



THE STRUGGLE OF
TRADITIONALIST
CATHOLICS

COMETAN



PURPOSE OF LECTURE

- To understand the motivations behind the beliefs of Traditionalist Catholics following the Second Vatican Council.
- To understand the challenges faced by Traditionalist Catholics in England from the 1970s.
- To understand how Traditionalist Catholicism in England began as a grassroots movement relying on lay members.
- This project began as part of my family history research but then turned into an area of academic interest.

BIOGRAPHICAL FACTS

- **Irene Mary Taylor** (née Hardacre)
- Born 7th March 1932 in Fishwick, Preston, Lancashire.
- Mothered 12 children, 10 of whom survived to adulthood.
- Worked as a tailoress.
- Known for her "immutable devotion" to the Catholic Church.
- Died 16th October 2015 at 222 Longmeanygate, Leyland, Lancashire.



- **Derrick Taylor**
- Born 12th August 1930 in Coppull, Lancashire.
- From age 7, had an instinct to covert to Catholicism from Anglicanism.
- Known for his experience of interior locutions during his 40s.
- Worked as a collier and gardener.
- Defendant of his Catholic faith against ridicule.
- 26th November 2011 in Victoria Hospital, Blackpool, Lancashire.

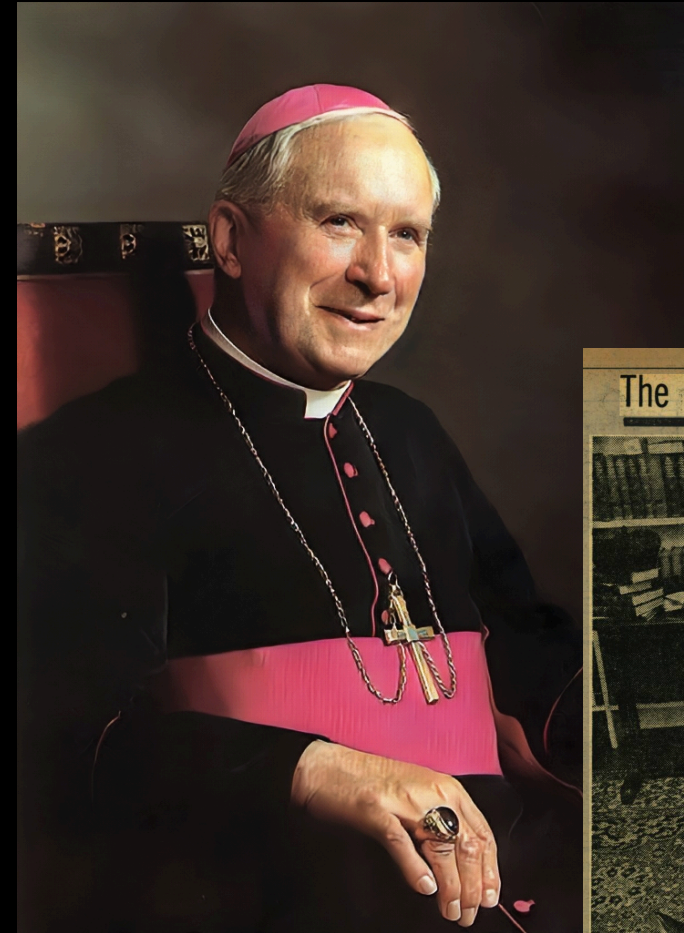
PRE-VATICAN II ERA

- Derrick began his conversion to Catholicism after a pilgrimage to the Crosses of Knockalla in Northern Ireland in 1949 that solidified his Catholic faith during an epiphany.
- Derrick Taylor built his second house 222 Longmeanygate in the village of Midge Hall near Leyland.
- Irene and Derrick made their home reflected their Catholic faith in every possible way. They raised ten children at this large home with its extensive land.

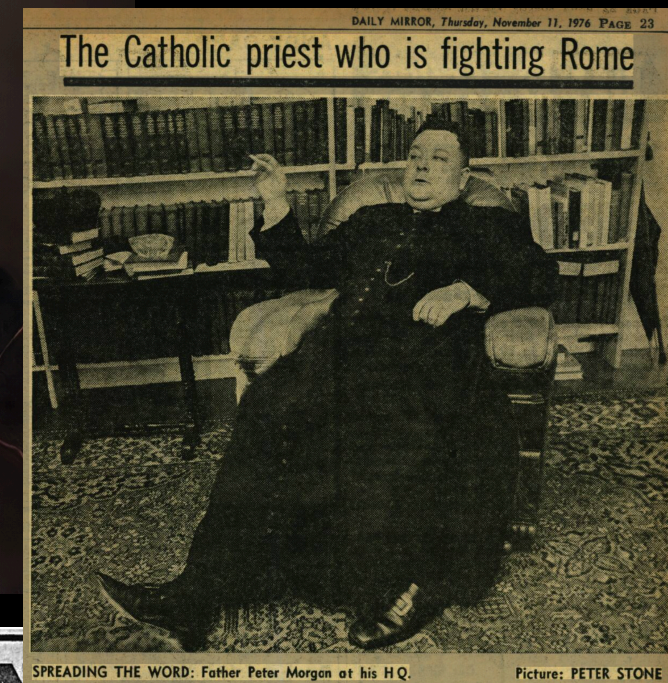


OPPOSITION TO VATICAN II

- **Loss of divine essence** – that the Mass has to be said in Latin as a sacred language for it to retain its divine functions to bringing about transubstantiation. The immutability of God was believed to be compromised by altering the central ritual that it is believed was instituted by God.
- **Caving to modernity** – it was believed the Church was bending to the will of the modern world.
- **Retention of traditional values and customs** – many pre-Vatican II customs were done away with and there was an acknowledgement of ecumenicalism in Vatican II that from their view undermined the Church.
- **Restoration of the Church** – this was the great spiritual fight of their generation, to see the Mass reinstituted and the Church restored to its former ideal state.



Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, Founder of the Society of St Pius X (a.k.a. SSPX).



Father Peter Morgan, the first Superior of the SSPX in Great Britain.

Father Michael Cresswell leads a Latin Mass at Bury in 1976.

DISILLUSIONMENT TO LOCUTION

- Derrick experience a noted phenomenon called the 'zeal of the convert'. Also bear in mind that he had undergone a 6 year conversion only for much of what he had been taught as true in Latin to be changed not a decade later.
- Derrick's disillusionment with the changes seemed to culminate in 1971 when he entered St Wilfrid's Church in Preston, returning to pray to the Sacred Heart devotion, and there claimed to hear the voice of God say:
 - "Keep up with your Mass. Everything is all right."
- A second locution supposedly occurred in 1978 in St Mary's Church in Bamber Bridge during which his confidant priest Father Patrick McNally spoke to Derrick supernaturally after his death.



Sacred Heart locutions in St Wilfrid's Church

ANALYSIS OF THE LOCUTIONS

- Derrick recounted his two sessions of interior locution during an interview he participated in during 1995.
- How can we determine that the locutions actually took place?
- What clues are in the content of the locutions and in the context and environment in which they supposedly took place that might help determine their validity.
- I am in the process of writing a further academic article that specifically explores the Catholic tradition of interior locution or hearing the voice of God.



Sacred Heart locutions in St Wilfrid's Church

POST-VATICAN II ERA

- Traditionalist Catholicism in England was a grassroots movement originally and relied on the efforts of laypeople.
- Irene and Derrick opened their home to the public both for indoor and outdoor Latin Masses from April 1974. They were the first people to do this in the North West region.
- They called their home the Leyland Mass Centre and built their own Traditionalist church.
- On 9th October 1975, their involvement with the St Pius V Association escalated when they were featured on the front page of the *Lancashire Evening Post*.
- The local priest called them 'cranks' and they were condemned by the archbishop.

Lancashire
Evening Post
No. 27,562 THURSDAY OCTOBER 9, 1975 6p

'Rebels' in outlawed Mass

Post Exclusive

LANCASHIRE CATHOLICS DEFEY PAPAL 'BAN'

By DARRYL FREEDMAN and DAVID GRAHAM

RELIGIOUS rites, outlawed by the Catholic Church, are being held in an isolated Leyland house. Roman Catholics from all over Lancashire including Preston and the Fylde Coast flock to the house to celebrate the prohibited, old-style Latin Mass every two months.

And, today a spokesman for the diocesan Archbishop — Archbishop Beck of Liverpool — said that the services were being conducted "against the laws of the church. They are carried out without the approval of the archbishop and the Vatican and they should stop."

People from as far away as Leeds and Liverpool are turning up to the old-style Latin Mass services at the house, set in rambling grounds down Leyland's quiet Longmead estate.

Inside, a kitchen and a dining room have been converted into a place of worship complete with pews and altar. The house is owned by 45-year-old Mr Derek Taylor and his wife Irene who have 10 children aged between four and 19.

Last night 60 people turned up for the outlawed service conducted by 18 stone, travelling priest Father Peter Morgan.

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they make no secret of it and talk fervently of their new found faith and their "breath of fresh air" — Fr Morgan.

Mr Derek Taylor readily admits he loves the Catholic Church but became disillusioned following Vatican Council reforms. "Quite frankly the new, English-speaking Mass is a load of rubbish," he said.

"It is deceitful and there is nothing about it at all. My heart bleeds for the Catholics of today. There is a treasure and they are just throwing it away."

"There are a lot of miserable Catholics about," she said. "They are very unhappy. But we are blessed. It seems that the new Mass has been tampered with by people who don't know what they are doing. I used to come out of church confused and troubled but now much of the burden has been lifted."

The couple first met Fr Morgan by chance at a Mass centre in Bath, three years ago after travelling down to visit friends. "It was like being given thousands of pounds," said Mr Taylor. "I would like him to come in here every day years," she said. "And they accept our view's."

The Taylors claim they are not afraid of people knowing their activities. They openly admit they want more Catholics to attend their Mass and to know what's going behind the scenes.

"The more the merrier," said Mr Taylor. "I would like to fill the house and when we would have a church."

The man who has "put meaning" back in their lives — Fr Morgan — tours the country with five other priests but works mainly in the South in an area from Falmouth to Herne Bay and north to Oxford. He has no church but claims to have several "centres" catering for about 2,000 Roman Catholics.

His base is in Newbury and is shared with four other priests and two lay brothers.

The house was bought by Fr Morgan's "superior" Archbishop Marcelle Lefebvre of Switzerland who gives him financial backing if necessary.

Fr Morgan, 35, came to England from Switzerland in 1971 after studying for the priesthood for six years.

dents, returning from seminary schools in Switzerland are constantly ready to join the ranks.

Talking about his work he said: "A number of priests who accepted the reform of the second Vatican Council accepted them more or less out of obedience. But 10 years later some are seeing the reform as not so good. There is no doubt that fewer people are going to church. In 1963, 56 per cent of Catholics went to Mass every Sunday. But by 1973 the figure has dropped to 37 per cent."

REFORM

"The idea of reform was to make our religion more meaningful, to bring Mass closer to the people. But it has completely backfired."

"Many people are very confused. It's got to a stage now where if you go to 20 priests with one problem you'd get 20 different answers."

He aimed to restore the old Tridentine Mass to the people and to administer the sacraments. But above all, to continue to do priestly

New and Old, and every Catholic priest had the basic right to say them without having to seek permission. "I was ordained to say this Mass and this is the Mass I will say," he added.

The Mass was the heart of the Catholic faith and was not a church service but a sacred action — a representation of the Calvary Sacrifice.

The New Mass had more or less become a service — a memorial of the Last Supper read as a narrative without action.

"It is not a question of Latin versus English," said Fr Morgan. "But of a change in the theological meaning of Mass."

Catholic people had a solemn duty to try and get back all people who had "strayed" and should do it by example.

Asked why much of his work seemed to be done behind closed doors in private houses, Fr Morgan said: "Nothing — I do it in secret. If I had a church I would say that's it, let's all meet there. But I haven't got one and that's the only reason."

People who attended his

He admitted he had "financial backing" from his Archbishop in Switzerland — the man who sent him back to England to do his work. And if he was ever "desperate" he would be helped.

It was the Archbishop who paid £25,000 for the mansion in Berkshire, said Fr Morgan, although he himself was responsible for paying the upkeep and had in fact spent over £13,000 on renovations.

SCHISM

Another of Father Morgan's parishioners is Mr T. S. Turek of Ullswater Avenue, Fleetwood. Mr Turek who teaches in Cleveleys attends all the Latin Mass services. "When the Mass changed myself and my family became totally disillusioned."

"The new translation bears no relation to the old Mass. It's completely false. We do not attend the established Catholic churches any more, said Mr Turek who has a family of 11.

Fr Edmund Fitzsimmons, parish priest of St Mary's Church, Leyland, said he would be very surprised if any of his parishioners were involved with the Latin Mass. He thought there would only be a "crank."

"Theologically there is very little if any difference between the old rites and the new. The new translations of the Canon are slightly different that's all."

"I have a lot of sympathy for these people who cannot accept the new rites. It's very sad. But I don't think there's any chance of what is called a schism in the

Fr Morgan in front of the altar at the Taylor home.

The Volvo car, a year old, was bought in Preston with money left by a relative.

Talking about money Fr Morgan said: "The whole of our work, the running costs and day-to-day expenses comes from the collections. It is providing just about enough to keep us going but we would obviously like more money and more people."

CHALLENGES

- Travelling for Latin Mass as masses became scarce during this period.
- Economic struggles of the 1970s, especially for coal miners.
- Secular ridicule who called the Taylors 'religious fanatics', 'cultists', 'rebels' and 'heretics'.
- Ecclesiastical ridicule who called the Taylors 'cranks' and defiers of the Pope.
- Poverty for the Taylor children and they had to go without in order to fund the Masses.
- In 1975, these tensions seemed to boil over when Father Oswald Baker of Downham Market made world news when he refused to say the English Mass in his church.



**'Rebels' set up
Latin centre**

NG POST, Thursday, Nov 6, 1975
**This is heresy
for a Catholic**

**'I won't
resign'
says priest**



POST-VATICAN II ERA



AFTERMATH OF THE MASS CENTRE

- From the mid-1980s, Irene and Derrick, in realising that the movement they had lead would not result in the changes they had hoped, retreated from the world.
- They planted tall trees to hide their home from the main road, they reduced their ties with the SSPX and made their home a sanctuary of Traditionalist Catholicism.
- Archbishop Lefebvre was excommunicated in 1988 following his consecration of bishops at Écone.
- Derrick died of a heart attack in hospital in 2011 and Irene died at home of cancer in 2015. Irene refused to take painkillers during her last days despite her friends and relatives pleading for her to. She said she wanted to suffer for her sins and for those of humanity.

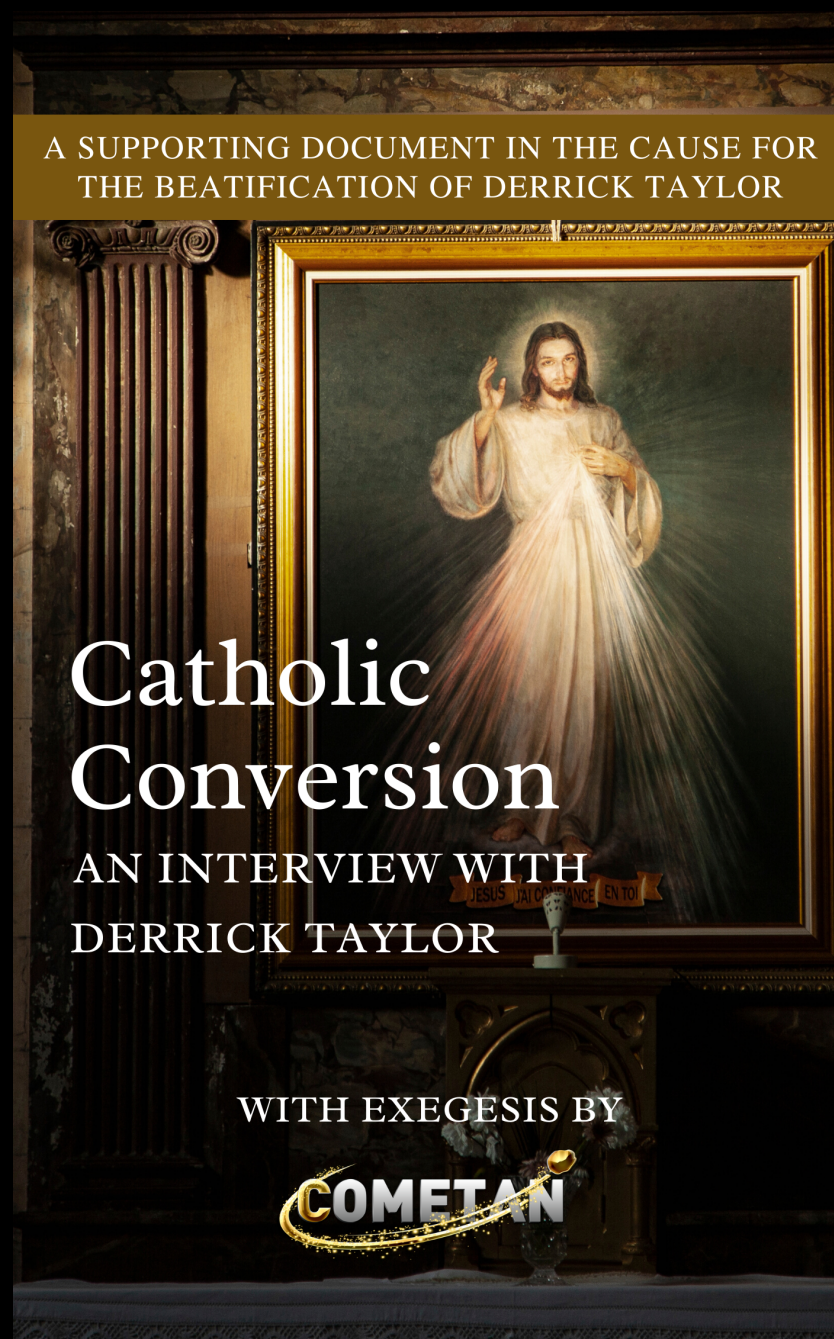


The Lost Shrine of Irene Mary Taylor at Longmeanygate

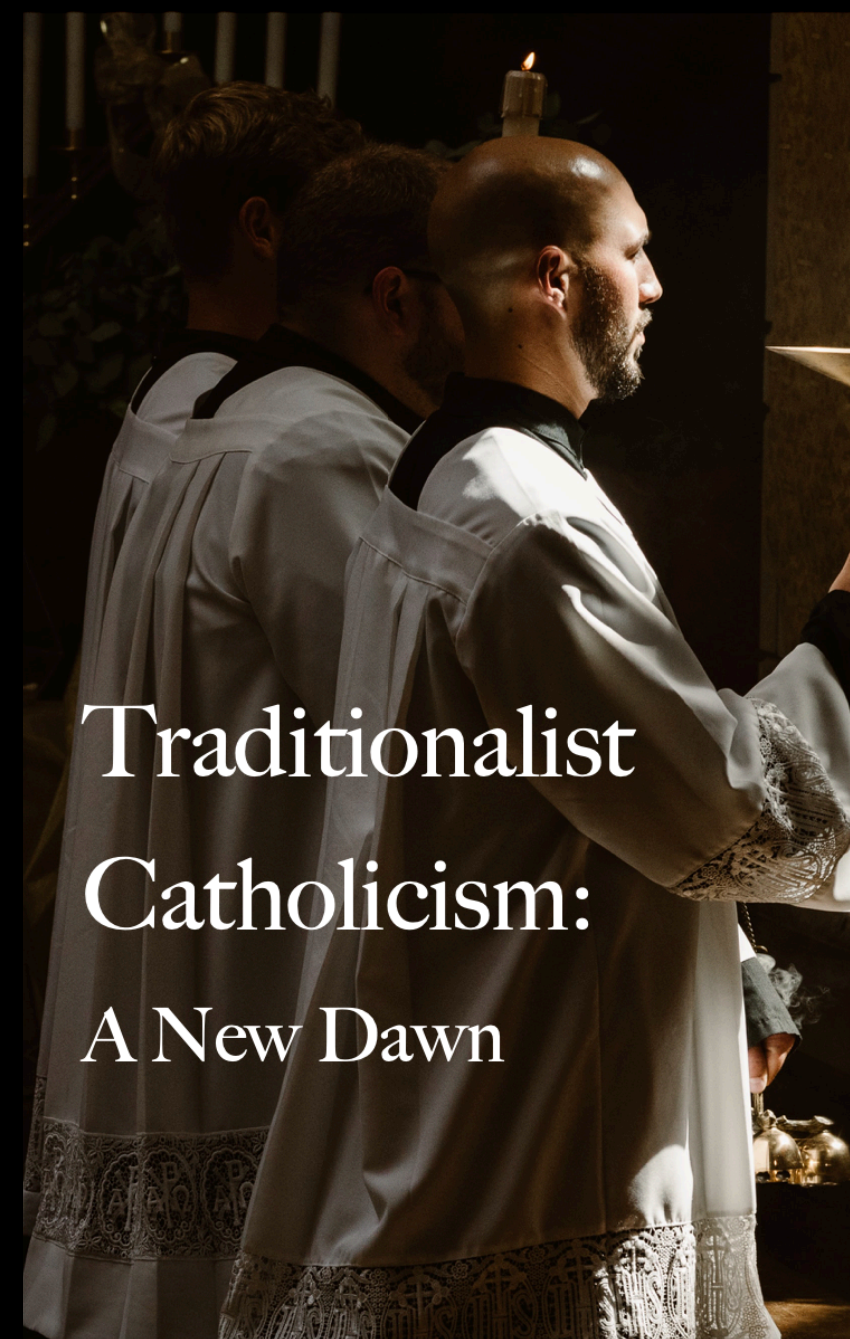
LATEST BOOKS



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JOURNAL ARTICLE



The Struggle of Traditionalist Catholics in 1970s Northern England in the North West Catholic History Journal.
Published May 2023.

Hearing the voice of God: the supernatural phenomenon of interior locution in the British Catholic History Journal. To be published autumn 2023.



THANK YOU FOR
LISTENING

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