically representative of the blood of Christ. The colour can also be associated with strong emotions such as hate or love, but it generally serves as a reminder of Christ's suffering and sacrifice on the Cross. I chose this colour for



the robes of Christ on the candle.

II. Purple is the colour of royalty and power. It can also symbolise suffering because it is an offshoot of red and blue. Purple also serves as an indicator of truth and leadership.

III. Blue is typically associated with the Virgin Mary. It evokes sincerity, piety and hope. Usually, the crescent moon against a blue sky can signify Our Lady. This can be seen in the starry moonlit sky at the top of the candle.

IV. Green is the colour of nature, joy and rebirth. It is associated with Christ's victory in the Resurrection.

V. White represents innocence, purity and chastity.

VI. Grey also features alongside white but has a dual purpose and can only be interpreted within the confines of the subject matter of a composition. Therefore, grey can represent either immortality of the spirit or mourning and humility.

VII. Black is tricky because it can be used interchangeably within a painting, fresco or stained-glass window. The most obvious thing black represents is death, but it is never as straightforward as one might imagine, as white can also be used in art to represent death, mourning and disease. In this case, think of the four horsemen of the apocalypse in the Book of

Revelation. Black also represents worldly death in the sense of taking spiritual orders; think of the Benedictine Order.

VIII. Brown is the offshoot of black in its use in that both colours are similarly arrived at vis-à-vis colour theory. It also represents simplicity of life and the taking of spiritual orders, just like the Benedictines or the Franciscans.

IX. In its simplest form, yellow is used in halos around Our Lord Jesus Christ, Our Lady and the saints, or as a device to add colour for a particular object or time of day (e.g., sunlight, gold and jewellery). Yellow must be considered alongside the subject matter, as yellow can convey divinity, power and glory. For this reason, along with blue, I chose yellow as the main colour for St Finbarr's robes. However, conversely and depending on the context, yellow can also symbolise treachery, betrayal and jealousy; hence, Judas Iscariot is often depicted wearing yellow or having a yellowish complexion. Demons are often depicted in yellow and, in the case of the paschal candle, I used yellow for the eyes of Lú as a device.

Conclusion


The entire process, from beginning to end, including research, experimentation, avoiding making



a highly combustible candle, and mapping composition, took over seven weeks to complete. It was also an exciting, often frustrating, challenge for me as an artist, as I had never seen or done anything like this before. I was delighted with how the candle turned out in the end. Fr Jules Doutrebente was likewise very happy with the finished piece. Moving forward, it has also inspired me as a teacher to use wax as ground in several art

projects. So, what started as an unusual request has certainly borne some unexpected fruit.


1 School in the context of art denotes a house/studio style. For example, Monet and Degas are Impressionists; therefore, their methodology follows the school of Impressionism in the use and application of paint both aesthetically and theoretically.


St Declan's
WAY PILGRIMAGE
11-13 August 2023

100 km pilgrimage from Ardmore to Cashel
Families welcome to join on final day!

Register online from 1st July

visit fsspx.ie/en/stdeclan to register
Any other queries, please contact
pilgrimages@fsspx.ie



Collage



Youth Group fundraiser, Athlone, April 2



Youth Group fundraiser, Athlone, April 2



Youth Group, January Outing



A Christmas Quiz



EC March 2023 Outing Athlone



St Patrick's Day, Athlone



Youth Group, January Outing

Winter 2023 Events

April	16	16 Religious Profession of Sr Mary Placide (Sherry)
May	14	First Holy Communions
June	12-19	Youth trip to Rome
	16	Priestly Ordination of Mr Joseph Budds
	27-29	Chartres Pilgrimage
July	23-30	Girls' Camp
	30-5 Aug	Boys' Camp
	23	Father Joseph Budds' First Mass Dublin
Aug	11-13	St Declan's Way Pilgrimage
	15	Newry Masss Rock Pilgrimage
Sept	9	Knock Pilgrimage
	29-1 Oct	Glendalough Conference



FSSPX Northern Ireland



FSSPX Republic of Ireland

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 Henry Willioud
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)
- Saturday 10am
- Friday 6:30pm

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

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.