

THE VENERABLE

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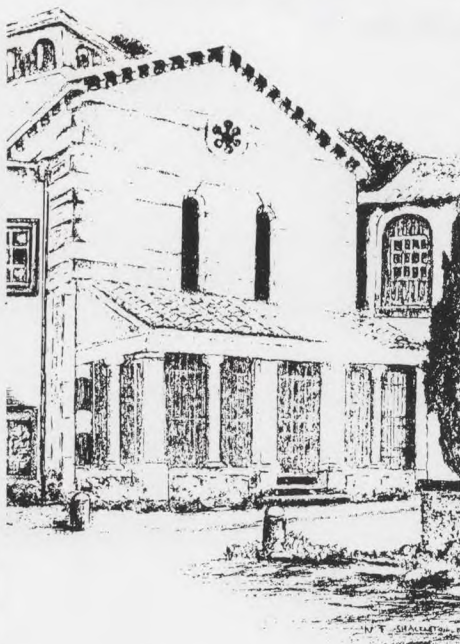
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THE VENERABLE 1989

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Editorial

“Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.”

I do not think it likely that there is anyone for whom the experience of first looking into an edition of “The Venerable” was akin to that of Keats on first looking into Chapman’s Homer (his reaction is quoted above) — nor do I claim that it’s going to be any different this year. However, “The Venerable” is the official mouth-piece of the English College and the English College as an English institution in the heart of “foreign” Rome can sometimes function magnetically to attract a whole range of unusual experiences. The College, acting for us as Chapman did for Keats, allows us to travel into many such new “realms of gold”: in “The Venerable” we can explore some of their contours and report on the findings. Here we may encounter a variety of personalities and events — Newman rubs shoulders with Mussolini, the Armada may be juxtaposed with the fall of the Papal States; we may learn about strange, new customs — for Christmas, for mountain climbing and for running a country villa; we may even talk with selected natives (this year with an Italian priest, Franco Gismano) and come to agree with C. S. Lewis when he said, “I should not be at all surprised to find that the other world had a separate time of its own”: that “other world” or “goodly state” of Italy has a different time all of its own and so perhaps we in College should learn to regard the College clock tower as the symbol of our distinctively English identity beneath whose watchful gaze these wondrous experiences pass.

I would like to conclude in the same whimsical fashion in which I have begun, by thanking all those who have shared their journeyings, the advertisers and subscribers who have provided the necessary financial backing, and the typesetters and printers for making our discoveries more widely known. I hope that we may continue to enjoy such support for next year’s venture.

Tim Swinglehurst

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Suor Livia with her new family. From left to right: Suor Angelia, Suor Gemma, the Rector, Suor Pia and Suor Livia.

Suor Livia

On 21st September we were pleased to welcome Suor Livia Costa to our community of Elisabettine Sisters. Her presence now brings the community here back up to four sisters. Suor Livia came to us after a period of five years in the Istituto di Villa Flaminia which is the large Elisabettine community here in Rome. She had previously been in very many of their communities throughout Italy. Suor Livia is kept very busy with her work in the Guardaroba which she inherited from Suor Angelia who has replaced Suor Norma as cook.

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In the Shoes of the Martyrs

After finishing his studies in Rome last autumn, Fr. John Kenny travelled back to England along the route taken by St. Ralph Sherwin and his companions in 1580. Late one November evening, he arrived in Geneva.

Despite aching feet and knees, I felt obliged to wander round and undertake whatever theological disputations were on offer! This was a very traditional aspect of the journey as Ralph Sherwin and friends had gone out a-disputing at the first chance to out-quiz the shock troops of the Protestant Reformation on their own ground. I walked up to St. Peter's Cathedral, used as a base by Jean Calvin, went on down to the lake, and stopped by at MacDonalds where a kind Asian assistant paid the half-franc I couldn't afford for my filet o'fish. *Much* appreciated. Walked back to the hostel where I was staying past two "life statues" of shopping and commuting city folk near the Avenue du Mail bus centre. My feet felt as leaden as theirs: I sank into bed almost crippled.

Wednesday, 4th November

I woke up at 6.15 a.m. in the oddly-named "Home", the Youth Hostel of St. Boniface's parish in Geneva. Shaved . . . oh no I didn't! My things were at the station (so I thought). Anyway I said morning prayer and went and concelebrated Mass in German for the Feast of St. Charles Borromeo with the Jesuit priest, the lay-brother and the sisters. After Mass the priest-chaplain showed me the route to the next stage of the trip, the solitary town of St. Claude where Campion, Sherwin and co. went in a spirit of penance after their Genevan adventures. The journey would have to be by train via Bellegarde and Nantua. Unfortunately there were no direct trains or buses to St. Claude.

After breakfast I headed off to the station, bought a ticket to St. Claude, and went to claim my bag — poor innocent abroad! Little did I know it would take two to five days for the bag to make its way to Geneva. That bad news complemented the fact that the station "Information" girls were in a remarkably bad humour, throwing timetables around, seething with frustration and drawing a cry of "Merde!" from at least one frustrated passenger. Makes you believe in evil spirits. . . .

'Well, I said to my father; "I will leave this place and go to St. Claude" by train via Bellegarde and Nantua', so I thought. When I arrived at Bellegarde at 10.15 a.m. I was informed that the next train was at 5.45 p.m. I decided to hitch-hike (note restrained understatement) and as it turned out God smiled on me in the form of a Portuguese cheese-worker called Aurelio, a forest transporter (yes a forest transporter), and a Japanese "Nissan" worker on his way to St. Claude to help set up a factory.

I arrived in St. Claude in time to see the Basilique just before it closed. St. Claude's body was destroyed by the 18th century revolutionaries, as were many of the 15th century choir stalls, the finest in France. Beautiful stained glass too, the 'represtinated' pure Gothic looks almost new.

All this was fine, but two problems were not far from my thoughts: how to get out of St. Claude, and how to get my luggage back from Geneva (if it had in fact arrived there). Leaving the imponderables to one side I went to find something to eat at "La Colombey". Sat down to my 30F "plat du jour" and local white wine and was smiled

at by the lady sitting next to me. I ate my meal in silence, stopping only to speak to the girl opposite, a sentence to check that I had actually seen the 'historic centre' of town. After a moment the lady next to me asked in English if I liked the local wine. I was a little taken aback at first, but soon we chatted away like old friends.

I couldn't understand how quickly she zeroed in on the fact that I was from England, rather than any other English-speaking country. The reason was that she, Sylviane, had lived in England for many years, in Derby. I told her about my plans for "the escape from St. Calude" and how I had to go back to Geneva for my bag. It was then that she offered me the chance to go back with her and stay with her husband Michel and herself in Dôle, north of Dijon. Somewhat surprised, I arranged to meet her in a couple of hours to let her know my reaction, yes or no. In the meantime I wrote postcards and went back to the Basilica to pray midday prayer. After the interval, we met up again and after an abortive attempt to phone Geneva about my bag we headed off to Dôle. After an interesting chat in the car we reached our destination and I wandered off to see its minor basilica (église collegiale). On the way back I bought some wine for supper and a bunch of flowers for Sylviane. Met Michel her husband and we shared a simple and satisfying supper enlivened by ice-cream and cassis! Had an interesting chat about why I was a priest and why so many Catholic French people no longer go to church. Went to bed exhausted (as usual).

Thursday, 5th November

Woke up at 7.30 a.m. Morning prayer — shave — breakfast — photo — fare thee well! Decided to hitch back to Geneva but had a very slow start. Eventually a school-teacher picked me up, then a man with two sons, a road-sign transporter from nearby St. Laurent, a speed merchant, an elderly Belgian retired lady, and a cosmopolitan pair of young people with a liking for Senegalese disco music who kindly dropped me outside Geneva station . . . phew! . . . God helped too!

And whadd'ya know? My rucksack was actually there, waiting for me! Ah, the joy of reunion! So, I posted my customary postcard and rushed for the train to Lausanne. Sadly a pedantic Customs official took my desire to catch the train as a sign of international wickedness and made me go back to the end of the queue and have my belongings searched. At the end he asked: "Are you a student?" I, stifling my fury at being made to miss my train, uttered the immortal Ralph Sherwin-like words, "Je suis Prêtre" (not that it made much difference to him, I could have said "Je suis trapeze artist" for all he cared). Much to my surprise the train was still there when he had finished with me. From Lausanne I caught the train to Dijon and arrived just after 8.00 p.m.

I didn't bother looking up any religious houses, just chose a cheapo one star place near the station called "L'Étendard", stopping *en route* to buy some wine for my hosts tomorrow. The room was fine, though the soft bed didn't do my back much good. The fact that it had a shower and I could freshen up after two days without my rucksack was much appreciated. I showered and went off to sleep "before my head hit the pillow" . . . then I said night prayer.

Friday, 6th November

Woke up quite sometime before the lark (3.40 a.m.). Prayed and tidied things up. Felt reasonably fresh as I had got to sleep at about 9.45 p.m. last night. Headed out to the station in the cold and misty morning air; fog and frost were certainly in charge but my tee-shirt, shirt, jumper, track-suit top and raincoat on helped me to cope quite well.

The train was waiting. I discovered that the 2nd class non-sleeping carriages for Rheims, my next stop, were at the very end of the train and decorated with assorted bodies strewn along all the available corridor space. Didn't really bother me as they looked quite comfortable and I wasn't really thinking of sleep. Prayed the office of readings nice and slowly sitting near the end doors of the carriage as we trundled through the night. Eventually we stopped at Obscuritania-CentreVille to fool around with the carriage coupling. The train was splitting in two, half for Rheims, half for Metz. Well, it took them a while to work out how this would affect emarginated corridor-dwellers and an even longer while to actually complete the shunting of carriages from A to B to C. I only had to move twice and ended up with a nice compartment of eight seats to myself. It was about 6.10 a.m. and I was feeling weary so I set my alarm clock and stretched out for a kip. People came and went for two hours but all in all I had a good old doze. My only disappointment was to come in the form of a long delay outside Rheims, with the result that we arrived in town a quarter of an hour after the train to Trier had left. Whether it left in time or not I don't know, but it left without me. I was feeling "under the moon, Brian" and opted to have breakfast and to catch a train going some of the way to Luxembourg.

Had coffee and a *huge* croissant and caught the train to Charleville-Mezières. My luck was in, there was a connection for Sedan; but at Sedan (where I arrived at about 11.45 a.m.) there was nothing further until the mid-afternoon connection for Longwy on the Luxembourg border so I wandered out of the station to hitch-hike instead. As I was waiting to cross the station forecourt, I asked a middle-aged woman accompanied by a bespectacled adolescent whether she could point out the road for Luxembourg. We exchanged a few sentences in French and then she started speaking English with the kind of accent I could only associate with Spanish children who go to learn English in Dublin. We crossed the road and she offered to walk with me and to point out the right direction when our paths diverged. It turned out that she was Irish, from Belfast, and had married a Frenchman who came to Belfast on holiday over 20 years before. The young man was her son, Bruce. Soon we came to the road for Verdun and said goodbye to each other, but I had hardly crossed the road when Bruce came running up behind me to invite me to walk a little further and share lunch with them! Flabbergasted by a seeming repetition of the Dôle experience, I agreed without *too* much persuading. As we walked along to the butchers, past the castle and on to their home in a nearby apartment block, Margaret told me about her husband Michel, her involvement with her local church, and her work as a part-time translator.

The family and I got on very well as we chatted over a beautiful meal and the nice bottle of wine bought last night in Dijon; our happiness came not only from a shared enthusiasm for things Irish, but also because the family had recently holidayed together in the Jura Mountains near St. Claude. Primarily, however, we shared a common interest in the Church and its different forms of local Christianity; in fact, Margaret made me a present of a book introducing children to the Christian heritage of their area. A fine time was had by all, photographs were taken, and Margaret and Michel even came to see me off at the station on the afternoon train to Longwy. As I sat in the train reading about the Champagne and Ardennes area and gazing from time to time at the beautiful autumn forests of the Franco-Belgian border I thanked God once again for the many kindnesses I've experienced on this twisting, tortuous journey — from Himself and from his people.

Well, arriving at the end of the line at Longwy I found that again there was no option but to hitch ("fair le stop"). After walking a fair bit away from the centre of town and holding my little "LUX" sign out to all-comers I was eventually assisted by

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a true Luxembourgish (a Luxemburger, but without cheese), a rare species. He was from Ezch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg's second city. Surprised that anyone from England could speak even a little French, he was eager to talk about his country and the last war, in which he lost a brother. Though he was very informative about the local economy, he was not too hot on local geography; I'm convinced that he put quite a few extra kilometres on to the distance by the time he left me at Ezch-sur-Alzette station. Nevertheless, the locals were very understanding, changing my French money with no fuss and directing me to Luxembourg City. There I changed more money for the train ticket and for a replacement bottle of wine, I phoned my hosts in Trier, and promptly caught the train.

Arriving at Trier station I was met by my friend Martina, a theology student who used to attend the English College Sunday Mass, and we walked for a few minutes through the thick and freezing fog to her family's home, where I stayed overnight. I got to know them all quite well last summer when I spent three weeks forty miles from Trier administering a beautiful parish on the River Mosel. Acquaintances were renewed, we ate and chatted and eventually I went off to bed — exhausted as usual. Seems to be the only way.

Saturday, 7th November

I dragged myself out of bed next morning and walked up to the beautiful church of St. Gangolf, run by the Redemptorist congregation where I was happy to concelebrate Mass on the Feast of the English Missionary to the Low Countries, St. Willibrord. His memory is still celebrated with the famous and very silly "hopping game" that takes place in the town of Echternach every Whit Monday (don't miss it). What a wonderful way to remember someone! Spent the rest of the morning chatting happily with the therapeutic Düntzer family. After a gargantuan lunch and several sticky buns we had to say our goodbyes. Peter drove me to the station for the afternoon train, I said goodbye to Martina, and soon I was heading back towards Rheims and Paris.

Arriving in Paris, I dashed from Gare de l'Est to Gare du Nord before any Elizabethan informer could notice that I was in town, picked up a hamburger and a coffee at a friendly African takeaway, and took my seat on the last train to Lille. It was a pretty groggy ride, made more tense by the fact that even though I was dropping off to sleep the last thing that I wanted was to miss the stop at which a connecting train to Amiens was waiting.

Eventually we arrived at the connection, caught the train for Amiens, and reached there at half-past midnight. I found a two star hotel. The proprietor came down to open the door in his pyjamas with the look of a man who had done so three or four times already and found it perfectly natural. He even managed a sympathetic smile as I counted out the pathetic dregs of my French currency, giving him 105 francs (about £10) and keeping the remaining five or six for myself. With a bleary "Bon Nuit" I staggered up three flights of stairs and set my alarm clock for 6 a.m. so that I could get up for early Mass at the Cathedral and buzz off to Calais as soon as possible.

Sunday, 8th November

It wasn't to be. I woke up at 9 a.m. Pretty cheesed off. Shaved, said morning prayer and resigned myself to a quick shifty at the Cathedral. Though I couldn't attend Mass there, I thought at least I would see the sights before rushing for a train to make the crossing to England in time for an evening Mass.

As I entered the Cathedral, which was only five minutes away by foot, I was surprised that so many people were going in at twenty minutes before ten. I followed

the stream of traffic over to a side chapel where lighted candles were waiting on the altar. The sacristan nodded when I asked if Mass were being celebrated and hurriedly pointed out the direction of the sacristy. In I dashed complete with plastic bags and an air of bemused scruffiness, interrupting a conversation between the Administrator and the aged and venerable Dean, who were about to receive a nod from the MC which would start their processing over to the side chapel. I stammered a few words about being an English priest who wanted to concelebrate and my request was met with a great and patient welcome. Within moments we were standing together at the altar at a solemn but cheery Sunday Mass with a parish community that had something extra to celebrate, the appointment that week of a new Bishop for their diocese and their Cathedral.

After Mass I staggered off to the station, stopping only to buy a couple of postcards. Then, realising that I had a quarter of an hour before my train was due, I wandered over to the station buffet and bought a cup of coffee, counting out bits of francs to a friendly assistant. As I stood there in civvies musing on my liquid breakfast an angel voice trilled over my shoulder *en Français*: "No, Father! You must eat — I have seen . . . now you must choose something, please!"

I seem to attract these people . . . God is good. Resistance was futile so, mystified, I accepted a salad bun. The lady in question had in fact attended the Mass at the Cathedral where the Administrator had kindly welcomed "the priest from England". I sat with her, her husband and their grand-daughter for a few moments and whilst I munched she told me a little about how her daughter's marriage had broken down and how they often came to Amiens to look after the little girl. Sadly I had only a few minutes with them before my train arrived. See how Catholics love their priests! They have my love and my prayers.

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The train drew to a halt at “Boulogne Aéro-glisseurs” . . . the Hovercraft stop. I was annoyed that it wasn't going into town but decided to look on the bright side, and marched out of the station towards the town. That was about 1 p.m.

Well, to cut a long story short, by 4 p.m. I was still in Boulogne. By then I was much the wiser, having been to the port railway station, the ferry railway station and another of the great gamut of railway terminals on offer there. My sentiments were less than cheery. I had had to change money to pay for a taxi (the kind driver settled for less than his due when my well-thumbed plastic satchet of centime scraps raised its sorry head), and when I finally arrived at the right railway station, I learnt that the last afternoon train to Calais had already departed.

That was probably the low-point of the journey. Very little eaten or slept, so close and yet so far. The little chance I had had of seeing St. Omer had been scuppered by over-sleeping and now it was doubtful as to whether I would even arrive in England today!

Well, nothing to do but hitch. . . . First of all, though, I had to walk out of Boulogne. Did so. Stuck thumb out. Waited for the angels to do their bit. Delay on the angel front. But look — something's stopped! It turns out to be a middle-aged working man and his son on their way back from an afternoon sport fixture. Chatty son and an embarrassed dad, but good company. In between chunks of a bar of chocolate which I had been given as I left the College in Rome we chatted about the church (he was a non-practising Catholic) and the “Chunnel”. He told me that the Channel Tunnel is very much welcomed by the people of Boulogne as a source of short-term employment and long-term commercial opportunity. What a kind man! We drove to his home, ten miles or so down the road, where he told his wife he would be late for supper and got a jacket for his son, and then he got back into the car and drove me all the way up to the Calais ferry terminal. I had nothing to give him in return but a *franglais* thank you, the last of my Luxembourg beer, and the promise that his kindness would not be forgotten. Talk about “the Unknown Soldier”, he was “the Unknown Frenchman” — he, the venerable Dean, and the families at Dôle and Sedan. Thank you France.

John Kenny

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The Headmaster and Mrs. Ketterer are always delighted to meet parents to show them the school and to discuss the educational future of their children.

Victims of the Armada: Blessed Christopher Buxton, Blessed Richard Leigh, Blessed Robert Morton

“I could reckon unto you the miseries they suffer in night journies, in the worst weather that can be picked; peril of thieves, of waters, of false brethren; their close abode in chambers as in prison or dungeon without fire or candle lest they give token to the enemy where they be; their often and sudden raising from their beds at midnight to avoid diligent searches of heretics; all which and divers other discontents, disgraces and reproaches they willingly suffer, which is great penance for their feathers; and all to win the souls of their dearest countrymen; which pains few men pity as they should do and not many reward them as they ought to do.”¹ Thus wrote William Allen, Rector of the English College at Douai, to the Prior of the English Carthusians in August 1577. He was replying to a criticism that his seminary priests were too young and worldly, decked out in feathers and secular dress, and offers a vivid account of the grim sufferings his priests were prepared to endure for love of the Catholic faith and of their nation. The words are particularly poignant when one considers that they were written before the persecution had really begun; it was not for another two years that the first student from Rome was to suffer martyrdom, Ralph Sherwin in 1579. The Roman Church was very quick to recognise the merits of the English martyrs. Personal devotion to them sprung up almost immediately particularly within the seminaries and among persecuted Catholics. In 1643 a Papal commission of enquiry was set up to look into their causes for recognition, although it was not until 1850 and the restoration of the English Hierarchy of Bishops that it was possible to carry out the indepth research necessary. In 1886 Pope Leo XIII declared 63 of the martyrs to be “Blessed” and 255 to be “Venerable”. Of these latter ones a further 136 were beatified in 1929 and 85 in 1987, while of those already “Beati”, two were canonised in 1935 (Saints John Fisher and Thomas More) and 40 in 1970. It is to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the beatification of the 136 martyrs in 1929 that this article is written. It looks in detail at the particular life and merits of three of the martyrs who were all past students of the Venerable English College.

Christopher Buxton, Richard Leigh and Robert Morton were all victims of the law passed in the English Parliament of September 1585 which made it a crime of treason, punishable by being hanged, drawn and quartered, to be an active seminary priest in England — that is to have been trained at a seminary abroad with the intention of returning to England to minister to the spiritual needs of Catholics. Buxton and Leigh were close contemporaries at the Venerable, and Morton was just a contemporary of Buxton. They were not among the first crop of martyrs from the College but together formed part of that first generation of seminarians who, perhaps unlike their predecessors, had a good idea of the almost inevitable fate that awaited them on their return to England. The tradition of the College Martyrs had begun with Ralph Sherwin in 1579, and by the time Leigh entered the College in 1582 four more alumni had received the martyrs’ crown. By 1580 the famous martyrs painting was hanging in the College Church and perhaps already it had become customary to sing the Te Deum before it on hearing of another martyrdom of a student. Certainly in 1583 the series of frescoes depicting English martyrdoms through the ages had been completed in the Church (replicas of which still adorn the tribune of the present Church) and must have formed a significant subject for the students’ daily meditation. How ardent must have been their prayer in the realisation that their choice of Christian vocation would surely determine whether or not they

were to meet with a premature and painful death.

The immediate pretext to the martyrdom of Buxton, Leigh and Morton was the decisive defeat of the Spanish Armada by the English fleet in July 1588. This triggered off an upsurge of anti-Catholic feeling expressed in savage attacks on English Catholics, whom it was believed, without any justification, had been friends of Spain. A letter from Buxton to the Rector of the English College written just before he embarked for England bears witness to the tenseness of the situation: "All things [are] so close in Inlande that we here nothing from thence. Prystes lye secrete and stirre not so boldlye as heretofore."²

Robert Morton was the first to be executed on 28th August 1588 — "the first and blackest day in this persecution."³ In order to spread the terror the executions were not all held at Tyburn but were scattered all over London; Lincons Inn Fields, Clerkenwell and Brentford. New gibbets were erected and hurdles and quartering were dispensed with to save time. The particular details of their death as for their life are scarce; we must rely mostly on accounts based on rumour and eye-witness descriptions written down at a later date. The fear of impromptu searches by crown officers was enough to deter most English Catholics from committing anything to paper which was liable to be at all incriminating. Nevertheless the few bare facts continue to inspire when seen through the eyes of faith and to the seminarian of today provide an awesome challenge to his sense of commitment. For while the grim circumstances of the priestly mission are thankfully changed, that charism of utter self-renunciation for the things of God which the martyrs essentially exemplify remains a fundamental objective of the vocation to the ordained priesthood.

Christopher Buxton was born in Derbyshire in 1562. He was brought up a Protestant but became a Catholic and spent some time at the English College at Rheims before entering the English College in Rome on 15th April 1584. He received all the Holy Orders in the month of October 1586 culminating in the prebyterate on the 26th. In April 1587 he left Rome in the company of Robert Morton and together they made the arduous journey back to England to take up their priestly apostolate. Details of their journey survive in the testimony of Father Christopher Grene and letters written by Buxton and Morton from Rheims to their Rector, before crossing to England. Most of the journey was made on foot as they only had one horse between them. They probably relied greatly on the hospitality of religious houses and friendly priests en route as they only had 25 crowns between them for a journey which took several weeks. No doubt Charles Borromeo was asked to provide more than just his benediction when these and other English clerics visited him in Milan on their way back to the mission.

On 27th May 1587, the feast of Corpus Christi, they reached Rheims. There they rested awhile with the intention of then embarking for England. However, in the meantime news reached Rheims of the ferocious and unremitting slaughter of Catholic priests in the build-up to the confrontation with Spain, and the zealous priests were restrained from leaving until they had received the express permission of their Rector in Rome. It was Buxton who spoke out begging to be allowed to go without delay: ". . . and I, for my part, gave answer that I came from Rome to go to Englande, and therefore if I could gette in, I would . . . and so I am amynded and determined within one weeke after the wryting hereof to go towards my cuntrye, and if I can gette anye hoope to escape by any meanes I will venter in the name of Jesus Christe and our blessed Ladye and all the holye and blessed companye of heaven."⁴ Permission duly came from Rome and the implication in Buxton's reply dated 12th September 1587 is that it had been wrongly withheld by the acting superior

in Rheims during William Allen's absence. He set sail from Dieppe and found shelter with a Catholic gentleman in London. More of his activities is not known, except that by November 1587 he was in the Marshalsea jail where he was held until after the defeat of the Armada. On 1st October 1588 he was martyred at Canterbury.

Richard Leigh was born in London in 1561 and was educated at Douai and Rheims before entering the English College in Rome on 6th November 1582. He was ordained at St. John Lateran on 11th February 1586 and left that same year for England. He arrived there on 18th June 1586. Bishop Challoner in his *Memoirs of Missionary Priests* (ed. 1924) says that he was arrested and banished. This is without confirmation from other sources and indeed there is no record of any banishments after the law of September 1586 condemning all seminary priests as traitors. What is certain is that he was committed to the Tower on 4th July 1588 and martyred at Tyburn along with Margaret Ward and four laymen on 30th August 1588.

Father Henry Walpole SJ in his *Acts of the English Martyrs* (p. 306) speaks of Leigh's great composure as he was taken to the place of execution in a cart. He gave his blessing to all his companions and from the scaffold spoke at length to the spectators and demanded time for prayer. Bishop Challoner also recounts two edifying stories from the rather gruesome circumstances. As the "Confessors of Christ" were being drawn through the streets, "a gentlewoman of fashion, animated with a zeal and fortitude above her sex . . . [cried] out with a loud voice, [and] exhorted them to be constant in their faith." She then forced her way through the crowd and knelt down before the prisoners asking for their benediction, before being apprehended by the authorities and committed to prison. A little later one of the condemned begged from the scaffold that if there were any Catholics present in the crowd would they pray for them as he felt very much in need of their prayers, at which point a Catholic "not thinking it enough to pray secretly in his heart as others did, knelt down before the multitude and prayed aloud for him, to the great encouragement of the confessor, and great mortification of the persecutors."⁵

The Yorkshireman Robert Morton only narrowly earns the title of alumnus of the English College, Rome. He entered the College aged 39 on 5th April 1587 and left that same month with all the orders up to deacon. He was ordained to the presbyterate at Rheims on 14th June 1587. In fact he had first commenced his seminary studies earlier in 1573 at Douai, but left shortly afterwards, perhaps because of the death of his father. He was subsequently married. In 1578 the couple decided to emigrate but were captured on board ship by the notorious persecutor of Catholics, Richard Topcliffe. By July 1578 he was in jail and as one uncle, Nicholas Morton* had been active in procuring the excommunication of Queen Elizabeth in 1570, and another, Thomas, had been a prominent rebel in the Northern Rebellion of 1569, he was subjected to a most rigorous examination. Thanks to the intervention of some friends at court, Morton was released. It was on the sudden death of his wife that he decided to make his way to Rome in the spring of 1586 and recommence preparation for priesthood. On 2nd July 1587 he was sent back to England, but was quickly recaptured by Topcliffe and received the martyrs' crown at Lincolns Inn Fields on 28th August 1588.

*In the Church of the English College in Rome there is a handsome memorial to Nicholas Morton, paid for by his nephew Robert. There is also a reference to the payment for it in the surviving letters of Robert Morton. (C.R.S.V, *The English Martyrs*, p. 137.)

Our devotion to the English martyrs can clearly be enriched by a greater appreciation of the particular circumstances in which they lived and died, In conclusion it is worth considering for a moment the wider implications of their achievements. Certainly they died for the maintenance of the eternal truths of the Catholic faith at a time of great dissent from the Church. This should remind us of our responsibility to preserve and deepen our understanding of these great truths in the calmer religious atmosphere which we enjoy in this present age. We have always to guard ourselves against the danger of losing the Faith through complacency, and a devotion to the martyrs is as necessary today as at any age in the history of the Church. Finally such devotions should also be seen as a great aid in our ecumenical endeavours, in the quest for Christian unity. As Pope Paul VI pointed out at the canonisation ceremonies for the Forty Martyrs in 1970, the English martyrs gave their lives for the unity of God's Church, and through their merits and prayers we have come far and will continue to advance in the restoration of what Newman termed "a communion of love and truth."

Beati Richarde Leigh
Christophore Buxton
Roberte Morton

ORATE PRO NOBIS

William F. Massie

FOOTNOTES

¹ ANSTRUTHER, Godfrey O.P., The Seminary Priests, p.v.

² C.R.S The English Martyrs V. p. 149.

³ ANSTRUTHER, p. 78.

⁴ C.R.S Vp. 145.

⁵ CHALLONER, Richard. Memoirs of Missionary Priests. p. 141.

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Christmas in Rome: Some insights for our non-Roman readers

I suppose that Christmas anywhere has its charms, but in Rome, and at the English College, it can be delightfully different.

You notice how little Christmas is commercialised here, though sadly this is quickly changing. Leaving England in October when the shops have already begun to fill their window displays with Christmas specials — Christmas packs of cigarettes, Christmas tins of car oil as well as the more obvious selection boxes — you come to Rome to find nothing at all. And when the decorations do start to appear, at the beginning of Advent, they do so quite delightfully. In central Rome many of the pavements are covered with a sort of carpeting in red or green and the kerbs are lined with Christmas trees decorated with tiny lights and tinsel wrapped boxes. If towards Christmas Day the carpeting gets rather worn with the passage of dusty or muddy feet, for the first two weeks at least it all appears magical, and nothing is ever vandalised. Roman shops are not given to special promotions. The elaborate window displays of Oxford and Regent Streets are entirely absent and when Advent calendars or posters appear, they are disconcertingly in English or German.

Only a few minutes walk from the College is the Advent Fair in the Piazza Navonna. This square is long and narrow (it used to be a stadium) and decorated with a church by Borromini and a famous fountain by Bernini. From the first week in Advent stalls are erected all around the perimeter and the Fair begins. Originally the stalls sold only the hand painted traditional crib figures. Many stalls still sell these, but there is increasing diversification, first into the same figures in plastic then into stalls selling sweets, toys and jewellery. The traditional crib stalls still have a fantastic range. As well as the traditional Holy Family, animals, shepherds and kings, the Italian cribs have extended into all sorts of barely relevant tradesmen: knife grinders, water sellers, cobblers, furriers, etc. So far we haven't seen the logical progression to factory workers, ATAC ticket sellers and Greg. Profs. But then the Italians are rarely accused of being over logical. If you can tear yourself away from the crib stalls there are still the sweet stalls where you get Roman specialities like sweet coal at only £2/lb. The character of the Fair is changing. There are more and more games and record stalls but still crowds of all ages mill around till late at night. The parents talk while their children fight with each other or compare the latest toys. The 'ragazzi', noisy but good-humoured, lark and shout while the sound of pop music is heard long into the night.

The church cribs are much bigger and more elaborate and there is another Roman custom of walking around the churches looking at them. This custom is also followed by the students although the ones who normally eschew sentimentalised religion are a bit embarrassed to be caught at it. The Gesu, the Jesuit church, has a spectacular example with moving figures in several tableaux with sound and lighting effects. Particularly effective is the descent of the angelic host singing 'Tu Scende delle stelle'. This is not only the most popular Italian carol but, as detailed investigations show, the only Italian carol, so it's not surprising that the Angels knew it so well! The S. Andrea crib is also notable because its figures decline in size from the bambino (the Child Jesus) and Mary at about a foot through the smaller and smaller shepherds and kings 'till we get to 1" water sellers and ½" knife grinders. The Greg. Profs. are quite invisible. Just in case you are still bored there is a tiny fountain and flowing water to keep you amused. Perhaps most unusual of all is the official crib

at the Greg. which as well as the usual figures has two baby Jesuses, one very large and sentimental with blue eyes and another tiny dark one. Even the hardened student, a veteran of hundreds of cribs, cannot forebear to raise an eyebrow at this.

Nor is the College immune. We have two official cribs, a fairly dull one in the Church and a huge ornate one with running water and hundreds of figures in the main corridor on the ground floor. Then we also have the semi-private cribs looked after by the upper corridors. There is a certain amount of inter-corridor rivalry about whose is the finest and most elaborately decorated. The blessing of the crib (all done as correctly as possible with incense, candles and priests in gold), is a centre of corridor life and inhabitants of other corridors are occasionally invited to join the celebration and the 'social' afterwards. Would it be entirely fanciful to compare this with the great Italian Cardinal-Princes vying with each other to decorate their palaces? Indulgence spreads to private rooms. Even the most beautiful cribs (to my mind), those made entirely of figures that glow in the dark, can be bought for only a few thousand lire in those shops of tasteful souvenirs near the Vatican. A full set can keep you awake at night and slowly irradiate you — but isn't this a small price to pay to patronise great Art?

When the cribs have been erected, decorated, blessed and criticised and we are all desperately looking for something else to distract us from studies, the Holly Cam arrives. The original charism of the Holly Cam was to collect holly for the decoration of the church and refectory, a job that two could do easily in an hour. (In fact I missed the first one because I thought they really were looking for volunteers for this task.) But soon it has been extended until now we hire a large coach to bring 40 or 50 students up to the Villa, we eat and drink as much as is compatible with being able to sing all the carols in the book (there are 55 of them) and then we are coached back



Pantomime time: some "improbable" dames with a man none of them recognise.

down to College. Somewhere along the line the holly gets collected as well.

Meanwhile the preparations for the pantomime are progressing. With the 'experimental' change in the holidays it has been moved to the few days before Christmas. It still keeps the students amused and busy but now it is also open to the English-speaking community in Rome and our fellow students at the Greg. For weeks beforehand the students learn their lines (the boring bit) and try on their costumes (the exciting bit) in preparation. The music is rehearsed, the scenery painted, the props prepared, the writers despair and finally everything is ready. Of course what really amuses everyone are the unexpected disasters and the delightful and astonishingly improbable attempts to act wicked or female roles!

Advent is a season of waiting, not one of fasting. This is just as well because here, just as in England, every possible combination of people has to organise a Christmas party. We have corridor parties, parties for Dioceses, for prayer groups, for the schola, even for groups who only exist to cook each other meals. For most of Advent the tea-room is in constant use after 8.00 p.m. for the elaborate catering. If this is done with a hint of apology before Christmas Day — 'We've got to get it in before Christmas' (thinks: or we'll be running into the Carnavale meal if we don't — it is done quite openly after. There's a quarter of an hour or so between Christmas supper and the start of the Christmas night party. This is hosted by the staff in the Salone. We entertain one another with songs, sketches and the odd impromptu dance. The level moves from the sacred to the profane as the evening proceeds. On St. Stephen's Night the Deacons return the compliment with a *ricevimento* in the 'Snug'. I've never lasted the full 5 or 6 hrs but I'm told it ends with parlour games of the least demanding sort. Finally we are free to go, either on gita or return to England. The College largely empties and returns to sanity and quiet.

For those who do stay the Roman Christmas still has a few surprises. On Jan.1 the College has a party on the roof overlooking the City. There is an old tradition that the people throw plates, glasses and other objects (students can remember whole beds being used) out of the windows at midnight. Alas, the custom is dying, being now against the law — not surprisingly when you consider that most Romans live in flats and there is considerable danger to pedestrians and cars — but is still observed a little. As midnight strikes from the various clocks of the City (not quite in unison) fireworks explode and the occasional crash of breaking crockery can be heard, the New Year is toasted. Finally, just before the new term begins, on Jan. 6th, the Bambino (a miraculous figure of the Child Jesus notable for its ugliness and rich wrappings) is taken out from the crib in the Araceoli and blesses the people.

Christmas doesn't stop exactly but rather fades away. The Advent Fair gradually closes down in the weeks following Jan. 6th and the cribs in the churches come down even more slowly and reluctantly. You wonder if they would take them down at all except for the approach of Lent. Meanwhile, at the College lectures have started and exams (cleverly timed to reconcentrate the mind) begin on the 1st of February.

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The Venerabile: A Synthesis of Time (English) and Event (Italian)

“It’s one thing for England and another for Italy. There (in England) we plan and get on high moral horses. Here (in Italy) we find what asses we are, for things go off quite easily all by themselves.” (E. M. Forster: “Where Angels Fear to Tread”). Franco Gismano, a priest from Gorizia in North Italy who has lived with us in College for two years, discusses in a peculiarly Italian style, what he feels to be the main obstacle to understanding between the Italians and the English:—

Time is an event, but it is also a measure(ment). It is, as the Greeks like to say, “Kronos”, precision. Precision/precise is the word to describe time in the English College. It is English, with precise regular intervals, which couldn’t be matched even by a Swiss watch. My alarm clock couldn’t even try, as it is Italian — always behind. Of course, it depends on one’s point of view, but when the clock, regularly wound up by the clockman, chimes the hour from its seventeenth century tower, the students stand in their “stalls” and begin their rhythmic morning prayer. Likewise, the students open the door of their refectory for the start of their meal at the same signal, and not a second before the appointed time.

In the heart of Rome, time, which seemed to be marked merely by good or bad events, has recovered its role of measure. At least it is so within this little island which is the Venerabile. Here time is the common referent for all that happens in the community. Time in the Venerabile is decidedly English: it is precise, though very little else is any more.

But something has happened with the regular succession of events, the pendulum which should have proved Galileo’s famous law of continuous perpetual motion has encountered an element of irregularity in its path. The yardstick of measurement has changed, it has become “personal”, in accordance with the needs of the present moment. Thus it has begun to suffer from “arhythmia”, like an old wind-up watch in which dust is clogging-up the mechanism. In other words, a touch of the Italian — with respect to my more punctual countrymen — has found its way into this English stronghold. The result is that “Kronos” acquires the unpredictable quality of a “moment” (my usual word, which can mean one single minute or one hundred).

It has been said that time is subjective, psychological, that one can live a minute as an eternity and an hour as an instant. Time springs from life and the way in which it is lived, but the clock in its seventeenth century tower does not seem to adapt to the new psycho-anthropological theories. It seems happier with the ancient Greek idea of measurement, the basis of our civilisation. My alarm clock seems incompatible with the College’s Big Ben, which is too precise, too cold and unfeeling, too impersonal. When it is time it rings. But what if I am not ready? A problem then arises of how to catch up with lost time, missed prayers and the meal which has already started.

It is the problem of the “New Economy”, the “already and not yet” of nature and the supernatural. Every time one seeks to align them, they diverge. This indeed seems to be the fate of the Italian student, to find himself in the measured flow of English time. It’s time “already”, but I am “not yet” there, that’s the problem. But perhaps there is a pedagogical element in this dialectic of the “New Economy” of the

Venerabile: that of the Covenant, and the importance of every consequence and every infidelity. Once the Covenant has been drawn up it must be observed. Lack of time is no excuse. The pedagogical aspect is this: the Covenant-giver (the Venerabile) patiently awaits the conversion of Israel (me?) who, despite the long time it takes (sc. me to learn?), knows that the future, the common goal, is certain for everyone. The Venerabile knows that I am already here, even if I haven't yet arrived, and that I participate in everything, even though not yet there. I am already, by this time, at one with the Venerabile, even if not yet completely so.

But does one find perfection in this world? If so, it would mean that time is identical with the totality of history. Or, better still, identical with the sum of individual histories which have been lived, and are now being lived, within the Venerabile. The Venerabile knows that one needs the patience of Job and the Wisdom of Solomon to make compatible that which doesn't seem to be so. On the other hand aren't we here because we believe that's possible?

Franco Gismano



The College Watch preserving our measured English life.

John Henry Newman and the Roman Oratory¹

Amid the vast literature which has grown round Newman nothing has been specifically written of his relations with the Roman Oratory. Something of this might fittingly find a place in the *Venerabile* since the College history is so closely interwoven with that of St. Philip Neri and the Chiesa Nuova.

Newman was received into the Church on 9 December 1845. Almost at once Wiseman suggested to him that he might consider becoming an Oratorian. The reason for this choice may be that Wiseman, during his time in Rome, had enrolled himself in what was called the *piccolo oratorio* as a recent book on the Oratory shows². This idea was discussed at Littlemore by Newman and his group of 'neophytes', as he called them, and a copy of the rule was procured. Faber, hearing of the suggestion, wrote commenting on the similarity of name of Maryvale (offered to Newman by Wiseman) with that of the Chiesa Nuova, S. Maria in Vallicella.

Newman with one companion, St John, went to Rome to prepare for ordination at Propaganda College, Piazza di Spagna. They did not at once visit the Chiesa Nuova but went first to see other religious houses — the Dominicans, Passionists, Rosminians and the Collegio Romano (many times). Newman was anxious to learn the views of his own writings, especially on the development of doctrine. He had long discussions with Perrone and Passaglia; the latter had been studying and writing of this for some time. Divergencies of views on the manner of doctrinal development emerged. Passaglia does not seem to have accepted Newman's interpretation of the mode of development, but a *modus vivendi* is said to have been reached between Newman and Perrone, though some have thought their views were not reconcilable³.

When Newman did go to the Chiesa Nuova with St John they "were disappointed to find it a simple concert with hardly anything religious about it, a short sermon, a few prayers. We were this evening at S. Andrea, the Theatine church, to hear Fr. Ventura. The whole was just what we had hoped the Oratory would be". Speaking of the Oratory building he wrote: "It is the most beautiful thing we have found in Rome." The good library and handsome rooms appealed to them. They found life there "like a college without a rule". It pleased them to learn that Oratorians kept their own property, furnished their own rooms, did not take vows, could leave at any time, and that each house was autonomous⁴. Soon the idea of their becoming Oratorians prevailed. An alternative scheme which had presented itself to Newman and Wiseman, that they might establish some kind of theological institute, was seen to be impracticable. It was clear that such a plan would not be acceptable in Rome. "They can't forget", Newman wrote, "that they burnt their fingers over Lammenais". Having ascertained that his companions at home approved the Oratory plan, Newman asked the Rector of Propaganda to put it to the Pope. Pius IX enthusiastically supported the plan but wished all the group to come to Rome for their novitiate. Newman informed Wiseman of everything declaring that it was a relief to him to abandon the alternative scheme; he would not have to worry what the theologians of the Collegio Romano were thinking.

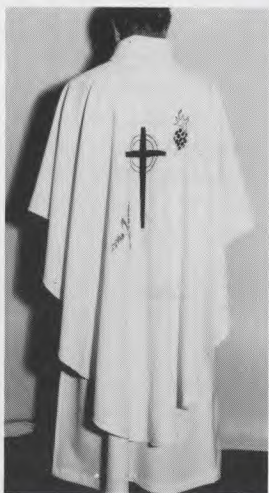
The weeks preparing for ordination passed happily. Expeditions were made to the Alban and Sabine Hills. Newman wrote that on Monte Cavo "the jonquils were smelling sweetly while at Tivoli the acacia blossoms and other flowers almost carried me away with their sweetness". He wrote that he "preferred Monte Cavo with its extensive view". By the spring they were, of course, making most of their visits to the Chiesa Nuova to learn oratorian ways.

It is possible to discover who were the members of the Roman Oratory whom Newman first encountered and those who assisted him. Two lists of members, compiled according to different criteria, are to be found in the archives of the Vallicella⁵. One gives only the names (though not all) of those who entered the Roman Oratory. The other includes those who had entered houses later amalgamated to the Roman one. The lists are said to need augmenting from other papers. It is not always possible to tell whether members had remained or left.⁶

The Roman Oratory had suffered much from the turbulence of recent times. Under the Napoleonic regime (1810-1814) the community had been suppressed. Throughout all the *ottocento* the lists show a considerable number of members entering and leaving. At the Chiesa Nuova when Newman and his group first came there may have been as few as 13 priests and 4 laybrothers. These priests were: Padri Cesarini (the Provost), Conca, Chiodi, Ricca, Buttaoni, Rossi, Marziale, Pellegrini, Del Re, Colloredo, Pieraldi, Rebaudengo and Theiner. The Brothers who were certainly there were Conceme, Calastri, Zamparuto and Girardini. Probably there were a few others also whose names of death or departure are not given in the lists. The community were understandably somewhat shy of the strange English converts, and only three, Conca, Theiner and Rossi, were in favour of allowing them to make their novitiate at the Vallicella. Four members of the oratorian community may be singled out for the special assistance they gave to Newman's group. These were Cesarini (to whom the Pope addressed warm messages enlisting his help), Theiner, Rossi and Conca. From the correspondence of each of these in the Vallicella archives, and also from some contemporary papers in the Propaganda archives, it is possible to see how each helped the English group⁷. Let us take each of these singly.

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described as “an impressive figure, of noble birth, aged 73” (in 1846). He had entered in 1807. He is said to have been “most exact in observance, much given to prayer, assiduous in preaching and hearing confessions, and eager to foster St. Philip’s traditional practices such as the Visits to the Seven Churches, to S. Onofrio and SS Nereo and Achilleo, the Quarant’ Ore, and other devotions associated with the founder”. Cesarini was held in high esteem by all including the Popes whom he served. He had been elected Provost at the age of 40, an appointment renewed for 27 years. Shortly after Newman’s group left, the Republican storm broke over Rome. The oratorian community was broken up temporarily and Cesarini and others were imprisoned. This was only briefly because of public outcry. Newman praised Cesarini’s government of the Roman house, comparing it favourably with that of later times. He warmly welcomed Cesarini’s repeated injunction that the rule must be kept ‘*exactissime*’. Newman and Cesarini, however, did not find it easy to understand one another. Newman says that he had found him “unco-operative” and speaks of differences between them “having to be made up”. There is only one letter from Newman to him after his return to England⁸. Nevertheless Newman was grateful to Cesarini and regarded him as a model to be copied. He wrote to Faber: “As to my position at the opening, do you know that it is the usage at the Chiesa Nuova on great functions for Fr. Superior to serve as acolyte? We saw Fr. Cesarini so serving either on St. Philip’s day or S. Nereo. . . . Therefore if you will put me into the function, I claim my place.” Cesarini died 19 September 1854, “in the concept of sanctity”.

PADRE AGOSTINO THEINER. The member of the Roman community most admired by Newman was the German historian Theiner. Wilfrid Ward, Newman’s biographer, who knew him intimately later, makes this clear, as do some of the laconic entries in Newman’s *Roman Diary*⁹. Theiner was already a recognised expert in ecclesiastical history when he entered the Roman Oratory at the age of 35 in 1839. He was a voracious student of documents and was assigned by the community to continue Baronius’ *Annales*. He became *scrittore* and then prefect of the Vatican Archives. He was asked by the Pope to specialise in studies of the documents of the Council of Trent to combat the distortions of Sarpì which were still in vogue. It was to Theiner that Newman first opened his mind as to his vocation to be an Oratorian. On one of Newman’s first visits Theiner said Mass for him and St John in the tiny oratory where St. Philip had his ecstasies. Newman hoped that it would be Theiner who would initiate him and his ‘neophytes’ into the ways of the Oratory. This, however, was not possible in view of Theiner’s many tasks. Small entries in his *Diary* tell of the personal relations of Newman with Theiner such as this: “March 25, ’47, I with Theiner to Ponte Molle.” Similarly in his letters we find items showing this as, for instance, this to Dalgairns: “We are going to Theiner the Oratorian this evening”. After his return to England the two exchanged letters in latin because of Newman’s difficulty with Italian¹⁰. Theiner tried to get Newman to rescue the Malta Oratory (reduced to a single member) and to introduce the Philippine nuns into England, but these ideas proved impracticable. It was later to Theiner that Pio Nono turned to bring back Achilli (Newman’s adversary in the famous trial) to the Church. Theiner remained in contact with Newman for some years, writing for books such as Mendham’s *Memoirs of the Council of Trent* and the *Philosophoumena* of Origen. At the same time, among other things, he sent Newman the three volumes of the *Annales* which he had completed. Theiner’s later life was a sad one. He had taken up residence in the Vatican on becoming Prefect of the Vatican Archives. Difficulties of some kind arose which led to his losing this office and having to leave his residence. These events and others connected with the controversies over Vatican 1, and possibly the Franco-Prussian War, caused the balance of his mind to be disturbed. He left

Rome and wandered for a while through Europe. Eventually he returned and was reconciled to everything. On his death he was buried in the Cimitero Teutonico beside St. Peter's. He had done immense work for the Church and for many individuals including Newman. He deserves the gratitude of very many who, in his days of health, he so generously assisted.¹¹

PADRE CARLO ROSSI. The member of the Roman Oratory who was to have most contact with Newman and his group when they were first in Rome from 1846-7 was Rossi. He was born in Rome in 1802 and entered the Oratory in 1830 after a career in the army. He is described as "prudent and learned". It was he whom Wiseman had known and perhaps this was why he was asked to instruct Newman and his group into the ways of the Oratory. One who like Wiseman had been drawn to the *piccolo oratorio* wrote later: "There was in those days in the Congregation Carlo Rossi. . . . Providence seemed to have led him to doff the military uniform to don the religious habit so that many might be attracted to religion by him."¹² The esteem in which Rossi was held by his brethren was shown in his election as Provost at the most difficult time of the expulsions of 1873. Rossi has left a vast correspondence which includes numerous letters to both the Birmingham and London Oratories and includes letters to those, such as the Duke of Norfolk, who were associated with the newly formed English houses. At Propaganda, too, there are *memoranda*, letters and various papers of his on English Oratorian and other affairs. Immediately after the ordination of Newman and his group and their first Masses (Newman's second Mass was at the Vallicella and his third at the English College), arrangements were made with Rossi for their novitiate. The Pope himself arranged that this should take place at Santa Croce under the direction of Fr. Rossi. On 30 June 1847, Newman, Penny, St John, Dalgairns, Coffin, Bowles and Stanton moved into "the upper part of the monastery"

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there. The present community are unable to say precisely which rooms they occupied. Newman wrote later: "Tassini (the Cistercian Abbot) was certainly our host but a very grudging one . . . until he knew us. Surely he and his looked back with melancholy pleasure to us *hospites et peregrinos* when his unwelcome and compulsory guests, the Roman radicals, quartered themselves on him and set fire to the pavement (if possible) of the basilica". Fr. Rossi, who lived with them at Santa Croce at once gave them the oratorian habit. He insisted on elections at which Newman became the Provost, Dalgairns first deputy, St John second deputy, and Coffin and Penny the other two deputies. To Knox, who was trying his vocation with the Sulpicians in Paris and wondered if the oratorian life was austere enough, Newman wrote: "If you were here under Fr. Rossi of the Chiesa Nuova with us, you would enjoy sweeping, slop emptying, dinner serving, bed-making, shoe-blackening at Saint Sulpice. "Newman was unhappy at Santa Croce and wrote contrasting their time there with the happy months at Propaganda. He was never at ease with Rossi. It has been suggested that this was because Rossi was younger than he and was "very talkative, excitable and extremely opinionated".¹³ Newman tells how from the outset there were disagreements between them. "One of the first acts of Fr. Rossi", he wrote later, "when I came to him was to give me and Fr. Ambrose a paper, which I still have, in which he stated his plan for the reform of the Oratory, and advocated that the various houses to be set up in England (should be) under one head. Fr. Ambrose and I gave no countenance whatever to such an idea; we wished to have St. Philip's Oratory, and not a reformation, and my shrinking from his proposals was exactly the beginning of that coolness which for that reason increased unhappily between us". In spite of such differences, however, Newman never ceased to be grateful to Rossi. Later, when the matter of prayers for benefactors was being discussed, Newman wrote: "Fr. Rossi did a definite service and I think should be a benefactor." During their stay at Santa Croce the Pope, accompanied by Wiseman, came to see them and warmly approved of all he saw. The *Brief* he then promised duly arrived before the end of the year. This made Newman Provost for life. It was at once presented at the Quirinal by Newman and his companions for the Papal signature and not long after their return, on the feast of the Purification, 2 February, 1847, the Oratory was formally opened at Maryvale, Wiseman presiding at the function. Notification was sent to Rossi and letters went backwards and forwards between him and the English house. Copies of music used at the Chiesa Nuova were sought and other items, the correspondence still being conducted in rather stiff and formal latin. Gradually letters became less frequent and on 3 October 1850 Newman wrote: "Talbot writes that our friends at Chiesa Nuova are hurt at our not writing to them. This must be Fr. Rossi". He promised to send "a latin line or two to Rossi". Later, when Rossi was elected Provost, Newman wrote him a beautiful letter of congratulations in which he said: *Tu qui tot nominibus Pater a me et a nostris jure dicendus es*". After the upheavals of the 1870s, Rossi became one of the great figures of the City. He led a most active life in defence of the Church's rights as his vast correspondence shows. When the government confiscated the buildings of the Vallicella, only allowing room for two members to remain to serve the church, Fr. Rossi who had been elected Provost became also the Rector of the church. This was after 1873. He is said to have "governed the parish and community with great prudence in its most difficult times". Fr. Carlo Rossi died in 1883.

PADRE GIOVANNI CONCA was another who rendered great service to Newman a little later. He was one of the community when Newman and St John first came to Rome. It was not, however, until Newman's visit in early 1856 that there were close relations between the two. Newman had come to Rome on business connected with

the London house. He had come, he wrote, to prevent a leave, petitioned and granted to the London house, enabling members to act as extraordinary confessors to nuns, from being applicable to the Birmingham house. He also wished to clear up other *dubi* which had risen. Fr. Conca was now the Provost and so it was to him that Newman had recourse. He was a very different superior from Cesarini. He is described as a typical Roman with the natural bontà of his fellow citizens. He was a 'character', not unlike Pio Nono, to whom he was sometimes compared. He was born in 1785 in the Lungotevere just across the Tiber from the Chiesa Nuova. He entered the Oratory in 1805 and is said to have brought back something of the musical tradition of an older age. He became so popular with the public that when he appeared he is said to have been "*applaudito in piazza*". He had been one of those briefly imprisoned in 1848 by the Republicans. It was good for Newman, in his somewhat over-anxious state, to encounter now such a typical follower of St. Philip. Newman had taken lodgings at 47 Due Macelle, Piazza di Spagna. Conca was upset at this and immediately went there to persuade him to come to the Chiesa Nuova. Newman was out when he came and wrote a note to explain that he had chosen this lodging "to place myself among the English of whom there are many who wish to consult me". Newman spent much time at the Oratory consulting Fr. Conca. He wrote that he found many changes "for the better" there — less rigidity and more freedom. Newman was anxious that the *Brief* granting permission for the London Oratory to provide extraordinary confessors for nuns should not apply to the Birmingham house. Stanton, who had made the novitiate at Santa Croce but had joined the London house, wrote on behalf of Faber and those with him a letter in Italian to Rossi which Conca had beside him when Newman came to see him. In the letter Stanton said: "We cannot understand how our way of proceeding . . . has so gravely offended Dr. Newman, unless it is that he thinks in truth that it touches his authority over our Congregation or that he (wishes) some kind of Generalate"¹⁴. Some in Rome did think this was Newman's desire. There is a copy of a letter to Theiner of this time from Rossi in which he takes this for granted¹⁵. Conca did not allude to this, but taking up the matter which had brought Newman to Rome, he stated that if a Bishop, who had so many needs, asked an Oratory to provide for confessions for nuns he considered that an Oratory ought to undertake it. If the Pope granted permission for some such matter it was evident that he considered it did not conflict with the rule. In any case it was a privilege granted temporarily and *nemo tenetur uti privilegio*. Other *dubi* put to him by Newman got short shrift. Asked if members of an Oratory must make their confessions to the community's Fr. Confessor, he replied laughingly that no one in his community went to their Fr. Confessor. Asked about members' outside work, he declared that he had been chaplain to soldiers and had catechised galley-slaves for twenty years. One *dubium* caused Fr. Conca anxiety. This was whether Newman should ask for a Cardinal Protector. Newman wrote: "He implored us not to think of it and said it would be the ruin of our congregation as introducing an authority to whom any contumacious subject in time to come might appeal against either Fr. Superior or the Congregation". Newman wrote home saying that Conca had "pooh-poohed some of our doubts, answered others and dissuaded us from going to Propaganda at all". He did in fact visit Propaganda where he says: "Mgr. Barnabò received us abruptly though not unkindly". In a *memorandum* later he wrote: "I think we have discovered by our visit to Rome that . . . there is a dislike of scrupulousness about duty in their subjects . . . they wish them to use a large discretion, to go as far as they can before they come to Rome for advice". There were two audiences, of which Newman wrote that they had been "received in the kindest way". He spoke of Pio Nono as being "very well and merry — and seemed quite pleased that he had made us laugh. At least he boasted of the fact to Mgr. Barnabò".

Newman was unable to follow what the Pope said and was startled to learn from St John that he had said or implied that he had come to Rome to have himself made head of the English congregations. They had noticed Stanton's letter on the Pope's table as they entered. St John had an opportunity to explain matters and at the end the Pope said: "Now I understand". In a subsequent letter to a Miss Bowles of 19 May 1856 Newman wrote that "not even a dream of such a thing had come into our minds". In spite of all, Newman was satisfied with his visit to Rome. Fr. Conca died in 1858 and there were not many letters between him and Newman after the latter's return. He was an old man when Newman came but was able to afford him valuable assistance and guidance which helped him in his future government of the Oratory of Birmingham.¹⁶

FRA FILIPPO MIELI. During this visit of 1856 Newman got to know well a laybrother, Fr. Filippo, who became one of the most prominent and well-loved figures of the Oratory during the second half of the 19th century. He too was a Roman. Born in 1833 he joined the Oratory in 1854 remaining there for sixty-three years. A summary of his life states that he was instrumental in fostering devotion to St. Philip and the Oratory by his simple and direct manner, his incessant labours and his personal prestige with many people which was a means in dangerous days to protecting the Roman house. He is credited with having rescued the sacristy from confiscation, procuring offerings, restoring the fabric and the organ, restoring the vestments and generally enabling the ceremonies of the church to continue. Students of the College who so often provide the *assistenza*, will remember the beautiful pavement and the other ornamentation there. It was due to Fra Filippo and to another Brother, Benedetto Canceme, that this was saved from destruction when the buildings were taken over by the government. Fra Mieli has also left many letters which show an astonishing range of acquaintance. Among them are some to Newman and other of his English *confratelli*. He took an active part in the centenary celebrations and lived on into the 20th century. The date of his death is not given.¹⁷

PADRE GENEROSO CALENZIO. The most celebrated of all the Roman Oratorians whom Newman would have known (though less intimately since he did not enter until after Newman's visit of 1856) was Calenzio. When he died Benedict XV said: "There were two monuments in Rome—the cupola of St. Peter's and Padre Calenzio; now there is only one"¹⁸. This remarkable Oratorian was born in Naples in 1831. He exemplified the saying that there is no more explosive mixture than a '*neapolitano romanizzato*'. He had already established himself as a historian and writer before he entered the Oratory and so he was given the task of continuing Baronius' *Annales* which Theiner had brought up to the time of Gregory XIII. Later Calenzio, among other writings, brought out in three volumes the classic *Council of Trent*, though these were the work of Theiner and should really be credited to him. He followed Theiner as a *scrittore* at the Vatican and was the librarian of the Vallicelliana Biblioteca. Calenzio was one of that illustrious group, which included Armellini, de Rossi, Marucchi, Stevenson and Marchi, who brought to light a whole new world of Christian antiquities. Calenzio's chief work was *La vita e gli scritti del card. Cesare Baronio*, compiled over many years in the great library over which he was said to "preside like a monarch". The personality of Fr. Calenzio, with its *facezzie* and eccentricities, delighted that small world which then occupied the centre of Rome. Yet he was also a man of immense erudition in the "golden oratorian tradition of the Vallicella". In 1872 the community house, including the glorious *aula borrominiana*, the heart of the great library, was sequestered. Only two members of the community were permitted to keep rooms to serve the Chiesa Nuova. Borromini's great hall became the seat of the judiciary where the tribunal held its courts. Fr. Calenzio had

to move into a flat beside the church. He refused to stop using the library. He was continually being put out of it and at length he was brought to court for 'intruding' there. By a piquant irony the hearing took place in the great hall of the library itself. There, beneath the statue of St. Philip, surrounded by his books, in the presence of the press and the curious come to relish the battle, he was arraigned. Those who had come were not disappointed. Accused of 'intrusion', he is reported to have launched an *"infiammatissima concione, torrenziale e inarrestibile"*. He was not the intruder, he declared, *they* were. Pointing to the statue of St. Philip, he said: "There is the master of this house". He excoriated the judges for taking 'pieces of silver' from the *governo ladro* which had robbed Pio Nono. He would not allow the Piedmontesi the name of Italian and referred to them throughout contemptuously as *"Quelli"*. The court was forced to abandon the proceedings and Fr. Calenzio became the hero of the *aristocrazia nera* and all the 'black' community. The case had a beneficial sequence. The Vallicelliana library was preserved intact as were the Casanatense, the Angelica, and other libraries (except that of the Collegio Romano) which had formerly belonged to the religious orders or the Church. Soon the Vallicella was actually opened to the public three days a week. After the court case, 'radicals' would wait outside Fr. Calenzio's rooms and on his emerging to go to his work at the Vatican each day would cry out: *"Evviva Garibaldi e Giordano Bruno!"*. To which he would shout back: *"Un accidente per uno!"* Young hooligans would follow him shouting *"Abbasso i preti!"*. Stories of Calenzio abound. One concerns Cardinal Rampolla. Calenzio had a little vineyard at the Garbatella to which he was greatly attached. There was a tiny chapel beside it and here he ran his own *piccolo oratorio* with Mass and processions for the peasants of what was then a remote countryside. Others would go out from the City to take part, drawn by his impassioned *fevorini*. Just after the Conclave, at which Austria had vetoed Rampolla's candidacy, a ferocious hailstorm shattered Calenzio's vineyard. It was known that he was devastated with grief. Soon after, he was making his way through an anti-camera at the Vatican when he encountered Rampolla who greeted him: *"Beh, Padre, com'è andata nella grandinata con la vigna?"*. Calenzio's reply, to the dismay of the bystanders, was: *"Come il pontificato per Vostra Eminenza"*. Another anecdote comes from Pius XII. He recalled serving Mass for Fr. Calenzio. He remembered that one day the priest, reading those words of the Gospel *"Qui habet dabitur ei et qui non habet auferetur ab eo"*, muttered *"Giustizia infame"*, to which the little server replied *"Laus tibi Christe"*. Turning to him the priest said: *"E tu pure credi?"* The most famous story told of Calenzio concerned St. Pius X. Finding it difficult to shave he started to wear a beard. The Pope hearing of this expressed the hope that the Oratorian would not be the cause of introducing a usage which, he said, had never existed among the western



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clergy. One day, entering the Vatican, Calenzio was told of this. He turned at once and rushed back to the Chiesa Nuova. One who saw him enter described him as like a “meteor on fire”. He shut himself away in his room from all occupations and the community for three days. When at last he emerged he set out precipitately for the Portone di Bronzo where he brusquely consigned to a startled *svizzero* a dossier saying: “Go and give that to your Padrone!”. It was a long dissertation entitled *De barba clericorum* in which the learned Oratorian set out to show that the Pope was mistaken and that by wearing a beard he was returning to a former usage in the western as well as the eastern Church. The Pope read this with much satisfaction and sent a message to Fr. Calenzio: “*Dite al padre Calenzio che porti la sua barba; benedico lui e la sue barba*”. It was by such deeds that Fr. Calenzio, in the manner of St. Philip himself, furnished not a little mirth to the Romans at a time when it was much needed. He was, however, far from being merely an eccentric. He was much esteemed by his *confratelli* who four times elected him one of the deputies (with whom rests the government of an oratorian house). He might be said to have been the classical type of oratorian, humorous, unpredictable, with an unsurpassed gift of satire, and on occasion invective, but above all most attached to his vocation and to St. Philip. It was he, with the help of Fra Mieli and a committee (which included Archbishop Stonor and the Duke of Norfolk) who organised the centenary celebrations of 1895. On that occasion the body of the Saint was carried in its new casket presented by Prince Massimi through the streets and squares where the Saint had exercised his apostolate. Over the door of the College, which was illuminated for the occasion were placed the words:

A PADRE FILIPPO, IL COLLEGIO INGLESE,
RICORDANDO IL SUO SALUTO AGLI ALUNNI
“SALVETE FLORES MARTYRUM”

In the last of a recent series of articles on Newman a writer has expressed surprise that he, whose temperament, he suggests, was so different from the oratorian spirit, should have embraced the oratorian rule. He quotes a French writer, Jean Honorè, who spoke of Newman's needing a ‘third conversion’ to have done this. The Oratory has always been distinguished for its festive spirit. St. Philip wrote: “The festive spirit acquires more easily Christian perfection than the melancholy spirit”, and he would put up little rhymed notices such as “*Tristezza E Melancholia Fuori Da Casa Mia*”. But Newman's devotion to the Oratory, and his gratitude to Providence for having placed him in it never failed. He wrote: “The Oratory is my only home, my only repose: I am distressed in mind when I am away”. The writer of the articles mentioned, summed up in his last one: “The spirit of St. Philip Neri penetrated into his heart though he did not always succeed in modifying his temperament. . . . This only demonstrates how even sanctity, which Newman sincerely placed over everything even peace of mind, carries within itself signs of human frailty”¹⁹.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Quotations from Newman's writings are taken from Charles Dessain's *Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vols XI-XVII (Lond., 1961 *seq.*).

² Carlo Gasbarri, *L'Oratorio Romano dal cinquecento al novecento*, p.116, (Roma 1962): “Nicola Wiseman non sdegnò di arruolarsi fra i fratelli dell' Oratorio Piccolo come fu chiamarsi e porsi sotto la direzione dello stesso Rossi”.

³ Alan Brent, “Newman and Perrone, Unreconcilable Theses on Development”, *Downside Review*, Oct. 1984, pp 276-289. Cf Thomas Lynch doctoral thesis, Gregorian Univ., 1935 and *Gregorianum*, XVI (1935) pp 402-447 where T. Lynch published in full the long paper, which Newman put into Perrone's hands at his request in 1847, “when I was eager to know how far my view of Doctrinal development was admissible”.

⁴ Meriol Trevor, *Newman, the Pillar and the Cloud*, p. 407 (Lond., 1962).

⁵ Archivio Vallicelliano, armadio C.1./17 and 18.

⁶ Carlo Gasbarri, p. 141, *ut supra*.

⁷ Prop. Arch. SRC, Anglia 14, ff 573, 581, 585-7, 591 and 593-5, which concern Newman's visit of 1856.

⁸ Arch. Vall., Carteggi dei Padri dei secoli XVI-XIX, armadio P, Padre Cesarini correspondence.

⁹ Wilfrid Ward, *Life of John Card. Newman*, vol. 1, p. 169 and elsewhere (Lond., 1912).

¹⁰ Arch. Vall. Carteggi dei Padri dei secoli XVI-XIX, armadio P. Padre Theiner correspondence.

¹¹ Carlo Gasbarri, *ut supra*.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 116.

¹³ Meriol Trevor, *Newman, the Pillar and the Cloud*, p. 419 (Lond., 1962).

¹⁴ Prop. Arch. SRC Anglia 14, f. 573.

¹⁵ Charles Dessain, vol. XVII, p. 126 *ad ped.*

¹⁶ Carlo Gasbarri, *ut supra* pp. 193-4.

¹⁷ Carlo Gasbarri, "Ricordando Fr Filippo Mieli", *L'Oratorio San Filippo Neri*, 8-9, 1957; cf too Fra Filippo's correspondence in Arch. Vall., armadio P.

¹⁸ Carlo Gasbarri, "Vecchia Roma nel primo novecento", *Strenna dei Romanisti*, 1960, pp 205-9. Cf too A. Grossi Gondi, "Il padre Generoso Calenzio", *Roma*, 5, 1932, and G. Calenzio's *San Filippo Neri (bolletino mensile del giubileo, 1894-5)*.

¹⁹ Giuseppe Cristaldi, "Affinità elletive con lo spirito oratoriano", *L'Osservatore Romano*, 6 Ott., 1988.

N.B. The Archivio Vallicelliano is at present being re-ordered and not all papers are accessible. This article owes much to earlier writings especially to those of Carlo Gasbarri and, to a lesser degree, A. Grossi Biondi's book *Della fondazione dell' Oratorio in Inghilterra* a copy of which is in the Bibl. Capitolina bound up with Fr. Faber's *The Spirit and Genius of St. Philip Neri*.



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Rome 1939: Three Cheers for Mr. Chamberlain

It is now fifty years since the outbreak of war between England, France and Germany in September 1939. Following the Munich agreement signed in September 1938, England and France sought new ways to maintain relations with Germany and prevent war. In December 1938 the French and Germans signed a declaration of friendship rumoured to include a French renunciation of interest in Eastern Europe. In response the English turned to Mussolini "to resume the classic Italian role of balancing between Germany and the Western Powers."¹ In January 1939 Prime Minister Chamberlain and his Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, visited Rome to promote this policy. While in Rome they had an audience with Pope Pius XI and Halifax came to the College. Postcards from the period chronicle Chamberlain's visit while extracts from the diary for January 1939 reveal the impression it made on students of the time.



"11th Wednesday. We added the full force of the English College vocal powers to the warm welcome given to Mr. Chamberlain. When he arrived, I think he must have heard the cheers coming from the clerical corner, for, after a word with the Duce and reviewing the Guard of Honour, he walked the full length of the platform and acknowledged our welcome."



Mr. Neville Chamberlain al Foro Mussolini - 12-1-XVII. E.F.

"12th Thursday. The majority of the students spent this morning following the Prime Minister from Pantheon to Piazza Venezia."



"After lunch, Lord Halifax paid a visit to the College, spoke to us (between cheers) of his especial desire to see the College. Every inhabitant of the Via Monserrato . . . assisted us in giving him a tremendous cheer when he departed."



“13th Friday. The English, Scots, Beda, Canadian and Propaganda Colleges assembled in the Sala Clementina, and gave three cheers (thereby creating a Vatican precedent) for Mr. Chamberlain who was on his way to be received in audience by the Holy Father.”



“After Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax had had their audience, the other members of the British party were also presented to the Pope who received them graciously — during the course of the audience the Holy Father walked to where a bronze diptych with the portraits of SS John Fisher and Thomas More stood near the bookcase. ‘This, he said, ‘reminds me of two great Englishmen. I have it always near me, and it is never closed. So, it keeps England always in my heart. I would like their Majesties to know that I have England constantly in my thoughts and pray for her.’”



“14th Saturday. Once more to the station to cheer the Prime Minister on his way to England. Again Signor Mussolini was at the station and nobody could have been more gracious than he as he waved a party of students onto the red-carpeted platform to give Mr. Chamberlain a last cheer.

Meanwhile the Film Committee have been scouring Rome for a patriotic film” — and Mussolini told Hitler that he was ready to conclude a formal alliance.

NOTE

¹ Halifax to Phipps, 1 Nov. 1938 quoted in A. J. P. Taylor, “The Origins of the Second World War,” London, 1962, p. 200.



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Rectors of the English College IX: WILLIAM GILES

“I have been well ever since I came here; I hope you are the same. It seems an age since I heard from you, and I hope your letter will soon arrive. Perhaps I may not acknowledge it for some days. I don’t know quite how it is, but my spirits are not very good at the moment”¹

For the young William Giles, arrival in Rome during the early autumn of 1852 meant one disaster after another. He had no lodgings, he had no College at first, and he knew virtually nobody. To cap it all, the ship carrying his precious books was moored at the mouth of the Tiber and refused to release his possessions until the unfortunate student had paid a heavy duty he was not expecting and could ill-afford.

Such an inauspicious start was perhaps a little surprising in a man who was to spend the remaining sixty-one years of his life in Italy, with only the occasional visit back to England. But then William Giles was and remains very much an enigma. He lived to see the English hierarchy restored, Pope Pius IX defeated and imprisoned in the Vatican, and the First Vatican Council convened. Yet his reactions to these momentous events is nowhere recorded. We learn that one of Pius XI’s last excursions outside the Vatican in 1870 was to the deathbed of Bishop Grant of Southwark in the English College,² but there are no references to Giles in the reports at a time when he had been Vice-Rector for six years. It would be unfair to say that these events passed him by, since his early letters are full of interest in the movements of the Pope³. Rather his concerns seemed to lie exclusively with the College. As Monsignor John Prior wrote of Giles as Vice-Rector:—

“He clothed us, fed us well, supplied all our material needs, and was our companion in our special recreations”⁴

Giles’ concern for the College to the exclusion of all else was perhaps a reflection of his deep love for his own family, and especially for his own brother Samuel, with whom he made a European tour in the summer of 1853.⁵ His correspondence with his “dearest Parents” was frequent and voluminous, and always concerned for the minutest detail of their health. Nor was this mere fastidiousness, for his parents took on the care of a second family four years after William left for Rome — four young cousins orphaned in 1856, and adopted on the condition that they would be brought up as Catholics. Giles himself and his family had been received into the Church early on in 1844, and their conversion gave much encouragement to the beleaguered Catholic community in London.⁶ The Giles household in King William Street later became a frequent port of call for prominent Catholic figures such as Fathers Rowe and Faber, the early English Oratorians.

William Giles was ordained priest by his Archbishop, Cardinal Wiseman, at Westminster in 1854. His employment in the newly-established archdiocese, however, was a matter of great uncertainty, and for two more years he was sent back to Rome to complete his degree in Theology. The decade following his ordination was certainly the most crucial period of Giles’ life, and until his appointment in 1864 as Vice-Rector of the Collegio Pio, where he had studied and which moved into the English College in 1853, his movements and intentions become very obscure.

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It is clear, though, that he clashed with Dr. Manning, Pope Pius IX's choice as Provost of Westminster. As part of Wiseman's plan to introduce religious orders (and particularly more modern Italian orders) into London, Manning set about establishing the Oblates of St. Charles Borromeo at St. Edmund's College, Old Hall, where Giles had been a brilliant pupil from 1844 until 1847. Early in 1857, Manning travelled to Rome to promote the cause of the Oblates in England and to find men to join them. Not surprisingly, Manning encouraged Giles to become an Oblate in order to teach Classics at St. Edmund's, but the young priest resisted firmly and absolutely:—

“For some strong reasons and from things I have heard and know I *dislike* the Oblates exceedingly and have *no* intentions whatever of ever becoming one”⁷

Giles never elucidated his “strong reasons” for opposing the Oblates, but it seems likely that he let himself be influenced by those in the English Church who regarded Wiseman with suspicion and judged many of his actions tyrannical and high-handed.⁸ It would be going too far to say that Giles had any such views on Wiseman himself or even ventured to criticise the deeds of his own Archbishop. But he was certainly not going to submit himself to any religious authority which curtailed his freedom or sought to dictate to him in any way on matters of education:—

“. . . of course the whole direction of studies would be in their [the Oblates'] hands and one could be there in a post of responsibility without being able to do anything except what one was told. Now under these circumstances the positions at the College would be unbearable”⁹

The key to Giles' attitude at this time is perhaps his love for Rome and its tranquility compared with the difficult situation that existed for English Catholics in London. Protestant suspicions of Papal claims to temporal power in England led to a great outcry against Wiseman and what *The Times* termed “one of the grossest acts of folly and impertinence”¹⁰ on the part of the Pope in restoring the Catholic hierarchy in 1850. Added to this Wiseman clashed bitterly with his coadjutor Bishop, George Errington, over the very question of the Oblates of St. Charles and the running of St. Edmund's College.¹¹ Errington saw Wiseman as more “Roman” than “English”, and Wiseman himself was incensed at his coadjutor's opposition to his policy of revitalising the English Church with a thoroughly “Roman” spirit. Giles, for his part, was certainly keen and well qualified to teach at the seminary but was not prepared to give up his peaceful existence:—

“. . . the wretched state of things in London, parties, dissensions everywhere, make the future look very black for me, and my heart sometimes quite sinks when I think of facing it”¹²

Giles was well out of the way in Rome and there he wished to stay.

After 1858 Giles became becalmed in Rome. His future was even more uncertain than after his ordination in 1854, and his letters home during this period show how agitated he was. Dr. Manning was not impressed, and replied to his many entreaties and questions with a two-line letter informing him that he would be glad for him to go to St. Edmund's. Giles wrote to his parents in exasperation:—

“Such a manner of proceeding does not inspire much confidence, indeed is disgusting beyond all expression”¹³

Giles took to tutoring the son of Mr. Vansittart¹⁴, a wealthy banker, and seems to have travelled with that family on holiday to Olevano during the summer of 1861. He gave occasional repetitions in Theology at the English College during this period, and still entertained strong hopes of being able to teach in a seminary. Writing from Olevano,¹⁵ he states his hopes of going to Oscott. He also actively considered changing to Clifton diocese, where his old friend and former Rector, Dr. Clifford, had been Bishop since 1857. Such a move would have had strong personal attractions for Giles, but would clearly have been an embarrassment to Bishop Clifford in his relations with Cardinal Wiseman. Also, it seems unlikely that Giles would really have consented to living in England so far away from his family. Despite being in Rome, Giles still considered himself a family man, and often counselled his parents not to take decisions about the welfare and education of his little cousins without consulting him.¹⁶

Giles' appointment as Vice-Rector of the Collegio Pio in 1864 must have come as an immense relief to him. Not only did it mean an end to anxiety about his future, it also meant relief from debt. In 1862 he had written privately to his father, informing him that he owed two friends the total sum of one hundred pounds.¹⁷ Without asking his father for relief, Giles tells of his plans for repayment and implores him not to inform his mother and Sam, his brother. The appointment as Vice-Rector was just the security needed in such circumstances, and was the turning point in Giles' life. He never again sought occupation outside the walls of the English College and put all his efforts into running, firstly, the Collegio Pio, and then, the Venerabile. Cardinal Manning favoured the appointment of an Oratorian as Rector of the English College in 1888,¹⁸ but Giles, who had by then been Vice-Rector for twenty-three years, managed to beat off the challenge of his ailing adversary.



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Under O'Callaghan as Rector, Giles came into his own and began to impose his character upon the College. Mgr. Prior tells how the Vice-Rector was "freed from the odium which sometimes arises from the enforcement of College rules",¹⁹ and which was the province of the stern Dr. O'Callaghan. Giles was thus free to cultivate friendly relations with the students. He took on the task of sacristan as well as the domestic, administrative chores of a Vice-Rector, absorbing into his routine most functions within the House. His letters home reflect his hectic lifestyle, and he continually tells his parents how busy he is.²⁰ Giles' energy and physical stamina were unbounded, and he would never let a situation get the better of him. He seems to have had little aptitude for music or singing, but his infectious enthusiasm overrode every consideration, and he ran the College choir for many years.²¹ Himself a great lover of gitas, he would organise every student gita himself using the many contacts and "pensionari" he knew in every part of Italy.²² He had few friends in Rome and rarely visited anybody. Gradually, and more especially after his appointment as Rector in 1888, the College began to be synonymous with William Giles. In many ways the College became his fortress and no one ever took it from him, even when he was made titular Archbishop of Philadelphia in 1904.

Giles brought no real innovation into the College, and John O'Connor, a student under Giles from 1889 until 1896, mentions that his favourite reply to suggestions was "Never been done before",²³ and Prior too, Giles' Vice-Rector, agreed with this analysis.²⁴ He was undoubtedly eccentric and the stories of his absentmindedness are numerous, but O'Connor, himself very much a rebel under the Giles regime, could not see him as a humorous figure at all:—

"I saw nothing of the possibilities of amusement as others saw them: I only resented the having no one I could look up to"²⁵



Rector Giles benignly presides over a picnic at Tusculum.

Giles could not inspire, but he was indefatigable in his work, and few were unable to see the kindness of his heart. Mgr. Prior mentioned his great kindness to the poor, which seemed at times to reach the point of exploitation.²⁶ Everyone knew he was generous and everyone who needed assistance came to him.

There is little evidence of Giles' financial management of the College beyond notices of investments in Buenos Aires and New Zealand government bonds.²⁷ His grandfather had started a successful stockbroking firm in London,²⁸ but such matters did not interest him. He ruled by force of his own personality, and his little concern for money matters or record keeping became the legacy of those who came after him.²⁹ Only with his death did the chaos of financial mismanagement become clear.

William Giles died at Monte Porzio, the old English College Villa, in July 1913. He was eighty-three and had outlived everyone he knew. He undoubtedly embodied the spirit of the English College for more than two generations of English priests educated in Rome. For himself, and particularly after 1864, he entertained neither ambitions nor interests beyond the running of the English seminary on the Via de Monserrato.

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² *Venerabile Magazine*: April 1926 p 287.

³ for example, Sc 81:13, letter 40.

⁴ *Ven. Mag.*: April 1926 p 277.

⁵ Sc 81:13, letter 42.

⁶ *Ven. Mag.*: April 1926 p 274.

⁷ Sc 81:14, letter 53.

⁸ cf Norman p 129 ff.

⁹ Sc 81:14, letter 53.

¹⁰ *The Times*, 14th October 1850; quoted in Norman p 104.

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¹² Sc 81:14, letter 53.

¹³ Sc 81:14, letter 57.

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¹⁵ Sc 81:14, letters 59, 60, 61.

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²⁰ Sc 81:14, letter 65.

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²⁹ see 'A Troubled Transition — the Roman Association and the English College' in *Ven. Mag.* 1988 p 59.

Dominic Rolls

Romanesque — Venerabile Verticale

The Final Report

(of the VEC Ecumenical Climbing Club)

Club Activities: Rock Climbing and Winter Mountaineering

Climbing: regular trips to the crags of Monte Morra, near Tivoli; one visit to Guadagnolo, the highest inhabited site in Lazio, occasional trips to a disused quarry just off the Via Appia Antica near Ciampino Airport.

Mountaineering: winter ascents of Monte Terminillo (2213m), Monte Viglio (2156m), the Corno Grande of the Gran Sasso (2914m), plus a mid-semester break expedition to the Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo which included Monte Marsicano (2242m).

Preamble: At the beginning of the first semester, the two founder members — David Blower (VEC) and Andrew Willson (temporarily on loan from Lincoln Theological College and the Church of England) discovered a bilateral shared interest in things mountainous. They possessed a combined total of five days' tentative rock climbing experience, one rope and two pairs of hardly used rock boots, and an intuition that the vertical gita was the only way to spend a free Thursday, Sunday, Saturday or any day.

Elucidations: Some achievements have been: finding the crags — it took three trips to discover the proper path to the rock face on Mte Morra; making sense of the Italian guidebooks; attempting and successfully climbing routes in the lower grades.

The standard question asked by lovers of the horizontal and slug (or Michelin) gita is "Why do it?" The traditional answer is "because it's there". Well that's true only in so far as "it's there" and "we're here" and we can immediately see ways of getting from here to there, in spite of the rock/ice/snow separating the "here" and the "there" (the già e non ancora tension, so called).

Theology: The "Transcendental Experience": this can be ambivalent. It's good when physical and technical potential is exercised beyond the normal daily activity level of climbing the stairs or getting into a lift. It's bad when getting half way up a climb and finding that the rock is *categorically* two grades higher than one's ability.

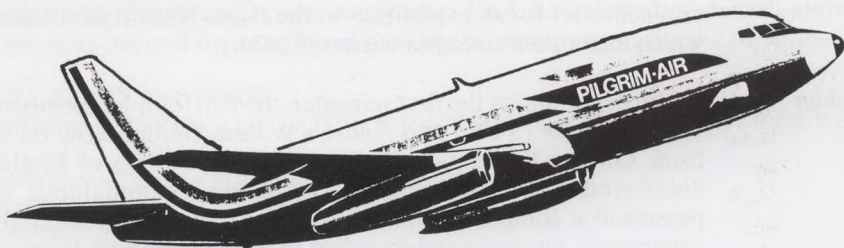
Findings: Rock is categorical.

Spirituality: It's good to live with a knowledge of one's own mortality. The existential experience: man being radically threatened by the good living of the V.E.C. refectory, i.e. death by slug gita.

Towards a Future Dialogue

The club's working party plans future meetings in the summer: in the Lake District,

Italy



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at a quarry in Bradford, and an afternoon on a monumental stone wall in the Lincoln municipal park.

Acknowledgements

To the suppliers of Colman's English Mustard, Branston Pickle, Castelli Wines, Bendicks' Sporting and Military Chocolate. To Suor Angelia for her comprehensive cestini. To Fr. P. Kilgarriff for the loan of two slings, a harness, and a karabiner in the early days. Finally to the late Archbishop Michael Ramsey, Vatican II (and especially Unitatis Redintegratio) for making it all possible.

Andrew Willson/David Blower

The next issue of *The Venerable* will include a pull-out supplement:

“A Guide to Climbing in the English College”

- (i) In the Monserra Tower: climbing the underside of the spiral staircase.
- (ii) The Refectory table: traverse of its underside.
- (iii) The Snug and Common Room mantelpieces: a simple step up (mantleshelf move).
- (iv) The Tea Room Door: the traverse (grade II+).



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Oxford's Geneva

I arrived at Wycliffe Hall in September 1987 to spend a whole year as the first and only Roman Catholic student at what somewhat uncharitably is known as a little corner of Oxford which is forever Geneva. My unceremonious arrival couldn't have contrasted more with the same arrival at the Venerable in September 1982. Arrival in Rome had been marked by falling into a vast almost empty refectory to meet other first year seminarians who were left somewhat bemused by this innocent about to start on six years preparation for the Priesthood. The same experience at Wycliffe was arrival in the common room to be greeted by a phalanx of laughing and crying children and their accompanying parents; of which both Mums and Dads would be joining me for their first year in Wycliffe.

It was thus that I started out on my brief, but what proved to be a very full career at this bastion of Anglican Evangelicalism. The first few weeks were more akin to an ecclesiastical assault course in what at times proved to be very foreign territory. However, after seven months, the worship, fellowship groups and family atmosphere had become almost second nature and it was with very sad feelings that I left to return to the Eternal City. I cannot claim to have become an expert in Anglicanism or Ecumenism (God forbid I can hear many saying) but my understanding and sympathy for the churches of the Anglican Communion has been vastly enriched and deepened by my sojourn at Wycliffe. For that I must first thank Almighty God and second my fellow Christians who warmly welcomed me and patiently answered my often naive questions.

Encounter and Exchange

The College has for nearly twenty years hosted two Anglican Ordinands for half the year. In turn we have been able to reciprocate but for various reasons haven't always been as faithful as the Anglicans.

It had always been on my mind to go on the Exchange but on the understanding that it should be for a whole academic year with a set course of Theology to do. When the time came I opted to go to the most Evangelical of the Oxford Anglican Theological Colleges. I was very fortunate to be given Rowan Williams as my Tutor who proved both an exacting and inspired teacher but also gave me an insight into the present state of Anglicanism that would have been difficult to equal.

Why an "Evangelical" College. Firstly because I knew even less of that tradition than the others within the ambit of Anglicanism and secondly because I wanted to witness for myself what is meant nowadays by "Evangelicals on the move". In neither respect was I disappointed. Now when asked what an Evangelical is I know to hesitate before answering simply that "they're just old fashioned Protestants in the disguise of Yuppydom" or that "they're ashen faced Puritans calling us to repentance and conversion". Not only are they the most vibrant of all "parties" within the communion but also they have a zeal for souls, a love for Christ and a piety which leaves many of us seemingly very small. As such they embody Christian witness that challenges our contemporary society to a much keener, holier and honest Christian witness. As a Roman Catholic I found myself both respecting and being challenged by what I witnessed and learnt. If we are endeavouring to build an ecumenism worthy of the name in our increasingly unbelieving society it must start with a fundamental commitment to holiness of life and prayer and an even greater love of Our Blessed Lord.

Unity and Trust

If we take seriously our mission from Christ namely to bring people to him then we must aim with all purpose to end the scandal of separation. There remain significant points of disagreement between us but with that said we can and must manifest together what is meant by a common Christian witness. That common witness must start in the desire to live and enfold the word of God in every moment of our lives. Ecumenism can be done out of briefcases but desire for unity must first be centred in that desire to live in our daily lives as Christ would have us live. The witness of love and holiness founded in Christ are where we can and only start our journey towards unity. At this stage our doctrinal differences seem to be growing rather than disappearing but that does not mean that we can't continue to show in our lives what it means to love God and our fellows. At times I found that on a theological level one was often talking a different language which seems to make it ever more urgent to explore what it means to live together in holiness and love. It is then that we can be at one with Cardinal Bea's cry that "we can only cross the threshold of unity on our knees".

My year at Wycliffe taught me not only how those of another tradition pray and worship but how if I sincerely trust in God I may share in that prayer and worship. It is too easy to talk to each other across our theological drawing boards but that is no substitute for the leap of trust we can make if we believe in the pure closeness of a loving God. My time at Wycliffe started by looking at my fellow Christians across that drawing board but before long I knew that wasn't what trusting in God is all about. The alternative is for us to slip further back into our ghettos. Our Lord prayed that we "may all be one"; our love and holiness we share with him and one another and trusting in God we cannot go wrong. The Exchange between the College and the Anglican Communion has been through difficult times but that should not deter future candidates and I only hope and pray that others will be enriched as much as I was.

Alexander Sherbrooke

“The Blood of Martyrs”: Witness Yesterday and Today

A Homily preached by the Most Rev. Derek Worlock, Archbishop of Liverpool,
Feast of the Martyrs, V.E.C. Rome, 1st December 1988

As part of our national heritage, we have the blood of martyrs in our veins. Many of you will remember that day of days a year ago, when George Haydock and his companions were added to the list of the beati. It was the same with the canonisation. Certainly none of us who were fortunate enough to be in St. Peter's on that glorious October Sunday in 1970 will ever forget the thrill of hearing the names of that somewhat haphazard selection of Forty proclaimed as saints of God: Ralph Sherwin, Edmund Campion, John Southworth, Margaret Clitheroe, David Lewis . . . and so it went on: our kith and kin, who had died in glorious ignominy and torture, and now were set before the universal Church for our honour and for their intercessory power.

Mindful of their fidelity to the See of Peter, successive Popes have claimed these martyrs as their own. But in a real sense they are *our* martyrs. Today it may help to be a “Roman”. But their cult and their example are wider than that. They are the pride of the Church in our nation. Marvellous to relate, they are revered ecumenically for their steadfastness in faith. We have their blood in our veins, and hopefully their spirit in our hearts.

But lest we be dazzled by the glamour of the bright lights in St. Peter's, we should not forget the full horror of their torment, the ghastly reality of those scenes depicted upon the walls of the gallery above. True, it is good to stand before this massive painting where once the *Te Deum* was proclaimed at the terrible news which had reached the Alma Mater. But tears of sorrow, as well as of thanksgiving, will have been shed by those who understood all too well the agony of being “drawn”, half-dazed as the victim would be from his cut-down hanging.

I will never forget the loving reverence with which Cardinal William Godfrey, a former Rector of this College, spoke to me of your proto-martyr, St. Ralph Sherwin, who as he felt the executioner's hand reaching for his heart, could not suppress the swiftly-stifled cry of “Oh, it hurts”. There was nothing straightforward nor technically scientific about a martyr's death in those cruel days of religious intolerance and hatred. “It is not easy to die, even for a good man — a good cause” St. Paul reminds us in our reading this morning (Romans 5, 7). I for one did not realise how difficult, how terrible to endure was a martyr's death, until I had the overwhelming privilege of clothing and placing in priestly vestments the mutilated remains of St. John Southworth, now lying at rest in Westminster Cathedral, hard by the Pimlico where his long years of priestly labour, amid pestilence and plague, did not prevent his gaining the martyr's crown.

I do not seek to dismay, disgust or deter you by such detailed description of the gruesome horror of it all: but merely to remind you of the price paid for the unbroken faith which now is yours, and which sadly is for some today undoubtedly endangered in apathetic acceptance, as an interesting but perhaps irrelevant hand-me-down from the hard history of other times and other ways.

A celebration like today's serves a double purpose if, in addition to honouring the past, it reminds us of the many lives sacrificed in our own time by Christians in other parts of the world, and even of other allegiance. It may well be that a different form of witness is asked of us: different for very reason of the bloody sacrifice which has gone

before us. "I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour" Jesus told his disciples. "Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour" (John 5, 38).

Whatever tasks may lie ahead of you, you may be sure that your martyrs would wish you neither the terrible sufferings which they endured nor a nostalgic longing for the past. Their prayers before God must surely be that you will enjoy the same cheerful courage, enthusiastic commitment and joyful faith, which made them thankful to be men of their own moment, just as we must try to be men of our own moment — or more honestly, moments — priests forever, but for our times: priests of (but not exclusively for) our own generation.

This is not to ignore your heritage. You would be unique among *Venerabilini* if you were not steeped in the blood of your martyrs. Nor is this the first celebration in honour of your martyrs in which I have taken part. For me the first occasion was in this chapel on 4th May 1947. The College was newly back in Rome after its war-time exile, and Cardinal Griffin, whose Secretary I was and with whom I was making my first ever visit to this College, was anxious to re-establish the inherited devotion to the martyrs, by himself celebrating Solemn Pontifical High Mass here, in honour of the Blessed English Martyrs whose feast day it was.

To do this the Cardinal had to secure the placet of the Cardinal Protector and the permission of the Holy Father via the Secretariat of State, which duly appointed for the occasion (and at inordinate cost), a Papal Master of Ceremonies to see fair play. I was merely permitted to put on the Cardinal's sandals and buskins during the singing of Terce in the Martyr's Chapel: after which we processed in full panoply of ceremonial war along the corridor outside, to the accompaniment of "O Roma felix quae duorum principum . . ."

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Let me jump forward now some sixteen years, to 1st December 1963, just twenty-five years ago today, when at mid-Vatican II we celebrated the College Martyrs — O liturgical horror! — on the 1st Sunday of Advent. The decree *Sacrosanctum Consilium* was still twelve months away, and in any case the whole event was overshadowed by what had happened in this Chapel the previous day, when the Rector, Monsignor Jock Tickle, was consecrated as Bishop to H.M. Forces by Cardinal Heard, assisted by Archbishop Heenan (newly at Westminster) and Bishop Eric Grasar of Shrewsbury. Twenty-five years ago — and I am sure we offer our episcopal Silver Jubilarian Jock, in retirement and sickness, our gratitude and prayers.

My Council diaries provide more significant fare for the 1962 celebration which coincided with a highly important date in the history of the Church. There is culinary detail: the Ambassador for lunch, the Irish bishops in the evening, and the promise of Archbishop Lefebvre for lunch the following day. But that morning whilst the College celebrated in the Chapel, the great debate in the Council at St. Peter's moved at last to *De Ecclesia* (which later became *Lumen Gentium*). The big guns thundered and battle lines were drawn.

Introducing the draft, Cardinal Ottaviani of the Holy Office said that he was already conscious of the lions breathing down his neck, *Tolle, tolle, subiicite eum*. But the speech that made that day historic and changed the direction of the Church came from Bishop de Smedt of Bruges, who delivered his powerful denunciation of triumphalism, clericalism and juridicalism. I can still hear the trembling voice of his rhetoric castigating the document's legalistic spirit. "No mother ever spoke thus", he claimed with tearful scorn. And that day, Martyrs' Day 1962, the great renewal of the Church began.

It was not martyr's blood my generation had to shed, though overwork and tension brought early death to many of my Council colleagues. Yet today, like the martyrs and their *Te Deum*, I thank God for having been a priest at such a challenging time. But what of the priests of tomorrow? There is no renewal without fidelity and sacrifice. What of consequence will you be required to shed, to lay aside to build up the body of Christ, the Church? Hopefully, bloodshed, triumphalism and inter-denominational rivalry will have gone for you. But we live in times of change and you must be true to those to whom you are called to minister.

In an age of relative but creeping affluence in much of our society, there may well be many pseudo-essentials — possessions and values — which you will have to shed if you are to travel light as heralds of the gospel. In a measure of insecurity you will discover stability. In commitment and faith you will remind yourselves and others that the gospel is good news. In mutual support and cheerful concern, as in the glorious example of the College Martyrs, you will find that the community life you build here and now is but a foretaste of the communion of saints.

But Christ-centred. As we heard at Morning Prayer today: "When the martyrs of Christ were in torment, they fixed their minds on heavenly things, and said: Lord, come to our help".

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ACTIVITIES

- A newsletter about life at the College and Association events is circulated regularly to members.
- Pilgrimage, holiday and study groups visit the College and Palazzola.
- Local groups of Friends organise events in their own area.

SUBSCRIPTION

- The minimum annual subscription is £10. Family Membership £15.
- Friends are asked to contribute an annual sum, to include their subscription, by a Deed of Covenant so that tax can be recovered.
- Friends are invited to consider legacies and other donations as ways to benefit the College.

For information please contact:

Mr. Bernard Sullivan, Secretary, Friends of the Venerable, 1 Montem Road, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 3QW

“Mercy Unto Thousands”

The Sisters of Mercy are now an integral part of life at the Venerable. Sister Assumpta Walsh provides an insight into their work at Palazzola with an account of their foundress, Catherine McAuley.

Over 157 years ago Catherine McAuley pronounced her vows of Poverty, Chastity, Obedience and the Service of those in need at the Presentation Convent in Dublin where she made her Novitiate and thus officially began the Order of Mercy.

However, long before that Catherine had grown in the spirit and manner of discipleship. Her father, James McAuley, was born into eighteenth century Ireland, which was still suffering from the effects of the Penal Laws and religious bigotry which made it difficult for parents to give their children a Catholic education and also limited their own participation in business or professional life. By the time James married and had a family the Catholic life of Dublin had slowly begun to change for the better, and when Catherine was born on the 29th of September 1778 her father was a prosperous man who could provide his children with a comfortable home and sound education. He was a man of deep faith — a faith strengthened by the knowledge that his forefathers died to defend it. This tenacity of faith was his richest gift to Catherine. In her, the seed of God’s love did not lie dormant, but despite many obstacles it grew and produced fruit a hundredfold. Catherine’s mother, Elinor McAuley, was a woman of outstanding beauty and integrity. She was endowed with many natural gifts and social accomplishments. These gifts, too, Catherine inherited and they, with her own warm personality, endeared her to all with whom she came in contact irrespective of creed or social condition.

Sadly for Catherine her parents died while she was still very young and she went to live with her uncle Owen Conway, but this was a short lived arrangement as the Conway family fell from a state of affluence to penury. Catherine willingly shared in their poverty which was so great that at times their only food was a crust of bread. This experience left its wake, not in bitterness, but in an extraordinary sensitivity to the needs of the poor — a characteristic which was to remain the hallmark of her life and the inspiration of her vocation. Out of concern for her uncle, Catherine went to live with the Armstrong Family, who were kind and warm hearted people, but did not share the religious convictions of the McAuleys. This was a great trial for Catherine as she was often subjected to listening to Catholic dogma and practice being ridiculed. In order to defend her position, she chose a wise Confessor and Spiritual Director and worked to develop her own knowledge of the faith which she strengthened by a regular life of prayer; one of her favourite devotions being the Psalter of Jesus.

Once more Catherine was forced to move to yet another family — William Callaghan and his wife who lived at Coolock House, near Dublin. A strong and lasting friendship resulted from this and Catherine’s example led the Callaghans to embrace the Faith and on their death she became the heiress to a large fortune as well as property. Dublin of the 1830’s was a city of contradictions with its rich and poor. As a young lady in the Callaghan household Catherine was no stranger to the plight of the poor who she saw as she rode through the city in her carriage. She was determined that the fortune she inherited should be used for the relief of the poor in her immediate neighbourhood. Her aims were twofold: first to give prompt assistance to the needy “God knows I would rather go cold and hungry than that the poor should

be deprived of any consolation in my power to afford." Secondly, to educate them to a state of independence through being able to earn an honest livelihood.

For this purpose she built the "House of Mercy" in Dublin and in so doing, she became a pioneer in the field of social services. In this House she provided poor girls with food and shelter, as well as a good training in household management which secured them suitable employment. She also provided free education for poor children when education was the prerogative of the rich. She visited the sick and aged in their homes and in the hospitals, bringing them whatever spiritual and material comfort they needed. The work of Mercy went from strength to strength, but it was not without the Cross, which is always a sure sign that one is on the right road. Catherine was a victim of many misunderstandings and the jealousy of others, and sad to say, the clergy were often at the root of such suffering, but gold has to be tested in the fire and so it was for Catherine. She was given the ultimatum by the Bishop that she had to become a religious or withdraw from the work of Mercy. This was a very agonising decision for Catherine since most religious were cloistered, but God was leading her step by step and in obedience to the authority of the Church as expressed in the office of the Bishop she said her unequivocal "YES". With permission from Rome the Bishop was able to guarantee to Catherine that once her novitiate was completed she would be able to continue the works of Mercy on the streets of Dublin. This was a big step forward in the Church and when Catherine pronounced her vows on the 12th December 1831 began the Congregation of Apostolic Religious known as The Sisters of Mercy. She herself said to her Sisters "need must be your cloister"; that surely is a mandate for any Sister of Mercy to go out boldly, in the name of Christ, to relieve the cry of the poor in whatever place or situation she may find them.

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Catherine lived ten years after the foundation of the Order and during that time opened many Convents in Ireland and two in England — Bermondsey and Birmingham. During that ten years Catherine was no stranger to suffering and she saw many of her young Sisters die from illnesses contracted in the course of duty. The outbreak of cholera in Dublin claimed 600 victims daily during the early days and it was to be expected that some of the Sisters should be among them since they gave unstintingly of their energy at the Townsend Street depot where the sick were taken. Catherine herself took her place in caring for the sick, but was always careful that her Sisters had a shorter rota from her and that they went home to a good meal of boiled meats, vegetables and port wine — the prescribed remedies against infection.

Catherine's day was not just about "doing" she was also a woman of deep prayer with a remarkable sensitivity to the Presence of God. Indeed she is paralleled with the Great Saint Teresa and others, not because of all the foundations she made, but in the wealth of spiritual writings she has left behind — conferences to her Sisters and to the Novices preparing for Profession. She gave her Sisters the perfect example of what a true Sister of Mercy should be by her sensitivity and availability to the needs of others at all times. "It is not in a disposition to bestow gifts like benevolent people in the world that speaks generosity of mind for the religious state, it is bestowing ourselves most fully and relying with unhesitating confidence on the providence of God".

After ten short years in the Religious Life Catherine died on the 11th November 1841. On her death bed she said "My legacy to the Order is Charity, may the sun never go down in your anger", and then the human touch, which only Catherine would be capable of: "When I'm gone give the Sisters a nice cup of tea".

Today there are 24,000 Sisters of Mercy in the world involved in the many missions that come under the umbrella of MERCY. When reflecting on what it means to be an apostolic religious in the Church today we have a shining light in the life of Catherine, that Great woman of Faith and Vision with unfailing charity especially to the poor.

Catherine was a woman with a human heart consumed with love for Christ and His people. She was no feminist, but knew and was aware of the true dignity of all women as modelled on Our Blessed Lady. "Where a religious woman resides peace and good order are usually to be found" or again "A perfect religious is a perfect lady". No matter what our calling in life, Catherine has a message for everyone and let us pray, that we may be like her, and that through the power of Christ's love in our lives, we may be effective instruments in changing our world into a world of peace which is the fruit of justice. "The poor need help today not next week".

Sister Maria Assumpta Walsh

Student Welfare at the Collegio Romano in the Early Seventeenth Century

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.....

5.—That no student or other person is to carry arms, including brass knuckles (we regard these as forbidden weapons), in the class halls or adjacent premises. Nor are they to harass students, either inside the College or on its premises, by sticks, stones or similar dangerous instruments, or by fists, blows, scurrilous language, or lies, under penalty of three lashes of the rope in public, three years in the galley, and a fine of 100 gold scudi, even if no one be actually wounded.

From a Greg. noticeboard; translator unknown.)

Kevin Haggerty

Frederic William Henry Myres — 1843-1901

Imagine my surprise when one day wandering around the Protestant Cemetery here in Rome, I found upon the wall opposite Keat's grave, a memorial stone to a man named Frederic Henry Myres. Why, you may ask? The answer is simple; because he was born and buried in the town outside of which my parents now live — Keswick, in the Lake District.

Just the amazement at finding somebody closely connected with Keswick at this cemetery, was enough for me to attempt to find out something about him; and what an interesting person he has turned out to be.

Frederic's father was the first Vicar of the new St. John's Anglican Church in Keswick, and it was there in the Parsonage of St. John's that Frederic was born on 6th February 1843.

His father died when he was eight years old and in 1852 his family moved down south. He always though retained vivid memories of his happy, early years at the Parsonage and had a great love of Cumberland throughout his life. Indeed, when he came to write his 'Memories' he wrote: 'It was in the garden of that fair parsonage that my conscious life began, and the memories of those fair years sparkle in a haze of light.'

After Preparatory School in Bromley, he entered Cheltenham College as a day pupil, and it was here that he began to show great promise as a poet. From here he went to Trinity College, Cambridge where he read Classics. Here he won a major prize (beside others) for poetry.

In 1865 he was elected a Fellow of Trinity and was appointed Classics lecturer. But he had no love of teaching and so resigned from this post after just a few years. He did though take up permanent residence in Cambridge when in 1872 he became a School Inspector under the Education Department.

In 1880 Myres married his fiancée Eveleen Tennant (by all accounts a most beautiful young lady), in Westminster Abbey. Theirs seems to have been a happy marriage, with Eveleen bearing Frederic three sons.

On the scholarly side, in 1867 Myres published a poem entitled: 'St. Paul', which met with a great deal of success amongst the general public. This was followed by small volumes of collected verses in 1870 and 1882. These culminated in a most beautiful poem: 'The Renewal of Youth'.

In between compiling these volumes, in 1881 Myres also wrote for the 'English Men of Letters' series, a monograph on a poet he loved deeply and upon whom he was a great authority — William Wordsworth. This was also very widely acclaimed.

In 1882 Myres helped found the Society for Psychical Research, the aim of which was to investigate the origin and causes of phenomenon which hitherto had been unexplained by normal scientific methods.

A year later Myres published his two volumes of: 'Essays Classical and Modern'. Two of the best essays within this work, it has been suggested, are his essays on Virgil and that on Ancient Greek Oracles.

Within the Society above which Myres had helped found and establish, he now very much became its mouthpiece, contributing greatly towards keeping it unified by

steering a mid-course between its different factions — the extreme sceptics and the enthusiastic spiritualists. He also helped enormously in the sifting through and revising of the cumbrous mass of the Society's 'Proceedings' — the chief content of which was the two volume book: 'Phantasms of the Living', published in 1886, to which he contributed the Introduction.

But like many theorists very often Myres ignored the hard facts which did not fit in with a particular theory he had been pursuing. This was clearly seen in his series of papers on subliminal consciousness, which constituted his own chief contribution to psychical theory. It was the results of these which were embodied in a posthumous two volume work entitled: 'Human Personality and the Survival of Bodily Death', published in 1903. This though was little more than provisional.

But as his friend Professor William James pointed out, the series of papers written by Myres on subliminal consciousness were: 'the first attempt to consider the phenomena of hallucination, hypnotism, automatism, double personality, and mediumship as connected parts of the whole subject.'

The last work to be published by him in his lifetime was a small collection of essays entitled 'Science and a Future Life', published in 1893.

In 1900 he was elected President of the Society. But his health by now was failing and he thus travelled to Rome to seek specialist treatment. This though was unsuccessful and he died peacefully in Rome on the 17th January 1901, with his friend Professor William James at his bedside. His body was taken back to England, to his native Keswick, to be buried in the Family Vault in the graveyard of St. John's, which I visited upon my return to Keswick this summer.

The plaque I stumbled upon in the Protestant cemetery was placed there most probably by his family, as the inscription upon it is the same as that upon his grave in Keswick; raised in memory of this most talented, kind, gentle and dynamic individual.

Christopher Sloan

A Thief in the Night: the Death of John Paul I

(*A Thief in the Night*: John Cornwell: London – Viking, Penguin Group; 1989.)

When David Yallop's book "In God's Name" came out, I was given a copy of it for my birthday by a well-meaning university friend. She honestly thought that someone heading towards 'public' involvement in the Roman Catholic Church ought to read it. Out of kindness to her I therefore waded through his tedious accounts of business deals, and his ridiculous suggestion that one motive for John Paul I's murder was to prevent him from changing 'Humanae Vitae'. One thing I can say categorically, therefore, is that John Cornwell is a much better read than Yallop ever was.

Whether Cornwell has stuck to the exact sequence or not, he has chosen to portray his enquiry chronologically rather than strictly logically. This has the effect of leaving the reader with a series of 'cliffhangers': we receive an interesting new insight from Sister Vincenza's memoirs, only to return to the frustrating details of the attempt to gain an interview with the Vatican doctor. One effect of this approach is that we also enter into the human drama of Cornwell's anger with some Kafkaesque Vatican bureaucracy, his despair as he determines to abandon his investigation, and his euphoria when strings are pulled (by Marcinkus no less) and a breakthrough comes. ("You're gonna be O.K. This is how this place works. See?")

Some character vignettes are delightful, and if it were not that we are familiar with one or two of them from College, one would be led to doubt their veracity altogether. An FBI agent who says "This is my make up: I'd put my mother in jail if the evidence was there" is just too good to be true. Cornwell exploits the full irony of certain situations: that same FBI agent, who has no axe to grind, is one of Marcinkus' best defendants. A Jesuit, close to the Curia, puts the best case for the prosecution against the Vatican. Nor does Cornwell fail to point up the humour of other moments — sometimes at his own expense.

After he has pursued each lead as far as he is able, it behoves him, in the final section of the book, to construct a hypothesis out of the available evidence. It also behoves him, as a journalist, to make this a 'good read'. Cornwell therefore relates his own story of the events on the night of Papa Luciani's death. This story includes the macabre spectacle of the two secretaries, Magee and Don Diego, finding the Pope dead on the floor late in the evening, and placing his still warm body in bed so that it will seem that he had the traditional 'respectable' death the next morning.

For all this excitement, the first interest of the book for us has been, naturally, Cornwell's portrayal of the English College — his arrival here and his conversations with its denizens. There has been some resentment that he may have over-stepped respect for our hospitality, by not only quoting what was friendly chit-chat, but also misquoting it.

My own feeling is that one cannot really expect Cornwell to detail the niceties of expression from remembered snatches of conversation, granted that he has decided to convey the whole tale of his investigation as it unfolds. The College does in fact come out well in the book. It is the warm heart to which Cornwell returns after his sorties into the Vatican, and the place where "looking about the church at the faces of the young seminarians from England the spectacle . . . seemed to temper my creeping cynicism". Some of his descriptions of people within the College are certainly a little mischievous, but, I would suggest they are drawn with affection. The

gift John Cornwell has given us, in return for our hospitality, is to capture a certain moment and certain characters in the College's history.

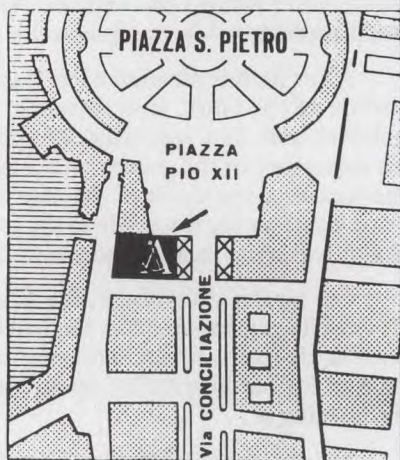
All this, however, is only to indulge ourselves in consideration of what is only a minor part of the book. Its importance is that, because Cornwell had the trust of influential parts of the Vatican, he has been able to set down important new evidence. We may doubt his reconstruction at the end of the book, but I think certain facts are now well-established. Papa Luciani died of a pulmonary embolism because he neglected to take anti-coagulants. The Vatican doctor, Buzzonetti, is embarrassed because he had not been able to visit the pope, nor had he received his medical records, before having to diagnose the cause of death. Sister Vincenza found the body in the morning. The most interesting new fact, testified to by the three people closest to the Pope, is that Luciani was convinced his election had been a mistake, was oppressed by the workload, prayed for death, and had a premonition that Wojtyla would succeed him after his own short Pontificate.

The problem, from the Vatican's point of view, is that this evidence is now in the public domain — something that, sadly, might scare them from ever being so adventurous again. As Cornwell admits, it would be quite possible to construct a new Yallop-style conspiracy theory with this new information. He argues very forcefully, however, that:

“the whisperings, the rumours, the theories — far-fetched, sensational, fantastic — all serve a purpose: they detract from the most obvious and shameful fact of all — that John Paul I died scorned and neglected by the institution that existed to sustain him.”

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Is this journalistic sensationalism? It is certainly unfair to the good-will and spirit of service evident in those friends we know in the Curia. And it will certainly help to sell a book. But my feeling is that the book is more than a flash in the pan. The reason is that Cornwell has covered himself all the way: he tells us from the outset where he stands with regard to the Church, and what the College and Vatican thought of him. With one exception, which actually does him no credit at all (Monsignor 'sottovoce'), he refuses to report a conversation unless he can reveal who said what and where. He is scrupulously honest about his own motives and feelings. He is even fair to Yallop! This openness means that John Cornwell is going to be accused of having betrayed the Vatican's trust, and also of being their creature. When these recriminations are over, however, what will emerge will be a very balanced account, an insight into an historical episode, and a tale of human fallibility.

To those who know the Catholic Church from the inside, and happen to love her, this revelation of human weakness will hardly come as a shock. The irony is that it takes a self-professed ex-Catholic like John Cornwell to raise a prophetic voice against a lack of simple human concern within Vatican officialdom.

Nicholas Kern

For Better and for Worse — Memoirs of Bishop Thomas Holland

(Published by Salford Diocesan Catholic Children's Rescue Society, 1989.)

The inside story of a man who has spent a lifetime — a long lifetime — dedicated to the service of the Church in England, and in particular to his beloved Diocese of Salford. Bishop Holland's style is discursive — erudite and nonetheless personal. Even though he is humble about his achievements, and almost goes out of his way to note his omissions, Bishop Holland comes across as one who is clearly not afraid of facing up, determinedly, to the problems of his age.

Of course, not all of his ministry has been as a Bishop. Before then he served (with distinction) as a Royal Navy Chaplain, giving rise in the book to a string of merry military anecdotes. (I enjoyed his account of a penance service in Exeter, in which the Marines were 'ubique' but where they should be.) Bishop Holland then recounts his ministry in the Catholic Mission Society, in the course of which his admiration and affection for both John Carmel Heenan and George Patrick Dwyer emerges very clearly. After a further mission in New Zealand, he then passed to the Apostolic Delegation in London, before going on to become co-adjutor Bishop of Portsmouth, and then Bishop of Salford.

Younger readers like myself will perhaps be drawn, if I may express it like this, to the two ends of the book: to Bishop Holland's account of his student days, and to his insights, which he is almost uniquely placed to provide, into the Second Vatican Council. Regarding his student days, it is a very great shame that pages 50-51, 54-55, 58-59 and 62-63 are missing from the book, particularly as they must relate to Bishop Holland's Roman experience. But what we *are* provided with is a new slant on the Spanish Civil War and the 'rough justice' Franco was obliged to mete out, that differs from the media accounts.

As he relates conciliar and post-conciliar times, Bishop Holland provides both interesting inside information and sage comment (for instance, regarding the prudence of Paul VI's decision not to lead the Roman Catholic Church into the World Council of Churches).

But this book will be of interest to all who have followed Church affairs — and indeed lived through the difficult but challenging times, for better and for worse, that Bishop Holland recalls so vividly.

Nicholas Kern

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Old Roman Notes

Writing news of Old Romans from a thousand miles away would be almost impossible, without the help of the Old Romans Association Diocesan Representatives. Very many thanks indeed to those who replied to my pleas for information.

This year we have the unusual situation of one man being claimed by two dioceses. I received news from both Clifton and Birmingham of Crispian Hollis' translation to the See of Portsmouth. Clifton's only other piece of news is that their Old Romans Rep., Thomas Atthill in St. Osmund's, Salisbury, now has an Old Roman curate: Michael Selway (his first appointment). Apart from the loss of their Auxiliary, all is quiet in Birmingham.

East Anglian Tony Philpot has been elected the International Responsible of the Jesus Caritas Priests' Fraternity, though he continues as Parish Priest of Our Lady and English Martyrs in Cambridge. In next-door Northampton Chris Beirne has been appointed as curate in Kettering and still finds time to complete his M.Phil at Hull University. Paul Donovan continues his commission with the Royal Navy; recently he spent some time with Armilla Patrol in the Persian Gulf. Just back from a sabbatical year at the Irish School of Ecumenics in Dublin, Sean Healy is now curate at Our Lady's, Luton and Ecumenical Officer for the diocese. The co-ordinator of the Diocesan Assembly, Paul Hardy, has become Chaplain at Cardinal Newman School, Luton. Other Northampton appointments are: John Koenig, Parish Priest of Thrapston and Raunds and Vice-Officialis of the Diocesan Tribunal; Thomas Cooper, Parish Priest of Towcester; Wilbur Boswell, Parish Priest of Long Crendon; Brian Frost, Parish Priest of Rushden and member of the Cathedral Chapter.

Hallam Old Romans are practising the art of stillness, even Anthony Towey is still; they are all still where they were last year. No such tranquility on the other side of the country in Menevia where every Old Roman has moved. Michael Burke has been appointed Parish Priest of Burryport in Dyfed and also Vice-Officialis of the Cardiff-Menevia Tribunal. Clyde Hughes Johnson has moved to Lampeter where, in addition to being Parish Priest, he is Chaplain to St. David's University College. He is also now Chancellor of the Diocese.

Up in Hexham and Newcastle Frank Kearney has fled the hustle and bustle of Newcastle's centro storico, having re-ordered and possibly de-Puginised the Cathedral. He is now close to the scene of the Blaydon Races as Parish Priest of St. Agnes, Crawcrook. John Tweedy, who has been Parish Priest of Boldon-on-Tyne for a few years now, is heavily involved in the project for a National Garden Festival in Gateshead. A contemporary reports that those who remember John smoking the most evil-smelling tobacco from the Campo may savour the image of him covered with sweet violets on the banks of the Tyne. Cuthbert Rand is also immersed in horticulture deep in the heart of Northumberland where he is Parish Priest of Thropton and Rothbury. Finally Bill Rooke, whose mission territory has been Kenya rather than England, comes back to the diocese this summer.

Nottingham reports that Liam Kelly has been appointed Diocesan Information Officer and Eric Whitehouse, ordained in 1942, has now retired. From the same diocese comes the sad news of the death of Stephen Hodgkinson after 56 years in the priesthood. *Requiescat in pace.*

After six or seven years at the Greg. one would think that most Venerabilini would have had more than enough of the academic life. Not so in Shrewsbury where Michael Morton has gone to Cambridge University and Stephen Doonan to Dundalk Institute of Religious Education, both to pursue further studies. Another Shrewsbury priest leaving church spire for ivory tower is Philip Egan who has been appointed Assistant Chaplain to Cambridge University. Journeying in the other direction is John McHugh who has retired from Ushaw and Durham University to become Parish Priest of St. Pius X, Alderley Edge. Other new appointments in the diocese are Michael English to Our Lady of Lourdes, Partington, Jim Robinson to Our Lady of Pity, Greasby, and Old Romans Association Secretary Frank Rice to St. Chad's, Cheadle.

Simon Peat and Gary Lysaght begin their work in Southwark at Thornton Heath and Orpington respectively. Anthony Barratt has moved from Addiscombe to the Cathedral and David Gummatt from Beckenham to Dartford. Leo Mooney has been appointed Parish Priest of Catford. Southwark permanent deacons-to-be now have Tim Finnigan as their Director of Studies.

Finally, many congratulations to our Jubilarians. James Brand, Peter Coughlan, Michael Feben, Michael Garnett and Anthony Pateman celebrate their Silver Jubilees. Completing fifty years of priesthood are Joseph Buckley, Arthur Iggleden, Patrick McNamara and George Pitt. To them all we wish *Ad multos annos*.

Michael Robertson



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Obituaries

Bishop Francis Thomas

When I was asked to express the gratitude of Oscott College to Francis Thomas when he left there to become parish priest of Holy Trinity, Newcastle-under-Lyme I found it right to use part of the final speech of Anthony in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*: "his life was gentle and the elements so mixed in him that nature might stand up and say to all the world: this was a man." Strangely, in offering this reflection to the readers of the *Venerabile Magazine* I find it right to take the first line of that same speech: "this was the noblest Roman of them all." I am fully aware that the adjective 'Roman' has a strange history and the feeling of that word varies from time to time. In reference to Francis Thomas I use it with this intent: when he came to the English College, Rome, in the 1950s he at once made the whole life of the College truly his own. It seems strange now but I cannot remember ever wondering where he had been before he came to the *Venerabile*. This was a hallmark of his whole service in the life of the Church. He embraced every situation completely and took it to himself. It was one of the reasons why, when I found myself invited, largely through his influence, to join the staff at St. Mary's College, Oscott, I did my best to return the compliment and seek to make that College truly my own.

In his days at the *Venerabile* he was always willing to advise students in the earlier years of the House and to contribute to their formation. Most of his life was certainly dedicated to the formation of future priests and yet, when the time came for him to go first to a parish and then to the Diocese of Northampton, he gave himself without reserve to the demands of these new services in the life of Our Lord's people. It was for me a special grace to be allowed to share with him quite closely the final year of his life and the same story was told yet again. It was moving to see how he was able to continue to hold the Diocese close in his prayer while at the same time, without reserve, seeking to discern the word of God spoken in his illness and in his dying. It seemed to many who knew him utterly appropriate that he should die on Christmas Day, the day on which we proclaim the utter truth of the Incarnation of the Word of God taking to himself space and time. Francis Thomas took to himself each space and time offered to him by God our Father. In other words we can say of him: "his life was gentle and the elements so mixed in him that nature might stand up and say to all the world: this was a man."

+ Patrick Kelly
Bishop of Salford

Mgr. Canon Timothy Rice

Mgr. Canon Timothy Rice was born in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, in 1936. He was educated first at Mark Cross Junior Seminary, entered the English College in 1954 and was ordained priest in 1961. Apart from a short term teaching at Mark Cross, he served in parishes in Sussex and Surrey for the whole of his life.

Tim and I were together at the Venerabile for three years. He was a good friend and threw himself wholeheartedly into everything. Keen on sport, he was a stalwart front-row forward at rugby, a sturdy half-back at football and a nifty batsman on the cricket field. He often recalled to me the North and South cricket match at the Villa when on one occasion, having reached the formidable score of 49, the miserable captain (the author) declared the innings before he reached his half century!

Tim was also an effective 'bodger', never happier than with a cigarette in the mouth and hammer in hand, knocking up the props for the annual panto. He loved the College and after his ordination was always a devoted Venerabilimo rarely missing the annual Roman meeting.

Many years later, on coming to Arundel and Brighton as Bishop, I was so grateful for Tim's wholehearted cooperation and support in every aspect of the life of the Diocese. He was an intelligent and reflective man and, like others, the Vatican Council had a profound effect upon him. The Council and its message formed the basis of his pastoral life and in particular, underlined his understanding of the liturgy. It was his principal care in parochial life.

Tim was much loved by an enormous number of people in the Diocese who were inspired by his own vision of Church and the practical ways in which he brought it to realisation within the parochial community. As Parish Priest, and later as Vicar General, Canon Tim was an example and inspiration to many and we all miss him very much indeed. The Diocese has lost one of its most devoted priests and the College a very faithful alumnus. May he receive the reward of his labours and rest in peace.

+ Cormac Murphy-O'Connor
Bishop of Arundel and Brighton

The Editor would be grateful to anyone informing him of the death of an Old Roman: it is to be hoped that any obituary that does not appear this year may do so in the next issue.

Palazzola re-visited

Tavoletti and *depuratore* were not part of my vocabulary in the fifties or sixties or even last year at Chorley with Silvio. They are now. I'm also called *faccio subito* by none other than the one whom I call *La Voce!!* Enough of all this. What I'm trying to say is that dear old Palazzola lives on and is thriving. Thanks be to God and to such bodies as the Friends of the Venerabile, the Roman Association, our English and Welsh Bishops and the whole of the student body.

Just over a year ago, on a January morning in Longridge, I was asked over the 'phone if I was busy that day. I replied that I had a funeral within half an hour and that this would take up that morning. Could I be of any help later in the day? Well I'd like to have a chat with you about something, said the voice — who turned out to be the Rector of the VEC. Puzzled, I suggested we met in Preston that evening. And so I was persuaded to take on the job of Palazzola — director and chaplain and — *we've all heard it before* — it'll work out alright and a job description will be yours really to work out. I'll try and tell you how it is working out.

I arrived late in February '88 and Phil Holroyd left on 7th March to take up his appointment in Sandal, Wakefield. What a colossal amount he and the Sisters of Mercy had achieved in the relatively short time of four years since the new Villa *ambiente* had been conceived. I came to a Palazzola which immediately was the *dear old villa* of thirty years ago with the most subtle of improvements made — such as glazing throughout the cloisters, central heating in all the rooms of the 'old' wing, re-wiring throughout, gutters, drains, all sorted out and the kitchen totally re-fitted and running on gas. Truly it was like stepping into a new tailor-made suit. I give talks and illustrate them with slides on the History of Palazzola and as we refer to Fonseca being the second builder of Palazzola we can find Godfrey as the third and why not Phil Holroyd as the fourth?

Carry on the good work — was the message and this suited me down to the ground. Holy Week came and presented itself with a group of Pilgrims looking to me to give them a retreat and treat them to the sights of Rome. Quite a new venture to a man who'd settled twice into being a PP in Salford having spent the previous fifteen years as a Fidei Donum in Kenya and in Mission/Development matters! This seemed to be all that — and more wrapped into one. Students come out on Thursdays and many weekends — not only from the English College but also from the Irish, Scots, German, American, Sant' Anselmo to say nothing of Sisters and Brothers from numerous religious houses in and around the City. What peace and genuine tranquility this property of Palazzola affords to all who come here. My 83-year-old Dad came out with a group at the end of May and fell in love again with the place after 27 years! He was back again this Christmas — and we even had breakfast together on the terrace, in sunshine, on Christmas morning!

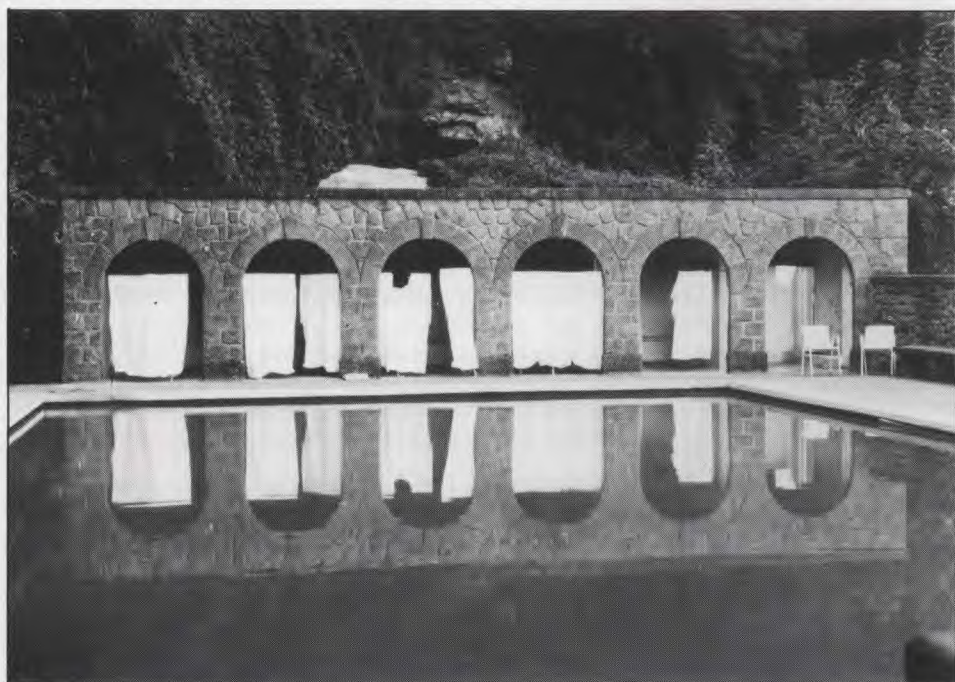
After Pentecost we welcomed fourteen Golden Jubilarian Sisters of Mercy who arrived after a pretty tiring flight to find Palazzola truly the *ultimo gradino primo di cielo!* They had a grand time with us and enjoyed the warmth of Palazzola — in every sense.

The College had its **Villegiatura** for close on four weeks in the June/July and after a week's break and preparation the next nine weeks were taken up with the Summer Pilgrim groups. Only two lunches during that period were eaten **inside** the house (due to wind and rain). Pilgrims came to us after three days in Assisi on a Sunday mid-day or evening and stayed until the following Saturday. The programme was one of rest,

gentle walks, swimming in the filtered and oh so blue *Tank*, good food and an open invitation to the morning and evening prayer of the 'house' and the daily celebration of Mass in Church, or sometimes out on the Terrace. Each group brought its own particular charisma and joy and each group was truly a 'family' group and many of the folks regard Palazzola as their true 'summer home'. I find it so nice that the 'Old Roman' that I am sees in the enjoyment of so many hundreds of people the same sort of enjoyment and regard for Palazzola that I had during my seven year Roman experience . . . with only one summer during that period spent back home.

Come the end of the 'summer' period I was to give my attention to another aspect of mission and service here. The *Priests' Sabbatical Period*. This period 'out' from parish or whatever had been started two years previously and here was the third one. In all eight participants booked in from Lancaster in the north through to Kisumu in the south and from East Anglia in the east to Florida in the west! A motley bunch of diocesan priests. For just over five weeks we had Greg Proffs and Sant' Anselmo Proffs and Regina Mundi Proffs, various Spiritual Directors to speak and share with us and a goodly number of Day Gitas and four gorgeous days in Assisi staying at La Rocca. I won't describe it too much as I might get too many applying — we are having another this year for sixteen and twelve are booked already. But make a note that the period ends in the week before Advent and lasts four and a half weeks.

The end of the year came with another group for the Old/New Year week and this group joined us as we, the basic family and community, had spent a cosy Yuletide in the Ref and Morgue. The Community into which I had been warmly welcomed is composed of four Sisters of Mercy — Sisters Assumpta, Anselm, Philomena and Gertrude with Alfredo and Fernanda Placentini and their son Giuseppe with his wife Julie and son Riccardo. There is within this family a team of ladies who come in and share the cooking, cleaning and upkeep of the house with such lovely names as



The "Oh so blue Tank - and the "Oh so new curtains" for our mixed pilgrim groups.

Peppa, Paola, Anita and Mirella. Of course there are the 'extended' families of Luigi and Roberto too. During the past twelvemonth we have also welcomed into our 'family' Teodoros and Esayliay — two Ethiopian refugees awaiting placement in USA or Canada — they are a great help to us here. I am sure that all Old Romans will see in all this the very magic of friendship, love and the family spirit of dear old Palazzola!

The binding factor of what I have written above is the presence of the community of Sisters of Mercy who came here at the invitation of the College some five years ago. Palazzola has always been a place of Community from Benedictines and Cistercians, through from Augustinians and four hundred and fifty years of Franciscans — even the Signor Arnoldi period of '*mangiare adagio e masticare bene*' had a community living here. Hinsley brought the College Community and found the Piacentini Family. The Sisters of Mercy came and helped by the glazing of the cloister they have settled here nicely. The Morning and Evening Offices of the Church are celebrated, the Liturgy of the Church is honoured and the general direction of the fitting out of the House and comfort of all visitors is accomplished in the most welcoming and understanding way. After leaving my beloved parish in Longridge I have been made to feel thoroughly at home in a reality of Palazzola which defies any spurious belief in ghosts from the past . . . I must write a thing or two for this Journal on '*blessed salt*' one day.

We had a generous injection of cash last winter from English benefactors and the New Wing received very special attention. Re-wiring and hot and cold water had already been installed just before the summer visitors. Now we set to work on the installation of the central heating system. This was achieved and much praise was given by visiting American and English plumbers of the professional welding methods used by our plumber. The rooms were all completely decorated — doors and windows too — and the finished product looks well. Student artists have completed the work by re-painting the names of the College Martyrs over the room doors.

So now the Upper New Wing (built, by the way, by Fonseca in the 1730's) is used solely by the College students and especially when the rest of the house is occupied — which is becoming more of the case these days. The College uses it for mini-retreats and days of Recollection and also for a total retirement area on Thursdays and 'free-weekends'.

Now we are currently at work on the Lower New Wing where nine rooms are being re-wired. The pipework is already completed for the installation of radiators when we have the cash to buy them. The hot and cold water also has to be installed as well as the washbasins and a couple of shower rooms. The decorators have just finished freshening up the walls and doors in the nun's convent (the former Piazza Venezia) and this being done they will smarten up the two approaches to the underground passage below the Church. Fernanda is at me hard and vociferously (hence my pet name for her!) to get the kitchens repainted. I promise her that this will be done after the summer visitors have left and before the October-end group arrives. . . .

A Fund was started last summer to redecorate our Church and make simple adjustments to the position of the High Altar. Another Fund has been started to purchase for Palazzola use a nine-seater Fiat Ducato mini-bus. And finally we are looking at something which I am sure will help us run this retreat, conference, student and pilgrim centre far more efficiently — I mean a Facsimile machine. Post still takes anything from four to six weeks to get here from England and I am convinced that with a FAX machine we could reduce our telephone bills enormously. Do feel free to send a cheque to *Collegio Inglese Palazzola* for any one or more of these Funds if you find this to your favour.

Holy Week is fast coming upon us. The students are here tomorrow (Thursday) to have a rest and also to do a bit more clearing of the Tennis Court. I have a job or two up my sleeve for anyone who wants to join in the spring-cleaning of the cloister windows and the sweeping of the paths down the garden. The Tank is deep green with a growing family of toads in it — to be emptied and cleaned by Alfredo, Esayliay and me in April — which reminds me, it was San Gregorio last Sunday *and I didn't dive in the tank!* O Heu!

Anthony Grimshaw



Friends of the Venerable

Over the past year there have been a number of developments in the activities of the FRIENDS.

Members of the Committee met for two days at Redditch in May 1988 by invitation of Father Tony Wilcox. This gave the opportunity of discussing the future. The slogan "CATCHING FIRE" was adopted and provided the theme for the September annual meeting of the FRIENDS. Even though there was a postal strike at the time the notices were sent out, some 70 members and their guests arrived at the school in Northampton which had been arranged for us as the venue by the local group.

Mgr. Philip Holroyd, the former Vice-Rector of the College and Chaplain at Palazzola, gave an inspiring address. He pinpointed the fact that the development of the FRIENDS had been slow over the past two years partly because the membership was dispersed throughout the country and also following on the successful appeal "our glorious past has made it difficult to focus on the future".

There is a great need for further groups up and down the country. This development has been slow. The two most active ones are those in Northampton and the Leeds Diocese. Philip Holroyd since taking up a parish in Wakefield has thrown himself with great enthusiasm into the affairs of the FRIENDS.

The second talk was from Stephen and Elizabeth Usherwood, the historians, who wrote an excellent book at the time of the Beatification of the Martyrs in 1987. It was a moving account of the College Martyrs. This was followed by a highly colourful talk by Fr. Ant Towey. He with four other students decided to return home tracing the route taken by Sherwin, Campion, Kirby, Parsons and Bishop Goldwell on the first mission from the College some 400 years before. This led them through Milan, Geneva, Rheims, Rennes and Douai. The return was through St. Omer which had been the Junior Seminary for the English Missioners. Ant Towey concluded by saying "our imitation was merely to follow him (Campion) and the others to Tyburn which was our last place of pilgrimage". The fuller story of the journey was published in the VENERABLE VIEW last December.

At the end of the morning the wives of the local group arranged an excellent lunch and during this period Friends got the opportunity to discuss and talk among themselves. Any attempt to slumber after the lunch was forbidden us by the forthright and lively talk given by Mgr. Jack Kennedy. He spoke on the College today and confessed he was immensely impressed with the calibre of today's students. Optimism was expressed for the future. "The College of today is a healthy place, full, and with a good mix of dedication and a sense of humour".

The day closed with discussion groups and a final plenary session. Grateful thanks were expressed to the school and the local group for all the arrangements. We owe a special debt to Fr. Chris Beirne.

The next meeting of the FRIENDS will be in London. This will take place at St. James', Spanish Place, Crypt, on Saturday, 23 September. Bishop Cormac Murphy O'Connor, the President of the Friends and a former Rector will concelebrate Mass and be with us during the day. An interesting programme will be arranged; the Rector has promised to be with us.

The Friends have made three grants recently to the College and the Villa. A new guide is being produced. This will be a professional production with photographs and a newly written history with a description of life in the College. Half the production cost, i.e. £1,300, has been donated.

At the request of the Rector £3,000 is being made available for repainting the kitchen area after rewiring.

A further payment of £3,500 has been authorised for the Villa. This will go towards the cost of a mini bus which will be invaluable for transporting small groups to local shrines and beauty spots.

These gifts can be seen as a tangible effort of the FRIENDS concern for the Venerable.

In conclusion, the office had to move from Westminster and through the good offices of Archbishop Bowen and Bishop Tripp we have crossed the water to Southwark Diocese. Canon O'Sullivan at New Malden has given us the use of a room in the presbytery at 1 Montem Road, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 3QW.

Our current membership is around 500. Help us to double this by joining or getting your friends to do so. We particularly hope the families of students will feel able to do so. We have had a lot of support from those who have been to the College and Palazzola with the pilgrimage groups.

**Robin Hood
Chairman**

College Diary 1988-1989

May

Wednesday, 4th. The College strains its communal ear (*ma che rumore!*) and sniffs its communal nose (*ma che profumo!*). Basilios Karagiorgos — our noctivagous Greek student — honours a CUCCU contract, and treats his lucky clients to bouzoukis and baklava in the Common Room. Whoever said '*Timeo Danaos. . . ?*'?

Thursday, 5th. That go-ahead corridor, the Monserra, takes off to Anagni for the day. Among the wonders to be seen are the fine Cathedral and (I'm sure he said) the *Sala del Scifo*, where Pope Boniface VIII was mortally insulted.

Sunday, 8th. The College fills with boisterous, chattering youth (so what's new), for the First Communion of children prepared by College students.

Tuesday, 10th. The exterior of the Church door takes on the semblance of the Pompidou Centre, as scaffolding goes up for cleaning work to begin. "Of course, a century ago they built these doors to look dirty. . . ." Thank you, James, that will do.

Wednesday, 11th. Fr. Chappin, Dutch Jesuit and History Prof, at the Greg, is being entertained by desperate Third Theology students, when below, from the garden, commences a boisterous rendition of the Dutch National Anthem. (I didn't know they had one either.) Fr. Chappin laughs, and Third Theology breathes again.

Friday, 13th. Rabbi Lionel Blue gives the spiritual conference tonight, and touches on the problems facing Rabbinic Judaism in an era of toleration. Later, he and Russell Wright are seen swapping recipes ("You did say 4 lb of pork, Rabbi . . . ?").

Saturday, 14th. Second Philosophy, i.e. David Barrett, goes on retreat. How quiet the College seems this weekend!

Sunday, 15th. Ascension Day it may be, but the sun sets on the football pitch, where Simon O'Connor injures his leg, David Blower breaks his collar bone, and we lose, to boot. And what is worse, to Americans.

In the evening, the Rector addresses the house on his decision over Christmas holidays. We are to stay for Christmas itself, but may depart from the 27th December. For the moment, no decision is made (or is it *taken?*) on the question of translating the Feast of S. Thomas.

Monday, 16th. A packed public meeting accepts — after considerable debate on voting procedure — a Constitution, and then, after heated exchanges, decides not to take a vote on extending Magnum Silentium.

Wednesday, 18th. The scaffolding comes down, and we discover that we have an exquisite Church door. James Manock hurries off to telephone Baedeker's with the good news.

Thursday, 19th. The SS rises from his sick-bed to lead us on the Nuns' Gita. *Quonam tendimus?* In the steps of S. Francis, as it happens, to the beautiful shrines of S. Maria de la Foresta, Poggio Bustone, Greccio and Fontecolombo, with lunch at the *pittoresco* Piediluca. Rain cramps our style, but cannot damp our spirits — indeed, Nella and Sandra contrive to turn the coach into a *sala da ballo* on the way home. Mind your heads!

Sunday, 22nd. After three days monsooning, the sun is out today to celebrate the Confirmation of seven children from St. George's. Jim Sullivan, labouring beneath a monstrous mitre, presides, while il Vice preaches, and proves again that he has a wonderful way with children.

Tuesday, 24th. At Community Mass, Canon Parker puts S. Augustine to the test, to see if he who sings really does pray twice. During his homily, he whips out a guitar and strums along to 'Three Blind Mice'. Like them or not, the Canon's Masses are certainly memorable.

Thursday, 26th. House function at the Chiesa Nuova for S. Philip Neri. The Padre Superiore spends seven minutes greeting everybody; ". . . e ancora il Collegio Inglese, da tanti secoli fedele." — not if you carry on like that. This, however, pales to insignificance beside Cardinal Poletti's 23 minute sermon. But, learning afterward that he is celebrating 50 years as priest, and 30 years as bishop, we are in forgiving mood, and salute him *ad multos annos*.

Later, the College is rocked by a rumour that Robert Esdaile, high-profile radical seminarian, had knelt to kiss the Cardinal's ring.

Friday, 27th. Our very own Cardinal arrives, and his diocesan students are too busy trying on his ring to worry about kissing it.

The Vice-Rector takes to his bed — too much chocolate, Jeremy, hmmm?

Saturday, 28th. Thunder all day. A particularly spectacular crash answers this morning's invitatory 'Let us listen for the voice of the Lord'.

Sunday, 29th. Trinity Sunday, and with the Rector away in London, and il vice bedridden, Canon Parker takes us under his wing, and reads at festal lunch *modo umoristico* from the College account book of olden days. In those times, sick students were sent away, and 'nobiles' were separated from common seminarists. "What a good idea — more claret down that end?"

Owing to (senior) staff absenteeism, the College photograph is postponed for the first time in its 400 year history.

Tuesday, 31st. Somebody in the music department with a particularly odd sense of humour asks toneless Eddie Jarosz to intone the *Salve Regina* at visit. However, 15 seconds expert coaching from your diarist does the job, and Eddie pulls it off!

We learn, with some consternation, that the Vice-Rector is to return home, for treatment of suspected duodenal ulcers.

June

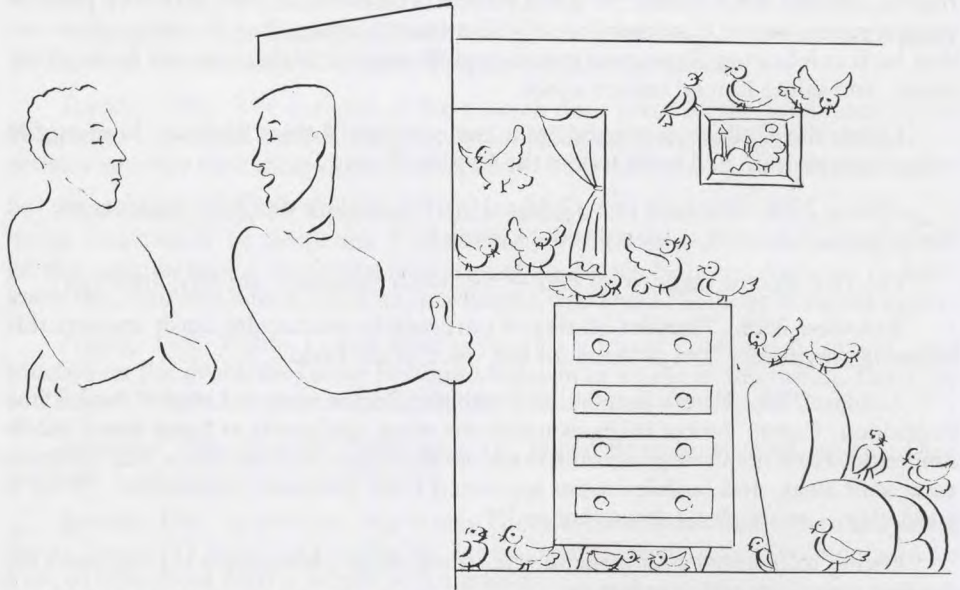
Wednesday, 1st. First cycle lectures end, and NAC students with nothing more to lose celebrate by reading Pope Clement XIV's bull suppressing the Jesuits in the Aula Magna. Soon after, Luiz Ruscillo *inter alios* is spotted amid our colonial cousins as they process to XII Apostoli, to honour the same pontiff with a wreath of flowers. All, of course, done in the best possible taste.

Thursday, 2nd. The house, on the verge of the exam period, looks wistfully ahead to balmy Villeggiatura days, and expresses its common *desiderium* by passing a money motion for a bar at the Villa.

Friday, 3rd. We are saddened to hear that Jeremy has indeed been diagnosed with duodenal ulcers, and must stay over in England for treatment.

Sunday, 5th. Students thread their way in torrential rain to the Little Sisters', for the annual house function. Michael Gilmore presides, while deacon Simon Peat proclaims the Gospel in Italian with a clarity that defies comprehension. Rain unfortunately prevents the usual Blessed Sacrament procession, but holds off in the afternoon for the College photograph. We have no *Vice*, but the Rector is there, dressed to kill by Michael McCoy. "If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times, Father, you mustn't let the cincture ride up under the armpits. . . ."

Thursday, 9th. Scaffolding goes up in the cortile, this time to block the rafters, which are proving home to a population explosion among the College pigeons. This means walling up the young ones — at what price *una vita pacifica*?



"Well it may have seemed cruel - but you won't be seeing any pigeons round here again"

Saturday, 11th. With indescribable sorrow, we take leave of Suor Norma, who returns to the Elisabettine Mother House in Padua because of ailing health. She takes with her much love, and many prayers — but we are subdued; the College feels a great sense of loss.

Tuesday, 14th. Thomas Wood is awarded his JCL *Summa cum laude* by the Canon Law faculty of the Angelicum. Legions of adoring little old ladies back in Liverpool express no surprise whatever.

Wednesday, 15th. Russell Wright is disconsolate — he is sure he can hear the plaintive cries of baby pigeons walled up in the rafters.

Thursday, 16th. Of course, it is now realised that the pigeons had kept away other, noisier types of birds. The cortile is now infested by ravens, evoking colourful language from even the most mild-mannered of seminarians.

Sunday, 19th. The Rector announces to the house that there will be no inaugural Mass at the Villeggiatura, owing to the gross insensitivity of the Greg exam timetable.

Thursday, 23rd. The Villeggiatura officially starts, but the university thinks otherwise, and it's revision as normal in College.

Tuesday, 28th. The last examinees, Messrs. LeBas, Langham and Jarmuz, are released from their (funnily enough) Eschatology exam, and arrive to complete numbers at the Villa. Let the good times roll!

Thursday, 30th. To great cheers, Jeremy returns from England, pockets loaded with chocolate. The sun comes out, and *allegria* abounds as a bumper contingent sets out for the lake gita. This year it seems fashionable to take one's DBL while actually in the water ("Careful, I don't want my gin diluted!"). Meanwhile, frontiers are pushed back on dry land, as Paul Daly persuades Bishop Cyril Restieaux to drink beer for the first time in 70 years at Palazzola. "And if you believe that —" Thank you, James, there's no need for that.

July

Friday, 1st. How many cubicles in the Monserra showers? What is the Rector's laundry number? It's fingers on the buzzers for VEC-SATION, the quiz that finds out just who reads the inscriptions in Church during Vespers. Tempers flare over the biblical reference of the College motto, but Mark Langham is your host, so it's all good clean fun.

Saturday, 2nd. The threat of rain does nothing to deter hearty Tusculum walkers. Jeremy preaches at Mass, linking us with the community past and present, near and far; and far away in Palazzola, Russell Wright smells sausages cooking, and finds the energy to join us in time for breakfast.

Sunday, 3rd. Dominic Byrne, Benito Colangelo, Robert Esdaile, Kevin Haggerty, James Manock, Alan Sheridan, Stephen Shield and Timothy Swinglehurst receive Candidacy at Mass today.

In the evening, a Gilbert and Sullivan entertainment, upon which the Rector comments, "If I'd known the standard was going to be this low, I'd have done a turn myself".

Monday, 4th. Michael Gilmore, Nick Kern, Mark Langham and Paul Shaw set off at 5.30 a.m. on the Castelli walk, that 30-mile tour around local vintages that makes most pub-crawls seem like sherry receptions by comparison. Undaunted by disgusted looks from passers-by as they quaff their first glass in Rocca at 6.00 a.m. ("*Che alcoolizzati sciagurati!*"), the adventurers make fine progress. At Monteporzio, lunch is taken in the shadow of the old Villa, where memories of the College are still very much alive after 70 years. The afternoon stretches out, the sun is hot, the road is long, and the brave lads stagger back to a heroes' welcome at 9.00 p.m.

Tuesday, 5th. The East-West football match; with the captains of both sides veterans of yesterday's gita, their role is interpreted as administrative rather than executive. West wins 3-2.

Top Year Tea follows; the Rector balances joy and sorrow at forthcoming departures, and finds that joy predominates. Michael Selway replies movingly of the friendship and support always found in the College. Don Augusto compares the leavers to the stones of S. Peter's, always constant in their support for Rome. "Crikey, they'll have some excess baggage to pay on the flight home, in that case!"

Friday, 8th. The North-South cricket match. The North scrapes to victory 120-80. Civilisation trembles. The Rector, magnanimous in victory, consoles Philip LeBas — “You make a big contribution to a losing side.”

An overdose of copper sulphate turns the water in the Tank bright blue — and anyone who ventures in for a dip.

At a meeting in the evening, it is decided to hold performances of the Pantomime *before* Christmas next year.

Saturday, 9th. Fr. Walter Drumm, Rector of the Beda, gives us a thoughtful and witty day of recollection — warning us to watch our image of priesthood.

Sunday, 10th. Stephen Boyle, John Cahill, Jim Creegan, Paul Cuff, Antony Hudson, Anthony Milner, Damien McGrath, John O’Leary, Paul Shaw and Martin Stempczyk are instituted as Lectors by Bishop Cyril at Mass today.

Monday, 11th. David Blower, David Bulmer, Paul Daly, Mark Jarmuz, Nicholas Kern, Mark Langham, Philip LeBas, Charis Pattichi and Luiz Ruscillo are instituted as Acolytes during Mass.

Wednesday, 13th. With joy, we celebrate the highlight of the Villeggiatura and the summit of the year, as Patrick Broun, Philip Gillespie, Peter Harvey, Stephen Langridge, Michael McCoy, Shaun Middleton, Peter Newby, Michael O’Connor, Simon O’Connor and Mark O’Donnell are ordained to the Diaconate. Friends and family gather round the new deacons, as they stand, resplendent and rather sheepish, in their dalmatics, for our congratulations and admiration. Festivities continue all day — and the tank, being no respecter of ontological states, takes its toll of the newly ordained. Suddenly, all too suddenly, the day is over, and guests and students disperse, some to their rooms, some back to Rome, some to return to England. Silence at last settles on Palazzola — but a silence charged with joy, both for what has just taken place, and for what is yet to come.



The new Lectors and Bishop Restieaux.



The new Acolytes and Bishop Restieaux.



The newly ordained Deacons and Bishop Restieaux.



During the summer Roy Hattersley visited the College to see for himself the place where his father spent his formative years.

NEW YEAR

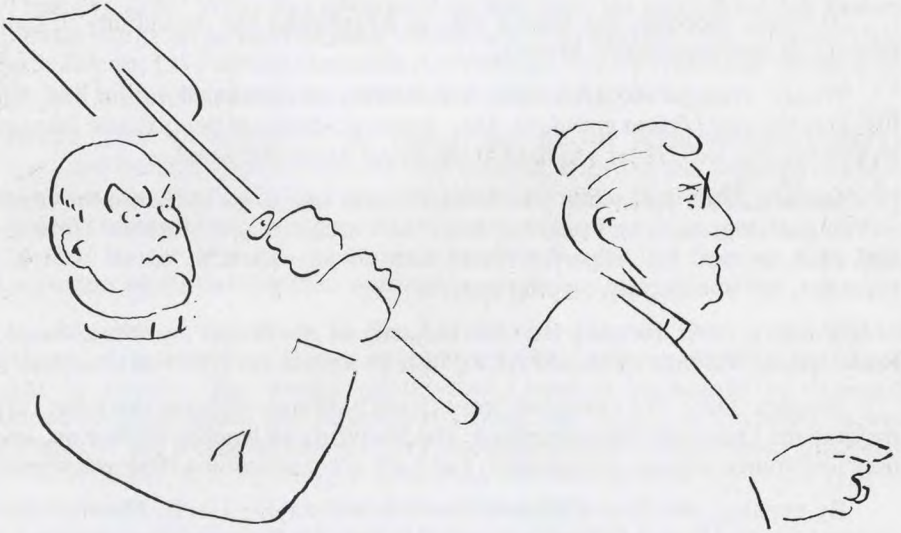
We welcome our new students, Marcus Brisley, Bruce Burbidge, Philip Denton, Martin Edwards, Robert George, Paul Grogan, Martin Hardy, Timothy Hopkins, Michael Koppel, Jean-Laurent Marie, Simon Thomson and Philip Whitmore — a talented lot, who very quickly make themselves at home. This year there is especial cause for satisfaction; for the first time in living memory, every English diocese is represented in the College — Archbishop Ward take note! We also welcome on Anglican Exchange, Christopher Vipers from St. Stephen's, Oxford and Andrew Willson from Lincoln: they too have many talents manifested (among other places) on rock faces and amid dirty washing.

October

Wednesday, 5th. The serious business of Vacation being over, the serious business of Vocation is taken up again. Students return to College, and, gathered around the notice-board to swap stories of holidays and pastoral endeavour, see that the Greg Delegate, Paul Shaw, is offering guided tours of the Gregorian. New men jump at the opportunity, while some older hands trail along out of interest — to discover where the place is.

Thursday, 6th. To inaugurate the new year in the manner in which most of it will continue, the Senior and Deputy Senior Student throw a 'Ben Tornati Garden Party' — showing they are better at Italian than they are at poetry. Wine flows in abundance, until some think they are seeing double. Wait a minute — they *are* seeing double! New man Philip Whitmore D.Phil. bears more than a passing resemblance to Philip LeBas D.Phil. A great double act is born, and thoroughly overcome by the uproar that ensues, Philip LeB. is seen retiring, leaving Philip W. to face the music (no, hang on — that's Philip W. retiring leaving Philip LeB. . . .).

Friday, 7th. The house divides Martha and Mary style, as the Nuovi recommence Italian lessons, while the rest of us move to Palazzola for retreat. The retreat-giver this year is Bishop Murphy O'Connor, who, in gentle, uplifting addresses, instils in us joy and hope for years ahead. Being, of course, no stranger to the College, he gives us, besides, some juicy anecdotes, mainly at the expense of his former fellow student, the Rector.



Now, I know the Rector won't mind my telling you another little story from his student days . . .

Tuesday, 11th. Sr. Mary Gertrude Standing arrives to join the community at Palazzola — we wish her every joy in her time at the Villa.

Wednesday, 12th. As the retreat draws to a close, the New Men join us at DOP for Mass. Our subsequent DBL is graced by the presence of Archbishop Barbarito, hot from the Nunciature in Wimbledon. “Think big!” is his message to us — several students are spotted noting this down, and other tips on how to succeed, on their cuffs.

Later, at lunch, the Rector has his revenge on Bishop Cormac, by relating a tortuous anecdote (“a sin in three parts”) involving deceit and thieving, fish-paste morsels and a bucket of Holy Water. Students gasp at the unheard-of naughtiness of seminarians of former days!

Thursday, 13th. The Greg Academic Mass — a trial for some, a joy for others, but (this year) a must for all.

Later, Tony Bridson shows considerable *sangue freddo*, being spotted arriving back in College 3 minutes before the 11 O'clock deadline for return.

Friday, 14th. Observant students (and even the not-so-observant) notice a goldfish in a bowl outside Mgr. Chestle's room. What! He's not been on the rifle-range at Luna Park again! No, in fact the goldfish is fungus ridden, and the Monsignor is displaying his well-known concern for all living things by rescuing it from the College pond, and treating it in Epsom Salts.

Saturday, 15th. The birthday of Messrs. Grady, McCoy, Pattichi, Stempczyk and Shield happily coincide. And even more happily, they hold a party to celebrate.

Sunday, 16th. The 10th anniversary of Pope John-Paul's Pontificate; *plus uno maneat perenne saeclo!* Unlike Messrs. Grady, McCoy, &c, he doesn't throw a party, but prefers instead a Rosary and torchlight procession. Eager firework watchers gathered on the Monserra tower feel very hard done by.

At house meeting, the Rector asks us to consider the desirability of 'unity of posture' at non-community Masses.

Friday, 21st. In the afternoon, a hailstorm of unusual duration and ferocity blankets the city (*Prima grando?*). This, however, does not deter Eddie Jarosz, who battles his way to S. Peter's to read at the Papal Academic Mass.

Sunday, 23rd. Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the front pew — two parish groups, and pilgrims from the Catenians and Mothers' Union arrive and pack us out. Fr. Kilgarriff shows himself an expert at crowd control, and preaches, not unnaturally, on pilgrimages.

Monday, 24th. Hearing that the majority of the Nuovi are musicians, Eddie Jarosz quips, "Perhaps we should ask the bishops to send out a football team next year!"

Tuesday, 25th. The Questura proves itself bafflingly efficient this year; I'd put it down to the Questura delegate myself. The Nuovi are all legal by 10.30 a.m., and can now join trades unions, get arrested, and have accidents with a clear conscience.

By evening, the Senior Student has finished playing Happy Families with the House List, and Prayer Groups are posted in time for Ruggieri's to experience a run on *mascarpone al salmone*.



New man Philip Whitmore tries to learn Roman ways by wearing a 'little skull cap.'

Wednesday, 26th. The First Year party, hosted by Dominic ('Panorama') Byrne and Michael ('Colpo Grosso') Booth. Before the floor show, all are put in a good mood — in general by Damien McGrath's lethal punch, and in particular by the melodies of the new VEC Symphony Orchestra. In due time, the Nuovi appear, and their performance gratifies us with their talent for libel, invective and exaggeration, so that the house has no hesitation in hailing them officially as 'first years'.

Thursday, 27th. What was advertised on the guest list as an Anglican Bishop from Africa, turns up as Metropolitan Vornicescu of Roumania. Well, you can't win them all, Jeremy. Like all *real* Orthodox Archbishops, the Metropolitan speaks only French, and is thus very romantic, and an immediate hit in College.

Friday, 28th. In a talk to the house, the Rector acknowledges minority concerns, and decides against requiring uniformity in kneeling and standing at Mass. He then demonstrates upon Luiz Ruscillo how to come to the rescue of somebody who appears to be choking at supper. *Ma non si sta sotto una cascata per inumidire un francobollo!* By the look of poor Luiz when the Rector has finished with him, choking seems by far the healthier option.

Sunday, 30th. Once again, to San Lorenzo for Quarant'Ore — that annual celebration of the glorious things wrought by God, accompanied by the chaos wrought by Italians. The Rector quotes Tom Gunn in his homily to bemused parishioners. After Mass, the procession around the Cortile is curtailed by the excavations of the medieval basilica; 'It's fascinating to see that even at this early stage the influence of Cosmatesque decoration was making itself felt in this type of basilical architecture . . .' Thank you, James; I've a diary to write.

November

Wednesday, 2nd. All Souls; lovers of *recherché* liturgy have a field-day. On offer, Alexander Sherbrooke offering Mass for his martyred ancestor at XII Apostoli, or commemoration of the Italian Royal Family at the Pantheon. "The employment of this noble edifice as a mausoleum almost entirely contradicts the vision of Marcus Agrippa, its founder . . ." Not now, James.

A group of students heads down to the Campo Verrano in the afternoon, to find the College vault sadly cracked and mossy.

Thursday, 3rd. On the soccer front, the VEC has a disappointing 3-0 win over the Beda. Is our form slipping?

Robert Beaken, previously our Anglican Exchange student, arrives on holiday.

Friday, 4th. The Rector heads to Padua, to visit Suor Norma, who is ailing but cheerful, and, as ever, thinking of us.

Saturday, 5th. Silly comment of the week from Simon Thomson; 'Do they celebrate Guy Fawkes out here?'

Monday, 7th. A Requiem Mass for Sister Patricia Mary Flanagan SND — a regular visitor to the College — who died last week after a long illness. *In paradisum deducant te Angeli.*

Tuesday, 8th. Robert Beaken falls during the night, and cracks his head. After fungus-ridden goldfish, this is a cinch for Monsignor Chestle, who has Robert looking like the Curse of the Mummy in no time.

Sunday, 13th. To San Silvestro, for Remembrance Sunday. The Scots officiate this year.

At house meeting in the evening, head Sacristan Benito Colangelo mentions complaints from people receiving damp hosts at Communion. Take holy water, he advises, *after* putting a host on the paten.

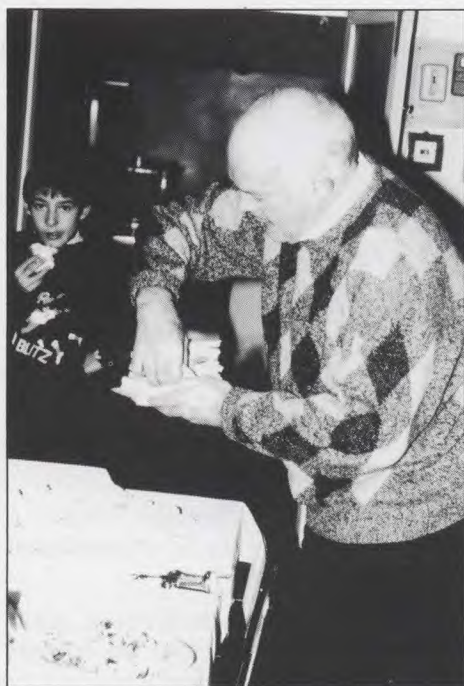
Monday, 14th. By popular-ish demand, the Italian-speaking table is revived on Monday lunchtimes, catching out the unwary who come late to the refectory. Conversation flows like — well, like lumpy custard, I suppose. ‘*Buongiorno Paolo, hai passato una mattina interessante?*’ ‘*Niente affato, sono andato alla Gregoriana!*’

Wednesday, 16th. The new deacons and the Suore have Mass with the Holy Father, and meet him afterwards. Somehow, but to nobody’s surprise, Michael McCoy has three times as many photographs taken with the Pope as anyone else.

At lunch, a money-motion to take ‘The Independent’ as well as ‘The Times’ is passed, and we become a two-newspaper house. Long-term residents of the snug shift uneasily in their armchairs; “Whatever has become of the place — women next?”

Thursday, 17th. The feast of S. Elizabeth of Hungary, and students join our Suore Elisabettine for Mass. The College organist, who in general has a talent for making the Church organ sound like an old Harmonium, reverses the trick, and gets some reasonable sounds out of the nuns’ wheezing instrument.

In the afternoon, the Nuns pay host to us in the Guardaroba for a bun-fight (or *combattimento delle paste* as the Senior Student felicitously put it).



The Rector tempts Jeremy to a sandwich, Mmmm! Scr . . .!

Sunday, 20th. The VEC beats the Ethiopians 6-3 at football, but the price was dear. Our captain, Stephen Boyle, is concussed after colliding with a swarthy Ethiop, and sees stars for several days afterwards.

Wednesday, 23rd. Hang onto your grant-cheques — it's going to be a bumpy night. Yes, CUCCU is here again, hosted by a shady crew; Trev the Rev, and His Red Hot Vicars (alias Nick Kern and side-kicks). Among this year's offers; an Albanian evening, a trip to the Villa to ogle Sophia Loren — and a cassock from Chris Vipers. The trouble was, the last time Chris had seen his cassock it had been hanging up in his wardrobe. Still, he managed to buy it back against the odds. That's what friends are for.



Trev the Rev holds a jumble sale: his friends sing some madrigals.

Thursday, 24th. We bid not farewell, but *arrivederci* to Tim Swinglehurst, who returns to England for a short rest, thus throwing the drama department into a flat panic.

Friday, 25th. *Dii quoque ridunt*; a powercut today traps Michael McCoy in the College lift, and, at the same time, his *alter ego* Suor Angelia in the Nuns' lift.

Monday, 28th. We give thanks as Cardinal Hume ordains Charis Pattichi to the diaconate. The occasion bears the marks of an Ecumenical Council, with a Greek and an Armenian Orthodox Bishop present.

Wednesday, 30th. The new Martyrs' List, including the recently beatified alumni, superbly scripted by James Manock, goes up on the staircase.

December

Thursday, 1st. Martyrs' Day; a time for rejoicing and remembrance as we honour our College Martyrs. Archbishop Warlock caught the mood as he reminisced of martyrs' days past in his homily (putting on Cardinal Godfrey's buskins during Terce in the Martyrs' Chapel). Yet, he warns us, are we prepared, like the martyrs, to shed our baggage and look to the future?

Friday, 2nd. We bid farewell to the Godfreys' out here for a final visit after many years accountancy work for the College. The Rector applauds their skill at keeping all interested parties not too interested; a presentation is made, and we wish them happy retirement *ad multos annos*.

Tuesday, 6th. S. Nicholas' Day, and at supper Nick Kern appears as the eponymous saint, to dispense sweets to all good seminarists. This doesn't take very long, as you may imagine.

Thursday, 8th. Paul Grogan celebrates his first ever College goal (against the Urbanianum) by providing wine for lunch. It cost him a heck of a lot, but made a wonderful headline.



Paul Grogan in action.

Saturday, 10th. Amid Panto rehearsals, and festive preparations, Dom Gilbert Jones has the unenviable task of quietening us down for the Advent Day of Recollection. His theme is suitably down to earth — the Incarnation as a vehicle of praise.

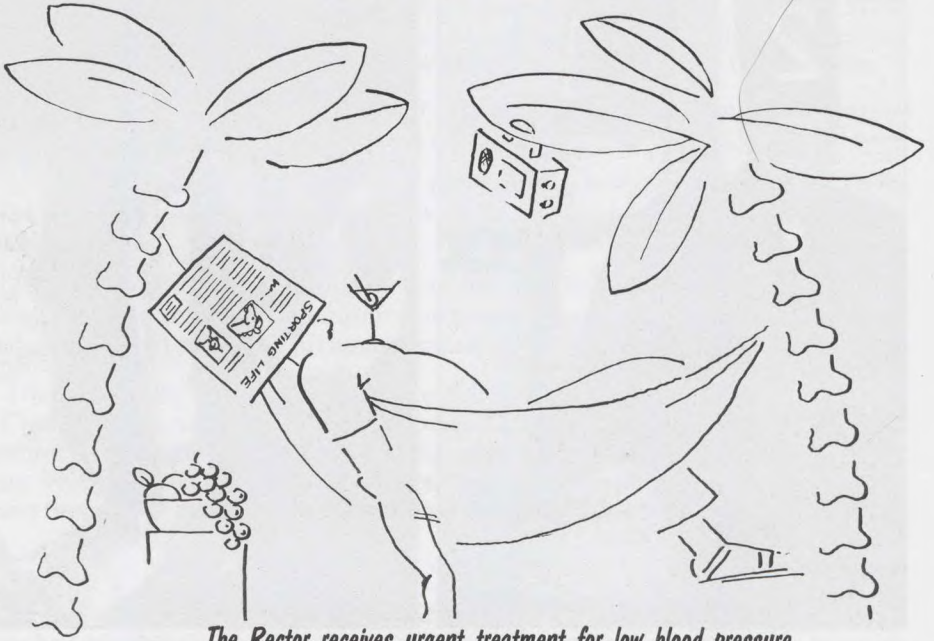
Tuesday, 13th. Christopher Patten, H.M. Minister for Overseas Development, is guest at lunch, and gives a short address, mentioning particularly the Government response to the Armenian earthquake disaster. He also reveals that his daughter has been instructed by an *ex-venerabilino*, one Father Phipps. Terry must have done a good job, for the Minister is all *buon umore*.

Wednesday, 14th. Decorations are dusted off, and pans sizzle furiously, for both the 44 and Common Room corridors have parties tonight. Rivalry is not only culinary, and the barricades go up; '*Et in terra pax hominibus . . .*' "You just come here and say that!"

Thursday, 15th. The Holly Cam; Chris Sloan, Peter Clarke and Andrew Brookes bring in the Holly in style, adding to the level of sophistication of this rapidly-expanding tradition. After Christmas lunch, the rest of us drag it back down again by an increasingly raucous trip through the carol book.

Friday, 16th. Our turn for Carols at the Greg; a little bit croaky this year, I felt.

Saturday, 17th. The Rector drags himself to Fiumicino, and hauls himself onto an aeroplane to England, for treatment for his ailing blood-pressure.



The Rector receives urgent treatment for low blood pressure

Monday, 19th. Dress rehearsals for the Panto. Costumes may not have been all there, nor indeed words, but we were all looking at Russell Wright, who has shaved off his beard to play the Dame. Trust him to steal the show.

Wednesday, 21st. The Pantomime is performed over the next three nights against all the odds — an unsympathetic Greg., intransigent curtains and Chinese flu. All goes extraordinarily well, though apparently the Rector got far more out of it than the rest of us. Or maybe he just read more into it than the rest of us. . . .



Pantomime "Stars": A selection



*The spies are out:
very silly people must take care.*



Vicious viziers with the poison.



but in the end Dick is reunited with his Alice.

Saturday, 24th. We gather in the dim, expectant Church before midnight to listen to the Office of Readings. Anticipation grows, until almost tangible, when at last, midnight strikes, *'the dark night breaks, and Christmas comes once more.'* Mass is followed by mince pies and carols in the Common Room. Most of us manage to grab a reasonable amount of sleep, but the Rector is up at 6.30 for the Nuns' Mass. So too is the Senior Student, who preaches in Italian, drawing parallels between the birth of the Christ-child, and a recent new-arrival in his own family. *Che bravura!*

As last year, the Rector and *Vice* wait at table for Christmas dinner, and the new *bambino*, Robert George, makes tuneful entry with the Boar's head.

In the evening, the Staff throws a party, and a new angle is seen to Philip Whitmore — or rather, several new angles, as he waggles his hips alluringly as 'Nina from Argentina'.

Tuesday, 27th. This is the first year of the new holiday regulations, and most students seem to take the opportunity to return home, to face doting family and friends, and (gasp) another Christmas Dinner.

Thursday, 29th. A poignancy is felt on S. Thomas' Day, as his feast is celebrated in a Church empty, save for a handful of students and guests. Still, the *resto sacro* is determined to honour our patron in fitting style, and Mass is sung to Byrd's 3-part setting. The nuns, too, laid on a magnificent festal meal, and the day concluded with Solemn Sung Vespers. *Pauci sumus sed haud immemores.*

January

Monday, 9th. Returning to College after the New Year break, we find that Philip le Bas has cracked under pressure, and grown a beard to distinguish him from his *gemello*, Philip Whitmore. 'Behold, my brother is an hairy man . . .'

Tuesday, 10th. Mgr. Gilbey arrives for a short stay *in vestitu deaurato, circumdatus varietate*, as ever, bemused by the stir he causes.

Tuesday, 17th. Bishop O'Brien, Auxiliary in Middlesbrough, arrives to confer candidacy on Francis Lynch. His cheeky and even irreverent ways endear him at once to the College — while he soon recognises a like-mind in his senior diocesan student, well known as the naughtiest person in College.

Friday, 20th. During ecumenical Vespers, visiting Baptist minister Ken Lawson proves the mildest of pulpit-punchers. His theme — the attitude of a Christian as exemplified in Romans 12 — is illustrated with an impressive array of scriptural references.

Saturday, 21st. The Mass for Christian Unity, at S. Maria in Campitelli, where Fr. Paschal Ryan preaches upon what ecumenism means in 20th century England, whereupon we recite the traditional prayer giving a more 17th century version of the same.

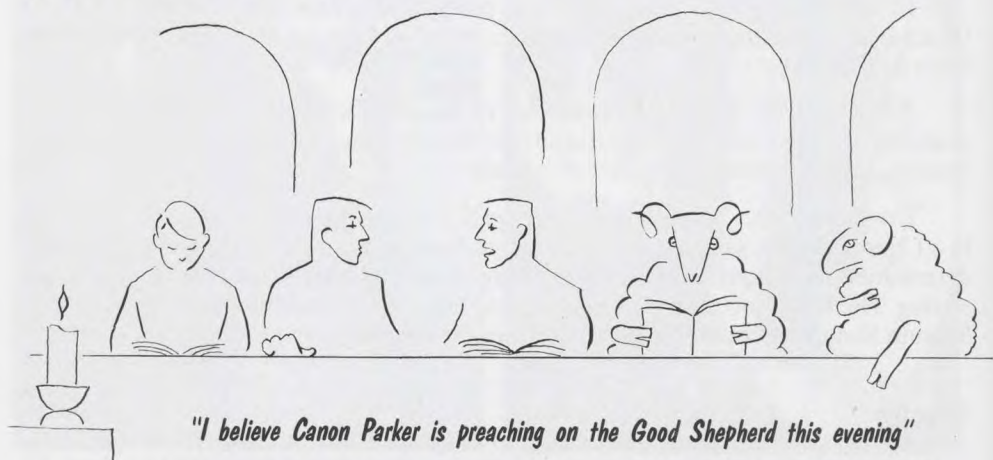
In the evening, the Monserrà stages its corridor party, described by one survivor as 'violent and delightful'. "More potage aux champignons there?" "No, but if there's any mushroom soup . . ."

Tuesday, 24th. Cardinal Willebrands presides at Community Mass for Unity Week, and preaches in exegetical fashion upon the text, 'It is better for one man to die for the people'. Christ alone it is who founds our unity; man's constructs distort and break that unity.

At supper, the Rector provides a huge Stilton, while the Anglican students contribute a fine red Chianti. 'Ideally, of course, it should be a claret.' Thank you, James, you won't be wanting yours in that case. . . .

Wednesday, 25th. Chris Vipers and Andrew Willson mark the end of Christian Unity Week with a DBL. At supper, ecumenism knows no bounds when the local Chinese restaurant makes us a present of a truck-load of Chinese dumplings.

Friday, 27th. Annual Mass at Mater Dei was given a somewhat unpredictable turn by Canon Parker, sermonising with a bandage and a bar of soap. Well, they do say that cleanliness is next to Godliness.



Sunday, 29th. Strolling through the Farnese after Mass, you might be forgiven for thinking that the bodies draped over one of the fountains were engaged in some vile sixties-revival student protest. In fact, it was only the Monserrà corridor photograph being taken, and a great new tradition being born.

February

Tuesday, 7th. *Di Carnevale ogni scherzo vale*; students seek to distract themselves from exam pressures by plunging into Carnevale — either the real thing, in Venice, or a scaled down version in College. As ever, the Costume wardrobe proves fruitful ground for fertile imaginations, although perhaps the biggest shock is the sight of Kevan Grady wearing a cassock for the first time in his life. He assures us, however, that it is strictly fancy-dress.

Wednesday, 8th. An extraordinarily early Ash Wednesday is marked *al solito* by *Penne al Salmone*.

Sunday, 12th. *Quando il gatto non c'è* . . . Canon Parker seizes the opportunity, with most of the College absent on post-exam gitas, to bring out more elaborate props during Mass. Young Mauro, Carlo's son, is deprived of his toy car for the morning, in order that we adults might be edified by its spiritual connotations.

Saturday, 18th. The College returns after the break to a long week of farewells. Today, Fr. Alexander Sherbrooke, having completed his licence, returns to a parish in West London. The Daughters of Charity are distraught, having only Mother Teresa left to them now.

Sunday, 19th. A second farewell, as Antony ‘Eyelash’ Hudson leaves us after two years to resume a career in teaching. Ever one for tugging at the heart-strings, Antony appears before he goes in the VEC string quartet, which will never be the same without him. In fact, it will be a trio.

Monday, 20th. Leave-takings continue, as Fr. Gary ‘Lizard’ Lysaght returns to the Diocese of Southwark having completed the licence in Moral Theology. The price of gin plummets in Rome.

Tuesday, 21st. Finally, our Anglican exchange students, Chris Vipers and Andrew Willson, move on to continue their studies back in England. The exchange proved particularly successful this year; Chris largely cornered the Pantomime with his genius for leading community singing, while Andrew sought to move mountains in order to build bridges.

Friday, 24th. Senior Student election; Nick Kern is the people’s choice.

Monday, 27th. Luiz Ruscillo is elected Deputy Senior Student, and furrows begin to appear on that once youthful brow.

March

Wednesday, 1st. A public meeting to effect the change of offices. Michael O’Connor muses on his term as SS, and picks out the new Christmas holiday routine as a memorable development. Nick Kern takes the chair, thanking Michael and his deputy Philip Gillespie, and reminds us all that it was the Kern-Ruscillo partnership that had Jonathan Harfield elected absentee Greg. -delegate (cf. *The Venerabile* 1988, Diary; 2nd November), so who knows what’s in store!

At the same time the House-jobs change, and a new one is created. Rob Esdaile becomes fireman, the excuse he’s always wanted to get hold of a large axe.

Wednesday, 8th. Mass for the Jubilarians, out in Rome celebrating their 25th anniversary of ordination. In his homily, Fr. Brian Newns of Liverpool Diocese considers the changes that have taken place in College since his time, and pronounces himself gratified that the atmosphere is less overwhelmingly masculine than it used to be.

Aptly enough, today is Women’s Day in Italy, and *Il Vice* massacres the mimosa tree in the garden to equip all the female *personali* with the wonted sprig.

Thursday, 9th. The College Visitation begins, and it comes as no surprise to learn that our Visitor (sic) is a Dominican. He spends tomorrow, Monday and Tuesday interviewing students and cowed members of staff. I thought he looked quite charming, actually. ‘They always do, and then they tighten the thumbscrews’. Thank you, James, I don’t think that’s called for.

Saturday, 11th. The Lent play ‘Close the Coalhouse Door’ is performed on the next three nights, produced by Paul Shaw. It is a powerful, and unusual, drama based around the history and struggles of the Miners (oops, sorry, ‘Pitmen’). Any concern that Northern working-class prose would seem out of place in a Roman seminary proved groundless, while Geordie-accent coach Martin Stempczyk did stalwart work. I certainly couldn’t understand a word they were saying.

Wednesday, 15th. A retirement meal for Nella and Germano, when the College thanked them for their dedicated work over many decades, and sought to return some of their legendary hospitality. When Jean-Laurent Marie and Paul Cuff

serenaded Nella, she was, for once, *senza parole*. We wished them the happiest of retirements *ad multos annos*, and hope they will ever remain close to the College.

Saturday, 18th. Tony Bridson returns from squash with his eye heavily bandaged after a particularly nasty accident. He is told to rest his eyes for a week, which is a shame, for *Roger Rabbit* has finally arrived at the Pasquino.

Sunday, 19th. The Palm Sunday day of recollection is given by Fr. Terry Sheridan, who takes as his theme the obedience that makes us more free and more human.

Monday, 20th. At a House meeting, Jeremy forewarns us of flying masonry; the stairwell is to be rewired for lights, while the lower two floors are to be repainted, thanks to an anonymous donor.

Thursday, 23rd. Just in time to prevent the first Easter guests plunging to their doom, handrails appear on the stairs. As the rails are fixed in place, Peter Newby, our very own Cure d'Arms, remarks, 'Ah, I see the Beda is going to be moving in'.

Friday, 24th. Good Friday. The Spiritual Director leads a thoughtful Stations of the Cross in the morning, and in the afternoon, guests and students gather in Church for the commemoration of the Lord's Passion. In an exquisitely moving ceremony, Scripture and Polyphony combine to take us all up in the intensity of this liturgy.

Saturday, 25th. The subdued silence of the empty cross is broken by the Easter hymn of praise, the new fire and the joyful proclamation of the Exultet. Once again, the College rings forth its praise and thanks at the mystery of our Redemption.

Sunday, 26th. Easter Sunday, and while the Schola sings at the Mass in S. Peter's Square, back in College, we are privileged to receive a regular visitor, Langdon Smith, into full communion with the Catholic Church. However, seminarists are nearly as interested in his sponsor, who bears the modest handle of the *Duca di Gaeta*. Scarcely is the festal lunch consumed than students begin to scatter, heading gita-wards in their droves. This year, most of the College seems to be re-assembling in Sicily. You can never really escape. . . .

And thereat, I lay down my weary quill, having chronicled the ins and outs of another year, and while I bid you, honest reader, learn from what has gone before, I bid you remember, '*testis falsus non erit impunitus, et qui mendacia loquitur non effugiet.*' (Prov 19:5).

Leavers' Notes

Mark Anwyll

From the very beginning Fr. Mark Anwyll has shown considerable presence within the life of the College. He arrived in September 1986 as a priest already ordained some years with much parish experience to study two licences, one in fundamentals and the other in communications. He has just completed a Magnum Opus focusing on the necessity of the phenomena of communications in theology and of what precisely this consists!

It will be difficult not to remember with warmth his many contributions to the annals of College stories particularly in regard to his truly penetrating voice. His singing, whether in Church, common-room or shower, has provided much entertainment for many of us. In particular his famous rendition of Rossini's 'La Columnia', combined with a truly superb visual display, has become imprinted indelibly on College memory, and was greeted at each performance with rapturous applause. Indeed this ability to perform resulted in an invitation to be Master of Ceremonies at the Diaconate ordination evening party in 1988. In an unforgettable show of acrobatics he somehow combined within the space of two minutes the famous song 'Molly Malone', a wheelbarrow, an unused toilet bowl and a Roman toga!

By that time Mark had moved up to the Villa to continue his studies in quieter surroundings; this for many of us here in Rome was a great loss but indeed an enormous gain for the Villa where he has been doing much good there with the Sisters.

Here at the College he will ever be remembered as a very devout priest who celebrated Mass with great dignity; whose resolve in prayer, love for Our Lady, sensible advice and great sense of humour have been an inspiring example to we who continue our studies for the priesthood.

Michael Booth

During his first years in College Mike gained the reputation that he was never that — in College. Born in Milan of English father and French mother and with many years' experience as part-time beach-boy in California, his international contacts in Rome and environs often tempted him beyond the walls of the Venerabile. More recently, as ontological change approached, Mike has struggled to acquire the virtue of "stabilitas" and has remained in the same room on the same corridor for two years now. Those who have discovered him "at home" have found that his vivid social life is mirrored by an idiosyncratically exotic taste in domestic furnishings — mats cover the walls, sand blooms in disused gin bottles and lamps (created from wicker baskets, modified plant pots, empty squeeze bottles, etc.) lurk in dark corners ready to surprise unwary visitors. A weird habitat it may be, but it is in this unusual environment that one grows to understand a person of great generosity and deep concern, who listens, guides and builds.

Nevertheless, if it is true that most people judge others by externals, by the roles they are given, Mike will be remembered by all as a person of great variety and quality — for the given roles he has played on stage: in the Pantomime as first a wicked and then a good king, as benign magician or as scheming grand vizier, but especially in the Lent Play, most notably (and to much acclaim) in the title role of "Sweeney Todd", the demon barber of Fleet Street — he has even been recognised as such at Gatwick Airport!

Michael has just completed a licence in Moral Theology and is now a deacon in the Westminster Diocese: he will be ordained priest on November 25th.

Tony Bridson

We began to suspect that Tony Bridson was not your usual type of student when he threw his bed out into the corridor. Tony came to the VEC two years ago to study for the licence in Fundamental Theology, from the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton — though we wondered if his links with the College went further back when it was noticed that he appears prominently in the large painting in the refectory.

In his present enfleshment in the OND, Tony has proved himself endearingly unconventional in every way, from sleeping on the floor, to playing apocalyptically violent games of squash. His famed white shoes, and wooden cross hung on hairy chest, are a familiar sight at the most formal of occasions.

Many will miss his earthy humour and his devilish laugh; others will miss his personal computer and word processor. For sure, without Tony, the College will be a duller place.

Patrick Broun

I arrived here in 1984. The first meal I had was shepherd's pie which I remembered because I thought: "How Italian". I was ordained Deacon on the 13th July 1988 and will be ordained priest on the 5th August 1989. I am presently doing a diploma in Pastoral Theology. My claim to fame is that in my first year I was entered in the College Diary when I had an "incontro" with someone's shorts during a rugby practice. The result was the lad (a priest) had two halves of shorts to choose from. He still scored a try!

Franco Gismano

Don Franco Gismano hails from the north Italian diocese of Gorizia — which is close enough to the Elisabettine mother-house in Padua to have ensured that the nuns have utterly spoiled him during his two years in College.

While studying for the licence in Moral Theology, Don Franco decided to immerse himself in English culture — so why he has formed so close a friendship with Tony Bridson nobody knows. But he has enriched our insular expectations in return, demonstrating with charm and wit that style and priestly office may walk happily hand in hand. Alas, the patent crocodile-leather shoes will no longer echo down the Monserra, but are destined instead for the ancient cobbles of his home province. We are unanimous in bidding him *'arrivederci!'*

Basilios Karagiorgios

The College says goodbye this year to Basilios, the doyen of "Blue Room" society, after his three years residence here. His stay in Rome was organised by the Secretariat (sorry — Council) for Christian Unity, as part of a programme of exchanges with members of the Orthodox churches. Having already studied theology in Athens he showed his versatility in the Eternal City (that other great centre of ancient civilisation and traffic congestion) by combining the study of church history and canon law: his *tesina* on the history of the canonical institution of the right of appeal could well become the standard work on the subject. His participation in College life has reminded the *Venerabile* of another theological and ecclesiastical tradition, and that you don't have to be ordained in order to study theology.

Robert LeTellier

Arriving from his studies of English and German literature in 1980, Robert has proved to be one of the “longest-serving” members of our venerable institution, successively studying philosophy (largely at the “Pasquino” cinema), theology (at the Greg.) and scripture (at the Biblicum). From 1982 to 1988 Robert shared his quarters with two opera-loving budgies, Claude and Esmeralda. The LeTellier record collection is of unparalleled scope (and weight), and three times Viennese *fin de siecle* society has been conjured up anew in the VEC common-room as Robert has shared his appreciation of Hapsburg civilisation at “Austro-Hungarian evenings”.

After 8 months “on the mission” at Our Lady of Victories, Kensington, Robert returned to the VEC to give the finishing touches to his *tesina* on Genesis 18-19. Next stop Jerusalem in order to round off his biblical studies.

Gary Lysaght

The subject of Gary Lysaght’s doctorate in History at Oxford was the translation of St. Benedict’s body from Monte Cassino to Fleury. A question little treated by historians, however, is that of the translation of Gary’s own (amazingly preserved) body. From Womersley it was translated to London and thence to Oxford, before arriving in Rome in 1984. It is an historically verifiable fact, and certainly no hagiographical elaboration, that at the English College a miraculous event occurred: by the application of holy water (Gordon’s, to be precise) and at the intervention of Madonna, Gary’s body sprang into life one ‘Snug’ party.

Historians, however, are not agreed as to the origins of Gary’s nickname of ‘Lizard’. Did it simply derive from his surname, or his slinky disco-dancing technique? Or possibly his ability to sit motionless lapping up the sun on the walls of the Villa?

At any rate, during his time here Gary displayed a chameleon-like versatility. He was, at various times: a magic Pantomime flower, Lady Macbeth, a Czech actress (the last two simultaneously), Oscar Wilde, Sir Guy of Gisborne, the victim of the warped sense of humour of two Panto writers (the last two simultaneously), the owner of the pie-shop next-door to Sweeney Todd, and the co-founder of a small monastic community at the very end of the ‘44’ corridor. Throughout all this Gary also managed to apply his gifts, first as Head Librarian, and then to a Moral Theology *tesina* on ‘conscience’. (This was *not* subtitled: “go on, have another gin”, as some historians affirm).

In early 1989 the chameleon-lizard turned salamander and is currently ‘sending fire into the earth’ in the deserts of Orpington.

Terry McGuckin

Fr. Terry, of Westminster, was already used to the academic life when he arrived at the VEC to study for a licence in Dogma. On completion of the licence he began sifting through the Gospel commentaries of St. Thomas Aquinas, gathering material for his doctorate which he ably defended last January. With so many supporters present would they have dared reject his thesis? Whilst studying Terry also taught at Regina Mundi and the Missionaries of Charity formation house as well as leading seminars at the Greg. No doubt his teaching benefited from missionary endeavours in Latin America during the summer.

Academic achievement there was, but Terry will certainly not be remembered as a distant ‘ivory tower’ figure for he was very much part of College life. His

contribution was not only in taking sermon groups nor just his time as the Legion of Mary spiritual director, but most of all in his friendship with so many of his fellow students. It may be said, though, that maybe not all will equally miss his particular sense of humour!

Despite his cross-over to teaching at the Beda Terry is still fondly remembered as 'Abbot of the '44'. Yet life at the Beda has not been a last thing for Terry; in September he takes up a post at Allen Hall for which his former novices and all at the VEC wish him well.

Peter Newby

It was no surprise when Peter Newby chose to pursue a licence in Philosophy, for we are all familiar with his penetrating reflections on life in general, and on aesthetes, socialists and degenerates in particular (usually employing the images of walls, blindfolds and firing-squads). But if, as Peter says, experience only confirms prejudice, then he should know, for at Cambridge he studied architecture, chaired the Fabian Society, *and* grew his hair long — which qualifies him as an aesthete, a socialist and a degenerate in my book.

Now, for sure, Peter has left the past behind him, and, progressing through an Architectural firm, Allen Hall and the Venerabile, is now a bulwark of the establishment and a scourge of all woolly thinkers.

Yet behind this bluff exterior lurks a deeply sensitive and shy person, as Peter insists on telling us forcefully; certainly at his most sensitive and shy when dealing with Italians, to whom he speaks loudly, slowly, and in English. But his fellow-students know of another Newby, of delightful talks to the House Forum on Architecture, of exquisite gitas to tiny Tuscan villages — a man of deed as well as word, a resourceful stage-manager for Sweeney Todd, and a pioneering Head Librarian. Here, Peter began the long-overdue process of protecting and preserving the College's ancient books, so that future generations will know that Cardinal Wiseman's *Hindoo Grammar* is there when they want it.

However, our enduring memories of Peter will always be associated with his mordant wit, most especially at the dinner table; the College, not to mention the Grappolo d'Oro, will be the duller without him.

Michael O'Connor

Arriving in down-town Rome at the tail end of the summer, after a year in the freshness of England's Lake District, the climate and the claustrophobia are the first difficulties to face. But not the only ones — who is Carl Rana? (a Frenchman surely?). And why should salvation be *economic*? Looking around the *ref* at so many wise heads, the new man supposes that he will find out when he's been there as long as they have. . . .

As a guitarist, Michael was involved immediately in the musical life of the College; with time, he took up the posts of Schola Master and Choir Master; and as a member of a the *équipe* of Composers to the Chapel, he leaves behind a *corpus* of Masses, Magnificats and motets, including a setting of Psalm 115 written for the Beatifications in 1987.

In December of that year, Michael was elected Senior Student, succeeding his co-diocesan Thomas Wood — a Liverpool Echo perhaps? — and serving the House for 15 months.

Urged to adopt an ecumenical slant, Michael followed the licence course in Dogmatic Theology, presenting a *tesina* entitled “The Holy Spirit and the Church: a Study in Jean-Marie Tillard”.

Michael returns to the Diocese of Liverpool, to be ordained priest on July 23rd, grateful for the Roman Experience. The questions are probably no fewer, but at least some of the illusions have been shattered.

Simon O'Connor

Space. The final frontier. This is the story of *Simon Peter O'Connor* (‘Spoc’ to his friends) and his seven year mission to seek out new life and new civilisations. When Simon first arrived at the planet VEC (Star code 00186), he discovered a people who thought that a Klingon was that velcro stuff you get on anoraks. He decided to stay and enlighten the natives about such diverse topics as Star Trek, Tolkien, Samurai, King Arthur, Halliwell’s Film Guide, Tolkien, the Crusades, the Second World War (all of it), Nat King Cole and Tolkien.

Simon came to love the people of VEC and was initiated into one of their tribes: the Maltfriscans. He took part in their strange seasonal rituals: Sok-Er, Cucu, Pan-To, Rug-Bee and Kri-Ket, eventually becoming a cult master in each (e.g. 50 VEC goals — 26 in *one* season). Working with a native called Esdaile, he produced a wizardly synthesis of the learning he had brought this people in a form they could understand, entitled ‘Jack and the Beanstalk’.

As the years wore on, however, Spoc experienced a strange unease. He stayed in his cell and was little seen at mealtimes, and then only with good-looking American women. The time had come to move on. And so Spoc set out on his new mission into the unknown, ready to enlighten anyone who would listen about: Heidegger, Rahner, Lonergan, Heidegger, the ancient Greek and Roman historians (all of them), Heidegger and (we hope) Tolkien and Star Trek.

Alexander Sherbrooke

“Alexander!”, the cry would go up, wherever he would be, either among the fountains in the Villa Lante on the Nun’s Gita, or down some dark Roman alley. During his stay here Alexander introduced a distinctive note to College life, both spiritual and social, whether it be the weekly trip to the *Barrache* to share and later celebrate Mass for the Sisters of Charity, or in organising visits to Sir John Leslie’s *Badia*. Alexander originally came to the College in October 1982 having studied history at Edinburgh University, and spent five years here before being ordained to the Diaconate for Westminster Diocese. The following year he spent at Wycliffe College, Oxford studying for a Masters in Theology while participating in the ‘Anglican Exchange’. Last September Alexander returned to the College to complete his licence in Fundamental Theology, having been ordained to the priesthood at St. Mary of the Angels, Bayswater on September 4th. Before returning to the diocese Alexander followed the path of St. Paul in reverse travelling from Rome to Jerusalem. If I may quote from his postcard, “it all seems somewhat of a far cry from under age offenders in Feltham.”

Andrew Summersgill

To tell the story of Andrew Summersgill is to tell the story of the College itself; many a happy hour has been passed in the Snug trying to guess just when he came to the College, but in the end, we settle for the fact that, like the front door and the fishpond, Andrew is part of the fittings. What is odd, however, is that at the same time he manages to be so very *young*. A tradition of many years involves the new men

gasping in disbelief when they discover how much older most of them are than this seemingly veteran Canon Lawyer.

Yet, the endless years of tireless youth have been eventful ones for Andrew. Knowing how much he hated all forms of ceremonial and ritual, the Rector cheekily appointed him both Head Sacristan and Master of Ceremonies. As Deputy Senior Student he proved as efficient in getting students to change their sheets as he had been in shepherding wayward celebrants. Next, knowing how much he hated legalism and institutions, his Bishop asked him to study for the licence and doctorate in Canon Law. More recently, Andrew has served from afar on the Leeds Diocesan Marriage Tribunal (where, as they say, he saw off more successful engagements than Admiral Nelson), and his experience has benefited a pastoral class or two.

But, whatever burdens have been laid upon those youthful shoulders, Andrew has combined a conscientious thoroughness with a delightful and irreverent humour. At dinner, his table would always be notable for the gurgling sounds of hysterical students choking on their *carciofi*. But now an era is over, and we bid Andrew farewell, knowing we shall not see his like again. Honestly, they'll be letting the bell-tower go next!

Russell Wright

Fr. Russell Wright leaves the English College this summer. It will be hard to imagine the place without him. He has that extraordinary gift of being able to create immediate warmth and friendship wherever he happens to be, both in the College context and in the wide circle of all our friends in Rome, where "Roosserl" has become almost a household term. And it is a gift that will enrich his ministry in the Diocese of Leeds 'ad multos annos'.

Russell came to us from a Law Degree at Dundee University where, not surprisingly, one of the many hats he had worn was "Entertainments Organiser" for the Students Union. During his seven years in the Via di Monserrato, he has firmly established himself as one of our most important students, at both the formal level of College activities and in the less formal atmosphere of the life of all of us, but especially of his cherished Monserrà Corridor.

There have been few College plays or pantomimes in which Russell has not taken a leading part; and those of us who have been privileged to work with him in these productions can testify to a remarkable degree of professionalism that he brings to every scene, to every line. Quite simply, he is a joy to work with, both musically and dramatically. That professionalism also, I suspect, underlies his more informal contribution to the fellowship inside the College: all his hospitality, his going out of his way to befriend newcomers, his kindness and warmth, flow, I suspect again, from not simply a big heart but from a wise and shrewd head, which has long since worked out what 'vocation' entails, and that it begins here and now, in College, not at some unspecified future date "out there".

It is no accident that his chosen licence specialisation is Ecumenical Theology: Russell's warmth will open more church doors in Yorkshire than all the theology books in the Greg. Library laid end to end.

We will miss Russell a great deal next year — who on earth will dare to occupy his corner room at the end of the Monserrà? — and in sending him all our very best wishes for his future life, for his first appointment in the Diocese and for all that lies beyond, he has the thanks of all of us whose lives he has touched and enriched during his time at the English College.

Schola Notes

The most striking thing about being Schola-Master, is the amazingly little amount of time available to prepare things. For example, at the time of the take-over, we had five major events to sing at in the space of three weeks: Ascension, Pentecost, St. Philip Neri, Trinity Sunday and Corpus Christi, all with no extra practice time available. And then the day after Corpus Christi saw the start of exams. . . . Any new music is limited as a result, and my ambition of trying to introduce 'something a little bit different' was not able to be fulfilled. The constant question was 'is there time to learn this?' and the regular answer was a definite 'NO!'

Despite all this, there have been one or two new things sung this last year, and two of them in particular, I would like to mention. One was sung at Midnight Mass at Christmas, 'From Virgins womb' by Wm. Byrd (written for Organ, baritone solo and male chorus); Mark Langham sang the verses and the schola responded with a refrain after both of them. (As a result of illness I ended up accompanying the piece, and Michael O'Connor made a reappearance in front of the schola.) It was something 'a little bit different' and the effect was rather good.

The other thing I'd like to mention is a little piece we sang on Ash Wednesday; 'Respite in me' by a chap named Gehagan (again written for Ten 1+2, Bass 1+2). Not a difficult piece but very pleasant. Dating from the early part of this century, it represents pre-World War Two Catholic church music from the other side of the Atlantic fairly well.

Time always being the enemy, I found that in response to requests from various people for the Schola to sing, the only thing to do was to have smaller groups (in which the first year could join in, as Tuesday afternoons is the time for Father Henrici's enthralling sessions on the history of philosophy, and so they are unable to come to the regular rehearsals). One of these groups sang a great favourite of mine; 'How lovely are thy dwellings fair' (Thomas Tompkins, 1573-1656). A well sung piece of English Cathedral style music is hard to beat, and the comments were very favourable.

Many of the old chestnuts made their annual appearance; among them was 'Cantate Domino' (Hassler) which really could do with a sabbatical! Although not generally considered to be one for change, I felt that it was about time the chorus parts to the Good Friday Passion were changed, 'a change being as good as a rest', and so this year we sang in place of the Byrd three-part setting, a setting by Vittoria in four parts (alto, tenor, and bass 1+2).

I'm sure Bruce (the new man at the front) will have something to say about it next year, as he had to conduct it, the hand-over coming this year in the latter part of Lent.

I enjoyed my term as Schola-Master, but would like to say that I think the Schola deserves a bit more encouragement from the House as a whole. Schola members put in a substantial amount of time and work, and they deserve more credit than often they are given.

Stephen Shield

Legion of Mary

1. REPORT . . .

Out of the long, semi-darkened corridor cries a distinctive voice; it is a call, a request — yet it scarcely provokes a response from the huddled, almost motionless figures seated along the corridor walls. The voice is heard again, and this time it achieves a little success: a head turns, something is muttered in coarse Italian. But passive resistance is only finally overcome when the request is repeated by a young, Indian-looking woman of small stature. She is dressed in shawl, sandals on feet, and wrapped from head to toe in what could easily be mistaken as being a very large tea towel! And like an engine spluttering into life on a cold winter's morning, old, crumpled figures shuffle from the shadows, responding to this 'tea-towel' clad lady, whose warm and radiant presence seems to dispel the darkness of the passageway. The young woman is in fact, a holy nun of the Missionaries of Charity and the corridor belongs to their house for the poor at San Gregorio, Rome. The dishevelled individuals are homeless victims of poverty; and the voice belongs to a member of the English College, fulfilling his weekly apostolic work for the Legion of Mary! The cry is to announce that it is time to shave-off that couple of weeks growth of beard, or that a wash or change of clothing is required. It could simply be to inform them that supper is ready, or that it's time to descend to the chapel on the floor below, to join with their female counterparts in the celebration of a supernatural supper, that of the Holy Mass. Helping the Missionaries of Charity in their work for Rome's poor at San Gregorio and the Vatican, has formed the bulk of the Legion's work since its foundation in the College two years ago.

Behind our local parish church of San Lorenzo, the scene is somewhat different. Alessandro has just mis-kicked the soccer ball allowing the opposing team to score. Bruno, his fellow team-mate, is furious and hot-tempered Latin blood has to be cooled by a few, badly constructed Italian sentences from an Englishman! Assisting with the supervision of football games between the local youth groups is not only improving our Italian, it also helps us to keep in touch with the youngsters of our parish. Hopefully, such contact will help keep the Faith burning in both their and our hearts!

Not far from the Vatican, an elderly English lady sits alone in her apartment. She has lived in Rome for a good number of years, but since her husband died three years ago, and with increasing frailty, she gets little opportunity to make contact with the outside — and for her still 'foreign' — world. Virtually enclosed within her dwelling, she welcomes our short weekly visits and the chance to converse once again in her mother tongue. Her need presents us with an opportunity to show some basic Christian charity.

The great beauty of the Legion is that, whilst its charism calls for a certain self-discipline and commitment, it allows a great variety of tasks to be undertaken. Members can engage in different types of service at different times of the week, to suit individual requirements — something we have found indispensable in our busy College timetable! And with our efforts being supported by a strong 'Auxiliary' base — non-active members who offer us a service of prayer — we hope that these simple tasks will inspire us to undertake more courageous ones when we return to serve in the parishes.

This year marks the centenary of the birth of Frank Duff, the founder of the Legion. We believe that in our modest way, we are helping to promote his aims for the lay apostolate, and we hope that the words of the Holy Father may be true for each of us: “You intend to render your service to every person, who is the image of Christ, with the spirit and solicitude of Mary”.

2. REFLECTIONS . . .

Weekly, the Legion praesidium of the Venerable English College gathers. At the start of every meeting the Rosary is recited, and for each Legionary the daily praying of the Rosary has a place of importance. The first three Joyful Mysteries seem to capture concisely much of the active spirituality at the heart of the Legion of Mary.

The Annunciation: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; Be it done to me according to thy word.” “Handmaid” is better translated as, “slave”. Mary frees herself to be totally at the service of God’s will. With her consent the Second Person of the Trinity enters our race. The Visitation: Mary, “went into the hill country with haste to visit Elizabeth,” bearing in her womb God the Son who has received from her a human nature. The Son of Mary is carried to another, and the son of Elizabeth leapt in her womb as David had danced before the Ark of the Lord. The Nativity: Mary gives birth to Jesus. Through her, “Yes” the Saviour is born for us.

The Legionary, like Mary, must free himself or herself to be captured by the will of God, to let God enter in. This divine presence within has to be shared with others by human actions. Legion work allows the member’s, “Yes”, to God be a reality beyond a word alone. In visiting the sick and lonely, helping the hungry and homeless or by teaching the Faith, the Legionary carries God the Son, Christ, to others so that they too may dance for joy. Through such very human works the divine, saving presence of Christ is continually brought to birth in the world.

A question: The Legion of Mary is essentially a lay apostolate so why should it exist at this seminary? Obviously every Christian, lay or cleric, has the mission of making Christ present to the world. However, the priest is called to “incarnate” Christ for the world in a particular, sacramental manner. Our Legion work, be it with the Missionaries of Charity, among the drug dependent or simply by playing football with the local *ragazzi*, can surely help us to understand more profoundly our future priestly ministry with respect to the special presence of Christ in the sacraments.

A second reflection: Yes, all the baptised have the task of showing to everyone the truth that Christ is with us — this is not just a priestly mission; after all, Mary was not a priest. Mary is, though, the Mother of the High Priest and so she is too the Mother of all Priests. Mary nurtured the child Jesus, likewise she cares for her spiritual sons. If you will permit a paradox, to follow the example of our Mother Mary is to become more like her Son, Christ. It is in this that the Legion contributes to the formation of priests. For Mary lovingly guides future priests ever closer to her Son that they may appreciate more deeply not only the marvel of making Christ present in the world, but also the mystery of acting in the person of Christ during the sacraments they will celebrate.

Stephen Boyle
Paul F. Cuff

Dick Whittington

The curtains closed — oh so reluctantly — as the Cast took their final bows, and tore themselves away from the applause of the adoring audience. Flushed with success, one producer turned to another and said, “Just to think; a few weeks ago all we had before us was a blank sheet of paper!”

And it is true. The Pantomime is a creation *ex nihilo*, given form and life within two months through the talents, dedication, and stamina of all those involved. This year, with performances before Christmas, time was especially precious, and heroic efforts were required.

The plot hugged closely to tradition, and followed the fortunes of young Dick (Martin Hardy) and his Cat (Jean-Laurent Marie). With Cook (Russell Wright) ever ready to make a scene out of a scene, they foil the intrigues of the evil Grimes (Mark O'Donnell), and sail to rat-infested Zanzibar, where Dick introduces his Cat, expels the vile Rat-King (Andrew Willson), and makes his fortune. Surviving the machinations of the wicked Grand Vizier (Michael Booth) and his henchmen (Eddie Jarosz and Dominic Rolls), Dick returns to London to be rewarded by Alderman Fitzwarren (Dominic Byrne) with the hand of his fair-ish daughter, Alice (Robert George). By acclaim of the citizenry, Dick is spontaneously elected Lord Mayor, thus fulfilling the destiny foretold him by the Bow Bells.

Music and Choreography were superbly crafted by Paul Shaw, who has a genius for making four townsmen seem like a cast of thousands. Rat-ridden Zanzibar was effectively suggested in sound and light by Tony Milner, while James Manock, decorating on a scale unusual for him, captured with his sets the essence of crowded London and spicy Zanzibar.

In front of the flats, the Pantomime itself *looked* good — a tribute to Michael McCoy and Peter Clarke in the wardrobe department, whose skill at doing wonderful things with old pairs of tights can only have come with years of experience. Joan Collins, meanwhile, would turn green with envy at the magnificent creations modelled by Cook, the handiwork of the Nuns from the College, and from Palazzola.

Behind the flats, Damien McGrath and his crew ensured we were in Zanzibar when we were meant to be in Zanzibar, and performed superhuman feats with moribund curtains.

“I believe a Panto is about humiliating people” — the declared manifesto of one of the producers may have been half in jest (although that left a lot of room for manoeuvre), but it contains a grain of truth. To the Cast, who were made to learn lines that defied memorising, who coped with tights and turbans, with blackened faces and matted wigs, no amount of praise could be denied.

The Pantomime is a precious College tradition, and never more than this year has it served to search out new areas of talent, drawing students together and involving as many as wanted to take part (the participation by the first years was especially notable). But above all, even at its new time, the Panto continues to fulfil its most important function — that of giving enjoyment to our College visitors and friends.

Mark Langham, esquire.

THE CAST

Dick Whittington	<i>Martin Hardy</i>
Trevor, his friend	<i>Kevin Dring</i>
Dick's Cat	<i>Jean-Laurent Marie</i>
Townsmen	<i>Michael Gilmore, Pat Kilgarriff Martin Stempczyk, Patrick Broun</i>
Grimes (a Cat-snatcher)	<i>Mark O'Donnell</i>
Mean } his Henchmen	<i>Stephen Brown</i>
Evil } his Henchmen	<i>Martin Edwards</i>
Alderman Fitzwarren	<i>Dominic Byrne</i>
Alice, his Daughter	<i>Robert George</i>
Alderman's Wife	<i>Paul Grogan</i>
Cook	<i>Russell Wright</i>
Scullion	<i>James Creegan</i>
Maids	<i>Bruce Burbidge, David Barrett</i>
Sailors	<i>Benito Colangelo, Kevan Grady</i>
Sultan of Zanzibar	<i>Simon Thomson</i>
Fatima, Jewel of the Orient	<i>Nicholas Kern</i>
The Grand Vizier, First Minister to the Sultan	<i>Michael Booth</i>
Ali } his Sidekicks	<i>Edward Jarosz</i>
Baba } his Sidekicks	<i>Dominic Rolls</i>
The Pasha, Master of Ceremonies	<i>David Blower</i>
The Senior Courtier	<i>Michael O'Connor</i>
Courtiers	<i>Andrew Brookes, Marcus Brisley</i>
P1 } The Sultan's Dreaded Spies	<i>Philip Whitmore</i>
P2 } The Sultan's Dreaded Spies	<i>Philip Le Bas</i>
Messenger	<i>Christopher Sloan</i>
Phyllis, A Washerwoman	<i>Christopher Vipers</i>
Hortense, A Laundry Boy	<i>Philip Denton</i>
The Rat King	<i>Andrew Willson</i>
Music and Choreography	<i>Paul Shaw</i>
Rehearsal Pianist	<i>Philip Denton</i>
Scenery	<i>James Manock, William Massie</i>
Lighting and Sound	<i>Anthony Milner</i>
Costumes	<i>Michael McCoy, Peter Clarke</i>
*** Mr. Wright's wardrobe created by <i>Sister Philomena</i> and the <i>Elizabethine Sisters</i> ***	
Make-up	<i>Mark Jarmuz, Sue McDonald, James Manock</i>
Stage Manager	<i>Damien McGrath</i>
Stage Hands	<i>John Sargent, Luiz Ruscillo, Charis Pattichi Simon O'Connor, James Manock</i>
Properties	<i>Timothy Hopkins</i>
Prompter	<i>Michael Koppel</i>
Video Recording	<i>Peter Newby</i>
Catering	<i>Stephen Shield, David Bulmer, Robert Esdaile Philip Gillespie, Alan Sheridan</i>
Written and Directed by	<i>Francis Lynch, Mark Langham</i>

Play Review: 'Close the Coalhouse Door' by Alan Plater

The idea of transferring Alan Plater's '60s documentary drama about the Newcastle miners to late '80s Rome in front of a middle-class multi-national audience threatened to be misconceived and pretentious. How could seminarians enter into the experience and history of these working men, let alone acquire Geordie accents? But the transfer was successful, for two reasons.

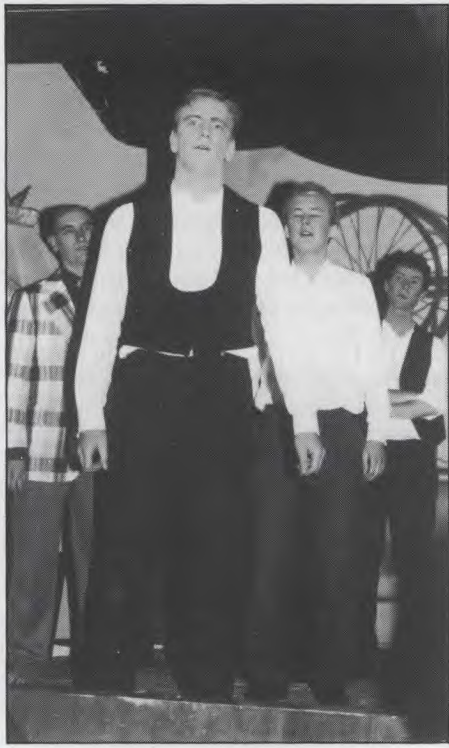
Firstly, unlike other '60s drama, Plater's play hasn't dated. In the end the play was about ordinary people largely at the mercy of the 'great' events of history. It could, therefore, bring out an empathy in those of us who knew nothing about the details of the social history, mining or the North-East.

Secondly, because it was 'community theatre', it was actually very well suited to a seminary cast who already knew each other well. No one actor predominated: more than in other plays we depended on each and every other person. It was also a very masculine play. It took someone outside the College to notice this, who remarked to me that a cast made up entirely of young men is rare in amateur dramatics. As such, they thought, we brought the necessary vigour to the script.

The play centres around the Golden Wedding Party of an old miner and his wife (played by Paul Grogan and Jim Creegan respectively). As the miners recount their tradition to a younger generation all the cast act out the different parts in the historical episodes, the play thus switching rapidly between present and past. Plater retains the historical interest by portraying the episodes through a wide variety of theatrical techniques — including mime, song, ventriloquist's dummy (admirably played by Rob Esdaile), 'newsreel', sketch, party game and comic routine.

It is very true that the play had a left-wing bias. Three things redeemed this bias for me. First of all, from the very first song ('A is for Alienation', sung ably by Chris Sloan as a solid Union man) this bias was clearly stated. Granted that there is nothing wrong with having a 'view' (even important to have one), everyone knew where they stood in relation to it. Secondly, it was not idealising. For instance, the miners' intimidation of blacklegs — other working men come from Wales, was not covered over; nor a streak of bloody-mindedness ("nae decent strikes any more"). The idealism and subsequent disillusionment with nationalisation were well conveyed. Lastly, in the left-wing tradition, Labour politicians came in for just as great a hammering as Conservative ones. At the end of the play Plater leaves us with three views: the old miner's poetic insight into the 'reality' of the miner's life; a Socialist analysis aimed at changing it, but also the Gospel promise of rest. Although this is not portrayed without a little scepticism, it is mainly directed, I thought, at placing the onus on the churchmen to make the promise credible.

One widely-voiced criticism was that the production was updated to include the appearance of Mrs. Thatcher. It needs to be said, though, that one thing that *had* dated about the original play was its ending with Ted Heath (prior to the 1973 strike). The rewrite tried to incorporate the play's themes (such as the miners' living in the past, and 'being the greatest Prime Minister that ever lived'). I suppose the main fault was in having another actor, John O'Leary, play Mrs. Thatcher (allbeit very well) rather than 'the Expert' — a character who continually entered the stage from the audience to put the other side of the case.



*"The Miners declare that it's
Time to make a stand."*



*"Close the Coalhouse door -
There's blood inside."*



The pitmen at rest.

The historical content was an education to all of us: Tommy Hepburn, Martin Jude, the 1873 Safety Act, and the Sankey Commission will be familiar to us should we ever meet them again. But after a certain point — for the British members of the audience at least — the history increasingly resonated with personal experience. A generation older than the students remembered Hailsham’s tour as Minister of the North (Mgr. Sullivan remembered as far back as Lloyd George); Wilson’s technological revolution came within the range of some of the students. The play relayed and helped us to appropriate a national experience and tradition wider (but including) that of the miners. That is why, however we managed it, it was probably important that the experience of Mrs. Thatcher was included. But precisely because it was an accurate portrayal of real experiences of ordinary people it seems that the play also spoke to non-British members of the audience.

Paul Shaw, the director, is to be congratulated for seeing the potential of the play and for inspiring (and bullying) those of us in the cast — especially through the early rehearsals, when we all wondered what we had bitten off. Philip Whitmore showed great versatility as the Expert (playing parts from a 19th century Lord Londonderry to Harold Wilson) and even heroically rose off his sick-bed to play the third night. At the centre of the play Paul Grogan played an essential part in leaving us with the impression of the gruff dignity of the working man.

Nicholas Kern

Thomas Milburn, fifty years married, a miner even longer	<i>Paul Grogan</i>
Mary Anne Milburn, his wife	<i>Jim Creegan</i>
John Milburn, the grandson who stayed at home	<i>Martin Hardy</i>
Frank Milburn, the grandson who didn’t	<i>Peter Clarke</i>
Ruth, Frank’s girl and fellow-student	<i>John O’Leary</i>
Will Jobling, Thomas’s life-long mate	<i>Stephen Boyle</i>
Jackie, straight-thinking Union man	<i>Christopher Sloan</i>
Geordie, Jackie’s mate, the local comic	<i>Nick Kern</i>
The Vicar, and every vicar	<i>Bobby Esdaile</i>
The Expert	<i>Philip Whitmore</i>
First Guest/First Pitman etc.	<i>Martin Stempczyk</i>
Second Guest/Second Pitman etc.	<i>Simon Thomson</i>
Third Guest/Third Pitman/Hughie etc.	<i>Kevin Dring</i>
Miner’s Ghost	<i>Jean-Laurent Marie</i>
Musical Director	<i>Jean-Laurent Marie</i>
Pianist	<i>Philip Denton</i>
Scenery, design and painting	<i>Mark Langham</i>
Lighting	<i>Tony Milner</i>
Sound Effects	<i>William Massie & Tony Milner</i>
Props made by	<i>Tim Hopkins</i>
Make-up	<i>James Manock & Marc Brisley</i>
Programme Cover & Poster	<i>Eddy Jarosz</i>
Costumes	<i>Michael McCoy</i>
Dialect voice coaches	<i>Stephen Brown & Martin Stempczyk</i>
Catering	<i>Stephen Shield, Paul Daly, David Bulmer, Philip Gillespie</i>
Gopher, curtain, tea-boy, and much else	<i>Stephen Brown</i>
Assistant Director	<i>Timothy Swinglehurst</i>
Director	<i>Paul Shaw</i>

Football Report

In a hard fought season, the record of 3 wins, 2 draws, and 6 defeats, while not being particularly impressive, includes some fine performances against a good standard of teams. I mean, just look at our great start.

Well, um, to be honest, two defeats actually, against the Americans (0-2) and the Irish (0-1). But of course we were bleeding in newcomers Jean-Laurent Marie and Paul Grogan, and we did play some skilful stuff, so things did bode well for the future. And so it proved, when we had a glorious run of four matches without defeat. Our first triumphant win was against the Beda College (3-0), Kevan Grady scoring the first two goals of the season, John Cahill the other. But our greatest performance of the year was the 6-3 thrashing of the much vaunted Ethiopian team. In a memorable match (in fact, I got a knock in the first half which meant I suffered complete memory loss of the match), two classic individual goals from yours truly (honest, Guv), and two from Simon O'Connor, left the Ethiopians reeling. So we were ready to dominate the season, to pulverise teams with our great English skills, and then in true Frank Bruno style, to knock 'em down.

Well, um, in actual fact it didn't quite work out that way. There were the fine results against the Brazilians (3-3) and the Redemptoris Mater College (3-1). But against the Urbanianum College (the cream of Propaganda Fidei) relentless pressure turned what had been a 2-0 lead into 2-4 deficit. Worse was to come when a lethargic performance against the Scots College was punished by a (0-4) defeat. But in the first match of the Four Nations Championship, played between the four English speaking colleges, a skilful and at the same time gutsy performance produced a (2-2) scoreline against the Americans, with John O'Leary doing a fine marking job on the play-maker of the opposing team, and Dominic Rolls playing well on the left side of defence. But this great start in the Competition was to be undermined by injuries and



The team. From left to right: Back row: J. Creegan, A. Willson, P. Cuff, A. Hudson. J. Cahill, J. O'Leary, D. Blower, S. Boyle (Captain). Front row: E. Jarosz, B. Colangelo, S. O'Connor, P. Grogan, L. Ruscillo, J. L. Marie.

the unavailability of players, and so defeats against the Irish (1-3) and the Scots (0-1) followed. Indeed, in the latter match it needed an unorthodox flying left foot save by Chris Sloan to keep the score-line as it was. So ending up with the "wooden spoon" (as Luiz Ruscillo so succinctly put it) and typed match reports from our roving reporter Paul Grogan, were our only reward.

In spite of the undistinguished end it has been an enjoyable season. But we do have to say goodbye and fond farewell to Michael O'Connor, and to Simon O'Connor, who has been an ever-present member of the side and top scorer for the past three years. We thank them for their contributions and wish them well in their Ministry. Best wishes also go to Antony Hudson, who left College during the year.

**Stephen Boyle
Captain**

Players

David Barrett
David Blower
Stephen Boyle (Captain)
Bruce Burbidge
John Cahill
Benito Colangelo
Jim Creegan
Paul Cuff
Philip Denton
Kevan Grady
Paul Grogan

Antony Hudson
Edward Jarosz
Jean-Laurent Marie
Michael O'Connor
Simon O'Connor
John O'Leary (Vice-Captain)
Dominic Rolls
Luiz Ruscillo
Christopher Sloan
Andrew Willson



John Cahill beats an Irish defender.

Squash Report

This season's squash playing at the College has at last merited a mention. But what is there to report? There have been no matches with 'outsiders' as such, only rounds of squash games among the students themselves. To my knowledge, some 20 students have played squash this year. An admirable rival to the other 'major' College sport — Football!

Squash may not be as aggressive as football, but it accommodates both those who wish to play at a competitive level and friendly level. Almost 50 games have been played so far this year (October '88–April '89).

There are too many games to mention them all individually, so it's far better to mention the individual squash players instead, to whom the credit would be due anyway.

Those who have played squash this year are: David Blower, Anthony Bridson, Andrew Brookes, Benito Colangelo, James Creegan, Kevin Dring, Michael Gilmore, Kevan Grady, Paul Grogan, Martin Hardy, Timothy Hopkins, Edward Jarosz, Jack Kennedy, Peter Newby, Michael O'Connor, Simon O'Connor, Paul Shaw, Alexander Sherbrooke, Alan Sheridan, Christopher Sloan, Martin Stempczyk, Russell Wright.

A special word of thanks must be given to the Christian Brothers in Rome — off the Via Maglianella — where we play squash. For some years now the students have had access and use of their squash court — only half an hour's drive (traffic permitting) from the College. Their generosity is much appreciated.

Well there is nothing more to add, except to hope that the significant amount of squash playing in the College has been noted. . . . I wonder if we will ever reach the stage when more people play squash than football?

Martin Stempczyk