LATIN LITURGY

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Latin Liturgy and Gregorian Chant for the Church of today

ALL Mass in St John the Baptist Cathedral, Norwich
10th May 2025

Contents

Editor's note: For reasons of space, the important paper entitled *The Trinitarian Dynamic of the Eucharistic Sacrifice* by Fr Richard Conrad OP, given at last year's meeting at Blackfriars, Oxford, is held over till our next edition so that it can be printed in full.

Open Meeting and AGM at Oscott 4th October 2025

All members, friends, and everyone interested, will be most welcome. The timetable for the day is planned as follows (subject to some possible alterations in the afternoon, details of which will appear on the website in due course):

11.00 onwards: welcome and coffee.

11.30 Rehearsal with Fr Guy Nicholls for those wishing to sing in the Schola at Mass. All welcome.

12.30 Sung Mass in the College Chapel.

2.00 Lunch. This needs to be booked in advance, either on our website or by sending a cheque with the enclosed lunch form.

3.00 Talk by Fr Mark Drew: *The Sense of the Sacred and the Destiny of the Cosmos.*

4.00 The Association's Annual General Meeting, to which all will be welcome, whether members or not.

4.30 Vespers and Benediction in the College Chapel.

The day will end with tea and an opportunity for discussion.

Agenda for AGM

Items 1 & 2: Chairman's and Treasurer's annual reports.

Item 3: Council recommends that subscription rates remain unchanged.

Item 4: Elections to Council. Frank Leahy, Paul Henriksen and Bernard Marriott retire as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Treasurer respectively, and offer themselves for election for a further year. In addition, Fr Anton Webb and Canon William Young are due for re-election as Ordinary Members and have signified their willingness to stand again. Council has also co-opted, in accordance with the Constitution, a new member, Mgr Eugene Harkness of OLEM, Cambridge. Mgr Bruce Harbert is retiring after many years of valuable service to the Association, for which we express much gratitude.

Members of the Association may, if they wish, make alternative nominations for these positions, in which case the names of nominees (whose prior consent must be obtained) and those of proposer and seconder, must be received by the Chairman at least two weeks before the meeting. According to our Constitution, if no other nominations have been received from members, Council's nominees will be deemed elected without a vote being taken.

Advance notice of event at St Anne's Cathedral, Leeds, Saturday 25th April 2026

Please put this date in your diaries now. The Association rarely goes so far north, and this will be an opportunity for our more northerly members to participate. It is anticipated that the 12 noon Mass (the regular Mass time on Saturdays) will be celebrated by the Bishop of Leeds, the Right Reverend Marcus Stock. Further information about the day will be given in our next edition.

Report on ALL day at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist, Norwich 10th May 2025

Members and guests were welcomed with coffee in the Narthex Hall, an excellent venue for our meeting. Then Fr Guy Nicholls rehearsed those who were to form the Schola, while the servers also prepared for Mass. The last time we were at the Cathedral, Mass was celebrated *ad orientem*; this time *versus populum*. The ALL recognises the merits of both arrangements. The Mass was unhurried and beautifully celebrated, Bishop Peter Collins being the chief concelebrant, with five other priests, many servers, and a substantial congregation. Chant was provided by a Schola of twelve, with fine organ music from the Director of Music, David Grealy. After the homily, in celebration of the papal election which had very recently taken place, all sang *Oremus pro Pontifice nostro Leone*.

The Schola in rehearsal

The elevation of the Host

Readers may like to know that the livestream of the Cathedral services: www.youtube.com/@CathedralofStJohntheBaptist/streams is of a very high quality, as the transmitted liturgies of the day showed.

Lunch followed, enjoyed convivially, with Bishop Peter joining us, after which the meeting was addressed, following an opening prayer in Latin, by Fr Peter Wygnanski (see back cover illustration). His talk – lively, profound, enlightening – was followed by twenty minutes of questions and discussion. His words, which convey, *inter alia*, an important message for this Association, appear in this edition, and we hope that the excellent homily given at Mass by Bishop Peter will be printed in our next. The Bishop took as his starting point the

recent death of Pope Francis and the election of his successor Leo XIV.

Vespers and Benediction followed the talk, the psalms in English, everything else in Latin, all enhanced by the remarkably beautiful singing of a cantor from the Cathedral choir. Finally, tea was taken in the Narthex Hall, before the participants in this excellent day dispersed.

The Association would like to thank the Very Revd Alan Hodgson, Dean of the Cathedral, for the welcome we were given, and we are especially grateful to Paul Henriksen for making all the very complete arrangements in the preparation and execution of this event, for publicising it beforehand in *Catholic East Anglia* and for transporting a substantial display of our publications for sale.

Seeing Liturgical Reforms through the eyes of Generation Z: a Yearning for the Sacred

Not that long ago I was enjoying a quieter chapter of life as priest-in-charge of a sunny parish on the coast. I was a long way from the world's hustle and bustle, no doubt one of the reasons why good people choose to live there. However, I was unable to decouple myself from the rest of the world, so felt like a carved walnut *fraulein* in a Black Forest cuckoo clock, mechanically going in and out, up and down the A148 at regular intervals. It was preferable when others came to me.

I found myself the sole occupier of a large house of historical interest, in walking distance of sea and sand, and it was a blessing to welcome many guests: brother priests, family, and friends who often brought with them their young children. Even a group of trendy young Catholic creatives from London asked if they could come for a few days, so I welcomed a photographer, a poet, a budding novelist and a songwriter for a weekend of inspiration-seeking in North

Norfolk. Amidst long walks on the beach and good food, the group asked me if, on a Saturday morning, I could celebrate the Traditional Latin Mass for them. I happily did so, and the conversations following were rich. Whilst I could dive into what was said then, my springboard for this talk came the next morning.

After the Sunday Mass, I was quietly amused to discover a parishioner hoping to lead my group of friends astray. Their plan was to visit Walsingham for some time of adoration and confessions. My parishioner, however, argued that time would be better spent in Blakeney, seeing the seal pups. I hasten to add that I have no quarrel with neonatal semi-aquatic mammals, but I knew, as I watched this conversation play out, that any consideration my Gen-Z *artistes* exhibited arose out of politeness. Their hearts were set on encountering the Lord.

There is much that could be unpacked from this intergenerational exchange, but my principal aim today is to dissuade from over-simplifications. Many would draw encouragement from what I have just described, but if we are to truly contribute to fostering discipleship amongst young people, we need to dig a little deeper.

I wish today to interrogate the notion that 'young people prefer traditional liturgy.' It crops up more and more: it was given voice only last week by the Archbishop of San Francisco in his published appeal for an end to the liturgical wars. (Note 1) There is a general question of how we understand the reasons behind the increases in congregation sizes that are now being seen.

I would argue that the causes behind that increase are complex and multi-faceted: the broader cultural and social climate, immigration, shifting demographics etc. Intellectual honesty, therefore, requires that we admit to our own biases. Is it not possible that a subconscious longing for affirmation

and consolation can tempt us to associate too directly any increase in congregation sizes in our parishes with the liturgical choices we have made? If so, then we are at risk of failing fully to understand what is going on. (It is worth noting that congregations are growing at comparable rates in most parishes, at least in the diocese of East Anglia, whether the liturgy makes much use of Latin or not.)

There is truth in saying young people prefer traditional liturgy, but, as I hope to describe today, it is a partial truth: by the imposition of an outdated frame of one generation's experience onto the experience of another, I argue it fails to capture the fullness of how young people increasingly seek for, and encounter, God today.

I hope I have earned sufficient attention to expend now some goodwill as I power through a brief excursus of disclaimers: statements of methodology, sources, and intent. Firstly, I am very much a Ratzingerian, so those who find Pope Benedict's and John Henry Newman's theology of history too progressive will have pre-sharpened barbs ready to launch in retort. However, I would argue that, in the case of what I am going to describe, it is not a question of deliberating if we are going to permit something to happen, as if we have some faculty of approbation.

The 1800s are no more, and no amount of castigating every concept of progress will bring them back. The dynamism of history is at play before our very eyes and Vatican II equipped us to work positively in a world in which development and progress has accelerated at such a rate that it can be perceived in one lifetime. The question is, will we have the good sense to turn to the best resources the Church offers, to make sense of what is happening, whether we like it or not? If that makes you feel uncomfortable, let yourself at least be consoled by remembering how much pain you have probably been spared by advances in dental care.

Finally, much of what I have to say is anecdotal, but I am happy to claim that I am more familiar than most with the reality which the statement 'young people prefer traditional liturgy' approaches. As the youngest priest of the Diocese of East Anglia, I have been involved in some way with almost every major youth event or pilgrimage organised by the Diocese in the last decade. Whilst some people, for example, might relate that they "saw plenty of young people at the Old Rite Mass at *Santissima Trinità* in Rome", the Altar Cards I use when I celebrate the *Vetus Ordo* were paid for by that group, as members of that group insisted we play for real money when I taught them how to play poker.

I spent longer than most in seminary, including two years as a priest, so I know all too well the proclivities of seminarians and the newest generation of the presbyterate of which I am part. Perhaps most importantly, as I come to the end of my second year as Chaplain to the University of East Anglia, it has been a privilege to accompany, yet more closely, young people on their journey of following the Lord, learning how the Liturgy supports them on that path amidst an oppressively secular environment.

On the basis of that CV, and in the spirit of acknowledging our own biases that I have described, what I have to say will seem, a little gently, provocative. The bears I wish to hunt for our collective nourishment have taken refuge on the other side of some rather thin ice over which I must now publicly skate, and careful wording will be required if I am to pursue my intended course without risk of falling through, but I trust you will begin to recognise my underlying conviction.

What I perceive 'out there' suggests that the particularity of the Association for Latin Liturgy has a significant role to play in ensuring the worthy liturgy which so many in this country long for; but I do believe there are traps which need avoiding if that important voice is to have its full effect.

To begin in earnest, here are some statements which, whilst general, I believe withstand scrutiny:

- The period before and during the liturgical reforms of VAT II can be characterised in terms of two sides engaged in a struggle: the liturgically progressive and the liturgically traditional.
- Following VAT II those two camps did not suddenly disappear.
- Having perceived victory, progressives enthusiastically pursued novel liturgical practices. In some cases this enthusiasm was greater than others.
- Whilst the liturgical debates were a live topic, Boomers and, in turn Gen X, often took, or fell into, a 'side'.
- It would seem that progressives quietly assumed that liturgical traditionalism would die out with those that defended it, presuming therefore that following generations would share their particular liturgical vision.
- This presumption has now proven false and there is disquiet for this reason among liturgical progressives.
- Furthermore: As the conciliar debates on liturgy fade further into the past, so does their influence over each subsequent generation. The inheritance of subjectivity, that set of preconceptions, and urgencies, has been depleted.
- This effect arising from time past, is exacerbated by the decline of 'cultural' Catholicism, the mechanism by which many liturgical preconceptions are passed on. Many of our young people are second generation immigrants like me, or are discovering or rediscovering faith anew, undertaking a more personal and independent journey to discovering God
- I therefore believe young people now approach the liturgy with fewer preconceptions, assumptions, and biases. They don't have the head-start of a 20th century

cradle Catholic, but they also carry less ecclesial baggage.

All this simply means that Gen Z are the first generation for whom Vat II feels like ancient history. Even amongst young seminarians and those who take a specialist interest, the old liturgical controversies have diminished in force: they are the subject of historical study which have ripple-effects now, rather than being an enduring active reality. For this reason, whilst it is true to say that Gen Z do not respond well to the liturgy we saw towards the end of the 20th century, it is a mistake to assume that they therefore automatically pine for the liturgy of the *early* 20th century. When uninspired by liturgical progressives, most do not default to the "other side", as they exist in a world where the old dichotomy has lost its force.

To illustrate some of this, I would make some comments on what I've seen on the far other side of things, beginning by noting that, of those creative visitors of mine to Norfolk, all in fact matured in their Catholic faith in Charismatic environments. Those interested in preserving the use of Latin in the Liturgy must be aware that there is genuine yearning for the sacraments and holiness of life amongst those at the very other end of the liturgical spectrum.

Bringing together the sacraments, the authoritative and ancient teaching of the Church, in tandem with the experientialism of Charismatic worship and more explicit mutual encouragement in the community, gives a powerful combination of faith expression for inspiring existential changes oriented toward the Gospel. I would argue, however, that such Charismatics are not the necessary conclusion of post-conciliar liturgical hubris amongst "progressives". Rather, the Charismatic renewal is *another* path away from the perceived tedium of mainstream liturgy found in so-called 'ordinary' parishes.

I'd encourage acknowledging a common rejection of the lack of seriousness in a religious expression which, to borrow some long words from Rowan Williams, can be described as little more than a conceptual pseudo-constellation which offers a spiritual gloss to unchallenged human desires and compulsions. (Note 2) Charismatics have simply gone in a different direction to seek an alternative. I would also claim something similar can be said for many devotees of the Old Rite: it is not that they believe that they can be nourished exclusively by the use of an older Missal, but they, including many young people, find in those celebrations a reverence and mystery that has been lost elsewhere.

A crucial point for us to unpick is that Charismatic groups have shown a great vitality in producing a next generation of young leaders, who now in turn facilitate worship and evangelisation, and their mission, especially amongst young people, has proven most impactful. At the recent Diocesan Youth Festival, after two hours of adoration in an undeniably Charismatic mode, I saw three hundred sixteen year olds raise their hands when asked if they'd felt the power of Jesus' love that evening.

There is something new going on in a generation of young Catholics, who were raised amidst the Catholic Charismatic renewal, something I might describe as an organic and gradual distillation of Charismatic practices in a way that allows more harmonious co-existence in a Catholic context: hearts burn to spend time in the presence of the Lord in the Eucharist amidst adoration, and for reverent and beautiful liturgy which enables profound encounter; the pop-rock entertainment songs of yester-year are increasingly replaced with music that is contemplative in nature.

There is a great yearning, by rigorous learning, for the knowledge of God kept safe by the Holy Spirit through the magisterium of the Church, with no assumption of a gradual but inevitable liberation of moral teaching. The queues for confession are long indeed, as the message of a radical

conversion of life by the grace of the Holy Spirit is boldly preached.

My metaphysical anthropology and theology of the liturgy is greatly affirmed by this observation: when empowered, when entrusted with liturgy, young people amongst Charismatics demonstrate a tendency towards Catholic fundamentals, by which the categorical transcendentals of beauty, truth and goodness are communicated. This phenomenon, I believe, can be explained by some philosophical foundations which apply to many, if not all, young people.

Unsheltered by the established patterns of thought and social cohesion enjoyed by older generations, Gen Z is directly exposed to the rotten fruits of the secular world, the ambiguities of individualism. They perceive, and encounter daily, the uncertainty that the idolatry of self-determination brings. As the symptoms of a world that tries to create values for itself get worse and worse, it becomes clearer and clearer to see that society is asking collective human reason to do something it was never meant to do: produce the meaning of what it is to be human.

What happens at a level of humanity collectivity is true for the individual too: as we all know, we individually are no more capable of constructing our own hope and fulfilment than human history is able to create a meta-historical horizon which gives life purpose and direction. Our spirit speaks to us, through a spiritual kind of heartburn, as our human nature rejects any surrender to abysmal meaninglessness, and so we discover a need for enduring values, a rock on which to stand in the choppy waters of this thing called life.

Gen Z is, therefore, especially attuned to the paradox of what it is to be human: that if we are really to try to find ourselves, we need to be led deep by beauty, far enough into our experience of life, the world and ourselves that we encounter the foundation of being. That foundation has been revealed

in the person and mission of Jesus Christ as the triune God of Father, Son and Spirit. In its essence, good liturgy leads us to worship, encounter, and know, in spirit and truth, God, that ground of all reality that is a living creative power which calls each of us, out of infinite love, by name.

This is why my Charismatic friends find such power in a mode of worship that, while feeling alien to you and me, nevertheless grounds them in encounter with Christ and supports them as they answer His call. Given what I have outlined about the lived experience of young people, we only see with greater clarity that there is *such* a need for communicating the timeless treasures of our liturgical inheritance, in full cooperation with the Church's teaching office, a task that this Association aspires to so nobly.

Our responsibility is to communicate the reverence, beauty and mystery the Church desires for her children, the Church which worships God together in liturgy that leads beyond the individual, pointing to a heavenly horizon. However, to do that well, we need to have the intellectual honesty to recognise that we can never be completely free from our own biases. I can think of those from the 'liturgical centre' who are still convinced that young people want folk Masses and bongo drums and are perplexed by the vitality occurring on either side of them but they do not share. They have a fixed view of what liturgy is best, and fail to open themselves up to the possibility that their own preferences are not a distillation of lasting and universally applicable truths. Charismatics, have however, better entrusted their liturgical practices to the next generation which is now thriving in an, ever-more, Catholic mode.

The riddle to solve is how can torch-bearers of tradition not make the mistake of not taking young people seriously, and receive the fruits of encouraging them to maturity and independence, without contradicting the basic principle of liturgical conservatism, of *handing down*. How can we pass something on that lives, rather than something fossilised?

In case of concern about where I am going, let me just anticipate my conclusions briefly; in keeping with the liturgical reforms of Vatican II, especially *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §§ 36, 54, 116, and 120, the Latin language, and Gregorian Chant, are most certainly upheld as holding enduring significance for authentic worship, and steps should therefore be taken so that the faithful may say or sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them, and chant should be given pride of place in liturgical services. The ancient language and musical heritage of the Latin rite are, and will remain, a powerful channel of the truth, beauty and goodness that our world so desperately needs. However, dare we recognise that some elements of the 'package' that we each have in mind when we think of 'good liturgy' perhaps aren't essential, but are an instantiation of the essential at a given point in time.

This matters, because obscuring clarity, not avoiding polemic and infighting about Liturgy are particularly damaging. I have seen how the zeal in the eyes of someone newly converted to, or rediscovering, Catholic faith dims when they find yet another source of division or controversy within the Church. Have we not just outlined the longing for clarity, a sure foundation? I'm describing here a particular form of the scandal of sin: the disunity which our human frailty introduces into the mystical body of Christ, which obstructs the fruit of surety of values that belonging to the Church should bring. Let me relate another story, a *mea culpa*, that comes to my mind when I think about all this.

Early in my priesthood I was asked to celebrate a Mass in the ancient basilica of San Vitale in Rome. A group of undergraduates from Cambridge, alongside seminarians of the Venerable English College who were alumni of that august university, were heading to St John Fisher's former titular Church.

So we turn up at that beautiful basilica, parts of which date back to the fifth century. I had with me, what was known as

'Fr Peter's Mary Poppins bag', a wonderfully capacious rucksack, out of which I could pull a seemingly impossible array of treasures raided from the seminary: golden vessels, carefully folded 19th century Roman vestments, albs with lace best measured in yards, a new rite missal in Latin. One of the Norwegian seminarians must have packed the maniple which had found its way up my arm, secured by a newly-replaced elastic band, as I diligently prayed the vesting prayers.

I processed in and quietly said some prayers which I happened to know, as I climbed the sanctuary steps. We had opted for the more intimate baroque high altar, so I had no option but to celebrate *ad orientem*. Of course, the proper chants from the *Graduale* were expertly sung, and I gave no thought to deviation from the first form of the penitential rite, nor from the Roman Canon which was punctuated by some additional hand gestures. As the offertory antiphon was sung, I realised nobody would really know, so, as the cards happened to be out on the altar, I fell into the temptation of using the offertory prayers of the Old Mass, rather than that of the Missal I had before me.

That was my most egregious case of the game I now call 'let's work around Vatican II by making all the choices possible, and some that probably aren't strictly speaking possible, to make the New Rite look like the Old Rite.' I was knowingly widening gaps of ambiguities to maximise the space in which I might circumnavigate developments taught by the Church's legitimate authority. I was not being malicious, or spitefully disobedient, but I was not acting in good faith. I was getting in the way of clarity, getting in the way of the Church being Church for those young people. Even if based on the best of foundations, even if the effects were subtle in that one case, I was creating *my* interpretation of the liturgy, not the Church's, and ironically the idolatry of individualism and self-determination which the liturgy is meant to defeat was rather propped up for another day.

I would say that we might check ourselves against some fallacies which, regrettably, our more radical traditional brothers and sisters fall into, even if with good intentions. We might perform a certain examination of hermeneutical conscience:

- Might I sometimes fall into the temptation of assuming that today's problems can be solved by recreating a past when those problems were less problematic?
- Might I sometimes fall into the temptation of assuming that the piety of past centuries has crystallised the bounds of everything worthy that could ever possibly be done and formulated?
- Might I sometimes misrepresent my own personal preferences as the timeless essence of Christian faith, both for myself, and when in conversation with others?

Prudence is required to tell the difference between two things when we consider what it means to pass on the art of celebrating the New Rite well, beautifully, and reverently; what in fact constitutes an enduring, essential, element of liturgy, and what does not. That's my case against what I'd call liturgical taxidermy; we can try to plan the liturgy of the future with the hope of enshrining what we think is best; but that is not the same as preserving the living essence of Catholic liturgy so that it can nourish those who come after us. Paraphrasing Gustav Mahler, can we not stifle the living fire of Tradition by covering its flame too closely?

Roman Catholic liturgy develops. The Church has taught this. The generations that come after us will celebrate and put the treasure of our liturgical heritage to use in ways that are not exactly identical to the past and the present. The danger is that, failing to trust the next generation to be attuned to the Holy Spirit, and therefore attempting to 'lock-in' our liturgical view, we end up failing to entrust young people with the liturgy that will most effectively lead their hearts to the essential truths about God, salvation, human

life, and right living, which they will need in new contexts that we cannot foresee, as new contexts develop at unprecedented rates. We also risk limiting the power of Latin liturgy to bubbles constituted by groups of young people who happen to share our preferences, which, if we're honest, are actually a smaller portion of young people than we'd like to think.

Clarity on what is truly essential helps both by giving renewed vigour to defend what must be defended, in accordance with the Church's teaching office, but also in helping us see when liturgical disputes can be avoided. That in turn enables us – priests and parish musicians – to work more broadly, to share the beauty of Latin for use in Catholic liturgy across a broader section of the spectrum of the Church's liturgical practice, including in youth ministry.

Most young people are unlikely to be drawn into a liturgical world when it is characterised by a capacity to become toxic, marred in controversies in which Gen Z has little or no stake, and depriving them of the sure foundation in the Church's liturgy for which they long.

The actual, concrete differences over any period of time will be relatively small in practice, and only you will know how that subtlety plays out in your particular context: the difference between insisting on the liturgy we think is best and preserving the essentials which can nourish those who come after us. But the difference in attitude is significant, as is the resulting lived experience of the young we are hoping to engage. I can only recommend that you seek out opportunities to entrust, as well as instruct, young people. Encourage their creativity, especially in music and art, even if it means at times they'll create things we don't really like.

Let us take our young people seriously. Put most concisely, this means developing a habit of critically assessing what is really essential and what is not. This is how we can ensure, as best we can, that our subjectivity is not inhibiting the

work of the Holy Spirit; and to avoid getting in the way we need first to acknowledge that it is possible in the first place.

Likewise, parents, let us strive to root our young people so deeply in sure principles that we then do not fear to give them independence, as they take up responsibility for worship themselves: minimising sleepless nights even when the young invariably do things that deviate from our carefully prepared plans.

Then, in Ratzinger's words, we can better play our part in the Church, penetrating to its true centre, to the life at the heart of tradition, to that community with God the Father and Jesus Christ that is revealed only through faith and prayer; the only way that true progress is possible, progress that leads to the goal of history, to the God-man who is humanity's humanisation.' (Note 3)

1. See "Putting an End to the Liturgy Wars", *First Things,* 5th May, 2025.
2. See the Introduction to his 'Looking East in Winter', Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021.
3. See Ratzinger's "Anthropological Foundation of the Concept of Tradition" in *Principles of Catholic Theology,* Ignatius, 1987, 101.

Fr Peter Wygnanski

Fashioning Faith

I was used to the idea of fashions in clothes from perusing my mother's film magazines (remember *Photoplay*, anyone?). But in church architecture? I was a bit perplexed when I came across the book *Fashions in Church Furnishings 1840-1940* (Note 1) by Peter Anson in my local public library. What did fashion have to do with churches? But I had just started going to a local Anglo-Catholic church, and haunted the library's theology section to increase my knowledge about this new undertaking. I was eager to learn, so I took the book

to the issuing desk. This year marks the 60th anniversary of the publication of its second, and last, British edition. So it seems an appropriate time to discuss it, not only for a walk down its author's combined architectural and liturgical memory lane but also to see what lessons it has for us today.

Who was Anson? (Note 2) He was born Frederick Charles Anson in Southsea in 1889, the son of Charles Eustace Anson (1858–1940), a naval officer eventually raised to the rank of rear-admiral, and his wife, (Maria) Evelyn, née Ross (1863–1904) whom Anson described as being 'highly strung and artistic'. He was educated at Wixenford School until the age of almost 15, but health difficulties precluded him being sent to any further public school.

A teenage encounter with Anglo-Catholic worship, reminiscent of that experienced by Michael Fane, the protagonist in Sir Compton Mackenzie's coming-of-age novel Sinister Street (1913), led him to become a whole-hearted devotee of this still-controversial movement. Anson spent two years at the Architectural Association (AA) school in Tufton Street, Westminster, learning to become an architect. During that time he had a whirlwind sampling of London's leading Anglo-Catholic churches as well as Catholic ones such as Westminster Cathedral, interspersed with occasional worship at Orthodox services.

However, in 1910 he offered himself as a novice for the Anglican Papalist (Note 3) Benedictine community on Caldey Island, off the Pembrokeshire coast. Three years later, he was one of the community's members who corporately became Catholics. For some years he spent time with various Catholic religious communities or other organisations. In 1924 he entered the Third Order of St. Francis, taking in religion the name of Peter. Eventually he went on to become, to use the title of one of his 47 books, a roving recluse, writing on topics ranging from Scottish Catholicism to fishermen

Fashions is, arguably, one of the four main books with which Anson achieved fame as a writer on ecclesiastical matters. (Note 4) And to evaluate it we have to consider two points contained in its Introduction. First, when writing of the first edition, Anson states that it was 'not meant to be a definitive history about church art in the period 1840-1940. What I tried to do was to make a pattern of both art and life, constructed from the specimens, extracts and fugitive pieces collected since the far-off days of my youth'.

However, this approach raised a problem. Anson was careful to remind his readers of the social backgrounds which paralleled changes and developments in church architecture and liturgy. He accompanied his observations with excellent line drawings showing people dressed in the clothes of the periods under discussion (evidently his years at the AA were not wasted). But he seemed to have accepted architectural writer and historian Sir Nikolaus Pevsner's idea that buildings were a product of the societies in which they arose and had some particular moral meaning. There was no recognition that buildings were – well, buildings whose creators were often simply concentrating on, and expressing, their own creativity – in other words, thinking outside their societal box without any socio-political message.

Pevsner's theory was disposed of with succinct elegance by the late Dr David Watkin in his small and perfectly formed polemical work *Morality and Architecture*. (Note 5) Such a view, arguably, limited Anson's perceptions of his subject matter. Yet it didn't completely overshadow his work: his lifetime of accumulated material was fruitfully mined. The book not only deals with the leading Anglican and Catholic church architects of the period but lesser-known ones too. So we meet the great masters such as Augustus Welby Pugin, George Frederick Bodley, William Butterfield, John Loughborough Pearson, George Edmund Street and Sir Ninian Comper. But we also encounter lesser ones such as James Brooks, Ewan Christian, and Samuel S. Teulon. Finally, he introduces us to architects, such as Eric Gill,

Father Benedict Williamson and F.X. Velarde, who tried, in their various ways, to renew old forms of architecture, or bring new ones (such as central altars), into church life in the years just before the Second World War.

Due to his combined Anglican and Catholic background, Anson had a thorough understanding of the theology that informed the church buildings, furnishings and clerical vestures of the book's time-frame, especially the gradations and nuances of belief within Anglicanism which are, arguably, not always understood by 'cradle' Catholics, used as they are to what is theoretically a unified belief system. He knew that the cut of a chasuble or the number of candles on a high altar were much more than matters of aesthetics but denoted doctrinal outlooks and issues.

In the book's Acknowledgements Anson tells us that he consulted a wide number of persons and organisations for information, advice or criticism of chapters, with especial thanks for Sir John Betjeman. He provided a thorough bibliography. The book received rave reviews, ranging from individuals such as Evelyn Waugh and Monsignor Alfred Gilbey to publications including the Church of Ireland Gazette and the RIBA Journal.

However, the book is not without a surprising feature. Anson had dedicated his *Call of the Cloister* to the (Anglican) Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield. This gave the impression that the hostility he had previously expressed towards Anglicanism – something which those who become converts from it to Catholicism can sometime feel in the early years of their Catholic life – was a thing of the past.

But in Chapter 30 of *Fashions*, entitled 'Back to Baroque', he showed a strange hostility towards the Anglican Papalists and other Anglo-Catholics of the inter-war years who adopted a Baroque ethos for the adjuncts of worship. He described this trend as 'the most aggressive effort made in a hundred years to force people to worship in a setting which was

completely out of tune with their daily life.' Yet a few pages earlier he had pointed out that the 'Back to Baroque' movement was contemporary with a similar change in domestic décor.'

It wasn't as if the Baroque was unknown here: Vanbrugh had already established an English form of it. All that the Anglican Papalists, and other Anglo-Catholics who adopted this setting for worship, were doing was what the early Catholic converts from the Oxford Movement such as Newman, Faber and Manning had implemented half a century earlier. They had imported, with great pastoral success, Counter-Reformation piety into the Catholic Church in England to bring it up-to-speed with its Continental coevals. Like any good writer, Anson could employ a pleasing degree of flippancy and bitchiness when required, but his attitude to the 'Back to Baroque' episode goes beyond the latter quality. It would be interesting to know why this topic aroused in him such a degree of hostility.

The other main point in the Introduction is Anson's seemingly uncritical enthusiasm for the reforms emanating from the Second Vatican Council. The Council was drawing to its close, but its liturgical changes – or at least, the manner of their implementation – were already arousing controversy, a matter to which he makes no allusion. Here we must remember that old but true cliché that hindsight is a wonderful thing.

One wonders what Anson would have thought of the fact that, within a few years of his death, in 1975 Pope St John-Paul II, in his letter *Dominicae Cenae* of 24 February 1980 (Note 6) would ask for forgiveness for 'the at times partial, one-sided and erroneous application of the directives of the Second Vatican Council, [that] may have caused scandal and disturbance concerning the interpretation of the doctrine and the veneration due to this great sacrament.' Careful study of this document should, arguably, form part of the education

of all concerned with the celebration of the liturgy within the Church.

And it should be on the mental speed-dial of any propagator of dignified, traditional liturgical forms to be summoned, if and when they are accused of going against the Conciliar teachings, the 'Spirit of Vatican Two', etc. Anson also couldn't foresee that the 1980s would see a revival of positive interest in Victorian architecture, including churches, spearheaded by writers such as the late Dr Gavin Stamp. (Note 7) Nor that, as regards some of the architectural products of liturgical renewal, a 'merciful Providence has ordained that high-alumina cement, blue asbestos, leaky flat roofs and general building "fatigue" – to say nothing of ugliness and unlovability – will ensure that few of them survive to celebrate their centenaries.' (Note 8).

Anson was not an academic. This was his strength and is, therefore, the strong point of *Fashions*. Those who labour deep in the groves of academe are always in danger of missing the healthy wood for the overgrown trees. Anson did knowledge and insight, not jargon and obfuscation. What makes this book still readable and relevant is its combination of erudition and enthusiasm as well as its celebration of creativity that is still relevant for today's church architects.

Nowhere does the writing feel laboured. Rather, it's a labour of love. Anson the author is still the young architectural student going eagerly from service to service on a carefree Edwardian Sunday. Reading *Fashions* is our chance to join him on that enthralling, educative journey.

1. Fashions in Church Furnishings 1840-1940, Faith Press, 1960; Studio Vista Ltd, 1965; and London House & Maxwell, 1966.
2. For further biographical details about Anson, see Peter Anson, Monk, Writer and Artist: An Introduction to his Life and Work by Michael Yelton, Anglo-Catholic History Society, 2005.

3. Anglican Papalists adhered to the same doctrinal position as the Catholic Church, including the Councils of Trent and Vatican One. Claiming to be part of the Western Latin Church, even if in an irregular position as a result of changes forced upon an unwilling English church by the state in the sixteenth century, they believed that reunion with Rome was impossible except on the grounds of complete dogmatic agreement.
   Their liturgy and devotions emulated those of contemporary Roman Catholicism. They held that only corporate reunion would save the Church of England from Protestantism and Modernism. Believing their orders to be valid, they did not consider the bull *Apostolicae Curae* (1896) condemning Anglican orders as invalid, but instead rather a result of unfortunate misinformation, and that it would be reformed in time.
   (For a fascinating study of Anglican-Catholic ecumenical discussions between the wars involving leading Papalists and Catholic scholars such as Fathers Martin D'Arcy SJ and Bede Jarrett OP, see *Reunion Revisited: 1930s Ecumenism Exposed* by Mark Vickers, Gracewing, 2017.)

4. The others being *The Call of the Cloister: Religious Communities and Kindred Bodies in the Anglican Communion*, SPCK, 1955; *Abbot Extraordinary, A Memoir of Aelred Carlyle, Monk and Missionary 1874-1955*, The Faith Press, 1958; and *Bishops at Large: Some Autocephalous Churches of the Past Hundred Years and Their Founders*, Faber and Faber, 1964.

5. *Morality and Architecture: The Development of a Theme in Architectural History and Theory from the Gothic Revival to the Modern Movement*, Oxford University Press, 1977. Fans of pop culture may be interested to know that the book's title was the source for that of the synth-band Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark's 1981 album, *Architecture and Morality*.

6. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1980/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_19800224_dominicae-cenae.html [letter accessed 23 July 2025.]

7. For an appreciation of Stamp and the importance of his work, see *Piloti and polemic in Pedro and Ricky Come Again: Selected Writings 1988-2020*, by Jonathan Meades.

8. Brian Brindley: *Churches for twentieth century flocks*, The Catholic Herald, 14 August 1998, p.6, quoted in *Sir Ninian Comper, An introduction to his life and work with complete gazetteer* by Anthony Symondson SJ and Stephen Bucknell, Spire Books & the Ecclesiological Society, 2006.

Nicky Charlish

[Nicky Charlish is a freelance writer and journalist.]

Nicolas Kynaston 1941-2025

Eamon Duffy, who addressed our AGM some years ago in Cambridge, is the author of *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village*. Another claim to fame for this Devon village is that it was the birthplace of Nicolas Kynaston. Described as 'the son of a painter and a violinist and the youngest of seven children', he outlined how the child became father of the man: 'The first organ record I ever heard, on a wind-up gramophone, was of Fernando Germani playing at Westminster Cathedral. The influence must have been profound since, a few years later, I went to study with him in Italy and then became Organist of Westminster Cathedral.

And all this in his teens. Much younger than his siblings, he became a chorister at Westminster Cathedral under George Malcolm and was then for a while educated at Downside, where he encountered director of music Roger Bevan, father of (among many others) David, who succeeded Nicolas Kynaston at Westminster Cathedral, Rachel who sang at the London Oratory and Tony who was for several years a Council member of the ALL.

Being accepted in Germani's organ class at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, and being taught by one of the world's greatest organists, who was also at the time Titular Organist of St Peter's in Rome, was enough to persuade him not to return to Downside but to enter the Royal College of

Music, where he studied with Ralph Downes. So much for his early musical life. What about the family into which he was born? In his autobiography *One Foot in the Cradle* Dom Hubert van Zeller recalls making a retreat at Caldey Abbey with Ronald Knox in the summer of 1936:

> 'Also staying was Roger Kynaston and his family who had taken a lighthouse for the summer. The Kynaston children recited the full monastic grace in Latin before and after each meal. They also kept a donkey, presumably transported from the mainland, because for some reason cow's milk was held by the Kynastons in suspicion. It was very hot that summer but Roger Kynaston, making no concession to the heat, wore a round fur cap like a poacher's. The children too wore fur caps, which they had made themselves. Roger was older than Ronald, and had in his time been first of all a friend, and then an enemy, of Baron Corvo [Frederick Rolfe, author of *Hadrian VII*].
>
> 'Ronald told me that at Oxford, and before he had become a Catholic, Roger used to give bridge parties in his rooms at which he used to preside wearing a biretta and a saffron silk cope from Spain. It was hard to see in this poacher with the homespun clothes, the tangled beard, the rough hands and big boots – the Kynaston of Eric Gill – the elegant dilettante who had sat as host on his baroque throne in a yellow cope at Oxford, dealing out the cards and smoking a cigar while incense burned in a brazier beside him. But this, Ronald explained, was in the Corvo days. The Kynastons came later to see me at Downside ("What, the whole boiling lot of them?" Ronald asked when I told him of their visit), all with their poacher's caps.'

Nicolas arrived some years after this adventure, and was only eleven when his father died. He was particularly glad therefore of the mentoring he received from Maxwell Fernie,

sub-organist at Westminster Cathedral. He talks briefly of this in a centenary tribute to Fernie: (see *Maxwell Fernie Centenary Tribute* on YouTube) And so fate decreed that he would become organist of that great cathedral and preside at its stupendous Lewis/Willis organ.

A brief example of his early days can be heard on a British Pathé newsreel of [Cardinal] Heenan making his solemn entrance into the cathedral in 1963. But a greater legacy of his time there came with two wonderful LPs of French organ music, one of Franck, Vierne and Jongen and the other, in the EMI Great Cathedral Organ Series, again featuring Franck but including two works of particular significance.

For the first piece, in January 1924 Louis Vierne of Notre-Dame made the first of two appearances at Westminster Cathedral. In traditional French style, at the end he improvised on a submitted theme, in this case appropriately the Westminster chimes. This eventually evolved into his well-known piece *Carillon de Westminster* which just had to appear on this disc.

The other piece had already had a significant effect on another Downes pupil, [Dame] Gillian Weir who, at her teacher's suggestion, had performed Messiaen's *Combat de la mort et de la vie* and gone on to win at the St Albans International Organ Festival. Kynaston's recording is astonishing: the unrestrained power of the Westminster Cathedral organ in the first explosive section, followed by an epilogue featuring the same theme but now transfigured into an eternal stillness.

At around the same time he also recorded some Reger there, as did Germani, but what seemed an ideal recording didn't happen. Philips had issued Kynaston's record of Liszt organ music (at the Royal Albert Hall) and they wanted him as soloist for [Sir] Colin Davis's projected record of the Berlioz *Te Deum*, for large orchestra and chorus and with an

important solo organ part. In an article entitled *Recording in the Cathedral: Dreams and Nightmares*, Philips administrator and Berlioz biographer David Cairns recalled that the ideal venue for such a project was:

> 'a building which combined plenty of space, a large organ, a resonant but tameable acoustic and a readiness to be used, temporarily at least, as a recording studio.
>
> 'It so happened that Westminster Cathedral may not be equipped as a recording studio, but we would not be elsewhere for the world. No doubt partly because of the wooden floor and the large amount of unfaced brick, which absorb what would otherwise be an excessive degree of resonance, it has acoustical properties that are rare if not unique in ecclesiastical buildings of its size. We approached the Cathedral Administration and the reply was cordial.
>
> 'In the event however the plan had to be abandoned; we found that the pitch of the Cathedral organ, built during the nineteen-twenties, was too low for the purpose of working with an orchestra, and the *Te Deum* was recorded in Watford Town Hall, a regular venue for classical recordings, artificial reverberation being added later to the tape [evidently by replaying it in a church in Holland to supply favourable acoustics]. The results were surprisingly good, despite the cramped conditions (and despite the fact that at one point the organ, a converted cinema organ which had already caused Nicolas Kynaston misgivings, became overheated and caught fire).'

[The practice of recording organ parts in other buildings had not begun at this time. Vernon Handley's later recordings of Elgar made at Watford feature organ parts recorded at St Augustine's Kilburn, while John Nelson, an American conductor and Berlioz specialist who worked in Paris and

who managed both to be born and to die within days of Nicolas Kynaston, recorded the Berlioz *Te Deum* in a concert hall with the organ part recorded at La Madeleine. And indeed the rebuilt organ at Westminster Cathedral, its pitch raised, took part in Klaus Tennstedt's recording of Mahler's *Symphony of a Thousand*, with the (many) other performers at Walthamstow Assembly Hall.]

David Cairns continues with another recording adventure at Westminster Cathedral:

> 'But when the question arose of recording the Berlioz *Requiem*, a work on an equally grand scale with its apocalyptic sections requiring four additional brass bands and sixteen timpani with ten players, but not requiring the organ, it was natural that we should again think of Westminster Cathedral: session photographs show the performers ranged from underneath the organ right up to the pulpit.
>
> 'This time there were no obstacles. The recording took place on seven evenings in November 1969, with results that are [in 1971] generally considered the finest yet achieved in the recording of a large-scale oratorio. The orchestral sound in particular has an unprecedented combination of richness and clarity, and the whole thing is invested with just the atmosphere of lofty grandeur and spaciousness that is required but which normally eludes recordings of this sort of music.
>
> 'Of course, planning and carrying out a recording of this magnitude in a Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral is not without its special problems, for the recording company as well as for the Cathedral, whose daily choral services of Capitular High Mass sung or solemn Vespers according to the feast continued throughout this time.

'The first afternoon, with the huge chorus rostrum still incomplete and the men going off for a lengthy tea-break only a few hours before 300 musicians were due to arrive for the evening session, was uncomfortably reminiscent of those scenes of near-débacle that Berlioz so vividly describes in his *Memoirs*. The first twenty minutes of the session were punctuated by the noise of thudding planks and clanging tubular steel. Three times that evening the power failed; the third time during the crucial final take, when the *Rex tremendae* was virtually 'in the can'.

'We at Philips are profoundly grateful for the opportunity to record there, as well as for the unfailingly friendly and helpful spirit with which we have been treated by Canon Bartlett (Administrator), Colin Mawby (Director of Music), and all the Cathedral staff.' [Adapted from an article in the March 1971 *Westminster Cathedral News Sheet*.]

[The *Te Deum* had greater success at Westminster Cathedral several years later when the organ had been rebuilt and its pitch changed: orchestra and choir were ranged on the sanctuary area while the spatial separation Berlioz had called for was achieved by the position of the Grand Organ on the west gallery. For this performance the organ was played by Wayne Marshall who at the end sprinted down the hundred yards of the nave to take a platform bow with his colleagues.]

The records in the *Great Cathedral Organs* series all had pictures of their players. However, as his distinguished pupil Graham Barber has observed, Nicolas Kynaston's was the only one showing the organist in concert dress, and in his case actually taken at the Royal Albert Hall.

Time to move on? Mention has already been made of his stupendous record of Liszt organ music at the RAH and he

followed it with two more there, one of which sold 100,000 copies in six months. Nor were ecclesiastical buildings neglected: he would return to Westminster Cathedral to record some Dupré and Duruflé on the rebuilt organ, while three instruments in the West Country also attracted him: Buckfast Abbey, constructed from various sources by Ralph Downes and Dom Winfrid Rechsteiner, and now replaced (the music in that recording by Alain and Langlais); the brand new Rieger at Clifton Cathedral for a critically acclaimed Bach programme; and Hereford Cathedral for Tournemire, Saint-Saëns and Demessieux.

Which brings us to Jeanne Demessieux, who had first played at Westminster Cathedral in 1947 (future art critic Brian Sewell was her console assistant on that occasion, an experience he describes in his autobiography). In addition to her whirlwind concert career, she rose to become *titulaire* at La Madeleine, and it was in connection with an article that I had been asked to write about her that I rang Kynaston, who generously spent the best part of an hour talking about her.

He had revived the annual series of organ recitals at Westminster Cathedral and he told me that he had hoped to book her for some recitals of Messiaen's music, with a possible recording, when sadly she died, in November 1968: all that remains of her Messiaen interpretations are *Les Anges* at the Colston Hall, Bristol and the unforgettable account of *Transports de Joie* at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral. The composer did hear his music at Westminster Cathedral however in 1974, when Kynaston played *L'Ascension* and *Messe de la Pentecôte* to him there.

His last recital there was in 2009. It is available on YouTube: *D'arcy Trinkwon Nicolas Kynaston* or go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWV6Q4t8fIc

Stephen Farr writes: "His students speak with unanimous respect and affection of their association. He was civilised,

cultured, thought-provoking, encouraging, generous, and heedless of time when it came to teaching – lessons would extend long past their allotted span, with no extra payment expected."

In addition to Stephen Farr, one-time organist of Guildford Cathedral, other students who have held cathedral posts include Kathy Lamb, née Langston (Lichfield), Jeremy Filsell (National Shrine, Washington) and Ashley Grote (Norwich Anglican Cathedral, now gloriously reigning), international virtuoso Jane Parker-Smith, who made her first record at Westminster Cathedral and who was in her early days organist of St James's Spanish Place, 'acknowledged him as the most important musical influence of her life' according to her *Guardian* obituarist Guy Rickards.

Writing in 1996 he said of Fernando Germani: 'His huge family of pupils all over the world regard him with gratitude and affection for instilling in them the disciplines of a solid technique and a sense of musical architecture. Above all he was and is a communicator.'

Clearly we could say the same of Nicolas Kynaston himself. It was at Westminster Cathedral that I first heard him, and afterwards I met the tuner there, Arthur Seare, who said: "Mr Kynaston is a gentleman first, and an organist second." *Requiescat in pace*.

Ian Wells

The ALL in the *Tablet*

The Editor was one of those interviewed for the *Tablet's* leading article *'In saecula saeculorum'* on 31st May, subtitled 'Will Pope Leo ease restrictions on the old rite?' In fact it turned mostly on a number of other topics, including what is generally referred to by advocates of the old rite as 'Tradition'.

Readers were divided in their responses, some taking the usual old-style 'progressive' line of sneering at Latin as being on a par with lace on vestments; others were more thoughtful. The *Tablet*'s own view, in a leader on June 14th, showed its understanding that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 36:1 was intended to be taken seriously, and cannot be disregarded. Finally, on 10th July, a letter from Frank Leahy, the ALL's Chairman, was published, observing, *inter alia*, that '*SC* permits the vernacular, and decrees the retention of Latin. This leaves considerable latitude, but the exclusive use of the vernacular is a source of division.'

The CTS Congregational Missals with the new Lectionary translations

In the last issue of *Latin Liturgy* we reported that the publication of the Daily and Weekday Missals was scheduled for mid-April. We understand that the CTS has had to make major alterations to the books' layouts, and they are now expected to be ready by mid-September. Like the Sunday Missal, which has already been published, these will be the only congregational missals which will have both the Missal texts in Latin and English, plus the translations of the Lectionary which were introduced last year. Details can be seen on the CTS Books website.

The Graduale Parvum: Progress to date

The *Introits*, published in 2018 are on sale by CTS Books. *Chants between the Readings* is ready for publication by the CTS hopefully later this year, and work on the *Communions* is well advanced. The *Offertories* are still being written. Organ accompaniments still need to be coded for a suitable computer program, and recordings to aid choirs made in the same manner as those for the Introits. If any members are competent at transcribing manuscript organ accompaniments onto computer, please contact the Association using the Contact page on the website.

The Schola at Norwich

Talk by Fr Peter Wygnanski, 10th May 2025

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Vice-Chairman	Paul Henriksen
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Membership Secretary	Brendan Daintith, 173 Davidson Road, Croydon CR0 6DP *Brendan.Daintith@Latin-Liturgy.org*
Website	www.Latin-Liturgy.org
Facebook	www.facebook.com/latinliturgy

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