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(above) The Basilica of St Francis in Assisi
(below) 'Prato della Valle'
the famous square of Padua



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Front cover: The College Church Monstrance in front of the Martyrs' Picture by Durante Alberti (1580). Photo: Alexander Balzanella

Back cover: Villa Palazzola, the College villa in the Alban Hills outside Rome.

Please visit our websites: www.vecrome.org and www.palazzola.it

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Recent books on the English College

A number of beautiful books have appeared recently on aspects of the College and its history which will be of great interest to Old Romans, Friends and anyone connected with the VEC.

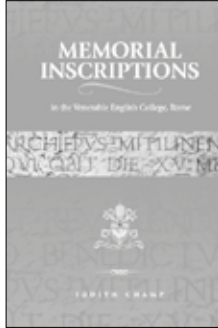
They can be purchased by callers to the College or ordered by e-mail from this address:

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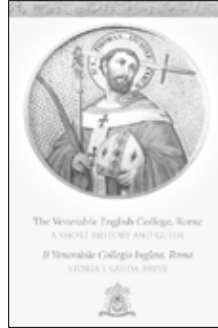
Each is a delight to read and in purchasing them you are helping to support the College.



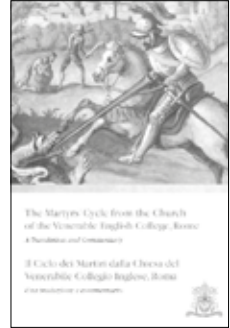
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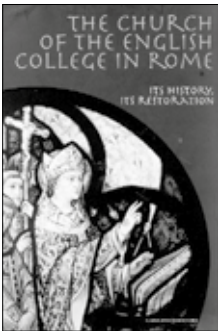
Memorial Inscriptions,
Judith Champ,



The Venerable English College, Rome: A Short History and Guide, Mark Langham,



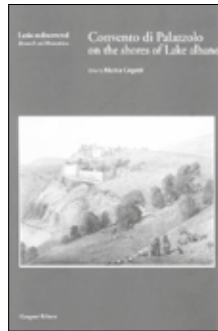
The Martyrs' Cycle from the Church of the Venerable English College, Paul Keane,



The Church of the English College in Rome: Its History, Its Restoration,



The Venerable English College Rome: A History, Michael Williams,



Convento di Palazzolo on the Shores of Lake Albano, Marina Cogotti, Editor,

Hardbacks of the College History and Guide and The Martyrs' Cycle are available as a limited edition, both presented in a handsome slip case. The perfect gift for jubilarians and for that special birthday or Christmas gift.

Some back issues of *The Venerabile* are also available.

Please offer a suitable donation for any book you would like, bearing in mind that the average cost for the production of each publication is €20.

All proceeds go towards production costs and student projects.

Thank you for your generosity!

Editorial

ALBERT LAWES



'All the good works in the world are not equal to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass because they are the works of men; but the Mass is the work of God. Martyrdom is nothing in comparison for it is but the sacrifice of man to God; but the Mass is the sacrifice of God for man.'

St John Mary Vianney

Too often in life (and especially in seminary) we can get caught up in the work we are doing and lose our proper perspective. These words of St John Mary Vianney remind us that no matter how hard we work, everything we do, all the effort we put in, is insignificant compared to what God has already done and what He continues to do for us. The Son of God gives Himself to us every day, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, never holding anything back, feeding and guiding the Church. This is something we should never tire of wondering and admiring at. We must begin with Christ, walk with Christ, talk with Christ, come back to Christ, and draw others to Christ. This is what life at the Venerable English College (and indeed all Christian life) should be about. Therefore, this year's edition of *The Venerabile* takes as its theme – Christ, the source and summit of our lives.

This year's edition begins with an historical insight into the impact of International Eucharistic Congresses on the life of the Church. Mgr John Allen recounts how the Congresses from 1881 through to the present day have reflected and guided the concerns of the Church in each phase of the last 138 years. Covering themes of social justice, peace, evangelisation, and of course devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, each Congress exhibits that the presence of Christ in the Church can speak to every age and concern.

The second article is a reflection of the role of the Eucharist in the life of the College. Toby Duckworth contemplates the relationship between our devotion to Jesus Christ made present in the Blessed Sacrament and our effectiveness for proclaiming the gospel. He focusses on the place of being close to Jesus in the Eucharist, through daily Mass and Adoration, which can help us to take Him to others in our lives. Through this, we may be able to draw others close to His Sacramental Presence. One example of how this is done is the recent 'Night of Light' initiative, opening the College Church and inviting people to adore the Lord.

Sometimes going out to draw people closer to the Lord will encounter hostile opposition. Cardinal Edwin O'Brien reminds us of this in his homily at Martyrs' Day 2018. He encourages us to have confidence in the Lord and in the witness of the martyrs, who 'did not die for a noble patriotic principle or for the lofty value of human rights..., they were being crucified with Christ, participating in the death of the One who had died for them in advance.'

The fourth article reflects on the nature of peace. One hundred years ago, our world was seeking to rebuild itself after 'the war to end all wars'. Yet, the twentieth century proved to be one of the most violent and destructive centuries in our human history. In light of this, Fr Gerard Sheehan considers how true peace is born in our world. Peace is not merely the absence of war, but a product of living in harmony with God. He therefore encourages us to become peacemakers in our own communities by taking seriously the role of prayer and fasting, the means by which we are conformed to God.

Despite many efforts to build peace today, war and the threat of war are still common occurrences. Many men and women of the British Isles offer their lives in service for their country and so where they are, so must Christ enter in. Matthew King and Fr John Waters recount their experiences of a pastoral placement with the Military, learning about and shadowing chaplains to the Armed Forces.

The sixth article in this year's edition is a theological inspection of the concept of 'synodality'. A much bandied about word these days, Fr Jan Nowotnik explores its biblical and magisterial roots, as well as how it impacts on our ecclesiological understanding of the Church in the Third Millennium. Whilst appreciating the diverse nature of the Church in her different levels and contexts, he encourages us to understand synodality as a method of 'walking together to find a common mind', conscious of the voice of the Holy Spirit in all areas of the life of the Church.

From theory to practice, Bishop Mark O'Toole provides an insight into the workings of a Synod of Bishops. Reflecting on his experience at the Synod on 'Young People, Faith and Discernment' in October 2018, Bishop Mark shows us an image of the Church as she seeks to listen and understand the varied and often complicated lives of young people in the world today. He encourages us to seek paths of accompaniment with young people, revealing Christ to them, as Christ revealed Himself to the disciples on the Road to Emmaus.

Finally, Fr John Metcalfe discusses the role of 'reading for fun' in the pastoral life. Good literature is a door into the lives of others, helping us to view the world from another person's perspective. It enables us to experience the struggles, moral quandaries, and varied motives of other people. Because of this, Fr Metcalfe reflects on how 'reading for fun' helps us draw towards other people, deepening our understanding of them and ourselves, allowing us to hone the skill of accompaniment.

It has been a great honour to be asked by Fr Rector to be this year's Editor of *The Venerabile*, but I wouldn't have been able to do it without the help and generosity of many people. I would like to thank my team, Theo Sharrock (Deputy Editor), Benjamin Woodley (Secretary), and Toby Duckworth (Business Manager) for their hard work, generosity of spirit, patience and diligence throughout the year. Many thanks also go to the Diarist, Andrew Coy, for his contributions and help as Editor Emeritus. Due to his appointments as Schola Master and Sports Man, as well as his sociable character, he contributed rather more than he had initially anticipated. I am extremely grateful to all those who contributed articles to this year's edition: Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, Bishop Mark O'Toole, Mgr John Allen, Fr John Metcalfe, Fr Gerard Sheehan, Fr Jan Nowotnik, Fr John Waters, Matthew King, and Toby Duckworth, without them it would be a very thin edition! Particular thanks also go to all those who supplied the pictures, especially Alexander Balzanella in his role as House Photographer, and Marcin Mazur for all the work he has done. I would also like to acknowledge Maurice Whitehead and all the hard work he has done in the Archives throughout the year, reflected in this year's Archive Report. Thank you also to the Diocesan Representatives of the Roman Association, as well as Michael Lang for the Friends of the Venerabile, for supplying your reports and putting up with a barrage of emails, it is very much appreciated. Finally, immense thanks to Fergus Mulligan, our publisher, for all his help and support throughout this process, and to Fr Rector for his contributions and for giving me this opportunity.



To all our readers, please pray for all of us here at the Venerable English College as we seek to conform our lives more closely to Christ. I hope you will find in *The Venerabile 2019* the joy of living the gospel and being drawn to Christ. May God bless you all.

ALBERT LAWES is a fifth-year seminarian of the Diocese of Plymouth, studying theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

Eucharistic Congresses - Then and Now

MGR JOHN ALLEN



Who said this, and when?

‘The spread of the Eucharistic Kingdom of Christ is necessary for the salvation of society. The Eucharist is the life not only of the individual Christian, but of nations as well. We know well that an age flourishes or degenerates in accordance with its worship of the divine Eucharist. It is the life and measure of its faith, charity, and virtue. The Eucharist is not only for personal piety; it is essential to social life, for it is the very life of the world. We must take Christ from the solitude of His tabernacle, so that He may place Himself at the head of Christian society, to guide and save it...

‘We have allowed our Lord to be banished from customs, laws, and good manners; in a mixed social gathering one would not dare speak of Jesus Christ. Even among practising Christians we should seem peculiar if we spoke of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament... There may be talk about religious art, moral truths, the beauties of religion; but about Jesus Christ, about the Eucharist, never. Well, change all that. Profess your faith openly. Be bold enough to say, “Our Lord Jesus Christ,” never just “Christ”! We must prove our Lord’s right to live and to rule in the language of society. It is a disgrace for Catholics to keep our Lord under a bushel the way that they do. We must manifest Him everywhere. The one who professes his faith boldly and dares speak out the name of Jesus Christ, places himself in the power of His grace. In public, everybody must know what we believe.’

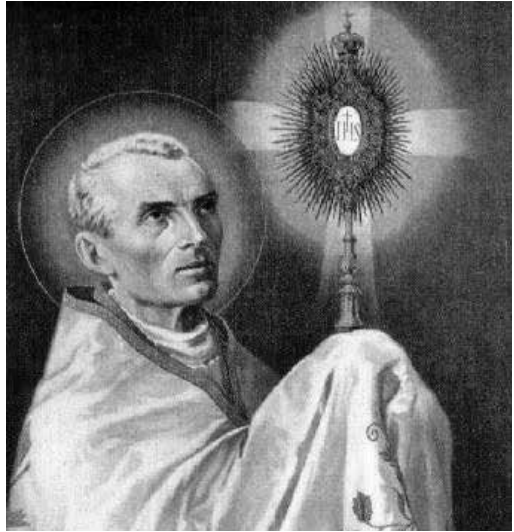
And who said this, and when?

“‘Christ in you, our hope of glory” [is] a very timely reminder for all the faithful. It reminds us that the risen Jesus is always alive and present in His Church, above all in the Eucharist, the sacrament of His Body and Blood. Christ’s presence among us is not only a consolation, but also a promise and a summons. It is a promise that everlasting joy and peace will one day be ours in the fullness of His Kingdom. But it is also a summons to go forth, as missionaries, to bring the message of the Father’s tenderness, forgiveness and mercy to every man, woman and child.

‘How much our world needs this message! When we think of the conflicts, the injustices and the urgent humanitarian crises which mark our time, we realize how important it is for every Christian to be a true missionary disciple, bringing the good news of Christ’s redemptive love to a world in such need of reconciliation, justice and peace.’

The first quotation is from St Peter Julian Eymard. He saw Christ, present in the Eucharist, as the living and life-giving answer to the secularist and atheistic thought and practice of his time. Eymard's aim was to restore Christ, dethroned by the anti-clericals and the atheistic philosophers, as the foundation and the keystone of Christian order in society. His vision was furthered by a French woman, Mlle Marie Marthe Emelie Tamisier, the instigator of International Eucharistic Congresses begun in Lille in 1881.

The second quotation is from Pope Francis' address at the *Statio Orbis* of the International Eucharistic Congress in Cebu in 2016. Both quotations show that the historical climate that produced the first Congress was not dissimilar to our own time. What then can we learn from the Congresses? How have they promoted particular aspects of Christian life? Are such Congresses still pertinent?



St Peter Julian Eymard, Founder of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament (1811-68). Source: Wikimedia Commons

What can we learn?

On a personal level, attending these Congresses has been:

- An enriching humanising experience. Seeing so many parts of our beautiful world lifts the heart; meeting with people of different cultures stretches the mind.
- A luminous academic experience. Listening and talking to some of the leading scholars of the day deepens one's grasp of the intellectual content of faith.
- A heightened spiritual experience. The Congresses have shown how the Eucharist is indeed the 'source and summit' of Christian life.
- A valuable pastoral experience, observing how the faith is lived and put into action.
- A truly Catholic experience, sharing communion with a plurality of peoples.
- A profoundly unifying experience, brought to pass at the *Statio Orbis* and by the presence of the Pope or his Legate.
- An experience which makes sense of the life of a priest, drawing out the timeless significance of words that changed the world: 'This is My Body, given for you. This is My Blood, poured out for you. Do this in memory of Me.'

On a more general level, many things have been said about the Eucharist in so many ways, times and places. All have shown that the mystery of the Eucharist is a wellspring of freshness, newness, that constantly rejuvenates, inspires, provokes awe. They have shown how the Eucharist never ceases to energise, re-invigorating our lives, inviting us into the brightness of a never-ending Easter.

How have they promoted particular aspects of Christian life?

The International Eucharistic Congresses reflected and guided the concerns of the age. They may be seen in three distinct clusters: 1881-1914; 1922-1938; 1952-2016.

1881-1914

Lille 1881 shaped the pattern of future Congresses. There would be daily and nocturnal adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Discussion papers and reports would tackle ways whereby Christ might be restored to His rightful place in the world: through confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament; adoration; the Mass and the Sacraments; frequent communion (this at a time when frequent communion was not the practice); catechism and preparing children for first communion; preparing the sick for the Last Sacraments; publicity for Eucharistic devotions and works.

The Fribourg Congress in 1885 reflected the Church's concern for workers when the local government and the military publicly proclaimed Christ as the King of Society. Rapid industrialisation in Europe was changing society. Catholic movements sprang up in France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and Italy with the aim of ameliorating the social evils suffered by the labouring or working classes. Leon Harmel, a textile manufacturer at Rheims, spoke in Fribourg on the Eucharist and Working Men. This social concern continued in other Congresses: as well as reports from the North African Missions and the Belgian Congo, Antwerp in Belgium in 1890 heard a paper on the relevance of the Blessed Sacrament to the social questions of the day. At Rheims in 1894 the Blessed Sacrament and the Social Question was an official Congress subject. This followed the publication in 1891 of Pope Leo XIII's famous encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*.

1893 saw the Congress in Jerusalem, the first to be held outside Europe. Pope Leo XIII chose the venue himself. He wished to foster good relations with those Churches of the East not in communion with Rome. He also gained the confidence of the Catholic Eastern Rite Churches. Opposing any effort to Latinise them, he maintained that they represented a valuable ancient tradition and were a sign of the divine unity of the Catholic Church. He made this clear in his follow-up encyclical letter of 1894, *Orientalium Dignitas*: 'The Churches of the East are worthy of the glory and reverence that they hold throughout the whole of Christendom in virtue of those extremely ancient, singular memorials that they have bequeathed to us.' Only a few years previously, in 1890, the Dominican, Fr Marie-Joseph Lagrange, had founded the École Biblique in Jerusalem. Leo knew its importance, and the École was to play an important part in the revival of Catholic biblical scholarship throughout the twentieth century. It was in the Jerusalem Congress year of 1893 that Pope Leo issued his encyclical letter *Providentissimus Deus*, underlining the importance of the Scriptures for theological study. For the first time at such a Congress, a papal legate was present in the person of Cardinal Langenieux. By such an appointment, the Pope wanted to highlight his aspirations for unity between East and West.

The Congresses over the next decade paved the way for the momentous decrees of Pope St Pius X. Frequent, even daily, communion and earlier communion for children were regular topics at these Congresses. Fr Duran SSS year after year pleaded for early communion: the Eucharist was not only for adoration but also food 'for the life of the world'. Against this background, and to mark the twenty-fifth year since Lille, Pope St Pius X called the Congress to Rome in 1905.

Pius X viewed International Eucharistic Congresses as an ideal way to prepare for and later to implement his decrees on frequent and early communion. Speaking to those present

at the Rome Congress, he stressed the importance of 'frequently approaching the Eucharistic Sacrament'. He pointed out that 'the centre of the Christian life, the soul of the Church, is to be found in the Eucharist'. 1905 saw the first of a trilogy of eucharistic decrees from Pius X. *Sacra Tridentina* on 'Frequent and Daily Reception of Holy Communion' recalled the instruction from the Council of Trent: 'The Holy Council wishes indeed that at each Mass the faithful who are present should communicate, not only in spiritual desire, but sacramentally, by the actual reception of the Eucharist.' Piety however had since grown cold and the poison of Jansenism had led to a forbidding rigorism. Accordingly, 'Frequent and daily Communion, as a practice most earnestly desired by Christ our Lord and by the Catholic Church, should be open to all the faithful ... therefore, parish priests, confessors and preachers ... should exhort the faithful frequently and with great zeal to this devout and salutary practice.' The following year, Pius X gave instructions that the sick should be given every facility to receive the Eucharist as often as possible. In 1910 came *Quam Singulari*, lowering the age for first communion to the age of 'seven, more or less'. The Congresses held from 1906 until 1914, including the London Congress of 1908, were especially concerned with implementing the decrees of Pius X.

From the Madrid Congress of 1911 came a proposal to institute a feast of Christ, the King of Society. All the themes of preceding Congresses were then encompassed in Lourdes in 1914 in a programme under the theme of the Eucharist and the Social Kingship of Jesus Christ. The papal legate, Cardinal Gennaro Granito Pignatelli di Belmonte, announced that the Congress would be 'for love and peace ... Christ wishes to reign through love, because it is love alone that will give to peoples the peace of which the nations today stand in such pressing need'.

Three days after the Lourdes Congress ended, the First World War broke out. The War was to disrupt the Congresses and change the face of Europe. It would be eight years before the next Congress was held, and then under the newly elected Pope Pius XI.

1922-1938

Following 'the War to end all Wars', the theme of the Rome Congress in 1922 was 'The Peaceful Reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist'. Pius XI explained: 'With this Eucharistic Congress ... will begin that full pacification which is the first and indispensable condition of all social reconstruction.' He called for

'a true regeneration ... in the return of society to Jesus Christ ... The sacrament of the Eucharist ... that is the remedy. Here it is, where the human mind bows before the majesty of God, offering Him the homage of faith, which believes, does not see, but adores and acknowledges. It is in this Sacrament that minds become softened and regain gentleness. It is in this Sacrament that all are seated at the same table and feel themselves truly brothers – great and small, masters and servants, rulers and ruled. Peace, the peace that all are seeking ... the peace the world cannot give because it can offer nothing more than goods unworthy of the human heart and insufficient for its happiness, this peace Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament alone can give.'

Following on the wishes expressed during previous Congresses, in 1925 Pius XI instituted the Feast of Christ the King for the whole Church. He made it clear that the Kingship of Christ is about service, not domination. It is a spiritual kingdom concerned with spiritual things. It stands for the common good and human dignity. From Christ's Kingship, peace and harmony will follow.

After the Rome Congress, Pope Pius XI - whose papal motto was 'The Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ' - began a 'new series of Congresses' involving the local churches in all five continents. Meeting at two-year intervals in Chicago, Sydney, Carthage, Dublin, Buenos Aires, Manila and Budapest, they focused on 'missionary' preparation. Pius XI's desire to establish worldwide the Kingship of Christ was one reason for his taking the International Eucharistic



The Closing Ceremony of the 31st International Eucharistic Congress held in June 1932 in Dublin. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Congresses into all continents. He also had the Church's missions in mind and was known as 'the Pope of the Missions'. Four months after Budapest, Europe plunged into war. It would be 14 years before another International Eucharistic Congress was held.

1952-2016

The Barcelona Congress theme in 1952, not surprisingly, was 'The Eucharist and Peace'. The Congress met in a world greatly changed by war. The dominant world powers were now the USA, the USSR and China. When the Congress opened, peace in Europe was fragile and there was open war in Korea. The Archbishop of Barcelona, Gregorio Modrego Casaus, had announced that 'united for the one same purpose and glorying in the name of Christ, the object of the Congress was to study the work of justice that is peace'. The theme of peace was developed each day with a different emphasis: first, peace in the family; then individual and social peace; international peace; peace in the Church.

Pope Pius XII relayed a message at the end of the Congress, summing up its work as

**'an example to the entire world – so many nations, so many races, so many rites
"one heart and one soul" – so that seeing it the world may come to understand
where lies the source of true peace, in its individual, family, social and international
aspects ... Gathering together all your voices, all the wishes of your hearts, all the
anxieties of your souls, we wish to concentrate them all into one great cry of
peace, which may be heard the world over.'**

The search for peace also underlay the theme of the next Congress, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1955. Its theme was 'The Eucharistic Kingdom of Christ the Redeemer'. The Congress examined the nature of this kingdom and its relationship with the individual Christian, the family, society and the Church, with particular attention to the Church of Silence – mainly Christians suffering under Communist regimes in Europe, China, Korea and Vietnam.

In 1960 the Congresses returned to Europe – to Munich. Munich marked a turning-point in the history of the International Eucharistic Congresses. In the previous year, Pope St John XXIII had announced that he was calling an Ecumenical Council. The Munich Congress would foreshadow changes the Council would bring in the Church's liturgical and devotional life and its pastoral approach to the problems of the day. Pope John had called on the Munich

Congress to pray that 'the entire social system of our day, as well as the entire way of life, be adapted to the rules of the Christian moral law'. The Congress theme was 'The Eucharist – for the Life of the World'.

At Munich the term *Statio Orbis* was coined, thanks primarily to the liturgist Josef Jungmann, who recalled how it was an early custom in Rome for the Pope to celebrate Mass in a different church most days of Lent in the presence of the clergy and faithful of the city. This was known as the *Statio Urbis*, the 'Station of the City'. At International Eucharistic Congresses, the faithful gathered around the Pope or his legate from all over the world – in Latin, 'orb'. This, Fr Jungmann maintained, constituted a *Statio Orbis*, a 'Station of the World'. The *Statio Orbis* has ended every Congress since Munich. Professor Josef Ratzinger of Bonn University, attending the Munich Congress as a young priest, saw it as 'a milestone of liturgical and theological development, serving the entire Church'. In 2012, now as Pope Benedict XVI, he recalled that Jungmann had created a new model for Eucharistic Congresses, one that was revolutionary for the whole Church as well as being a preparation for the Second Vatican Council, 1962-1965.

Although impossible to detail in a short space, following Munich all Congresses have featured and furthered the Council's decrees. Bombay and Bogotá stressed peace and social justice; Melbourne, ecumenism and a 'Congress of the People'; Philadelphia, 'Jesus, the Bread of Life'; Lourdes, 'The Hungers of the Human Family'; Nairobi, 'The Eucharist and the Christian Family'; Seoul, 'Christ is our Peace'; Seville, 'Christ, Light of the Nations – the Eucharist and Evangelisation'; Wrocław, 'Christ our Freedom'; Rome, 'Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of the World, Bread for New Life'; Guadalajara, 'The Eucharist, Light and Life of the New Millennium'; Quebec, 'The Eucharist, Gift of God for the Life of the World'; Dublin, 'The Eucharist, Communion with Christ and with one another' (drawn from *Lumen Gentium*); Cebu, 'Christ in You, our Hope of Glory'.

Are such Congresses still pertinent?

Liverpool 2018 answered that with a resounding 'Yes'. Day one was 'Symposium', day two 'Congress', day three 'Pilgrimage'. Congressists shared their thoughts afterwards using such words as 'Inspired', 'Refreshed', 'Renewed', 'Energised', 'Blessed', 'More thoughtful', 'Faith-filled'.



Cardinal Vincent Nichols leads Adoration at the National Eucharistic Congress in Liverpool 2018. Photo: Flickr/ Catholic Church (England and Wales)

A number of dioceses welcomed the rich legacy provided by the Congress. Birmingham for example reported on a number of initiatives, including that many schools had already begun to arrange Adoration with their parish priest or chaplain. Nottingham had prepared a booklet for parishes with themed resources for Eucharistic services and 'personal encounter moments'. Liverpool planned a diocesan Synod for 2020 'focusing our gaze firmly on Christ'. Shrewsbury enjoyed a Year of the Eucharist, promoting personal holiness. Bishop Mark Davies wrote:

'The central message of the Second Vatican Council was that every one of us, in every state of life, is called to the fullness of the Christian life and the perfection of love: that is, called to become nothing less than a saint. This is the only renewal of the Church which will ever matter, our renewal in holiness ... it is urgent to recall this one goal of every Christian life for it is in the saints that the true face of the Church shines out. For, though they can have their place, no pastoral programme; no discussions amongst us; no re-organisation or re-structuring can ever accomplish this; only our striving for holiness to become the saints we have been called by God to be ... above all, in the Holy Eucharist, we are given the Divine means, the grace to reach this goal.'

One hears of more parishes opening churches again during the day and starting Adoration, of an increase in the Forty Hours Devotion and of planned Blessed Sacrament Processions.

England and Wales have not been represented in big numbers at recent International Eucharistic Congresses. Our Bishops hope this will change. They are encouraging us to go to Budapest in 2020. Another National Congress in a few years' time must also surely be on the cards. 'Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar!'



MGR JOHN ALLEN is a priest of the Diocese of Salford. He was ordained at the VEC a fortnight after the opening of the Second Vatican Council. He is now parish priest of Our Lady of Grace, Prestwich, Manchester and President of the Old Brotherhood of the English Secular Clergy. Whilst College archivist he edited *The English Hospice in Rome 1362-1962* and last year published *The International Eucharistic Congresses: A Spiritual Odyssey 1881-2016*.

The Mission - From, With & Towards the Eucharist

TOBY DUCKWORTH



There is no doubt that the mission ahead is the same as ever; to go back to our fair lands and to announce Jesus Christ as 'the way, the truth and the life' (Jn. 14:6) and to proclaim his very death and resurrection as our only hope for eternal salvation. While the mission since the inception of the Church has always had its challenges, perhaps today the greatest of them is the hypocrisy or infidelity of those who herald the Gospel. Indeed, only if those who proclaim the Gospel live as witnesses to their own hearing of it, will the message itself be seen as credible. As such, our involvement with the mission begins with our own



The Blessed Sacrament is adored in the College Church.
Photo: Marcin Mazur

discipleship, our own journeys of conversion, fidelity and ultimately intimacy with the Lord in prayer. It is *from* our own times of prayer, particularly before the Lord truly present in the Eucharist, that we are commissioned to go out and announce Him. Then, as one sets off on the road, one never walks alone and by his own strength, but rather *with* Him who guides us and strengthens us on the journey, not least through the Mass and our times of prayer. This journey has a proper intention to draw others *towards* Him into the Church, into union with Him through the Sacraments and ultimately to eternal life in Him. This article does not seek to reinvent the wheel, but merely to reflect upon the ways in which our College community is preparing for the mission ahead, framing it as flowing from, with and towards the Eucharist. Each dimension draws on a phrase from our most recent Advent recollection by Mgr John Armitage and considers a reference to a recent project of ours called 'Night of Light'.

From the Eucharist

'We are dangerous men if we do not pray'

Contrary to popular opinion, from the moment we arrive in seminary the focus is not immediately about what one needs to know in order to preach or to celebrate the Sacraments, but rather about discipleship. For if we are not first disciples of Christ ourselves then we are cut off from Him, His will, and ultimately His mission of salvation. We are never supposed to stop being His disciples, even when, God-willing, we are ordained priests. Although we

arrived here in seminary by virtue of the Lord calling us in the midst of our private prayer, the challenge is to develop that *habitus* of always living *from* those moments of encounter with the Lord in prayer. Learning how to be dependent on our moments of prayer is a more important lesson than anything else we learn in the many years of seminary study. How can we possibly encourage others to pray if we aren't accustomed to praying ourselves?

We are not merely students, but seminarians whose lives revolve around our prayer and the community liturgy, particularly the Mass. We usually begin our day with morning prayer and Mass at 6.45am – it is the most important moment of the day when we truly are made present to the death and resurrection of the Lord. Each day at the offertory we literally hand over ourselves wherever we are at; we present all that we have to offer in thanksgiving, but more often also the struggles we have, those that we need Him to transform. Like all priests and religious across the world we offer our times of prayer for the intentions of others, for friends and family, but also for the whole people of God. The house is perhaps most silent at that moment we receive Holy Communion, where we merely let go and allow the Lord to embrace us, being attentive to what He has to communicate. We don't often get crystal clear messages beckoning in our ears, rather the Lord is more subtle than using words. As Mass ends so does the focal point of our day, yet from this source of energy and commitment we are best prepared to continue the day and resume our studies at the universities.

When one falls in love, one naturally wants to spend time with that person. The same is true for each of us who recognise that He created us and even died upon the Cross so that we might be with Him for all eternity. As such, an extended moment(s) of meditation every day is just part of our life – many of us choosing to spend this in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. All of us describe this time slightly differently and it is certainly beyond words but whether it be a moment of 'encounter', 'nourishment', 'touching-base', 'intimate time' or even just 'ranting in annoyance', it is a time spent with Him. Often these moments of prayer begin with meditation on a piece of Scripture and the attempt to be quietly receptive to the Lord. Thanks to the commitment of the students there continues to be daily Adoration available in the College (as there has been for years). It is in Adoration that we discover His love and desire to be fully one with us. Whilst one bathes in that perfect love, our hearts and minds want nothing more than to respond generously with that same love, which we continue to receive *from* Him.

Our times of personal prayer lead us to inspiration and good discernment when it comes to making decisions, writing essays or beginning a new project. As such prayer allows us to think not about one's own solution, but His. Not praying is simply 'dangerous', and for priests particularly, because without it what we do becomes merely ours and not His (whilst the people we serve readily assume it is from Him). There should be no action in the Church without first considering it in the presence of the Eucharist, for then what is carried out is not merely from ourselves but also *from* Him. A couple of years ago a small group of us seminarians brought both 'the surrounding area of lapsed Catholics' (yes, even in Rome!) and some of the good work of evangelisation that we had seen in our parishes at home to prayer and asked Him what could be done. Eighteen months later, after prayerful consideration and discussion we eventually reached a point when we led our first (seemingly successful) 'Night of Light'. More about this later, but the point here is merely that this began as a fruit of our prayer and was thus *from* Him.

In these small ways our College community is learning to be dependent on our lives of prayer, on beginning things from Him and not merely ourselves. If the 'mission' involves telling people to look beyond this world, to believe in Him and to speak with Him in prayer,

then we must first do this ourselves. Let us serve the 'mission' by counteracting the infidelity of others, with our own fidelity to the Lord in our prayer and way of life. After all, the words of Blessed Columba Marmion in *Christ the Ideal of the Priest* read at a post-lunch visit to the Blessed Sacrament ring true:

'You cannot give what you do not have. The man who has not interior life himself can never exercise a beneficial influence on souls. We can give to others only the overflow of our own spiritual life, of the abundance of our own religious convictions which we have consolidated in our mental prayer... [and thus] hand on to others the things we have contemplated.'



Fr James McAuley gives Benediction at the end of a College Holy Hour. Photo: Marcin Mazur

With the Eucharist

'The Kingdom is not just beyond our own effort but it's beyond our own vision'

When St Paul exhorted the people of Thessalonica to 'pray without ceasing' (1 Thess. 5:17) he did not mean he wanted the people to give up their day jobs and simply sit meditating in the church every hour of the day. Rather, St Paul was asking the people to lift their minds and hearts to God by doing the normal everyday acts of the day *with* Christ and not merely by their own strength. Therefore, as a community we try and consecrate the 'normal' moments of the day, like eating together and studying, to the Lord, knowingly making Him part of the way we carry out these tasks. Hopefully even when one struggles with an essay or is utterly bored in a lecture, we too endure those moments with Him. Again, contrary to popular opinion we do not 'live' in the church all day, but we do hope to spend the whole day with Him.

While we may desire to build God's Kingdom on earth, our idea of His Kingdom falls way short of the reality. Since we have no epistemic access to the Beatific vision here on earth,

the only way we can see or do anything in accord with His Kingdom comes about from our cooperation with His grace - from doing things *with* Him. As such, even the projects that have begun from Him need to be carried to fulfilment with Him. Let us return to an example of this in our College life, that of 'Night of Light'. We have already mentioned that we believed this call to action, to open the doors to the lapsed Catholics passing by, was *from* Him. Thus, we were led to action and in time considered all manner of practicalities (music, decoration, scripture etc.) but only in order to prepare the way for the Lord, to facilitate the encounter between Him and those who would enter the church. In this small way we were His co-workers on the 'mission' in which all of our precise activities were not important *per se*, but merely that what we did was *with* Him exposed upon the altar in the Blessed Sacrament. While we are not released from action altogether, we are called in our activity to knowingly offer it up to be transformed beyond all our imagining, by Him. As such, if we are His faithful servants dedicated to working from and with Him then we will often be surprised by what is achieved.

Towards the Eucharist

'The Church must offer life beyond this world, otherwise it offers nothing at all'

Everything that we strive to do from and with prayer needs to be rooted in the ultimate desire of God to be one with us. For if our ministry is one of mere coffee mornings, games with young people and social accompaniment, then at best we will offer a worse version of what is done well by other finer 'social organisations'. What the Church offers is unique and beyond all that makes us feel good - it offers people a genuine hope for the salvation of their entire person! Accordingly, those that are truly working for the 'mission' of Christ are the ones who place all their efforts on bringing those that they encounter into union with Him.

I'm a big fan of drinking coffee, of playing games with young people, and for accompanying people through the highs and lows of their lives, and despite what I've just said all this can be good. These things are good when they are orientated towards the service of the Gospel. Maybe that cup of coffee facilitates a conversation with a grieving person about having faith in the resurrection, the playing of a game may allow young people to be more receptive to listening to the truths of our faith, and our accompaniment of someone lonely could be an icon pointing them towards the fullest of unions with Christ Himself. Perhaps then, one interested in the 'mission' could simply ask themselves this question: 'Is what I am doing orientated towards the salvation of my soul *and* the souls of those I meet?'

In the seminary our lives are generally made up of work (study), prayer, and from time to time relaxation, which one hopes are all orientated towards the 'mission'. Our dedication to study is perhaps the most obviously orientated, since it is for the sake of our future ability to preach the Gospel and to direct souls. Our own prayer is firstly a reminder of our personal desire for salvation and is indeed a communing with Him who saves. But secondly, our prayer is also one of intercession for the needs of the whole world, and for the salvation of all. Strangely enough even our moments of (healthy) relaxation are also orientated towards the 'mission' when they are taken for the sake of refreshing our ability to put our efforts back into the 'mission' itself.

By way of conclusion...

Let us return for a final time to our recent 'Night of Light' project, in which the aim is merely to facilitate encounters with Him by opening the door to the Lord exposed in the Blessed Sacrament. While we acknowledge that a single evening where one enters a church and

prays is not exactly the salvation of their souls, it is a start. This project, if nothing else, witnesses to the existence of faith and subliminally leaves all we encounter thinking, 'Do I have faith too?' Our recent 'Nights of Light' have been one such example of our partaking in the 'mission' as *from*, *with* and *towards* the Eucharist and one we hope to continue several times throughout an academic year.

I hope that in the consideration of *The Mission - from, with & towards The Eucharist* one can identify the centrality and primacy of each individual's personal relationship with Christ – long before any sort of outreach or mission. While this may sound obvious to many, on a personal level I know we often need to be reminded of this and, knowing that many things in life can throw us off-centre, we must also recognise that only He is the true stabilising force. Our crucified and risen Lord fully present to us in the Eucharist never tires of loving us and drawing us to Himself. I merely want to remind myself and all who read this article to persevere in giving Him time and space, for only then will our small part in the mission truly flow *from*, *with* and *towards* the Eucharist.



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Martyrs' Day Homily – 1st December 2018

CARDINAL EDWIN O'BRIEN



Terribilis est locus iste. Hic domus Dei est, et porta coeli: et vocabitur aula Dei.
How awesome is this place. This is the house of God and the portal of heaven, and it shall be called the court of God.

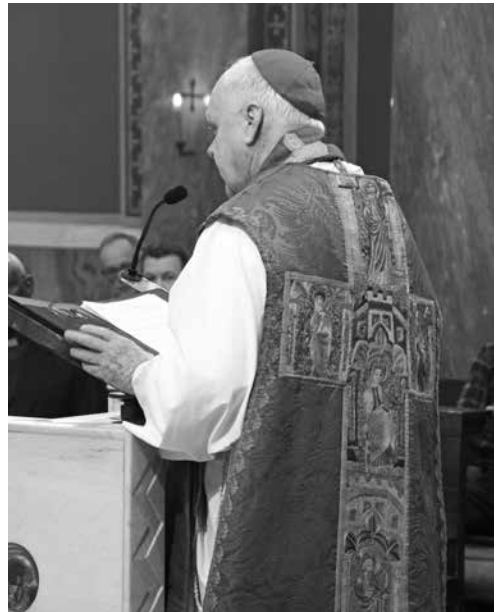
I quote the Introit from the dedication of the church or chapel – sacred spaces, as this space is indeed! No one with a serious Catholic sensitivity can stand here and not feel a sense of awe. In addition to my gratitude for Mgr Whitmore's invitation, that is my primary sentiment here on Martyrs' Day, your College's annual commemoration of the martyrdom of these Forty-four.

They are your intercessors, your true patrons. As the Christians of the primitive Church celebrated the Liturgy upon the tombs of their martyr-patrons, so do we now as we call upon the beatified and canonised martyrs of England and Wales, whose relics lie beneath this altar.

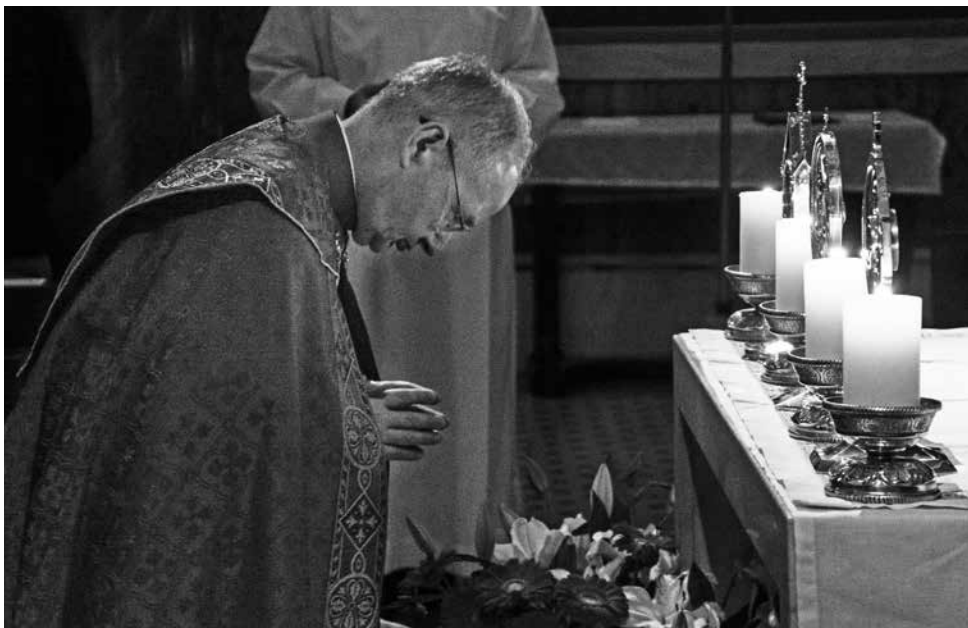
In this blessed house, those men of unspeakable bravery pondered the fate that likely awaited them as they absorbed the paintings around this chapel and readied themselves for their English Mission. And here their compatriots, your predecessors, received the fateful news from Tyburn. They then gathered on this very spot and with eyes raised to Alberti's Martyrs' Picture, sang a grateful *Te Deum*. In an almost literal sense, for the Forty-four and others, this house of God became a portal of heaven.

You know all this. But permit me, as your awe-struck guest, to suggest that you never become accustomed to the history which you live here. How radically you are rooted in the communion of saints that stretches back in this City, to 597 when Pope Gregory the Great commissioned his fellow monk, Augustine, to go from the Caelian Hill to England.

The New Evangelisation had begun with its ebb and flow of slavery and suffering, death and rebirth. It is a communion of saints which stretches across the boundaries of time and which in your spiritual imaginations you can meet and join as you ponder the lives of those



Cardinal O'Brien preaches at Mass on Martyrs' Day.
Photo: Alexander Balzanella



Fr Rector venerates the relic of St Ralph Sherwin on Martyrs' Day 2018. Photo: Alexander Balzanella

whose relics lie here, and indeed, the lives of all those who have given themselves over the centuries for the Evangelisation of England. From that encounter you can take inspiration and gain courage for the work of evangelisation that awaits the priests and all the faithful of England in the 21st Century.

Indeed, there are Christian martyrs today – and MANY! Recently Aid to the Church in Need has estimated that some 215 million Christians worldwide are suffering severe persecution even to the point of martyrdom. In a recent address to the members of our Order of the Holy Sepulchre, Holy Father Francis lamented, 'In front of the whole world – which too often turns its gaze aside – there is the dramatic situation of Christians who are persecuted and killed in ever increasing numbers.'

Hopefully in the Western World of today and tomorrow, you and the men and women to whom you minister will not be threatened with execution because of the Faith you will openly profess. But in an increasingly and aggressively secular culture, Christians today are being driven to the margins of public life and even legally threatened for preaching and teaching such traditional truths as the dignity of every human life and the sacred origins of marriage and family life.

Our Holy Father referenced this when he continued: 'In addition to their martyrdom of blood, there is also a "white martyrdom", such as that which occurs in democratic countries when freedom of religion is limited.' Blessed John Henry Newman, in citing the Church's earliest martyrs noted that their death and final suffering were but the consummation of a life of anticipated death. No less can be said of the Forty-four who endured diabolically ingenious tortures in prison and on the scaffold even with levity, for they rejoiced to the extent that they were filling up what was lacking in the sufferings of Christ on behalf of His Body, which is the Church (Col 1:24). Throughout their lives, their monomaniacally consuming pursuit was to take up the Cross daily and follow Christ.

They did not die for a noble patriotic principle or for the lofty value of human rights. Distinctive was their conviction that they were being crucified with Christ, participating in the death of the One who had died for them in advance. The Lord had enlightened the eyes of their hearts that they would know the great hope that belongs to His call (Eph 1:18).

And each did so in the confident prayer of Blessed George Haydock as he was drawn to the scaffold,

‘God grant that the Catholic Faith may receive some increase by my blood.’

But what if the Forty-four had recanted and turned back? What of this fabled English ‘seminary beyond the seas’, this Pontifical Seminary of Martyrs? And what for each of you would now be your vocation?

In our post-Christian era, there is no longer Catholicism by osmosis. The cultural air of our days is too toxic to be a carrier of Faith. It has to be proposed by convinced witnesses – martyrs, if you will – in order that future generations will meet and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, if the Faith in your land is to flourish.

François Mauriac spoke of priests (like you) who ‘have chosen to lose their lives because someone made them the seemingly foolish promise, “He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it.”’

May this house serve for each of you to be a portal of heaven as you surrender control of your life, completely submitting to His will for love of God and neighbour. Like the Forty-four – not troubled, not shrinking back, but setting out eagerly each day for that everlasting and blessed life, which is in Christ Jesus, Our Lord. That is surely worthy of a *Te Deum* on this Feast Day of your Martyrs.



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Sowing Peace all around us: That's Holiness¹

FR GERARD SHEEHAN



Earlier this summer Heads of State and of Governments from around the world came together to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings in June 1944. This anniversary came on the back of the centenary of the Armistice that brought an end to the First World War in November 1918. On such occasions sincere gratitude is expressed and tributes are rightly paid to those who sacrificed their lives in order to bring peace to a world at war. And yet, there is something troubling when we reflect on how we are so often obliged to call upon our Armed Forces to 'restore' peace. We can certainly rejoice that more and more such resources are used in what are termed 'peace-keeping exercises'. Nevertheless, there is perhaps a risk of vicariously leaving the task of establishing peace in the world to others. We leave it to politicians and diplomats to keep the peace, and if they fail we call upon the military to fight for peace.

In his Message for the World Day of Peace 2019, Pope Francis quoted the 'Beatitudes of the Politician' proposed by the Servant of God Cardinal François-Xavier Nguyễn Văn Thuận, who died in 2002:



Marco Egawhary prays at San Silvestro in Capite. The VEC, the Scots College and the Beda have gathered to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War. Photo: Alexander Balzanella

'Blessed be the politician with a lofty sense and deep understanding of their role.

Blessed be the politician who personally exemplifies credibility.

Blessed be the politician who works for the common good and not his or her own interest.

Blessed be the politician who remains consistent.

Blessed be the politician who works for unity.

Blessed be the politician who works to accomplish radical change.

Blessed be the politician who is capable of listening.

Blessed be the politician who is without fear.'²

While we may rejoice that someone has put together a set of Beatitudes for politicians, and may even cleverly devise another set of Beatitudes for those in the Armed Forces, the fact remains that each of us must confront the original set which Jesus proposed to his followers and, as disciples, we should take them to heart. Pope Francis went on to say in that same message for 1st January 2019:

'Peace ... is the fruit of a great political project grounded in the mutual responsibility and interdependence of human beings. But it is also a challenge that demands to be taken up ever anew. It entails a conversion of heart and soul; it is both interior and communal; and it has three inseparable aspects:

- peace with oneself, rejecting inflexibility, anger and impatience; in the words of St Francis de Sales, showing "a bit of sweetness towards oneself" in order to offer "a bit of sweetness to others";
- peace with others: family members, friends, strangers, the poor and the suffering, being unafraid to encounter them and listen to what they have to say;
- peace with all creation, rediscovering the grandeur of God's gift and our individual and shared responsibility as inhabitants of this world, citizens and builders of the future.³

St Paul uses the language of battle and warfare in his letter to the Ephesians to describe the life of a disciple:

'Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.' (Eph 6:10-13)

Having referred (v.14) to the 'gospel of peace', he goes on to advise:

'Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that utterance may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.' (Eph 6:18-20)

We could see here an invitation to look to ourselves and see how we might be boldly proclaiming the gospel of peace through our words and our actions, by engaging in spiritual struggle against those things which cause division within our families and communities, and how we are praying in the Spirit to be constant witnesses to that good news.

The Holy Father is always ready to place before us the first and clearest demands of the gospel. In his Apostolic Exhortation on the Call to Holiness in Today's World, when speaking of the Lord's teaching, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God', he immediately reminds us that 'we ourselves are often a cause of conflict or at least of misunderstanding. [...] The world of gossip, inhabited by negative and destructive people, does not bring peace. Such people are really the enemies of peace; in no way are they "blessed"'.⁴ In a footnote he alludes to the noble practice of fraternal correction exercised by 'those who speak to others face to face, serenely and frankly, out of genuine concern for their good'.⁵ How much evil and suffering could be avoided in the Church if we were all open and ready to hear the truth spoken to us in charity!

At the same time, it would be naïve to think that peace among peoples, nations, communities and individuals could come about without a serious reconciliation with God who is the author of peace. Pope Benedict XVI wrote in the first volume of *Jesus of Nazareth*:

'Enmity with God is the source of all that poisons man; overcoming this enmity is the basic condition for peace in the world. Only the man who is reconciled with God can also be reconciled and in harmony with himself, and only the man who is reconciled with God and with himself can establish peace around him and throughout the world. [...] The struggle to abide in peace with God is an indispensable part of the struggle for "peace on earth"; the former is the source of the criteria and the energy for the latter. When men lose sight of God, peace disintegrates and violence proliferates to a formerly unimaginable degree of cruelty.'⁶

In his book *The Eight Doors of the Kingdom*, Fr Jacques Philippe, himself a member of the Community of the Beatitudes, makes the point that the Beatitude we are considering here is the seventh in the series, indicating fullness and perfection:

"Shabbat Shalom" is the Jewish salutation for the Sabbath, expressing a wish for peace that is not merely an absence of conflict but order, fullness, accomplishment, happiness. The opposite of peace isn't only war but frustration, interior emptiness, dissatisfaction, worry. Placing this Beatitude seventh signifies that one who lives according to the six that precede it will receive the grace of peace and will be empowered to spread this peace around himself or herself, thereby realizing their baptismal vocation to be children of God'⁷.

Peace resides in the heart in the first place: 'Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body,' St Paul writes to the Colossians (3:15). The peace we are speaking of is not a peace that the world can give; it is the peace of Christ. And it will not come from anywhere else but Christ (cf. Jn 14:27). God has written a Sabbath rhythm into the whole of creation, including us. Activity is ordered towards rest and to worship. God wants us to have time to stop and think. Without that time we become restless, and in our restlessness we undermine the rest of others.

In the Letter of St James, we read:

'What causes wars, and what causes fighting among you? Is it not your passions that are at war in your members? You desire and do not have; so you kill. And you covet and cannot obtain; so you fight and wage war. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.' (Jas 4:1-3)

Can we not see in these texts an invitation to review the quality of our prayer-life as a wellspring of peace? Certainly, we must pray *for* peace, and do so insistently. However, it would be superficial simply to content oneself with a petition in the intercessions at Sunday Mass, and a routine handshake offered as a Sign of Peace. Jacques Philippe comments in the work cited earlier:

'Being a believer calls for working with generosity but also knowing how to rest in God. There is a "Sabbath of the soul," a heart's rest that God prepares for his children, and it is absolutely indispensable that we enter into it, lest our lives go off the track.'⁸

We need to learn how to pray, resting in the Lord. In that prayer we should try to explore and identify what it is that so often makes us restless. Still in prayer we should seek and find peace of soul for ourselves, in order to be able to share it with others.

In the traditional spiritual armoury, as well as prayer, we find the weapon of fasting. This too may well prove to be a useful tool in the pursuit of peace, but perhaps not necessarily in

the traditional sense. Each year we welcome onto the market the invention of dozens of new timesaving, effort-saving devices: new smartphones, fit-bits, apps, etc. Can we truly say that these are giving us more time for rest? Or do they make us yet more restless?

At the start of Lent this year, a number of my Facebook friends advised me that they were going to fast from Facebook for the duration of the penitential season. It seems an admirable choice, and one that for some at least implies

a genuine struggle. And yet it brings with it a real freedom from the restlessness that a lot of social media can engender nowadays. Perhaps more recently, you will have come across the idea of a 'Technology Shabbat' or 'Digital Fast', a weekly day (appropriately a Sunday) on which to fast and rest from social media and digital devices. Such a fast offers those who undertake it the opportunity to slow down and spend time on relationships which are at the core of our striving for peace: prayer – our relationship with God; rest – taking good care of our other needs, and preserving ourselves from unnecessary worries; time spent in the company of others, family, friends, fellow parishioners, neighbours, the needy,⁹ it can also be a time to rest in and enjoy more fully the beauty of creation. It may well be that a weekly paring back in order to direct our lives more clearly towards the message of the gospel, and spending more time in worshipping the one true God, rather than continuing to submit ourselves to the constant demands of the other days of the week may indeed help us develop the skills needed to be peacemakers.

As Pope Francis reminds us, 'We need to be artisans of peace, for building peace is a craft that demands serenity, creativity, sensitivity and skill.'¹⁰ When it comes to the call to be peacemakers, we must go beyond words to the struggle to be at peace with the Lord in the stillness of prayer, be at peace with our neighbour avoiding all gossip and negativity, and at peace with ourselves seeking to moderate those tendencies that distract us from being attentive disciples of the Lord. 'Sowing peace all around us: that's holiness.'¹¹



The seminarians of the VEC at prayer in the Martyrs' Chapel. Photo: Marcin Mazur



FR GERARD SHEEHAN is a priest of the Opus Dei Prelature, based in London. Having been a parish priest, he now offers spiritual support to priests and regularly preaches recollections and retreats. He also helps as a spiritual director in a number of seminaries.

Endnotes

1. Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 89
2. Pope Francis, Message for 52nd World Day for Peace, 1 January 2019
3. *Ibid.*, 7
4. Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 87
5. *Ibid.*, footnote 73
6. Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, vol.1, Bloomsbury (2007), p.85
7. Jacques Philippe, *The Eight Doors of the Kingdom*, Scepter (New York 2018), p.182
8. *Ibid.*, p.190
9. Cf. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*
10. Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 89
11. *Ibid.*

Experiences of Military Chaplaincy

Bringing Christ's Light to the Nation's Soldiers

REV. MATTHEW KING



Two days in, on my summer placement with the Royal Army Chaplaincy, I found myself balancing precariously atop a turret of a Challenger 2 main battle tank, grinning from ear to ear, trying to take a selfie. This moment sits with me so powerfully because I recall that feeling of childlike glee suddenly turned to sober reflection on the question of morality in war. 'With these optics, factoring in the curvature of the earth, we're able to hit our target miles away with pinpoint accuracy.'



Matthew King in front of a Challenger 2 Tank.
Photo: Matthew King

The confidence in the soldier's words hit me squarely between the eyes. 'What target?' This enormous machine, which I had just treated like a jungle-gym, was designed, primarily, to kill and destroy. It was these moral issues, and many others, with which we as participants from multiple Christian denominations grappled on the two-week Theological Student Course hosted by the Royal Army Chaplains' Department. It is my intention to share with you some brief thoughts on this truly enriching experience.

The programme, designed to give one a broad overview of service as a chaplain in the British Army, was divided into two parts. The first, consisting of topical lectures and discussions, took place at Chaplaincy Headquarters, Amport House in Hampshire. It's a Grade II listed National Heritage site, and a world away from any real or imaginary battlefield. This first week also included excursions (to stretch the legs) at army sites in Salisbury Plain and Sandhurst Military Academy. The second part involved being placed with a Chaplain. I completed this week with Fr Stephen Sharkey based at Pirbright, an army training centre, along with another Catholic seminarian, Rev. John Waters.

What possible place does an ordained minister of the Holy Priesthood have in a fighting army? Certainly, the history of army chaplaincy dates back considerably, its present iteration dating to 1796, as we learned on our tour of the museum that honours the service of many courageous Chaplain forebears. And though the Chaplain is a strict non-combatant, it does not mean he is not in a war. The war, however, is of a spiritual kind and the battlefield is the souls of men and women. But the moral question does not appear to be something you can ever fully resolve. At least that was the sense I got; that it should sit with you uncomfortably

all your days. To be contemplated lest you become hardened to the loss of life, the tragedy and the horror of war. What I also saw was the immense value a Chaplain can bring, when he comes through, with and in Jesus Christ.

The Army is composed of many hard-working men and women, facing struggles, challenges and danger far beyond the ordinary. The Chaplain is positioned to be right there among them, ministering to the spiritual, emotional and sacramental needs of the many people that compose the armed forces. It was most interesting to hear how the Catholic sacraments are particularly valued amongst soldiers. There is a physicality to them with which the soldier, faced with substantial realities, holds an affinity. One chaplain, a self-professed liberal Presbyterian, even admitted to carrying around holy water though he confessed it to be at odds with his beliefs. He did so because the soldiers asked for it. How much more when the Chaplain brings the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist? And even if there is an element of superstition involved in this desire for the Catholic rites, can that not be simply a doorway to profound truth and faith? Here the work of the Chaplain is saving souls in his daily goings about on the army base, just as on the battlefield.

The Chaplain, as *alter Christus*, may be the first occasion an individual meets the Catholic Church, perhaps the only occasion. Often there is lamenting at the lack of young people in churches, how they leave straight after Confirmation, the so-called *exit sacrament*. Well, the Army is full of young men and women, whose chosen path will force them to consider the great questions such as life's purpose. These young people might never set foot in a church, yet they are likely to contemplate these questions. I was greatly moved (and surprised) after a 17-year-old recruit came up to me and just started talking about his prayer life, not coming from any formal religious background. He also shared with me his dejection over being unable to iron his shirts to the corporal's satisfaction. What a wonderful position for a Chaplain to be in! To walk with these soldiers, and face life's challenges with them. Something particularly emphasised was the strain army service can put on marriages and families. The many pressures, not the least of which is the very real prospect of death. The Chaplain is right there, to accompany and share in the burdens, bringing Christ's light to the nation's soldiers.

Another element, which took me by surprise, was the ecumenism I witnessed. Not only did I sense a high regard for Catholic Chaplains, but also the way multiple Christian denominations engaged with each other at a very real level. Would you believe it, but the Chaplaincy team (and they were a team in every sense of the word) at Pirbright consisted of a Catholic priest, a female Baptist minister, and an Anglican vicar? The only other time I hear of such trios is when they're all walking into a bar.

I am grateful for the opportunity the British Army provided in hosting me for those two weeks and I am especially grateful to Fr Stephen Sharkey for hosting Rev. John Waters and me at Pirbright.



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'Morning Bish!'

FR JOHN WATERS



In September of 2018, having been ordained a Deacon only two months beforehand, I began exploring a very specialised area of ministry, military chaplaincy. Having briefly been a member of the Army reserves upon graduating from university, I had already spent much of my seminary years toying with the idea of chaplaincy and it seemed to me an area worth exploring whilst still relatively young and (almost!) fit enough to keep up with the men and women one would be working with.

A few years into seminary, a chance conversation with Bishop Richard Moth, then Bishop of the Forces, ultimately led to my applying for the one-week introduction to chaplaincy course, run by the Royal Army Chaplaincy Department, at Aport House. The course, open to Theology students of all denominations, gives a snapshot of the life of a chaplain. Our days were generally spent in lectures on the history of the Chaplains department and the chaplain's place in the Army's hierarchical structure, interspersed with stories from



John Waters stands in front of the Northumberland Fusiliers War Memorial, his great-grandfather's regiment in the First World War.

operational deployments in which these chaplains had taken part. One particularly impressive story came from an infantry chaplain who told us of a time in Iraq when, after a week of heavy losses to IEDs (improvised explosive devices), the men decided they needed divine protection and would not go on another patrol unless their chaplain was with them and had placed bibles in each of their armoured personnel carriers! We also had the opportunity to visit some working bases and meet the soldiers themselves. Particular highlights for me were a visit to the Royal Tank Regiment at Tidworth and an afternoon at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

At Sandhurst, the resident chaplain to the officer cadets, a Presbyterian minister, explained that he also trained as a psychiatrist and had done a lot of work with veterans suffering from PTSD. To my great surprise, most of the men he worked with in this capacity were veterans, not of the recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, but of the Falklands and First Gulf Wars, so long does it take men to be able to talk about what happened to them. When he leaves the army, this chaplain plans to dedicate himself to full time ministry with veterans because, in his own words, 'After 10 years of continuous operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, there's a tsunami of trauma coming our way.'

Next came my 'who do you think you are?' moment. Taking up the offer of a week's placement alongside a serving chaplain, I found myself posted to Alexandra barracks, Pirbright, where I had done my own phase 1 basic training, 10 years ago! I must say, being back was very, very surreal! Although the accommodation this time around (The Officers Mess) was a significant improvement to my last spell at Pirbright, in a dormitory with 15 other men!

Most of our time at Pirbright was spent giving lessons in the Values and Standards of the British Army, to the recruits undergoing basic training. The Army makes a point of having the

chaplains give the lessons, which draw heavily on Britain's Judeo-Christian ethics. Not only does this afford the recruits a chance to ground themselves in the values for which they will fight, but it also highlights their Chaplain, making him a recognisable figure and someone set aside to be of service specifically to the recruits and their families. I had heard much of how quickly soldiers adopt their chaplain and now I saw it in action. Recruits came to chat during breaks from classes and fielded questions about priesthood, seminary, why chaplaincy appeals to some of us, and so on. These men and women had never met me before and yet were ready to come and talk, simply because I had a clerical collar on!

Following my time at Pirbright, I was invited down to the Naval Base at Portsmouth, to spend just over a week shadowing the chaplaincy team there. Highlights included a visit to the Frigate *HMS St Albans*, watching the final fly-past of the Sea King Search and Rescue helicopters, seeing *HMS Dragon* set sail for an overseas deployment and deaconing the Sunday morning Mass for the officer Cadets at the academy in Dartmouth.

At Dartmouth I was again struck by how quickly chaplains are adopted by the sailors they care for. Sunday church attendance is compulsory at the Academy and because this was the first Sunday of the term, all 150 cadets were marched into the main chapel to meet their Catholic, Anglican and Free Church chaplains and learn where and when each service would take place. As I waited at the chapel door, I was greeted with numerous shouts of 'Morning Bish!' (a naval nickname for chaplains). In what other walk of life would 150 18-25-year olds make a point of greeting a complete stranger in a clerical collar? Just as at Pirbright, I couldn't help but think of Matthew 10:40. 'Anyone who welcomes you, welcomes me. And anyone who welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me.'

Perhaps it was fitting that my final day with the Navy was spent helping with the committals of ashes at sea. The MOD offers all naval veterans the chance to have their ashes committed at sea. Each week, weather-permitting of course, families of deceased veterans arrive at the base and are sailed out to Spithead, just outside the harbour. This anchorage, renowned for its calm waters, is where Nelson was famously seasick on his first posting as a young Midshipman! I'm pleased to report that none of us suffered the same ailment as he, so at least I can say that I have surpassed Nelson in one way!

We led the families in a few short prayers and then brought each family in turn to the stern of the ship. There, two Naval ratings placed the containers of ashes under the Union Jack and gently slipped the containers into the sea. Having spent those three weeks with the present of our military, it was fitting to end my time by helping commend the past into God's merciful hands.

Jesus teaches us that a man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. The men and women of our Armed Forces could well be laying down their lives for their friends at any moment. With the early years of this century spent in almost continuous operations (Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya) much has been asked of our military. As a result, the need for Catholic Chaplains has probably not been greater since the Second World War. I feel very privileged to have been able to give this small amount of service over the summer and hope to return in the future to serve our military personnel for longer. I give thanks for the welcome I received in the military, from the personnel and chaplains with whom I worked, and I thank their Bishops for their generosity, releasing them for this vital priestly service.



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Synodality: Walking Together to Find a Common Mind

FR JAN NOWOTNIK



Synodality 'is an essential dimension of the Church' and 'what the Lord is asking of us is already in some sense present in the very word synod.' This is how Pope Francis summed up synodality in October 2015 when he spoke on the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops by Pope St Paul VI and manifestly proclaimed it as a significant theme of his pontificate. He affirmed it in the same address when he boldly stated that 'it is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.' I will offer a brief definition of synodality and explore why it is essential for the Church in the third millennium.

My interest in synodality was sparked during my licentiate studies in ecumenical theology when I became aware of the bi-lateral dialogues that the Catholic Church has with the Orthodox Church. Much of the pattern of their discussions revolves around ecclesiological issues with a particular regard to the relationship between the Local and Universal Church which in many ways is defined as synodality. There is much that the two Churches can learn from each other, and this forms a backdrop to how I wish to explore synodality and why it is high on Pope Francis's priority list.

Firstly, let me begin with a tentative definition of synodality as presented in the International Theological Commission document on *Synodality in the life and the mission of the Church* which was published in 2018. This text speaks of synodality as taking us back to an 'ancient and venerable tradition of the Church drawing upon the deepest themes of Revelation.' The word synod is composed of a preposition *συν* (with) and the noun *ὁδός* (path), which brings us to the notion of walking together (presumably on the same way). St John Chrysostom (4/5th century) spoke of it as a sense of harmony where everything is held together as a consequence of walking together on the road. 'The Church is an assembly convoked to give thanks and glory to God like a choir, a harmonic reality which holds everything together, since by their reciprocal and ordered relations, those who compose it converge in a common mind.'

Two phrases strike me in this definition of synodality that opens the text of the International Theological Commission, *walking together* and *common mind*, which following the thrust of the same text, I suggest should primarily be explored by a recourse to the Scriptures which must be both the origin and the ongoing method of how to understand synodality in the life of the Church. From the very beginning the Church has gathered together in a council or synod so that it can 'discern, by the light of the Word of God and listening to the Holy Spirit, the doctrinal, liturgical, canonical and pastoral questions that arise as time goes by.'

Let us look at these themes in the light of two Scriptural passages, the first is the notion of *walking together* expressed so beautifully in Luke 24, the familiar passage of the road to Emmaus. We know the themes well; it is the evening of the day of Resurrection and Cleopas and another, un-named disciple, are leaving Jerusalem on their way to Emmaus. Downcast as they mull over the events of the past few days, not really sure what to make of it, they are joined by the Risen Lord. At first, they are prevented from recognising Him, so they tell their seemingly unknown companion all that had happened over the past few days and what was

in their hearts. He in turn describes to them the marvellous ways of God, taking them through a journey of the Old Testament. As dusk falls it seems as if the stranger is going to leave them and they press Him to stay with them for the evening. It is in the breaking of the bread that they recognise Him and the feeling of encouragement that He gave them on the road. It was just what they needed and soon they were able to return to Jerusalem to proclaim the Resurrection with their faith restored. This is a wondrous description of what can happen when we let the Lord walk with us on the journey.

A second piece of Scripture allows us to focus on the theme of a *common mind*. Here I am drawn to the events of the Council of Jerusalem as narrated in chapter 15 of the book of Acts. This passage can be understood as a model of how the early Church came to agreement on important matters as a consensus was sought among all the communities. What is dealt with is whether the Greek converts needed to be circumcised in order to be baptised. When the Church in Antioch couldn't reach a decision, they sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to consult the apostles and the elders. What develops is a pattern of discernment where the members of the churches listened to each other, shared their experiences, and with the help of what the Lord had said and the Holy Spirit, came to a common mind. This *modus operandi* became the model of synodality in the Church and I believe sets the tone for how we must come to live out synodality in the light of what Pope Francis said in October 2015 and it is to those comments that I turn once again.

It is clear that at the heart of a synodal Church is listening to the Word of God to discern what it means in a given context always remaining faithful to the deposit of faith. Pope Francis suggests that the starting point lies with all the baptised, the People of God, who as the Constitution of the Second Vatican Council *Lumen Gentium* reminds us, cannot err in matters of belief. It is *Lumen Gentium* 12 that states that from the bishops to the last of the faithful there is a universal consensus in matters of faith and morals. This means that there can be no separation between an *Ecclesia docens* and an *Ecclesia discens*, a *teaching and discerning Church*, so ways need to be found of allowing all the members of the Church to be involved in the process of discernment. This has been witnessed most recently in the preparation for the last two meetings of the Synod of Bishops, those on family life and young people, where Pope Francis sought to consult the faithful on the matters to be brought to the synodal fathers. This is one way in which Pope Francis is trying to discern a new pathway for the Synod of Bishops which as a vehicle of collegiality among all the bishops must be ready to listen to the lay faithful who know what it means to live the Christian faith in a modern context. This represents a true expression of the *sensus fidelium*, lay faithful, bishops and the Bishop of Rome discerning the movement of the Holy Spirit together.

For Pope Francis this consultation process is key to the discernment that the Church needs to take, so that pastors and people walking together can truly be attuned to the *sensus fidelium*



Jesus and the Disciples on the Road to Emmaus by Peter Bruegel the Elder (1571). Source: Wikimedia Commons

whereby under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the pastors listening to the lived experience of the people can find a common mind. It is obvious in this model that the faithful are attuned to the voice of the bishop who is their shepherd and so teaches them the Truth. It culminates with the Petrine ministry and the Pope, who like St Peter confirms the faith of the Church and is the visible source of unity for the Church. For Pope Francis the synodal process works best when it is enshrined with a true sense of service, pastors as the servants of the Word and servants of the people and the Pope as the servant of the whole Church. This continues to invert the pyramidal structure of the Church, in this model the Pope is at the bottom and acts as the servant of all.

For Pope Francis, *walking together* or synodality has three important manifestations which explain the synodal process that encompasses every sphere of the Church. The Local Church or the diocese is a true manifestation of synodality found in the Universal Church in so far as it is evident in every area of diocesan life. This is nothing new, most dioceses are already attentive to the *organs of communion* and they are well integrated into the way a diocese functions and hopefully reflects the context of the diocesan family. So, a synodal Local Church will make good use of a presbyteral council, the college of consultors and chapter of canons, which for example, help the bishop in his governance of the diocese. There are many examples of diocesan synodality that could be evidenced, but the pastoral council that is attentive to the concerns of the lay faithful must never be lacking in the Local Church if it is truly synodal.

The second level of a synodal Church deals with a notion of regional synodality and here I mention the contribution of Pope St John Paul II in *Apostolos Suos*, a teaching document on Episcopal Conferences. This offers a different expression of synodality which could be a bridge between the Local and Universal Churches. The Episcopal Conference reflects the life of a Church at a national level and in some ways is akin to an Orthodox reality of grouping dioceses nationally. There is certainly merit in this approach which takes into consideration the needs of a wider reality of the Church, grouped by culture or language. However, there are certain risks with this if it creates a Church within a Church. *Lumen Gentium* reminds us that episcopal collegiality is based on the relationship between the bishop in the Local Church and the Pope. It also reminds the bishop to have a solicitude for all the Churches, and the Episcopal Conference certainly helps with this, but always in the context of that primary relationship. A national understanding of synodality cannot supersede this but work in harmony with it.

The third movement of a synodal Church is the Universal level where bishops in communion with the Pope manifest an effective collegiality that is at the service both of the Local and Universal Church as envisaged in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. Although synodality as a term was not used during the Council it would be true to say that the seeds of how it might develop were certainly implied. I believe Pope Francis wants to find ways to encourage this so that the bishops will find the means to understand their ministry as the focal point of unity for the diocese and its witness of the faith by walking together with the faithful and seeking a common mind. For this to take place each portion of the Church must be a mirror image of every other portion or Local Church, effectively living the synodal life.

It strikes me that there is one other important topic that is vital for a synodal Church according to Pope Francis, ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. From the moment that he became Pope this has been important to him and has been evidenced in word and action. He also addressed this point in his 50th anniversary speech that I have already cited in this article. He moves into a territory that is well trodden by his predecessors Popes St Paul VI and St John Paul II who both spoke of how the Petrine ministry can be exercised and certainly in a way that is open to the ecumenical movement. For Pope Francis now is an opportune moment to

consider the question once again. In some way he is guided by the comments made by Pope St John Paul II in his encyclical on ecumenism, *Ut Unum Sint*:

‘As Bishop of Rome, I am fully aware...that Christ ardently desires the full and visible communion of all those communities in which, by the virtue of God’s faithfulness, his Spirit dwells. I am convinced that I have a particular responsibility in this regard, above all in acknowledging the ecumenical aspirations of the majority of the Christian communities and in heeding the request made of me to find a new way of exercising the primacy which, while in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission, is nonetheless open to a new situation.’

For his part Pope Francis is keen to find an answer to this that is consistent with the experience of the Church today, which for him involves being engaged in a dialogue with other Christians and those of other faiths. We have already seen the fruits of this and so it may be that in a synodal Church we get used to the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury speaking out for the marginalised and planning a trip to South Sudan together. This image of the Church is one where the Pope and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople are happy to address together their concerns for the environment and call us to greater concern for good stewardship of our planet. This model also allows for a Pope who travels to predominantly Muslim countries to be in dialogue with Muslims whilst encouraging Christians in majority Muslim countries. In a synodal Church the Pope and the Chief Rabbi of Rome will be able to greet each other. These manifestations are necessary for a Church that walks with humanity and seeks to reach a common mind which includes those outside of visible communion with the Church.

I hope that I have managed to convey both what synodality is and why it is important for the Church at the beginning of the third millennium. For me, it rests on an understanding that was prevalent at the time of the Council; the mission of the Church is not just the preserve of the clergy and religious but the whole People of God. It relies on men and women who celebrate their faith, their joys, and their sorrows with their companions on the journey in the local contexts, who share what they have received with others. This is what a synodal Church can bring, a renewed confidence in what we have received from the Lord and an ability to proclaim it to others.

I conclude with the words of Pope Francis which I offer as an encouragement for us all, lay faithful, priests and religious and bishops to walk together to find a common mind. Pope Francis is clear:

‘we must continue along this path. The world in which we live, and which we are called to serve, even with its contradictions, demands that the Church strengthen cooperation in all areas of her mission. It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.’



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The Synod on ‘Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment’

BISHOP MARK O'TOOLE



I was pleased to be able to attend the most recent Synod on ‘Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment’ that took place in Rome last October, together with the two other ‘Synod Fathers’ who took part from England and Wales, Cardinal Vincent Nichols and Bishop Ralph Heskett.



Bishop Mark O'Toole of Plymouth (right), and Bishop Ralph Heskett of Hallam at the Youth Synod. Photo: Flickr/Catholic Church (England and Wales)

At the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops by Pope St Paul VI, Pope Francis indicated the centrality of the synod process, when he said, ‘It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium’. He stressed that, in fact, synodality ‘is an essential dimension of the Church’, in the sense that ‘what the Lord is asking of us is already in some sense present in the very word “synod”’. Composed of a preposition $\sigma\upsilon\upsilon$ (with) and the noun $\acute{o}\delta\acute{o}\varsigma$ (path), it indicates the path along which the People of God walk together. Equally, it refers to the Lord Jesus, who presents Himself as ‘the way, the truth and the life’ (Jn14:6), and to the fact that Christians, His followers, were originally called ‘followers of the Way’ (cf. Acts: 9:2; 19:9,23; 22:4; 24:14,22).

This sense of 'walking with, on a path' is crucial to the experience and understanding of the recent Synod. 'Synodality' or 'a synodal Church' refers both to the meeting that took place in October, but also to what led up to it, and what follows from it, too. Important in this process was the consultation which had taken place with young people in the pre-Synod meeting, attended by 350 in March 2018, and in the consultations which had taken place with hundreds of thousands on-line in the two years leading up to the Synod. In England and Wales there were a variety of local and regional gatherings with Young People and some national meetings attended by Cardinal Vincent, Bishop Ralph and myself, in preparation for the October meeting.

The young people also had an important voice at the Synod meeting. Forty were present from across the globe and they were given a prominent place in the plenary sessions as well as a longer amount of time for their interventions, and certainly made their voices heard in the Synod hall. They were also full and active members in the different language groups. In addition, there were two broader gatherings of several thousand during the weeks of the Synod. One of those was to hear testimony and witness from a range of young people, including a group from our country.

The other gathering was of 'Inter-generational' dialogue, which Pope Francis has stressed is so vital, not only within the life of the Church, but within wider society, too. Accompaniment, the sense of walking together and of listening to one another, was a vital aspect of our time together. It is not just the bishops trying to give time to listen to the young, but a mutual dialogue and listening to one another. There is that lovely saying of Pope St John XXIII, 'to the young, it is important to say, "the world existed before you"; to the elderly, to say "the world will continue to exist after you"'. As the days progressed, I had a growing esteem and affection for the young people present, and I believe that was true of how the young people felt, when they reflected about the bishops as well. In this sense the young people were active participants in the Synod process, not simply passive recipients.

Collegiality as an experience within Synodality

This was my first experience of a Synod and I was struck by the rich diversity and catholicity of the Universal Church. There are very different contexts in which the faith is lived. We were 260 Bishops altogether but one gets to know one's neighbours best! The two Bishops sitting either side of me were both missionaries from different parts of the world. Bishop Jean-Pierre Laurent, originally from Canada, now ministers in Paraguay, and Bishop Damiano Gozzetti, originally from Italy, has been a missionary in Uganda for many years. Bishop Damiano has a diocese covering the size of Ireland, with just 5 priests. The Confirmation ceremonies he presides over are usually for 500; one of them was for 1500 and the confirming alone took 4 hours!

To meet, to share our experiences, and get to know other Bishops was a highlight of the meeting for me. I believe this important experience of collegiality within synodality, of walking with each other, is a rich gift of Catholic communion. It makes 'synodality' within the Catholic Church distinct from the experience within Anglicanism.

This was strengthened by the generosity and presence of the Holy Father, who was there to welcome and greet us as we arrived for every plenary session. He stayed throughout and heard everything. His simple summary of the meaning of a Synod within the Catholic Church was particularly profound – 'The Synod is not a parliamentary process but a Sacred Space in which to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit.'



Pope Francis greets Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Bishop Ralph Heskett, and Bishop Mark O'Toole outside the Paul VI Hall. Photo: Flickr/Catholic Church (England and Wales)

At numerous times I was struck by the link with Acts of the Apostles and the first Council of Jerusalem. At that time, the Apostles came together in order to decide on the place of Gentiles in the Church, asking a fundamental question – ‘how does the Church remain faithful to the tradition it has received in regard to the Lord’s Resurrection and at the same time, be open to the challenges it faces in light of gentile converts to Christ?’

In many ways, that dynamic has not changed in the Church. It is the relationship between what one might call ‘focus and fidelity’ on the one hand, and ‘flexibility and creativity’ on the other. The Catholic genius is not to collapse one of these into the other; so never just to insist on fidelity and focus, and never just to push for flexibility and creativity.

The Work of the Synod – Recognising, Interpreting, Choosing

In terms of the structure of the time we spent in Rome we were limited - some of us would say ‘straight-jacketed’ - by the preparation document, the *Instrumentum Laboris*. This laid out the pattern of how the interventions were to be heard and the discussions undertaken. It was split into three parts, adopting the pattern of the ‘See-Judge-Act’ method that many would be familiar with from the Young Christian Worker Movement. Except, being a Church document, the language used was more complicated. So rather than speaking of ‘See-Judge-Act’ we were to engage in three movements – ‘Recognising, Interpreting and Choosing’.

The first week or so we spent on the ‘Recognising’ element. There were inherent tensions in starting in this way, from a kind of sociological analysis, because the contexts are so different and what one ends up with is a kind of ‘supermarket’ of issues and situations.

This has fed into the final document (and the Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit*, albeit more concisely). When you look at it, what you come across, certainly in the first part, is a seemingly endless list of every major reality, from gender issues to ecological matters, from war to education, and everything in-between. The positive side of this is that everyone can find themselves in there somewhere.

I found our discussion around Part II – 'Interpreting' and Part III – 'Choosing' – far more riveting and inspiring. That was mainly because we were able to creatively explore Christ's impact on human lives and to give expression to our belief about Him.

Testimonials

One of the most inspiring elements of this period within the Synod was to hear accounts of modern day Martyrs. One young man - Safa al Abbie, a 26 year old dentist, who is a Chaldean Catholic from Iraq - spoke of the challenges for peace and stability in his homeland, alongside the desire to live his faith with dignity. He relayed the experience of coming away from Mass one Sunday morning. In saying goodbye to his friends, he shouted out, 'See you next week!' But he did not, because shortly afterwards they were killed by a car bomb which went off down the road from their church.

Archbishop Barwa of North East India shared the experience of a Dalit Youth, killed by Hindu Fundamentalists. He was travelling home on the bus, they came on board and asked him, 'Are you a Christian?' He didn't answer. They searched his bag and found his prayer book and Bible, so they bundled him off the bus. They beat him, demanding, 'Give up your Jesus!' He replied, 'I will not give up my Jesus.' They hurled him into a pit, and filled it with mud, up to his neck. They raised a large rock over him and asked him one last time, 'Give up your Jesus!' He would not, so they smashed the rock down on him.

We only know the circumstances of his death because two years later these men came to his village to meet with his parents and to ask their forgiveness. The parents replied, 'He would not give up Jesus, neither can we. He asked us to forgive our enemies, so we forgive you.'

In this period of the Synod when we were listening to the 'Choosing' that some had made, we heard testimonies of other young people who bore witness to the transforming power of Jesus's love. One man spoke of his addiction to pornography, and others of addiction to drugs and alcohol, and of a young woman who had struggled in a series of broken personal relationships. In each of these situations the young people spoke honestly of their struggles with self-esteem and feelings of isolation, despite living in a digital world which esteemed direct contact and 24-hour communication but which, nevertheless, left them cut off in self-destructive siloes. A number, particularly from the affluent West, spoke of the present challenges for young people with mental health issues.

Each of these young people went on to relay stories of how individual Christians, friends and family, had reached out to them, and how they had discovered a sense of belonging in communities and networks of relationships where they were given second chances, the opportunity to begin again. It was in these contexts that they began to discover afresh the person of Jesus, by reading the Gospels, by praying before the Eucharist and by helping others.

They recognised they were all still on a pathway of conversion, not the finished product but 'on the way'. They valued enormously the accompaniment given within the Church. The Church was experienced, not so much as a judgemental institution but as a loving mother, experienced as a place of healing, of belonging, a place where one continues to encounter Jesus and to share Him with others.

Conclusion

I went to the Synod with the hope that there would be some definite proposals and ideas which might make this focus on Jesus more concrete for our situation in our islands. A disappointment has been that this was not the case. But the Synod confirmed in me the reality that young people, like all of us, are more attracted to the Lord of the Church rather than to the Church of the Lord.

I am not suggesting – and you would not expect a bishop to suggest – that we can have Jesus without the Church. Rather, it is a matter of priority. Where the Synod really took off, in my view, is when we looked to Him, rather than to the structures, or programmes, or organisation. This is reflected in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit*. Key to Christian living is the idea that Jesus is the 'norm' of every human life, giving meaning and purpose to every person, not just in the totality of one's life, but in the individual stages of each life. Chapter 2 especially gives us an inspiring reflection on Jesus as a young man, and how this enables Him to enter into every young person's life, *from the inside*.

This was the path which the Synod also laid before us as the 'Choosing' that is to be done in the future. We have recognised that there are some things which make encounter with Jesus more possible, where 'discernment' becomes a path of deepening discipleship.

'Accompaniment' is crucial for the young and is key in moving forward – an accompaniment of the heart, which helps each person overcome, or perhaps better, 'integrate' the wounds of their history; an accompaniment of the mind which provides some of the orientations in faith necessary, in order to negotiate a faithful path through a terrain which is often experienced as hostile to a religious perspective; and an accompaniment in the service of others, which takes me out of myself into a practical love of my neighbour.

When the Church is experienced as the place in which these things happen, then young people can feel at home. They are given that firm, but gentle hand, which helps them to set out on the way to continue to encounter the Lord.

The dynamic of the Road to Emmaus is important here, and it became the concrete motif for understanding and exploring the three movements of recognising, interpreting and choosing, in our accompaniment of young people. On that road, the disciples discover Jesus to be with them, even when they are walking away. They do not recognise Him as He takes up His place alongside them and *walks with* them. In His accompaniment – His walking with them – He helps them to interpret the experience that they have had in the light of His Word. Recognising Him fully in the Breaking of Bread they choose to return to Jerusalem and become His missionaries to others.

This is the path of the Synod for the future. In the meantime, my prayer continues to be, 'Draw close to us Lord, that we may continue to encounter you, and so bring others to you. Amen'



THE RT. REV. MARK O'TOOLE is the 9th Bishop of Plymouth. Ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Westminster in 1990, he served as Private Secretary to Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor (2002-08) and Rector of Allen Hall (2008-14) before being ordained Bishop of Plymouth in 2014.

No Man is an Island

FR JOHN METCALFE



A couple of months ago, I came across this passage from *Readers' Liberation* by Jonathan Rose (OUP, 2018) writing of the benefits of reading for those in prison. He says, 'if criminals lack empathy, literature can fill that void, because it compels readers to confront moral quandaries, understand characters different from themselves, contend with multiple perspectives and voices, and deal with the complexities of life.' It is not necessary to be a convict to experience that; and at the risk of seeming to draw an (unintended) parallel...

...Seminaries often ring to talk of 'the real world', i.e. the outside world, as though it were an (unvisited) foreign country. It has probably ever been thus. Of course, any institution, clerical or secular, with its eyes focussed on a future rôle can so easily lose sight of the world from which it has sprung or by which it is surrounded. It will be difficult to serve or transform a society of which one has little practical knowledge or experience, so, the institution needs to be aware, to be careful, to be focussed in a broader way. In our situation pastoral work would be one way to counter 'isolationism', yet this is not easy to establish for us here in Rome, though a month during the summer in England can be a small corrective; but the best foundation is quite simply a personal maturity and self-knowledge which will readily adapt to (pretty well) any situation.

There are other ways. I often end a tutorial by asking the student what he is reading. *The Imitation of Christ*, *Saint Teresa of Avila*, 'Columba Marmion' or some modern author I have never heard of (but recommended by the Spiritual Director) is assumed to be the correct answer. 'Oh yes, of course, but what are you reading for fun?' I don't always get an answer, except to hear that there is not enough time (sc. for such fripperies), though some always have some good literature at hand. When I say 'for fun', I don't simply mean that in terms of sheer amusement, good though that is, indeed, in itself. Rather, I am proposing that 'No man is an island, entire of itself'; there cannot be many polymaths about these days, and certainly no one is 'poly-experienced'. So we rely more and more on others (and Google) for facts of life, and we rely, too, on others to enrich us and feed us with their experiences, ideas and dreams. A broadness of vision and a richness of imagination are certainly not unachievable in the most constricted of lives, as Jane Austen in the vicarage at Steventon or the Brontës in their parsonage at Haworth demonstrate so powerfully - and with such fun.

So, reading 'for fun', for knowledge, for experience, for stimulation, can be a truly enriching adventure; can, indeed, be 'spiritual reading'. John Milton in his *Areopagitica* concurs: 'A good book is the precious life blood of the master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.' Franz Kafka (perhaps rather more pessimistic) tells us that 'A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us.' And here is where we return to the 'moral quandaries' of the opening paragraph. The quandaries may be personal or they may be the situations in which those whom we serve may find themselves; and we may well feel that we are not personally equipped to address them. So to talk from a direct personal experience is often impossible, whereas the indirect experience of what we have read, seen, or talked about with others can certainly be the point from which we can address all sorts of situations with a certain assuredness.

Some years ago, I began a new parish appointment. There were calls for a welcoming party, and a formal ceremony of induction. I was horrified: imagine the fuss! So one Sunday, early in my appointment, I recalled to the congregation the story of Graham Greene's 'Whisky Priest' in *The Power and the Glory* (never mind that he drank brandy), set in 1930's Mexico in Tabasco Province in the time of a most vicious persecution of the church, when priests either abandoned their ministry or were shot. Father (he has no name), Father 'Anybody', was on the run, at times harboured, at others betrayed; drunk when he could find the drink, he administered the sacraments when he could and when he had to; and slowly the net drew round him. At length the trap was set: 'a dying man wanted a priest, someone to hear his confession'. Of course it was a trap and the priest knew it, but he also knew it was his test, his big and last test: could he, at this most dangerous moment, be true to his vocation, a vocation which he had (he felt) so often betrayed? Could he for once be faithful? He stepped up to the mark, was captured, taken away and shot. A little while later a stranger knocked up at a door in the parish and announced himself as a priest, another 'Father Anybody'. There was no fuss, and the work carried on. He heard confessions and celebrated Mass, and then he moved on somewhere else; and quite possibly he was shot too.

That was in Mexico, but it was not that long ago in our own country when exactly such a situation obtained. Robert Benson's *Come Rack, Come Rope* tells the same tale, set in the Derbyshire Dales four hundred years ago, always a Father Anybody (perhaps a student of this College), the same betrayal and the same bravery; and a very sticky end. It's all very romantic stuff, but it's only too real and very harsh. It attracts and it repels; it inspires and it makes us want to run away. But it should also



A detail from an image in the College Chapel depicting the racking of Edmund Campion, Ralph Sherwin and Alexander Briant. Photo: Alexander Balzanella

give us cause not to make too much of ourselves. Evelyn Waugh, in very down-to-earth mood, talks of the priest as a craftsman like a plumber or an electrician. In his hands are the power to forgive sins and to 'make' the Body and Blood of Christ: everyday things penetrated by the divine. There's no need for fuss, and certainly no need to glorify the priest for the 'talents' which have been given to him: it really is his job, certainly his mission. That's a very prosaic view of the situation, but the glory of the priest lies in what he does and whom he represents, not in who he is.

None of this is likely to happen in twenty-first century England; but Christians are even today bloodily persecuted in many parts of the world. The example is encouraging but it is not something that we are likely to experience, but we let it go from our imagination at our peril. For when that kind of decision does loom, albeit in an un-bloody way, and my way of life, if not my life, is seriously threatened on any level, and my own personal experience brings forth no answers, to have encountered someone else's experience, real or imagined, may be just the yardstick by which I come to my decision, and am assured in that decision.

That was the priest. Here's a lesson on how (not) to run a diocese and, at a deeper level, an insight into the motivations, lives and characters of others: at the same time as reforming the Post Office, Anthony Trollope had a go at reforming the Church of England, or, at least, exposing its faults and scandals in a very gentle but incisive way. There was a 'hospital' for elderly men at Barchester. The warden, (hence the title of the book, *The Warden*) the Reverend Septimus Harding, was paid a princely £800 per annum from the considerable endowment; the residents were paid a trifle. The press was onto it and a campaign was launched to expose the scandal. Mr Harding, the gentlest and most naïve of men, was thought to be innocent of any wrongdoing, but nevertheless guilty of living on the very generous proceeds. It certainly never even occurred to him that he was doing any wrong. The diocese became involved, but had no press officer to deal with the situation and the embarrassment; and so the plot unravels.

The diocese of Barchester had a number of rivals for the position of 'leader'. The Reverend Obadiah Slope, the Bishop's Chaplain thought he should run the diocese. Played by Alan Rickman in the BBC's 'The Barchester Chronicles' to an oily perfection only equalled by his similarly oily performance as Professor Severus Snape in the Harry Potter films - now there was an exercise in imagination! - the slimy secretary plotted and planned, manoeuvred and manipulated to gain control of the diocese and the ladies of the parish, particularly the ones with money. The Bishop, Doctor Proudie, who didn't run the diocese, was helpless before him, and even more helpless before his wife, Mrs Proudie, who certainly did run the diocese. She and Slope, partners and enemies as suited the circumstance kept him fairly well under control. Archdeacon Grantley was not too concerned who ran the diocese provided that it was run in the same way as it had been under the previous bishop, his father. All in all, he probably thought that he was best placed to do this but was not prepared to push the point. He did have rather a nice rectory and a more than substantial living at Plumstead Episcopi to compensate. If he could get rid of Slope and Mrs Proudie, then he could control the bishop and all would be well - and peaceful.

To everyone's surprise, including his own, the bishop did finally put his foot down, on his wife and his secretary, and peace and order were restored. The winner was probably the Archdeacon! Not that any of this reflects the reality of a modern diocese(!) but it should give one food for thought, beyond the sheer entertainment: how often do we ask ourselves seriously 'what and whom is the diocese for, or a parish for that matter?' How does one exercise governance and be conscious that one is a servant? How does one recognise and deal with these characteristics: the press was driven by self-righteous indignation; the bishop was weak-willed; Slope was blatantly ambitious; Mrs Proudie overwhelmed by greed for power; and the Archdeacon was concerned for the good of the diocese (according to his own lights), while desiring a quiet life and no change?



Mrs Proudie meets Archdeacon Grantley.
Source: Wikimedia Commons

On a less clerical note, if there was ever a novel (and to call it simply a novel doesn't quite capture its essence) that allows a reader to contend with multiple perspectives and voices dealing with the complexities of life, that novel is Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. Whilst being a long read, it is eminently readable with most of its chapters being no more than four or five pages long. But because it is a long read, it is an immersive experience of the interplay of relationships, the impact of joy and sorrow on the human heart, and the human desire to discover meaning in a changing world. It mainly follows the lives of three Russian aristocratic families, the Bezukhovs, the Bolkonskys, and the Rostovs amid the backdrop of the Napoleonic Wars, especially Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812.



In 1812 by Illarian Pryanishnikov (1874). Source: Wikimedia Commons

Unsurprisingly with a title like *War and Peace*, issues of the human experience of life and death feature heavily in the book. It captures the changing interplay between the youthful joy of living and the threat of death. The epitome of this is Nikolai Rostov who is filled with a bravado to prove himself on the field of battle and yet experiences that initial terror of the destructiveness that war brings. As a reader, we experience that strange human struggle within him of wanting to feel fully alive by confronting the threat of death. In the midst of this struggle, the threat of death also brings a new appreciation for life. As Andrei Bolkonsky lies wounded on the battlefield at Austerlitz, he loses consciousness of the noise of battle around him, all he notices is the sky. He remarks to himself, 'How quiet, peaceful, and solemn; not at all as I ran... How was it I did not see that lofty infinite sky before? And how happy I am to have found it at last!'

The book covers a period spanning roughly a decade. As such, the reader experiences the changing circumstances of life for all the characters, how their choices and events impact upon them. A good example of this is Natasha Rostov who is only thirteen at the beginning of the novel, full of a youthful, joyful energy, and a childlike sense of self-certainty. Throughout the book she grows into a young woman, facing her own trials along the way. Her first experience of falling in love, her fall into temptation when she is seduced by another man,

the spoiling of her love, the loss of her own self-assuredness, suicidal despair, moments of grace and the finding of deeper meaning in her life. From someone who delights in life, Natasha is forced to confront her own weakness, her own sinfulness and discover her own capacity to love. It is a truly human experience.

War and Peace is a very lifelike novel. Aside from the main characters, there is a whole host of minor characters who come and go, and yet sometimes those seemingly unimportant individuals or events are formative for the lives of others. For Pierre Bezukhov, after all his searching for meaning in his life, in pleasure, philosophy, Freemasonry, it is his encounter with a peasant called Karataev with his simple faith, his joyful bearing of suffering, that affects him the most. Life is complex, full of contrasting and conflicting ideals and beliefs, meetings and partings, each leaving their mark. Reading a book like *War and Peace* helps us to accompany someone else's (albeit fictional) life in that complexity, and therefore, one would hope, helps us to appreciate the complexities of the lives of those we meet.

We can, of course, only meet and get to know so many people directly and so we are reliant in ways we do not always clearly perceive on so many others and their experiences. It is often the sum of what we have seen directly, of what we have done and undergone ourselves, along with those insights into the lives of others we have gathered from our reading and viewing, which bring the world into a closer perspective. John Donne in Meditation VII (written in 1623) said it for us:

No man is an island, entire of itself;
Every man is a piece of the continent,
a part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less,
as well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were;
Any man's death diminishes me, ...'

It is not a polemic against Brexit *avant la lettre!* but a reminder that the world is a shared world, that we do not possess it as individuals and, indeed, cannot survive in it as individuals. Donne was very ill when he wrote this and conscious of how others helped him by participating in some sense, in his suffering, supporting him in their compassion. What he says is perfectly obvious to all of us as soon as we read it; but could I have thought and expressed it myself? And if I did not think of it, how can my small life absorb such otherness? The stimulus of what others think and put into words, their challenges and experiences, is precisely that which takes us out of our individuality and selfishness and attaches us to the 'continent' of humanity which is our true home, because as Donne continues, '...I am involved in mankind'.

FR JOHN METCALFE is a priest of the Diocese of Hallam. He is currently based in Rome as the Pastoral Tutor at the Venerable English College.

News from the College Archives, 2018–19

MAURICE WHITEHEAD



For the College Archives, the academic year 2018–19 has been another eventful one, with much to report.

The Schwarzenbach Reading Room

The highlight of the year was the opening on 2nd April 2019 of the Schwarzenbach Reading Room. For the first time in the long history of the College, the Archives now enjoy a designated space in which a number of researchers can be received appropriately, with adequate desk space to consult and study documents of varying sizes.



Views of the Schwarzenbach Reading Room

Following the Rector's consultation with students in 2018, the College bar was relocated to a corner of the Garden Room and the ground-floor room thus vacated was redesigned as a Reading Room. Happily opened by Urs Schwarzenbach in the presence of Archbishop Bernard Longley, the Chair of the Trustees, the focal point of the new room is a portrait of Urs and Francesca Schwarzenbach. First unveiled at the Symposium, *Memory, Martyrs and Mission: Aspects of priestly formation for England and Wales, 1118–2018*, held at the Pontificio Istituto di Musica Sacra on 14th April 2018, the portrait was commissioned by the College in recognition of the outstanding support that the Schwarzenbach family has given to preserving and making available to scholars the College's remarkable collection of archives and rare books.

The Reading Room has been fitted with bespoke shelving to house a specialist collection of books celebrating the rich history of the English and Welsh Catholic community at home and abroad from earliest times down to the present day. This collection currently comprises some 2,000 volumes and it is fully available to the College staff and students and external researchers. The books are continually being added to, principally through donations from

diocesan archives and religious houses in England which are kindly offering the College duplicate works from their own collections.

The new facility, along with other related developments, has raised the functioning of the Archives to a professional level. For external visiting researchers, access to the Archives is now via the entrance at Via di Monserrato, 48, which has now been fitted with a *citofono* or entryphone connected to the reading room. A new cloakroom with lockers and an adjacent new washroom, both located at the inner entrance to the College at No. 48, together provide a place where visitors sign in and out officially and a secure space for the storage of bags, briefcases and other personal items: as a security measure, as in most other archives, visitors are only allowed to bring into the Reading Room notepads, pencils and laptops.

In the Reading Room itself, key printed reference works are now immediately available to hand for those consulting archival documents. Numerous researchers – notably Italian scholars – have already remarked favourably on the new reference library development, reminding us that there is no other such specialist collection in the whole of Rome, or indeed elsewhere in Italy.

The College is indebted to the trustees of the Mrs Lucy D Rope Third Charitable Settlement, based in Suffolk, for a grant for computer and library equipment for the new Reading Room: the grant has been particularly welcome as the new space now provides a permanent and fitting home for books donated to the Archives over many years during his lifetime by the late Mrs Lucy Rope's brother-in-law, Fr Henry Rope (1880–1978), Archivist of the College from 1936 to 1957. We are also indebted to Barbara Donovan and the Vice-Rector, Fr John Flynn, for the design and furnishing of the room, as well as to the College Librarian, Sr Mary Joseph, who has been working assiduously, ensuring that new accessions to the Reading Room collection are duly recorded in the electronic catalogue of the Library.

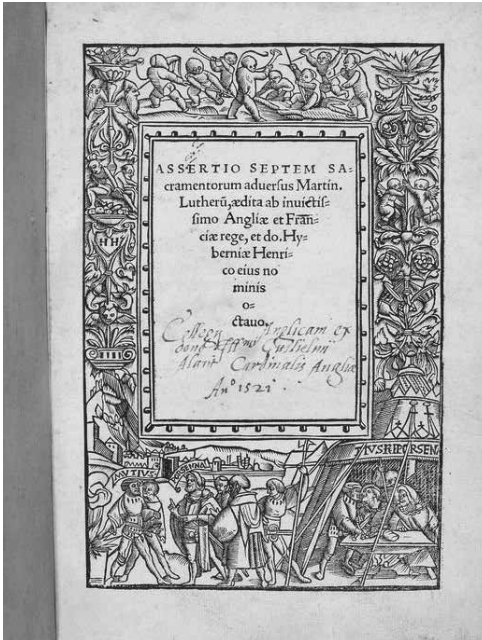
Visits from researchers

During the academic year, a total of 48 researchers have visited the Archives, a few for multiple visits: these include 17 from the UK, 16 from the USA, 11 from Italy, 2 from Finland and one each from Canada and Belgium. Between them, they have consulted 150 different files or documents from the Archives on a wide range of topics covering a broad timescale, from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. Beyond this, the Archives have dealt with many e-mail enquiries from all parts of the world seeking information from documents held in the collections.

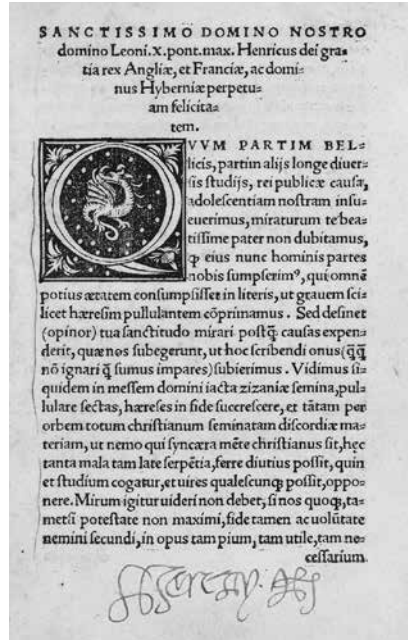
A recent discovery

Discoveries are being made constantly in the College's heritage collections as archival items are catalogued and rare books examined. One particularly exciting discovery, made on 1st May 2019, coincidentally the 440th anniversary of the sealing of the College's Bull of Foundation by Pope Gregory XIII on 1st May 1579, linked back to an even earlier pope.

On a visit to the VEC on 1st May 2019, Stephen Patterson, Head of Information Services at the Royal Collection in London pointed out to us that the printed copy of Henry VIII's *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum adversus Martinum Lutherum* of 1521, for which the king was awarded the title *Fidei Defensor*, housed in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle, is of especial interest. The volume bears the autograph of Henry VIII, but it also carries, on its title-page, an inscription indicating that it was given to the Library of the Venerable English College by Cardinal William Allen, circa 1590.



The title-page of the 1521 *Assertio*, indicating its Venerable English College provenance. Reproduced by kind permission of the Royal Collection Trust



Page showing the autograph of Henry VIII. Reproduced by kind permission of the Royal Collection Trust

The surviving evidence suggests that this item was looted by the French after they invaded Rome in 1798 and sequestered the College. The volume was subsequently sold in Lyons in 1846 and later purchased by the Royal Library in 1900 for £600. This discovery raises many fascinating new questions about what precisely was lost from the College's collections during the Napoleonic period.

Archival interns, 2018–19

In the on-going absence of an assistant archivist (our last assistant, Dr Orietta Filippini, left in August 2017 and, for financial reasons, has not yet been replaced), the help of visiting interns has proved invaluable in the smooth running of the Archives, including the reception and accommodating of visiting researchers wishing to use the collections.

From October to December 2018, the volunteer assistance of Winnie Axworthy, a Rome-based gap-year student, provided timely help, particularly in the preparation of books for the new reading room.

A three-month archival work placement, from 1st April to 30th June 2019, undertaken by Christopher Archibald, a recently graduated research Masters student from the University of Oxford, proved to be of particular help to the Archives. Christopher, who in the autumn of 2019 is to embark on doctoral study at Oxford on seventeenth-century English Catholic literature, concentrated his attention during his time with us on the early part of the unbound manuscripts housed in the *Scrittura* section of the Archives: using his knowledge of early modern English and Welsh Catholic history, Christopher thoroughly checked and refined the developing archival catalogue describing and analysing that part of the collections relating to the period of the College's administration by the Jesuits in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

During his final month with us, Christopher was joined by William Jolleys, who had then just completed his second year as an undergraduate in History at the University of Edinburgh. Happily, William had come back to the VEC as a volunteer for the month of June 2019 to continue sorting the papers of Fr Henry Rope, a major task on which he had begun work as a volunteer gap-year student in the summer of 2017, as reported in that year's edition of *The Venerabile*.

The College is immensely grateful to Winnie Axworthy, Christopher Archibald and William Jolleys for all their hard work helping in the Archives, as well as to the British Province of the Society of Jesus and to the Rope Trust for student mobility grants, awarded to Christopher and William respectively: this allowed them to live at the Lay Centre in Rome during their work placements and we are grateful to the Director there, Dr Donna Orsuto, and her staff for all their help and support.

A new website for the Archives – vecarchives.org

Another key development of the past academic year has been the launch of **vecarchives.org** – a website for the College Archives, the first of its kind here. This includes a section entitled *Tales from the Archives* – a new space in which interesting and unusual discoveries from the Archives can be reported and significant anniversaries can be duly marked. Kindly sponsored by generous donors Tom and Mary Harrison, and launched in November 2018, the blog has already proved to be a success and has been attracting worldwide attention.

Official visitors

Throughout the past year, the Archives have received a steady stream of official visitors to the College who have been keen to see our heritage collections, to learn more about them, better to understand the 657-year history of the English Hospice and the Venerable English College. The dates and names of the visitors are summarized below:

- **30th September–5th October 2018**, the Reverend Professor Michael Suarez, SJ, Director of the Rare Book School at the University of Virginia, co-general editor of *The Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, and editor-in-chief of *Oxford Scholarly Editions Online* came to examine the College's rare book collections and to advise on their future conservation, building upon a report to the trustees undertaken by the Flemish book historian, Dr Goran Proot, in 2017.
- **2nd October 2018**, the Association of Church Archivists of Ireland – twenty in number.
- **2nd October 2018**, the Reverend Max Kramer, Precentor of Canterbury Cathedral.
- **4th October 2018**, the Dean of Canterbury, the Reverend Dr Robert Willis, and the Deputy Director of the Anglican Centre, Rome, the Reverend Justin Lewis-Anthony.
- **16th October 2018**, members of the Confraternita di San Carlo Borromeo, Lugano, Switzerland, including its prior, Gianfranco Baumann, its vice-prior, Mauro Martini, and Umberto Angeloni, to see archival items of the 1580s relating to San Carlo Borromeo.
- **18th October 2018**, Cardinal William Levada and Monsignor Steven Otellini, Archdiocese of San Francisco.
- **18th October 2018**, Anne Sherriff, Deputy Director, Europe, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, with Joanne Cappa-Gunduz, Deputy Head of Mission, British Embassy to the Holy See, Rome.
- **24th October 2018**, four students from English Martyrs' Catholic School, Leicester,

sponsored by *The Tablet* to visit Rome on the last week of the Synod of Bishops on Young People, visited the College and Archives with their principal, Marius Carney, and vice-principal, Shelley Conaghan, accompanied by Christopher Lamb, Rome correspondent of *The Tablet*.

- **16th November 2018**, Federico Trillo, former Spanish Ambassador to the UK, with Ambassador Jorge Hevia Sierra, Spain's Permanent Observer to the Organization of American States, to see Spanish documents in the Archives.
- **17th November 2018**, twenty American Friends of the Anglican Centre Rome, together with the Deputy Director, the Reverend Justin Lewis-Anthony.
- **29th November 2018**, thirty-six priests from England and Wales celebrating jubilees of ordination.
- **21st January 2019**, twenty Doctoral students and staff from the universities of Durham (9), Newcastle (8) and from Queen's University, Belfast (3), all members of the Northern Bridge Doctoral Consortium, at the start of a study week in Rome.
- **18th February 2019**, seven Masters and Doctoral students from the University of Edinburgh, led by Professor Carol Richardson and Dr Catriona Murray, for an archival workshop.
- **27th February 2019**, Harriette Hemassi, Dean of the Library, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, Fr Leon Hooper, SJ, Director of the Woodstock Library, Georgetown University, Ethan Henderson, Curator of Rare Book Collections, Georgetown University, and Fr Paul Finnerty, Vice-Rector, Pontifical Irish College.
- **8th March 2019**, Lord Nick Bourne of Aberystwyth, Minister for Faith and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales, with Hilary Patel and Edward Clark, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London. To the delight of our visitors, the papal flag and the Welsh flag were flown together at the entrance to the College in honour of Lord Bourne's first visit to the College.
- **12th March 2019**, six Masters students from the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Culture at the University of Southampton, led by Dr Marianne O'Doherty, Assistant Professor of English, for an archival workshop using a range of late medieval and early modern records.
- **13th March 2019**, Professor Paulina Kewes, Professor of English Literature and Tutorial Fellow, Jesus College, University of Oxford.
- **14th March 2019**, five Anglican priests and lay people from Nigeria, Canada, the USA, and Ireland, studying Christian martyrdom in a historical context under the direction of the Reverend Justin Lewis-Anthony, Deputy Director of the Anglican Centre, Rome.
- **15th March 2019**, Julianne Simpson, Rare Books and Maps Manager at the John Rylands Library, Manchester, and founder member of the Montefiascone Conservation Project.
- **11th April 2019**, Dame Colette Bowe, Chairman of *The Tablet* Trust.
- **17th April 2019**, Canon Anthony P. Dolan, former Archivist of the Diocese of Nottingham.
- **23rd April 2019**, six students of the British School at Rome, with two Assistant Directors, Dr Harriet O'Neill and Dr Martina Caruso.
- **30th April 2019**, Professor Luis Martínez Ferrer and sixteen history students from the Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, Rome.

- **8th May 2019**, H.E. Vicki Downey, DGHS, and eight founder members of the North American Friends of the Venerable English College, created in 2019 to help, *inter alia*, in the future work of the College's heritage collections (*further details below*).
- **28th May 2019**, Cressida Williams, Archivist of Canterbury Cathedral.
- **7th June 2019**, Mary and Matt Waller, from Dallas, Texas.
- **9th June 2019**, Professor Mark V. Vlasic, KHS, Senior Fellow and Adjunct Professor of Law, Georgetown University, and Executive Producer, *Blood & Treasure*, for CBS and Amazon Prime.
- **13th June 2019**, ambassadors to the Holy See from the Czech Republic, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia, together with representatives of the ambassadors to the Holy See from Belgium and the Netherlands, led by the Deputy Head of Mission of the British Embassy to the Holy See.
- **14th–15th June 2019**, history workshop for a group of twelve students from Princeton University, USA, studying the English Counter-Reformation.
- **17th June 2019**, Donald and Carol Lalonde, Houston, Texas, collateral descendants of Cardinal William Allen (1532–1594).
- **11th July 2019**, Carol Chillington Rutter, Professor of Shakespeare and Performance Studies, University of Warwick.

Outreach and networking

The College Archives have been involved in a range of outreach and networking activities during the course of the year, including the following events:

- **23rd October 2018**, Monsignor Anthony Wilcox and Professor Maurice Whitehead visited the Grand Master of the Sovereign Order of Malta, Fra' Giacomo Dalla Torre del Tempio di Sanguinetto, at the Magistral Palace in the Via Condotti, Rome. They presented to the archives of the Knights of Malta a facsimile copy of a photographic album of 1944 held in the Venerable English College (VEC) Archives. This contains a wealth of photographs showing the VEC converted into a military hospital of the Knights of Malta (1940–44), during the wartime 'exile' of the College at St Mary's Hall, Stonyhurst, from 1940 to 1946. The Grand Master, himself an archivist, received the gift warmly.
- **30th November 2018**, a book launch was held in the College Crypt on the occasion of the publication by Cambridge University Press, for the Royal Historical Society, of a volume entitled *Henry Piers's Continental Travels, 1595–1598*, edited by Brian Mac Cuarta, SJ, Academic Director of the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*. Henry Piers (1567–1623), born in Ireland of English parents, lived at the VEC as a married lay convictor, or boarder, from 1595 to 1597. The edited version of the 1605 manuscript account of his time in Rome, preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Rawlinson, MS D. 83), throws important new light both on the early history of the College and on late-sixteenth-century Rome.
- **5th December 2018–31st January 2019**, loan from the VEC to the *Comune di Bagnoregio*, Viterbo, of two manuscripts from the Archives and four rare books surviving from the Library of the English Hospice, originally belonging to Cardinal Reginald Pole (1500–1558). The loans were for an exhibition at the Palazzo Petrangeli, Bagnoregio, entitled 'Reginald Pole, tra Michelangelo e Shakespeare', curated by Enzo



Account book of the English Hospice, Rome, 1548–1559, bearing the coat-of-arms of Cardinal Reginald Pole, loaned for the exhibition at Bagnoregio Archivum Venerabilis Collegii Anglorum de Urbe, Liber 23

Bentivoglio and Gian Maria Cervo, commemorating Reginald Pole's period as papal legate to Viterbo (1541–47) and governor of Bagnoregio.

- **5th April 2019**, Maurice Whitehead gave a paper entitled 'Unlocking a hidden heritage: developing the Archives of the Venerable English College, Rome' to a group of thirty Irish ecclesiastical historians as part of the Mícheál Ó Cléirigh Institute seminar series, in the Department of History at University College Dublin, directed by Professor John McCafferty, chair of the Irish Manuscripts Commission.
- **26th April 2019**, Maurice Whitehead gave a paper at the Bar Convent, York, entitled 'Opening a Convent Chapel in Troubled Times: the Conclave of 1769 and its International Repercussions', as part of a symposium marking the 250th anniversary of the opening of the chapel there on 27th April 1769.
- **16th May 2019**, the VEC hosted, on behalf of the British Embassy to the Holy See, a conference entitled *800 Years of Magna Carta: the Church, peace-making and human rights*.

This formed part of the celebrations surrounding an exhibition of Hereford Cathedral's copy of Magna Carta, held at Vercelli to mark the 800th anniversary of the founding there of the Abbey of Sant'Andrea in 1219. Cardinal Guala Bicchieri (c.1150–1227), who laid the foundation stone of the abbey, was also the papal legate to England and was instrumental in the creation and ratification of the 1217 Magna Carta.

Speakers at the conference at the VEC included Mrs Sally Axworthy, HM Ambassador to the Holy See; Canon Christopher Pullin, Chancellor of Hereford Cathedral; Nicholas Vincent, Professor of Medieval History at the University of East Anglia; Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States, Holy See; George Garnett, Professor of Medieval History, St Hugh's College, University of Oxford; and Monsignor Richard Gyhra, Secretariat of State, Holy See.

- **22nd July 2019**, together with the Reverend Professor Mícheál MacCraith, OFM, Emeritus Professor of Modern Irish at the National University of Ireland, Galway, and Geraint Evans, Senior Lecturer in English Language and Literature at Swansea University, Maurice Whitehead gave a paper at the XVIth International Congress of Celtic Studies held at Bangor University.

Entitled 'Newly discovered poems in Welsh and Irish on the life of Odoardo Farnese (1573–1626), cardinal protector of the Venerable English College, Rome, 1626', the paper analysed the general context, as well as the Welsh and Irish dimensions, of *Liber* 274 preserved in the VEC Archives. This remarkable illustrated volume, containing a complete record of the special decoration of the College Church for the solemn Requiem Mass held there following the death of the cardinal protector in 1626, also includes eight poems composed in the late cardinal's honour, written in the eight languages, including Welsh and Irish, then used in the College.

Accessions and donations to the Archives

The past academic year has again witnessed generous donations of pertinent archival material and books for the Schwarzenbach Reading Room, all of which are much appreciated.

Archival accessions

- A bound volume containing the annual *Report of the Association of the Venerable College of St Thomas de Urbe* for the years 1910–1913, together with rare printed copies of the Roman Scholarship Examinations held at St Bede's College, Manchester, 2nd–4th August 1910, and the Our Lady's Roman Scholarship Examinations, held at St Francis Xavier's College, Liverpool, 29th–31st July 1913. Presented by the Reverend Paul Daly.
- *Venerabile Collegio Inglese in Roma – Nel primo Centenario del suo ristabilimento 1818 – 18 Dicembre – 1918: discorso di Monsignor Giovanni Prior, Prelato Uditore di S. Romana Rota. Traduzione dall'inglese di Mons. Amleto G. Cicognani* (Subiaco: Tipografia dei Monasteri, 1919), 27pp., presented to the Archives on 13th May 2019 by Canon Thomas Atthill on the centenary of its publication.
- 'Memoirs of the Venerable English College, 1955–1962', by Anthony J. Grimshaw, typescript, 4pp., presented by Bernard Tucker.
- Michael Berry, 'Heraldry in the Venerable English College, Rome', Newsletter 81 (May 2019), pp.10–12, of the White Lion Society: A Society of Friends of HM College of Arms. Presented by the author.
- Thomas Finnigan (VEC, 1966–1970), Roman memoirs: 'Cigarettes and Acorns' and 'Something Unexpected', 7pp, typescript.
- A collection of fourteen cassette tape recordings of the *Schola* of the VEC singing in a variety of liturgical settings during the period 1977 to 1983. Presented by Fr Stephen Porter, a student at the VEC during this period, now based in California, this collection is an invaluable complement to copies of sheet music used in the College Church during the same period and recently transferred to the Archives. For this material, and for a collection of digitized copies of photographs taken at the VEC during his time as a student, we are indebted to Fr Porter.
- Personal certificates and diplomas, 1967–2006, and commemorative papal medals of the late Mgr Philip Holroyd, former Vice-Rector of the College, donated by his executors.

Donations of books

Books and pamphlets have been donated by the following:

- Birmingham Archdiocesan Archives
- Dr Rosemary Darby, University of Manchester
- Canon Anthony Dolan, Diocese of Nottingham
- Reverend Paul Fitzpatrick, Archdiocese of Birmingham
- Professor Paulina Kewes, University of Oxford
- Liverpool Hope University
- The Patrimony Committee of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, per Sophie Andreae
- St Edward's Parish, Windsor
- St Omers Press, Stonyhurst College
- The Spanish Embassy to the Holy See, Rome, per Angeles Tarrats Feliú
- Mgr Anthony Wilcox.

Towards the future of the VEC heritage collections

Given the expansion in the work of the Archives since 2015 and growing interest in the College's heritage collections, including its rare books, it is clear that current activity can only be sustained and future development achieved with the help of extra staff. Towards this end, two developments have taken place during the past year.

First, Archbishop Bernard Longley, as chair of the Trustees, has created an Archives' Appeal Committee chaired by Steve Baylis, Head of Development for the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Together with committee members, Geoffrey Fielding, Tom Harrison and Monsignor Anthony Wilcox, and with input from Maurice Whitehead, the new team has developed a 40-page business plan detailing the aims, objectives and aspirations for the College's heritage collections in the near future. The hope is that an endowment can be built up over time to allow the collections to be sustained and developed for posterity: many plans are currently afoot in the hope of achieving significant developments in the coming year.

In parallel with this, the Rector, with the invaluable assistance of two British subjects based in the USA, Vicki Downey, in New York City, and Mark Batey, in Florida, set up in the early months of 2019 the *North American Friends of the Venerable English College* (NAFVEC). This is now formally constituted and registered as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in the United States.

As recorded above, some of the founder members of NAFVEC made their first visit to the College on 8th May 2019 and work in developing the new organization, with a prime aim of its helping to secure the future of the College's heritage collections, is to begin in the second half of 2019.

Prayers are requested for the success of these important new initiatives and our thanks are due to the many members, visitors and friends of the Venerable English College who have worked so hard during the past year to take forward the work of the heritage collections.



MAURICE WHITEHEAD is the Schwarzenbach Research Fellow at the Venerable English College, Rome. He is also a Research Fellow at the British School at Rome, Honorary Professorial Fellow in Catholic Studies in the Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University, and Emeritus Professor of History at Swansea University.

Nova et Vetera

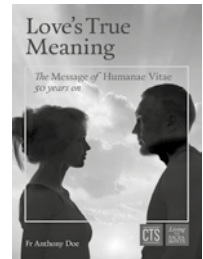
THEO SHARROCK



Once again, many Old Romans have been hitting the keyboard and producing new publications. The following titles have been brought to our attention and are available for purchase. These short reviews have been compiled from publishers' and promotional material as well as reviews.

Fr Anthony Doe – Love's True Meaning (CTS)

The 50th anniversary of the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, Fr Doe tell us, provides Catholics and others with the opportunity to rediscover how to live the true meaning of love, in all its aspects, and above all the gift of sexuality that finds its most creative expression in marriage and family life. This is particularly important today in a society that has reinterpreted love through the lens of a contraceptive culture causing terrible damage, both socially and spiritually. Fifty years on, Fr Doe asks whether we can grasp this opportunity to reclaim the wonderful truth of the Gospel message: that genuine love, respect for the dignity of others, and true generosity of heart develops within our humanity only through the presence of Jesus Christ himself. This short booklet also contains the entire text of *Humanae Vitae* with an explanation of the same.



FR ANTHONY DOE is a priest of the Diocese of Westminster. He studied at the Venerable English College and was ordained in 1981. He is a trained psychotherapist and has been the Spiritual Director at the VEC since 2015.

Mgr Tony Philpot – Spiritual Conferences

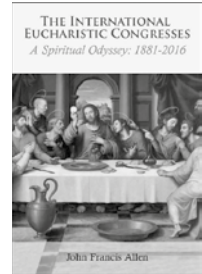
The late Mgr Tony Philpot, shared in his preaching and talks what flowed from faithful prayer and his years of parochial ministry. As Spiritual Director at the English College in Rome and throughout the British Isles and beyond, he helped form and renew seminarians and priests alike. This book of spiritual conferences is drawn from talks to those training to become priests or to those already serving as diocesan priests. For seminarians and priests this volume will be a resource for spiritual reading, days of recollection and retreats. Any Christian, however, will be nourished by the reflections contained within these pages.



MGR TONY PHILPOT was born in 1935 and trained for the priesthood at the Venerable English College. He was ordained in 1959 for the Diocese of Northampton before later joining the newly formed Diocese of East Anglia. He was Director of Villa Palazzola and then, from 2001 to 2006, Spiritual Director of the VEC, before later taking on the same position at the Pontifical Beda College in Rome. He died in 2016 at the Little Sisters of the Poor convent in London.

Mgr John Allen: International Eucharistic Congresses – A spiritual Odyssey – 1881-2016

International Eucharistic Congresses entered the mainstream of Catholic life in the 1880s. They have played a huge part in spreading the Church's social teaching; promoting early and frequent Communion; championing the Kingship of Christ; encouraging the worldwide mission of the Church; supporting the movement for peace after two world wars; deepening understanding and love of the Eucharist. The countries which have hosted these Congresses have been the first to benefit. Delegates from other countries have also taken valuable lessons back home. Nothing substantial however had been published in English to inform the general reader about the rich treasures offered by all these Congresses. Mgr Allen's clear style will appeal to all and his distilling of the meditations of some of the finest theologians in the world provides endless spiritual nourishment. Here we have an opening up of Eucharistic thought over many years, closely observing the way it has developed, and bringing us nearer to Christ the Bread of Life and His Mystical Body, the Church.



MGR JOHN ALLEN is the Senior Old Roman of the Diocese of Salford, having been ordained in 1962, the same month as attending the opening of the Second Vatican Council in St Peter's. He has attended all twelve International Eucharistic Congress since 1973 and continues to serve as Parish Priest of Our Lady of Grace, Prestwich.

Edited by Fr Andrew Pinsent – The History of Evil in the Medieval Age: 450-1450

The second volume of *The History of Evil* explores the philosophy of evil in the long Middle Ages. Starting from the Augustinian theme of evil as a deprivation or perversion of what is good, this period saw the maturation of concepts of natural evil, of evil as sin involving the will, and of malicious agents aiming to increase evil in general and sin in particular. Comprising fifteen chapters, the contributions address key figures of the Christian Middle Ages or traditions sharing some similar cultural backgrounds, such as medieval Judaism and Islam. Other chapters examine contemporaneous developments in the Middle East, China, India and Japan. The volume concludes with an overview of contemporary transpositions of Dante, illustrating the remarkable cultural influence of medieval accounts of evil today.



FR ANDREW PINSENT was ordained for the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton in 2005 having completed his studies at the Venerable English College. He previously worked as a research physicist at CERN and is currently Research Director of the Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion at the Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Oxford.



THEO SHARROCK is a third-year seminarian of the Diocese of Salford, studying theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

Schola Report 2018-19

ANDREW COY



Taking on the role of Schola Master at the beginning of this academic year was something of a challenge. While I am quite comfortable behind an organ, I had no previous experience of directing a choir when Fr Rector proposed the idea to me during the *villeggiatura* of 2018. I took on the role, certain that the long musical tradition upheld by the *Schola Cantorum* of the Venerable English College was about to come to a swift and discordant end. Fortunately, this has not been the case - due to the tremendous dedication and hard work of its members.

The Schola year began, as ever, with Martyrs' Day. Here, we sang *Desidero, Mi Jesu* by the contemporary American composer, Kevin Allen. The final verse of this Eucharistic motet proved especially appropriate for the liturgy of the day: 'Let it give grace while I breathe; in my final agony be it a pledge of future glory.'

The Advent Meditation this year unfolded under the theme: *In Hope We Were Saved*, devised by Oliver Welsford. Readings relating to this theme were masterfully chosen by Oliver, who also took a keen interest in the music with which the readings would be interspersed. The service began with the hymn, *Come Thou Redeemer of the Earth*, with the Schola singing the first verse at the entrance to the church before processing in. After hearing the words of Jeremiah exhorting the people to repentance, two sections from Handel's *Messiah* were sung by Benjamin Woodley: 'For behold, darkness shall cover the earth' and 'The people that walked in darkness'. This spellbinding performance opened the ears of the congregation to the reading which followed, in which Isaiah promises the Lord to be our light. Following this, we indulged in an old Schola favourite: *Adam Lay y-bounden*, arranged by Fr Rector. After a reading from Benedict XVI's *Spe Salvi*, we then sang a setting of Psalm 121 ('I will lift up mine eyes') by H. Walford-Davies (1869-1941). Unfortunately, the four-part setting proved a challenge in the early stages of rehearsal, and I am grateful to Fr Rector for providing a three-part arrangement which managed to retain as much of the original harmony as possible. A reading from Romans 8 followed, containing those words around which our Meditation was based: 'in this hope we were saved.' Giving the Schola some respite, and the congregation an opportunity for some singing, we then sang *A Great and Mighty Wonder*, accompanied with gusto by Sean Elliott on the organ.

After hearing the account of the dragon seeking to devour the new-born child in Revelation 12, the Schola then sang a setting of the *Ave Maria*, written by the Schola Master for the occasion. After the appropriately stark and penitential start to the service, we ended on a note that sang of the glorious renewal that comes from above. The final reading was taken from Revelation 21, in which Christ declares: 'Behold, I make all things new... I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.' This was followed by *O Regem Caeli* by Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611), whose priestly ordination took place in 1575 on exactly the same spot we sang his music. A mini-Schola consisting of Sean Elliott, Benjamin Woodley, Piotr Wygnanski, James Finnegan and myself sang this stunning hymn to the paradoxical beauty of the Incarnation: 'he lies in the manger and reigns in heaven, alleluia.'

After a much-needed rest, the baton was once again taken up in the New Year - this time to prepare for the Lenten and Easter music. As usual, we provided singers for the Station Mass



The Schola Cantorum sings at the Station Mass in San Lorenzo in Damaso. Photo: Alexander Balzanella

at San Lorenzo in Damaso. During Communion, the Schola sang *Si Iniquitates* by Samuel Wesley (1766-1837): a moving rendition which worked well in the generous acoustic. Lent also witnessed a very demanding and time-consuming preparation for the sung Passion on Good Friday. I am very grateful to James Finnegan, Piotr Wygnanski, David Irwin, Albert Lawes, Joachim Teigen, Sean Elliott and Theo Sharrock, and to Deacons Marco Egawhary, John Waters and Benjamin Woodley, for the many hours of preparation that this required. On the day, it was sung beautifully, reducing a number of the congregation to tears. We were also able to record the entire work this year, thanks to the technical know-how of Piotr Wygnanski - something which will undoubtedly prove useful in future years.

Something of a highlight of the Schola year is always our excursion to St Peter's Square to sing for the Easter Sunday morning Mass. This year was no exception, and we were joined by a large number of guests, posing as members of the *coro guida*, as well as nine men from the Beda College. Negotiating our way through the various brass bands, loudspeaker announcements and basilica bells was something of a challenge, and when we did manage to sing, we were never quite sure as to whether we were supposed to be, and if so, whether the microphones were even switched on. Nevertheless, adopting a suitably relaxed attitude to the whole affair, we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, and the weather - in stark contrast to previous years - proved ideal.

The Schola year finished with the feast of St Philip Neri, celebrated at Chiesa Nuova. Here, we sang Palestrina's *Iesu, Rex Admirabilis* during Communion - a piece familiar to most. Following this, as time was not of the essence, we sang another piece by Kevin Allen, *Ave Sacer Christi Sanguis*. As is often the case at this time of year, Schola numbers had dwindled, and singing in such a vast acoustic was a strain on all of our voices - not least my own, suffering from a particularly nasty cough at the time. However, it was a joyful and tuneful end to an eventful year. I am tremendously grateful to all the Schola members for their hard work throughout the year, and to Fr Rector for his practical support. A word of thanks must also go to Sean Elliott and Benjamin Woodley for their role in leading sectional rehearsals during the more intense periods of preparation. Thanks to them, and also to James Finnegan, for providing the College community with such fine music from the organ throughout the year. I look forward to whatever the upcoming year holds for the Schola, and will be offering prayers to St Cecilia for the sending of many good voices in the new academic year!



ANDREW COY is a fifth-year seminarian of the Diocese of Northampton, studying theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

Sports Report 2018-19

ANDREW COY



The past year has witnessed a number of exciting new developments in the VEC sporting world. The most visible of these is the new and improved gym, which has changed location and been given something of a makeover, under the watchful eye of Fr Vice-Rector. Where previously the gym was to be found in the Gradwell Room, this has now been transformed into a multi-purpose space for conferences. Slightly more controversial is the collection of bold artwork which now adorns the walls. However, while the artwork may not be to everyone's taste, the new gym certainly is. This is now located in the cellar underneath the Garden Room, which, until now, had been a dark and damp space, filled with junk and dead leaves. With some bright new lighting, smart flooring and whitewashed walls, it has been transformed into a very slick and professional-looking workout space. Air-conditioning, dehumidifiers, wall-to-wall mirrors and a wireless speaker add to the ambience and use of the gym by students seems to have intensified. While much of the original equipment has been retained, there are plans to obtain new, good quality gym equipment which will last. Undoubtedly, this will encourage more students to use the facilities more frequently. We are



The VEC football team at the 2019 Ragheed Ganni Tournament. From left to right: Joseph Rizk, Marco Egawahry, Martin Fyles, Dominic Jenkinson, Piotr Wygnanski, Joshua Dixon, Hai Nguyen.

very grateful indeed to the Roman Association for their generous contribution, which has helped to enable all this to take place.

In other news, football remains an unaccountably popular pastime for some of the students. While we did not win the Ragheed Ganni tournament this year, the football was well-played by our team, under the enthusiastic leadership of Dominic Jenkinson. Tuesday evening football outings to the Beda continue, and are an excellent way of strengthening friendships between our two seminaries. The vicious and bloody civil war that hides under the title of 'North-South football match' also took place during this year's *villeggiatura*. Unfortunately, the Sports Man - undoubtedly by this point the worst Sports Man in VEC history - was unable to be present. Rumours have it that the North won, but whether this was a 4-0 or a 5-0 victory could not be agreed upon. The Sports Man's suggestion that it might perhaps be better to call it a draw was flatly ignored, but no doubt all would agree that it is the participation, rather than the sporting victory, which is of greatest merit.

Otherwise, seminarians have found various other ways to shed puppy fat. Croquet, while hardly an intense workout, has been encouraged with the purchasing of a fine new croquet set. Ping-pong is also occasionally played, both in the College and at the Villa. Most popular of all, however, are the swimming pools. While it would be something of a stretch to refer to the horseplay that takes place in the water as 'swimming' it no doubt burns calories, and is thus, from a sporting perspective, undoubtedly a 'Good Thing'.



ANDREW COY is a fifth-year seminarian of the Diocese of Northampton, studying theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

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The Year in Pictures

THEO SHARROCK



The New Men and their Italian teachers pose for a photo in San Giovanni. Say 'formaggio'!



New Men Dave Bench, Martin Fyles, Joseph O'Brien, and Elliot Hanson sing the finale to their 'New Men's Show'. Photo: Alexander Balzanella



Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament during the first ever VEC 'Night of Light'.



Students and Fr Tony Curren go holly-picking to decorate the College. Photo: Joseph O'Brien



Sean Elliott directs the cantor group during Martyrs' Day Mass. Photo: Alexander Balzanella



Cardinal O'Brien celebrates Martyrs' Day Mass while Senior and Deputy Senior Students Marco Egawhary and Benjamin Woodley assist as deacons. Photo: Alexander Balzanella



Dave Bench and Rev. Ryan Service pose with the ladies who keep the VEC running.

Toby Duckworth and Albert Lawes discuss profound truths with Pope Benedict XVI after Martyrs' Day Lunch. Photo: Piotr Wygnanski



Martin Fyles reads during the Advent Meditation. Photo; Alexander Balzanella



Rev. Benjamin Woodley and Sean Elliott sing 'Tenor and Baritone' during the Advent Show.
Photo: Alexander Balzanella



Archbishop Patron Wong, Secretary for Seminaries, preaches during his visit to the VEC.
Photo: Alexander Balzanella



Fr Francis Murphy celebrates Mass at the Altar of the Crib in Santa Maria Maggiore at the beginning of the Seven Churches Walk. Photo: Piotr Wygnanski



A tired group of pilgrims pose in front of St Peter's after the Seven Churches Walk. Photo: Andrew Chase



Dominic Jenkinson pours out the last bit of soup at the Lenten Charity Lunch in the student kitchen. Photo: Marcin Mazur



Joseph O'Brien, Trym Hellevig, and Elliot Hanson entertain themselves by playing a game of Risk in the Palazzola Library. Photo: Piotr Wygnanski



Fr John Hemer blesses the olive branches at the start of the Palm Sunday Liturgy.
Photo: Alexander Balzanella



Sean Elliott lights the candles of his exquisitely decorated Altar of Repose.
Photo: Alexander Balzanella



Deacons John Waters, Benjamin Woodley and Marco Egawhary sing the Passion Narrative on Good Friday. Photo: Alexander Balzanella



Newly ordained VEC students Fr Peter Ellul (left) and Fr Aaryton Muscat (second right) with Archbishop Scicluna after their Ordination Mass in Malta. Photo: Archdiocese of Malta



James Finnegan and Joseph Rizk take a break from the celebrations in Malta to pose in front of the harbour.



Above: Students take a photo with Milena and Stefano who live in front of Sant' Andrea della Valle after inviting them to lunch for Milena's birthday. Photo: Benjamin Woodley



Left: The mighty John Waters stands in front of his namesake during the College Gita to Villa d'Este. Photo: Piotr Wygnanski



Thurifer Theo Sharrock leads out members of the College among the servers at the Papal Mass for Pentecost Sunday in St Peter's Square.



Students take a well-deserved free-weekend break in Ischia before the summer exam season begins. Photo: Piotr Wagnanski



Left: Fr Hai Nguyen gives his first priestly blessing to Andrew Coy. Photo: Theo Sharrock

Below: New Lectors Trym Hellevig, Joachim Teigen, Edward Hauschild, and Theo Sharrock with Archbishop Arthur Roche after Mass. Photo: Alexander Balzanella





New Candidates
Andrew Coy and
Albert Lawes with
Archbishop Charles
Scicluna. Photo:
Edward Hauschild

New Acolytes Elliot
Hanson and Toby
Duckworth with
Bishop Paul Tighe.
Photo: Alexander
Balzanella



Bishop Alan Hopes
prays at the end of
the Litany of Saints
as the deacons-to-be
prostrate themselves.
Photo: Theo Sharrock



Deacons new and old pose with Bishop Hopes along with staff, priest guests and servers after the Diaconate Ordination Mass. Photo: Theo Sharrock



THEO SHARROCK is a third-year seminarian of the Diocese of Salford, studying theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

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The College Diary 2018-19

ANDREW COY



Monday 1st October

The year begins, as ever, with the annual *ben tornati* party on the roof terrace. Returning students - well-rested and re-affirmed after their pastoral placements - rub shoulders with the fresh-faced new arrivals. This year we welcome ten 'newbies', although not all of them are first years in the conventional sense. We welcome Fr Michael Grace, who hails from Australia. Deacons Peter Ellul and Aayrton Muscat join us from Malta, while the College risks taking on yet another Scandinavian in the form of Joseph Rizk, from Sweden. Elliot Hanson of Cardiff provides the College with a Welsh presence for the first time in a long while, although there are thankfully no plans to now identify ourselves as the 'Venerable English and Welsh College'. James Finnegan and Martin Fyles join us from Liverpool, while David Bench adds to the already sizeable Birmingham clan. Joseph O'Brien of Hexham and Newcastle offers his own contribution to the growing array of regional accents. We also welcome back Albert Lawes, the Editor, who returns to the College after having spent some time in a parish.

Tuesday 2nd October

After the excitement of meeting and greeting each other, the College community is plunged into silence as the individually-guided beginning-of-year retreat commences at Palazzola.

Sunday 7th October

The blanket of silence is lifted after Sunday Mass, accompanied by the enthusiastic partaking of DBLs on the terrace. Although all are undoubtedly eager to return to Rome and begin the rigours of academic study at the Pontifical Universities, the coach breaks down in the Villa driveway, forcing everyone to spend a few more moments in the Alban Hills.

Within seconds of returning to the College, Alex Balzanella decides it is high time for him to injure himself again. Cutting his finger open on a razor blade while reaching into his bag, several trips to the hospital are required before undergoing a skin graft. The next week sees him with the middle finger of his left hand in a comically large bandage.

By the end of the day, the fourth-year seminarians are safely back in Rome, having spent the past week completing their extended pastoral placements in their respective dioceses.

Monday 8th October

While a 6:45am start might otherwise cause resentment among the student body, the prospect of Lauds and Mass in Italian gives everyone that extra motivation to spring out of bed on this first morning of the new semester. Not everyone seems so enthusiastic, though, as shortly after Mass Connor Hey announces via the noticeboard that he is leaving.

After Italian Vespers, seminarians flock to the noticeboard to see whether any other victims have been claimed by foreign-language liturgy.

Tuesday 9th October

The community are more-or-less adjusted to the new timetable, in which lunch is now a community event where all are expected to be present. Some find this more difficult to adjust to than others, and Deacon John Waters raises both smiles and eyebrows by bringing his own packed lunch to the refectory - something which continues well into the year. The large numbers in the refectory this week are augmented by those present in Rome for the Synod on the Youth - including Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop Charles Scicluna, Bishop Mark O'Toole and Bishop Ralph Heskett.



Aayrton Muscat, Hai Nguyen and Elliot Hanson prepare to indulge themselves with whatever the kitchen has to offer today. Photo: Marcin Mazur

Sunday 14th October

The College head to St Peter's Square for the canonisation of Pope Paul VI, Oscar Romero, Francesco Spinelli, Vincenzo Romano, Maria Katharina Kasper, Nazaria of Saint Teresa of Jesus and Nunzio Sulprizio.

After Vespers we say a fond farewell to Connor Hey, who travels back to England. Not so fond, of course, as to exclude the removal of any desirable items of furniture from his room within minutes of his departure...

Thursday 18th October

The fourth-year seminarians travel to San Vito Romano for a three-day retreat. The first night witnesses Sean Elliott informing the dear sisters that '*il vino non è buono*', but fortunately a crisis in relations is avoided.

Sunday 21st October

Cardinal Vincent Nichols presides at morning Mass. After lunch, the community make the journey, with the Cardinal, to his titular church of Sant'Alfonso di Liguori all'Esquilino to dedicate the year to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour.

Wednesday 24th October

The New Men are afforded the opportunity to recover from their experience of seminary life so far by having a little 'rest and recreation' at the Villa. A *gita* to Nettuno and Anzio proves popular, while the evenings are whiled away at the bar, to the sound of both guitar and piano.

Friday 26th October

A momentary slip of the tongue while reading at Mass leads Sean Elliott to exhort the community to live in 'complete selfishness'. Not that any encouragement is necessary, as the room ballot brings out the animalistic instinct to fight to obtain the largest (and most finely furnished) nest.

Sunday 28th October

While most birthdays in College are marked by the singing of 'Happy Birthday' during breakfast, Fr Rector's birthday is apparently deserving of something a little more special. Benjamin Woodley cuts the Rector short during grace before lunch with an explosive and operatic '*Glory!*', before starting the more conventional and familiar rendition of 'Happy Birthday' to a stunned refectory.

Monday 29th October

The storm which has been battering Rome these past few days has picked up enough force to close the schools in the city, including the Angelicum. The Gregorian, however, either out of a lack of concern for her students, or being in a better state of repair than Mother Ange, opts to remain open.

Thursday 1st November

Once more, the whole host of heaven comes to our aid and shuts the Pontifical Universities for a day. The combination of a *ponte* followed by a free weekend offers the opportunity for a four-day break. The solemnity is marked with Mass at 9:30am, though Mother Nature rather churlishly opts out of the celebrations, providing relentless and torrential rain that continues over the next few days.

Wednesday 7th November

Fr Jan Nowotnik celebrates his 20th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood, and presides at evening Mass. A small group sing Byrd's *Mass for Three Voices*, which adds an air of solemnity to the occasion. With characteristic mischievousness, James Finnegan brings everyone back down to earth with his final organ improvisation on the theme of *Ad multos annos!*

Sunday 11th November

The Basilica of San Silvestro in Capite once more hosts the College community, along with the Scots College and Beda College, for the celebration of a Requiem Mass commemorating the war dead. Mgr Phelim Rowland of Westminster presides, while the English College provides servers and music. In an ostentatious display of musical snobbery, the English College also provides its own organ, the small electronic organ in San Silvestro used in previous years having been judged inadequate. Instead, the sound of the organ of St Anne's parish church in Moseley fills the basilica, thanks to the Hauptwerk computer programme, some powerful speakers and the technological know-how of Piotr Wygnanski. Choirmaster Sean Elliott - never one to shy away from a solo performance - sings Dido's Lament from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* with great accuracy and feeling.

After lunch, we gather in the College church for a moment of silence to mark the centenary of the ending of the First World War. In union with churches across the globe, the bell is tolled at 13:30 Italian time. Fr Vice-Rector assumes the role of campanologist and ascends the bell tower with a hammer. Unfortunately, the bells sustain no damage.

Friday 16th November

Deacon John Waters makes a courageous and thoroughly unconvincing attempt to assure us of his 'normality' during a homily at Mass: 'with a bird-watching mother and a train-spotting father, it's a miracle I'm as normal as I am.'

In the afternoon, the refectory is filled with flowers, candles and busts wearing bejewelled mitres - indicating that the time has come for the ontological change of the New Men into First Years (after a healthy dose of ritual humiliation). Drinks follow Vespers, before all pile into the refectory to experience the Italian understanding of a traditional English dinner. Oliver Welsford assumes the role of Master of Ceremonies, and invites us to 'kick off our shoes and have a good screech on this 439th New Man show'. First up is tomato soup, which is as alarming in its taste as it is in colour. More successful is the fish and chips (complete with mushy peas) and apple crumble. Joachim Teigen and Trym Hellevig make a desperate plea for attention by singing something indistinguishable (probably Norwegian), while Theo Sharrock holds everyone on his table in a state of fervent excitement by offering his thoughts on the kilogram.

After our hearty feed, and having been berated by MC Welsford for having handled the whole affair 'with all the efficiency of a nationalised industry', we descend to the crypt to be entertained by the New Men. Here, the considerable talents of our first years are put to surreal use, and we witness what can only be described as a freak show of outstanding quality. The evening's compère is a very convincing Archbishop Malcolm McMahon (James Finnegan) - who occasionally drifts into equally convincing impersonations of the staff (very brave). Joseph Rizk and Martin Fyles appear in wigs, and photographer Alex Balzanella, ever on the prowl for blackmail material, springs into action. Fr Michael Grace offers Australian reflections, while Joseph O'Brien recites something regional from the lectern. Deacons Peter Ellul and Aayrton Muscat demonstrate their considerable vocal ability with a few Maltese songs. Perhaps the highlight of the entertainment is a musical reflection on English College food - always an easy target for a 'screech'. The New Men exhibit great confidence in conveying to the Vice-Rector their thoughts:

*Food, terrible food,
With main courses that feature
Meat culled from a strange
Unidentified creature.
It could be a badger, or
It could be a seagull.
It's tricky to say for sure,
Could - be - a beagle...*
(Sung to the Tune, 'Food! Glorious Food!')

Saturday 17th November

A very quiet morning for most, though a dedicated few head up to the Irish College for the annual Ragheed Ganni tournament. Captained by Dominic Jenkinson, the team come joint-third out of ten. Later, all head to the Villa for a Human Development weekend.

Tuesday 20th November

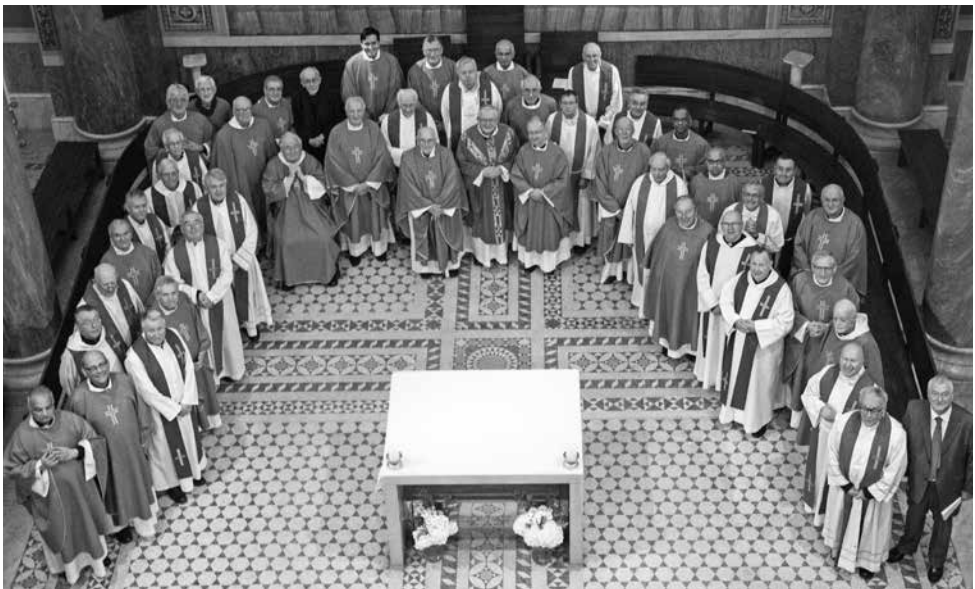
Choir practice tonight is led by Edward 'Show-Tunes' Hauschild, who, in a moment of supreme irony, exhorts the community to sing with softer voices during the liturgy. 'You shouldn't be aiming to be heard above everyone else', he explains, as looks of bemused incredulity are exchanged across the church. Later that evening, Edward empties a Trastevere *trattoria* with his enthusiastic rendition of 'Waltzing Matilda'.

Saturday 24th November

The annual forty hours of exposition begin - this year a little earlier, on account of Martyrs' Day falling next weekend. The talks are given by Mgr John Armitage, who reflects on that infamous line of a beloved hymn: *change and decay in all around I see*. While Mgr Armitage could well have taken this opportunity to reflect on the weight-gain or hair-loss which seems to be part-and-parcel of seminary life, he rather charitably chooses not to. Instead, he offers fiery and passionate talks on the need for a renewed sanctity in the Church, being the only effective way to combat the self-destruction so apparent in modern society.

Thursday 29th November

The annual gathering of the Jubilarians takes place. Evening Mass is celebrated by Bishop Peter Doyle, who celebrates 50 years of priesthood this year. *Auguri*, Bishop Peter!



The VEC hosts the Jubilarians, celebrating many years of faithful service. Photo: Alexander Balzanella

Saturday 1st December

*When priests, like sudden angels, came
To light in distant shires the flame
That faith's dull embers cherished,
When Mass and shrift were sought for still
In silent farm, on lonely hill,
Ere ancient memories perished.*

A visibly emotional cantor group lead the opening hymn for morning Mass on Martyrs' Day, which - to everyone's disappointment - falls on a Saturday this year. Mass is celebrated by Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, followed by DBLs and a hearty lunch. A brief respite from culinary and liturgical activity is followed by Vespers (always interesting) and the Veneration of the Relics in the evening.

Sunday 2nd December

The first Sunday of Advent, and Fr John Metcalfe presides at Mass. Having subjected the community to 'Joy to the World' last Eastertide, it seems fitting that today's offertory hymn is 'Now the Green Blade Riseth'.

Monday 3rd December

James Finnegan cheers everyone up by getting his finger stuck in his coffee cup during breakfast. A little olive oil and all is better.

Wednesday 5th December

More rectorial entertainment is provided by Oliver Welsford, who accidentally sits on his satsuma at dinner. The traumatised fruit is consumed nonetheless.

Saturday 8th December

In a particularly cruel twist of fate, the feast of the Immaculate Conception also falls on a Saturday this year, stripping us of the pleasure of taking a day off the universities to honour our Blessed Mother. Nevertheless, a (relatively small) group head up to the Villa for Hollycam, where any feelings of disappointment or betrayal are quickly smothered by an avalanche of pasta, potato pie, and apple crumble. Rendered immobile and docile, the provision of *digestivi* further contributes to the Christmassy schmaltz. Joseph O'Brien, being the baby of the house, ascends to the refectory pulpit to intone *The Holly and the Ivy*, which is taken up by everyone else with rather a little too much enthusiasm. The carol-singing continues, and Oliver Welsford, as seems to have become Venerable Tradition in recent years, takes possession of that hallowed line: *Five Gold Rings!* Later in the evening, Benjamin Woodley reduces a roomful of guests to tears with a spell-binding performance of *Clair de Lune*.

Sunday 9th December

In his maiden voyage driving from the Villa to Rome, Joseph O'Brien drives into a rut at speed, causing the wheel rim to fall off. While alarming noises are heard from the rear wheels, Sean Elliott makes emergency phone calls from the back seat crying for help. Car Man, Dominic Jenkinson, comes to the rescue and offers his expert opinion, kicking the back wheel and declaring 'the best thing to do in these situations is just coast home'. While the passengers survive the nail-biting journey, all question whether they would endure Joseph's driving a second time...

Thursday 13th December

The bags of holly harvested at the Villa are put to good use and scattered throughout the College, lending a festive air and an authenticity perhaps lacking in this year's (artificial) tree. A rather unconvincing 'Auguri' is hung above the entrance to the refectory. A particularly classy touch is the wrapping of tinsel round the bannisters. Fr Vice-Rector decides more is needed and buys the entire stock of tinsel in a nearby shop, before Theo Sharrock discovers a vast quantity in a second-floor cupboard.

Saturday 15th December

After a full day of rehearsals, all is in place for the annual Advent Meditation and Show. This year's theme is chosen by Oliver Welsford: 'In Hope We Were Saved.' The readings, starting with Jeremiah and ending with Revelation, present the pregnant history of

mankind's longing for salvation. The readings are complemented by music sung by the Schola. The Diarist is thrust into the spotlight in his other, more public, role of Schola Master, and, in a bid to distract attention away from the dazzlingly elaborate lace patterns of Ben Hilton's cotta, appears clad in a winged surplice. This, combined with the singing of a little Anglican psalm chant, lends a very English feel to the evening. Indeed, one guest is overheard leaving the church that she had forgotten she was in Rome - undoubtedly the highest compliment we could have received.

Moving from the sublime to the ridiculous with an alacrity only to be found at the English College, we descend to the crypt for the Show. This, too, is thoroughly English in its nature, being characterised by an almost offensive surreality. James Finnegan, once more taking up the position of compère, breaks the ice by insulting everyone in the room. We then witness Edward Hauschild playing Cardinal Hacker in an adaptation of *Yes, Prime Minister*, before launching into a full-throated rendition of *A Spaceman Came Travelling*. Their ears ringing, and with one eye trained on the fire escape, members of the audience are further entertained with a rehash of Monty Python's 'Argument Clinic', during which Alex Balzanella punches John Waters in the face, and comes alarmingly close to hitting him over the head with a chair.



James Finnegan, Benjamin Woodley, Andrew Coy and Sean Elliott all decked-out for the festive frivolities. Merry Christmas!
Photo: Alexander Balzanella

Sunday 16th December

The Advent Meditation and Show continues for its second night, with the traditional 'Producer's Party' in the Common Room afterwards.

Monday 17th December

The Schola Master rises at noon.

Wednesday 19th December

After the evening Mass, the community gathers in the *salotto* as usual for prosecco. The appearance of large trays of 'pigs in blankets' indicates that the Christmas Dinner has begun. This is a tradition that has been reinstated in lieu of the Candidacy celebrations (now moved to the summer), and hopefully one that will stick. Turkey, brussels sprouts, carrots, potatoes and a fine Christmas pudding made by Barbara Donovan are all washed down with a little Chianti, courtesy of the Bridgettine sisters. Brandy butter and cranberry sauce complete the festal array. Dominic Jenkinson is unable to control his excitement and begins throwing corks around the refectory. Fortunately, we retire swiftly to the Common Room, where *digestivi* soothe our tired and overworked stomachs. This evening also gives us an opportunity to formally say farewell to Joshua Dixon, who has discerned to leave formation and continue academic studies.

Friday 21st December

A bizarre-looking group of young men clad in tweed, red socks and battered brogues gather round the piano displayed in the departure lounge of Fiumicino Airport as one of them hammers out some Bach Preludes. It can only mean one thing: the VEC are off home! Unfortunately, the sighting of drones at Gatwick Airport and the ensuing chaos mean that Oliver Welsford and Alex Balzanella must remain in Rome for an extra day, but eventually all find their way back to spend Christmas with family and friends.

Sunday 6th January

After an all-too-brief holiday, the students - some of them noticeably plumper than when they departed - return to the College.

Monday 7th January

The annual Epiphany Party takes place after dinner, featuring the usual combination of chocolate, Chianti and somewhat repetitious accounts of how one's holiday has been.

Saturday 12th January

The community head up once more to the Villa for a Human Development weekend. In the excitement, Oliver Welsford manages to rip his only pair of trousers.

Wednesday 16th January

Fr Vice-Rector begins the day by brushing his teeth with shaving foam. At least things can only get better...

Thursday 17th January

In light of the upcoming Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the Spiritual Conference tonight is given by Professor Dimitrios Keramidas, who speaks on relations between Catholics and Orthodox. Joseph Rizk nearly jeopardises aforementioned relations by condemning Gregory Palamas as a schismatic and a heretic. After a brief theological joust, the two parties agree to disagree, and the ecumenical goodwill continues.

Friday 18th - Sunday 20th January

A free weekend, which seminarians with any sense spend at their desks preparing for the upcoming exams. Fr Andrew Chase, Fr Francis Murphy, Joachim Teigen and the Diarist head to Ovindoli for a spot of skiing. Life evidently being valued as little as academic success, the battered and unpredictable Fiat Stilo is the vehicle of choice to ascend the mountain. Unfortunately, the group does not even leave Rome before a flat tyre brings the jolly outing to a halt. The replacement tyre rather churlishly also proves punctured, meaning a trip to a nearby garage. Having reached the snowy peaks, the Diarist impresses everyone with a manly display of competence in fitting the snow



Man vs. Machine. Fr Andrew Chase refuses to be beaten by a flat tyre. Photo: Fr Francis Murphy

chains on the rear wheels. After a great deal of skidding and a near-death experience, it becomes apparent that the Stilo is, in fact, a forward-drive car. Further vehicular drama is experienced on the return journey, when the snow chains become stuck while descending a mountain in the dark. After much physical exertion on the part of Frs Chase and Murphy, it is the Diarist's tin of Vaseline which saves the day.

Tuesday 22nd January

Two days into examtide and Sean Elliott shares his preferred methods of revision: 'There's nothing better than a siesta after breakfast. The only problem is that lunch gets in the way.'

Wednesday 30th January

After spending some time in Australia, Fr Michael Grace returns to us today. Welcome back, Fr!

Saturday 9th February

Theo Sharrock returns to Rome after a post-exam break in Athens. More distressing still is that he arrives alone, having departed with Joachim Teigen. It soon becomes apparent that Joachim has lost his passport somewhere in Greece and is stranded in Athens for the time being. Joachim receives a one-word email from Fr Pastoral Tutor. Nonetheless, reassuring messages are sent by the exile to members of the community, assuring us that he will make the most of his time while he is there...

Monday 11th February

A familiar face to many, though a stranger to some, David Irwin rejoins the community. *Ben tornato!*

In an unrelated note, displayed in the Common Room, Matthew King announces to the community that he is to return to Portsmouth Diocese at the end of the academic year, in order to prepare for priestly ordination in a parish setting. Undoubtedly, an effective way of escaping the upcoming Senior Student elections...

Friday 15th February

Having been subject to early-morning screechings and generous gifts of white 'deposits' on the terrace these past few years, an elaborate system of wires is set in place over the College rooftop, along with artificial owls and crows. A truly commendable effort to keep the seagulls away.

Wednesday 20th February

While Wednesday mornings normally afford the opportunity for an extra half an hour's sleep, Edward Hauschild manages to wake everyone on the Common Room corridor at 5:30am, after leaving his iPad in the Common Room overnight. This uncharacteristic display of absent-mindedness leaves Edward very unpopular for the rest of the day.

Thursday 21st February

Those preparing to receive the ministries of lectorate and acolytate, as well as the candidates-to-be, head to Bagnoregio for a few days' retreat. Sean Elliott continues his crusade against the hospitality of Italian nuns by bringing his own pillows, while lamenting the 'distinct lack of comfortable chairs.'

Tuesday 26th February

Dominic Jenkinson is announced as our new Senior Student.

Wednesday 27th February

Alex Balzanella is announced as our new Deputy Senior Student.

Thursday 28th February

After lunch, the seminarians gather sheepishly outside Fr Rector's door, awaiting their new house jobs. David Irwin is flung into the deep end, bagging himself the enviable position of Choirmaster. Elliot Hanson also receives something of a baptism of fire by being appointed Master of Ceremonies.

Friday 1st March

Tonino is spotted prowling the College clutching a rifle. Fortunately, seminarians are not his intended target; it is merely an intensification of the war against Rome's seagulls. While there is a certain *je ne sais quoi* to this armed figure silhouetted against the early morning sun, more peaceful chores need attending to. The red dragon of Wales soon emerges fluttering in the wind, side-by-side the papal keys, adding a splash of colour to the only-too-colourful Via di Monserrato.

With the presence of a Welshman in College, the feast of St David becomes a solemnity, which is marked by an evening Mass and a festal supper. The provision of *aperitivi*, as well as post-cenal port and cheese are welcome additions to a hearty feast. As the Welsh blood within him begins to warm itself, Elliot Hanson ascends to the refectory pulpit and, after a short speech, intones 'O Land of My Fathers'. Despite very few members of the community being familiar with either the words or the tune, all throw themselves gallantly into the spirit of things. The climactic '*Wales, Wales!*' of the chorus was surely never as tuneless and lacking in rhythm as tonight... but our hearts were with it.

Thursday 7th March

The deacons-to-be, along with Ryan Service and Fr Anthony Doe, head for the small Lazio town of Farfa for a retreat. In search of peace and quiet, it certainly helps to be 'far, far' away from the chaos of Rome.

Friday 8th March

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth visits the College, and is greeted by the Welsh flag fluttering outside the main entrance, one week on from its last appearance. Bishop Robert Barron is, by chance, also lingering outside the College at this time, and joins the Parliamentary party for the tour. A particular highlight is the viewing of various treasures from the College archives. The Diarist, one week into his new job as Student Archivist, finds himself fielding questions relating to vellum, temperature control and international funding, and considers whether a discreet resignation from the position would be better for everyone concerned.

Saturday 16th March

Another Human Development weekend at the Villa, in which we explore 'The Art of Dying Well'. Members of the Beda College, in a purely professional capacity, also join us for this conference.

Monday 18th March

James Abbott and Marcin Mazur arrive at the College, with the intention of capturing aspects of seminary life in video and photo. As the cameras roll at lunch, there seems to be marked improvement in table manners and quality of conversation. Surely, just a coincidence...

Tuesday 19th March

A floral display of piety marks the solemnity, as a vase of fragrant lilies is placed at the feet of the statue of St Joseph by Fr Francis Murphy. The appearance of prosecco and *bigne* at lunch further inspires an intensified devotion among the brethren to this great saint. An evening Mass is presided over by Fr Anthony Doe.

Thursday 21st March

Benjamin Woodley raises a few smiles at Mass as, clad in a purple dalmatic, he proclaims the Gospel: 'There was a rich man who used to dress in purple and fine linen and feast magnificently every day.'

Monday 25th March

A mid-morning fire alarm forces a sheepish crowd of seminarians onto the Via di Monserrato. No doubt their absence at the Pontifical Universities today is in honour of our Blessed Mother. The solemnity is marked by an evening Mass, which is presided over by Archbishop Jorge Carlos Patrón Wong. The Archbishop preaches on Mary's 'yes' and our own 'yes' which we must offer to the Lord in joyfully living out our vocations. After joining us for supper, the Archbishop answers questions in the Garden Room, where group photographs are also taken.

Tuesday 26th March

The Wiseman Society hosts a talk in the College crypt, given by Fr Marcus Holden and entitled, 'Making Angels of the Angles'. Fr Holden reflects on the mission of St Augustine to England and what lessons can be learned from his challenges and successes in our continued mission today. It also marks the final talk given with Oliver Welsford acting as chair, with the Editor now preparing to take on the role.

Wednesday 27th March

The community bid a fond farewell to Oliver Welsford, who has discerned to leave formation. He himself leaves a few parting words of Jennifer Paterson via the College WhatsApp group: 'treats all round: I'm off to Capri!'

Friday 29th March

The new gym officially opens, which has been moved into the underground cellars beneath the Garden Room. Whitewashed walls, new air conditioning and de-humidifiers, as well as wall-to-wall mirrors contribute to a very slick and professional-looking space. Will this induce seminarians to make good use of it? Only time will tell...

Saturday 30th March

A 6:30am start for a sizeable group of seminarians, student priests and staff as they set out on the Seven Churches' Walk. Unlike in recent years, the weather is glorious: neither wet nor hot. Fr Francis Murphy celebrates Mass at the Altar of the Crib in Santa Maria Maggiore,

before we move on to San Lorenzo. On the way, we almost literally run into Alex Balzanella, who has opted to run the route alone in the opposite direction. At each of the churches, reflections are given by students, and the only downer on the day is our arriving at St Peter's too late to enter. In the evening, a hearty feast of chilli con carne is enjoyed in the Common Room, prepared by Dominic Jenkinson, in what has become Venerable Tradition.

Sunday 31st March

Those who opted to remain in bed on their day off are afforded the opportunity to visit at least one of the aforementioned churches, as we head to the Pontifical Beda College for the biennial Lenten Oasis. Mass is followed by drinks in the garden and a splendid lunch.

Monday 1st April

The annual Bishops' Visitation begins, as Archbishop Bernard Longley, Bishop Terence Drainey, and Bishop Mark O'Toole arrive in College. We also welcome Christopher Archibald, who begins a three-month internship, assisting Professor Maurice Whitehead in the Archives.

Tuesday 2nd April

6:30am, and the Schola are already assembled in the Garden Room, warming their voices for the Station Mass, celebrated today in our parish church of San Lorenzo in Damaso. This year's celebrant is Bishop Terence Drainey, who is assisted by Deacons Marco Egawhary and John Waters.



Andrew Coy, aka The Schola Master, prepares the Schola Cantorum for a rendition of *Si Iniquitates* by Samuel Wesley (1766-1837) at San Lorenzo in Damaso. Photo: Alexander Balzanella

After Vespers, a reception is held in College to mark a number of significant events. In the presence of Urs Schwarzenbach, Archbishop Bernard Longley opens the new Schwarzenbach Reading Room. Formerly the College bar, this room will now be available to students and visiting scholars who wish to explore the collection of rare books and documents contained within the Archives. At dinner, Fr Rector takes the opportunity to pay tribute to Peter Horgan and Terry Forbes, two outgoing Trustees, who have devoted many years of service to the College. Fr Rector explains to the community that it is largely thanks to Peter and Terry that most of the rooms are now ensuite, prompting an enthusiastic and long-lasting round of applause. With two of the College's great benefactors present at the meal, heartfelt thanks are also given to Urs Schwarzenbach and Pam Coote, who have contributed so much to the seminary through their friendship and generosity.

Saturday 6th April

Tourists and locals walking down the Via di Monserrato tonight are greeted by the smell of incense and the sight of candles flickering outside the College church. The church doors onto the street are opened for the second 'Night of Light', organised by Toby Duckworth, in which those passing are invited to enter and encounter Christ in the Blessed Sacrament and the sacrament of Confession. Benediction is given at 10:45pm.

Sunday 7th April

We are joined for Mass and lunch by twenty-five monastic formators from around the world, headed by Fr Mark Butlin OSB.

Thursday 11th April

With Easter falling so late this year, many are showing signs of weariness and the need for a holiday. Head sacristan, Joseph Rizk, accidentally sets out the Missal on the lectern and the Lectionary on the credence table, leading to a moment of confusion during Mass. At breakfast, Elliot Hanson is overseen having a conversation with the milk jug.

Friday 12th April

A day for which many were preparing to witness Brexit finally take place. As it happens, it has been delayed to 31st October.

Saturday 13th April

The community head up to the *anticamera di Paradiso* once more - this time for our Holy Week retreat, which lasts until Tuesday morning. Due to a new tax on coaches in Rome, we are driven up in slick and very comfortable black taxis. Hurrah for the delinquent Roman authorities! The retreat-giver is Fr John Hemer, a Mill Hill father, who also teaches at Allen Hall.

Sunday 14th April

Palm Sunday. A beautiful red fiddleback, dating from the late nineteenth century and recently discovered by the sacristy team in a drawer, is brought out and worn by Fr John Hemer, who preaches powerfully on the nature of Christ's entry into Jerusalem.

As the sun sets, the weather takes a turn for the worse, and soon a fierce storm is raging immediately above the Villa. During Vespers, the church is illuminated periodically by flashes of brilliant blue light, and the Diarist finds himself pulling out the 32-foot stops on the organ in order to contend with the searing claps and thunderous roars coming from above. At supper, the silence takes a somewhat passive aggressive tone, as the Editor is the last to finish, clearly in no hurry to polish off his apple.

Monday 15th April

Joseph O'Brien celebrates his 21st birthday. While he will be able to celebrate it with due aplomb tomorrow evening, for now he must make do with sympathetic smiles and pats on the back.

During silent dinner, Theo Sharrock raises a few eyebrows by drinking sixteen glasses of water. It later emerges that this water would have been better used elsewhere, as news of the tragic fire at Notre Dame filters through.

Tuesday 16th April

The retreat ends, and we return to College in order to prepare for the Triduum liturgies.

Wednesday 17th April

Concerns are raised over the sanity of our head sacristan, Joseph Rizk, who is spotted ironing the tiled floor in the sacristy.

Thursday 18th April

The College begins to fill with guests and family members. None are put to better use than James Finnegan's grandmother, who kindly assists Sean Elliott in the preparation of a truly splendid Altar of Repose in the Martyrs' Chapel. We outdo ourselves this year, as lemon trees and other large potted shrubberies are brought in, as well as the usual abundance of lilies. Fr John Metcalfe presides at Mass, during which several visitors are moved to tears. Later, many seminarians take the opportunity to visit the various Altars of Repose throughout the city, while others remain in the Martyrs' Chapel, where there is watching until midnight.

Friday 19th April

Fr Vice-Rector presides at the Good Friday liturgy, in which the College church is fuller than it has been for many years. William Byrd's setting of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John is sung, with Benjamin Woodley as the Evangelist, Marco Egawhary as Christ, and John Waters as Synagoga. The crowd parts are sung by a Schola. In the evening, there is



'Behold, the Wood of the Cross!' Fr John Flynn presides at the Passion of the Lord, flanked by candle-bearers Dave Bench and Matthew King. Photo: Alexander Balzanella

a screening of *The Passion* in the Common Room, while some head to the Colosseum for the Stations of the Cross with Pope Francis.

Saturday 20th April

The sun sets on a full day of musical and liturgical rehearsals, and the garden is illuminated by the flickering light of the Paschal fire. Fr Rector presides, while the Exultet is proclaimed beautifully by Benjamin Woodley. The view from the Tribune of a church illuminated solely by candlelight is thrilling, while the music and flowers only add to what is undoubtedly the most beautiful and uplifting liturgy of the year. Afterwards, prosecco and *colomba* are enjoyed in the Garden Room.



The light from the Paschal Candle is passed around, illuminating the dark. Photo: Alexander Balzanella

Sunday 21st April

Surrexit Dominus de sepulcro, alleluia! A group of forty set out to sing at St Peter's, consisting of VEC and Beda seminarians, as well as family and friends. The weather, for once, proves fine: neither wet, nor too hot. Our band of merry Englishmen compete gallantly against brass bands, basilica bells and the German College. After a splendid lunch, many head home for the holidays, though some remain in Rome with their families. Others head to Malta...

Saturday 27th April

Peter Ellul and Aayrton Muscat are ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Charles Scicluna in the co-cathedral of St John in Valletta. A good number from the English College are present and come back plump and sun-kissed, having made the most of Maltese hospitality.

Tuesday 30th April

Having fallen during the Easter Octave, the feast of St George is marked today. Fr Rector presides at an evening Mass, before a festal meal in the refectory. As is to be expected on such occasions, the food takes a suitably English theme: tomato soup, fish and chips and what looks to be a variation on Victoria Sponge. Tawny port and blue cheese polish everything off, before Dominic Jenkinson, Alex Balzanella and John Waters ascend to the pulpit and offer the community a unique re-interpretation of Shakespeare's finest works. An enthusiastic rendition of *Jerusalem* then follows. The Editor, fuelled either by fervent patriotism or a little too much port, seizes a nearby sword



Patriotic fervour in full flow at the VEC refectory on the Solemnity of St George.

during the second verse and begins to wield it manfully. Thankfully, no injuries are sustained and the sword is once more laid at the feet of Our Lady of Walsingham.

Wednesday 1st May

Feast after feast, as today we mark St Joseph the Worker. As the rest of Italy deems it fitting to take the day off, so do we. Many are grateful for the lie in, with the tuneless roar of patriotic anthems still ringing in their ears.

Saturday 4th May

A commotion on the roof terrace this evening transpires to be a seagull tangled in some loose wire. Freed from the trap, the gull promptly crashes down the terrace stairs and lands on Theo Sharrock's head. It is left to the reader's imagination as to exactly how Theo reacted to this. After having flown up and down St Joseph's corridor several times, the bird is eventually persuaded back up to the terrace at the hands of Piotr Wygnanski and Joseph Rizk. We hope its visit to the English College will not cause lasting trauma.



Piotr Wygnanski, with almost St Francis-like calm, returns the seagull to the terrace. Photo: Theo Sharrock

Sunday 5th May

Founders' Day. Unfortunately, Fr Vice-Rector is taken with appendicitis and is unable to be present. Mass is celebrated by Fr Rector, with many guests present, including the British Ambassador to the Holy See, Sally Axworthy. Drinks in the garden offer us the opportunity to welcome our guests, before a fine lunch is enjoyed in the refectory.



Students gather in the garden for a drink before lunch on Founders' Day.

Saturday 11th May

In the midst of several weeks of cold and wet weather, today the sun shines and the temperatures rise as we head off on the annual College *gita* - this year to Tivoli. Mass is celebrated in the parish church of Santa Maria Maggiore, during which we give thanks for the contribution of the *personale* to the College community. A tour of the Villa d'Este and the gardens follows. While it could never compete with the stunning views afforded from our own venerable summer residence, the plethora of fountains is certainly a sight to behold. A long and leisurely lunch is enjoyed in a spot near the Villa Adriana, before we reluctantly return to Rome.

Wednesday 15th May

As the rain patters against the window and the temperature only just reaches double figures, Fr Metcalfe becomes more and more vocal in his complaints that we have been robbed of our summer. The weather certainly proves disappointing for the members of the Roman Association staying at Palazzola, who today visit the College. Archbishop Kevin McDonald presides at an evening Mass, after which the Old Romans join us for a dinner of truffle pasta and roast beef. Fr Rector toasts the health of several priests who celebrate their anniversaries this year. A truly memorable speech is offered in return by Fr Leo Mooney, involving organs and bowls of water.

Thursday 23rd May

A House Meeting is convened, prompting the usual rumours that some major change in personnel is about to be announced. Those who were hoping for drama, gossip or excitement, however, are left disappointed, as College life continues much the same as it did before.

Saturday 25th May

The annual College barbecue takes place, and there is, mercifully, a brief respite from the rain. The bar is opened, and Ben Hilton takes the opportunity to test out some of his dance moves on unsuspecting members of the community.

Sunday 26th May

No morning Mass for us today, as we prepare to head to Chiesa Nuova to celebrate the feast of St Philip Neri. An evening Mass is celebrated by Cardinal Ladaria, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Following a long tradition, servers and a Schola are provided by the English College.

Monday 27th May

We enter examtime, which brings the benefit of a more relaxed timetable. As the academic pressure mounts, most students begin to wish they had made more of an effort to pay attention in lectures...

Saturday 1st June

The drizzle finally stops, and the much-missed figure of the sun emerges from behind the clouds. Temperatures even reach 25 degrees, and a few students brave the icy waters of the Tank.

Sunday 2nd June

Coronation Day, which the Italians claim for themselves as 'Republic Day'. After Mass, we enjoy a free day, which most spend at their desks in preparation for the upcoming exams.

Sunday 9th June

Pentecost Sunday, and the College community finds itself at St Peter's Square, having been invited to serve Mass for the Holy Father. Before Mass, the Pope takes the opportunity to greet us, and upon discovering our nationality, enquires as to whether or not we are *anglicani*. Having been assured that we are, in fact, in full communion with His Holiness, Pope Francis nevertheless seems unconvinced and seems to enjoy toying with this little joke of his for a while longer. While our religious sympathies may have been held in question, our

national identity certainly was not, as several members of the community transform into a dramatic shade of red during this outdoor Mass. A particularly poignant moment is afforded the deacons-to-be, as the Holy Father promises his prayers for Alex Balzanella, Dominic Jenkinson, Matthew King and Piotr Wagnanski.

Tuesday 11th June

Fr Andrew Chase successfully defends his doctoral thesis: 'Tradition in the Theology of Yves Congar and Joseph Ratzinger: an historical, theological and comparative study.' Congratulations, Rev. Dr Chase!

Wednesday 12th June

While our new doctor's thoughts turn to acquiring whatever biretta it is that he is now entitled to wear, Ben Hilton's pride for his friend's academic achievements carries a little further. At lunch, he makes known his intention to compose a symphony for didgeridoo (in the style of Mozart) in honour of the Rev. Dr Andrew Chase. Benjamin Woodley struggles to conceal his horror.

Sunday 16th June

Trinity Sunday, and the door to the College church on the Via di Monserrato is opened, flooding the church with light and warm air. A particularly discerning group of seminarians, weary of the heat, flee to the Villa for a few days.

Wednesday 19th June

Dave Bench and Ryan Service take themselves off to the beach for the day. Unfortunately, our unsuspecting first-year underestimates the power of the Roman sun and comes back an alarming and very painful-looking shade of red. A bottle of aftersun lotion is left discreetly outside of Dave's room by a concerned Diarist.

Thursday 20th June

The College begins to empty as students travel hither and thither, either to attend ordinations or to enjoy a little rest and recreation in the post-exam period. Some head to Norway and, upon a 1:30am arrival, are promptly whisked away for a Vietnamese feast.

Saturday 22nd June

Several priestly ordinations of former and current students take place today. James Barber is ordained a priest for Plymouth Diocese, while Gary Dench is ordained for Brentwood. Further north, Hai Nguyen is ordained for the Diocese of Oslo. Congratulations, Reverend Fathers!

Saturday 29th June

The start of the *villeggiatura* has been delayed by twenty-four hours in order for us to attend the Mass for the Solemnity of Sts Peter and Paul in St Peter's Basilica. During this Mass, Archbishop-elect John Wilson receives his pallium from the Holy Father. After Mass, we hold a formal lunch in College by way of offering congratulations. The day's celebrations prove somewhat overwhelming for Dave Bench, whose postprandial *riposo* extends well into the afternoon, causing him to miss the minibuses transporting us up to the Villa. The Deputy Senior Student takes it all in his stride, and charitably secures the provision of alternative transportation.

Monday 1st July

The *villeggiatura* begins with three days of pastoral classes. The lower years look at youth ministry with Fr Stephen Wang, while the middle years look at hospital chaplaincy with Fr Peter Harries OP. Those higher up in the house prepare themselves for their impending ministry, by exploring the concept of leadership. A little light relief is afforded us in the evening in the form of a quiz, put together by Edward Hauschild. Certain aspects of last year's quiz did not prove to everybody's taste, not least with Fr Rector lamenting that 'it would have been nice to have some music in the music round.' Thus, Edward seeks to restore his quizzical reputation by including not one, but two music rounds: 'Music' and 'Proper Music'. This seems to work to Fr Rector's favour, as he emerges as the winning team, prompting from him a triumphant double fist-bump.

Tuesday 2nd July

The Villa *personale* awakes to find the Hinsley Room flooded. It later transpires that some well-wishing seminarians (not the most practical of God's creatures) had attempted to use the dishwasher in the adjoining bar.

In the evening, the VEC sporting talent is once more displayed for all the world to see, as a group head down to the glamorous Ciampino bowling alley. In his effort to win himself the champion's wreath, Piotr Wagnanski rips his shorts. Alas, it is to no avail, as Trym Hellevig emerges as this year's undisputed bowling champ.

Wednesday 3rd July

The Editor and the Diarist are admitted as candidates by Archbishop Charles Scicluna. It is also the feast of St Thomas, and the Archbishop preaches beautifully on our need for God's mercy. Some confusion arises during the offertory motet (Palestrina's *Sicut Cervus*) and the deer seemingly drowns in the streams for which it so longed. After Mass, dinner is enjoyed outside, by the light of the setting sun.

Thursday 4th July

The 'North-South football match' is played after morning Mass. Of course, the North-South football match would not be what it is without the shedding of blood or the breaking of bones, and this year it is Edward Hauschild who requires bandages. Sadly, even the shedding of blood for the South is not enough to defend against the savagery of the Northern barbarians, and we lose by quite some margin. This margin remains unspecified, however, as the final score could not be settled upon. 4-0? 5-0? Let's just call it a draw...

Friday 5th July

The 'Lake Gita', otherwise known as the 'Sunburn Gita', takes place. Dave Bench, perhaps still scarred from his last encounter with sunlight, pulls out at the last minute.

Sunday 7th July

Toby Duckworth and Elliot Hanson are instituted acolytes by Bishop Paul Tighe. It is certainly a relief to now have an MC able to fold a corporal.

Tuesday 9th July

A merry band of intrepid hikers awake early to embark on the annual 'Tusculum Walk'. A schismatic duo, in the form of Trym Hellevig and the Editor, opt to leave slightly later,

avoiding Monte Cavo, and meeting the rest of the group at Rocca di Papa's optimistically-named 'Dream Cafe'. Arriving at the Tusculum Hill, Mass is celebrated by Fr Rector. By this point, the rain clouds have gathered, and Fr Rector carefully negotiates his way through an outdoor Mass in the rain, with all the liturgical challenges that entails. The traditional picnic then follows, and great bravado is shown by all in persevering through the damp and the rain, determined to enjoy themselves whatever the weather.

Meanwhile, back at the Villa, Joachim Teigen's birthday is marked by his being thrown into the pool fully clothed. Joachim spends much of the remainder of his birthday preparing the barbecue, along with Toby Duckworth. As evening falls, the Villa Barbecue is seized upon by James Finnegan for the inaugural sporting of a pair of trousers of a shade of yellow to be found neither in nature, nor surely in the mind of even the most eccentric of fashion designers. The climax of the evening is an enthusiastic dancing of the macarena, with a stellar performance from Fr Hugh Logan.

Wednesday 10th July

A rather more unusual outing today, in the form of paintballing. While attempts to pressure Fr Anthony Doe into playing prove unsuccessful, Frs John Flynn and James McAuley opt to join in the fun, which proves as exhilarating as it is sweaty. Fr McAuley's initial reticence is soon cast aside, and he proves particularly adept at crawling through the undergrowth and surprising the enemy. Ben Hilton is wounded in a particularly sensitive area, and we wince with him. The weather gradually worsens as the day progresses, and the dramatic final shoot-out between Toby Duckworth and Edward Hauschild takes place during a thunderstorm.

In the evening, we say farewell to those who are leaving the community this year with Mass and supper. Fr Rector pays tribute to those who return to their home dioceses: Fr Brian O'Mahony, Fr Andrew Chase, Fr Francis Murphy, Deacon Benjamin Hilton, Deacon Benjamin Woodley and Matthew King. Fr Francis responds to the Rector's speech by offering the community feedback he has gleaned from local residents on their English College neighbours. Affirmed by the knowledge of the considerable impression we have on the good people of Rome, we head to the terrace for the annual Photo Review. This compilation of photographs from throughout the year is accompanied by a witty commentary from James Finnegan. Despite the occasional technological hiccup, and the Diarist featuring in rather too many photographs, it proves an amusing pictorial chronicle of the past year's japes and jollities.

Friday 12th July

Fr Rector delivers his annual 'State of the Union' address, offering some reflections on the past year, as well as news of upcoming changes. The College community look forward to welcoming five new men in the autumn, but fear something of a takeover: four of them are Scandinavians!

Sunday 14th July

The last day of the academic year. This is not, however, our primary cause of joy today, as it is also the day of the diaconate ordinations. Bishop Alan Hopes presides over a beautiful Mass, during which Alex Balzanella, Dominic Jenkinson, Matthew King and Piotr Wygnanski are ordained deacons. Congratulations to all! Fears of wet weather for the day prove unfounded and we head from the Villa church to the terrace for the usual DBLs

and hearty feast. Friends and family of the new deacons are welcomed by Fr Rector, after which we congratulate the new deacons with the solemn singing of *Ad multos annos!* It is also revealed that Joachim Teigen is to take up the editorial baton in the coming year: congratulations! The microphone is then passed to Alex Balzanella and Piotr Wygnanski, who express their gratitude to all present. As lunch comes to an end, we are informed that the coach has been unable to make it down the driveway and that we must make our way to the top of the drive to meet it by the roadside. This is not the place to recount the horrors of that steep climb; suffice it to say that the response of the student body was anything but stoic. Indeed, one cannot help but be minded of the drama involving a coach being unable to make its way out of the Villa driveway at the beginning of this year, an incident which revealed much of the temperament of our venerable students. Nonetheless, once on the Romeward-bound coach, and sitting in a pool of our own sweat, an enthusiastic round of singing begins, lasting the whole journey and featuring English Christmas carols, Norwegian drinking songs and something incomprehensible about Liverpool. And thus, the year ends with the esoteric surrealism which seems to characterise seminary life and within which this diary has had to be recorded. From those whom the Diarist has managed to offend in the process, he craves pardon. After all, as Chesterton noted, we are all in the same boat in a stormy sea, and we owe each other a terrible loyalty. To Him who commands the stormy sea, we thank for another year of great challenge and joy. *Deo gratias!*



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Leavers' Profiles



Fr Andrew Chase

It takes strength of character to survive six years as an Australian in a house full of whingeing poms, but Fr Andrew Chase's stint proves that it is not beyond the realms of possibility. Managing to smile politely throughout his time at the English College while the same old Skippy the Bush Kangaroo/Crocodile Dundee/didgeridoo jokes were revisited relentlessly, Fr Andrew has shown himself a man of great forbearance. He has even been happy to play to type occasionally. Whether singing about 'Galleries of Pink Galahs' on stage, touting the merits of Queensland's Bundaberg Rum to anyone minded to listen, or screening episodes of *Kath & Kim* in the Common Room, Fr Andrew has been able to slide into cultural attaché mode without too much difficulty when circumstances have called for it. If Sir Les Patterson's not retired already, he might well find in Fr Andrew cause to fear for his position.



As well as disclosing the riches of the Antipodes to the community, Fr Andrew has provided a solid priestly presence in the house: someone to whom seminarians have been able to look for counsel and inspiration. Often to be found enjoying the fresh air on the Smokers' Terrace, his willingness to share a joke and a few words of encouragement have made his company highly prized. Only on the pistes of various ski resorts or at the poker table might that kindly demeanour be seen to melt away, with a steelier, more competitive persona emerging in those tense settings. But then he would fall over and require rescue by an Alpine soldier, or lose with a full house against an unanticipated flush, and the easy laughter would return, and we'd know that the kindness ran deep with this one.

Just as there have been great shows of kindness, there have also been impressive demonstrations of learning. Earning a licentiate and a doctorate in the course of his stay on the Via di Monserrato, Fr Andrew leaves Rome an expert on the theologies of Ratzinger and Congar, the man to turn to for clarity as to what constitutes 'Tradition' as opposed to 'tradition'. Given his area of research, and the frequency with which conversation in seminary can turn to 'matters traditional', Fr Andrew's ability to steer a course through awkward conversations, avoiding polemics while being scrupulously orthodox, has been consistently impressive. His sobriety in the liturgical arena, coupled with clear and engaging preaching, have contributed notably to the life of the house.

But what will be the abiding memory of Fr Andrew? The thing that stands out most? People will answer differently, but for me it will be the impression left by visiting Fr Andrew's room from time to time and noticing the many photos of his loved ones - family and friends from home - decorating it. Six years on the other side of the planet, even with the occasional trip back, is a long time away, and to have travelled that far, returning to a seminary environment for further study after priestly experience in a parish, must have been challenging. Yet if Fr Andrew experienced it as a hardship, he never hinted as much, and instead - as mentioned at the outset - kept smiling while we poms whinged on. Thank you for showing us the better way, Fr Andrew, and may God continue to bless you as you move on to the next stage of your ministry.

Fr Francis Murphy

Matthew King

Garrulous, bombastic and simply loud. None of these words describe our King! In recent years our community has been blessed with a great diversity of nationalities attending. From Vietnamese, to Grenadian, to Welsh! Matty has introduced us to South African culture and Catholicism, much to our enrichment. On the odd occasion when not hogging the limelight for himself he has been found running the backstage of every show and running the back of house in the seminary, diligently undertaking roles such as Sacristan and general top bloke in any capacity that needs some assistance.



Matthew has undertaken his academic formation at the Angelicum. In his pastoral work he enjoyed his time assisting the Missionaries of Charity in their care for the homeless of Rome. Providentially his cousin Sr Ryan MC came to Rome to undertake her novitiate with the order. The occasion of her profession and receiving of the famous blue and white habit of St Teresa of Calcutta being an occasion of great joy for the whole family.

In later years Matthew volunteered to be soup-chef for our work with the Sant'Egidio community reaching out to those on the streets of Rome.

Highly notable have been the occasions when Matthew has preached to the Seminary community. Clearly the fruit of much prayerful pondering he has delivered memorable reflections full of insight and fire.

The good people of Portsmouth are about to be blessed with a humble and deep-thinking Deacon and future priest. Whilst all in our community will miss his unassuming presence, we wish our friend all the best, trusting that he will grow ever more in the likeness of the Servant King.

Dominic Jenkinson

Benjamin Hilton

As Ben Hilton prepares to say goodbye to Rome after seven years, rumours have surfaced that clerical apparel firms Gammarelli, Mancinelli and Barbiconi are preparing for severe staff cutbacks in anticipation of a harsh economic downturn. Reports that Gammarelli is considering relocating to Harrogate are as yet unconfirmed.

Personally, I don't believe these rumours, and am sure these businesses will continue to thrive under the patronage of future English College students. The College itself however will certainly feel the loss of one of its great characters as Ben begins his priestly life as curate in St Robert's parish in Harrogate. I have no doubt that Ben will bring to the people of his new parish the same charming wit and cheeky grin he shared with us at the VEC, and that those parishioners will have the joy of being regaled by the raconteur who has kept us entertained these last seven years with every manner of witty anecdote; from his hilariously clever impersonations of his brethren and superiors to an uncannily accurate recollection of perfectly cromulent lines from *The Simpsons*, Ben has a way of delighting everyone with whom he comes in contact.



Despite having come to seminary life at a young age, Ben very quickly shone amongst his brothers as a confident man with high ideals, who always strove to be faithful to the spiritual demands of seminary life (any tardiness at morning prayer being surely nothing more than an accidental misreading of the numbers on his watch face). Ben's wonderful

artistic skill was frequently on display in the spectacularly crafted paschal candles and beautifully illustrated pages of the College guest book, and his decorations of the Maundy Thursday altars of repose showed us all both his creative talent and his spiritual devotion.

Ben's mischievous side was also frequently on display and he seemed to take great delight in attempting to discover just where the boundary lay in his repartee with the formation staff; how closely he came to that boundary remains unknown (although the Vice-Rector's habitual smile did occasionally seem to harden into something that telegraphed all sorts of warning signals to which Ben may have been oblivious...).

The move from academic life to parish ministry will no doubt have its challenges; having recently completed a Licentiate in Moral Theology at the Pontifical University of St Thomas, Ben will now transition to a more acute focus on the spiritual care of the people of God in his home Diocese of Leeds. But I have every confidence that the same motivation that has driven him to give his best in the world of theology will be at work as he shares with people the Word of God and the Sacraments in the ups and downs of their lives. And that motivation comes from being completely rooted in the love of God and from a deep desire to configure his life to that of Jesus.

And while the fate of the ecclesiastical outfitters of Rome may remain unclear, the people of Leeds will certainly be blessed by the ministry of a priest with a heart of genuine kindness and love for God. Because whether Fr Benjamin Hilton is dressed in a ferraiolo of the finest watered-silk with resplendent flocchi polishing the buckles of his shoes and the most glorious of birettas atop his head, or attired in the simplest of grey tab-collared shirts, what he will truly be bringing is the loving and humble presence of Christ to the people he will serve. Good luck and God bless Ben!

Fr Andrew Chase

Fr Francis Murphy

From the Reformation to the rise of Communism Holy Mother Church has been the victim of infiltration by the spies of her enemies. Most talk of infiltration is either fantasy or gossip; however, such threats do exist and must be taken seriously and alarm bells were sounded with the arrival of Francis Murphy at the English College. When describing Francis, one could mistake him for a character from an Ian Fleming novel. He is a traditional gentleman, quick-witted, with a taste for cocktails that would give 007 a run for his money, and above all discreet. I know what you might be thinking: discretion in a seminary? How is this possible? In fact Francis Murphy's discretion surpasses someone just keeping to his own business, to his reportedly being able to conduct an entire conversation without moving his lips, giving rise to arguably the most contentious question the College community has ever had to ask itself: who is Francis Murphy?



Firstly, Francis can be cleared of the charge of being a political spy due to his love of films, boasting one of the largest multi-genre DVD collections the College has ever seen, with many that would horrify any committed Communist propagandist. Francis's film collection spans from the latest blockbusters to the classics, including the more surreal and thought-provoking. Over the last seven years Francis has hosted countless film screenings in the Common Room and has shown a variety of films. Again, I know what you might be thinking: a film night in the Common Room, what fun! This however was not always the case. Found within Francis's collection were films by Bela Tarr, a Hungarian film director

known for his philosophically-themed work. To the community's horror, Francis screened two of Tarr's films: *Werckmeister Harmonies*, two hours and twenty-five minutes about a dead whale put on display by a travelling fair, and *The Turin Horse*, two hours and twenty-five minutes about the life of the horse that Friedrich Nietzsche saw being beaten in Turin. Of course, both of these films, like all of Bela Tarr's work, were subtitled and in black and white. (By the grace of God, Francis did not, however, show his *Satantango*, which runs at seven hours and thirty minutes!) Despite some odd, and sometimes downright eye-wateringly slow film choices, Francis's love of films and dedication in putting them on for others shows us someone at the centre of community life, who has enjoyed sharing his passions and interests with others.

Secondly, Francis may be cleared of being sent to gather intelligence of a Popish plot, as it is apparent that not only does Francis enjoy the study of the sacred sciences, but when you enter into conversation with Francis about these subjects, he lights up with love and zeal for Holy Mother Church. Before beginning his seven years in Rome, Francis had already studied philosophy and theology in-depth and thus was no stranger to academic life. Francis's enthusiasm, his love of study and his extensive knowledge, meant that he was regularly sought after for help and guidance by those of us who are academically less inclined (speaking from personal experience!). Francis's kindness, patience, and generosity were frequently seen in his helping his fellow brothers wrap their heads around some dense academic exercise.

The community may have at one point asked, 'who is Francis Murphy?' The question has been answered. As Francis's tenure at the English College comes to a close, we say goodbye to a member of the community who throughout his time has brought so much joy and laughter to his brothers in the College. Francis Murphy's discreet personality is not one of secrecy, but in fact one of staggering humility and gentleness of spirit. Despite his zany film preferences and his pursuit of academic excellence, Francis's greatest and most discernible quality is his love of Christ and His Church. Francis has spent his last year in the College as a priest and, while he has a natural flair for the academic life, he has been looking forward to beginning his parish ministry. Now, Fr Francis's longed for journey is about to begin as he prepares for life in St. John the Baptist's, Purley. We wish Fr Francis all the very best and assure him of our prayers and support. God bless, and thank you Fr Francis.

Benjamin Hilton

Fr Brian O'Mahony

The start of each new year at the English College has some constant features: the rumble of suitcase wheels along the *cortile* cobbles, the scavenging of *objets d'art* from the throw-out table, and the cut-throat viewing of the summer leavers' rooms that would make even an estate agent go pale. October 2017, however, brought a small upset to these proceedings as one of the most coveted rooms - not least due to its location opposite yours truly - was given to a new member of the community; the rumour quickly got around that the occupant was a Fr Brian O'Mahony, a priest from the Diocese of Westminster coming to Rome to pursue a Licentiate in Fundamental Theology at the Gregorian.

Even with a rap-sheet like that, Brian instantly won around the affection of the student community with his kind manner, love of good humour, and generous heart. Always ready



to welcome anyone for a coffee, the laws of time seemed to stop with Brian as a five minute break led to up to two hours setting the world to rights, a phenomenon only exacerbated by his clock always running 15 minutes early. Indeed, in examtime some students made sprints worthy of Usain Bolt to avoid the black hole of procrastination that seemed to have moved on to the *Monsera'* corridor.

Yet this love of good conversation did nothing to hinder Brian's academic success at the Gregorian. Whilst he experienced frustration with the *teppisti* of the Gregorian Italian exam he showed himself more than capable of understanding the language, doing well in both his oral exams and seminar contributions, even when professors provided the wrong materials for the examination. He was a regular user of the College Library, although often hard to spot behind the piles of books that usually occupied his desk. Testament to Brian's love of his priestly ministry is that he was not satisfied solely pursuing academic study whilst in Rome but also sought and undertook pastoral work, providing instruction for an English-speaking catechumen and helping her through the minefield of Roman bureaucracy in the run-up to Baptism, a happy occasion at which Brian was celebrant at Pentecost 2019.

In spite of all this Brian did find the odd occasion to socialise and enjoy the *Bella Vita* that being in Rome offers. When invited for *aperitivi* I was always struck by his ingenious conversion of an IKEA shoe rack into a drinks' cabinet - one I am sure will be adopted by many future occupants of his room. On a Friday night Brian could sometimes be found in Trastevere with seminarians and priests of the College for whom he always had an anecdote or a listening ear. Brian also formed firm friendships outside of the College, particularly with students of the Scots College, along with other expats living in Rome. Bonding over a mutual love of rugby, the events of these nights-out are shrouded in mystery but vague rumours that Ireland international Brian O'Driscoll was an occasional attendee continue to circulate.

Brian finished his STL with his Tesina on 'The Act of Faith in Newman and Rahner', two inspirations who will aid him as he takes up his appointments as Parish Priest of St Matthew's, Northwood and teaching at Allen Hall. His faithfulness to God, his kindness, and his generosity will serve him well in caring for the people of God and assisting in the formation of their future priests. God bless you Brian in the next stage of your ministry.

Alexander Balzanella

Benjamin Woodley

Some might say that for a man to have two leaver's notes in the *Venerabile* is just downright greedy. But in the case of Benjamin, it is due to his profound selflessness. When Ben left us in the summer of 2016 to pursue the religious life, his departure profoundly affected the community. We were sorry to see him go, but gladdened that he was finally able to devote himself so generously to following God's calling for him. During his year in Mount St Bernard's Abbey, Ben gradually came to an awareness that his deeply contemplative nature was not incompatible with 'the marketplace', and that his yearning for the religious life was something which would enable him to more fruitfully live out his vocation to the diocesan priesthood. Thus, it was with great joy that the community welcomed Ben back in the autumn of 2017.

Ben immediately resumed his position in the community: a stabilising and prayerful presence, a good listener and a faithful friend. His sense of humour can only be described



as 'curious', and the occasional verbalisation of his thoughts often reveal a mind free from the servile bonds of convention. While some members of the community remain baffled at some of Ben's observations and his fervent enthusiasm for the most banal of things (or, indeed, the most disgusting of food), all would agree that he possesses a truly unique ability to perceive the beauty of God in all things. Ben's sensitivity to beauty is something which sustains him, and will no doubt nourish him in his priestly ministry. But it also nourishes those around him. Ben has been a truly edifying presence in this community, and there is no doubt that he will continue to draw people into a love of goodness, truth and beauty: in short, to lead souls to God.

Ben lives and breathes music. It wouldn't be fair to say that he talks of nothing else, but it is certainly his favourite topic of conversation - whatever the musical tastes of his conversation partner. It is a well-known fact that musicians are often temperamental, irritable and defensive characters. Ben, to his great credit, has never indulged in any of these characteristics, and is, in fact, quite the opposite. Naturally, a pianist of such talent will obtain some eccentricities along his *cammino* of life - but where to start? His inexplicable enthusiasm for butteries? His sleeping with towels instead of blankets? His penchant for exploding into song at the most inopportune of moments? The trinity of cars he has written off? These are merely flecks of colour in a much richer and deeper character.

Ben's worldview, while seen through a musical lens, is one greatly influenced by the Angelic Doctor. Conversation with Ben will often turn to matters pertaining to the divine ordering of things, and our own ability to participate in this order. Completing a Licenciante in Moral Theology at the Angelicum has enabled Ben to pursue this great love of truth, and to explore the intellectual riches which the Church, through St Thomas, gives us. Yet, while Ben finds great joy in mining the great minds of the Church for their theological jewels, his own spirituality is one that is simple, pure and poor in spirit. While Ben certainly has a soft spot for all things beautiful (and, dare I say it, expensive), and while he could spout off most of the *Brideshead Revisited* script from memory, his keen awareness of the radical call to generosity of spirit is inspiring. The fact that he left everything to enter life in a Cistercian monastery is but one instance of this.

And so, it is with great sadness that the community bids farewell to Ben once again. Your kindness, your musical gifts, your humour and your wisdom we will greatly miss. But these you will undoubtedly bring to wherever it is you go in the future. Robert Schumann once observed that the duty of the artist is to 'send light into the darkness of men's hearts.' Is this not also the duty of the priest? This you have done, and may you continue to do so in your priestly ministry. *Ad multos annos*, Benjamin!

Andrew Coy

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Trustees: Mgr Seán Healy, Canon Michael Cooley, Fr Paul Keane, Mr Damien McGrath, Dr Fergus Mulligan, Fr Aaron Spinelli

Immediate Past Presidents: Rt Rev. Christopher Budd (2017), Mgr Anthony Wilcox (2019), Mgr Seán Healy (2021)

Rector: Mgr Philip Whitmore
elected for three years **until 2022:** Patrick Mileham, Mervyn Tower, Mark Woods

Association of the Venerable College of St Thomas de Urbe

Present Trustees: Canon Michael Cooley, Mgr Provost Seán Healy, Rev. Paul Keane, Dr Fergus Mulligan, Mr Damien McGrath, Rev. Aaron Spinelli (Dates of retirement not confirmed)



The Roman Association Diocesan Representatives

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Birmingham: Rev. Gerard Murray, Sacred Heart, 17 Lime Tree Avenue, Bilton, Rugby, CV22 7QT, gpbmurray@gmail.com

Brentwood: Fr James MacKay: The Presbytery, 1 Berwick Road, Custom House, London, E16 3DR, 020 7474 1687 james_m79@hotmail.com

Cardiff: Mgr Canon Robert Reardon, Meadow View, School Road, Miskin, Pontyclun CF72 8PG

Clifton: Canon Thomas Atthill, Stoneleigh Cottage, Pound Lane, Oakhill, Radstock BA3 5BG, thomasratthill@gmail.com

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Gibraltar: Mgr John Pardo, Cathedral of St. Mary the Crowned, 215 Main Street, Gibraltar jpardo@gibraltar.gi

Hallam: Rev. John Metcalfe, Venerabile Collegio Inglese, Via di Monserrato 45, 00186 Roma, Italia, jhf.m@tiscali.co.uk

Hexham and Newcastle: Rev. Peter Stoddart, St Mary's Cathedral, Clayton Street West, Newcastle, NE1 5HH

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The Minutes of the 150th Annual General Meeting of The Association of the Venerable College of St Thomas de Urbe



The Roman Association

Palazzola, Tuesday 14th May 2019

Thirty-six members of the Association attended the AGM: John Ainslie, John Allen, Thomas Atthill, Christopher Budd, Michael Burke, Tony Churchill, Anthony Coles, Michael Cooley, Stephen Coonan, Tom Cooper, Paul Daly, John Fegan, Kevin Firth, Timothy Galligan, Michael Griffin, Sean Healy, Patrick Kilgarriff, Chris Larkman, Christopher Lough, Damien McGrath, Patrick Mileham, Leo Mooney, Fergus Mulligan, Gerard Murray, Guy Nicholls, Seamus O'Boyle, Anthony Pateman, Terry Phipps, Peter Purdue, Aaron Spinelli, Mervyn Tower, Francis Wahle, Philip Whitmore, Anthony Wilcox, Mark Woods. The Meeting began at 10:30 in the Conference Room at Palazzola, Fr Paul Daly in the Chair and Association Secretary Rev. Aaron Spinelli taking Minutes.

1. Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Proceedings began with the Prayer to the Holy Spirit and welcomes to the Rector, members and Anthony Coles representing the Friends of the Venerabile.

2. Apologies and best wishes

Received from Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Archbishop Pat Kelly, Bishop Crispian Hollis, Bishop John Wilson, Philip Andrews, David Barnes, David Barrett, Chris Beirne, Austin Bennett, Chris Bergin, Liam Bradley, Vincent Brennan, Mark Brentnall, Michael

Brockie, David Bulmer, Paul Bryant-Quinn, Paul Crowe, Christopher Dawson, Frank Fallon, Tom Finigan, Peter Fleetwood, David Forrester, Miguel Garnett, Philip Gillespie, John Guest, Bruce Harbert, Tim Hopkins, Edward Jarosz, Paul Keane, Peter Kirkham, Edward Koroway, Nicholas Levisieur, Eddie Matthews, David McLoughlin, Shaun Middleton, Tony Myers, John Nelson, Nicholas Paxton, Michael Quinlan, Paul Rowan, Javier Ruiz-Ortiz, Paul Simmons, Gerard Skinner, David Standley, Roderick Strange, William Steele, Simon Thomson, Adrian Toffolo, William Young

3. Minutes of 149th AGM

These were approved by the meeting.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. The De Profundis for deceased members

Mgr Philip Holroyd, Canon Brian Frost, Mgr Michael Tully, Fr Gerard Burke, Canon Tom Dakin, Fr Petroc Howell.

6. Prayer for sick members

Prayers were said for Archbishop Michael Bowen, Bryan Chestle, William Young, Tim Finigan and Jerome Bertram.

7. Chairman's Remarks

The Chair remarked how this was the 150th Meeting of the Roman Association, the first having taken place in 1865 in Birkenhead. He gave thanks to all those who had organized the AGM and informed those

present of the developments surrounding the re-organization of the two Trusts: Roman Association (Thomas de Urbe) (RA) and the Roman Association Trust (RAT), the Chair emphasized that it was not just an exercise in re-organising assets but it would be a re-emphasizing of the first aim of the Association – To promote and sustain College friendships.

8. Mark Lewis on Amalgamation of Trusts into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Mr Lewis, solicitor acting for the RA, informed the meeting in greater detail what the new structure would be to be formed from the RA and RAT trusts – he said that the new Charity would give limited liability, legal personality and would be able to hold property. Being the 150th meeting was a fortuitous opportunity to make some progress in this area.

A small working party would form to take this forward, to meet with Mark. It would be a long process including much work with the Charity Commission. All work however is expected to be done by the next AGM in 2020.

The proposal was put forward and read by Mr Lewis:

'That the proposal to incorporate the Roman Association as a Charitable Incorporated Organization be hereby approved and that the Trustees be authorized to form a committee of such Trustees as they decide in relation to the formation of the Charitable Incorporated Organization and the drafting of the constitution and the presentation of the application to the Charity Commission with such additional persons to be co-opted by the Trustees to such committee as they consider appropriate'.

Proposed by Seán Healy and seconded by Tony Wilcox. All were unanimous in favour, the proposal was passed.

8. Treasurer's Report

This was preceded by the Chair of Trustees Seán Healy commenting that there is good news, although the investment fund had dropped it now stands at over one million pounds. There had been some issues around the difficulty in getting trustee approval, however we are moving forward with Rathbone's. In the past year we have given £20,000 to the College for social projects and this year we proposed to do the same to complete the gym refurbishment and supply of equipment. The following questions came from the floor: 'What is a social project? Where does the money come from? Are the investments ethical?' 'Are our investments safe?' We were assured by Rathbone's that investments were ethical and followed the appropriate code of investment.

Thanks were given to Peter Purdue and for his time in office and the great work he had done in bringing things forward as Treasurer.

9. Rector's Report

The meeting expressed its thanks for the work of the Rector and the College staff and accepted the Rector's Report.

10. Election of new members

The following were elected to membership from the summer: Ben Hilton, Andrew Chase, Francis Murphy, Brian O'Mahony, Ben Woodley. A note of congratulations would be sent to them.

A discussion followed on the three types of membership:

Ordinary Members are the following:

Those who studied in the College;
Those who later left active ministry;
Anglican Exchange Students.

Associate Member:

Any priest who supports the aims of the College

Honorary Member:

Association may elect someone as an associate member e.g Anthony Coles

11. Elections and Appointments

- a) Election of Chairman of the Roman Association – Paul Daly was nominated by Seán Healy and seconded by Mervyn Tower to continue as Chairman.
- b) Election of Treasurer – Damien McGrath was proposed by Paul Daly and seconded by Mark Woods.
- c) Councillors of the Roman Association – for clarity, membership of the Council is defined as Trustees, Councillors, Rector, Past Presidents, up to 15 members but 3 elected each year for a fixed term and then cannot be elected until a gap of a year has passed.
The meeting elected three new Councillors: Mark Woods, Patrick Mileham and Mervyn Tower
- d) Election of Trustee of the Roman Association Trust and Roman Association – Damien McGrath was elected replacing Peter Purdue.

Tony Wilcox proposed the following note in the minutes:

To note for the Fund Managers that there shall be six Trustees and:

Acknowledging that the Roman Association is the appointing authority for the Trustees of the Roman Association Trust, we affirm that at this present time the following are Trustees of the Roman Association Trust:

- Seán Healy
- Michael Cooley
- Paul Keane
- Damien McGrath
- Fergus Mulligan
- Aaron Spinelli

12. 151st AGM

This will mark the 80th Anniversary of going to Stonyhurst, and the 100th year of going to Palazzola on 22nd May 1920.

Anthony Coles then took the floor to speak of events planned. There will be a Mass, Festal Meal and Talk with room for up to 36 people. So it was suggested we will meet at Palazzola at the next AGM (2020) between Monday 20th April and Friday 24th April in order for there not to be a clash with the above events.

13. 2019 Martyrs' Day gatherings

Suggestion from Shaun Middleton, that there would be two celebrations one in the North and one in the South, as numbers were low in London this year. It was felt that the current arrangements should be kept.

14. Any Other Business

Chris Larkman spoke of the College Lexicon project and encouraged those present to look at it and contribute if possible.

The meeting then concluded and that same afternoon Prof. Maurice Whitehead gave another excellent talk to those gathered on further College discoveries.

Rector's Report to the Roman Association 2018-19



We began the year with a good-sized intake: 4 first-year seminarians, 4 transferring from elsewhere, 1 returning after a 2-year absence, and 1 new priest. This meant that we had 29 seminarians at the start of the year.

The first-year seminarians were: Dave Bench (Birmingham), James Finnegan and Martin Fyles (Liverpool) and Joseph O'Brien (Hexham and Newcastle). Transferring from Uppsala was Joseph Rizk (Stockholm), transferring from Allen Hall was Elliot Hanson (Cardiff) and transferring from Malta were deacons Peter Ellul and Aayrton Muscat. Albert Lawes (Plymouth), aka the Editor, returned after a 2-year absence. Later in the year, David Irwin (Shrewsbury) returned after a 3-year absence. *Ben tornati!*

We began the year with six student priests. Andrew Chase (Rockhampton), Hugh Logan (St George's in Grenada), Jan Nowotnik (Birmingham) and Brian O'Mahony (Westminster) were joined by Michael Grace (Brisbane) and newly-ordained Francis Murphy (Southwark).

Five deacons are due to be ordained to the priesthood in July 2019 – Marco Egawhary, Ryan Service and John Waters (Birmingham), Ben Hilton (Leeds) and Ben Woodley (Westminster). At the end of the *Villeggiatura* this year, four are due to be ordained deacon – Alex Balzanella (Westminster), Dominic Jenkinson (Hallam), Matthew King (Portsmouth) and Piotr Wygnanski (East Anglia). Our Maltese deacons were ordained to the priesthood just after Easter in Malta and our Vietnamese-Norwegian deacon Hai Duy

Nguyen was ordained in Oslo on 22nd June.

We began the year with eight seminarians in 1st Cycle Theology at the Gregorian University; one in 2nd Cycle Social Studies; one in 2nd Cycle Canon Law and one in 2nd Cycle Theology. At the Angelicum we had nine seminarians in 1st Cycle Philosophy; four in 1st Cycle Theology and three in 2nd Cycle Theology. We had one seminarian in 2nd Cycle Scripture at the *Biblicum* and one in 2nd Cycle at the John Paul II Institute for Study of Marriage and Family.

The year began with a six-day directed retreat at Palazzola. In preparation for Advent we had a day of recollection led by Mgr John Armitage. As in previous years, we arranged Forty Hours of exposition, beginning on the Saturday morning and continuing all day and all night. The Advent recollection began after supper on the Saturday and concluded with Solemn Vespers and Benediction on the Sunday evening – the end of the Forty Hours. Fr John Hemer MHM came to lead the Holy Week retreat at Palazzola, including a moving Palm Sunday celebration. Those seminarians preparing for ministries or orders had an opportunity for a further retreat in late February with their year-group. Our Deacons-to-be and Priests-to-be made a canonical retreat close to their ordination.

Rosanna Giacometto continues to see many of our seminarians for one-to-one human formation sessions. Fr Antonio Delfau SJ from the Jesuit Curia and Fr John Breen from the Beda also provide valuable assistance in this area.

At our Human Development weekends, we had the services of Rosanna Giacometto and Fr Matthew Pittam in addition to Fr Gerard Byrne. For one of the weekends, a group based at St Mary's University, Twickenham, gave us a presentation on 'The Art of Dying Well'. We were pleased to be joined by some of the Beda staff and students for this event.

For Pastoral Formation, we continue the pattern of short courses during the *Villeggiatura*, given by lecturers from England and Wales. The weekly pastoral classes during term-time include *Catechetics*, *Homiletics*, and *Preparation for Diaconal Ministry*. These are led by the resident members of staff with occasional outside input. In these classes we emphasize the pastoral skills that are needed in our particular English and Welsh context.

For their weekly pastoral assignments in Rome, some give tours of the Scavi under St Peter's, some assist with the English-language news desk at the Vatican, some visit the housebound, some teach English at the Jesuit Refugee Centre, some assist with catechesis in local parishes, while others assist the Missionaries of Charity. The soup run provided by our students for homeless people in the area on Tuesday evenings has gone from strength to strength (cf. the YouTube presentation on the Bishops' Conference website). During the summer, most of the students are given pastoral placements in their home dioceses and every effort is made to visit them while they are there.

Memorable student initiatives this year have included two 'Night of Light' evenings, when the Church has been opened and passers-by have been invited in for an opportunity to pray and to speak about the faith. It has given the students a taste of evangelisation in action and an encouragement to look for similar opportunities in their future ministry.

Monday evenings during term continue to see Praise and Worship sessions in the College Church, another student initiative.

Last summer, Dominic Jenkinson (Hallam) went on a missionary placement to Jerusalem to work at St Rachel Centre – a summer camp for the children of immigrants and refugees, Peter Wygnanski worked in the slums of Kingston, Jamaica, and in the Philippines, while Matthew King did placements with the Army and with the Apostleship of the Sea.

Perhaps the principal change that has taken place with regard to formation for the priesthood in recent decades is the degree of individual accompaniment now given to seminarians. Not only does each have a spiritual director, but each has a human formator and an external forum formation tutor. The variety of backgrounds and the variety of personal stories among the seminarians is such that a 'one size fits all' approach simply does not work, even though in the different circumstances of earlier generations this level of individual accompaniment may not have been necessary.

Financially, the College is still able to meet its running costs, although the declining number of students has brought its challenges. Rents received from the tenants in the various College apartments continue to provide a useful additional source of income.

Work on the College Archives has continued, with a growing number of visitors. Happily visiting scholars can now be accommodated in a designated Reading Room (the Schwarzenbach Reading Room), which was officially opened on 2nd April, in the presence of our bishop Visitors and Urs Schwarzenbach himself (Francesca, sadly, was prevented by ill health from attending). Grants were received to help set up the Reading Room from the St Mary's Priory Fernham Residual Fund, from the Harold Hood Foundation and from the Mrs

L D Rope Third Charitable Settlement. The Friends of the Venerabile kindly provided the table. Visitors to the Archives are able to enter through Via di Monserrato 48. Cloakroom and toilet facilities are available as they enter the College building from the kitchen *cortile*. They are then escorted through the Garden Room to the Reading Room itself.

The opening of the Reading Room also provided an occasion for us to thank two long-serving Trustees, as they came to the end of their term of office. Peter Horgan and Terry Forbes were joined by their wives Mary and Angela – and we were delighted that Pam Coote and Mgr Anthony Wilcox were also able to come for the celebration of all that Peter and Terry contributed to the College over a 20-year period.

Plans are taking shape for the launch of an Association of North American Friends of the Venerabile, particularly with a view to raising further funds for the continuing work needed on our Archives. Our long-standing benefactors the Schwarzenbachs have also kindly offered to host fund-raising dinners in the UK.

The gym has been relocated to a part of the Crypt under the Garden Room and we are grateful to the Roman Association for assistance in setting the area up. The Gradwell Room has been converted into a Meeting/Dining Room. The student bar has been moved into the Garden Room, its place having been taken by the Schwarzenbach Reading Room. The wi-fi has been completely renewed, thanks to the Friends, and LED lighting is gradually replacing traditional bulbs.

At Palazzola, occupancy continues to be lower than we would wish, particularly in the period from January to March. There is a sense that Brexit and the low value of sterling have reduced the appetite for foreign travel among the British public. Hence Palazzola is looking to attract custom from elsewhere.

On behalf of everyone at the College, I'd like to thank the Old Romans for their continuing support and their prayers. Please remember especially in your prayers the four men who are to be ordained deacons this July and the five who are to be ordained priests back in their home dioceses.

Philip Whitmore

News from Old Romans



Arundel & Brighton

I begin this year's contribution as I return from the diocese's annual on-going formation overnight which took as its theme 'Mental Health and Clergy Wellness'. There were a few 'take-aways' from the overnight, the first was, as priests that it was OK to not like people, the second was a water bottle, in order to stay hydrated, and third, a pedometer to see that we were being mobile during the day. We all mused on whether the step count of priests would now be put into the parish returns!

So folks, in order of ordination year I am pleased to report the whereabouts of the following Old Romans:

Mgr Bryan Chestle died on 4th September 2019, may he rest in peace; see Obituary on p.127. Canon Tony Churchill is parish priest of Ashstead, Surrey and is Episcopal Vicar for Ecumenical Affairs.

Our retired Bishop, Kieran Conry, is in Hampshire. Mgr Michael Jackson continues to help out in the Hove area. Tony Bridson is parish priest of Redhill, Reigate and Merstham. Raglan Hay Will is parish priest of Eastbourne. Canon Kieran O'Brien is Episcopal Vicar for Formation and remains parish priest of St Joseph's, Brighton and St John the Baptist, Kemp Town, Brighton.

In Surrey, Simon Hall continues as assistant priest at Woking. Congratulations to two Old Romans who were made Chapter Canons of Arundel Cathedral. Canon David Parmiter continues as parish priest in Godalming and Canon Rob Esdaile remains parish priest of Thames Ditton. Jonathan How continues as parish priest of Cobham. Tony Milner continues as parish priest of Dorking.

Kevin Dring is Pastoral Director at the Seminary at Wonersh. Stephen Dingley continues at Wonersh albeit in a part-time role as he is now parish priest of Effingham. Stephen Hardaker continues in Oxted and Terry Martin is on the south coast at Worthing.

Andrew Pinsent continues at the Ian Ramsey Centre at Oxford University.

Bruno Witchalls has left Preston Park, Brighton and is taking a sabbatical. Aaron Spinelli is parish priest of Horsham and has taken on the parish of West Grinstead which boasts the Carthusian Monastery at Parkminster within its boundaries. Andrew Moss continues working in Shrewsbury Diocese.

Mark Woods is parish deacon at Worthing and concludes his sterling work as the Diocesan Communications Officer, he has taken a sabbatical year from pastoral duties.

And finally, Tristan Cranfield who was ordained priest last year at Arundel is assistant priest at Our Lady of Ransom, Eastbourne.

Aaron Spinelli

Birmingham

This year I give a full list to include the recent changes to Old Romans in the Archdiocese and those that have taken place in the past couple of years.

Timothy Menezes is relinquishing his role as Vicar General and becomes Cathedral Dean. Stephen Wright is to become the new Vicar General. Patrick Kilgarriff has retired to St George's Worcester. John O'Brien has retired and is living in Nuneaton. Danny McHugh has retired and is living in Solihull. Petroc Howell died 14th November 2018. He was

perhaps the greatest Old Roman of them all, in our diocese anyway. May he rest in peace. His mantle passes to Tony Wilcox, retired and happily living in Henley-on-Thames.

David Doran is at St Peter's, Bloxwich. Christopher Miller has stepped back from parish ministry. Paul Moss works in the Secretariat of State. David Gnosill is at Corpus Christi in Coventry. Joseph McLoughlin is at SS Peter and Paul, Pye Hayes and Sts Mary and John, Gravelly Hill in North Birmingham and is Judicial Vicar. Patrick Mileham is at St Mary's, Warwick. Robert Murphy has moved to the Apostolic Nunciature in New Delhi. Richard Walker is at St John's, Banbury.

Gerardo Fabrizio is at Our Lady of the Wayside, Shirley, Solihull. Mark Crisp is multitasking in Wolverhampton, based as Parish Priest at St Peter and Paul's in Wolverhampton, sharing pastoral care for St Michael's, Penn and St Bernadette's, Womborne, and is Chaplain to Wolverhampton University. Patrick Broun is at Our Lady and St Hugh, Witney, Oxfordshire. Harry Curtis is Chaplain at Warwick University and parish priest at nearby St Joseph the Worker, Canley. He also runs the Diaconate Programme. Bruce Harbert is retired and living at Charlbury, Oxfordshire. David Evans is at Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Rednal in South Birmingham.

Mervyn Tower is at Corpus Christi, Headington, Oxford. John Osman is at St Birinus, Dorchester-on-Thames. Gerard Murray looks after Sacred Heart, Bilton, and English Martyrs, Hillmorton, both in Rugby. Bishop David Mc Gough continues as auxiliary bishop with care of the north of the diocese.

We are very pleased for the ordination of the three New Romans to the priesthood at St Chad's during the summer. We wish Marco Egawhary, Ryan Service and John Waters, *ad multos annos* and look forward to their joining the ministry in our diocese in due course.

The Midland Martyrs' Day Mass and Celebration will be held in Oxford on Monday 2nd December at Corpus Christi, Headington, courtesy of Mervyn Tower. Details to follow. We hope you can join us.

Gerard Murray

Brentwood

Gary Dench was ordained on 22nd June and has been appointed as Assistant Priest to Brentwood Cathedral from September 2019. Michael Butler has retired as Parish Priest of Old Harlow. Philip Denton and Jean-Laurent Marie celebrate their Silver Jubilee (10th September and 17th September 2019 respectively) as will Andrew Headon on 16th September 2020. We also pray for William Young who has recently suffered a bout of ill health and will celebrate his Ruby Jubilee on 28th March 2020.

James MacKay

Cardiff

Liam Hennessy continues as parish priest of Abertillery and Brynmawr. Bob Reardon is retired and lives in Miskin, Pontyclun.

Robert Reardon

Clifton

There have been two new appointments of Clifton Old Romans this year.

Our Diocesan Archivist, Canon Tony Harding, four years on now from the Diamond Jubilee of his ordination, is still resident at St John's flats, Bath. Michael Healy continues as PP of Withywood (Bristol) and Chew Magna, Michael Robertson of Fairford and Cricklade on the upper reaches of the Thames, Philip Beisly, across the Cotswolds, of Dursley and Nympsfield, and Colin Mason of Westbury-on-Trym with Henbury, Bristol. Colin has also been appointed Vocations Director for Clifton Diocese. Alex Redman has moved from Our Lady of Lourdes, Weston-super-Mare to be Parish Priest of Wells and Cheddar.

Parishes across the Diocese are still being supplied from Mendip as necessary by Bishop (Emeritus of Portsmouth) Crispian (Sam) Hollis, and your correspondent, who in August celebrated the 50th Anniversary of his ordination in Downside Abbey with a Mass of Thanksgiving – in Downside Abbey.

Thomas Atthill

East Anglia

Since my report last year there are a couple of changes to report for the small band of East Anglian Old Romans. Simon Blakesley has moved to St Laurence's in Cambridge, and Mark Hackeson has just been appointed to Our Lady of Pity in Swaffham. The rest of us are unchanged. Michael Griffin enjoys his retirement, Eugène Harkness is at Our Lady and the English Martyrs in Cambridge, Sean Connolly is at St George's Norwich and I am still teaching philosophy at Oscott College.

Bruce Burbidge

Gibraltar

On 29th June 2019, Bishop Carmel Zammit appointed Fr Victor Ghio as Administrator of the Cathedral of St. Mary the Crowned. He will continue to be Priest-in-Charge of St Bernard's Church. Mgr John Pardo, who is currently the Vicar General and Acting Parish Priest of Sacred Heart Church, has been appointed to assist Fr Ghio as Cathedral Sub-Administrator.

John Pardo

Hallam

I wrote last year, and probably the year before, 'Hallam remains as Hallam was', and there is no reason to say any different this year, except perhaps to record that Peter Kirkham has been raised to the purple: the good Monsignore has been created a Chaplain to His Holiness.

- Peter Kirkham (1966) – Worksop
- John Ryan (1978) – St Bede, Rotherham
- Mark McManus (1988) – St Joseph,

Handsworth, Sheffield

- Adrian Tomlinson (2003) – The Annunciation, Sheffield
- Craig FitzPatrick (2005) – Oldcotes
- John Metcalfe (1973) – VEC, Rome
- Tom Clarke (left in 1967) and Bernadette – retired, and now living in Doncaster
- Anthony Towey (1986) – teaching at St Mary's Twickenham
- Kevan Grady (1990) – and Helena – teaching at All Saints, Sheffield

John Metcalfe

Hexham and Newcastle

On the move: Michael McCoy has been appointed Dean of St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle. He is joined by Peter Stoddart as assistant in September, the new H+N Diocesan Rep. Phil Carroll has been appointed Spiritual Director for the Propaedeutic Year at Valladolid. Please keep in your prayers Lee Barrett who has left his parish to discern his vocation.

Keeping the ship afloat: John Butters, Bill Rooke and Michael Brown continue to keep the rumour of God alive in their parishes, as do Andy Downie, university chaplain and parish priest of St Cuthbert's in Durham, and Stephen Watson, hospital chaplain to all the hospitals in the Northumberland Hospitals Trust. William Agle is at St Charles, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, John Cooper is at St Cuthbert's, Stockton-on-Tees and Martin Stempczyk, our Vicar General, is at St Mary's Cullercoats. Tony Curren continues in the Vatican at the Congregation for Christian Unity.

Recently retired: Peter Carr and David Tanner have hung up their boots. David has recovered well after some illness and lives in Gateshead and Peter is happily at home in a private house in his former parish of New Seaham.

Phil Carroll

Lancaster

Peter Clarke is at St Bernadette's, Blackpool; Thomas Dakin is retired and living in Lea, Preston; Michael Docherty is at Christ the King, Carlisle; Emmanuel Gribben is at St Mary's, Barrow in Furness; Michael Murphy is at St Mary's Fleetwood; Hugh Pollock is at Holy Trinity and St George, Kendal; Terence Rodgers died on 28 June 2019 at Nazareth House, Lancaster, may he rest in peace; Luiz Ruscillo is at St Mary's, Lancaster; Michael Smith is retired and living in Ripon; Adrian Towers is at St Andrew's, Cottam; John Watson is at the Priory, Workington.

Leeds

We pray for the repose of the soul of Mgr Philip Holroyd who died on 5th October 2018. May he rest in peace.

Congratulations to Mgr William (Billy) Steele who celebrates his Diamond Jubilee and to Mgr Paul Grogan and Fr Stephen Brown who celebrate their Silver Jubilees this year. Also, to Fr Benjamin Hilton who was ordained on 20th July. *Ad multos annos!*

- Right Reverend Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds, Bishop's House, 13 North Grange Road, Leeds LS6 2BR
- Most Reverend Arthur Roche, Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments 00120 Stato Città del Vaticano
- Most Reverend John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark
Archbishop's House, 150 St George's Road, London SE1 6HX
- Mgr Basil Loftus
'Braeval', Helmsdale, Sutherland, Scotland KW8 6HH
- Mgr William Steele
Mount St Joseph's Home, Shire Oak Road, Leeds LS6 2DE
- Rev. John A Kelly
4 Hinsley Court, Leeds LS6 2HB
- Rev. Gerald Creasey
5 Hinsley Court, Leeds LS6 2HB

- Rev. Peter Nealon
St Malachy's Presbytery, Nursery Lane, Ovenden, Halifax HX3 5NS
- Canon Kevin Firth
St Joseph's Presbytery, 22 Gisburn Road, Barnoldswick, Lancashire BB18 5HA
- Rev. Christopher Willis
Parish of St Martin de Porres, St Austin's Presbytery, 6 Wentworth Terrace, Wakefield WF1 3QN.
- Mgr Andrew Summersgill
St Stephen's Presbytery, Castle View Terrace, Skipton BD23 1NT
- Rev. Russell Wright
St Patrick's Parish, 7900 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota, FL 34241, USA
- Rev. Malachy Larkin
Sacred Heart & St Patrick's Presbytery, Bolton Brow, Sowerby Bridge HX6 2BA
- Rev. David Bulmer
St Joseph's Presbytery, Church View, Low Street, Sherburn-in-Elmet LS25 6HZ
- Rev. Timothy Swinglehurst (Episcopal Vicar for Education)
'Ashlea', Hinsley Hall, 62 Headingley Lane, Leeds LS6 2BX
- Mgr Paul Grogan
St Winefride's Presbytery, 54 St Paul's Avenue, Wibsey, Bradford BD6 1ST
- Rev. Stephen Brown
St Wilfrid's Presbytery, Petergate House, 11 High Petergate, York YO1 7EN
- Rev Gregory Knowles
First Martyrs' Presbytery, 65 Heights Lane, Heaton, Bradford BD9 6HZ
- Rev. Steven Billington
Pontifical North American College
Postgraduate House, Casa Santa Maria, Via dell'Umilita, 30, 00187 Roma, Italy
- Rev. Matthew Habron (Cathedral Dean)
Cathedral House, Great George Street, Leeds LS2 8BE

- Rev. Dennis Cassidy
St Joseph's Presbytery, Queen's Road,
Ingrow, Keighley BD21 1AT
- Rev. Michael Doody (Vocations Director)
St Augustine's Presbytery, Harehills
Road, Leeds LS8 5HR
- Rev. John Carlisle
St Peter and St Paul Presbytery, 23
New Road, Yeadon LS19 7HW
- Rev. Marc Homsey (Chaplain to the
Universities of Leeds and Director
of Youth Service) Leeds Universities
Catholic Chaplaincy, 5 St Mark's
Avenue, Leeds LS2 9BN
- Rev. Martin Kelly
St Mary's Presbytery, 2 Clarence Street,
Halifax HX1 5DH
- Rev. Anthony Rosso
St Joseph's Presbytery, 40 Pakington
Street, Bradford BD5 7LD
- Rev. Sean Crawley (Bishop's Secretary)
Cathedral House, Great George Street,
Leeds LS2 8BE
- Rev. Elliott Wright
Holy Redeemer Parish, St Patrick's
Presbytery, 34 New North Road,
Huddersfield HD1 5JY
- Rev. Benjamin Hilton
St Robert's Presbytery, Robert Street,
Harrogate HG1 1HP

Matthew Habron

Liverpool

What are Liverpool's Venerabilini up to these days?

Archbishop Paul Gallagher has been awarded an honorary doctorate at Liverpool Hope University. The ceremony took place there in July 2019. Apart from that he still darts with amazing energy from one appointment to the next. He would be the first to say that his backroom staff in his office and in his home deserve most of the glory (but I would add, 'by no means all of it').

Out near St Paul's basilica, **Philip Gillespie** is still running what I once disrespectfully called 'St Bede's Finishing School' (the Pontifical Beda College, of course). St Mary's College in Oscott still benefits from the scriptural and musical services of **Andrew Robinson**. **Paul Rowan** is still teaching in Jersey, where he also looks after a theological institute. Back in the Archdiocese, let's go from North to South this year. **Gerald Anders** is still on the banks of the Ribble estuary, looking after our parishes in Tarleton and Mawdesley. **Michael O'Dowd** is standing down as Episcopal Vicar for Education, but is still parish priest in Eccleston. **Francis Marsden** is still in the lovely church of St Mary in Chorley, with a satellite in Adlington. **Tony Slingo** is on the coast at Ainsdale and Woodvale, introducing people to Christian meditation and working with the Cursillo movement. **Brian Newns** is still holding on to St Edmund Arrowsmith's Holy Hand in Ashton-in-Makerfield. Not far away, **Kevan O'Brien** is busy in St Helen's. **David Potter** is parish priest in Stockbridge Village next to the M57. **John Furnival** is Dean in Crosby - again. **Aidan Prescott** is still keeping us all legal as Chancellor of the Archdiocese. **Brian Murphy** is still guiding the Marriage Tribunal. **John Poland** has completed his doctoral studies and is moving into a posh house in Cressington Park, to become the Archbishop's secretary. **Peter Fleetwood** is still chaplain at Maryton Carmel and, 8 miles away, at Aintree University Hospital. He is sad not to be teaching any longer, but the commitment to Oscott wore him out and he is now in the hands of the NHS, who cannot discover what is ailing him. He has recently given retreats to priests in Scotland and Denmark, and some communities of religious women. **John McLoughlin** is working hard in East Warrington, where he also looks after his lovely sister Margaret, who is not at all well. To our retired brethren: **Archbishop Patrick Kelly** is in many e-mail inboxes, where he regales recipients with reflections on his life, as well as thoughts on

Bernard Lonergan SJ, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and cruises in central Europe, which seem to have replaced visits to the Holy Land. **Peter Cookson** looks frail, but is still helping liturgically at the Cathedral. In the 'Miscellaneous' category, **Peter McGrail** is still locked in his ivory tower at Liverpool Hope University, dispensing theological wisdom. **Jonathan Jones** is involved with Ofsted (I think) and **Michael O'Connor** is still in Canada (I think). **Paul Robbins**, though retired, is available to assist anyone who requires his help on canonical questions. I think he is a freelance consultant. **Paul Crowe** is enthusiastically involved in *Synod2020*, a process which began early in 2019. **Tony Murphy** pops up all over the place, and is incredibly well informed on the health of *Venerabilini* throughout the land. Several people have asked about **Thomas Wood**. I think the best way of getting in touch is via Fr Atli Jónsson: 40 York Road, Birkdale, Southport. PR8 2AY (ajonsson@btinternet.com).

Peter Fleetwood

Malta

The Maltese Old Romans are the following:

- Rev. Dr Joe Mizzi (parish priest of the Parish of Pope St Pius X in Santa Lucija);
- Fr Stefan Bonanno (Director of the diocesan Media Centre);
- Rev. Dr Mark Sultana (Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Malta);
- Rev. Dr Jimmy Bonnici (Director of the Pastoral Formation Institute);
- Fr David Muscat (Rector of the church of Our Lady of Hope, Mosta);
- Rev. Dr John Berry (Dean of the Faculty of Theology, University of Malta);
- Canon Brendan M. Gatt (Judicial Vicar);
- Rev. Dr Kevin Schembri (Lecturer in Canon Law and Defender of the Bond at the Metropolitan Tribunal);

- Canon Dr Jonathan Farrugia (Lecturer in Patristics at the University of Malta and Assistant in the Parish of the Nativity of the B.V. Mary, Senglea),
- Canon Dr Nicholas Doublet (Diocesan Archivist).

Also, H.G. the Archbishop of Malta, Mgr Charles J. Scicluna, a friend of the College and a regular visitor has been appointed Adjunct Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and is frequently being entrusted by His Holiness Pope Francis with delicate missions to countries where the Church has been struggling with the abuse crisis. We keep him in our prayers.

Brendan Gatt

Menevia

There are no major changes to report in the Diocese of Menevia, with no clergy having changed location. Mgr Clyde Hughes-Johnson is at Brecon in retirement, and Fr Michael Burke continues to be engaged in pastoral and canonical work in Florida. Fr Liam Bradley continues in the parish of Haverfordwest as police and hospital chaplain but, after 5 years, has relinquished the role of Vocations Director. Fr Liam was recently appointed as Dean of Pembrokeshire.

Liam Bradley

Middlesbrough

Mgr Anthony Bickerstaffe continues in the Holy Name Care home, growing weaker but still as lovely to everyone he meets as he ever was.

Mgr David Hogan is still happily ensconced in St Bernadette's, Nunthorpe. He will be harder to remove than Japanese Knotweed!

Canon Alan Sheridan has received the stunning news that he will be leaving St George's, York in September. In itself, not stunning. However, he is to RETURN to St

Therese, Ingleby Barwick... which he left to go to St George's, York. As the Lion King might have said, 'It's the Circle of Life.'

Fr William Massie is in charge of Our Lady of Lourdes and Peter Chanel as well as being Hull University Chaplain. He is also Diocesan Vocations Director, organises Faith Events and day retreats for priests. It keeps him out of trouble, I suppose.

Canon Stephen Maughan is still at Sacred Heart Middlesbrough and still running the diocese from the Chancery and the Judicial Vicar's Office. An occasional bribe keeps him sweet...

Alan Sheridan

Northampton

Our two senior Old Romans continue in their respective parishes – Canon John Koenig at St Edward's, Kettering and Fr Paul Hardy at St Edward's, Milton Keynes – although both have had a spell of ill health. Mgr Seán Healy combines his role as Vicar General with caring for the communities at St Teresa's, Beaconsfield and St Dunstan's, Bourne End. Mgr Kevin McGinnell is still at Holy Ghost, Luton and is also Episcopal Vicar for Education and Formation. Fr David Barrett is now working as assistant priest at St Augustine's, High Wycombe and seems very contented.

Seán Healy

Nottingham

Fr Peter Harvey has been appointed to Our Lady of Good Counsel, Sleaford in Lincolnshire after many years of service at Ilkeston; Fr Martin Hardy is leaving the Diocese temporarily to work in schools ministry; Fr Peter Vellacott has been appointed to St Mary and St Augustine's, Stamford, Lincolnshire; Canon John Cahill has been appointed to The Most Blessed Sacrament, Leicester; and Fr John Guest, Parish Priest of Ashbourne in Derbyshire will be retiring at the end of September this year.

I am also delighted that we now have the go ahead for the building of a new church dedicated to St Ralph Sherwin at Chellaston, a part of English Martyrs' Parish - hopefully to be completed by the end of 2020.

Mark Brentnall

Plymouth

Not much has changed with the Plymouth Brethren in the last year except that we have got older! Our senior citizen, Canon Kevin Rea, who is celebrating 70 years as a priest, is in Nazareth House, Plymouth and is frail, but concelebrates Mass from his wheelchair. Mgr George Hay is also celebrating 60 years as a priest, and God-willing, will be at Palazzola in November. Fr Michael Downey also lives in retirement, in Sherborne. There he has Mgr Robert Draper as Parish Priest: Robert also is Vicar General and Moderator Curiae.

Fr Michael Wheaton continues his ministry as University Chaplain in Exeter and priest-in-charge at Crediton. But we do now have a new Old Roman priest: James Barber was ordained in Plymouth Cathedral on 22nd June and is expected to remain on the team there.

We do not forget either those who spent some time at the VEC: Fr Mark Skelton who is Dean of Torbay and Parish Priest of Teignmouth, as well as being the Bishop's representative for Safeguarding. Fr Guy de Gaynesford has been Rector of the School of the Annunciation at Buckfast Abbey, but that is closing down later this year. And, of course, there is the Russian Orthodox priest, Hieromonk Porphyrios, alias Robert Plant, who lives and ministers in Exeter.

Finally, your reporter who has been Parish Priest of Kingsbridge for seven years, has now reached the canonical age of resignation from ecclesiastical office, and will move to Northern Italy in the autumn, from where he may even reach Rome more often!

Adrian Toffolo

Portsmouth

Following the announcement of the Year of the Bible in 2020 by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, in Portsmouth, Bishop Philip Egan (1984) recently announced that he 'would like us to follow-up the Year of the Bible in 2021 with a Year of the Eucharist. This will give us as a Diocese the opportunity for a deep 'spiritual re-boot'. I pray these two Years will deepen us and unify us, filling us with passion for mission, formation and catechesis, service and charitable action. In this way we can really begin to put into practice our grand vision of 'Bringing People Closer to Jesus Christ through His Church.' This is an encouraging vision that our Diocese will be making every effort to enable people to engage and explore Scripture and Tradition and, gently draw all Catholics, especially those on the periphery, back into the fullness of the faith and I am sure many Old Romans will be assisting in enabling this vision.

After Bishop Philip there are many Old Romans in the Diocese of Portsmouth. Only a few new appointments have so far been announced: Fr Bruce Barnes (1997) will be moving to Our Lady and the Saints of Guernsey as Parish Priest and Dean; Fr Simon Thomson (1994) will be moving to Corpus Christi, Wokingham as Parish Priest. Mgr James Joyce (1971) has retired and moved to Hook as has also Mgr Canon Cyril Murtagh (1957).

Other Old Romans are: Fr Marcus Brisley (1994) who continues as Parish Priest of Holy Ghost in Crowthorne and The Immaculate Conception in Sandhurst; Fr Gerard Flynn (1999), our Vocations Director and Parish Priest at St Michael and All Angels, Leigh Park in Hampshire; Fr David Forrester (1972), retired in Cumbria; Mgr Jeremy Garratt (1975), who continues as Parish Priest of Sacred Heart and St Peter the Apostle, Waterlooville and is also Dean of the St Wilfrid Deanery, Southeast Hampshire

and the Isle of Wight and Co-ordinating Pastor of the Havant Pastoral Area; Canon Alan Griffiths (1974), who continues as Assistant Priest to St Swithun, Wells parish with particular responsibility for Our Lady Queen of the Apostles, Bishops Waltham, Hampshire; Fr Paul Haffner (1981), teaching in Rome; Fr Phillip Pennington Harris (2010), who continues as Parish Priest of English Martyrs, Didcot and St John the Evangelist, Wallingford; Fr Peter Hart (1980), who is continuing as Parish Priest of St Margaret Mary, Park Gate.

Bishop Emeritus, Bishop Crispian Hollis (1965), is retired in Somerset; Fr James McAuley (2010) continues as Academic Tutor at the English College, Rome; Mgr John Nelson (1984) continues as Chaplain to the 2nd Battalion Mercian Regiment and Catholic Chaplain to the British Forces community in Cyprus; Fr Benjamin Theobald (2013) continues as Assistant Priest in St Thomas, Jersey, Channel Islands.

Phillip Pennington Harris

Salford

Our most senior Old Roman, John Allen, keeps good health and continues his ministry to the people of Our Lady of Grace, Prestwich. He is joined there still by VEC contemporary, Tony Dearman who still celebrates Mass at St Bede's each week. Michael Quinlan, Provost Emeritus, is still Parish Priest of St Winifred's, Heaton Mersey, although he is no longer responsible for St Mary's, Heaton Norris, where Fr Geoffrey Marlor enjoys a panoramic view of the M60 and Stockport. John Marsland manages to continue as President of Ushaw while resident and ministering as Parish Priest in Lees, Oldham. Chris Lough continues as responsible for adult faith formation and sacramental catechesis in the Diocese as well as parish priest straddling East Manchester and West Tameside. Chris's parish is the home parish of Mark Paver who is assistant priest at the newly-formed parish

of Our Lady of Hope, Irlams O' th' Height and Pendleton. Nicholas Paxton continues his ministry of supply work and also his own research projects. Robert Lasia has moved from prison ministry to become parish priest of St Patrick's, Rochdale, and St Mary's, Littleborough. David Quiligotti is working in the newly formed parish of Bl John Henry Newman, made up of three former parishes in Trafford. Ian Farrell is now parish priest of Great Harwood, Clayton-le-Moors and Rishton, with four churches. James Manock continues his liturgical formation brief and is in the process of moving to the parish of St Vincent, Norden, Rochdale. Mark Harold is Dean of a large portion of the Lancashire part of the Diocese as well as Parish Priest of St Mary's, Bamber Bridge, where his neighbour is Joe Gee, who is also involved in spiritual formation. Gerard Byrne continues his work at the St Luke Centre while John Flynn is close to HQ as Vice-Rector of the College. I am still Parish Priest in Heywood, as well as Episcopal Vicar for Formation. Michael Deas has been moved to St Catherine's, Didsbury as assistant priest, and Richard Howard is assistant priest in Horwich. Finally, Bishop John Arnold presides over the lot of us!

Paul Daly

Shrewsbury

To deal with the factual updates first: Frank Rice moved last August to The Old Garden Nursing Home, Hoylake, but sadly, Frank died on 18 August 2019. David Charters is also on the move. After serving four years in the Central African Republic, he took up a new appointment as Secretary at the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See at the United Nations in New York. His new address is: Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See, 20 East 72nd Street, New York NY 10021-4196, USA. This summer he was appointed a Monsignor. That makes all our other moves seem quite humdrum by comparison! Tom Cunnah joined the clergy team last October at our Cathedral

in Shrewsbury, which is far from humdrum these days, the clergy there looking after large areas of Shropshire as well as our own Diocesan House of Formation, next door to the Cathedral. Now full to bursting, it gives young men considering a vocation the chance to live in community for a year or so while they discern the way forward, with Tom, Tony McGrath and Edmund Montgomery as the three young priests in residence there. Already, a super number have gone on to Seminary. Well done, all!

Andrew Moss was on loan to us from Arundel and Brighton for some months, assisting at the Carmelite Monastery in Birkenhead where he has been serving as Chaplain since September. He has also been helping with pastoral and canonical work in the Diocese and covering where needed in local parishes. It's been good having him with us, and we send him our very best wishes for the future.

Old Roman Golden Jubilarians this year are John Rafferty (13th July) and Rod Strange (21st December). Heartiest congratulations to them both! John has signalled his intention to retire this summer from St Vincent's Altrincham, but hopes to keep active helping out in the area. In Summer Moves this July, Jonathan Brandon is going from Chester to replace John Rafferty; Nick Kern becomes Dean of South Trafford and Wythenshawe (another of John's former responsibilities); Tony McGrath leaves the Cathedral to take over two South Manchester parishes, Christ Church, Heald Green and St Chad's Cheadle; and Tom Cunnah somehow adds looking after two Shropshire parishes, St Mary's Shifnal and St Joseph's Albrighton, to all his other duties. How do you do it, Tom?

At their best, these Diocesan Reports are so much more than just the factual. They capture a little of what those years on the Monserrà meant to all of us, whether five or fifty years ago. And those memories sometimes come at the oddest times. For the past few years, I've been pursuing my

Dickens obsession, and a couple of years ago had the great experience of presenting a paper at a Conference in Florence on the perennially fascinating question of exactly how anti-Catholic he was. One prized book on my shelves I consulted the other day is the magnificent facsimile reproduction of his Working Notes, a very expensive volume indeed. A sheet of blue writing paper fell out: 'Dear Paul. Please accept this as a present. I must admit I have hated Dickens since c.1942 and have now got all I can get out of this book! So, enjoy it. Buona lettura, Bryan. 20th January 1988.' You never knew who you'd sit next to in the Ref in those days, or what the conversation would turn to. Or what lives people had led before coming to the VEC. Bryan Chestle didn't advertise his past as an Oxford Russianist. But what a deeply cultured man he was, and what a generous one. That book for me sums up Bryan and sums up VEC fellowship at its best. May he rest in peace.

Paul Shaw

Southwark

There are a few moves to report in this year's Southwark report; the most tremendous — almost *rocambollesco* — news being that Bishop John Wilson has left the balmy heights of north-west London to become our new archbishop! On the feast of Mary, Mother of the Church, spumante corks a-plenty were rakishly flying out of bottles in good old *Venerabile* fashion as the *bolletino* from Rome was read, and re-read, with great joy and happiness. Archbishop John was already known and respected within the diocese, having directed many clergy in events at Merville (where he is fondly remembered for buying several deacons ice-lollies), and at the Kairos Centre. *Benvenuto*, Archbishop John!

Archbishop Peter Smith now finds himself with time to potter around in his garden at Whitstable. Ever the gentleman, and raconteur, we give thanks to God for his ministry these past years and pray that his

pumpkins and swedes will soon be winning prizes at the local town fête. *Grazie di cuore*, Archbishop Peter!

Nevertheless, I'm sure we're all aware that moving can be a stressful affair, but, after hearing the tale of a recently arrived lady to a leafy suburban avenue within our diocese, I think clergy moves are far less stressful. The lady in question hadn't been in her London home long (so didn't know the neighbours well), when a removal van pulled up outside of the adjacent house, which incidentally had been on the market for some considerable time. The two men were very pleasant and industrious — one of them even broke off to help the lady with her shopping bags — and as the owners weren't in, she returned their kindness by offering them both teatime comestibles. Eventually they left. However, two days later, the neighbours returned from holiday to find their house completely empty! Red-faced, she gave a description of the two men to the police, but the men were never caught and the neighbours never spoke to her again. So with that tale of woe fresh in our minds, here are the Old Romans who (I hope) have had far more agreeable experiences of moving.

Last October, David Gummatt was translated from Merton (incidentally, still home to Chris Larkman — a key player in the early days of Palazzola Holidays) to become parish priest of St Mary of the Crays, Crayford, only a stone's throw from the acclaimed, *Red House*. At about the same time his new parish was founded in the mid-nineteenth century, Red House was also built to be a 'Palace of Art' by the artist and textile designer, William Morris. However, it had so many windows, chimneys and other curious nooks, that by 1865 he was forced to move out due to the financial upkeep; and he left with such a hatred for his former dream home, he declared that to see it again would 'be more than he could bear'. I'm sure Fr Gummatt will be far more at home in his modest parochial dwellings devoid as they are of all nooks, and crannies.

Marcus Holden, on the other hand, may have the benefit of a few nooks and crannies in his new parish of St Bede at Clapham Park. As in his former parish of Ramsgate, he shows no sign of slowing down in his zeal to share the faith with humour and integrity; and so Clapham Park's magnificent presbytery has already been utilised to this end with the most laudable programme of catechetical events held under its graciously high ceilings. Talking of graciousness, that most generous of Old Romans, Tomás Creagh-Fuller, is now arranging dispatch of his Fortnum choccies from the 'hip hood' of Brixton Hill, having moved this past September from Forest Hill. He is joined by another new locomotive priest as Matthew O'Gorman has finally vacated leafy Purley in order to join Tom in his Brixton escapades at Corpus Christi. (Matthew, you'll recall, wreaked revenge on behalf of curates everywhere who had experienced curacy under a fabled 'curate-breaker' by himself going through three parish priests within the space of three years.) So well-liked was Matthew in Purley, it's hard to imagine who might have replaced him, but then the eminently suitable, fresh-off-the-boat from Rome, Francis Murphy, turned up on the doorstep of 48 Dale Road, proving that the people of St John the Baptist, Purley have been, and will continue to be, very well cared for! Sadly, the esteemed parish priest of Margate, Tim Finigan, had to resign the parish due to ill health, but is much in the prayers of his brothers as he recuperates. Meanwhile, Bishop Paul Mason's time as auxiliary for Kent was to be short-lived, having been translated to the Bishopric of the Forces in July 2018.

Despite trying to keep under the radar, the awesome majesty of the archdiocese has caught up with your scribe (Philip Andrews, in case you don't make it to the end of this verbose report) who, after three very happy years in terrifically-tasteful Tooting Bec, now finds himself living on a traffic island next to

our beautiful Metropolitan Cathedral Church of St George. Philip continues in his privileged role as chaplain to the excellent *Friends of the Venerabile*. Of the remaining movers, this only leaves David Howell, who at the time of the previous *Venerabile's* publication had already packed his bags in Brixton Hill and was heading down Lewisham-way to the gloriously named parish of the Holy Saviour, St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist, or for short, St Saviour's (or possibly, the 'Lewisham Lateran'). As an *ex-officio* member of the PPC, can he now claim to sit on the Lateran Council? *Anathema sit!*

Not wishing to sound like a news report concerning Brexit, of the 'Remainers' the irrepressible Michael Cooley still works stalwartly at St Peter's Residence in Vauxhall as chaplain, despite (supposedly) being in retirement. Likewise, other retirees seem to practise this same work ethic: Bishop John Hine, although retired from his role as auxiliary for Kent, is still parish priest of St Andrew in Tenterden; and the much-loved, Francis Mooney (Leo, to his chums), continues as parish priest of Southborough.

As we're discussing bishops, Archbishop Emeritus, Michael Bowen, is currently very poorly, and so we continue to pray for him, and give thanks for his long ministry within this diocese. Paul Hendricks, meanwhile, continues as auxiliary bishop with responsibility for deaneries in the south-west of the diocese; and Bishop Nicholas Hudson has responsibility for those parts of central and east London which fall within Westminster. Back in May, it was good to note Bishop Hudson's presence at the Requiem Mass for the late, great Jean Vanier. Vanier had inspired him during his time both as a seminarian and priest, and it was Vanier's values which he then shared with those of us who knew Mgr Hudson as Rector of the VEC. Whilst dallying over the water, Luke de Pulford continues to do sterling work advocating for the rights of the victims of

slavery and human trafficking with the *Arise! Foundation*.

Having dallied in the 'other place' which borders Southwark in the north, we now turn to the fabled diocese of sea and hills to recall one of the greatest raconteurs in the history of Southwark, the late Bryan Chestle, *requiescat in pace*. He enjoyed retirement in Sussex, receiving regular visits from Bishop John, who lives nearby. David Stanley continues to enjoy retirement, although he is still active in numerous pastoral organizations.

Returning to the other 'immutables', they include Richard Whinder who remains parish priest of Balham, 'Gateway to the South' (as Peter Sellers once praised it); Martin Edwards is still the *curé* of Wandsworth East Hill; Tim Galligan remains as parish priest of Battersea, Altenburg Gardens (and Clapham Junction railway station); Charles Briggs continues as parish priest of St Mary's in Chislehurst, famous for its links to Napoleon III and the Empress Eugenie; and Stephen Boyle remains in Dartford, a town with a rich history, but sadly often noted now for its hectically-busy crossing, and the Mick Jagger Centre of Performing Arts.

A couple of gentlemen who might appreciate having a performing arts institution within their parishes are Simon Peat (Wimbledon South) and Stephen Langridge (Richmond), as both parishes boast theatres notorious for their pre-West End run shows. Indeed, someone not averse to a bit of drama in his life was Henry VIII's Lord Great Chamberlain, and Putney lad, Thomas Cromwell. Happily, Michael O'Dea, as present parish priest of Putney, does not have to worry about such troublesome locals these days. Victor Vella remains in leafy Orpington, and Orpington lad, Steven Greenwood is now a happily married man, and City Hall mandarin. Dominic Allain continues his vital work with *Grief to Grace*, a charity which seeks to bring healing and wholeness to survivors of trauma and abuse, and is now its International Pastoral Director, as well as overseeing the programme's work in

the UK. Lastly, Paul Connelly remains resident within the parish of Tooting Bec. At the time of writing, he is very ill, but nonetheless, still loves seeing old friends.

Philip Andrews

Toronto

Two Old Romans gathered at Toronto's Old Mill for luncheon and the chance to reminisce about the good old days. Fr Edward Koroway (1984) is the Parish Priest of St Mark's and Fr Alexander MacDonald (2018) is an Associate Pastor at St Michael's Cathedral Basilica, both in the Archdiocese of Toronto, Canada.

Alexander MacDonald

Westminster

Recent changes in **bold print**

- + Vincent Nichols, Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster
- + John Arnold, Bishop of Salford
- + Nicholas Hudson, Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster
- Mark Anwyll, PP, *Our Lady of Muswell*, Muswell Hill
- Keith Barltrop, PP, *St Mary of the Angels*, Bayswater
- David Barnes, PP, *SS Anselm & Cecilia*, Lincoln's Inn Fields
- **Andrew Bowden, Assistant Priest at Our Lady of Lourdes, New Southgate**
- Michael Brockie, Provost of Cathedral Chapter
- **Gerry Burke, RIP 20th March 2019**
- **Dominic Byrne, PP, St Theodore of Canterbury, Hampton-on-Thames**
- Antony Conlon, PP, *Our Lady & St John*, Goring-on-Thames
- John Conneely, Judicial Vicar, Diocesan Tribunal
- Antony Convery, PP, *SS Edward the Confessor*, Golders Green
- John Cunningham, PP, *Immaculate Conception & St Joseph*, Waltham Cross

- John Deehan, PP, *Our Lady Help of Christians*, Kentish Town
- Anthony Doe, Spiritual Director at the *Venerabile*
- Pat Egan, Retired — Ann Arbor, Michigan
- Michael Garnett, Santa Apolonia, Cajamarca, Peru
- Daniel Humphreys, Sub-administrator, Westminster Cathedral
- Roger Kirinich, Retired — living in Clifton diocese
- Mark Langham, Chaplain to the University of Cambridge
- Robert LeTellier, Further Studies, Cambridge
- Hugh Mackenzie, Studying for a PhD; and chaplain to St John & St Elizabeth Hospital
- Eddie Matthews, Retired — resident in Sussex
- **Paul McDermott, PP, St Mellitus, Tollington Park, from September 2019**
- Paul McPartlan, Professor, Catholic University of America, Washington DC
- Shaun Middleton, PP, *St Mary's*, Cadogan Street, Chelsea
- Philip Miller, PP, *St Augustine*, Hoddesdon
- Peter Newby, PP, *St Margaret's*, Twickenham; and chaplain to St Mary's University
- James Neal, PP, *St Gabriel*, South Harrow, and *St Bernard*, Northolt
- Seamus O'Boyle, PP, *St John the Evangelist*, Islington; and Episcopal Vicar for Safeguarding
- **John O'Leary, Vice-Rector of Allen Hall, commencing Sept 2019**
- **Brian O'Mahony, Completed further studies at Venerabile; PP, St Matthew, Northwood; and lecturing at Allen Hall, commencing September 2019**
- **Jim Overton, Retiring summer 2019, to be resident in Somers Town**
- Terence Phipps, PP, *Immaculate Conception & St Joseph*, Hertford
- Antonio Pineda, Assistant Priest, Borehamwood parishes
- Dermot Power, Associate Spiritual Director, Allen Hall
- F. Javier Ruiz-Ortiz, PP, *Our Lady & St Catherine, Bow*; and lecturer at Allen Hall
- Paschal Ryan, PP, *Holy Redeemer*, Chelsea
- Nicholas Schofield, PP, *Our Lady of Lourdes & St Michael*, Uxbridge; and Diocesan Archivist
- Alexander Sherbrooke, PP, *St Patrick*, Soho Square
- Gerard Skinner, PP, *St Francis of Assisi*, Notting Hill
- Michael Tuck, PP, *St Ignatius*, Sunbury on Thames
- Mark Vickers, PP, *Holy Ghost & St Stephen*, Shepherds Bush
- Chris Vipars, PP, *St Mary*, Moorfields & *St Joseph*, Bunhill Row; and Director of Agency for Evangelization
- Frank Wahle, Retired — Baker Street
- Stephen Wang, Senior University Chaplain in the Diocese of Westminster
- Philip Whitmore, Rector of the *Venerabile*
- **Ben Woodley, Newly Ordained. Assistant Priest at Our Lady, St John's Wood**

Philip Miller

Wrexham

There are only two Wrexham Old Romans – Rev. Charlie Lloyd and Rev. Antony Jones – and sadly Fr Lloyd died on 23 August 2019, may he rest in peace.

Antony Jones

Obituaries



Fr Gerard Thomas Burke

18th April 1935-20th March 2019

Because of his love for, and commitment to, the Priesthood and the Diocese, Fr Gerry will be fondly remembered and sorely missed by the Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Religious and Lay People who knew him. And because of his love for, and commitment to, his family and friends they too will miss him greatly and treasure their memories of him as a brother, uncle and companion.



Gerard Thomas Burke (known as Gerry by almost everybody except his family!) was born on 18th April 1935 in Willesden. Gerry was educated at Sacred Heart Primary School and Gunnersbury Grammar School. He was an altar server at the parish church, and a member of the scout troop, always keen to learn new skills.

In his mid-teens Gerry's sense of vocation to the Priesthood led to his acceptance as an ecclesiastical student by Archbishop Myers. In 1951 Gerry was sent to St Edmund's College, Ware as a boarder to complete his secondary education and prepare him for seminary life. In 1953 Gerry went to the Venerable English College in Rome as a seminarian, and studied at the Gregorian University. While in Rome, Gerry became proficient in Italian, and he developed a love of cooking, Italian style. He enjoyed travel to other parts of Italy during breaks from study, travelling with, and enjoying the company of, friends from the College and other seminaries in Rome. Because he had practical skills and ingenuity, Gerry was called upon to attend to various repairs and odd jobs, with varying degrees of success, hence the nickname 'Bodger' that friends continued to use, as did he of himself, long after life at the English College.

On 12th March 1960 Gerry was ordained to the Priesthood by Cardinal Traglia at the Basilica of St John Lateran. After early appointments to the parishes of Holy Cross, Parsons Green and St James', Spanish Place, he was then appointed Private Secretary. He was Assistant Priest at Barnet (1967-73), and Isleworth (1973-80) and Chaplain to Gumley House School. In 1980 he was appointed Parish Priest at Poplar, where he remained until 1983. In Poplar Fr Gerry found parishioners as robust in their understanding of the faith as he was robust in challenging them to a renewed understanding, and what follows from it. They were well matched!

Fr Gerry took part in preparations for the National Pastoral Congress, held in Liverpool in 1980 and was involved with a 'theological road show', travelling around the Diocese to address packed meetings in the pastoral areas explaining ecclesial models and theological concepts. It was a time of great hope, and Fr Gerry was an optimist. Fr Gerry helped many 'ordinary' Catholics to grasp the difference between the Body of Christ and the People of God, drawing inspiration from the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. From 1983 to 1986 Fr Gerry was Pastoral Director at Allen Hall Seminary.

Fr Gerry was appointed diocesan Director of the 'Ministry to Priests' programme (1986-95) that was being introduced to the Diocese. In this role, and in the running of the Centre for Human Development based in Kensington Square, Fr Gerry worked tirelessly to support and promote the growth of priests in every aspect of their lives. The need for such support

was recognized in other countries, and Fr Gerry was invited by the Bishops' Conference of South Africa to set up and run the Ministry to Priests programme based in Pretoria. With the blessing of Cardinal Hume Fr Gerry went to South Africa in 1995 and remained there for three years. During his years working with the Centre for Human Development Fr Gerry travelled to many other English-speaking countries to share his knowledge of, and passion for, the life and ministry of priests and the need for organized support and means for personal growth for priests.

In March 1998 Fr Gerry returned to the Diocese and was appointed Parish Priest of St Lawrence's parish, Feltham. He enjoyed life and ministry in Feltham, and he remarked to a colleague, speaking of the parishioners, 'I have never seen people as generous and loving as these people', and to another, 'these have been the happiest years of my life'. The response of the parishioners to Fr Gerry's commitment to shared responsibility for the ministry and mission of the church brought him much satisfaction. As a Parish Priest Fr Gerry had his own thoughts about matters such as the age of First Reconciliation and the manner of the celebration of Reconciliation with adults, and he articulated these verbally and in writing. But above his personal preferences, based on his knowledge and experience, he respected the authority of the Bishop and the unity of practice in the Diocese. From 2001 to 2006 Fr Gerry served as a member of the Chapter of Canons of Westminster Cathedral.

Throughout his life as a priest Fr Gerry remained close to his family and to his friends. Many visited him in his various parishes and while he was in South Africa, and have stories to tell of his zest for life, fun and adventure, and of the animated conversations around the table while enjoying the results of Fr Gerry's cooking. Fr Gerry was an intelligent and articulate priest, and a good listener to the ideas, and to the joys and sorrows, of others. He brought humour to many situations, helping people to not take themselves too seriously, while supporting people with kindness and compassion as they faced serious situations. Many colleagues and parishioners appreciated Fr Gerry's prophetic teaching and preaching, inspired by Vatican II, but others found him challenging, while maintaining respect for him perhaps in recognition of his evident integrity.

In 2010, at the customary retirement age for priests, Fr Gerry retired to what he described as 'a bijoux little bungalow' in Feltham, where he was able to indulge his twin passions of cooking and gardening while remaining among his adopted parish family of St Lawrence's. In his letter to the Vicar General he wrote, 'This parish, more than any other, has become my family, and if I could retire locally I would be near many friends and, no less importantly, close to the various hospitals and medical facilities of which I have had to avail myself...' He remained active in ministry, giving assistance in the parish and giving his successors support while never interfering. Fr Gerry died peacefully on 20th March after a short illness, having recently moved from his bungalow to the nearby Derwent Lodge Care Home where he continued to receive the support of family, friends and colleagues. He knew he was close to death and, without fear, was ready to be embraced by the Lord whom he knew, loved and served.

At the age of 83 years, having served as a priest for 59 years, may this much-loved man and priest rest in peace.

Mgr Martin Hayes

Mgr Philip Holroyd

23rd October 1947-5th October 2018

Philip Holroyd was born in Bradford on 23rd October 1947. He was educated at St Bede's Grammar School, Bradford and Ushaw College, Durham. He studied for the priesthood at the English College in Rome, in the years immediately after the Second Vatican Council, and was ordained in the church at the *Venerabile* on 12th December 1971.



From 1972-74 Fr Holroyd was an assistant priest at St Joseph's parish, in Handsworth, Sheffield. In 1974 he went to Oriel College, Oxford to study for a Masters in Philosophy. In 1976 he returned to Rome as Tutor in Philosophy at the English College and in 1979 he became the College's Vice-Rector. In 1982 he was appointed a Chaplain of Honour by Pope St John Paul II. In 1985 he took on the role of Chaplain and Administrator at Villa Palazzola, the College's summer villa on the shores of Lake Albano, outside Rome.

Mgr Holroyd returned to the Diocese in 1988 when Bishop Konstant appointed him as Parish Priest of SS Peter and Paul, Sandal. In 1995 he moved to Leeds to become Parish Priest of St Urban's in Headingley. It was to be a brief tenure as less than eighteen months later he became the first Director of the new Diocesan Pastoral and Conference Centre at Hinsley Hall.

In 2005 Mgr Holroyd became the Parish Priest of St Theresa's at Cross Gates in East Leeds. In 2013 he was appointed to St Wilfrid's, Ripon from where he retired owing to ill-health in the summer of 2018.

Mgr Holroyd died on Friday 5th October 2018 at St Gemma's Hospice in Leeds.

His legacy to the life of the Church, locally and further afield is a significant one and in large part a very tangible one. At the *Venerabile* he was responsible for the redevelopment of Villa Palazzola which underpinned its emergence as a thriving retreat, conference and pilgrim centre in recent years. In the Leeds Diocese he will be remembered for overseeing the construction of the new church at SS Peter and Paul, Sandal, completed in 1992, and, especially, for the establishment of Hinsley Hall. Along with the late Austin Smith, the first General Manager of Hinsley Hall, he translated Bishop Konstant's vision for a new diocesan pastoral centre into a successful reality in the years that followed its opening in 1999.

In East Leeds Mgr Holroyd brought together three existing parishes – St Theresa's, St Gregory's and Corpus Christi – in an amalgamation that formed the new parish of Blessed John Henry Newman in 2010. Finally, at Ripon, until ill-health took its toll, he was heavily involved in leading a major project to restore and refurbish the Church of St Wilfrid, one of the finest 19th century Catholic churches in the country.

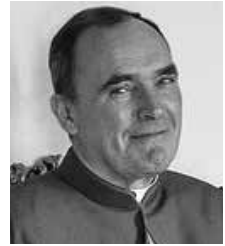
Mgr Holroyd was a priest of high intelligence and ability and both were placed at the service of the Diocese of Leeds for over 45 years, at parish and diocesan level. He was, for example, Episcopal Vicar for Christian Formation from 1999 – 2004, an assiduous school governor and school chaplain, and a valued member of the Diocesan Council for Education for many years. He had formidable organisational skills and his belief in collaboration and participation enabled the laity to play their full and active part in the parishes where he served. In that sense he was very much made in the mould of Vatican II. He always placed great trust in the People of God and with his passing the people of the Diocese of Leeds have lost a man of great talent and a very fine priest. May he rest in peace.

Mr Robert Finnegan

Mgr Bryan Chestle

1st September 1933 – 4th September 2019

We were nine raw recruits from eight dioceses, arriving at the Venerabile in October 1956 to begin our priestly training. A few weeks later we heard that another was coming to join us. Bits of information filtered through: he was from Southwark archdiocese, lived in New Malden and was educated by the Jesuits at Wimbledon College where he had won a state scholarship; he had worked for a year in the offices of Surrey County Council; he had done his two years of National Service, in the select band learning Russian in case of a war with the Soviet bloc; he had read languages, French and Russian, at Oxford and then tried his vocation with the Jesuits; he did not take to using the discipline and stayed only three weeks in their novitiate; he would arrive on 25th November, feast of St Catherine of Alexandria. Bryan duly arrived. After supper, props dressed him as a Russian dancer and he sportingly made his first public appearance on the stage at Philosophers' Concert.



Seven years at the College can reveal the best and worst in a person. In Bryan, we saw the best. He was consistently reliable, often fun to be with, an elder statesman with the occasional wise word for the youngsters in his year. He could grumble, but not for long. As Deputy Senior Student he rose earlier than the rest of us to ring the bell every morning at 5.25.

The name Chestle dated from Norman times but Bryan's family was the last to bear the name. His father was not a Catholic and, as Bryan neared priesthood, his paternal grandmother unavailingly offered him, as an only son, incentives to leave and continue the family name. He would much later have the happiness of receiving his father into the Catholic Church. Cardinal Heard ordained Bryan priest in the Villa Chapel, along with Christopher Budd, on 8th July 1962. That night, from the Villa balcony, we watched the fireworks display in Ariccia. Unconnected with the ordinations but, we felt, very appropriate.

Bryan had no trouble passing his licentiates in philosophy and theology. His first and only appointment in England was to St Joseph's, Mark Cross, in East Sussex. Mark Cross, in a building designed by Edward Pugin, was the minor seminary for St John's College, Womersley. It had recently been extended to allow for six extra classrooms. There Bryan taught religion and French.

He was five years at Mark Cross. Then came a sudden change. He wrote to me on 6th December 1968: 'Would you believe it – I've been asked to go and work in the Secretariat of State. The Bishop says someone in Rome suggested me to the Delegate (whom I have yet to see) & I may have to go at Christmas ... Anyway, it's only for a probation period, so I may well be sent back quite quickly. My feelings are pretty mixed, but it is conveniently timed: this place is packing up in 18 months because of lack of numbers.'

A letter to me the following March described his arrival in Rome and the work he was doing:

'I found myself quartered in the Coll in the Bps' area: in Beck's suite, on the corner of the Monserrà and the Montoro. Three rooms, all very smart. The next morning ... up we went to the terza loggia to the S of S. I met the Substitute, Abp Benelli, and his deputy, the Assessor, Mgr Sanz. I took the oath of secrecy etc and in a few minutes was upstairs in the Borgia Tower, being introduced to the English section. I found there were four others ... So there I was, being ushered into my own office within half an hour of arriving! The room I was given was piled high with mail; it took about three weeks to catch up.

'The job is simply being English secretaries to the Pope; we get all the mail addressed in English; we help with translations, and when needed one has to interpret ... Hours

9 to 1.30, and at least three evenings a week, to make up a total of at least 33 hours. The office has to be staffed between 6 and 8. I always slope off about 7.30 to get back for supper. The nuns do me a special lunch at 2 o'clock. I have fallen into the siesta habit I'm afraid, so from 4 onwards I am a walking automaton. I have been told I must do a doctorate in theology ... I'm not sure whether I like this sort of life ... I don't know how long I'll stay the Coll: Benelli wants me to move – to preserve the secret! In fact I meet the lads very little, and know very few names as yet.'

Archbishop Benelli's wish was never granted. Bryan lived at the College all the time he was in Rome. He did get to know 'the lads' and they revered him. He became the elder statesman he had once been to the rest of us in his year. He took charge of the College garden which benefited greatly from his horticultural knowledge and expertise.

Bryan could have told many stories but that was not his way. Quiet discretion was his trademark. But he did recall with pleasure Pope St Paul VI taking him on one side and saying: 'Thank you for all you do, but above all thank you for your friendship.' He also let slip that when he was teaching Pope St John Paul II Russian, the Pope couldn't understand how an Englishman spoke better Russian than he did. At his time, the College was in great financial crisis. A legacy via an old lady in England had come to the Vatican with a value of £4 million. Bryan suggested that Archbishop Bowen, chair of the College Trustees, should apply for a grant and showed how to do it. The paperwork came to Pope John Paul II with a recommendation that £200,000 might be given to the College. Pope John Paul II discussed it with Bryan, signed the paperwork and added an extra zero, which meant that the College received not £200,000 but £2 million. That money was put into trust and forms the Endowment of the College.

Bryan also recalled with amusement his meeting with Mrs Raisa Gorbachev when he was given the job of escorting her round the Vatican during the historic visit in 1989 of her husband, President Mikhail. 'How many columns are there in St Peter's Square?' she asked. 'I'm afraid I don't know.' 'Well, you should! And where did you learn Russian?' 'In the British Army!'

Meeting Queen Elizabeth twice during her visits to Pope St John Paul II gave him great satisfaction.

Such events might give the impression that life at the Secretariat simply meant mixing with dignitaries. That would be to ignore the ordinary daily grind, carried out devotedly by Bryan and others like him. He was conscious of the fact that in serving his time in the Secretariat of State he was directly serving the Holy See, the supreme spiritual authority over the Catholic Church which the Pope has as successor of Peter. 'I answer letters,' he said, 'letters sent to the Pope, and it doesn't matter if that letter comes from a diplomat or a child in school, a head of state or any office worker, each one has to be answered as if Jesus were talking. Each one is important.'

The daily grind began to take its toll. He became depressed, lost interest in his role and made the decision to leave the Vatican and return to his diocese. What happened then was a spiritual turning point, 'a cure'. It empowered him to stay in Rome, to continue his valuable role in the Vatican. He explained this to the College students when he gave them a Conference some years later.

'The cure I felt was of "going through the looking glass". It was based on a revelation of love, of the fact that God is love and that love is the meaning of everything. It is hard for me to express it clearly. What I experienced for many months was what I would describe as sudden and unexpected onslaughts of the Lord's love. This never happened at set times or during prayer, but at times, for example, when I was climbing the stairs in the College or typing at my desk in the office. These waves of all-embracing delight never interfered with what I was doing at the time. But they were

extremely intense. Sometimes I found myself saying “Please stop, go away!” It was as though I would be loved to death, which was wonderful but scary ... The result of these “free gifts” is to put the world and its worries in a better perspective. Everything becomes somehow unified. One goes on living by faith, but one’s experiences confirm one’s faith and are a help for the rest of one’s life. Nothing is ever the same again.

In my life things suddenly began to happen. From having felt completely sad and helpless, I began to feel happy and fulfilled. From hating every cobblestone that I walked over each morning on the way to work, I began to greet them as old friends. Prayer suddenly became very easy, the prayer of simply being lovingly aware. Jesus ceased being someone known about and became someone known personally, in a way that cannot be put into words: not seen or heard or touched but known as being overwhelmingly present as a lover ...

The transition from helpless and hopeless depression was like passing through a curtain into brilliant light. The effect was decisive and apparently permanent. I would say that in some mysterious way I had become a new person. Doubt of the existence of God is now inconceivable. I never feel alone or abandoned ... One can become an effective instrument of God.’

Archbishop Edward Adams, Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain, shared an office with Bryan for a year at the time of his spiritual turning point. The Archbishop recalled: ‘During that year, I learned so much from Bryan, and not only the finer points of the Queen’s English. I was able to benefit from his kindness, to experience his deep faith and love, and to be inspired by his infectious joy. He would leave me notes, telling me: “Ed, I just needed to share with you how much I feel the Lord’s presence”.’

Retirement from the Secretariat of State came in 2003. Bryan received a warm message of gratitude from Pope St John Paul II and was appointed to the College of Protonotaries Apostolic *de numero participantium*, one of the most ancient in the Church. He became one of seven such Protonotaries, charged with witnessing and signing papal documents.

Having lived for 49 years in the College, he returned to England in 2011. He appeared among the Leavers’ Profiles in the *Venerabile* for that year: ‘With a kind twinkle in his eye and a slight grin on his face, he’ll turn to a trusted friend to announce kindly, “not criticising; just observing”. A tug of the collar, and a nonchalant glance upwards will follow, as the resulting silence says it all.’ The writer spoke of Bryan’s priestly qualities, ‘who while exalted in his position, remains a humble servant and was a role model of priestly service to hundreds of seminarians’.

The Sisters of Our Lady of Pity at St John’s Convent in Kiln Green welcomed Bryan and he was happy there. Then illness overtook him and he needed more specialist care. His last years have been spent at St Clare’s Home in St George’s Park, Ditchling Common, East Sussex where he received exquisite nursing from the Augustinian Sisters and Staff. One who had lived a life of faithful and diligent service deserved nothing less. He died on 4th September 2019, may he rest in peace.

Mgr John Allen

As The Venerabile was going to press we learned of the death of two greatly respected Old Romans. Fr Frank Rice of Shrewsbury died on 18th August 2019 and Fr Charles Lloyd of Menevia on 23rd August 2019. May they both rest in peace and rise in glory.

Friends of the Venerabile

(The Venerable English College, Rome)



Join us to help the College Students by Prayer, Support and Funding

Benefits of membership

You will:

- Receive a copy of *The Venerabile*, the annual College journal.
- Receive the *Venerabile View Newsletter* with news and items of interest about the College and Palazzola.
- Be able to take part in our highly enjoyable outings, pilgrimages and annual gatherings held in different locations round the UK.
- Be kept in touch with the College and its students, helping them in their formation as priests.

What we do

We contribute towards additional facilities at the College and Palazzola. Recently we have paid for the resurfacing of the tennis courts at Palazzola and for the installation of a loop system in the church and the conference room.

For further information

Please visit our website: www.friendsofenglishcollegerome.org.uk

Contacts

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Bingley, W. Yorks. BD16 4DR
Tel: 01274 568500
Email: JHGlenewes@aol.com

Report of the Friends of the Venerable

MICHAEL LANG

Following on from the very successful meeting held in Palazzola in October 2017, the committee decided that the 2018 meeting should be held in the London area. We held the meeting in Balham at the Parish where Fr Phil is the assistant priest. We were able to welcome the Vice-Rector, Fr John Flynn, and the Deputy Senior Student, Marco Egawhary.

Fr John gave us a very interesting talk on College life, in which he stressed the importance of *friendship*. In thanking us for our continued support, he assured us that the whole College community was most appreciative of our spiritual support through prayer, as well as everything else that we do.

Deacon Marco concentrated on 'life after College' as it applies to newly ordained priests. Even though the seminarians are well prepared for the modern world that awaits them, they will still be in great need of the support and friendship of the faithful. On behalf of the students, he too thanked us for our continued support, spiritual and practical.

The AGM location was an item on the Agenda and it was decided that we should retain the traditional pattern of London area/elsewhere in the Country/London area. For this year we will be holding the meeting in the West Midlands, at St Joseph's, Cannock Road, Burntwood, on Saturday 14th September.

The Palazzola 'addicts' amongst us were a little sad at the decision and so at the November committee meeting it was decided that the *Friends* should book Palazzola for a week's holiday on a regular basis. For 2020 the Villa has been booked from 15th to 22nd May and I am pleased to report that nearly all the places are already taken.

Sadly for medical reasons I have been unable to visit the VEC during 2018/9 so unfortunately I have not been able to meet

up with the seminarians, but the wonders of modern communications have enabled us to keep in touch with the College and I learned that our 2018 donation to the College has enabled the Vice-Rector to update the College WiFi system to 2019 standards. I am informed that the staff and seminarians are delighted with the result.

My inability to travel meant that I missed the Roman Association Annual Meeting at which it was announced that Palazzola needs to 'fill more beds'. We are helping in this regard as stated above, but I would like to suggest that the **Friends** should increase their 'marketing' role by encouraging their fellow parishioners and friends to visit this 'Ante-chamber of Paradise'. The recently-acquired display banners have proved to be a very successful marketing tool.

I attended the ordination of Fr James Barber for the Diocese of Plymouth. The Cathedral was full, the liturgy wonderful and, as a bonus, the sun came out and we were welcomed to an open-air reception on the lawn in the Bishop's garden. I returned to Plymouth for Fr James's first Mass when he was joined at the Altar by Frs Cranfield, Marsden and Murphy and also Deacon Peter Taylor. It was good to see this group of young priests celebrating Mass together.

As always, the Friends will be represented at all the ordinations, and I am particularly looking forward to attending the July ordination of the 'Birmingham Three', after which 'normal service' will hopefully be resumed and I will be able to undertake all the usual engagements of a year in the chair. Theresa joins me in thanking all those who have supported us in our *annus horribilis* by their prayers, Masses and kind messages of good wishes, and we look forward to resuming our visits to Rome and Palazzola in the near future.



MICHAEL LANG is
Chairman of the Friends
of the Venerable

House List 2018-19



Staff

- WHITMORE Philip (Westminster), Rector
- FLYNN John (Salford), Vice-Rector
- DOE Anthony (Westminster), Spiritual Director
- METCALFE John (Hallam), Pastoral Director
- McAULEY James (Portsmouth), Academic Tutor

3rd Cycle (Year III)

- CHASE Andrew (Rockhampton)

3rd Cycle (Year II)

- NOWOTNIK Jan (Birmingham)
- MURPHY Francis (Southwark)

2nd Cycle (Year III)

- LOGAN Hugh (St George's-in-Grenada)

2nd Cycle (Year II)

- EGAWHARY Marco (Birmingham)
- HILTON Benjamin (Leeds)
- NGUYEN Hai (Oslo)
- O'MAHONY Brian (Westminster)
- SERVICE Ryan (Birmingham)
- WATERS John (Birmingham)
- WOODLEY Benjamin (Westminster)

2nd Cycle (Year I)

- ELLUL Peter (Malta)
- GRACE Michael (Brisbane)
- MUSCAT Aayrton (Malta)

1st Cycle Theology (Year III)

- BALZANELLA Alexander (Westminster)
- JENKINSON Dominic (Hallam)
- KING Matthew (Portsmouth)
- WYGNANSKI Piotr (East Anglia)

1st Cycle Theology (Year II)

- COY Andrew (Northampton)
- ELLIOTT Sean (Leeds)
- IRWIN David (Shrewsbury)
- LAWES Albert (Plymouth)
- RIZK Joseph (Stockholm)
- WELSFORD Oliver (Portsmouth)

1st Cycle Theology (Year I)

- DIXON Joshua (Liverpool)
- DUCKWORTH Toby (Birmingham)
- HANSON Elliot (Cardiff)

1st Cycle Philosophy (Year II)

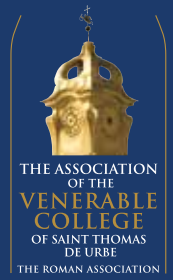
- HAUSCHILD Edward (Portsmouth)
- HELLEVIG Trym (Oslo)
- HEY Connor (Salford)
- SHARROCK Theo (Salford)
- TEIGEN Joachim (Oslo)

1st Cycle Philosophy (Year I)

- BENCH Dave (Birmingham)
- FINNEGAN James (Liverpool)
- FYLES Martin (Liverpool)
- O'BRIEN Joseph (Hexham and Newcastle)

Student Priests	6
E & W Seminarians	24
Other Seminarians	6
Total Students	36
Total Seminarians	30

The Roman Association Trust and the College



The Roman Association exists to support friendships among those who have studied *intra muros Collegii*, who are known as the Old Romans and to support the College. It does the latter in a very practical way through the Roman Association Trust, an endowment fund that invests capital in a range of funds that offer a good return without excessive risk.

Leaving the capital intact, the Trustees who are all voluntary, use these returns to benefit current and future students at the



Photos: Bishop Nicholas Hudson



College by supporting individual projects that improve living conditions and facilities for staff and students.

Over the past 18 years the Trust has given no less than £500,000 in this way to the College. It is a practical way of showing our love for our alma mater.

You can help us to continue this work by making a donation to the Trust or better by remembering the Trust when making your will. This is easy to do and we'll be glad to advise you on the most effective way to leave such a bequest that will help the College for years to come.

For further information contact one of the Trustees below or any of those listed on p.103.

Mgr Anthony Wilcox, tel. 07976 359 565;
email: alwilcox19@gmail.com

Mgr Seán Healy, tel. 01494 673018;
email: mgr.sean.healy@gmail.com



AUTUMN AND WINTER: THE VERY BEST TIME TO VISIT PALAZZOLA

As the days shorten and evenings lengthen, there's no better way to lift your spirits than by taking a break in Palazzola. You'll be amazed at the very special offers and reduced rates available between November and March.

We can't guarantee endless sunshine but we can guarantee a warm welcome, a comfortable heated room, delicious meals with local wines and engaging company. Take gentle strolls along the wooded slopes of Lake Albano or walk to one of the nearby Castelli towns like Rocca di Papa, Castel Gandolfo or Nemi which are much less busy outside the summer months. Walk one way and we can organise a taxi to bring you back.

Or hire a car and go further afield to Monte Porzio, Anagni, Sermoneta, Tivoli or Ostia Antica, Rome's very own Pompeii. Rome too is much less frantic at this time of year.



Photos: Palazzola website



Photo: Peter Fleetwood

Palazzola has all the facilities you'll need for a retreat, days of recollection, yoga or wellness breaks. It is a safe environment that is especially attractive for those bringing school groups or students on overseas trips. Ask about our special rates for such groups.

Come on your own, bring a group of friends, Old Romans, parishioners or family members. And don't forget Palazzola is also the perfect place to celebrate a round birthday, a jubilee or any other special occasion.



Visit www.palazzola.it, making your booking is simple and in jig time you'll have something to look forward to in your diary.

Villa Palazzola, via dei Laghi km 10.800, 00040 Rocca di Papa (RM), Italy

www.palazzola.it palazzola@palazzola.it 0039 06 9474 9178